

MINISTRY OF FINANCE
(Department of Revenue)
(CENTRAL BOARD OF DIRECT TAXES)
NOTIFICATION
New Delhi, the 25th September, 2020
(INCOME-TAX)

S.O. 3296(E).—In exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (6B) of section 250 of the Income-tax Act, 1961 (43 of 1961), the Central Government hereby makes the following Scheme, namely:—

1. Short title and commencement.—(1) This Scheme may be called the Faceless Appeal Scheme, 2020.

(2) It shall come into force on the date of its publication in the Official Gazette.

2. Definitions.— (1) In this Scheme, unless the context otherwise requires, —

- (i) “Act” means the Income-tax Act, 1961 (43 of 1961);
- (ii) “addressee” shall have the same meaning as assigned to it in clause (b) of sub-section (1) of section 2 of the Information Technology Act, 2000 (21 of 2000);
- (iii) “appeal” means appeal filed by a person under sub-section (1) of section 246A or section 248 of the Act;
- (iv) “appellant” means the person who files appeal under section 246A or section 248 of the Act.
- (v) “authorised representative” shall have the same meaning as assigned to it in sub-section (2) of section 288 of the Act;
- (vi) “automated allocation system” means an algorithm for randomised allocation of cases, by using suitable technological tools, including artificial intelligence and machine learning, with a view to optimise the use of resources;
- (vii) “automated examination tool” means an algorithm for standardised examination of draft orders, by using suitable technological tools, including artificial intelligence and machine learning, with a view to reduce the scope of discretion;
- (viii) “computer resource” shall have the same meaning as assigned to them in clause (k) of sub-section (1) of section 2 of the Information Technology Act, 2000 (21 of 2000);
- (ix) “computer system” shall have the same meaning as assigned to them in clause (l) of sub-section (1) of section 2 of the Information Technology Act, 2000 (21 of 2000);
- (x) “computer resource of appellant” shall include the registered account in the designated portal of the Income-tax Department, or the Mobile App linked to the registered mobile number, or the registered e-mail address, of the appellant;
- (xi) “digital signature” shall have the same meaning as assigned to it in clause (p) of sub-section (1) of section 2 of the Information Technology Act, 2000 (21 of 2000);
- (xii) “designated portal” means the web portal designated as such by the Principal Chief Commissioner or Principal Director General, in charge of the National Faceless Appeal Centre;
- (xiii) “e-appeal” means the appellate proceedings conducted electronically in 'e-appeal' facility through the registered account of the appellant in designated portal;

- (xiv) “electronic record” shall have the same meaning as assigned to it in clause (t) of sub-section (1) of section 2 of the Information Technology Act, 2000 (21 of 2000);
- (xv) “email” or “electronic mail” and “electronic mail message” means a message or information created or transmitted or received on a computer, computer system, computer resource or communication device including attachments in text, image, audio, video and any other electronic record, which may be transmitted with the message;
- (xvi) “hash function” and “hash result” shall have the same meaning as assigned to them in the *Explanation* to sub-section (2) of section 3 of the Information Technology Act, 2000 (21 of 2000);
- (xvii) “Mobile app” shall mean the application software of the Income-tax Department developed for mobile devices which is downloaded and installed on the registered mobile number of the appellant;
- (xviii) “National e-Assessment Centre” shall mean the National e-Assessment Centre set up under scheme notified under sub-section 3A of section 143 of the Act;
- (xix) “originator” shall have the same meaning as assigned to it in clause (za) of sub-section (1) of section 2 of the Information Technology Act, 2000 (21 of 2000);
- (xx) “real time alert” means any communication sent to the appellant, by way of Short Messaging Service on his registered mobile number, or by way of update on his Mobile App, or by way of an email at his registered email address, so as to alert him regarding delivery of an electronic communication;
- (xxi) “registered account” of the appellant means the electronic filing account registered by the appellant in the designated portal;
- (xxii) “registered e-mail address” means the e-mail address at which an electronic communication may be delivered or transmitted to the addressee, including-
- (a) the email address available in the electronic filing account of the addressee registered in designated portal; or
 - (b) the e-mail address available in the last income-tax return furnished by the addressee; or
 - (c) the e-mail address available in the Permanent Account Number database relating to the addressee; or
 - (d) in the case of addressee being an individual who possesses the Aadhaar number, the e-mail address of addressee available in the database of Unique Identification Authority of India ;or
 - (e) in the case of addressee being a company, the e-mail address of the company as available on the official website of Ministry of Corporate Affairs; or
 - (f) any e-mail address made available by the addressee to the income-tax authority or any person authorised by such authority;
- (xxiii) “registered mobile number” means the mobile number of the appellant, or his authorised representative, appearing in the user profile of the electronic filing account registered by the appellant in the designated portal;
- (xxiv) “Rules” means the Income-tax Rules, 1962;
- (xxv) “video conferencing or video telephony” means the technological solutions for the reception and transmission of audio-video signals by users at different locations, for communication between people in real-time.

