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Govt targeting enhancing domestic production of oilseeds

PTI | May 11, 2014, 06:01 PM IST

New Delhi, May 11 (I) The government is targeting to enhance domestic production of oilseeds and edible oil and aims to bring more acreage under their cultivation, Rajya Sabha was informed today. Commerce Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the government is also looking at greater oilseeds growth in the country to help reduce dependency on import of edible oil. "If there is no such dependency on imported edible oil, Government is definitely having plans to extend (increasing the acreage under palm and oilseeds cultivation)," The Minister said replying to supplementary questions. Sitharaman said the growing dependency on imported edible oil is an issue of serious concern for the government and "is looking at greater oilseeds growth in the country". She said government has also adopted a historical duty exemption on imported edible oil, including palm oil which is the cheapest edible oil on productivity per hectare. The Minister said only last month the farmers were paid record government price of Rs. 7,000 per quintal, some for palm oil in order to encourage palm cultivation in the country. "While edible oil imports are required to bridge the gap between domestic production and consumption, consistent with the emphasis on self-sufficiency in edible oils, Government policy is target enhanced domestic production of oilseeds and edible oil through more area under oilseeds cultivation, improving productivity of oilseeds cultivation, tapping new sources of edible oil and market intervention through Minimum Support Price," the Minister said in her written reply. SMC/AAK

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A local court adjourned to July 5 in order on two cheque bounce cases filed against Noida-based entrepreneur Vijay Malviya and Kingfisher Airlines by GMR Hyderabad International Airport Ltd.



Contracted workers protest in Shimoga

Violent protests erupted in Shimoga as contracted government employees took to the streets demanding regularization of their services.

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Comptax sets aside CCI's Rs 74 crore fine on Alkem Laboratories

PTI | May 11, 2014, 06:34 PM IST

New Delhi, May 11 () The Competition Appellate Tribunal has set aside a CCI's order that imposed over Rs. 74 crore penalty on Alkem Laboratories.

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) in December had penalised Alkem Laboratories and its two officials for indulging in unfair business practices.

On an appeal filed by the company, the tribunal had first stayed the order in February and finally set aside the ruling through a 145-page order.

Apart from imposing Rs 74.63 crore fine on Alkem, CCI had also penalised two of the company's employees - Johnson Mathew and T.K. Ramesh.

"...since the tribunal has come to the conclusion that the finding recorded by the commission (CCI) against Appellant No 1 (Alkem Lab) is legally unsustainable, the consequential penalty imposed by the commission on Appellants Nos 1, 2 and 3 (Mathew and Ramesh) cannot be sustained and is liable to be quashed," Comptax said in the order dated May 10.

CCI's ruling had come on a complaint which alleged that Alkem did not supply medicines even after agreeing to do the same to a distributor in Kerala.

Comptax in its order stated that CCI and its Joint DG, who conducted the investigation proceeded on a wholly erroneous assumption that the distributor had been appointed as a stockist by the competent authority of Alkem Laboratories.

"Rather, from the day one, Appellant No 1 had taken a stand that Paul Mathew was (Divisional Sales Manager), who had issued letter dated 14.11.2013 appointing Respondent No 2 (distributor) as a stockist was not competent to do so," the order said.

Further the tribunal noted that the distributor had deliberately suppressed the vital facts and documents from CCI, which resulted in the order for investigation based on the premise that Alkem Laboratories had refused to appoint as a stockist and supply the medicines.

Had the facts been stated "the commission would not have entertained the allegations contained in the information and issued its own fine or also the fine of the investigating officer and of the tribunal, whose prevention act just out of public funds", the tribunal said.

It was alleged that Alkem reported no application for appointment as its stockist since he failed to obtain a no-objection certificate from the All Kerala Chemist and Druggist Association (AKCDA).

Besides, CCI had slapped fines on AKCDA and one of its officials as well. SOM MR

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Delhi BJP meets Jung, demands action in DIB tanker 'scam'

PTI | May 11, 2016, 08:52 PM IST

New Delhi, May 11 (I) A Delhi BJP delegation today met La Governor Nityajit Jung and urged him to "order" action against those involved in an alleged Rs.400 crore DIB tanker scam under the Congress government led by [Shashi Dixit](#).

