

[West Bengal](#) Finance Minister [Amit Mitra](#) on Monday said that exporters across the country were awaiting refunds to the tune of Rs 250 billion, which have been stuck due to the "inability" of the [GST Network](#) (GSTN).

"There have been three lakh applications from exporters of the country, involving Rs 250 billion, which are awaiting refunds," Mitra, also a [GST](#) Council member, said here during an exports conclave, a part of the Bengal Global Business Summit 2019 roadshow.

The GSTN auto verifies refund claims, but it is unable to do so, and therefore, manual verification is relied upon that leads to huge pileup of applications and impacts the working capital of the exporters, the minister said.

He said an average of only 35-40 per cent of these applications have come to states for manual verification, and the situation remains grim for [West Bengal](#) as well.

Mitra has been critical of the [GST](#) implementation in the past, too, accusing the Centre for its "hurried" introduction without adequate infrastructure, which has made the indirect [tax](#) system more "primitive" than the [VAT regime](#).

He also said that he will raise the issue with the GSTN.

Mitra had earlier assured the state's exporters of some advance credit to partially tide over their crisis.

The Bengal minister said the state was aiming to double exports from the existing \$9.15 billion, over the next three years.

Towards this goal, it has decided to adopt measures to improve infrastructure for exporters at the district level.

The WBIDC and MSME will work together to set up export facilitation centres at district headquarters, he said.

Mitra added that steel, foundry, garments and leather are among a few focus sectors to push exports from the state.