

NREGS wages: Jharkhand banks on Adhaar, micro ATMs

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FOR the first time, 500 NREGS workers have drawn their wages in January utilising the UIDAI Adhaar, a micro ATM, and biometric data.

The pilot project, to ensure transparency and timely disbursement of wages, has been welcomed by villages. Launched simultaneously at Meru in Hazaribagh and Ratu in Ranchi on January 5, the project is expected to cover 30 villages soon.

A micro ATM — costing less than Rs 20,000, weighing less than 2 kg, linked to a laptop, and supported by four to six hours of power backup — made it possible



500 NREGS workers drew wages in January using Adhaar data

to disburse wages without using the pen and paper.

Earlier, workers were paid by cashiers at banks or post offices. Block Development Officers sent files having names of workers and wages to banks/post offices. The process resulted in delays and many a times, the worker had to travel some

distance to collect the amount. Also, cases of frauds were reported, as in the case of Saguna panchayat under Patan block in Palamau where Rs 1,782, which was due as wages to a worker, Uday Singh, was withdrawn by another man after Singh's death.

Ratan Lal Pahan, an NREGS worker who has drawn his wages twice through the micro ATM, has even received SMS alerts after the amount was transferred to his bank account. "This is magic," he says.

The new online feature enables workers to access his or her bank account, also gives an option to change the account and start receiving fund in a new account.