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RGNUL features prominently in the Consumer Ministry Committee to develop Framework on 'Right to Repair'

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PATIALA: Three members of Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law, Punjab feature in the newly constituted Committee by Department of Consumer Affairs for development of framework on 'Right to Repair'. Prof. (Dr.) G.S. Bajpai, Vice-Chancellor, Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law (RGNUL), Punjab, Prof. Anand Pawar, Registrar, RGNUL, Punjab and Justice Paramjeet Singh Dhaliwal, Former Judge, Punjab and Haryana High Court and LL.D candidate at RGNUL have been selected as members of the Committee. Notably, an article titled 'Upholding Right to Repair' in Indian Express (dated 19th April 2022) penned by Prof. G.S. Bajpai attracted the attention of policy makers. The rationale behind the 'Right to Repair' is to assure that the buyer of a product owns it completely. The consumers should be able to repair and modify the product with ease and at reasonable cost, without being captive to the whims of manufacturers for repairs," said the ministry officials statement added.

The newly constituted committee chaired by Smt. Nidhi Khare, Additional Secretary, Dept. of

Consumer Affairs and members Sri Anupam Mishra, Joint secretary, Dept. of Consumer Affairs; Prof. G.S. Bajpai, Vice-Chancellor, RGNUL; Justice Paramjeet Singh, Former Judge, Punjab and Haryana High Court, Chandigarh and former President of State Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission, Punjab; Prof. Ashok Patil, National Law School of India University, Bengaluru and Chair of Consumer Law and Practice, (Ministry of Consumer Affairs); Prof. Anand Pawar, Registrar, RGNUL, Punjab; Shri Sanjay Vashistha, Advocate, Supreme Court of India; Representatives of ICEA and SIAM; S Saroja, Executive Director Citizen Consumer & Civic Action Group Chennai and Ms. Pushpa Girimaji, Senior Journalist & Consumer Activist in its first meeting held on July 13, 2022, identified important sectors like farming equipment, mobile phones, tablets, consumer durables and automobiles, and automobile equipment for liability under Right to Repair.

The committee also discussed the companies that avoid the publication of manuals that can help users make repairs easily. "Manufacturers have proprietary control over spare parts, monopoly on repair processes that infringes the customers 'right to choose'. Manufacturers are encouraging a culture of 'planned obsolescence'. This is a system whereby the design of any gadget is such that it lasts a particular time only and after that particular period, it has to be mandatorily replaced. When contracts fail to cede full control to the buyer, the legal right of owners are damaged," the ministry said.

This committee shall submit its recommendations within six weeks. It will examine and undertake measures to develop a policy, meet various stakeholders in different parts of India to develop a policy framework, recommend legislative framework and research international best practices. The Ministry through effective legislation and a framework aims to harmonise trade between the original equipment manufacturers and the third party buyers/ & sellers.