



Circular No. 163/19/2021-GST

To,
Principal Chief Commissioners/ Principal Director
Generals, Chief Commissioners/ Director Generals,
Principal Commissioners/ Commissioners of Central Excise & Central Tax(All),

Madam/ Sir,
Subject: Clarification regarding GST rates & classification (goods) based on the recommendations of the GST Council in its 45th meeting held on 17th September, 2021 at Lucknow–reg.

Based on the recommendations of the GST Council in its 45th meeting held on 17th September, 2021, at Lucknow, clarification, with reference to GST levy, related to the following are being issued through this circular:

- i. Fresh vs dried fruits and nuts;
- ii. Classification and applicable GST rates on Tamarind seeds;
- iii. Coconut vs Copra;
- iv. Classification and applicable GST rate on Pure *henna* powder and leaves, having no additives;
- v. Scented sweet *supari* and flavored and coated *illaichi*;
- vi. Classification of Brewers' Spent Grain (BSG), Dried Distillers' Grains with Soluble [DDGS] and other such residues and applicable GST rate;
- vii. GST rates on goods [miscellaneous pharmaceutical products] falling under heading 3006;
- viii. Applicability of GST rate of 12% on all laboratory reagents and other goods falling under heading 3822;
- ix. Requirement of Original/ import Essentiality certificate, issued by the Directorate General of Hydrocarbons (DGH) on each inter-State stock transfer of goods imported at concessional GST rate for petroleum operations;
- x. External batteries sold along with UPS Systems/ Inverter;
- xi. Specified Renewable Energy Projects;
- xii. Fiber Drums, whether corrugated or non-corrugated.

2. The issue-wise clarifications are discussed in detail below.

3. Applicability of GST on fresh and dried fruits and nuts:

3.1 Representations have been received seeking clarification regarding the distinction between fresh and dried fruits and nuts and applicable GST rates.

3.2 At present, fresh nuts (almond, walnut, hazelnut, pistachio etc) falling under heading 0801 and 0802 are exempt from GST, while dried nuts under these headings attract GST at the rate of 5%/ 12%. The general Explanatory Notes to chapter 08 mentions that this chapter covers fruit, nuts intended for human consumption. They may be **fresh (including chilled), frozen** (whether or not previously cooked by steaming or boiling in water or containing added sweetening matter) or **dried (including dehydrated, evaporated or freeze-dried)**. Thus, HS chapter differentiates between fresh, frozen and dried fruits and nuts. Fresh fruit and nuts would thus cover fruit and nuts which are meant to be supplied in the state as plucked. They continue to be fresh even if chilled. However, fruit and nuts do not qualify as fresh, once frozen (cooked or otherwise), or intentionally dried to dehydrate including through sun drying, evaporation or freezing, for supply as dried fruits or nuts. It may be noted that in terms of note 3 to Chapter 8, dried fruits, even if partially re-hydrated, or subject to preservation say by moderate heat treatment, retain the character of dried fruits or dried nuts.

3.3. Therefore, exemption from GST to fresh fruits and nuts covers only such products which are not frozen or dried in any manner as stated above or otherwise processed. Supply of dried fruits and nuts, falling under heading 0801 and 0802 attract GST at the rate of 5%/12% as specified in the respective rate Schedules.

4. Applicability of GST on tamarind seeds:

4.1 Representations have been received seeking clarification regarding classification and applicable GST rates on tamarind seeds. The dispute is in classification of tamarind seeds between tariff heading 1207 and 1209.

4.2 As per general Explanatory Notes to HS 2017, heading 1209, covering seeds, fruit and spores, of a kind used for sowing, covers tamarind seeds. As per Chapter note 3 to Chapter 12, for the purposes of heading 1209, beet seeds, grass and other herbage seeds, seeds of ornamental flowers, vegetable seeds, seeds of forest trees, seeds of fruit trees, seeds of vetches (other than those of the species *Vicia faba*) or of lupines are to be regarded as “seeds of a kind used for sowing”. Thus, tamarind seeds, even if used for any purpose other than sowing, is liable to be classified under heading 1209 and hitherto attracted nil GST rate, irrespective of its use (for the period 01.07.2017 to 30.09.2021).

4.3 The GST council in its 45th meeting recommended GST rate on seeds, falling under heading 1209, meant for any use other than sowing to 5% (S. No. 71A of schedule I of notification No. 1/2017- Central Tax (Rate) dated 28.06.2017) and Nil rate would apply only to seeds for this heading if used for sowing purposes (S. No. 86 of schedule of notification No. 2/2017- Central Tax (Rate) dated 28.06.2017). Hence, with effect from 1.10.2021, tamarind and other seeds falling under heading 1209, (i.e. including tamarind seeds), if not supplied as seed for sowing, would attract GST at the rate of 5%.

