

PM reviews GST preparedness, calls it 'turning point' for nation



Prime Minister Narendra Modi reviewing the status of GST in New Delhi on Monday. PTI

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU

NEW DELHI, JUNE 5

AHEAD OF the rollout of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) from July 1, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday held a meeting to review the preparedness for the indirect tax regime. Terming it as a “turning point” for the economy, the Prime Minister said the creation of ‘One Nation, One Market, One Tax’ through GST would greatly benefit the common man, a PMO statement said.

Modi was quoted to have said that the implementation of GST from July 1 is the culmination of the concerted efforts of all stakeholders, including political parties, trade and industry bodies. Describing it as an unprecedented event in history, Modi also directed that maximum attention be paid to cyber-security in IT systems concerned with GST.

The meeting, which lasted for over two and a half hours, was attended by finance minister Arun Jaitley, revenue secretary Hasmukh Adhia and senior officials from the Ministry of Finance, PMO and the Cabinet Secretary, a PMO statement said.

In the course of the meeting, the Prime Minister specifically reviewed aspects of implemen-

tation such as IT readiness, HR readiness, training and sensitization of officers, query handling mechanism, and monitoring, the statement said. The Prime Minister was informed that GST

systems such as IT infrastructure, training of officials, integration with banks, and enrolment of existing taxpayers will be in readiness well in time for the July 1 implementation date.

Information security systems were discussed in detail, the statement said. A Twitter handle — @askGst_GOI — has been started for real time answering of queries. An All India toll-free phone 1800-1200-232 has also been activated for this purpose.

Items like salt, milk, *gur*, egg, curd, unpacked foodgrain and *paneer*, fresh vegetables, unbranded *atta*, *maida*, *besan*, honey, besides education and health services, have all been exempted from GST. Tea, sugar, coffee beans, edible oil, packed *paneer*, milk powder, brooms, domestic LPG and kerosene have been put in the 5 per cent bracket.

The next GST Council meeting is scheduled to be held on June 11 wherein the Council will take up tax rate for lottery and other pending rules of e-way bill and accounts and records. Also, the Council will review tax rates of items based on industry representations in case the fitment committee finds that there is a substantial increase from the present tax incidence.