

Move to make export sops WTO-compliant

A STAFF REPORTER

Calcutta: New norms for incentives to exporters that are compliant with the World Trade Organisation are expected to be in place within a year's time, Union commerce secretary Rita Teaoitia said here on Thursday.

The decision to revise the guidelines comes amid the US raising objection in the WTO on the incentives offered by India to its exporters as its per capita gross domestic product has crossed the threshold of \$1,000.

"We are going to look at a completely different environment in terms of incentives. This is a transition that we will have to live with. The foreign trade policy is up for review next year and by then the new framework will have to be in place," Teaoitia said at the AGM of the Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC).

Later at an interactive session, she said an expert group is examining the WTO-compliant support mechanism in light of global best practices.



Teaoitia in Calcutta on Thursday. A Telegraph picture

"The exercise is almost complete. Hopefully, we will have a draft set of schemes for discussions in the next month or so," she said.

"There is a real possibility that this is one dispute we may lose because India has crossed the income threshold. What we are trying to do is to figure out what is WTO-compliant."

Exporters, however, can expect the continuation of some schemes such as the incentives on service exports, duty-free import of inputs, statutory levies which are legitimate for the purpose of ex-

ports as well as refund of uncovered taxes under the GST regime.

She said the government is looking to frame regulations for the logistics sector.

"We will look at an integrated multimodal logistics legislation which covers all stakeholders. Logistics is largely an unregulated sector in the country."

She said there was a need to promote the tea auction platform. "Auctions have not had the kind of acceptability (that is desired). Hundred per cent of the tea does not come to auction," she said.

ICC president

Rudra Chatterjee, executive director, Luxmi Tea Company, has taken over as the president of the Indian Chamber of Commerce. Mayank Jalan, managing director, Keventer Agro Ltd, has been elected as the senior vice-president of the chamber. Vishal Agarwal, vice-chairman and managing director, Visa Steel Limited, has taken over as the vice-president.