

Reforms have always been part of govt's agenda: FM

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Bengaluru: Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the government has been proactive in responding to the challenges caused by the pandemic and reforms have always been on the agenda.

"The sum and substance of what began in March 2020 with Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PM-GKAY) have again been extended from this March till November," Sitharaman said in a media interaction in Bengaluru on Friday. She concluded a two-day tour where she interacted with industry leaders, and also reviewed some of the vaccination and related infrastructure in the state. "From a stage when we



did not even manufacture PPE, did not have enough ventilators or sufficient centres to test virology samples, we have walked a long course," she said. Talking about how reforms are a priority for the government, she said, "Whether it was in the last tenure when you had GST and IBC (Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code) passed, or this tenure when you have agriculture bills which have now become Acts, labour codes, mining sector reforms, reforms to the financial sector, reform to the distribution network of power, are all being undertaken even during the pandemic," she said.

She said a special GST Council session will be held to decide on extending the GST compensation beyond

2022. Regarding pending GST compensation to states, she said, "As per the discussions held in October 2020 with all the states on the loss of revenue, and as a result of lack of money to pay the compensation, a formula was arrived at and based on that formula for the year 2020-21, whatever was agreed to be given through back-to-back borrowing has already been given."

Asked about the progress on plugging technical glitches in the GST portal, she said, "When the Infosys team came to North Block, people from nearly eight different parts of the country voiced grievances. Since then, they have been sorting out the issues. Hopefully, soon they will completely sort it out...there are one or two issues remaining," she said.