

As the government looks to tap rural voters in the general elections next year, it has announced that all [common service centres](#) (CSCs) in the country will act as banking correspondents. Going forward, it may also open extension branches of banks at the [CSCs](#).

CSCs, which work under the public private partnership (PPP) model, are one of the mission mode projects under the [Digital India](#) programme. There are about 290,000 [CSCs](#) across the country. [Village-level entrepreneurs](#) (VLEs) run the centres to provide essential public utility services, social welfare schemes, healthcare, financial, education and agriculture services, apart from host of B2C services to citizens in rural and remote areas, through digital means.

Over 200,000 gram panchayats already have [CSCs](#) and the remaining 50,000 will soon have them. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had earlier asked the [Ministry of Electronics](#) and IT (MeitY) to set up a CSC in every gram panchayat.

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Piyush Goyal, Minister of Finance, Railways and Coal, said, “About 2.90 lakh CSCs will be able to work as banking correspondents. The expansion of digital technology in our country will add five per cent more growth to our GDP. CSC has the potential to change the social fabric of our country.”

The Minister added that the government may explore the idea of opening extension branches of banks at CSCs, but did not share more details.

Highlighting the importance of CSCs in the NDA government’s scheme of things, Modi is set to address the VLEs on June 15 to deliberate on [Digital India](#).

Besides that, Law and IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said the Wi-Fi choupal initiative of the CSCs plans to connect all gram panchayats with broadband connectivity from BharatNet project. At present, 11,082 gram panchayats are in place with Wi-Fi infrastructure.