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Refilling ATMs: Rural areas to get priority

By [Pratik Bhakta](#), ET Bureau | Updated: Nov 11, 2016, 01.04 AM IST

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MUMBAI: It would not be Mumbai, or New Delhi, or Bengaluru that would be the focus of banks on Friday to stuff currencies in to the ATM machines. It would be towns, villages, hospitals and bus stations as those regions less connected with the digital world become the priority.

At a recently held meeting with the regulator and the National Payments Corporation of India, it was decided to give priority to these areas as cash logistics companies do not have the manpower or the capacity to replenish the entire 2 lakh ATMs of the country within 72 hours.

“There is a target to reach as many ATMs as possible in the tier 2 to tier 5 cities as people there are yet to be exposed to digital transactions and there will be more demand for cash. We are also setting priority for ATMs near the hospitals and railway stations,” said one of the bankers associated with the task of replenishing cash at ATMs.

Citizens are struggling to meet their daily expenses as Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s decision to make Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 currency notes illegal.

Banks reopened on Thursday after a day’s closure and ATMs will be operational from Friday. But filling up ATMs with new currency could take a while.

Under normal circumstances ATMs get replenished once in three days, now the demand is such that it will need to be ideally replenished twice daily for a few days.

To further worsen the situation, cash logistics companies are facing issues like traffic, complicated cash reconciliation procedures at bank’s currency departments and a strained manpower as a major hurdle to get the cash machines working.

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