

Retailers staring at loss of ₹3L cr, more job cuts

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INDIAN retailers and traders are staring at a whopping ₹3 lakh crore loss in revenue, especially due to the prolonged closure of all non-essential operations, as well as the kinks in the supply chain.

Welcoming the extension of nationwide lockdown as an important measure in the national interest, traders' body Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT), which represents seven crore traders, has urged the government to help the retailers ensure smooth supply of essential goods.

"Till now, only half of the traders community dealing with essential service supplies could function because of the limited number of curfew passes available and shortage in transport staff. We urge the government to make the process of issuance of curfew passes smooth that would benefit more than 40 lakh retailers and their employees who deal with essential services supply chain,"

CAIT general secretary Praveen Khandalwal told *TMS*. CAIT has also sought a financial stimulus for retailers in terms of low interest loans, deferment in tax payments for an immediate working capital once the lockdown is lifted.

Kumar Rajagopal, CEO of Retailers Association of India has also expressed that a survival plan, is the need of the hour for the crisis-hit retail industry. Already hundreds of thousands of small businesses are expected to perish, even though retailers with big pockets will take at least 6-12 months to revive. "Revenues apart, as much as 25 per cent of jobs could be under threat due to the extended closure," he said.

While many fashion retailers are staring at insolvency due to high cost of goods, fixed rentals, employee costs, other categories of discretionary retail such as consumer electronics and home appliances are pitching for non-essential items to be allowed through online sales channels.

