

Govt lists GST Bill for passage in Rajya Sabha today

The government will on Tuesday bring the much-awaited bill on GST for passage in the Rajya Sabha even as doubts persists if the opposition Congress will allow passage of the Constitution Amendment Bill.

The Revised List of Business of Rajya Sabha said Finance Minister Arun Jaitley will move the Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-second Amendment) Bill, 2014, incorporating recommendations made by a House Select Committee.

Jaitley will also move that the Bill be passed, it said.

The Goods and Services Tax (GST), that seeks to replace all indirect taxes, with a uniform levy has already been approved by the Lok Sabha and was in last session referred to a Rajya Sabha Select Committee.

The panel has given its report endorsing majority of the provisions, while suggesting changes in compensation to states and definition of supply for the purpose of states levying additional one per cent tax.

Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Rajiv Pratap Rudy assailed Congress for opposing the Bill, which he said was its own brain child.

Asked whether the GST is unlikely to be passed in the Rajya Sabha in the ongoing session of Parliament, Rudy said: "Looks like as of now".

Speaking on Karan Thapar's 'To The Point' programme on India Today TV channel, Rudy said the GST is not being deliberated in Parliament because "the Congress does not want it to happen despite being the architect of the bill".

"We have tried to build a political consensus... There were reservations of states which we have tried to address," Rudy said.

The current monsoon session of Parliament ends on August 13.

The GST Constitution Amendment Bill is waiting nod of Rajya Sabha, where the ruling NDA does not have a majority. Indirect tax reform GST proposes to create an uniform tax rate across the country by subsuming excise, service tax and other local levies. GST can boost India's GDP by 1-2 per cent.

Opposition Congress has repeatedly disrupted proceedings in the Rajya Sabha, preventing the House from taking up the Bill for passage.

Revenue Secretary Shaktikanta Das said: "We have to wait for what Parliament decides on GST. So far as preparation in administrative side is concerned, we are taking all the administrative measures, we have taken all the administrative measures required to implement GST from April 2016".

Separately, Chairman of Empowered Committee of State Finance Ministers K M Mani said most states are on board and expressed hope for GST roll out from April 1, 2016.

"I am not pessimistic about it, I am optimistic, I think we can implement GST by beginning of next fiscal... Most states are on board for GST roll out," Mani said here.

Asked if states would be in readiness to implement GST from April 2016 if the bill does not get passed in the ongoing session of Parliament, Mani said, "we have to speed up everything, every state need to cooperate to meet the deadline".

The report of the Rajya Sabha Select Committee was tabled in Parliament last month. The Committee had suggested to compensate the states fully for five years for any revenue loss for GST roll out. However, the Congress, AIADMK and left parties had submitted dissent notes on the same.

Mani said the revenue neutral rate has not yet been decided and the GST Council will take a final call on it.

(Zee News)