

5 States, a UT sign pact with Centre on e-Marketplace

Common goods procurement by govt. is about Rs. 5 lakh crore annually, said Ms. Sitharaman.

In a spirit of cooperative federalism, 5 States and a Union Territory (UT) on Tuesday formally adopted the Centre's initiative called the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) that aims to ensure that public procurement of goods and services in India worth more than Rs. 5 lakh crore annually is carried out through the online platform for transparency and to eliminate corruption.

The States and the UT that signed an MoU with the Centre include Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat, Telangana, Puducherry and Arunachal Pradesh.

Four more, including Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu and Haryana, will ink such an MoU soon. They would have done so on Tuesday but for some technical issues, and more states/UTs are likely to adopt the GeM later, Commerce Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said.

This follows a call made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to all the Chief Ministers in April to ensure that priority is accorded to transparency in public procurement of goods and services. Addressing the chief secretaries of states/UTs on Monday, Mr. Modi had talked about how the GeM can enhance transparency, efficiency and speed in public procurement.

'Cooperative federalism'

Speaking at the 'National Consultative Workshop on GeM', Ms. Sitharaman said, "These states in the spirit of cooperative federalism have adopted GeM, similar to what all the states, as 'Team India,' did in the case of the Goods and Services Tax regime. By joining the GeM initiative, the states have supported transparency in public procurement."

Pointing out that procurement of common use goods and services required by various Government (Central and state government) departments/organizations/public sector units is estimated to be over Rs. 5 lakh crore annually, she said all efforts were being made to strengthen the GeM initiative to ensure that the tax payers' money is spent in a transparent manner.

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