

Govt defers release of April GST collection data amid Covid-19 lockdown

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The government on Friday deferred the release of April GST revenue collection data as the ongoing lockdown led to a lower mop-up during the month and extended the deadline for filing returns, sources said.

The government had in March extended the deadline to file GST returns for entities with a turnover of over Rs 5 crore by 15 days from the due date without payment of any late fee, interest and penalty. However, a reduced rate of 9 per cent interest will be levied if the return is filed after May 5 till June 30.

For the business transactions in March, GST return was to be filed by April 20, which was extended till May 5. According to convention, the government releases GST revenue collection number on the basis of cash collection in a particular month. However, with the situation arising out of Covid-19, the government has decided to wait till the extended deadline for filing return before release of collection figure, a source said.

Sources said due to the "unprecedented situation" arising out of the coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak, it has been decided to defer the April GST collection data release. No date has yet been decided to release this data, they said.

"The government is expecting that more returns will be filed and will wait till May 5 before announcing the collection data," a source said, adding a decision on extension of this date will also be taken. Businesses with turnover exceeding Rs 5 crore have to file GST return for a particular month by the 20th of the next month.

In 2019-20 fiscal, Goods and Services Tax (GST) collection had remained above the key Rs 1 trillion mark for 7 months out of 12. The collection was Rs 97,597 crore in March. According to another source, low collection figure till now for April could have been the reason for deferment of GST data release on Friday. The nationwide lockdown to contain spread of Covid-19 disease was imposed on March 25. Data released by the government on Thursday showed that output of 8 core sector contracted by 6.5 per cent in March. The real impact of the lockdown on GST revenue will be reflected in the revenue collections in May (for business activity in April) as the country was in complete lockdown last month with only essential services permitted. Experts said the GST mop-up in May would mainly come from sectors like telecom, FMCG, food processing and pharma.

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