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NEWS CLIPPINGS

INTERNATIONAL NEWS	
No	**Topics**
1	China’s CPTPP membership could create hurdles for US’ textile industry
2	US Trade Representative visits Charlotte region's textile industry with talk of reshoring U.S. manufacturing
3	Pakistan: Provide more incentives to textile processing units, urges APTMA
4	Sustainability pressures compel brands to relook raw material choices
5	Apparel dominates Brand Finance’s 2021 luxury brands list with 62% value
6	IAF, ABIT, Euratex join hands for international conferences on European industry
7	Egypt's cotton prices jump to record as gov't promotes textile industry
8	Kyrgyzstan's textile production amounted to 3.9 bn soms in 2021

	NATIONAL NEWS
1	PM Modi meets leading American CEOs; encourages them to invest in India
2	Goods exports to hit record $190 billion in first half of FY22: Commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal
3	Piyush Goyal inaugurates Centre of Excellence in Logistics and Supply Chain Management at NITIE, Mumbai
4	All states come on board for Rs 3 trillion discoms reforms scheme
5	Australia trade minister to visit next week to advance trade deal talks
6	GST rates increase, a huge setback for the garment industry
7	India’s exports to EU declined in the last 20 years, accounts for mere 0.9% of the total imports of EU
8	East India's textile industry wants govt focus on jute, tech textiles

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

China's CPTPP membership could create hurdles for US' textile industry

Textile and apparel companies have been on a high alert ever since China submitted its application to join the 11-member Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). They believe China's potential accession to the CPTPP could create unprecedented challenges for the Western Hemisphere textile and apparel supply chain that also involves the US textile industry.

In a signed article 'China's Membership in CPTPP Could Threaten the Survival of the US Textile Industry' by Sheng Lu, Associate Professor, Department of Fashion & Apparel Studies, University of Delaware in Fash455, writes if China joins the CPTPP, tariff cuts could provide strong financial incentives to Mexico and Canada to use more Chinese textiles. This would increase China's share in textile exports in these two countries more than that of the US.

Currently, US is the largest textile supplier to Mexico and Canada with share of 48.2 per cent and 32.7 per centChinas CPTPP membership could create hurdles for US textile industry respectively in exports. They also serve as the largest export market for US textile producers, accounting for as much as 46.4 per cent of total US yarn and fabric exports in 2020. However, China has stepped up competition by offering a wider range at more competitive prices. It has strengthened its foothold in these two markets while US textile suppliers lost nearly 20 percentage points market shares from 2015-2019.

Potential threat to US' export markets

If China becomes a CPTPP member, its textile exports would enjoy duty-free access to Mexico and Canada. Mexico's reduction of import tariffs from 9.8 per cent to zero for China would make its textiles more price-competitive than the US'. This would cause the US textile industry to lose its most critical export market.

China's CPTPP membership would also encourage Mexico and Canada to import textiles from there and export finished garments to the US duty-free. This would prove devastating for the US textile industry as it would decline US textile exports to its critical market comprising CAFTA-DR countries.

US' textile exports to CAFTA-DR countries mainly depend on the volume of garment exports by these members to the US. On the other hand, US' apparel imports from Asia are free from dependence on US-made textiles. These imports are mainly made from Asian textiles. For instance, Vietnam imports 97 per cent of its textiles including yarns and fabrics from Asian countries including China, South Korea, Taiwan and Japan.

Increase in Vietnam's competitiveness

China's membership of CPTPP also threatens to make Vietnam a more competitive apparel exporter than the US. Already, Vietnam is the second-largest apparel exporter to the US, next only to China. US' apparel imports from Vietnam increased by 131 per cent between 2010 and 2020. Its share of apparel exports from Vietnam also increased from 7.6 per cent in 2010 to 19.3 per cent in the first half of 2021. Its inclusion in the CPTPP could encourage China to make more investments in Vietnam and increase its competitiveness in apparel exports. China and Vietnam's CPTPP memberships could also result in demand drop for US textiles, making the industry's survival more difficult.

Source: fashionatingworld.com– Sep 23, 2021

HOME

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US Trade Representative visits Charlotte region's textile industry with talk of reshoring U.S. manufacturing

U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai made a trip to the Charlotte region on Sept. 23 with the goal of connecting with textile manufacturing leaders.

