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SOPHOS

Rural post offices will soon get digitally connected

By Anandita Singh Mankotia, ET Bureau | Dec 26, 2015, 06.06 AM IST Post a Comment

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NEW DELHI: The communications and IT ministry is set to launch a slew of schemes on December 28 that will seek to digitally connect rural post offices across the country and enable core banking facilities at 12,000 other post offices.



The ambitious project to digitise all transactions made by postmen in rural India will include equipping branch postmasters with solar powered, biometric hand-held devices.

The ministry will also announce a programme to set up over 1,000 ATMs in three months for the convenience of post office savings bank customers.

Communications and IT minister Ravi Shankar Prasad will launch the schemes to mark the 'Good Governance Day'.

The ambitious project to digitise all transactions made by postmen in rural India will include equipping branch postmasters with solar powered, biometric hand-held devices.

It will be launched at three pilot circles in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan. A senior government official told ET that the Good Governance Day will hence be a critical date for the government to measure its success in digitising governance and for setting new digitisation goals. The official said the government's attempt to mark the day on December 25 last year had become controversial and it was thus decided to shift it to December 28. "By March 2017, 1.30 lakh hand-held devices will be made available across rural branch offices. This instrument will revolutionise lives of people across villages," the official said.

Booking and delivery of Speed Post, registered mail, money orders, sale of stamps and postal stationary will be done through these devices and paper receipts will be generated instantaneously, the official said. "All financial transactions shall also be reconciled immediately and cash on delivery amount collected in the village will be immediately credited to the account of e-commerce company," the official said.

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These devices will also facilitate biometric authentication of social security beneficiaries at the time of pay-out, "reducing leakage in the scheme", the official said.

The postal department has clocked revenue of Rs 980 crore in 2015 through cash on delivery and the figure is likely to cross Rs 1,500 crore by the end of the current financial year, the official said. The postal department has also set up 57 integrated state-of-the-art parcel centres for booking, processing and delivery of ecommerce parcels.

The official said the postal department has this year offered more than 57,000 policies under the PM Suraksha Bima Yojana, PM Jeevan Jyoti Yojana and Atal Pension Yojana to post office savings bank account holders.

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