The delegation headed by Delhi BJP chief Satish Upadhyay submitted a memorandum to Jung which mentions contents of a letter Delhi Water Resources Minister Kapil Mishra wrote to Chief Minister [Arun Kejriwal](#) on August 28 last.

The memorandum says that as the then Minister expressed "fear" of "losing their job" and even "possibility" of "quitting government" if action is taken against those involved in the alleged scam.

The memorandum says the Mishra wrote to the Chief Minister citing findings of an inquiry committee report "establishing that a Rs.400 crore water tanker scam" took place in Delhi Jal Board during the Shashi Dixit government.

The memorandum says that a "surprising" fact as action has been ordered by the Chief Minister against the accused even after nine months.

"In some other present government is under a such like deal with the former Chief Minister Shashi Dixit or Kejriwal finds a fear to his government if he acts in the matter of the tanker scam as indicated by minister Mishra in his letter," it said.

Upadhyay said it's "really surprising" that "self-proclaimed Mr Chuan Kejriwal" has time to speak on international issues but goes "silent" on a Rs.400 crore "scam" of his predecessor government.

Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly Nityajit Gupta who was also in the delegation alleged that for the past 15 years the DIB has been a "corruption den" where "over 75 percent" development funds are "hoaxed". VIT TER RG TER

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Cong demands PM's apology in Parliament

PTI, May 11, 2016, 06:47 PM IST

New Delhi, May 11 () Revised by the [Liaison Unit](#), Assembly (first two reads). Congress today attacked Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#), demanding his apology in Parliament and backing of the minister who "advised" him to impose President's rule in the state.

"The Prime Minister should apologise in Parliament and sack the Minister who advised him to impose President's Rule in Uttar Pradesh," party spokesman [Kant Singh](#) said after the session.

He, however, did not name the minister.

Shah also raised a series of questions whether President Pranab Mukherjee should also quit in the wake of the Supreme Court revoking President's rule in the hill state.

"It is not for me to say what the President should have done and I do not wish to comment. I don't think it is proper for me to make any comment on the actions of the President, who is a high constitutional functionary," he said.

He, however, insisted that it is "not correct" to say that the President does not act on his own and acts in the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers.

"The President can return the file only once" in the event of such proposals, he said.

Regarding the Prime Minister, Shah alleged that the highlight of Modi's two-year rule was attack on the Constitution.

"The problem is that Modi hopes he is the Prime Minister of India and not a RSS pracharak," Shah said even as he accused Congress' full cooperation to the government of a "workshop properly."

"While Modi in India has remained a starry eye, Yoke in India has been launched with the product ready," he said, taking a dig at the Prime Minister.

Attacking Modi for targeting Congress chief Sonia Gandhi in the Agartala/Warland issue, he said, "The Prime Minister should understand the fundamental thing that when Parliament session is on, charges are made inside the House."

Abanindranath, political secretary to the Congress President, said, "Even after trying every trick in the book to topple Opposition states, Modi government has been brought to its knees. It's a victory of democracy."

"Uttarakhand has taught BJP a bitter lesson. No matter how hard they try they can neither intimidate the Congress party or subvert democracy," he said on Twitter. SFG PMS ZMN PMS

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GSPC's KG gas field under new pricing formula: Pradhan