Tai is holding roundtables with industry leaders today before a discussion with students at Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte. Tai toured the Milliken & Co. Magnolia Finishing Plant in Blacksburg, South Carolina, before a roundtable there discussing women in the textile business. She then went to Mount Holly for a tour and roundtable with textile industry leaders at the American & Efird plant. She will finish the day at JCSU.

Despite the stark decline of textile manufacturing, Tai said the pandemic showed the strengths of the sector. She hopes that increased calls for reshoring U.S. manufacturing since the pandemic hit apply to textiles too. The Charlotte region's deep ties to the industry prompted Tai's trip here.

"I think that, in the scramble that we had a year and a half ago over PPE, for example, that was a real realization for probably everybody in our economy that the erosion of our manufacturing base has gotten to a point where, in a moment of crisis, there is a certain set of things that there just aren't enough of in the world, we need to be able to step up and produce," Tai said, referring to shortages of personal protective equipment and other items in the early days of Covid-19. "And the textiles industry has really, really stepped up."

U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai held a Women in Textiles roundtable at the Milliken & Co. Magnolia Finishing Plant in Blacksburg, South Carolina, on Sept. 23.
Enlarge

U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai held a Women in Textiles roundtable at the Milliken & Co. Magnolia Finishing Plant in Blacksburg, South Carolina, on Sept. 23.

Gaston County includes one stop on Tai's tour. The county has been relevant in the textile manufacturing space both before and after the sector's significant decline. Companies there are among those Tai discussed in helping produce PPE.

Gastonia-based Parkdale Inc. has been one of the nation's largest federal contractors for emergency Covid-19 protective and testing supplies. Beverly Knits, also in Gastonia, worked with Parkdale and other manufacturers on a national effort to ramp up mask production.

Tai hopes her trip to the region sends a message that the textile industry is a priority in trade talks and policy at the federal level. She also pitched President Joe Biden's plans for infrastructure as critical in helping the textile sector rebound as well as manufacturing as a whole.

"I think it leads straight into the conversation that is going on right now, hot and heavy in Washington with lots of relevance for the entire economy, which is America investing in America, investing in our infrastructure, investing in our people and making sure we are thinking about our future strategically," Tai said. "The global marketplace is increasingly competitive. There are others who are investing in themselves. We've got to go toe-to-toe with them."

Source: bizjournals.co– Sep 23, 2021

HOME

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Pakistan: Provide more incentives to textile processing units, urges APTMA

Sheikh Shahid Javaid, Regional Chairman, All Pakistan Textile Processing Mills Association (APTPMA) has urged the government to provide more incentives for the textile processing sector. Javaid said, previous governments had badly ignored the textile processing industry despite the sector earning huge foreign exchange for the country. However, the PTI government took pro-industry steps to revive this sector. It provided subsidized energy rates for the textile sector in addition to implementing the 'inspector-less regime' policy to stir its growth, he added.

The government also provided relief to the industrial sector and adopted smart lockdown policy to keep industrial wheel on moving during the COVID-19 period. It provided electricity on comparatively less rates to the textile sector, Javed observed. He added, COVID-19, has increased raw material prices manifold at global level due to cartelization, pushing the textile processing industry on the verge of total collapse.

Therefore, the government needs to take bold steps and provide more incentive to the sector by exchange rates, reversing freight rates on previous level and imposing zero rate policy on raw material imports, he added.

Source: fashionatingworld.com – Sep 23, 2021

HOME

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Sustainability pressures compel brands to relook raw material choices

Sustainability pressures compel brands to relook raw materialThe pandemic has accelerated demand for clothes made from performance fabrics because of its moisture-wicking, anti-odor and cooling properties they offer. As per a Women's Wear Daily report, consumers are seeking not just presentable but also versatile garments. This has created demand for fabrics with technical attributes, says Stephen Kerns, President, Schoeller USA. His company launched several products in June including 'Drys', a two-way stretch fabric made from recycled polyester and Ecorepel Bio, a moisture and abrasion-resistant technology that can be used in sports and lifestyle apparel.

The company also launched Schoeller Shape, a cotton blend made from recycled polyamide. Another launch is the Softight ripstop fabric made from recycled polyamide for making pants. Finished with Ecorepel Bio technology, these fabrics offer are water- and dirt-repellent besides being PFC-free and renewable raw materials-based. They can be used in bottoms, tops and jackets, says Kerns,.

