

**Demand to address the plight of small scale business persons in the country**

SHRI A.A. RAHIM (Kerala): Sir, due to the pro-corporate and anti-people financial policies of this Government, a vast section of the Indian economy is on the verge of collapse. I am talking about the betrayal faced by small- and medium-scale businesses, including paint shops, grocery shops, small jewellery shops, wholesale dealers, furniture shops, fruit and vegetable merchants, etc. No one can ignore the immense contribution of these businesses in generating direct and indirect employment and strengthening the Indian economy. However, the neoliberal policies introduced in 1991 and aggressively pursued by the Narendra Modi Government have pushed them into crisis. The great betrayal began in 2012 during the UPA-II regime, which introduced 51 per cent in Foreign Direct Investment in multi-brand retail. This opened the floodgates for international corporate giants like Amazon and Walmart and Indian corporates like Reliance, Flipkart, Big Bazaar, etc., which bulldozed the retail sector. Yet since 2012, the Union Government has failed to conduct any study on the devastating impact of this decision on small- and medium-scale businesses. Instead of providing relief, the Government imposed further burden through Tughlaqi reformation, GST and demonetisation, and crippled the sector forcing countless business owners to shut down their shops. Have you seen how many small- and medium-scale businesses have disappeared from our own towns and villages since 2012? We could see that. Many footwear shops, small furniture shops, paint shops, grocery shops and wholesale shops have disappeared from our own villages and towns. The numbers are staggering.

Sir, I urge the Government to conduct a comprehensive study on the impact of these policies on this sector. Online purchasing has now become a new normal and nobody can stop this culture. I know that we have limitations, but a large percentage of small business operators operate from rented premises. The Union Government has made it mandatory for registered traders in GST. I demand the Government to revoke GST on rent for small and medium enterprises and introduce a special relief package to safeguard and revive these vital sectors. This is the need of the hour. Thank you very much, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The following hon. Members associated themselves with the matter raised by the hon. Member, Shri A. A. Rahim: Dr. Fauzia Khan (Maharashtra), Dr. John Brittas (Kerala), Shri Haris Beeran (Kerala), Dr. V. Sivadasan (Kerala) and Shri R. Girirajan (Tamil Nadu).

Shri N.R. Elango. Demand to create Regional Benches for Appellate Tribunals for Prevention of Money Laundering Act and other Acts.

**Demand to create Regional Benches for Appellate Tribunals for Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and other Acts**

SHRI N.R. ELANGO (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I thank you for the opportunity to raise an important issue. As of today, there is one Tribunal which is handling appeals under five key enactments, namely SAFEMA, NDPS Act, PMLA, Prohibition of Benami Transaction and FEMA. The cause of concern is that all these Tribunals' functions are now entrusted to one Tribunal which is taking care of all the appeals from the whole of the country. This unification of several tribunals into one and locating it in Delhi is causing inconvenience to the litigant public, the accused persons, the professionals such as advocates, chartered accountants, company secretaries, etc. From all over the country, they are made to come to Delhi and most of the time have to return with a case being adjourned due to paucity of time.

I request the Union Government to address this issue and to create, at least, four Regional Benches, including the one at Chennai. Already there is a strong, long-pending and genuine demand to create Regional Benches of the Supreme Court. ...(*Time-bell rings.*)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It is over. Nothing is going on record.

12.00 Noon

**ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, Question Hour.

(सभापति महोदय पीठासीन हुए।)

**Upgradation of towers**

#\*346. MS. INDU BALA GOSWAMI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

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# Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.