(2) Words and expressions used herein and not defined but defined in the Act shall have the same meaning respectively assigned to them in the Act.

3. Scope of the Scheme.— The appeal under this Scheme shall be disposed of in respect of such territorial area or persons or class of persons or incomes or class of incomes or cases or class of cases, as may be specified by the Board.

4. Faceless Appeal Centres.—(1) For the purposes of this Scheme, the Board may set up-

- (i) a National Faceless Appeal Centre to facilitate the conduct of e-appeal proceedings in a centralised manner, which shall be vested with the jurisdiction to dispose appeal in accordance with the provisions of this Scheme;
- (ii) Regional Faceless Appeal Centres as it may deem necessary to facilitate the conduct of e-appeal proceedings, which shall be vested with the jurisdiction to dispose appeal in accordance with the provisions of this Scheme;

- (iii) Appeal units, as it may deem necessary to facilitate the conduct of e-appeal proceedings, to perform the function of disposing appeal, which includes admitting additional grounds of appeal, making such further inquiry as thinks fit, directing the National e-Assessment Centre or the Assessing Officer, as the case may be, for making further inquiry, seeking information or clarification on admitted grounds of appeal, providing opportunity of being heard to the appellant, analysis of the material furnished by the appellant, review of draft order, and such other functions as may be required for the purposes of this Scheme;

and specify their respective jurisdiction.

(2) All communication between the appeal unit and the appellant or any other person or the National e-Assessment Centre or the Assessing Officer with respect to the information or documents or evidence or any other details, as may be necessary under this Scheme shall be through the National Faceless Appeal Centre.

(3) The appeal unit referred to in clause (iii) of sub-paragraph (1) shall have the following authorities, namely:—

- (a) one or more Commissioner(Appeals);
- (b) such other income-tax authority, ministerial staff, executive or consultant to assist the Commissioner (Appeals) as considered necessary by the Board.

5. Procedure in appeal.—(1) The appeal referred to in paragraph 3 shall be disposed of under this Scheme as per the following procedure, namely:—

- (i) the National Faceless Appeal Centre shall assign the appeal to a specific appeal unit in any one Regional Faceless Appeal Centre through an automated allocation system;
- (ii) where the appellant has filed the appeal after the expiration of time specified in sub-section (2) of section 249 of the Act, the appeal unit may, —
 - (a) in case, it is satisfied that the appellant had sufficient cause for not filing the appeal within the said time, admit the appeal; or
 - (b) in any other case, reject the appeal,

under intimation to the National Faceless Appeal Centre;
- (iii) where the appellant has applied for exemption from the operation of clause (b) of sub-section (4) of section 249 of the Act, the appeal unit may, —
 - (a) admit the appeal and exempt the appellant from the operation of provisions of said clause for any good and sufficient reason to be recorded in writing; or
 - (b) in any other case, reject the appeal,

