



Consumer Protection Bill is the top priority: Shri Narendra Modi

Shri Narendra Modi inaugurates International Conference on Consumer Protection for East, South and South-East Asian Countries with the theme of “Empowering Consumers in New Markets” in New Delhi

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The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the two days International Conference on Consumer Protection for East, South, South East and Asian Nations on the theme “Empowering Consumers in New Markets” in New Delhi, today. The Prime Minister in his inaugural speech congratulated the Department of Consumer Affairs for holding this important event and mentioned that East, South and South East Asian countries have a shared heritage. These nations have long history of trade. This in itself paves way for mutual cooperation in the area of consumer protection. Shri Modi said that it is the consumer that helps markets grow and trade expand. The Prime Minister thanked the delegates from countries and UNCTAD for associating with India in holding this conference. He drew attention of the gathering to the traditions and laws of ancient India as old as 2500 years and Vedic period, when laws existed for preventing unfair trade practices, abuses and adulteration of products.

Shri Modi said, in India, Consumer is considered as God in trade premises. ‘Grahak Devo Bhava’ is the dictum for consumer satisfaction. While mentioning the unique nature of CP Act 1986, He mentioned the new Consumer Protection Bill which is on the top priority of the Government. The Prime minister mentioned several important efforts taken by his government across various sectors like Housing, Energy, Standards, Healthcare, pharmaceuticals and medical devices and procedures that has resulted in financial benefits to consumers.

He drew attention to demonetization and the GST regime that introduced a new business culture which will ultimately bring down prices for consumers. Redressal system that is efficient is the corner stone of democracy, he asserted.

While talking about various sectoral initiatives he mentioned the, importance of good governance, Jandhan Yojna, Make in India programme, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and provision of free LPG to the poorer sections of society, technology driven PDS system and Aadhar based transparency system, etc that have protected consumer interests and how specific consumers are benefitted and their hard earned money saved. On the digital front he said efforts are on to ensure that at least one member in a rural family gets digitally educated so that the rural population can derive benefits from various government schemes and are able to use UPI, BHIM etc. Finally, while concluding his speech the Prime Minister mentioned the need for trans-national cooperation especially in Asian region on cross border issues based on mutual trust.

Shri Ram Vilas Pawan, Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, welcomed the delegates from East, South and South East Asian Nations for being in New Delhi to attend this first ever Asian Conference on consumer protection.

Shri Paswan explained various initiatives taken by the Govt in furthering consumer protection. He made specific reference to the New Consumer Protection Bill which is likely to replace the old Act soon and the new BIS Act with specific emphasis on Hallmarking Scheme for ornaments. For protection of consumer interests and their hard earned money, he mentioned, several measures have been taken including Hall Marking of Gold.

Secretary General, UNCTAD, Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi in his address elaborated on globalization and the resultant challenges it brought to consumers. He mentioned the backdrop against which the UN Guidelines on Consumer Protection were revised in 2015 and the commendable role India has played. He said that this Conference is an ideal opportunity to learn from best practices and exchange information, and suggested some points for consideration of India to consider in the implementation of UN Guidelines, such as Provision of high quality ICT infrastructure at affordable prices, Consumer safety from hazardous goods, complete disclosure of all information for guidance of consumers, redressal system that is rapid and affordable for consumers in shortest time possible and regulations against identity theft and provision for data privacy protection.

International Conference on Consumer Protection is being organised by the Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of India with the association of United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). This is the first time an international conference on consumer protection is being organised by India for countries of the region which account for a majority of the global consumers and share common challenges and experiences. 22 countries from East, South and South-East Asia are participating in the international conference. The two day conference will conclude on 27th October, 2017.

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