

# Bank branch expansion at a decade's high

The growing popularity of alternative banking channels has failed to discourage lenders from setting up brick-and-mortar branches across the country.

State-run and private sector [banks](#) have opened a little more than 7,300 branches during calendar year 2013. This is the highest yearly number in the past decade.

Bangalore-based [Canara Bank](#) set up 723 branches in 2013, while State Bank of India, the largest lender, opened 627. Among private lenders, ICICI opened the highest number, 587.

The majority of branches were opened in non-metropolitan locations, as lenders focused on expanding the reach in unbanked and under-banked regions. [HDFC Bank](#), the second largest private lender, opened 333 of its 339 new branches in rural and semi-urban centres. About 80 per cent of Canara Bank's new branches were outside metro and urban locations.

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