

# India exempts NRIs from quoting Aadhaar in tax returns

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Abu Dhabi: The Indian government has exempted Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) from the requirement of quoting Aadhaar (Indian biometric ID card) number while filing income tax returns back home.

Although NRIs are exempted from income tax on their income abroad, they have to file tax returns for their income earned in India.

Many Indians in the UAE, who regularly file income tax returns in India but do not have Aadhaar, were worried after the government move to link Aadhaar with PAN (Permanent Account Number) issued by income tax authorities for tax and financial transactions by June 30, 2017.

On March 30, a top Indian official clarified to Gulf News that NRIs were not eligible for Aadhaar and government departments had to give exemptions to NRIs in this regard. They were waiting for announcements on exemptions.

“It is the responsibility of the relevant departments to give exemption to NRIs [on Aadhaar requirement],” Dr Ajay Bhushan Pandey, CEO, Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), had told Gulf News in a telephone interview from New Delhi. The departments can get a declaration from the NRI that, being an NRI, he or she is not eligible for Aadhaar card, he had said.

On Wednesday, India’s Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) made the first such announcement on exemption. The requirement to quote Aadhaar for filing income tax returns and for making an application for allotment of PAN with effect from July 1, 2017 shall not apply to non-residents [NRIs], according to a CBDT press release.

It clarified that an Indian is considered a resident, if he/ she has resided in India for a period or periods amounting in all to 182 days or more in the 12 months immediately preceding the date of application [for relevant services or documents like Aadhaar].

Welcoming the move, Indian expatriates in the UAE said all other government departments and private players should also give similar exemptions to NRIs for all services and transactions.

**Rohan Shetty** Rohan Shetty, 31, a restaurant manager from Mumbai, said the reprieve to NRIs in filing tax returns should be extended to other services and transactions also. “When I applied for a driving licence two years ago, I was asked to produce Aadhaar [although it was not mandatory then]. If the government cannot give exemptions to NRIs, it should amend laws and make NRIs eligible for Aadhaar,” he said.

Shetty said he felt Aadhaar was like Emirates ID in the UAE that acts as a comprehensive smart card for multiple services. “I think all Indians, including NRIs, have the right to get such an ID card,” he said.

**Jossi John** Jossi John, 45, a finance manager from Kerala, said he had to send his teenage son to India for two days in the midst of his 12th grade exams to obtain Aadhaar last month because Aadhaar was mandatory for him to attend National Eligibility cum-Entrance Test (NEET) for medical education in India. NEET did not exempt NRI students, causing too much inconvenience, he said.

“Unlike NRIs in the West, Indians in Gulf are supposed to go back home one day. Government should amend the rule and give us Aadhaar,” John said.

**Madathil Sudhir.** Madathil Sudhir, 52, an IT professional from Kerala, said one cannot live in India without Aadhaar now. Therefore, NRIs are compelled to obtain it even if they are not legally eligible. "Even I cannot take a mobile SIM card without Aadhaar in my hometown." He also demanded NRIs should be made eligible for the card.