5. **Clarification of definition of Copra:**

5.1. Representations have been received seeking clarification regarding the definition of *Copra* and applicable GST rates.

5.2 As per Explanatory Notes to HS (2017 edition) to heading 1203, *Copra* is dried flesh of coconut generally used for the extraction of coconut oil. Coconut kernel turns into *copra*, when it separates from the shell skin, while still being inside the shell. The whole unbroken kernel could be taken out of shell only when it converts to *copra*. Once taken out of shell, *copra* could be supplied either whole or broken.

5.3. As per the Explanatory Notes to HS, the heading 0801 covers coconut fresh or dried but excludes *Copra*. Thus, exemption available to Coconut, fresh or dried, whether or not shelled or peeled, vide entry at S. No. 47 of notification No. 2/2017- Central Tax (Rate) dated 28.6.2017, is not available to *Copra*. Accordingly, *Copra*, classified under heading 1203, attracts GST rate of 5% vide entry at S. No. 66 of Schedule I of 1/2017-Central Taxes (Rate) dated 28.06.2017, irrespective of use.

6. **Applicability of GST on pure henna powder and leaves:**

6.1 Representations have been received seeking clarification regarding classification and applicable GST rates on henna powder and henna leaves.

6.2 As per the Explanatory Notes to HS 2017, heading 1404 is vegetable products not elsewhere specified or included. Further, as per the said Explanatory Notes, heading 1404 includes raw vegetable materials of a kind used primarily in dyeing or tanning. Such products are used primarily in dyeing or tanning either directly or in preparation of dyeing or tanning extracts. The material may be untreated, cleaned, dried, ground or powdered (whether or not compressed).

6.3 Accordingly, it is clarified that pure *henna* powder and *henna* leaves, having no additives, is classifiable under tariff item 1404 90 90 and shall attract GST rate of 5% (S. No. 78 of schedule I of notification No. 1/2017-Central Tax (Rate) dated 28.06.2017).

6.4. Further, the GST rate on *mehndi* paste in cones falling under heading 1404 and 3305 shall be 5% (S. No. 78A of schedule I of notification No. 1/2017-Central Tax (Rate) dated 28.06.2017).

7. **Applicability of GST on scented sweet supari & flavored and coated illaichi:**

7.1 Representations have been received seeking clarification regarding classification and applicable GST rates on flavored and coated *illaichi*, and scented sweet *supari*.

7.2 Scented sweet *supari* falls under tariff item 2106 90 30 as “Betel nut product” known as “*Supari*” and attracts GST rate of 18% vide entry at S. No. 23 of Schedule III of notification No. 1/2017-Central Tax (Rate) dated 28.6.2017.

7.3 Flavored and coated *illaichi* generally consists of Cardamom Seeds, Aromatic Spices, Silver Leaf, Saffron, Artificial Sweeteners. It is distinct from *illaichi* or cardamom (which falls under heading 0908). It is clarified that flavored and coated *illaichi* is a value added product and falls under sub-heading 2106. It accordingly attract GST at the rate of 18% (S. No. 23 of

schedule III of notification No. 1/2017-Central Tax (Rate) dated 28.06.2017).

8. Applicability of GST on Brewers' Spent Grain (BSG), Dried Distillers' Grains with Soluble [DDGS] and other such residues:

8.1 Representations have been received seeking clarification regarding classification and applicable GST rates on Brewers' spent grain (BSG), Dried distillers' grains with soluble [DDGS] and other such residues of starch manufacture and similar residues, beet-pulp, bagasse and other waste of sugar manufacture, brewing or distilling dregs and waste, whether or not in the form of pellets.

8.2 As per the Explanatory Notes to the HSN, heading 2303 includes residues of starch manufacture and similar residues (from maize (corn), rice, potatoes, etc.); beet- pulp; bagasse; other waste products of sugar manufacture; brewing or distilling dregs and waste, which comprises in particular - dregs of cereals obtained in the manufacture of beer and consisting of exhausted grains remaining after the wort has been drawn off; malts sprouts separated from the malted grain during the kilning process; spent hops; Dregs resulting from the distillation of spirits from grain, seeds, potatoes, etc; beet pulp wash (residues from the distillation of beet molasses). All these products remain classified in the heading whether presented in wet or dry.

8.3 Thus, Brewers' spent grain (BSG), Dried distillers' grains with soluble [DDGS] and other such residues are classifiable under heading 2303, attracting GST at the rate of 5% (S. No. 104 of schedule I of notification No. 1/2017-Central Tax (Rate) dated 28.06.2017).