under intimation to the National Faceless Appeal Centre;
- (iv) the National Faceless Appeal Centre shall intimate the admission or rejection of appeal, as the case may be, to the appellant;
- (v) where the appeal is admitted, —
 - (a) the appeal unit may request the National Faceless Appeal Centre to obtain such further information, document or evidence from the appellant or any other person, as it may specify;
 - (b) the appeal unit may request the National Faceless Appeal Centre to obtain a report of the National e-Assessment Centre or the Assessing Officer, as the case may be, on grounds of appeal or information, document or evidence filed by the appellant;
 - (c) the appeal unit may request the National Faceless Appeal Centre to direct the National e-Assessment Centre or the Assessing Officer, as the case may be, for making further inquiry under sub-section (4) of section 250 of the Act and submit a report thereof;
 - (d) the National Faceless Appeal Centre shall serve a notice upon the appellant or any other person, as the case may be, or the National e-Assessment Centre or the Assessing Officer, as the case may be, to submit such information, document or evidence or report, as the case may be, as may be specified by the appeal unit or as may be relevant to the appellate proceedings, on a specified date and time;
- (vi) the appellant or any other person, as the case may be, shall file a response to the notice referred to in sub-clause (d) of clause (v), within the date and time specified therein, or such extended date and time as may be allowed on the basis of an application made in this behalf, with the National Faceless Appeal Centre;
- (vii) the National e-Assessment Centre or the Assessing Officer, as the case may be, shall furnish a report in response to the notice referred to in sub-clause (d) of clause (v), within the date and time specified therein or

- such extended date and time as may be allowed on the basis of an application made in this behalf, to the National Faceless Appeal Centre;
- (viii) where response is filed by the appellant or any other person, as the case may be, or a report is furnished by the National e-Assessment Centre or the Assessing Officer, as the case may be, the National Faceless Appeal Centre shall send such response or report to the appeal unit, and where no such response or report is filed, inform the appeal unit;
- (ix) the appellant may file additional ground of appeal in such form, as may be specified by the National Faceless Appeal Centre, specifying therein the reason for omission of such ground in the appeal filed by him;
- (x) where the additional ground of appeal is filed-
- (a) the National Faceless Appeal Centre shall send the additional ground of appeal to the National e-Assessment Centre or the Assessing Officer, as the case may be, for providing comments, if any, and to the appeal unit;
 - (b) the National e-Assessment Centre or the Assessing Officer, as the case may be, shall furnish their comments, within the date and time specified or such extended date and time as may be allowed on the basis of an application made in this behalf, to the National Faceless Appeal Centre;
 - (c) where comments are filed by the National e-Assessment Centre or the Assessing Officer, as the case may be, the National Faceless Appeal Centre shall send such comments to the appeal unit, and where no such comments are filed, inform the appeal unit;
 - (d) the appeal unit shall, after taking into consideration the comments, if any, received from the National e-Assessment Centre or the Assessing Officer, as the case may be,—
 - (A) if it is satisfied that the omission of additional ground from the form of appeal was not wilful or unreasonable, admit such ground; or
 - (B) in any other case, not admit the additional ground,
 for reasons to be recorded in writing and intimate the National Faceless Appeal Centre;
- (xi) the National Faceless Appeal Centre shall intimate the admission or rejection of the additional ground, as the case may be, to the appellant;
- (xii) the appellant may file additional evidence, other than the evidence produced by him during the course of proceedings before the National e-Assessment Centre or the Assessing Officer, as the case may be, in such form, as may be specified by the National Faceless Appeal Centre, specifying therein as to how his case is covered by the exceptional circumstances specified in sub-rule (1) of rule 46A of the Rules;
- (xiii) where the additional evidence is filed,—
- (a) the National Faceless Appeal Centre shall send the additional evidence to the National e-Assessment Centre or the Assessing Officer, as the case may be, for furnishing a report within the specified date and time on the admissibility of additional evidence under rule 46A of the Rules;
 - (b) the National e-Assessment Centre or the Assessing Officer, as the case may be, shall furnish the report, as referred to in sub-clause (a), to the National Faceless Appeal Centre within the date and time specified, or such extended date and time as may be allowed on the basis of an application made in this behalf, by the National Faceless Appeal Centre.
 - (c) where the report, as referred to in sub-clause (a), is furnished by the National e-Assessment Centre or the Assessing Officer, as the case may be, the National Faceless Appeal Centre shall send such report to the appeal unit, and where no such report is furnished, inform the appeal unit;
 - (d) the appeal unit may, after considering the additional evidence and the report, if any, furnished by the National e-Assessment Centre or the Assessing Officer, as the case may be, admit or reject the additional evidence, for reasons to be recorded in writing, and intimate the National Faceless Appeal Centre;
 - (e) the National Faceless Appeal Centre shall intimate the admission or rejection of additional evidence, as the case may be, to the appellant and the National e-Assessment Centre or the Assessing Officer, as the case may be;
- (xiv) where the additional evidence is admitted,—
- (a) the appeal unit shall, before taking such evidence into account in the appellate proceedings, prepare a notice to provide an opportunity to the National e-Assessment Centre or the Assessing Officer, as the case may be, within the date and time specified there into examine such evidence or to cross-examine

