Print label details of pre-packed food in big size: Govt to cos

Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Ram Vilas Paswan addressing a press conference, in New Delhi. Minister of State for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution C.R. Chaudhary is also seen. PIB

NEW DELHI, JULY 7 /--/ In a relief to consumers, the Union government has made it mandatory for manufacturing companies to print details like expiry date and net quantity on labels on all pre-packaged food in a "bigger font size". These changes have been effected through an amendment to the Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 2011, by the consumer affairs ministry.

"We have done this in the interest of consumers, who should clearly be able to see the details mentioned in the label of pre-packaged food," Consumer Affairs Minister Ram Vilas Paswan told reporters on Friday. Five declarations are a must to be printed on the label. These include MRP (maximum retail price), manufacturing data, expiry date, net quantity and consumer care details.

"The size of words and numbers for mandatory declarations has been increased so that a consumer can easily read," Paswan said. At present, the declarations on the label are printed in such small fonts that consumers have complained to the government and even made representation to address the issue.

Besides, Paswan said no dual MRP will be allowed and testing of net quantity and its declaration on pre-packaged food have been made more scientific in the interest of industries.

"No person shall declare different MRPs on an identical pre-packaged commodity by adopting respective trade practices or unfair trade practices as defined under the Consumer Protection Act," he added. (PTI)

Prez gives nod to order on GST in J&K

NEW DELHI, JULY 7 /--/ President Pranab Mukherjee on Friday gave nod to an order pertaining to implementation of the Goods and Services Tax regime in Jammu and Kashmir, clearing decks for the state assembly for enacting a State GST law.

Official sources said that the President cleared the order and sent it to Ministry of Home Affairs for further action. The PDP-BJP government had passed a resolution on Wednesday in the assembly after which the state cabinet under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti cleared a draft order for concurrence of the President. Jammu and Kashmir is the only state which is yet to implement the GST which was rolled out in rest of the country on July 1. The presidential order, which was concurred by state Governor N N Vohra, relates to the application of certain provisions of the Constitution of India through an order of the President issued under Article 370 that gives special status to the state. States Finance Minister Haseeb Drabu had said yesterday that after the Presidential Order is received, the government will take it to the Assembly for enacting a SGST (state goods and services tax) bill. Drabu, during discussion in the assembly on Wednesday, said that the government was not required to bring the resolution but it did so to "get a sense of the House on the issue", a move termed by opposition National Conference and Congress as a "sham".

This was the first time in the history of the Jammu and Kashmir assembly that a resolution, seeking a presidential order on a constitutional amendment, was discussed and passed.

J&K finally joins GST from tonight

NEW DELHI: Jammu and Kashmir, the only state to miss the GST rollout on July 1, will join the new tax regime from tonight as the state Assembly passed a bill in this regard on Friday amid opposition boycott.

The Jammu and Kashmir Goods and Services Tax Bill 2017, moved by Finance Minister Haseeb Drabu, was adopted by a voice vote in the absence of opposition parties which accused the PDP-BJP government of undermining the special status of the state. The bill was moved in the Assembly after a Presidential Order which gave an assurance on preservation of the special status of the state guaranteed by Article 370 of the Constitution. Drabu said the GST regime will roll out in the state at midnight tonight, making Jammu and Kashmir the last state to join the new tax regime. Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti sought to allay apprehensions over the GST law, saying anything that is good for the country cannot be bad for Jammu and Kashmir. Before moving the bill for consideration and passing by the state assembly, the finance minister read out the contents of the Presidential Order pertaining to the special status of the state and its exclusive taxation powers. He said there was no tradition of tabling a Presidential Order in the Assembly but the PDP-BJP government was starting a new one by tabling this order. "Notwithstanding anything contained in this Order, the powers of the state of Jammu and Kashmir as per Section 5 of the Constitution

of Jammu and Kashmir, shall remain intact," said the Order which was read out by Drabu. "The legislature of the state of Jammu and Kashmir shall have the powers to make laws with respect to goods and services tax levied by the state," the document said. The legislature of the state of Jammu and Kashmir shall have exclusive powers to make laws in respect of imposition of any taxes enabled by section 5 of the Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir, Drabu added.

