

FINAL PAYOUT COULD REACH '₹1.2 LAKH CRORE'

DBT Payments Cross ₹1 lakh Crore in '17-18; Govt may Declare Savings of ₹75,000 Crore

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New Delhi: Payments made by the government into people's bank accounts through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) have crossed ₹1 lakh crore in this financial year. The government is expected to announce soon that it has saved almost ₹75,000 crore through DBT since 2014.

DBT payout figure stood at ₹1,00,144 crore on Wednesday, up from ₹74,707 crore in 2016-17 and ₹7,367 crore in 2013-14, when the UPA was in power.

A senior government official told ET the final DBT payout for 2017-18 could reach ₹1.2 lakh crore, a 60% increase over the previous year.

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Over 63 crore people have received DBT payments for programmes including rural jobs and subsidised cooking gas in this financial year, against 35 crore last year, implying that every second person in the country now gets benefits from the government directly, without any middlemen or leakage, the official said. Only 10 crore people were covered by DBT when the Modi government took over in May 2014.

"The cumulative savings due to DBT and the money saved from falling into the wrong hands could stand at almost ₹75,000 crore, once the latest figure is compiled. The last de-

clared figure of savings was ₹57,029 crore," the official said.

The savings figure, however, has been attacked by the opposition and activists who claim it is grossly inflated. The increase has been effected by the government's attempt to bring all central schemes — about 450 of them — under DBT's ambit by March. While 142 central schemes were covered under DBT in the previous financial year, there are currently 412 programmes.

The biggest payout this financial year, as in earlier years, was ₹28,623 crore under MGNREGS. The government paid ₹20,610 crore as LPG subsidy, ₹10,042 crore under various scholarship schemes and ₹5,831 crore through the National Social Assistance Programme. An amount of ₹34,917 crore was paid under various other schemes.

Pushing For It



Govt explains savings as the amount that would otherwise have gone to 'ghost' or duplicate beneficiaries



Govt asking states, especially BJP-ruled, to adopt system



Centre estimates states pay ₹3 lakh crore/year in benefits from their own schemes and there is scope for savings

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