

The government plans to expand its [BPO promotion scheme](#) to one lakh seats, and will also set up India's largest [National data centre](#) in Bhopal, IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said on Monday.

"We want to make India a hub for BPO movement," Prasad said at a conference to highlight the achievements of IT and Electronics Ministry over the last four years.

The government will increase the capacity under the [BPO promotion scheme](#) to one lakh seats from the current 48,000 seats, he said, adding that initiative has not only created new job opportunities but also ensured that people in smaller towns find employment closer home.

"BPOs are going to start soon in smaller cities like Gaya and Gazipur...They are already operational in Guwahati, Muzaffarpur, Patna and other places...in all 91 in 27 States...So our efforts that youth should find employment near their cities and towns, have materialised," the minister said.

Allocation of 31,732 seats for BPO units operating from smaller towns have created new employment avenues with potential to offer nearly 200,000 direct and indirect jobs to youth under India [BPO promotion scheme](#) and North East BPO promotion scheme, he added.

Prasad also said that the fifth 'National Data Centre' - the largest of such centres - will come up in Bhopal with capacity of five lakh virtual servers.

The [National Data Centres](#) - that host government websites, services and apps - are currently operational at four locations - Pune, Hyderabad, Delhi and Bhubaneswar.

Prasad last month, had inaugurated the cloud-enabled [National Data Centre](#) in Bhubaneswar, which is spread over 40,000 square feet. The data centre will host new as well as existing applications of Central and state governments with ability to support 35,000 virtual servers.

"Bhopal data centre is important as India is becoming big centre of data...the huge population has become digitally reliant. We want to create a robust data centre...NIC is working on it," the minister said.

National Informatics Centre (NIC) provides technology support to governance services and hosts nearly 10,000 websites of the government. A senior NIC official said that the work on new Bhopal centre has already started and it will be operational in two years or so.

The minister further said that 12.3 million rural adults have been trained so far under Pradhan Mantri Digital Saksharta Abhiyan. This includes 6.3 million candidates who have already received their certification.

Commenting on the digital payments initiative, the IT ministry said that the monthly BHIM-UPI transactions touched a record high of 19 crore transactions worth 270 billion in April 2018.

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