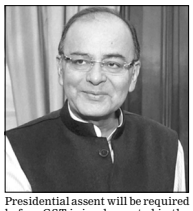
"Notwithstanding anything contained in clause 4 to clause 11 for the purpose of any decision impinging on constitutional provisions relating to the state of Jammu nand Kashmir, the concurrence of the representative of the state of Jammu and Kashmir in the Goods and Services Tax Council shall be mandatory and the procedure provided under Article 370 shall be followed," the Presidential Order read.

Mehbooba brushed aside separatists to roll out GST: Jaitley

NEW DELHI: Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley on Thursday said that J&K Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti rooted for people welfare and ignored separatists voice to adopt GST in the state assembly.

Jammu and Kashmir was the only state that had not approved a legislation to implement the Goods and Services Tax (GST) even after the new indirect tax regime was rolled out on July 1. Jaitley said separatists ran a propaganda that GST should not be implemented in J&K otherwise there will be "financial integration of the state with India." The state finance minister was part of all the negotiations at the GST Council that decided on the tax rate and rules for its implementation and the state even hosted a meeting of the GST Council that decided on tax rates for about 1,200 goods. The Centre had to then emphasise to the state that its people will lose out as they will pay tax twice over instead of just one GST, making goods costlier to them, he said.

"I wrote to Mehbooba Mufti saying that goods will become costlier (if you dont implement GST). So, you have to choose the path of either going with the separatists or thinking about the welfare of the people of the state," Jaitley said, addressing an event organised by state BJP as thanksgiving for successfully implementing GST. The J&K assembly yesterday adopted the resolution to implement the new tax regime in the state. However,



Presidential assent will be required before GST is implemented in the state. Jaitley pointed out that the price of a commodity would have varied in Pathankot and J&K, if the latter decided not to implement GST. Citing his meetings with traders and businessmen based in Jammu, Jaitley said that they had voiced concern that they may be at a disadvantage if the same product is sold at a cheaper price in Pathankot in Punjab which is just an hour away from the state. "And the same argument was given by the state government yesterday in the state assembly," he said. The Finance Minister further said that in the last 70 years, this is the first time that the country had become economically integrated.

"...The J&K consumers also feel that they are integrated with India, and it is beneficial for us," he said. Being a consuming state, J&K would also benefit from GST and the revenue of the state will increase, he added. (PTI)

CIL ropes in KPMG for Vision 2030

KOLKATA, JULY 7 /--/ MNC consultant KPMG is being roped in by Coal India for a business roadmap plan 'Vision 2030'.

"We have selected KPMG for 'Vision 2030' plan in which all options remain open at a time when coal demand are subdued and uncertainty looms over it in the long run," Coal India officials said. KPMG will submit its report in 14 weeks after the formal contract award. KPMG had prepared 'Vision 2020' besides a few other assignments for Coal India. Coal India invited bids for 'Vision 2030' because coal is likely to decline in country's energy mix with big boost to renewables. Power plants account for over 80 per cent of coal demand in the country and is now is showing signs of stagnation in demand. Coal India is now looking at diversifying into related energy fields like renewables. Possibility of it entering into mining, metals and minerals are not ruled out. In the notice inviting tenders for the Vision 2030, Coal India said With government s efforts to push renewable energy due to international conventions on climate change, increase in carbon cess and other initiatives for lesser use of coal, there is a need for Vision 2030 for the coal sector, which takes into account the environmental factors such as reduction of carbon footprint, abatement of global warming. (PTI)

Rly online tests saves 319cr A4 size sheets

NEW DELHI, JULY 7 /--/ The Indian Railways has replaced bulky, multi-lingual question booklets with online tests for its recruitment process, resulting in a green initiative that has helped saved four lakh trees and 319 crore paper sheets.

