

Karnataka govt will not ask IT companies to open offices, WFH may continue – Minister

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- **The union government has extended connectivity norms for work from home for IT and BPO companies till December 31.**

BENGALURU : The Karnataka government on Thursday said it will not ask IT companies to open office spaces and that the work from home arrangement that is currently in place may continue for a few more months due to prevailing COVID-19 situation.

Deputy Chief Minister C N Ashwath Narayan, who is also incharge for IT and BT department, made it clear that the government cannot mandate the companies to open their offices and ask employees to report to work there, instead of working from home or work from anywhere. He was responding to a question raised by an Independent MLA from Hoskote Sharath Bachegowda in the assembly. "Eventually, they (offices) will open.

The companies will take a call when the time is right..," he said adding that there was no thought before the government to ask the companies to make its employees to attend to work at offices, also the situation is still not appropriate for it. Bachegowda while pointing out that most of the IT workforce was still working from home, claimed that it has affected productivity, and asked the government to put pressure on the companies to open offices. He also pointed to its impact on other dependent work forces like transport.

Udupi MLA K Raghupati Bhat too said that with IT companies yet to open, cabs, canteens and other dependent livelihoods are getting affected, and it was time for the government to ask companies to open offices.

Responding to this Narayan said once offices open up, ancillary services will also get back on track, and maintained that work from home was still the safe option due to the prevailing situation. He pointed out that technology came to the rescue of several sectors during the pandemic as he acknowledged the efforts of the IT, startups and innovation sector.

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