'India Must be Aadhaar-Enabled'

Group of ministers wants link even at existing PoS, internet banking levels

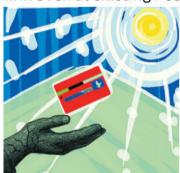**Surabhi.Agarwal**@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: The financial systems of the country have to be made Aadhaar-enabled to make the transition to a digital economy. This is one of the decisions taken by a group of ministers which is charting out a strategy for digital payments.

The Aadhaar link should be made even at the existing Point of Sale (PoS) level and at the internet banking level to "formalise cashless banking in the country," it was felt.

The group, led by minister for Electronics and IT, Ravi Shankar Prasad, which met for the second time in a week, also suggested that public sector banks should make the initial push towards digitalisation.

One government official who attended the meeting said the idea was to make bankers focus more on digital payment modes instead of across the counter mode of operations.

"Aadhaar is being pushed because it doesn't require people to remem-

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ber their PINs or password, which can be an issue with the poor and the illiterate. Through Aadhaar, only biometric based authentication is needed," said the official.

The group had met on Monday and had chalked out a plan to promote tools such as Unified Payment Interface (UPI) and digital wallet apps. They had also discussed ways to make government-owned touch points such as post offices to facilitate digital pay-

ments. They also wanted increased collaboration with the state governments to convert the economy into a cashless one.

"Post their discussions, the relevant authorities will be briefed for implementation," added the official.

The group also suggested that public sector banks should push forward their digitalisation plans promoting their wallet applications considering that private wallets are much ahead in the race.

Following up on the discussions, the ministry of electronics and IT announced a project where each CSC will train at least 40 households in their vicinity along with facilitating digital payments for at least 10 merchants.

"We are saying that for 40-50 crore people who do not have smartphone or any other means of electronic transaction, AEPS is the best solution since all they need is to give their biometrics to carry out any transaction," another government official said.