- such witness, as may be produced by the appellant, or to produce any evidence or document, or any witness in rebuttal of the evidence or witness produced by the appellant, and furnish a report thereof, and send such notice to the National Faceless Appeal Centre;
- (b) the National Faceless Appeal Centre shall serve the notice, as referred to in sub-clause (a), upon the National e-Assessment Centre or the Assessing Officer, as the case may be;
- (c) the National e-Assessment Centre or the Assessing Officer, as the case may be, shall furnish the report, as referred to in sub-clause (a), to the National Faceless Appeal Centre, within the date and time specified, or such extended date and time as may be allowed on the basis of an application made in this behalf, by the National Faceless Appeal Centre;
- (d) the National Faceless Appeal Centre shall send the report furnished by the National e-Assessment Centre or the Assessing Officer, as the case may be, to the appeal unit or where no such report is furnished, inform the appeal unit;
- (xv) the National e-Assessment Centre or the Assessing Officer, as the case may be, may request the National Faceless Appeal Centre to direct the production of any document or evidence by the appellant, or the examination of any witness, as may be relevant to the appellate proceedings;
- (xvi) where the request referred to in clause (xv) is received, -
- (a) the National Faceless Appeal Centre shall send such request to the appeal unit;
- (b) the appeal unit shall consider such request and may, if it deems fit, prepare a notice -
- (A) directing the appellant to produce such document or evidence, as it may specify; or
- (B) for examination of any other person, being a witness;
- and send such notice to the National Faceless Appeal Centre;
- (c) the National Faceless Appeal Centre shall serve the notice referred to in sub-clause (b) upon the appellant or any other person, being a witness, as the case may be;
- (d) the appellant or any other person, as the case may be, shall file his response to the notice referred to in sub-clause (c), within the date and time specified in the notice or such extended date and time as may be allowed on the basis of application made in this behalf, to the National Faceless Appeal Centre;
- (e) where a response is filed by the appellant or any other person, as the case may be, the National Faceless Appeal Centre shall send such response to the appeal unit, or where no such response is filed, inform the appeal unit;
- (xvii) where the appeal unit intends to enhance an assessment or a penalty or reduce the amount of refund, -
- (a) the appeal unit shall prepare a show-cause notice containing the reasons for such enhancement or reduction, as the case may be, and send such notice to the National Faceless Appeal Centre.
- (b) the National Faceless Appeal Centre shall serve the notice, as referred to in sub-clause (a), upon the appellant.
- (c) the appellant shall, within the date and time specified in the notice or such extended date and time as may be allowed on the basis of application made in this behalf, file his response to the National Faceless Appeal Centre;
- (d) where a response is filed by the appellant, the National Faceless Appeal Centre shall send such response to the appeal unit, or where no such response is filed, inform the appeal unit.
- (xviii) The appeal unit shall, after taking into account all the relevant material available on the record, including the response filed, if any, by the appellant or any other person, as the case may be, or report furnished by the National e-Assessment Centre or the Assessing Officer, as the case may be, and after considering any matter arising out of the proceedings in which the order appealed against was passed, notwithstanding that such matter was not raised in the appeal, -
- (a) prepare in writing, a draft order in accordance with the provisions of section 251 of the Act; and
- (b) send such order to the National Faceless Appeal Centre along with the details of the penalty proceedings, if any, to be initiated therein;
- (xix) the National Faceless Appeal Centre shall upon receipt of the draft order, as referred to in sub-clause (a) of clause (xviii), -