PTI May 11, 2016, 08:47 PM IST

New Delhi, May 11 () Jumping to the defence of the Gujarat state-run GSPC, Union Minister [Anurag Singh](#) today said the KG Basin gas field is now "viable" under the new pricing formula and blamed the UPA government for arbitrarily fixing the gas price. He accused the UPA of side-stepping the signed production sharing contract (PSC) and wondered why it was done. While the PSC allowed pricing freedom, the UPA fixed a rate of USD 4.2 per million British thermal unit. The new formula is an economically not viable to produce gas from a highly complex field of GSPC in the KG basin. And GSPC rightly sought a higher rate, he said, adding that the BJP government has recently allowed pricing freedom for such difficult high-pressure, high-temperature fields. The new pricing has made the field viable for production. Pradhan said during his intervention in the Rajya Sabha during discussion on the [Finance Bill](#). He claimed that the KG Basin field of GSPC was one of the top five challenging fields in the world as gas has to be taken out from 5,000 metres below sea level with a 400-metre vertical exploration. Launching attack on the Congress for working with a particular company in mind, he said just before exit from power, the UPA had approved doubling of gas price keeping certain considerations in mind. "In the energy budget, gas constitutes about 24 per cent. In India, gas constitutes about 7 per cent and in Gujarat, it is 25 per cent. It is possible only because of GSPC," he said complimenting Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "What is the main fight? You ([Anurag Singh](#)) said it is not viable in 4.2. Who set 4.2? What was under PSC? Under it, gas exporters will have the freedom to fix gas price and will have marketing freedom. Who was your competition that in 2005, you took gas pricing in government's hand?" the minister asked as he accused Ranath of spending his. He singled out wrong policies of the UPA for a drop in gas production in the country. **SAP ANZ ARD**

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Apex court remarks on drought a critique of Congress: Minister

IANS | May 11, 2016, 08:42 PM IST

New Delhi, May 11 (IANS) Agriculture Minister Radha [Mohan Singh](#), on Wednesday told the Supreme Court's directives to the Centre and critical observations on the drought situation in Haryana, Gujarat and [Andhra](#) were actually an "indictment of non-performance" of the Congress party that ruled the country for over 60 years. "It's (Supreme Court order) not just for (this verdict) is actually an indictment on yours," Singh told Congress members in the [Lok Sabha](#) while replying to a debate on drought and water scarcity that took place over the last three days.

"I am only doing your job minister. Even Supreme Court's orders is a reflection of that. You do not want to see your own mirror... I am only showing you that," Singh said amid repeated interruptions from Congress members. Even Congress floor leader [Mallikarjun Kharge](#) was seen trying to say something in the din.

"There can be no comparison between our two years of performance and your 60 years of performance," the minister told Congress members. "The Supreme Court's order and the anxiety expressed by members on drought, all these are like mirror of the non-performance of over 60 years," Singh said.

The Supreme Court on Wednesday tapped Haryana, Gujarat and Bihar on the drought issue and directed the Centre to convene an urgent meeting with their chief ministers to assess the drought situation in those states. The court directed the union agriculture secretary to hold a meeting within a week with the three chief ministers to discuss drought in whichever district, village or ward is now seriously

Refraining from the apex court's ruling, Kharge said the government should focus more on active mitigation of drought or rather discuss over the works and achievements of the [Narendra Modi](#) government.

"The UPA regime followed the same terms of distribution of funds to the states for drought," Kharge said, countering the minister's claim that fund allocation for drought has since been given up considerably under the Modi regime.

There were again clashes between the treasury and opposition members when the minister mentioned that even for him staying there were reports of irregularities in Maharashtra during Congress-NCP rule.

"There is no shortage of funds," the minister asserted more than once.

The agriculture minister said review of the drought situation at the top level has been made from time to time including at the level of PMO officials and Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself.

-IANS

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We have promised India support in its efforts to become a member of NSG, said Swiss Parliament president Johann Schneider-Ammann.

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GAAR to override bilateral tax treaty provisions: Official

IANS | May 11, 2016, 08:42 PM IST

New Delhi, May 11 (IANS): Following the revision of India's bilateral tax treaty with Mauritius, the government on Wednesday said the General Anti-Avoidance Rule (GAAR) provisions, with effect from April next year, will override the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) in case of abuse.

"GAAR being anti-abuse provision can prevail over the treaty if it is proved that it is an abuse of treaty," Revenue Secretary Harshad Adhia said in a tweet.

He said GAAR applies to a company in case of abuse of treaty for getting undue tax benefits.

"We had clarity in the treaty being notified, it may be difficult or unrealistic that the treaty is being amended," he said in another tweet.

The limitations of Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) benefit its benefits to those who meet stipulated conditions relating to business, residency and investment.

Seeking to plug loopholes in the existing bilateral treaty that allows setup of shell companies, India on Tuesday said it has signed a general agreement with Mauritius to govern evasion of taxes on income and capital gains by entities of either side.

"The protocol for the amendment of the convention for the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income and capital gains between India and Mauritius was signed today (Wednesday) at Port Louis," an official statement said.

