

Many workers seek part of salary in cash

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MUMBAI: Salaried employees, fearing they will be unable to withdraw the amount credited into their accounts on December 1, pleaded with employers to pay at least part of it in cash.

BEST Workers' Union demanded that all employees, especially drivers, conductors and low grade workers, be paid only in cash. "It is ridiculous to get money credited in your account and then you have to run from one bank to another to withdraw it. It will affect duty hours and may impact bus services," said union leader Shashank Rao. "Employees are finding it difficult to get change for Rs2,000 so BEST must pay in small denomination notes," he added. But BEST general manager Jagdish Patil said the salaries would be credited to employees' accounts. Waiters, chefs

and bouncers in hotels and restaurants are being encouraged to accept cheques.

Establishments that give cash are dividing the salary, to be distributed weekly., to avoid a sudden burden on the employer's monthly cash reserve. "For employees from poor families or villages, who are illiterate with no bank accounts, we have to pay some amount in cash. But we are trying our best to get them to open accounts to avoid difficulties in future," said Adarsh Shetty, owner of Sion's Cafe Vrundavan.

Shetty, also president of Ahar, an association of 8,000 hotels and bars in the city, said the limit on withdrawal and absence of small currency were affecting cash payments.

Liquor merchant Arvind Miskin said, "Sometimes, employees take a salary advance. We are encouraging it so that a lumpsum payment does not haunt us at the month-end."