- (a) where the aggregate amount of tax, penalty, interest or fee, including surcharge and cess, payable in respect of issues disputed in appeal, is more than a specified amount, as referred to in clause (x) of paragraph 13, send the draft order to an appeal unit, other than the appeal unit which prepared such order, in any one Regional Faceless Appeal Centre through an automated allocation system, for conducting review of such order;
- (b) in any other case, examine the draft order in accordance with the risk management strategy specified by the Board, including by way of an automated examination tool, whereupon it may decide to —
- (A) finalise the appeal as per the draft order; or
- (B) send the draft order to an appeal unit, other than the unit which prepared such order, in any one Regional Faceless Appeal Centre through an automated allocation system, for conducting review of such order;
- (xx) the appeal unit shall review the draft order, referred to it by the National Faceless Appeal Centre, whereupon it may decide to —
- (a) concur with the draft order and intimate the National Faceless Appeal Centre about such concurrence; or
- (b) suggest such variation, as it may deem fit, to the draft order and send its suggestions to the National Faceless Appeal Centre;
- (xxi) the National Faceless Appeal Centre shall, upon receiving concurrence of the appeal unit, finalise the appeal as per the draft order;
- (xxii) the National Faceless Appeal Centre shall, upon receiving suggestion for variation from the appeal unit, assign the appeal to an appeal unit, other than the appeal unit which prepared or reviewed the draft order, in any one Regional Faceless Appeal Centre through an automated allocation system;
- (xxiii) the appeal unit, to whom appeal is assigned under clause (xxii), shall, after considering the suggestions for variation —
- (a) where such suggestions intend to enhance an assessment or a penalty or reduce the amount of refund, follow the procedure laid down in clause (xvii) and prepare a revised draft order as per the procedure laid down in clause (xviii); or
- (b) in any other case, prepare a revised draft order as per procedure laid down in clause (xviii);
- and send the such order to the National Faceless Appeal Centre along with the details of the penalty proceedings, if any, to be initiated therein;
- (xxiv) the National Faceless Appeal Centre shall after finalising the appeal as per item (A) of sub-clause (b) of clause (xix) or clause (xxi) or upon receipt of revised draft order as per clause (xxiii), pass the appeal order and-
- (a) communicate such order to the appellant;
- (b) communicate such order to the Principal Chief Commissioner or Chief Commissioner or Principal Commissioner or Commissioner as per sub-section (7) of section 250 of the Act;
- (c) communicate such order to the National e-Assessment Centre or the Assessing Officer, as the case may be, for such action as may be required under the Act;
- (d) where initiation of penalty has been recommended in the order, serve a notice on the appellant calling upon him to show cause as to why penalty should not be imposed upon him under the relevant provisions of the Act;

(2) Notwithstanding anything contained in sub-paragraph (1), the Principal Chief Commissioner or the Principal Director General, in charge of National Faceless Appeal Centre, may at any stage of the appellate proceedings, if considered necessary, transfer, by an order, the appeal with the prior approval of the Board to such Commissioner (Appeals) as may be specified in the order.

6. Penalty proceedings— (1) Appeal unit may, in the course of appeal proceedings, for non-compliance of any notice, direction or order issued under this Scheme on the part of the appellant or any other person, as the case may be, send recommendation for initiation of any penalty proceedings to the National Faceless Appeal Centre.

(2) The National Faceless Appeal Centre shall, upon receipt of recommendation under sub-paragraph (1), serve a notice on the appellant or any other person, as the case may be, calling upon him to show cause as to why penalty should not be imposed upon him under the relevant provisions of the Act.

(3) The appellant or any other person, as the case may be, shall file a response to the show-cause notice referred to in sub-paragraph (2) or in sub-clause (d) of clause (xxiv) of sub-paragraph (1) of paragraph 5, within the date and time specified in such notice, or such extended date and time as may be allowed on the basis of an application made in this behalf, to the National Faceless Appeal Centre.

(4) The National Faceless Appeal Centre shall assign the recommendation for initiation of penalty proceedings, as referred to in sub-paragraph (1), along with the response filed, if any, by the appellant or any other person, as the case may be, to a specific appeal unit in any one Regional Faceless Appeal Centre through an automated allocation system.

(5) The appeal unit shall, after taking into account all the relevant material available on the record, including the response filed, if any, by the appellant or any other person, as the case may be, —

- (a) prepare a draft order and send a copy of such order to the National Faceless Appeal Centre; or
- (b) drop the penalty after recording reasons, under intimation to the National Faceless Appeal Centre.

(6) where the appeal unit has dropped the penalty, the National Faceless Appeal Centre shall send an intimation thereof, or where the appeal unit sends a draft order, the National Faceless Appeal Centre shall pass the order for imposition of penalty as per such draft, and communicate such order, to, —

- (a) the appellant or any other person, as the case may be; and
- (b) the National e-Assessment Centre or the Assessing Officer for such action as may be required under the Act.

