

Steps taken for smooth implementation of GST

*64. SHRI ANIL DESAI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether public and private sector banks are readying themselves to handle collection, accounting and money transfers under the Goods and Service Tax (GST) structure, if so, details thereof; and

(b) what steps Government has taken to upgrade bank's Information Technology Management System to ensure that the GST is implemented smoothly and effectively?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) Yes; The Public and Private Sector Banks are readying themselves to handle collection of taxes under GST regime and remitting it to Government Account with Reserve Bank of India. For this purpose, they are developing and making necessary changes in their Information Technology Systems for integration with Reserve Bank of India and Goods and Services Tax Portal of Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN).

(b) Detailed protocols, for integration of the Banks' Information Technology Systems with RBI and GST portal of Goods and Services Tax Network, have been prepared and finalized by the Reserve Bank of India and Goods and Services Tax Network respectively in consultation with Government of India.

Illegal use of carbide gas for ripening fruits

*65. SHRI RAM KUMAR KASHYAP: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether despite a ban, dangerous chemical like Calcium Carbide (CaC_2) is being used unchecked to artificially ripen fruits;

(b) whether the use of carbide gas in ripening of fruits is prohibited under the Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restriction on Sales) Regulation, 2011;

(c) whether as per the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) regulations, there is a provision of penalty or imprisonment with penalty for the persons who store/sell/distribute/import any article for consumption which is unsafe; and

(d) if so, the details of persons who have been penalised and imprisoned for storing/selling artificially ripened fruits?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI JAGAT PRAKASH NADDA): (a) As per information available with the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), some reports have appeared in the media

regarding use of calcium carbide for ripening fruits. FSSAI is responsible for making regulations and setting standards, import of food, notifying labs and coordination to ensure cooperation between FSSAI and States. The responsibility for implementation of the Act is that of the State/UT Governments and it is discharged through the Commissioner of Food Safety, Designated Officers and Food Safety Officers. The drawing of samples, getting them tested and launching prosecution, etc. is the mandate of the State/UT Governments.

(b) and (c) Yes.

(d) While, separate information about penalties/convictions for storing/selling artificially ripened fruits is not maintained centrally, as per information made available by States/UTs, the total number of samples examined, samples found non-conforming to the prescribed standards, number of prosecutions launched, number of penalties/convictions and the amount of penalties during the last three years are as under:-

| Year | Total No. of samples examined | No. of Samples found non-conforming | No. of prosecutions launched | No. of penalties/convictions | Amount of penalties raised (in ₹) |
|---------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2013-14 | 72,200 | 13,571 | 10,235 | 3,863 | 7,34,45,974 |
| 2014-15 | 75,282 | 14,716 | 10,675 | 4,197 | 11,28,45,522 |
| 2015-16 | 65,833 | 14,283 | 9,852 | 3,999 | 21,19,08,436 |

Discontinuation of Alliance Air operations from Kolkata

*66. SHRI RITABRATA BANERJEE: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Alliance Air operations from Kolkata to different sectors have been discontinued in the last few years; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ASHOK GAJAPATHI RAJU PUSAPATI): (a) and (b) Alliance Air was operating flights from Kolkata to North East under a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with North Eastern Council (NEC) since January, 2003. These flights also included intra-North East operations. As per the MoU, NEC would fund Viability Gap Funding (VGF) to cover losses on the operations in the North East. Alliance Air received VGF from NEC up to calendar year 2011. In spite of discontinuance of VGF, Alliance Air continued services in the North East upto 31st December, 2012.