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# Govt's paperless push to streamline functions

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Bengaluru:

A fresh push for paperless governance, prompted by the coronavirus pandemic, is expected to streamline administrative functions, free up manpower for stretched government departments, and perhaps open up the work-from-home option for employees.

Chief minister BS Yediyurappa on Tuesday night issued an order for mandatory use of 'e-Office' for administrative purposes. Chief secretary TM Vijay Bhaskar also communicated the same to various departments.

e-Office, an electronic system for clearing files, was launched in November 2019. Both bureaucrats and ministers have been reluctant to use it. In fact, only two of the 28 members in Yediyurappa's cabinet have used the system so far, according to government officials. The two cabinet members are deputy chief minister CN Ashwath Narayan and mines and geology minister CC Patil.

This will now change as Yediyurappa has made the system adoption compulsory. An official in the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said going online would reduce physical handling of files



**NEW AVATAR:** The use of e-Office for administrative purposes will free up manpower for short-staffed govt departments

and papers, cutting chances of infection. The move will also improve efficiency and resource utilisation.

"In every office, there are scores of Group C and D officials whose basic job is to sign on files and take them from one desk to another. In the CMO, too, there are many such employees. The online system will free up such employees for other work," the official said.

With the state's finances under pressure, the government is reportedly looking to rationalise departments by shifting a section of officials to divisions facing a staff shortage.

The online switch will also prevent unnecessary delays in clearing files. The said system tracks a file from the minute it is opened to the moment it is processed. It also records the time a file spends with

every administrative function. Narayan said the system was very convenient and had helped his department to dispose of cases quickly. "Apart from transparency, it offers another benefit: it weeds out middlemen and excess government personnel in any department," he said.

Some government employees claimed there had been no training for the system switch in the secretariat. "While an online mechanism for clearance of files has been in place in districts like Udupi and Shivamogga for over 12 years, the e-Office system has not been installed in the offices of all ministers and bureaucrats," CS Shadakshari, president of the Government Secretariat Employees' Association. He added that there was no staff redundancy in any department.

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