Opportunity for stretch fabrics

Pandemic-prompted lifestyle changes have stepped up demand for stretch fabrics, opines Kerns. These fabricsSustainability pressures compel brands to relook raw material choices enable consumers to retain their garments longer, explains Alexa Raab, Head-Global Brand and Communications, Sorona, a bio-based, high-performance polymer from DuPont. Sorona-blended fabrics not just offer long-lasting stretch but also feature wrinkle resistance and shape recovery properties that reduce bagging and pilling.

Certified through the company's 'Common Thread Certification Program', these fabrics meet the key performance criteria of long-lasting stretch, shape recovery, easy care, softness and breathability. They are being used in home products and comforters. In February, Dupont teamed with Thindown to launch a blended material that provides warmth, lightness and breathability on top of Sorona's softness, drape and stretch.

Owned by Milliken & Co, Polartec increased the use of performance fabrics in garments, Steve Layton, President notes, the brand introduced synthetic PolarFleece performance fabric in 1981as an alternative to wool. It also works with Moncler, Stone Island, Reigning Champ, Veilance and other fashion brands.

Blending appearance with comfort

Appearance plays an important role in garments made from performance fabrics, says Layton. One of the most popular performance fabrics offered by Ploartec is the PowerAir that retains warmth by reducing microfiber shedding. Polartech also eliminates PFAS (per- and polyfluoralkyl substances) across its line of performance fabrics. In future, the brand aims to use more bio-based fibers in its performance fabrics, Layton adds.

Growing demand for sustainable performance fabrics have been answered by Unifi which launched Repreve recycled polyester fiber. As Chad Bolick, Vice President says, these fibers can be used to create a variety of products ranging from apparel and shoes to home furnishings.

Growing demand for merino wool loungewear

Consumers also look to merino wool to meet their performance needs. Stuart McCullough, Managing Director, The Woolmark Company says, consumers are seeking innovative and eco-friendly solutions in performance fabrics. This is leading to increased demand for loungewear made from merino wool. To capitalize on this, Woolmark plans to increase the use of performance fibers in shoes such as APL's technical knit runner.

McCullough believes demand for a sustainable system will drive the use of performance fabrics in future. Sustainability pressures are compelling brands and manufacturers to relook their material choices and opt for more eco-friendly fibers. Australian wool is emerging as a more eco-friendly option for development of sustainable textiles.

Source: fashionatingworld.com– Sep 23, 2021

HOME

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Apparel dominates Brand Finance's 2021 luxury brands list with 62% value

Apparel dominates Brand Finances 2021 luxury brands list withIn 2021, 62 per cent of the total value generated by the world's top 50 valuable luxury and premium brands was from apparel brands reveals 2021 Luxury and Premium 50 report by Brand Finance. The report states, 30 apparel brands dominated the ranking. However, the value of these brands declined due to COVID-19. Total value of the world's top 59 most valuable and premium brands declined 5 per cent year-on-year, from $227.1 billion in 2020 to $219.5 billion in 2021.

Gucci wins despite a drop in brand value

Italian fashion value Gucci emerged second in the list dominated by German auto giantApparel dominates Brand Finances 2021 luxury brands list with 62 value Porsche, who topped with a brand value of $34.3 billion. Gucci's brand value however, declined by 12 per cent this year. With a 118 per cent growth in brand value, French ready-to-wear and leather luxury goods brand Celine emerged as the fastest growing brand, while American luxury design house Coach recorded the biggest decline of 31 per cent in brand value in its apparel segment. The value of this segment declined to $47 billion.

Tapestry bucks downturn with strong e-commerce growth

Along with brand value, sales and profits also took a hit this year. However, Coach's parent company, Tapestry recorded triple-digit e-commerce growth besides a strong rebound across the Chinese market. The report also brands' relative strength based on factors such as marketing investment, customer familiarity, staff satisfaction, and corporate reputation. Automaker Ferrari tops this list with 2 per cent growth to $9.2 billion. It emerges as the world's second strongest brand in the list. Rolex follows as the second strongest luxury and premium brand in the world. The brand's value increased by one per cent to $7.9 billion in 2021 due to the watch market's strong resilience to the pandemic turmoil

Towards responsible apparel production

Alex Haigh, Valuation Director, Brand Finance believes, the pandemic can help transform the industry by accelerating e-commerce use and making apparel production socially and environmentally responsible.