9. Scope of GST rate on all pharmaceutical goods falling under heading 3006.

9.1 Entry at S. No. 65 of Schedule II of notification No. 1/2017-Central Tax (Rate) dated 28.6.2017, reads as "*Pharmaceutical goods specified in Note 4 to this Chapter [i.e. Sterile surgical catgut, similar sterile suture materials (including sterile absorbable surgical or dental yarns) and sterile tissue adhesives for surgical wound closure; sterile laminaria and sterile laminaria tents; sterile absorbable surgical or dental haemostatics; sterile surgical or dental adhesion barriers, whether or not absorbable; Waste pharmaceuticals] [other than contraceptives]*"

9.2 S. No. 65 of Second Schedule of Notification 1/2017- Central Tax (Rate) dated 28.6.2017 refers to the note 4 to Chapter 30 of the First schedule of the Customs Tariff Act, 1975 while mentioning an illustrative list. Certain representations were received seeking clarification on the applicable rate of goods falling under heading 3006 that are not specifically mentioned in the Entry at S. No. 65 of Schedule II of notification No. 1/2017-Central Tax (Rate) dated 28.6.2017.

9.3 Note 4 to Chapter 30 of the First schedule of the Custom Tariff Act, 1975 reads as follows:

"(a) sterile surgical catgut, similar sterile suture materials (including sterile absorbable surgical or dental yarns) and sterile tissue adhesives for surgical wound closure;

- (b) *sterile laminaria and sterile laminaria tents;*
- (c) *sterile absorbable surgical or dental haemostatics sterile surgical or dental adhesion barriers, whether or not absorbable;*
- (d) *opacifying preparations for X-ray examinations and diagnostic reagents designed to be administered to the patient, being unmixed products put up in measured doses or products consisting of two or more ingredients which have been mixed together for such uses;*
- (e) *blood-grouping reagents;*
- (f) *dental cements and other dental fillings; bone reconstruction cements;*
- (g) *first-aid boxes and kits;*
- (h) *chemical contraceptive preparations based on hormones, on other products of heading 2937 or on spermicides;*
- (i) *gel preparations designed to be used in human or veterinary medicine as a lubricant for parts of the body for surgical operations or physical examinations or as a coupling agent between the body and medical instruments; and*
- (j) *waste pharmaceuticals, that is, pharmaceutical products which are unfit for their original intended purpose due to, for example, expiry of shelf-life.*
- (k) *appliances identifiable for ostomy use, that is colostomy, ileostomy and urostomy pouches cut to shape and their adhesive wafers or faceplates.”*

9.4 Thus, it is clarified that said entry 65 covers all goods as specified in Chapter Note 4 and Chapter Note 4 in turn covers all goods covered under Heading 3006. Therefore, said entry 65 covers all goods falling under heading 3006, irrespective of the fact that such goods are specifically mentioned in said entry. Therefore, all goods falling under heading 3006 attract GST rate of 12% under entry 65 in the 12% rate schedule.

10. All laboratory reagents and other goods falling under heading 3822:

10.1 Entry at S. No. 80 of Schedule II of notification No.1/2017- Integrated Tax (Rate) dated 28.6.2017 prescribes GST rate of 12% for “All diagnostic kits and reagents”.

10.2. Representations have been received whether the benefit of concessional rate of 12% would be available to laboratory agents and other goods falling under heading 3822.

10.3 Heading 3822 covers “Diagnostic or Laboratory Reagents, Certified Reference Materials etc.”.

10.4 The issue was placed before the GST Council and on its recommendations, it is clarified that the intention of this entry was to prescribe GST rate of 12% to all goods, whether diagnostic or laboratory reagents, falling under heading 3822.

10.5 It is accordingly clarified that concessional GST rate of 12% is applicable on all goods

falling under heading 3822, vide Entry at S. No. 80 of Schedule II of notification No.1/2017-Integrated Tax (Rate) dated 28.6.2017.

11. Requirement of Original/ import Essentiality certificate, issued by the Directorate General of Hydrocarbons (DGH) on each inter-State stock transfer of goods imported at concessional GST rate for petroleum operations

11.1 Notification No. 3/2017-Central Tax (Rate) prescribes concessional rate of 5% for specified goods which are used in connection with specified petroleum operations. Condition 1 (d) in notification No. 03/2017-Central Tax dated 28.06.2017 prescribes that “*whenever goods so supplied are transferred to other licensee or sub-contractor a certificate from Directorate General of Hydrocarbons (DGH) is to be produced that the goods may be transferred to the transferee*”.

