

## **No need for bank balance details, foreign trip info in new ITR forms**

*Taxpayers will need to disclose passport numbers in place of travel details.*

The Income tax department has notified a new, more simplified, set of ITR forms for taxpayers to file their returns for assessment year 2015-16, wherein it has done away with intrusive details such as the number of foreign trips and bank account balances that assesseees were expected to furnish earlier.

The forms are in line with the finance ministry's pledge last month, wherein it had assured taxpayers that the 14-page income tax return (ITR) form would be replaced with simpler three-page ITR forms and that filling of intrusive details such as number of foreign visits undertaken would be done away with. The notification of the ITR forms — ITR-1, ITR-2, ITR- 4S — by the CBDT in April had drawn widespread criticism for the enhanced compliance cost and the cumbersome details sought, following which finance minister Arun Jaitley had announced their withdrawal and announced that new, simplified forms would be issued. The government had also extended the time limit for filing these returns up to August 31, in place of July 31, in view of the changes in the forms.

As per the notification for revised forms issued on Tuesday, a new form — ITR-2A — has been issued for individuals or Hindu undivided families (HUF) who do not have business income, capital gains or income from profession, and do not hold foreign assets. However, such taxpayers will have to disclose their passport numbers, if available, in place of the details about foreign trips sought earlier. All filers will now have to declare only the “total number of savings and current bank accounts” held by them “at any time during the previous year, excluding dormant accounts”.

In terms of bank details, assesseees will have to provide the IFSC code of the bank and the account in which they want their refunds to be credited. Those filing form 2A will get a four-page schedule that has to be filled by only those who have to disclose additional details on a case-to-case basis.

With regards to ITR-2, for those with capital gains, the earlier 14-page form has been replaced with a 3-page form with a schedule comprising 10 pages. The taxpayers will have to declare the foreign assets held abroad or have income from any foreign source.

“In schedule FA, mention the details of foreign bank accounts, financial interest in any entity, details of immovable property or other assets located outside India. This also includes details of any account located outside India in which the assessee has signing authority, details of trusts,” the notification said. In case the resident assessee is a beneficial owner, the taxpayer has to fill in a schedule providing details such as the asset from which he derived benefit and the consideration for such asset was provided by any person other than such beneficiary.

Earlier on May 31, the income tax department had said that an individual who is not an Indian citizen and is in India on a business, employment or student visa would not mandatorily be required to report the foreign assets acquired by him during the previous years in which he was non-resident if no income is derived from such assets during the relevant previous year.

*(Indian Express)*