Taking steps in this direction, German automaker Porsche has introduced the brand's 'Strategy 2025.' Through this strategy, the automobile brand aims to launch more sustainable offerings like Taycan which sold 20,000 units last year. The auto giant also aims to maintain the traditional aspects that the brand is known for.

Hospitality suffers as consumers 'work from home'

The rise in work from home culture led to a complete standstill in the hospitality industry. However, two hotels Shangri-La and Intercontinental managed to buck the trend. Ranked on the 29th position, Shangri-La emerged as the highest-ranked hotel brand. Home to several five-star luxury properties across Middle East, Asia, North America and Europe, the hotel recorded an impressive growth across mainland China as domestic leisure travel supported demand. On the other hand, the Intercontinental Hotel was ranked 35th in the list.

Source: fashionatingworld.com– Sep 22, 2021

HOME

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IAF, ABIT, Euratex join hands for international conferences on European industry

International Apparel Federation (IAF), ABIT, the national association for the Brazilian Apparel and Textile industry and Euratex have joined forces to hold international conferences to offer complementary insights into the huge transition the apparel and textile industries are going through. While the conferences of IAF and ABIT are based on similar themes, Euratex's conference is based on 'A new paradigm for the European Textile and Clothing Industry.'

ABIT's international conference will take place on October 27 and 28 and focus on people, exploring data gathering; a transition to a design more guided by individualization and communication in a digital environment. IAF's conference will focus on the intra supply chain dynamics, looking at how the relations between buyers and suppliers need to change. Meanwhile, Euratex's conference will focus on the role of legislation shaping our industry's actions.

IAF and Euratex will hold their conferences back-to-back in Antwerp, Belgium on November 8 and 9 respectively. For those visitors that might be held back by pandemic related restrictions to visit the venue in Antwerp, the conferences will be available online.

Source: fashionatingworld.com– Sep 23, 2021

HOME

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Egypt's cotton prices jump to record as gov't promotes textile industry

With the government's effort to promote the textile industry, Egypt's cotton prices have jumped to a record in 2021, nearly doubled compared to the previous year.

KAFR EL-SHEIKH, Egypt, Sept. 23 (Xinhua) -- Cotton prices in Egypt have jumped to a record in 2021, nearly doubled compared to the previous year as the government is keen to promote the textile industry, by expanding the cultivated areas and improving the quality of seeds.

"This is the best season of cotton production for the Egyptian farmer," said Hisham Mosad, manager of state-run Cotton Research Institute.

According to official statistics, the price of a qantar of cotton (45 kg of lint cotton) has surged by more than 70 percent to 3,900 Egyptian pounds (nearly 248 U.S. dollars) compared to 114.5 dollars last year.

"The Egyptian cotton will restore its place and constitute a large part of the country's national economy," Mosad told Xinhua while watching the harvest of the long-staple cotton starting on Tuesday.

Mosad attributed the rise in cotton prices to the new marketing system that depended on holding auctions across the country periodically and the government's new approach of selling cotton this season.

"The country has a tendency to advance the textile production, and the agriculture ministry has been working on improving seed quality," he said.

The cotton planting area in Egypt in 2021 amounts to 236,000 feddans (991,200,877 square meters), compared to 183,000 feddans (768,600,680 square meters) in 2020, Mosad said, predicting that cotton will represent a big share in the types map of plantation across the country in the coming few years.

So far, some twenty countries have signed contracts with Egypt to import Egyptian cotton, he said, naming India, Pakistan, the U.S., China, some EU countries, and Japan as the top importers of Egyptian cotton.

"We also opened new markets in England, Portugal and Canada. Revenues from cotton are hiking," Mosad added.

Egypt exports the majority of its long-staple cotton and imports three million qantars of short-staple cotton that is originally used in local textile production, according to official statistics.

However, under the government's new strategy for 2025, 60 percent of the cotton production will be used in local industries, while Egypt used to export 80 percent of its production, Mosad said.