Under the revised tax treaty, India gives taxation rights on capital gains arising from sale of shares to tax India firm on or after April 1, 2017, while also promising investment in shares acquired before that date. Such tax will be limited to 50 percent of the domestic tax rate of India with certain.

The benefits of 50 percent return to tax one during the transition period from April 1, 2017, to March 31, 2019, shall not be available if the Mauritius company, including a shell firm, does not pass the test of having a bona fide business.

"A resident is deemed to be a shell or a conduit company if its total expenditure on operations in Mauritius is less than Rs.2,70,000 (Mauritian Rs.1,500,000) in the immediately preceding 12 months," the statement added.

The [Finance Minister](#) said this protocol will tackle long-pending issues of treaty abuse - wherein IP-gains money is first sent to Mauritius through bogus transactions, and then comes back to legitimate investment. This is called round-tripping.

"The protocol will improve transparency in tax matters and will help curb tax evasion and tax avoidance. At the same time, existing [taxation](#) - investment made before April 1, 2017 - have been grandfathered and will not be subject to capital gains taxation in India."

Commenting on the development, BMR Legal managing partner Mahesh Bhatnagar said, "One needs to give a context to the change in the treaty - India's commitment to BEPS (Base Erosion Profit Shifting) which advances avoidance of tax on income, impacting GAAR regulations from April 17, make it a compelling case for India to assume right to tax capital gains and avoid treaty shopping."

"With this change, the capital gains tax concessions for investments from Mauritius into India gradually comes to an end. Further, this will also impact the similar benefit under the India-Singapore treaty. It will be interesting to see in to what impact the amendment will have on FPI/FII investments into India eventually," Glinkh Varma, head of tax at international accounting firm [KPMG](#), in India said in a statement here.

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Afghanistan on Saturday to mark the completion of a nearly \$100 million hydroelectric dam project, the latest crest of Indian investment in its South Asian neighbour.



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Former Union minister V Narayanasamy took oath as the chief minister of Puducherry.



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We have promised India support in its efforts to become a member of NSG, said Swiss Federation president Johann Schneider-Ammann.

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NEXT STORY

Digital India programme to offer passport, pension online

PTI | May 31, 2016, 08:42 PM IST

New Delhi, May 31 (I) Government is implementing the Digital India programme to transform the country into a digitally empowered and knowledge [economy](#), so that various services like passport, [e-Kranti](#) and driving license could be delivered online. [Lal Kishore](#) was informed today.

Education and IT Minister [Piyush Goyal](#) said one of the primary focus areas of Digital India is Pillar 3 - e-Kranti - electronic delivery of services.

"e-Kranti aims to ensure a government wide transformation by delivering all services electronically to the citizens through integrated and interoperable systems via multiple modes while ensuring efficiency, transparency and reliability of such services at affordable costs," he said during Question Hour.

In e-Kranti, 44 Mission Mode Projects (MMP): 13 central, 17 state and 14 integrated MMPs - are being implemented. Under the 23 operational MMPs 222 services are being provided. More than 192 e-transactions have been reported since January 1, 2016.

"Under e-Kranti, the government of India has made concerted effort to make offline government services to be also delivered through online mode, ensuring that all citizens would have access to them, thereby improving the quality of basic governance on an unprecedented scale," he said.

Passport and services being provided online include income tax, passport, immigration, core banking, pension governance reform, courts, police, RTI, utility payments, licenses, social welfare schemes, agriculture, maternity, land record, vehicle registration, driving license, public distribution system etc.

The Ministry said so far more than 100 crore Aadhaar enrollments have been processed and for scaled up extensive use of Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) scheme for allocation and routing of Rs. 21,000 crore.

Passport and around 1.95 lakh consumer services centers have been made operational and 1,40,750 KM, OTC pipe laid and over 1.12 lakh KM optical fibre laid for connectivity to 50,000 gram panchayats to deliver services to citizens in rural areas.

Rural tele-density has crossed 80.9 per cent. Guidelines for spectrum sharing and trading and liberalization of spectrum have been issued. More than 2 crore passport applications have been processed. he said. MORE>>> I/D

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