7. Rectification Proceedings. – (1) With a view to rectifying any mistake apparent from the record the National Faceless Appeal Centre may amend any order passed by it, by an order to be passed in writing.

(2) Subject to the other provisions of this Scheme, an application for rectification of mistake referred to in sub-paragraph (1) may be filed with the National Faceless Appeal Centre by the, —

- (a) appellant or any other person, as the case may be; or
- (b) appeal unit preparing or reviewing or revising the draft order; or
- (c) the National e-Assessment Centre or the Assessing Officer, as the case may be.

(3) Where any application referred to in sub-paragraph (2) is received by the National Faceless Appeal Centre, it shall assign such application to a specific appeal unit in any one Regional Faceless Appeal Centre through an automated allocation system.

(4) The appeal unit shall examine the application and prepare a notice for granting an opportunity—

- (a) to the appellant or any other person, as the case may be, where the application has been filed by the National e-Assessment Centre or the Assessing Officer, as the case may be; or
- (b) to the National e-Assessment Centre or the Assessing Officer, as the case may be, where the application has been filed by the appellant or any other person, as the case may be; or
- (c) to the appellant or any other person, as the case may be, and the National e-Assessment Centre or the Assessing Officer, as the case may be, where the application has been filed by an appeal unit referred to in clause (b) of sub-paragraph (2); and

send the notice to the National Faceless Appeal Centre.

(5) The National Faceless Appeal Centre shall serve the notice referred to in sub-paragraph (4) upon the appellant or any other person, as the case may be, or the National e-Assessment Centre or the Assessing Officer, as the case may be, calling upon him to show cause as to why rectification of mistake should not be carried out under the relevant provisions of the Act.

(6) The appellant or any other person, as the case may be, or the National e-Assessment Centre or the Assessing Officer, as the case may be, shall file a response to the notice, as referred to in sub-paragraph (5), within the date and time specified therein, or such extended date and time as may be allowed on the basis of an application made in this behalf, to the National Faceless Appeal Centre.

(7) Where a response, as referred to in sub-paragraph (6), is filed by the appellant or any other person, as the case may be, or the National e-Assessment Centre or the Assessing Officer, as the case may be, the National Faceless Appeal Centre shall send such response to the appeal unit, or where no such response is filed, inform the appeal unit.

(8) The appeal unit shall, after taking into consideration the application and response, if any, filed by the appellant or any other person, as the case may be, or the National e-Assessment Centre or the Assessing Officer, as the case may be, prepare a draft order, —

- (a) for rectification of mistake; or
- (b) for rejection of application for rectification, citing reasons thereof;

and send the order to the National Faceless Appeal Centre.

(9) The National Faceless Appeal Centre shall upon receipt of draft order, as referred to in sub-paragraph (8), pass an order as per such draft and communicate such order, —

- (a) to the appellant or any other person, as the case may be; and
- (b) to the National e-Assessment Centre or the Assessing Officer, as the case may be, for such action as may be required under the Act.

8. Appellate Proceedings.—(1) An appeal against an order passed by the National Faceless Appeal Centre under this Scheme shall lie before the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal having jurisdiction over the jurisdictional Assessing Officer.

(2) Subject to the provisions of paragraph (3) of the scheme, where any order passed by the National Faceless Appeal Centre or Commissioner (Appeals) is set-aside and remanded back to the National Faceless Appeal Centre or Commissioner (Appeals) by the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal or High Court or Supreme Court, the National Faceless Appeal Centre shall pass the order in accordance with the provisions of this Scheme.

9. Exchange of communication exclusively by electronic mode.—For the purposes of this Scheme,—

- (a) all communications between the National Faceless Appeal Centre and the appellant, or his authorised representative, shall be exchanged exclusively by electronic mode; and
- (b) all internal communications between the National Faceless Appeal Centre, the Regional Faceless Appeal Centres, the National e-Assessment Centre, the Assessing Officer and the appeal unit shall be exchanged exclusively by electronic mode.

10. Authentication of electronic record.— For the purposes of this Scheme, an electronic record shall be authenticated by the—

- (i) National Faceless Appeal Centre by affixing its digital signature;
- (ii) the appellant or any other person, by affixing his digital signature if he is required under the Rules to furnish his return of income under digital signature, and in any other case by affixing his digital signature or under electronic verification code;

Explanation. – For the purpose of this paragraph, “electronic verification code” shall have the same meaning as referred to in rule 12 of the Rules.