Magdy al-Souraky, head of the Assembly General for Land Reclamation Association in Cairo, said that "I am glad that Egyptian cotton will restore its glory among the world markets."

"The farmers' high income from selling the cotton this year was not surprising," he said, adding that owing to the harvested cotton's high specifications, the Egyptian and foreign companies offered high prices in the auctions.

However, he argued that the traditional process of cotton picking is one of the challenges facing the Egyptian farmers. "We still collect the cotton by hand while the world is moving to the machine harvest," al-Souraky said.

Source: bignewsnetwork.com– Sep 23, 2021

HOME

****

Kyrgyzstan's textile production amounted to 3.9 bn soms in 2021

Manufacturing output in Kyrgyzstan in January-August 2021 amounted to 160,656.7 million soms, said the National Statistics Committee.

Production of textiles, clothing and footwear, leather and other leather products amounted to 3,913.2 million soms (1.9%).

Production of clothing and footwear, leather and other leather goods increased in volumes by 5.7%.

Textile production increased by 4.1%, leather, leather goods and footwear increased by 48.8%.

Source: akipress.com– Sep 24, 2021

HOME

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NATIONAL NEWS

PM Modi meets leading American CEOs; encourages them to invest in India

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday met a group of five top American corporate leaders on a one-on-one basis from a range of diverse sectors ranging from drones to 5G, semiconductor, and solar and encouraged them to step up their investments by highlighting the vast opportunities in India.

"Talking technology...," the Prime Minister's Office said in a Twitter post after Modi's meeting with Qualcomm CEO Cristiano Amon and First Solar CEO Mark Widmar. They had a productive interaction, it said.

"PM Modi highlighted the vast opportunities India offers. Mr. Amon expressed keenness to work with India in areas such as 5G and other" Digital India efforts, it added.

Qualcomm, which started its operations in 1996, has operations specialising in wireless modem and multimedia software, Digital Signal Processing (DSP) and embedded applications, and digital media networking solutions.

In India, Qualcomm Ventures has invested in companies that address key domestic issues from dairy, transportation to defence.

"Toward making India a global innovation hub!" Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi tweeted. The Prime Minister had a conversation with Amon on investment opportunities in hi-tech sectors in India.

"Discussed recent electronics and telecom manufacturing PLI schemes; and measures to strengthen innovation ecosystem," he added.
ALSO READ: Modi discusses boosting defence tech with General Atomics chief executive

They discussed investment opportunities offered in India's telecommunications and electronics sector. This included the recently launched Production Linked Incentive Scheme (PLI) for Electronics System Design and Manufacturing (ESDM) as well as developments in the semiconductor supply chain in India, the MEA said in a release.

"Strategies for building the local innovation ecosystem in India were also discussed, the ministry added.

"Powering India's Solar Potential!" Bagchi said after Modi's meeting with Widmar. They discussed India's renewable energy landscape.

Widmar shared plans to use the PLI scheme for manufacturing solar power equipment with unique thin-film technology; and integrating India into global supply chains, Bagchi said in a tweet.

First Solar has successfully commissioned 150 MW of Utility-Scale Solar Power to the Grid in India and has installed 1.8 GW of solar capacity in the country. Early this year, it announced its intention to set up a new 3.3 GW Facility in India. As such First Solar is contributing to India's plans to ramp up solar power generation to 100 GW by 2022.

During the meeting, the prime minister elaborated on India's efforts to harness solar energy, including the 'One world, One sun and One grid' initiative and investment opportunities in the sector, his office said in a tweet.

"They talked about India's renewable energy landscape, particularly solar energy potential, and our target of 450 GW electricity generation from renewable sources by 2030, the ministry said.

Discussions also took place about First Solar's interest in setting up manufacturing facilities in India using their unique thin-film technology by availing the recently launched Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme, as well integrating India into global supply chains, it added.

In his meeting with Adobe CEO Shantanu Narayen, Prime Minister Modi discussed Adobe's ongoing activities in India and future investment plans, according to Bagchi.

"Ideas to leverage Digital India flagship programme in sectors like health, education and R&D were also discussed, he said. "Deepening Knowledge Partnerships! he tweeted.

