

# Digital India-2 from mid-June

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Keeping an eye at the target of a \$1 trillion digital economy by 2022, the government could soon announce the second phase of its Digital India programme, with about 30 policy initiatives.

According to sources, this is likely to be launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi around June 15. The electronics and information technology ministry is working on the boost to the existing programme, the sources added.

The programme was launched by Modi in 2015 with an aim to make all government services available to citizens electronically.

“The proposal is to launch the programme immediately after the Modi government completes four years in office,” an official in the ministry said.

The focus would be on services such as health, education, rural development, agri-

culture, energy and next-generation financial services. The government plans a national document and data exchange, to develop real-time data visualisation and deep analytics capabilities, a government e-marketplace, digitally-enabled power distribution and direct benefit transfers, and grid automation, among others.

“The initiative will be based on taking a big leap into the new technological achievements, including artificial intelligence (AI), cloud computing, robotics, blockchain technology, etc,” the sources said.

Support is likely to be more for skill upgradation and creation of social infrastructure. The team believes nearly 500,000 jobs on new technologies would be created, for which technology centres like Nasscom should be well placed to create the requisite personnel.

Sources further said the entire initiative

will be based on identifying sectors where potential for growth is higher; these will get priority. Around 30 policy measures have been identified.

“Work is on to justify action needed on the basis of the cost-benefit ratio. Also, that the new avenues created do not eat into

existing sources of revenue generation and sectoral growth is matched by availability of requisite professionals,” the official said. Digital India was a major commitment of the government during the earlier general election. This might take a leap if it returns to power in the next elections.

Another official said a digitalisation process has taken place but adoption of technology at a much faster pace is required for taking care of aspects which are slowing the economy and widening the rich-poor gap.

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