11.2. As per Section 7 read with Schedule-I of the CGST Act 2017, inter-state stock transfer between distinct persons (establishment of same person located in two different states) is considered as ‘supply’ of goods.

11.3. Representations have been received seeking clarification whether the original/ import Essentiality certificate can be used for such inter-state stock transfers or a fresh Essentiality certificate would be required for each inter-state stock transfer as it is being treated as supply subject to IGST.

11.4 GST Council deliberated upon this issue and a decision was taken that the original/ import Essentiality certificate, issued by the Directorate General of Hydrocarbons (DGH) is sufficient and there is no need for taking a certificate every time on inter-state movement of goods within the same company / stock transfer so long as the goods are the same as those imported by the company at concessional rate. The importer is required to maintain records and should be able to establish nexus between the stock transfer of goods and the description in the essentiality certificate.

12 GST rates applicable on External batteries sold along with UPS Systems/invertor

12.1 References have been received seeking clarification about whether, ‘UPS Systems/inverter sold along with batteries as integral part’ are classified under heading 8507 at 28% GST or under heading 8504 at 18% GST.

12.2 The matter has been examined and it is observed that even if the UPS/inverter and external battery are sold on the same invoice, their price are separately known, and they are two separately identifiable items. Thus, this constitutes supply of two distinctly identifiable items on one invoice. Therefore, it is clarified that in such supplies, UPS/ inverter would attract GST rate of 18% under heading 8504, while external batteries would attract the GST rate as applicable to it under heading 8507 (28% for all batteries except lithium-ion battery).

13. Applicability of GST rates on Solar PV Power Projects

13.1 Representations have been received seeking clarification regarding the GST rates applicable on Solar PV Power Projects on or before 1st January, 2019. The issue seems to have arisen in the context of Notification No.24/2018- Central Tax (Rate), dated 31st December, 2018. An explanation was inserted vide the said notification that GST on specified Renewable Energy Projects can be paid in terms of the 70:30 ratio for goods and services, respectively, with effect from 1st January, 2019. The request has been that same ratio (for deemed value) may be applied in respect of supplies made before 1.1.2019.

13.2 As per this explanation, if the goods specified in this entry are supplied, by a supplier, along with supplies of other goods and services, one of which being a taxable service specified in the entry at S. No. 38 of the Table mentioned in the notification No. 11/2017-Central Tax (Rate), dated 28th June, 2017, the value of supply of goods for the purposes of this entry shall be deemed as seventy per cent. of the gross consideration charged for all such supplies, and the remaining thirty per cent. of the gross consideration charged shall be deemed as value of the said taxable service. This mechanism for valuation of supply was recommended by the Council considering that it adequately represented the value of goods and services involved in the supply.

The GST Council has now decided to clarify that GST on such specified Renewable Energy Projects can be paid in terms of the 70:30 ratio for goods and services, respectively, for the period of 1st July, 2017 to 31st December, 2018, in the same manner as has been prescribed for the period on or after 1st January, 2019, as per the explanation in the Notification No.24/2018 dated 31st December, 2018. However, it is specified that, no refunds will be granted if GST already paid is more than the amount determined using this mechanism.

14. Applicability of GST rates on Fibre Drums, whether corrugated or non-corrugated

14.1 Hitherto, corrugated boxes and cartons, falling under heading 4819 attracted GST at the rate of 12% (entry 122 of 12% rate schedule), while other cartons falling under this heading attracted GST at the rate of 18%. Disputes have arisen as regards applicable GST on fibre drums, which is partially corrugated (as to whether it is to be treated as corrugated or otherwise). This dispute gets resolved on account of the recommendation of the GST Council, in its 45th meeting, to prescribe a uniform GST rate of 18% on all goods classifiable under heading 4819 (with effect from 1st October, 2021 under S. No. 153A of Schedule III of notification No.1/2017-Central Tax (Rate) dated 28.6.2017).

14.2 For the period prior to 1.10.2021, the Council upon taking note of the fact that there was an ambiguity regarding the GST rates applicable on a Fibre Drum, because of its peculiar construction (partially corrugated), has decided that supplies of such Fibre Drums even if made at 12% GST (during the period from 1.7.2017 to 30.9.2021), would be treated as fully GST-paid. Therefore, no action for recovery of differential tax (over and above 12% already paid) would arise. However, as this decision has only been taken to regularize the past practice in view of certain ambiguity, as detailed in para 14.1, no refund of GST already paid shall be allowed if already paid at 18%.

15. Difficulty if any, in the implementation of this circular may be brought to the notice of the Board. Hindi version shall follow.

Yours faithfully,

(Piyush Kumar Ankit) Technical Officer, TRU