CCPA Imposes Penalty of ₹20 Lakh on ExportersIndia.com (Weblink.In Pvt. Ltd.) in Two Orders for Online Listing of Ammonium Nitrate, PETN and Picric Acid

Penalties and Directions Upheld; Appeals Dismissed by NCDRC

Posted On: 16 NOV 2026 4:50PM by PIB Delhi

The National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC), New Delhi, through two orders dated **12 November 2026**, has dismissed the appeals filed by **Weblink.In Private Limited**, operator of ExportersIndia.com, against two final orders of the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA). The NCDRC has thereby upheld in full the **penalties and directions issued by the CCPA** for the online listing, hosting, advertising and facilitation of sale of regulated and hazardous explosive substances on the platform. **following the CCP A's earlier sector-wide action against such listings on e-commerce platforms**.

Background: CCPA's Action Against Online Listing of Explosive Substances

The CCPA, headed by **Chief Commissioner Smt. Nidhi Khare and Commissioner Shri Anupam Mishra**, in exercise of its powers under Sections 18 and 19 of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, carried out a sector-wide review of e-commerce platforms to examine whether hazardous chemicals, explosive substances and related precursors, namely **Ammonium Nitrate, Gun Powder, Picric Acid and Pentaerythritol Tetranitrate (PETN)**, were being listed, hosted, advertised or made available for sale online.

These substances are regulated, restricted or prohibited under the **Explosives Act, 1884** and the rules framed under it. Picric Acid stands declared an explosive by Notification GSR 625(E) dated 7 August 1983, while Ammonium Nitrate is regulated under the **Ammonium Nitrate Rules, 2012**.

The CCPA found that several platforms were enabling access to these highly sensitive materials without disclosure of the seller's valid **PESO (Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation) licence**, verification of the identity and licensed status of the buyer, traceability safeguards or caution regarding the legal restrictions on their possession and use.

The platforms examined included **IndiaMART, Justdial, Dial4Trade, Sigma-Aldrich India, ExportersIndia, Ibuychemikals and TradeIndia**. Following the CCPA's intervention, the listings of these substances were delisted from the platforms.

Two CCPA Final Orders Against Weblink.In Private Limited

After issuing Show Cause Notices to the company, calling for an investigation by the Director General (Investigation), sharing the investigation reports with the company, considering its written replies and hearing its counsel, the CCPA passed two separate final orders under Sections 20 and 21 read with Section 10 of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019:

Final Order dated 08.09.2026: Relating to the listing of Ammonium Nitrate and PETN.
Final Order dated 10.09.2026: Relating to the listing of Picric Acid.

Both orders were challenged by the company before the NCDRC.

Under each order, the CCPA imposed a penalty of **₹10 lakh**, taking the total penalty to **₹20 lakh**. It also directed the company to **permanently discontinue the listing, hosting, advertising or facilitation of sale of, or enquiry for, such substances** and any other substance classified as an explosive under the Explosives Act, 1884 or the Explosive Substances Act, 1908.

CCPA's Findings: Misleading Advertisements and Unfair Trade Practices

The CCPA held that the conduct amounted to a **misleading advertisement and an unfair trade practice** under Sections 2(28) and 2(47) of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, and violated the right of consumers under Section 2(9) to be protected against the marketing of goods hazardous to life and property.

The platform displayed Ammonium Nitrate, PETN and Picric Acid like ordinary products, with price quote options and an invitation to "Get Best Quotes". However, it did not disclose that these substances are notified explosives, that a licence is required to buy or sell them, or that unauthorised possession is punishable. It also displayed a "verified" tick against sellers of explosives, although the company admitted that it did not check the licence of any seller or buyer. This gave buyers the false impression that these substances could be freely and lawfully purchased.

The CCPA further observed that the platform earned fees through paid memberships and a paid V-Trust Certificate, but failed to put in place basic safeguards. The key deficiencies identified included:

Non-disclosure of sellers' PESO licences.
Failure to verify the identity and licensed status of buyers.
Absence of traceability safeguards as required under the Ammonium Nitrate Rules, 2012.
Failure to provide warnings regarding the legal restrictions on possession and use of these substances.

The company's claim that it was only a B2B directory was not accepted, as anyone could register with just a phone number and e-mail address and post a requirement for any quantity. Since explosives could thereby reach persons with no legal right to hold them,

the CCPA held that consumers and the public were exposed to serious risk, in violation of Section 2(9). It also held that the **Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020** applied to the platform.

Safe Harbour Defence Rejected by CCPA and NCDRC

Before both forums, the company argued that it was only an intermediary protected by Section 79 of the Information Technology Act, 2000, that it had no actual knowledge of the listings and that no law required it to verify licences of sellers or buyers of explosives.

The CCPA rejected these pleas. It held that safe harbour under Section 79 is conditional on due diligence under Section 79(2)(c) and Rule 3(1)(b) of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021. The "actual knowledge" standard laid down in *Shreya Singhal v. Union of India* governs takedown of specific content on notice, but does not remove the independent duty to exercise due diligence at the point of listing. A compliance approach that only removes listings after detection was held to be insufficient for regulated and hazardous substances.

The NCDRC affirmed this position. It held that the platform could not plead selective diligence, that knowledge of the notifications declaring these substances to be explosives could be ascribed to such facilitators and that the company could not claim immunity under Section 79 of the IT Act.

The NCDRC also rejected the argument that no statute required licence verification. It observed that a platform must take reasonable care and exercise due diligence when its space is used to advertise trade in hazardous substances, and that the advertisements carried none of the categorical cautions that such substances demand.

The NCDRC found that the CCPA had acted within its jurisdiction after following the principles of natural justice and that there was **no infirmity, perversity or error of law** in its orders. In the second appeal, it dismissed the challenge for the same reasons.

Action Against Other E-Commerce Platforms

The CCPA has also taken action against other platforms examined during the sector-wide review:

> **Dial4Trade Technologies Private Limited:** A penalty of ₹10 lakh was imposed for listing Ammonium Nitrate. The NCDRC dismissed its appeal on **09.10.2026**.
> **Just Dial Limited:** A penalty of **₹10 lakh** has likewise been imposed.

Proceedings against the remaining platforms examined in this exercise, including **India MART InterMESH Limited, Sigma-Aldrich Chemicals Private Limited, TradeIndia (Infocom Network Private Limited) and Ibuychemikals**, remain under investigation.

CCPA Reiterates Commitment to Consumer Protection

The two NCDRC orders reaffirm that platforms which host or promote listings of regulated and hazardous goods must **exercise due diligence before listing such products** and cannot rely on intermediary status to avoid responsibility under consumer protection law.

The CCPA reiterates its commitment to protecting consumers and the public from the unregulated online availability of hazardous substances and ensuring that e-commerce platforms comply with due-diligence requirements.

Any instance of explosives being offered for sale on an online platform may be reported to the **National Consumer Helpline at 1915**.

***

RT/SB/ARC

(Release ID: 2336972) Visitor Counter : 319
Read this release in: Gujarati , Urdu , हिन्दी , Tamil , Kannada

Share

1200 words | 5 min read