E-way bills on GST portal double from April level

SUMIT JHA
New Delhi, May 12

THE AVERAGE NUMBER of e-way bills generated by businesses on the GST Network portal was 6 lakh/day in the week to May 11, twice the level in April, in what indicated a pick-up in economic activities and demand after the lockdown restrictions were relaxed on May 4 (see chart). In February, an average of 19.7 lakh e-way bills were issued by the portal on a daily basis.

Continued on Page 2
E-way bills on GST portal double from April level

HOWEVER, IN MARCH, which is otherwise the busiest month of the financial year, the average e-way bills generated dropped to 13.1 lakh/day due to lockdown imposed in the last week of month.

E-way bills are required for GST-registered businesses to transport cargo if it exceeds over ₹50,000 in value. A government portal issues these receipts after relevant information (related to cargo, sender, recipient and vehicle for transport) are provided.

Last week, among several measures aimed at easing compliance burden during the pandemic, the government extended the e-way bill validity for the second time since the lockdown was imposed. The e-way bill generated on or before March 24 and expiring during March 20-April 15 period would now be valid till May 31. This is likely to help trucks stuck en route to reach their destinations smoothly.

However, experts said that unless lockdown is relaxed substantially, the movement of cargo would remain restricted to essential items.

“During the period of relaxed lockdown daily average of e-way bills has seen a sudden surge, yet the numbers are far away from the regular numbers. E-way bill numbers may continue to be low as many of the state governments are apprehensive about the free movement of non-essential commodities till the pandemic is controlled,” Rajat Mohan, senior partner at AMRG & Associates, said.

Another aspect that may hamper truck movement is the scarcity of drivers as migrants are choosing the travel options made available to go back home states. “The trucks are now carrying cargo from more sectors than before but with drivers leaving for their home states, a problem is looming over us,” All India Transporters Welfare Association (AITWA) joint secretary Abhishek Gupta said.

Tanushree Roy, director-GST at Nangia Andersen Consulting, said: “On 3 May 2020, the government allowed industries and standalone shops in residential complex to transact in non-essential product. As a result, the goods movement across state borders revived somewhat, leading to a growth in the generation of
e-waybills. This is a positive sign signalling revival of the economy.”