

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The following hon. Members associated themselves with the matter raised by the hon. Member, Shri Brij Lal: Dr. Sasmit Patra (Odisha), Shri Niranjana Bishi (Odisha), Shri Mayankbhai Jaydevbhai Nayak (Gujarat), Dr. Sikander Kumar (Himachal Pradesh), Dr. Kalpana Saina (Uttarakhand), Ms. Kavita Patidar (Madhya Pradesh), Shri Ram Chander Jangra (Rajasthan), Shri Madan Rathore (Rajasthan), Shri Naresh Bansal (Uttarakhand), Dr. Bhagwat Karad (Maharashtra), Shrimati Ramilaben Becharbhai Bara (Gujarat), Shrimati Geeta alias Chandraprabha (Uttar Pradesh), Shri Deepak Prakash (Jharkhand), Shri Aditya Prasad (Jharkhand), Dr. Bhim Singh (Bihar), Shri Pradip Kumar Varma (Jharkhand), Shri Sadanand Mhalu Shet Tanavade (Goa), Shri Amar Pal Maurya (Uttar Pradesh), Shri Babubhai Jesangbhai Desai (Gujarat), Shrimati Darshana Singh (Uttar Pradesh), Shri Krishan Lal Panwar (Haryana), Shri Neeraj Shekhar (Uttar Pradesh), Shrimati Sumitra Balmik (Madhya Pradesh), Shrimati Seema Dwivedi (Uttar Pradesh), Shri Dhananjay Bhimrao Mahadik (Maharashtra), Dr. Anil Sukhdeorao Bonde (Maharashtra) and Shri Sant Balbir Singh (Punjab).

**Demand to address huge pendency of cases before the Commissioner of Income Tax (Appeals)**

SHRI SANJEEV ARORA (PUNJAB): Thank you, Deputy Chairman Sir, for giving me an opportunity to speak on the appeals which are pending with Commissioners of Income Tax Appeals. I would like to express my deep concern regarding the significant backlog of appeals pending before Commissioner of Income Tax Appeals in India. The current situation is worrisome because as of April 2024, a staggering number of five lakh appeals remain unresolved with CIT, with the majority of these lodged within the recent implemented faceless appellate system. This immense backlog not only contradicts the commitment to timely decisions outlined in the Taxpayers Charter, but, also raises serious questions about equity and fairness within the tax system. Sir, in last financial year, only 61,311, around 10 per cent cases, were resolved, which is around 10 per cent and I am sure equal number must have been filed also. To address the critical situation, I urge the hon. Minister, through you, to consider the following measures in the upcoming time.

First is budget; but the budget is already there. So, the following aspects can be considered in the budget also. (i) Strengthening legal framework - enact appropriate legislations to enforce stricter time limits on CIT appeals for appeal disposal. The current advisory limit of one year is insufficient. Sir, it is an advisory limit, but it is not being adhered to. (ii) Taxpayer relief measures - introduce

measures to provide relief to taxpayers, waiving the requirement of 20 per cent pre-payment before filing appeal, refunding excess tax collected/recovered during prolonged delays, granting automatic stay on penalties and prosecution for appeals exceeding the specific timeframe, accountability for delays, establishing a system of accountability to address the root causes of delays within the system. The current pendency crisis discourages taxpayer compliance and undermines the integrity of the tax system. Taking swift action through these proposed measures will ensure a more efficient, fair and transparent appellate system. Sir, I urge, the hon. Finance Minister, through you, to give this suggestion her thoughtful consideration. Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The following hon. Members associated themselves with the issue raised by hon. Member, Shri Sanjay Arora: Shri Niranjan Bishi (Odisha), Shrimati Priyanka Chaturvedi (Maharashtra), Shri K.T.S. Tulsi (Chhattisgarh), Shri Sant Balbir Singh (Punjab), Shrimati Jebi Mather Hisham (Kerala), Dr. Sasmit Patra (Odisha), Dr. John Brittas (Kerala) and Dr. Fauzia Khan (Maharashtra).

#### **Demand to reduce the rate of GST on health and insurance policies**

SHRI DEREK O'BRIEN (West Bengal): Sir, the demand is straightforward — Reduce 18 per cent GST on medical and health insurance. Reduce it. Sir, in three minutes, let me make four quick points. This has been there since July, 2017, and it has gone unnoticed! Why should we reduce it? We should reduce it, because this is an issue which is burdening the people, mainly the middle class. That is why this is to be reduced. The high tax rate of 18 per cent is a burden.

Insurance penetration is low in India. Internationally it is more than 7 per cent and in India it is just about 4 per cent. That is why GST should be reduced. Sir, there is an imbalance in the insurance sector where 75 per cent is life insurance and only 25 per cent is medical insurance! How can this be done? Who has raised this? Two of our MPs here — Shri Saket Gokhale and Ms. Dola Sen — have raised it. My hon. Chief Minister has written a letter to the hon. Finance Minister to reduce it. They wouldn't listen to us. Okay. At least, listen to the Union Cabinet Minister from her own BJP party who has also recently written to the hon. Finance Minister. He is the hon. Minister of Road Transport and Highways. He is from the BJP. They could listen to him. But, when we write, the hon. Finance Minister will say, 'No, no. I cannot do anything. The GST Council will change it.' This is a flawed argument. The ratio in the GST Council is: NDA-2 and INDIA-1. The GST Council, as said by the Supreme