

## **E-filing of I-T returns: Taxpayers to get digital signatures**

In order to weed out the hassle of sending by post a hard copy of e-filed return, the Income Tax department has decided to bring in the facility of electronic signatures for taxpayers to endorse their bonafides.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), the apex office to formulate policies for the Income Tax department, has decided to implement the new mechanism by the end of the next financial year in March, 2015.

Official sources privy to the development told PTI that the CBDT will get in touch with the Union Ministries of Law and Communications and Information Technology to establish the legal position and technology requirements respectively before it operationalises the new protocols for the e-returns called 'ITRV'.

"It has to be seen what will be the procedure to obtain electronic or digital signature by the taxpayers. There should not be an additional cost or procedural burden for the taxpayer who opts to file his or her I-T return online," a senior official said.

In case of digital signatures (used by corporate entities as of now), a bonafide statement that verifies the identity of the sender, it is required to be created by paying a fee and this requires regular renewal, which is why this is being seen as a burden on salaried class and other categories of small taxpayers.

The department, within the same time-frame, is also desirous of enabling the e-filing of Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) statements through its official web portal which is used by taxpayers currently to file their electronic returns.

As per the norms in force at present, a taxpayer who files an e-return has to mandatorily send a copy of the same by post to the I-T department's Central Processing Centre (CPC) in Bengaluru.

However, in many cases the post would not reach the CPC and hence the tax department categorised the taxpayers return as null and void.

The department, sources said, wants to promote e-filing of I-T returns and it desires that e-filing should be "hassle free and sans any glitches", which will prompt more number of people to file their tax returns by this way.

*(Financial Express)*

The I-T department is also bolstered by the fact that more and more number of people are opting to file their returns online.

As per existing rules, the CPC, on receipt of the posted 'ITRV', sends an electronic acknowledgement to the tax return filer.

The problem arises when the document sent by post does not reach the CPC because of lapses on the part of the taxpayer or some other reason.