

If you have two minutes with the Prime Minister...

JANUARY 27, 2021

By Vijay Kumar

IF you have two minutes (and only two minutes) with the Prime Minister, what will you tell him?

In a recent web talk, Dr. D. Subba Rao, former Governor of the Reserve Bank of India asked Dr. Montek Singh Ahluwalia,

You talk about a very interesting incident in your book - when you accompanied Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to London. You introduced Dr IG Patel to the Prime Minister and Dr Patel had just two minutes with the PM but he used that very efficiently to give very concrete and specific advice to the Prime Minister.

Now if you had two minutes with Prime Minister Modi, what would you tell him?

Dr. Ahluwalia replied,

Ha ha, I'm not as clever as IG Patel who really â€. but â€..

One - let's please fix the GST, everybody loves it; you've got the credit for it; for bringing it in and everybody agrees it is being mucked up. This is not beyond the capacity of real experts and I would say on this -

please do not rely on the revenue department

because they're the ones who built it so far, I mean they've done a wonderful job, given their constraints, but â€â€..

There's not much point telling the people who have been functioning on it; by all means, bring some of them in but get some world experts to tell you what would an ideal GST look like. The Prime Minister has huge political popularity. You've got a bunch of BJP states that are in power and so probably if you can come to the conclusion that this is what we're going to do, I think you have the political capital to get it done. Nothing would be more important than people saying "wow India has finally got the GST right."

So that's point number one.

He also added two more points on banking reforms and customs tariff.

So, if Montek Singh Ahluwalia had two minutes with the Prime Minister, the first thing he would tell the PM is, **"fix the GST"** and don't depend on the Revenue Department for that.

As they say, war is too important to be left to the generals.

If a noted economist like Montek Singh Ahluwalia thinks that:

- GST needs fixing;
- Everybody agrees it is being **mucked up** ;

- We should get some world experts to tell you what would an ideal GST look like;
- Nothing would be more important than people saying **"wow India has finally got the GST right"**.

And it is the first thing that he would tell the Prime Minister, if he gets two minutes with him.

This is really worth being taken note of by the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister. You have the power, you have the resources, do fix that GST.

CBIC Presidential Awards - One Department, two years and three lists

Hearty Congratulations to the 24 meritorious officers of the CBIC who have been conferred the Presidential Appreciation Certificates and Medals.

But the way the awards were notified, added jest to the just awards.

The [Notification No. 06/2021 \(N.T.\)](#), dated 25 January, 2021 states,

In terms of Notification No. 12/139/59-Ad.IIIB dated 05.11.62, as amended and in supersession of Notification No. 06/2020 (N.T.)

dated 25th January, 2020, the President is pleased to award Appreciation Certificates and Medals for -"Specially Distinguished Record of Service"- to the officers and staff of Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), Department of Revenue, for the Republic Day, 2020 , as mentioned below:

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You can see [Notification No. 06/2020](#)

was superseded. By this now superseded notification, 28 officers were granted the presidential award on 25.01.2020 on the occasion of the Republic Day, 2020. This notification is strangely not available on the CBIC website, but can be accessed on our website at <https://taxindiaonline.com/RC2/notDesc.php?MpoQsrPnM=MjY1Nzk=>

For some reason(s), known to Board and God, these distinguished officers are not given the award yet. Now, just a day before the Republic Day 2021, they have superseded this notification - which means the awards are superseded - the officers in the list are not presidential awardees. No, no, don't just jump into such conclusions; After superseding the 2020 notification, the Board has brought in another [Notification No. 06/2021 \(N.T.\)](#),

dated 25th January, 2021, whereby the President is pleased to award Appreciation Certificates and Medals for - ***"Specially Distinguished Record of Service"***

- to the officers and staff of Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), Department of Revenue, for the Republic Day, **2020**. So, the 2020 list was superseded and a new list was notified. The old list consisted of 28 names and the new list announced on 25th January, 2021 has 26 names. Thus, two outstanding officers to whom the President was pleased to award Appreciation Certificates and Medals for - ***"Specially Distinguished Record of Service"***
- have been left out in the new list. Maybe after one year, the President must have been pleased to realise that they should not be in the list. Perfect, after all, no award can be given without the pleasure of the President.

All this, is for the year 2020. What about 2021? Yes, for the year 2021, the

President is pleased to award Appreciation Certificates and Medals for -"Exceptionally Meritorious Service at Risk to Life" and "Specially Distinguished Record of Service"- to the officers and staff of Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), Department of Revenue, on the occasion of the Republic Day, 2021.

By another [Notification No. 07/2021 \(N.T.\)](#), dated 25th January, 2021, the President is pleased to award ***Appreciation Certificates and Medals for "Exceptionally Meritorious Service at Risk to Life"*** to 2 officers and for ***"Specially Distinguished Record of Service"*** to 22 officers.

Thus, 50 officers of the CBIC have been recognised by the President for meritorious service for the two years, 2020 and 2021 by three notifications and these distinguished officers will be honoured by the Board sometime later by handing over the certificates, if these notifications are not superseded before that.

It is not that easy to get the Presidential award and even after getting it, there is no guarantee that the notification will not be superseded.

Until next week