The three-phase online examination covering preliminary, written and aptitude and typing skill test is a first of its kind for the state-run transporter. Aiming at eliminating the scope for malpractices in its recruitment process, Railways had conducted the worlds largest online examination at 351 centres for 92 lakh candidates to fill up over 14,000 vacancies in various categories as part of the ambitious recruitment reforms. Out of the 92 lakh candidates, 2.73 lakh qualified the preliminary exam and were called for online written test for Assistant Station Masters and clerical jobs on January 17-19 this year. Now about 45,000 candidates, qualified for the third and final test, appeared for psychological and typing skill test on June 29 and 30, said a senior Railway Ministry official. Because of the digital transformation, both these tests could be completed in a day each whereas in conventional mode these would have taken about two months time. The online test has resulted in substantial saving of time and resources while at the same time bringing transparency in the recruitment process. Earlier, recruitment examinations used to be conducted manually, but the railways had to abandon the manual system and opt for online mode after a few alleged incidents of question paper leak.

Describing it as the "largest online examination in the world?, the official said that in order to ensure complete transparency, the railways have introduced the system of showing answer papers online to examinees one week after the examination. (PTI)

Microsoft to cut up to 4,000 jobs

NEW YORK, JULY 7 /--/ Technology giant Microsoft is undertaking a major reorganisation in its sales and marketing units that will likely to see the company cutting about 4,000 jobs from its workforce, mostly outside the U.S.. A Microsoft spokesperson said in an email on Thursday that the company is implementing changes to better serve its customers and partners.

"Today, we are taking steps to notify some employees that their jobs are under consideration or that their positions will be eliminated. Like all companies, we evaluate our business on a regular basis. This can result in increased investment in some places and, from time-to-time, re-deployment in others," the spokesperson told PTI in an emailed statement. While the spokesperson declined to confirm any specifics, a report in the New York Times said the overhauling of technology giant led by India-born Satya Nadella will cut 3,000 to 4,000 jobs, mostly outside the U.S.. The report said the possible total of job cuts was described by a person familiar with Microsoft's plans, who was not authorised to speak on the record about them. It added that Microsoft workers were notified on Thursday if their current job was affected. Some of the workers will get other jobs within the software company. "This is being done mainly to evolve the skill sets we need," Frank Shaw, a Microsoft

spokesman, had said in the NYT report. Last week, Microsoft had described a realignment of its sales and marketing arm, which employs about 50,000 people worldwide. In an internal email last week, Judson Althoff, a Microsoft executive vice president, described the reorganisation and its rationale.

He wrote that there was "an enormous $4.5 trillion market opportunity" for Microsoft in the coming years. Althoff had said the sales and marketing changes were intended to "enable us to align the right resources for the right customer at the right time." He had identified expanding Microsoft's cloud offerings in data analysis and artificial intelligence, and helping companies in every industry to become digital businesses, using Microsoft tools as key areas of opportunity. Microsoft has 71,000 employees in the U.S. and 121,000 employees around the globe. (PTI)

SER's overall growth in passenger sector

KOLKATA, JULY 7/--/ During the first three months i.e. April to June of current financial year (2017-18), South Eastern Railway has earned Rs.518.50 crore from Passenger Traffic as against Rs.486.81 crore earned during the same period of last financial year(2016-17), thereby achieving a growth of 6.51%.

