

## Centre to aid offshore e-commerce play

Game gets bigger: Inside a fulfilment centre of an e-commerce player in Delhi. Ramesh Sharma

The Union government is working on a new policy to expand the footprint of the Indian e-commerce sector to tap potential markets outside the country, including Africa and Southeast Asia.

This is part of efforts to achieve the target of making India a trillion-dollar digital economy in the next seven years, a senior official of the Electronics and Information Technology Ministry told *The Hindu*.

### Two aspects

“We are working on a policy framework for expanding the e-commerce economy. There will be two aspects to it — one will focus on expansion within India, and the other on global expansion. The e-commerce economy should cross borders and capitalise on foreign markets,” the official said.

Currently, the Ministry is looking at tapping markets such as Southeast Asia, West Asia, SAARC countries such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, the Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, and BRICS partners (Brazil, Russia, China and South Africa).

The e-commerce economy is currently pegged at \$30 billion, and the government expects it to grow at \$150 billion by 2024-25.

The Ministry says the digital economy in the country was forecast to generate employment for about 30 million people by 2024-25, “which is double than the current scenario”.

### Top contributors

While electronics, telecom and IT/ITeS sector will be the top three contributors with 8.9 million, 8.8 million and 6.5 million jobs, respectively, e-commerce is expected to create jobs for 6 million people. “e-commerce is set to grow 19-fold in generating employment,” the official said.

The government is also working on a strategy to make India a hub for data analytics, cloud computing and financial technology, besides encouraging development of Internet of Things, to push the digital economy. “The national programme for developing 5 lakh resources for data analytics and AI [Artificial Intelligence] will be formulated and approved by the end of this year,” the official said.

### Data Protection Act

The official said the Data Protection Act, the draft of which is likely to be ready by December 2017, will provide a policy framework on digital economy, including social media. The government will also ready a security framework for mobile devices and the mobile application ecosystem by March 2018.

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