

## **Regarding full compliance with compulsory jute packaging law**

**SHRIMATI PRATIMA MONDAL (JAYNAGAR):** Thank you, hon. Chairperson, for allowing me to speak in Zero Hour.

The jute industry in West Bengal, employing over 2.5 lakh workers and supporting millions of dependent families, is in severe socio-economic distress. Once sustained by guaranteed Government procurement under the Jute Packaging Materials Act, the industry has seen orders slashed and synthetic alternatives permitted, weakening demand for traditional jute sacks.

Recent approvals for non-jute bags in key procurement schemes have directly undercut jute demand, deepening the crisis faced by mills and workers. This policy shift has contributed to mill closures and widespread unemployment. Workers confront irregular wages, precarious employment and loss of livelihood, with entire families pushed into economic insecurity.

Despite environmental rhetoric against plastics, inconsistent enforcement of mandatory jute use and growing tolerance for plastic alternatives have eroded the industry's market base, compounding its long-standing structural problems. The result is poverty, joblessness and deteriorating living conditions for jute workers in Bengal. We demand that the Central Government mandate full compliance with compulsory jute packaging laws and restore assured procurement to protect workers and the industry.