The number of originating passengers carried during the first three months i.e. April to June of current fiscal has also gone up by 2.53% in comparison to the corresponding period of last financial year. During April-June of 2017-18, SE Railway carried 65.60 million originating passengers as against 63.98 million passengers carried during the same period of last financial year. Out of total 65.60 million passengers, 34.25 million were suburban passengers and 31.35 million were non-suburban passengers. (EOIC)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi in bilateral meeting with the Prime Minister of Japan, Mr. Shinzo Abe, on the sidelines of the 12th G-20 Summit, at Hamburg, Germany. PIB

News In Brief

Forex kitty at record-high

MUMBAI, JULY 7 /--/ The country's forex reserves touched a new record-high of USD 386.539 billion after it rose by USD 4.007 billion in the week to June 30, due to an increase in foreign currency assets (FCAs), the RBI said. In the previous week, the reserves had surged by USD 576.4 million to reach USD 382.53 billion. FCAs, a major component of overall reserves, rose by USD 3.724 billion to USD 362.388 billion in the reporting week, the RBI data showed.

Govt to revive small savings

KHARAGPUR (WB), JULY 7 /--/ The Union government wants to revive small savings as it is currently not as robust as it should be, Minister of State for Commerce & Industry, Nirmala Sitharaman said here on Friday. "Small savings is backbone of the economy. Small savings is not as robust as it was always. We want to revive it," Sitharaman said. She, however, did not elaborate on how the government was planning to revive the small savings scenario when interest rates are slipping gradually.

Al Delhi-Washington flight

NEW DELHI, JULY 7 /--/ State-owned Air India on Friday launched its first flight to Washington DC from New Delhi, thereby adding its fifth destination in the US. Air India has deployed its 238-seater Boeing 777-200 LR aircraft to cater to the new direct service to the US. The plane offers eight seats in first class, 35 in business and 195 in economy class. The launch took place at the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport here in the presence of Charge de Affairs of US Embassy Marykay Loss Carlson, Air India Chairman and Managing Director Ashwani Lohani, Commercial Director of Air India Pankaj Shrivastava, among other airline officials.

India ranks 23rd among 165 nations in cybersecurity index

UNITED NATIONS, JULY 7 /--/ India is ranked a high 23rd out of 165 nations in a global index that measures the commitment of nations across the world to cybersecurity.

The second Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI), released by the UN telecommunications agency International Telecommunication Union (ITU), said only about half of all countries have a cybersecurity strategy or are in the process of developing one and urged more countries to consider national policies to protect against cybercrime. India is ranked 23rd on the index with a score of 0.683 and has been listed in the "maturing" category, which refers to 77 countries that have developed complex commitments to cybersecurity and engage in cybersecurity programmes and initiatives. The index has been topped by Singapore with a 0.925 score. The report said about 38 per cent of countries have a published cybersecurity strategy and an additional 12 per cent of governments are in the process of developing one. The agency said more effort is needed in this critical area, particularly since it conveys that governments consider digital risks high priority. "Cybersecurity is an ecosystem where laws, organisations, skills, cooperation and technical implementation need to be in harmony to be most effective," stated the report, adding that cybersecurity is "becoming more and more relevant in the minds of countries decision makers." The top 10 most committed countries to cybersecurity are Singapore, United States, Malaysia, Oman, Estonia, Mauritius, Australia, Georgia, France and Canada. Russia is ranked 11th. In addition to showing the overall cybersecurity commitment of ITU's 193 member-states, the Index also shows the improvement and strengthening of the five pillars of the ITU Global Cybersecurity Agenda: legal, technical, organisational, capacity building and international cooperation.

The threat is particularly worrying as in 2016, according to ITU, nearly one per cent of all emails sent were essentially malicious attacks, the highest rate in recent years. Last month, a cyberattack crippled tens of thousands of machines around the world. It is unclear who was behind the attack. "While the impact generated by cyberattacks, such as those carried out as recently as 27 June 2017, may not be eliminated completely, prevention and mitigation measures to reduce the risks posed by cyber-related threats can and should always be put in place," said ITU Secretary-General Houlin Zhao. The

findings show that there is "space for further improvement in cooperation" at all levels, according to the report, which advocates for encouraging governments to consider national policies that take into account cybersecurity and encourage private citizens to make smart decisions online. (PTI)