

Failsafe e-way bill urged after deferred rollout



Lalatendu Mishra

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With heavy load the e-way bill portal crashed and transporters and consigners waited

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A day after the Centre deferred February 1 rollout of the e-way bill in the wake of 'technological glitches' that left trucks stranded for hours across the country, transporters urged the Centre to fix all issues before introducing the measure.

"We have raised several issues with the GST Commissioner and we hope the government addresses them first rather than implementing without preparedness," said Abhishek Gupta, Treasurer, Bombay Goods Transport Association.

"Lakhs of trucks were stranded across the country and many companies and truckers were not aware of the decision," he said, referring to the government's decision, late on Thursday, to suspend the rollout. The e-way bill portal had crashed on Thursday leaving transporters waiting in vain for hours to generate the bills.

'Back to normal'

"Today things are back to normal," said Ramesh Agarwal, Chairman, Agarwal Movers Group. "Government took a wise decision to put it [rollout] on hold. Otherwise by Saturday lots of factories would have closed down," he said.

The Centre's use of twitter to announce the decision added to the confusion.

"It will take time in India to accept information disseminated through twitter," said Devendra Patne, CEO, DTIX.org, a transport industry initiative. "Lots of people did not give credence to it and waited for logging into the portal."

"E-way bill should be introduced but lot of education must be imparted to all stakeholders," Mr. Patne said.

S.R. Hatti, VP of VRL Logistics in Bengaluru, said the firm had started moving goods from Friday morning with normal invoices as all States were accepting them.

Finance Secretary Hasmukh Adhia told *PTI* the measure would be reintroduced in the "next few weeks" after the system was fully ready.

"One does hope that various grey issues and questions are clarified by the government before the date of implementation. the duration of the deferment should be used by the government to make the IT infrastructure robust," said Ranjeet, Mahtani, Partner, Economic Law Practice.

M.S. Mani, Senior Director, Deloitte India said, "It is better to completely test the e-way bill portal before its made mandatory. This is critical as the experience during the initial days of GSTN was not good for most businesses and they have been apprehensive of the e-way bill platform."

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huge volumes during the initial phase itself. The objective should be to ensure that there are no business disruptions or transportation challenges on account of the e-way bill,” Mr. Mani added.



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