

Undeterred by lockdown, GST staff process over 10,000 new registrations

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- **Also handle nearly 8,000 refunds using VPN**

The lockdown has not deterred business entities from getting new GST registrations. Statistics released by the GST Network (GSTN), the IT backbone for the indirect tax system, show that over 10,000 entities registered themselves between March 25 and April 3, the first 10 days of the lockdown.

According to the data, 20,273 registrations were processed during the period. These include 10,077 cases of new registration, 3,377 core amendments, 3,784 cancellations by application, 1,966 cancellations suo moto and 1,069 cases of revocation. Similarly, 7,876 cases of refund were also processed during the period. These numbers are for 21 States and Union Territories (UTs).

As on March 31, the total number of registered assesseees stood at 1.23 crore. January alone saw the registration of 1.85 lakh.

Lost time

The number of registrations would have been higher during the lockdown period had the first 3.4 days not been lost in setting up the virtual private network (VPN), said officials.

Under GST rules, businesses with a turnover above the prescribed threshold limit need to register mandatorily while those with a turnover below that can do so voluntarily. While Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Puducherry, Sikkim, Telangana, Tripura and Uttarakhand have opted for a threshold limit of Rs.20 lakh, the other States/UTs have gone for Rs.40 lakh.

For suppliers of services, the threshold limit is Rs.10 lakh in Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura, and Rs.20 lakh elsewhere. Taxpayers may opt for multiple registrations within a State/UT for multiple places of business located therein. Mandatory registration applies only to e-commerce operators who are required to collect tax at source.

GSTN during lockdown

Meanwhile, the IT network said it has enabled 1,748 tax officers from 18 States/UTs to access their office network during the lockdown using VPN. This is in addition to the three hill States, which already connect to the GST system using VPN.

The remote access is helping the officers avoid the backlog which was bound to have occurred if the cases had not been processed during the lockdown, the GSTN said.