

Govt. to set up fifth national data centre

Data boom:The data centre to be set up in Bhopal will have the capacity to host five lakh virtual servers. Sandeep Saxena

The Centre will set up the country's biggest data centre in Bhopal with a capacity to host five lakh virtual servers, Electronics and IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said on Monday.

The data centre, which will take about two years to come up, will be set up by the National Informatics Centre (NIC), under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).

This will be the fifth National Data Centre after the ones at Bhubaneswar, Delhi, Hyderabad and Pune. These National Data Centres host government websites, services and applications.

"India's digital ecosystem has got a momentum of its own and this process is going to be irreversible. As far as data privacy is concerned, we have always said that data must be protected, and India should become a good centre of data analysis," the Minister said.

Replying to a query on data mining by firms in the context of the general elections in 2019, Mr. Prasad said, "Any attempt to influence India's elections in a covert or overt manner by abuse of data will not be tolerated. People can campaign on social networking sites, but misuse and abuse of data is not acceptable."

He added that the government planned to expand its BPO promotion scheme to one lakh seats from the "current 48,000 seats."

Under the initiative, which had an outlay of Rs. 493 crore, 91 BPOs had been set up in small towns and rural areas till now.

'121 cr. Aadhaar issued'

On Aadhaar, the Minister said that while only 61 crore Aadhaar numbers had been generated up to 2014. The numbers had jumped to more than 121 crore as on June 16, 2018.

Asked about the government's action plan in case the Supreme Court's decision was not in favour of Aadhaar, the Minister said, "The question is hypothetical... the judgment [in the case] is reserved but I believe our Aadhaar team lawyers have argued it with proof, and Aadhaar has already established its benefits for the public."

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