After North America, India represents Adobe's biggest operations with over 6,000 employees across its campuses in Noida and Bengaluru. India also serves as an innovation hub for Adobe, with the Indian R&D team contributing to development of every Adobe product. Moreover, initiatives such as Adobe's Grassroots Innovation Challenge and Women-in-Technology Scholarship are fueling the ongoing digital revolution in India.

Modi also met Vivek Lall, chief executive of General Atomics, and Stephen A Schwarzman from Blackstone.

The Prime Minister and Lall discussed India's strides in drone technology, including the path-breaking reforms and PLI scheme, the PMO said in a tweet.

"They spoke about strengthening the defence technology sector in India. Lall appreciated the recent policy changes to accelerate defence and emerging technology manufacturing and augment capacity building in India, the MEA said.

General Atomics, which opened its first office in India in 2018, is making significant contributions to deepen India-US defence and security cooperation. It is working with both governments in an effort to provide India with the latest systems and technologies supporting national defence. General Atomics has also partnered with Indian companies to develop solutions for Indian defence as well as capacity building.

"India remains an attractive investment destination! PM @narendramodi met Mr. Stephen Schwarzman, CEO @blackstone. Discussed ongoing projects and further investment opportunities in India, including under the National Infrastructure Pipeline and National Monetisation Pipeline," Bagchi tweeted.

Blackstone, which started its operations in India in 2006 and has so far invested around USD 15 billion in various sectors including private equity, real estate, education, fashion, packaging and housing finance.

Blackstone Real Estate Fund is said to be the largest owner of commercial real estate in India. The company played a key role in launching India's first real estate investment trust (REIT) along with its partner Embassy Group in 2019 and has since then launched two REITs in the country.

Source: business-standard.com– Sep 24, 2021

HOME

****

Goods exports to hit record $190 billion in first half of FY22: Commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal

After a Covid-induced fall of 7% last fiscal, exports this fiscal have been supported by improved order flow from advanced markets following an economic resurgence there and rise in global commodity prices.

Addressing exporters in Mumbai, the minister said exports already hit $185 billion by September 21 this fiscal and exuded confidence that the country would realise the ambitious target of $400 billion in FY22.

Merchandise exports could hit a record $190 billion or even cross this level in the first half of FY22, commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal said on Thursday. While the export would be 51% higher than a year before, aided by a conducive base, it would also exceed the pre-pandemic (same period in FY20) level by 19%.

Addressing exporters in Mumbai, the minister said exports already hit $185 billion by September 21 this fiscal and exuded confidence that the country would realise the ambitious target of $400 billion in FY22.

Source: financialexpress.com– Sep 24, 2021

HOME

****

Piyush Goyal inaugurates Centre of Excellence in Logistics and Supply Chain Management at NITIE, Mumbai

Union Commerce, Industry and Textile Minister Piyush Goyal today inaugurated Centre of Excellence in Logistics and Supply Chain Management at NITIE in Mumbai. The Minister asserted that centre would be helpful the logistics sector become more cost-effective, make the sector more competitive, create new jobs, improves export, engage better with the world markets, expand outreach and bring more economic activity to India.

Union Minister For Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal said that India is at a very nacent stage of industrial engineering training, research and study and lots more needs to be done as scope is unlimited. Mr. Goyal also said that in the current age where global supply chains are adding value to international trade and world is getting closer and working as one, the amount of interdependency in the current way of doing business in globalised world calls for significant value addition. He added that value addition in research, packaging, transport, storage and more can be thought through in global supply chain.

Giving example of how pizza is delivered in 30 minutes, he said that the same has to be done in every walk of life including delivery of public services. Mr. Goyal also mentioned that with the work at NITIE the future of the country can be transformed.

Source: aninews.in – Sep 23, 2021

HOME

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All states come on board for Rs 3 trillion discoms reforms scheme

States are in consensus with the Centre on the Rs 3-trillion power distribution reforms scheme launched this year, said R K Singh, union minister for power, new and renewable energy.

Singh held a virtual meeting with state power ministers on Thursday. He said, however, the states have been given a two-month extension--till this December--to submit their loss reduction plan.

"Almost all states have said that they will reduce their losses and draft a plan for it. Most of them will be able to submit their plan by October," Singh said, adding the ministry will handhold states in preparing their loss reduction plans.

The new 'Reforms-based and Results-linked, Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme' seeks to improve the operational efficiencies and financial sustainability of all discoms/power departments (excluding private sector discoms) by providing conditional financial assistance to discoms for strengthening of supply infrastructure.

