

Press Release

GST needs to be simplified further, say seafood exporters

Margao, Jan 29: Seafood exporters attending the ongoing three-day India International Seafood Show here have acknowledged that the central government has addressed a lot of their concerns over the Goods and Services Tax (GST), but said a number of GST provisions continued to be in the grey area, impeding their trade.

Participating in a technical session dealing with various aspects of processing and export of marine products, they said they were happy with the merger of multiplicity of central and state-level taxes into single GST. However, they were finding it difficult to understand the nuances of the new tax regime.

While the tax refund procedure had been clarified and simplified, exporters were yet to get the refunds as there was no timeline for the purpose. Among the other thorny issues were merchant exporters' warehouses and claiming drawback benefit, which took into account only the central GST, not the state GST.

Making clarifications on their doubts, trade law expert Mr. Karthik IVRN said clarity was needed in several GST clauses relating to exports. An enabling GST regime is crucial for achieving the export target for marine products. The central government, the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) and the Seafood Exporters Association of India (SEAI) are seeking a target of US\$ 10 billion in exports by 2022.

Dr. C N Ravishankar, Director of the Central Institute of Fisheries Technology, Kochi, gave details of new and emerging technologies for processing seafood to increase its shelf life and thereby help farmers get remunerative prices for their produce.

Dr I. Karunasagar, Senior Director (International Relations), Nitte University, Mangaluru, gave an overview of seafood safety requirements in major markets. Dr Karunasagar was with the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) for two decades.

The seafood show, which concludes today, was organized jointly by MPEDA and SEAI and attended by about 3,000 delegates from within the country and abroad.

Mr Lim Meng Huat, Chief Operating Officer, Apollo Aquarium, Singapore, said the demand for live edible shrimp and fish was rising in the international market which necessitated adoption of latest technologies for live transportation of marine products.

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