11. Delivery of electronic record.—(1) Every notice or order or any other electronic communication under this Scheme shall be delivered to the addressee, being the appellant, by way of-

- (a) placing an authenticated copy thereof in the appellant’s registered account; or
- (b) sending an authenticated copy thereof to the registered email address of the appellant or his authorised representative; or
- (c) uploading an authenticated copy on the appellant’s Mobile App; and

followed by a real time alert.

(2) Every notice or order or any other electronic communication under this Scheme shall be delivered to the addressee, being any other person, by sending an authenticated copy thereof to the registered email address of such person, followed by a real time alert.

(3) The appellant shall file his response to any notice or order or any other electronic communication, under this Scheme, through his registered account, and once an acknowledgement is sent by the National Faceless Appeal Centre containing the hash result generated upon successful submission of response, the response shall be deemed to be authenticated.

(4) The time and place of dispatch and receipt of electronic record shall be determined in accordance with the provisions of section 13 of the Information Technology Act, 2000 (21 of 2000).

12. No personal appearance in the Centres or Units.—(1) A person shall not be required to appear either personally or through authorised representative in connection with any proceedings under this Scheme before the income-tax authority at the National Faceless Appeal Centre or Regional Faceless Appeal Centre or appeal unit set up under this Scheme.

(2) The appellant or his authorised representative, as the case may be, may request for personal hearing so as to make his oral submissions or present his case before the appeal unit under this Scheme.

(3) The Chief Commissioner or the Director General, in charge of the Regional Faceless Appeal Centre, under which the concerned appeal unit is set up, may approve the request for personal hearing referred to in sub-paragraph (2), if he is of the opinion that the request is covered by the circumstances referred to in clause (xi) of paragraph 13.

(4) Where the request for personal hearing has been approved by the Chief Commissioner or the Director General, in charge of the Regional Faceless Appeal Centre, such hearing shall be conducted exclusively through video conferencing or video telephony, including use of any telecommunication application software which supports video conferencing or video telephony, in accordance with the procedure laid down by the Board.

(5) Any examination or recording of the statement of the appellant or any other person shall be conducted by Commissioner (Appeals) in any appeal unit under this Scheme, exclusively through video conferencing or video telephony, including use of any telecommunication application software which supports video conferencing or video telephony in accordance with the procedure laid down by the Board.

(6) The Board shall establish suitable facilities for video conferencing or video telephony including telecommunication application software which supports video conferencing or video telephony at such locations as may be necessary, so as to ensure that the appellant, or his authorised representative, or any other person is not denied the benefit of this Scheme merely on the ground that such appellant or his authorised representative, or any other person does not have access to video conferencing or video telephony at his end.

13. Power to specify format, mode, procedure and processes.—The Principal Chief Commissioner or the Principal Director General, in charge of the National Faceless Appeal Centre shall, with the prior approval of Board, lay down the standards, procedures and processes for effective functioning of the National Faceless Appeal Centre, Regional Faceless Appeal Centres and the appeal unit set-up under this Scheme, in an automated and mechanised environment, including format, mode, procedure and processes in respect of the following, namely:—

- (i) service of the notice, order or any other communication;
- (ii) receipt of any information or documents from the person in response to the notice, order or any other communication;
- (iii) issue of acknowledgment of the response furnished by the person;
- (iv) provision of “e-appeal” facility including login account facility, tracking status of appeal, display of relevant details, and facility of download;
- (v) accessing, verification and authentication of information and response including documents submitted during the appellate proceedings;
- (vi) receipt, storage and retrieval of information or documents in a centralised manner;
- (vii) general administration and grievance redressal mechanism in the respective Centres and units;
- (viii) filing of additional ground of appeal;
- (ix) filing of additional evidence;
- (x) specified amount referred to in sub-clause (a) of clause (xix) of sub-paragraph (1) of paragraph 5;
- (xi) circumstances in which personal hearing referred to in sub-paragraph (3) of paragraph 12 shall be approved.

[Notification No. 76/2020/F.No. 370142/33/2020-TPL]

ANKUR GOYAL, Under Secy.