The assistance will be based on meeting pre-qualifying criteria as well as upon achievement of basic minimum benchmarks by the discom evaluated on the basis of agreed evaluation framework tied to financial improvements. Implementation of the Scheme would be based on the action plan worked out for each state, this paper had reported earlier. An annual appraisal of discoms would be done to check their progress and funding would be disbursed accordingly.

The Scheme will have an outlay of Rs 3,03,758 crore with an estimated gross budgetary support from the Central Government of Rs 97,631 crore. All the existing power sector reforms schemes namely DDUGJY, IPDS, PM-KUSUM scheme would be subsumed into this umbrella program. Singh said till yet Rs 2 lakh crore has already been given to the states under these schemes.

"The two key focus areas of the reform plan are strengthening the power supply system and modernising it. I want every discom to have an IT wing," he said.

Under the modernisation plan, SCADA, Demand management system, digital systems, smart prepaid meters etc would need to be installed.

Singh said states are required to prepare their plan based on thorough system study assessing the demand and the weaknesses in their power systems.

The scheme has been designed as a bottom-up scheme and the discoms/States are empowered to prepare their own detailed project reports (DPRs) based on their need assessments prioritizing the loss reduction works, the minister said.

During the meeting, Singh said states were also encouraged to avail benefits of PM-KUSUM scheme for solarisation of agricultural feeders.

State owned lenders Rural Electrification Corporation and Power Finance Corporation have been nominated as nodal agencies for facilitating implementation of the Scheme.

State-owned discoms across the country and financially and operationally beleaguered despite four reform schemes in the last 15 years. The earlier discom reform scheme UDAY concluded in FY20 with most of the states failing to meet their stipulated targets and still in red.

Source: business-standard.com – Sep 24, 2021

HOME

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Australia trade minister to visit next week to advance trade deal talks

For Australia, there are significant growth opportunities in critical minerals, infrastructure, energy and technology, Tehan said in his address Wednesday

Australia's trade minister Dan Tehan will visit India next week to advance talks on a free trade agreement called the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA), an early harvest deal of which is to be concluded by December 2021.

For Australia, there are significant growth opportunities in critical minerals,

infrastructure, energy and technology, Tehan said in his address Wednesday. "Both countries are committed to achieving an early harvest announcement on an interim agreement to liberalise and deepen bilateral trade in goods and services, and pave the way for an early conclusion of a full CECA," he said.

CECA. Tehan said that he and commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal are seeking to make progress towards an interim deadline. "It's an ambitious approach, and this meeting will be crucial, but it's one that can be achieved if both sides are seeking a truly complementary agreement," he said. In 2020-21, India's exports to Australia amounted to $4.04 billion while imports were $8.24 billion.

India mainly exported refined petroleum, medicaments, railway vehicles including hovertrains, pearls and gems, jewellery and made-up textile articles. Major imports were coal, copper ores and concentrates, gold, vegetables, wool and other animal hair, fruits and nuts, lentils and education-related services.

Source: Economic Times– Sep 23, 2021

HOME

****

GST rates increase, a huge setback for the garment industry

Experts and businessmen believe, the government's decision to increase GST on textile articles like yarn, fabric, cloth to 12 per cent from January 1, 2022 will lead to an increase in prices of garments and textile articles for end consumers. It will also hike the cost of investment for the businessmen, says NK Thamman, Tax Expert. Narinder Mittal, General Secretary, Ludhiana Business Forums opines, the GST increase will prove to be a big setback for the industry already facing severe fund crunch due to lockdowns.

Harish Kairpal, Finance Secretary, Knitwear Club, adds, the move will have serious repercussions on garment and textile manufacturers. Their cost of investment will rise steeply and retail consumers will also suffer as rates of garments and textile articles will be increased due to this tax difference.

Source: fashionatingworld.com– Sep 23, 2021

HOME

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India's exports to EU declined in the last 20 years, accounts for mere 0.9% of the total imports of EU

India's exports have seen a gentle progress during the last six months, however bucking this pattern commerce with the European Union (EU), which is the second largest export marketplace for India after the USA, has seen a gentle decline.

