

57th GST Council: What Has Become Law as on 17 November 2026

Description

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Quick summary

- The 57th GST Council met on 08/10/2026 and recommended a long list of process reforms. Within three weeks most of them were given legal effect, but not all, and not from the same date.
- Everything that could be done through circulars, the CGST (Amendment) Rules, 2026 and rate notifications has largely been done, with effect from 01/11/2026.
- Three changes to the CGST Act itself, on post-sale discounts, credit notes and provisional refunds, were already in the Finance Act, 2026 and were commenced from 01/11/2026 by a separate notification.
- The headline reforms on arrest powers, e-way bill interception and the Rs 10,000 notice threshold still need an amendment of the Act. CBIC has directed field officers to follow them administratively in the meantime.
- A substantial block of the new rules, including the whole revised credit-blocking procedure, does not start until 01/04/2027, so it must not be quoted as the present position.

A Council press release is not law. It is a statement of intent, and the gap between it and the statute book is where most of the confusion about GST changes lives. The 57th Council met on 8 October 2026 and recommended a long list of process reforms; in the weeks since, a great deal of it has been turned into binding law, and some of the most quoted parts have not. This post sets out which is which.

New to these terms? See the technical terms explained in simple words further down.

At a glance

Item	Detail
Council meeting	57th, 8 October 2026

Item	Detail
Instruments issuedsince	Ten circulars, one set of amendment rules, several rate notifications, one instruction and two commencement or scope notifications
Main effective date	1 November 2026
Other dates in play	1 December 2026, 1 January 2027 and 1 April 2027
Position stated here	As on 17 November 2026

- The reliable test for any single item is not “did the Council recommend it” but “which instrument carries it, and from what date”.
- What follows is a status check, not a restatement of the recommendations themselves.

What is now binding law

Reform	Instrument	From	Our post
Post-sale discounts: the pre-supply agreement test dropped; credit note plus ITC reversal retained	Finance Act, 2026 sections 153 and 154, commenced by notification 03/2026-Central Tax	01/11/2026	Post-sale discounts
Provisional refund extended to the inverted duty structure; small export refunds not withheld	Finance Act, 2026 section 155, same commencement	01/11/2026	Post-sale discounts
Refund processing: ten-day acknowledgement, deemed acknowledgement, portal-generated 90% provisional order in three working days	CGST (Amendment) Rules, 2026, rules 90 and 91	01/11/2026	CGST Amendment Rules
Simplified registration for e-commerce sellers with no physical presence in a State	New rule 14B	01/11/2026	CGST Amendment Rules
Registration, cancellation and amendment procedure rewritten	Substituted rules 19, 20 and 21	01/11/2026	CGST Amendment Rules

Reform	Instrument	From	Our post
Reverse charge on used cooking oil and waste and scrap of plastics, tyres and electronics bought from unregistered persons	Notification 04/2026-Central Tax (Rate)	01/11/2026	Rate changes
Isabgol exempt; retreaded tractor tyres at 5%; bio-stimulants written into the fertiliser entry	Notifications 02/2026 and 03/2026-Central Tax (Rate)	01/11/2026	Rate changes
Registration application handling, show cause notices, pre-deposit, ISD, banking ITC, demo vehicles, export proceeds, rule 96(10), classification, services	Circulars 257 to 266 of 2026	On issue, 26 and 28 October 2026	Ten separate posts on this site

What is directed but not yet in the Act

Reform	Position today
Removal of arrest and prosecution powers in the recommended cases	The CGST Act is unchanged. Instruction No. 02/2026-GST dated 30/10/2026 directs field officers to give effect to it administratively and immediately, pending the legislative amendment
Restrictions on e-way bill interception and detention	Same position: binding on officers by instruction, not yet an amendment of the Act
Minimum threshold of Rs 10,000 for a show cause notice	Same position

This distinction is not academic. An instruction binds the officer and can be relied on in dealing with the department, but it is not the same as a right under the Act, and it can be withdrawn or modified without Parliament. Our post on the instruction sets out what it does and does not do.

What is law but has not started yet

Reform	Starts
e-Invoicing for reverse charge supplies from unregistered persons and for import of services	01/01/2027
FORM GSTR-7A and FORM GST INV-01 changes	01/01/2027

Reform	Starts
Rule 19(3), rule 44, parts of rule 89(2), FORM GST RFD-01 and FORM GST REG-16	01/12/2026
Substituted rules 21A and 22, new rule 23A	01/04/2027
The revised rule 86A credit-blocking procedure, with FORM GST DRC-26, DRC-27 and DRC-28	01/04/2027
Capital goods entering the refund formula	01/04/2027

A notified rule that has not commenced is still not the present law. The credit-blocking reform in particular is widely described as if it already applies; it does not, and will not until April 2027.

One recommendation has not been traced to any instrument. The Council also recommended a 2% deduction of tax at source under section 51 on supplies of waste and scrap of plastics, waste and scrap of tyres, electrical and electronic waste and scrap, and used cooking oil, between registered persons. The reverse charge half of that package was notified by notification 04/2026-Central Tax (Rate), but the deduction half is not in that notification and no separate notification for it has been found. Until one is traced, it should not be assumed to be in force.

