

5.42 crore I-T returns filed as deadline ends

Increase Of 71% Over Last Yr's Number

New Delhi: Income tax returns filed in 2018-19 so far showed a significant surge, totalling 5.42 crore, an increase of 71% over the previous year, the tax department said on Saturday.

The increase points to improving compliance on the back of several measures undertaken by the government. The government's decision to impose a penalty on anyone filing returns after the deadline of August 31 may have prompted more people to file their annual financial statements. The government had earlier extended the deadline to file returns by a month till August 31.

The total number of income tax returns, filed electronically up to August 31, was 5.42 crore as against the previous year's 3.17 crore. Almost 34.95 lakh returns were uploaded on August 31, the last date of the extended deadline for filing returns, the tax department said.

A remarkable increase was seen in the number of returns in two categories — returns filed by salaried individuals as also those avai-

ling the benefit of the presumptive taxation scheme.

The total number of e-returns of salaried individual taxpayers filed till August 31, increased to 3.37 crore from 2.19 crore returns filed during the corresponding period of 2017, registering an increase of 1.18 crore returns, a growth of nearly 54%.

A sharp increase has been witnessed in the number of returns e-filed by persons availing the benefit of Presumptive Tax, with 1.17 crore returns having been filed up to last date compared to 14.93 lakh filed up to August 31, 2017.

The increase in the number of returns reveals a marked improvement in the level of voluntary compliance of taxpayers which can be attri-

buted to several factors, including the impact of demonetisation, enhanced persuasion and education of taxpayers.

"This is indicative of an India moving steadily towards a more tax compliant society and reflects the impact of continuous leveraging of technology to improve tax-payer service delivery," the tax department said. The number of people filing returns is substantially higher than the number of people who pay income tax — over one crore returns declare zero tax liability.