In response to an evaluation by MVIRDC WTC Mumbai, the share of the European Union in India's merchandise exports has declined within the final 20 years. The share of the European Union in India's general items exports declined from 18% in 2001 to 14% in 2020, regardless that there was progress within the absolute worth of shipments. India's exports to the European Union stagnated round $45 billion since 2011 after rising from $8.1 billion in 2001. As we speak, India hardly accounts for 0.9% of the overall import of the European Union, which displays untapped export potential on this market.

That is in stark distinction to the present progress in India's exports. In response to India Exim Bank exports from India within the quarter ending September 2021 is estimated to be $98 billion. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry expects India's exports to develop to $1 trillion by 2027-28. It has deliberate to reinforce exports of 31 commodities to 200 nations to achieve the goal of $400 billion exports in 2021.

Whereas the EU is seeing a decline, the share of Asia in India's items exports grew from 38% to 46%, Center East Asia rose from 13% to fifteen.6%, Africa's share expanded from 6.4% to 9.5% and Latin America and Caribbean's share elevated from 2.4% to 4.5%. The share of North America (USA, Canada & Mexico) in India's items exports remained regular round 20% within the final 20 years.

What led to the stagnation?

The report says India's worth of exports to the European Union has not made a lot headway within the final one decade due to a slew of non tariff measures taken by the bloc towards Indian exports. Particularly, the plant and animal security measures (technically referred to as sanitary and phytosanitary measures) has affected India's exports of agro commodities. The European Union has carried out eight sanitary and phytosanitary measures towards India's agro product exports up to now.

In a press release, Vijay Kalantri, Chairman, MVIRDC World Commerce Middle Mumbai mentioned, "There may be enormous scope for Indian exporters to broaden their footprint within the EU market. India must revive its negotiation of the FTA with the EU to resolve the non-tariff barriers."

With the intention to enhance the exports to the EU market, MVIRDC WTC Mumbai says India must take a three-pronged technique:

- Promote exports of mechanical home equipment, electrical & digital machineries and its elements, cars & auto elements, that are prime import gadgets within the EU
- Revive negotiation of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the EU to resolve non tariff obstacles
- Present yearly goal to India's official commerce missions within the EU nations for rising exports to those respective nations

Potential market

The European Union holds the important thing in India realizing its export goal of $1 trillion by 2027-28, because the bloc is the second largest importer of products on this planet with a share of 28% in world imports, after Asia's 38% share. Main merchandise imported by European Union bloc are:

1. Mechanical home equipment
2. Electrical and digital machineries and its elements
3. Cars and auto elements
4. Prescription drugs
5. Plastic merchandise
6. Medical and scientific devices
7. Natural chemical compounds
8. Iron and metal merchandise

India exports to the EU grew greater than 5 instances between 2001 and 2011 to $45 billion, however stagnated within the subsequent years. Round 60% of products imported by the European Union are sourced from nations throughout the bloc. The low share of India within the whole import of EU displays scope for increasing the exports on this bloc. Within the final 20 years, nations comparable to Romania and Slovakia have elevated exports to different nations throughout the European Union. Due to this fact, Indian exporters planning to foray into the EU market have to show their competitiveness towards others, says the MVIRDC WTC Mumbai.

Source: universalpersonality.com– Sep 23, 2021

HOME

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East India's textile industry wants govt focus on jute, tech textiles

The Indian government should give special importance to the jute industry in the eastern part of the country, participants said at a recent discussion session organised by the Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) with the ministry of textiles. With Bangladesh growing faster in technical textiles, they feel the government's focus on that sector has not been enough.

The participants raised concern over the varied goods and services tax rates and requested the central textile ministry to seek a fixed single slab of 7 per cent for all types of garments.

They urged the government to replicate the Bangladesh model of supporting the textile fraternity with ease-of-business and simplified tax structures.

Global buyers are comparing the cost of Indian textile products with Chinese ones and the reason for the higher cost of Indian products is because the country's banking system is not supporting the textile sector, it was discussed.

The participants also raised concerns over how the production-linked incentive scheme will benefit micro, small and medium enterprises in the eastern region.

Man-made fibres is an area where India has been lagging, they felt.

The eastern region should take advantage of the proximity to Bangladesh to cultivate a textile hub, they added.

Source: fibre2fashion.com– Sep 24, 2021

HOME

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