How to read any future announcement

1. **Find the instrument.** A press release names an intention; a circular, rule or notification carries it.
2. **Check the date inside the instrument**, not the date it was issued. The CGST (Amendment) Rules, 2026 were issued on one day and carry four different commencement dates.
3. **Ask what kind of change it is.** A clarification can be issued as a circular at once. A procedure needs the Rules amended. A rate needs a notification. A power or a right needs the Act amended, which means waiting for a Finance Act and then for a commencement notification.
4. **Treat an instruction as binding on officers, not as a change in the law.**

What to do

1. **Act now on the 1 November items**, which are live obligations: reverse charge on the four scrap categories, the refund timelines, the discount documentation, and rule 14B if you sell through an e-commerce operator.
2. **Put the 1 January 2027 e-invoicing change into your software plan**, because it affects self-invoices you will already be raising from November.
3. **Diary the 1 April 2027 block separately** and do not quote it in a reply or an appeal as if it were the current position.
4. **Where you are dealing with a field officer on arrest, interception or a small notice, cite the instruction**, and understand that you are relying on an administrative direction rather than on the Act.
5. **Re-check this picture before relying on it.** The Act amendments are expected, and when they come the middle table above moves into the first one.

Technical terms explained in simple words

Term	What it means
GST Council	The joint body of the central and State governments that recommends GST changes. It recommends; it does not legislate
Press release	The Council's summary of what it decided, issued the same day. It has no legal force on its own
Circular	A CBIC document explaining how the department reads the law. Binding on officers, and useful to taxpayers, but it cannot change the law
Instruction	A direction from CBIC to its own officers on how to act. Like a circular, it binds the department, not Parliament
Rules	The detailed procedure made under the Act. They can be amended by notification without Parliament
Rate notification	The notification that fixes the GST rate on goods or services
Finance Act	The annual Act carrying tax amendments. Its provisions often wait for a separate commencement notification
Commencement notification	The notification that fixes the date an already-passed provision starts to operate
Amendment of the Act	A change to the statute itself, which only Parliament can make
Reverse charge	The arrangement where the buyer, not the seller, pays the GST
Inverted duty structure	Where inputs are taxed higher than the finished supply, so credit accumulates and has to be refunded
Provisional refund	90% of a refund released early, before full verification
Electronic credit ledger	The online account holding a taxpayer's input tax credit
Blocking of the credit ledger	An officer's order preventing that credit from being used
e-Way bill interception	Stopping a vehicle in transit to check the documents covering the goods

Term	What it means
Show cause notice	The notice that starts a demand, asking why an amount should not be recovered

How CSM & Co LLP can help

The practical risk in a reform season is not missing an announcement; it is acting on one that has not become law, or missing one that quietly has. We track each recommendation to the instrument that carries it and the date it bites, tell a client which obligations are live today, which are coming in December, January and April, and which are still only a direction to officers, and then make the changes that are actually required in the registers, invoicing and refund files. Please reach out to our team and we will be happy to assist.

Frequently asked questions

Are the 57th GST Council recommendations law?

Some are and some are not, which is why the date and the instrument matter more than the press release. Anything that could be done by circular, by amending the CGST Rules or by a rate notification has largely been done with effect from 01/11/2026. Anything needing an amendment of the CGST Act itself has not, except the three changes that were already enacted in the Finance Act, 2026 and have now been commenced.

Is the removal of arrest powers now the law?

No. That reform requires an amendment of the CGST Act, which has not been made. What exists is Instruction No. 02/2026-GST dated 30/10/2026, by which CBIC directs its own field officers to give effect to the position administratively and immediately. That binds officers; it does not change the Act, and the legislative amendment is targeted for a later date.

What actually changed on 1 November 2026?

The CGST (Amendment) Rules, 2026, most of the rate notifications, and the commencement of sections 153 to 155 of the Finance Act, 2026. In practical terms: the new registration route for e-commerce sellers, the faster refund timeline, the post-sale discount test, reverse charge on four scrap categories, and a long list of form changes.

What has been deferred to 1 April 2027?

Substituted rules 21A and 22, new rule 23A, the whole revised rule 86A procedure for blocking the electronic credit ledger with FORM GST DRC-26, DRC-27 and DRC-28, capital goods entering the refund formula, and a block of registration and demand forms.

What starts on 1 January 2027?

e-Invoicing extends to supplies received from unregistered persons under reverse charge and to import of services, under notification 04/2026-Central Tax. FORM GSTR-7A and FORM GST INV-01 also change from that date.

Why did the Council's recommendations need so many separate instruments?

Because GST is spread across an Act, rules, rate notifications and administrative circulars, and each type of change has its own route. A clarification can go out as a circular immediately, a procedural change needs the Rules to be amended, a rate change needs a notification under the charging section, and a change to a right or a power needs Parliament to amend the Act.

Is there anything a business must do right now?

Yes, if it buys scrap or used cooking oil from unregistered suppliers, claims refunds, gives post-sale discounts, or sells through an e-commerce operator into States where it has no premises. Those are live obligations from 01/11/2026, not proposals.

Official sources

- Press Information Bureau: Recommendations of the 57th Meeting of the GST Council, 08/10/2026
- GST Portal: press release of the 57th Council meeting
- CBIC GST portal (notifications and acts)

Related reading

- GST Post-Sale Discounts: New Section 15(3)(b) Rules from November 2026
- GST on Services (2026) Part 3: Motor Vehicle Leasing Recoveries, TRAI and Bank FTP / NBFC Co-lending
- GST on Waste and Scrap (2026): 2% TDS and Reverse Charge for Plastic, Tyre, E-waste and Used Cooking Oil

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