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82.84	91.06	105.45	0.57

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

UK GDP projected to grow by 0.4% in 2023, 0.3% in 2024: NIESR

Despite continuing to expect the United Kingdom to steer clear of a recession in 2023, gross domestic product (GDP) is projected to grow barely by 0.4 per cent this year and by 0.3 per cent in 2024, with the latest economic outlook by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR) remaining highly uncertain.

There are, in fact, even chances that GDP growth will contract by the end of this year and a roughly 60 per cent risk of a recession at the end of 2024, NIESR said on its website. "We forecast inflation to remain continually above target until 2025. More specifically we expect it to fall to 5.2 per cent by the end of 2023 and to 3.9 per cent by the end of 2024, as the effects of the rises in bank rate over the past year start to take effect," NIESR said.

"Nevertheless, with core inflation at 6.9 per cent, and other underlying inflation measures remaining high, we see significant risks to our inflation forecast, which could result in inflation being higher than anticipated," it noted. Low economic growth and stagnant productivity is increasing the financial vulnerability of households in the bottom half of the income distribution and the incidence of destitution at the poorest end, the institute observed.

Its projections for 2024 suggest that inequalities of income and assets will grow, with little real income growth for many, low or no savings, higher debt, as well as elevated housing, energy and food costs. As a consequence, the shortfall in the real disposable incomes of households in the bottom half of the income distribution is set to reach some 17 per cent between 2019 and 2024, it said. Real wages in many UK regions are expecting to be below pre-pandemic levels by the end of 2024. The institute expects the number of people available for work to continue to grow with the unemployment rate reaching 4.7 per cent in 2024 and peaking at 5.1 per cent, its 'natural rate', by 2026.

Source: fibre2fashion.com – Aug 09, 2023

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AGOA boosts Kenya's textile exports to US; sector sees 7.2% growth

The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) has benefitted Kenya's textile and apparel sector, leading to monthly exports to the tune of Sh4.5 billion, or Sh150 million per day, last year, according to a study by London-based Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA).

The programme has had a positive impact on the country's export-processing zones (EPZs), especially in the textile and garment sector.

Kenya is the second-largest exporter of textile and apparel products to the Unitd States among AGOA beneficiaries.

The sector has experienced steady growth in capital investment, with a 7.2 per cent increase from 2018 to 2022, in which 36 firms with a capital investment of Sh24.88 billion employed 66,260 people and generated exports worth Sh54.12 billion, a Kenyan newspaper reported.

The textile and garment sector accounted for 7 per cent of Kenya's total exports last year.

Source: fibre2fashion.com – Aug 09, 2023

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UK to apply GSP to 92% Bangladesh tariff lines for 3 yrs post 2026

Bangladesh will receive duty-free export facilities for 92 per cent of tariff line products, including readymade garments (RMG), in the UK market after graduating from the least developed country (LDC) status in 2026, according to Mohammad Abdur Rahim Khan, additional secretary (export) in the Bangladesh commerce ministry.

Khan led his country's delegation at a recent meeting in Dhaka of the joint working group formed for the expansion of UK-Bangladesh bilateral trade and investment.

The United Kingdom will continue offering Bangladesh different facilities under the Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) for three years as a transition period after LDC graduation.

However, Dhaka proposed at the meeting that the United Kingdom continue the GSP benefits for six years following LDC graduation. The UK delegation replied that it will discuss the matter on their side, according to a report in a Bangladesh news outlet.

Bangladesh's merchandise exports to the UK—the third largest export destination of the country—peaked at $5.3 billion in fiscal 2022-23, up from $4.8 billion in the previous fiscal, and double the figure from a decade ago when it stood at $2.7 billion, according to commerce ministry data.

Source: fibre2fashion.com – Aug 10, 2023

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World’s top jeans maker on a mission to stop water wastage in production

San Francisco, May 20, 1873 is one of fashion’s iconic dates that are going to be etched in history forever. On this day, the US saw the birth of blue jeans. Levi Strauss and Jacob Davis obtained a US patent on the process of putting rivets in men's work trousers for the very first time. At that time, the proud inventors of the blue jeans would not have known how this humble bottom wear for manual labourers would not only take the world by storm but also become an enduring and loved clothing item forever.

They knew even less that the humble pair of jeans consumes 3,800 litres of water as it journeys from the cotton fields to factories and then on the wardrobe. With the fashion industry being accused of being one of the key players in depleting the earth’s resources and contaminating its surfaces, brands are trying their best to work out innovative solutions. In the case of Levi Strauss & Co, it was their Water Action Strategy.
Water Action Strategy 2025

Levi Strauss & Co. is aiming to do its part to save as much water as it can, particularly where it matters most, which is through its production processes. In 2019, the brand had announced a new Water Action Strategy where it committed to reduce the amount of water used in manufacturing in highly stressed areas by 50 per cent by 2025, those areas being home to half the world’s population.

The pledge made through the Water Action Strategy is that the manufacturing units of Levi Strauss & Co in such water-stressed areas will only use as much water as can be naturally replenished. As a spokesperson of Levi Strauss *& Co mentions, “To this end, we will help all of our key suppliers (representing 80 percent of total product volume) become distinguished Water<Less® facilities by 2025.”

In the same communiqué, Liz O’Neill, Executive Vice President and President of LS&Co.’s Global Product, Innovation and Supply Chain said, “The Water Action Strategy announcement is an illustration of what sustainability means to us now: innovative, responsive, scalable programs that drive impact and inspire collective action to address the most pressing social and environmental issues facing our business, industry, and planet.”

Implementing Water Action Strategy

The first changes were innovation in design and manufacturing pipeline, having saved 3 billion liters of water since those changes were undertaken in 2019. Levi's is using the best available water-stress data to develop manufacturing facility-level targets that addresses local water stress. If a factory or fabric mill meets its target by adherence to sustainable consumption levels appropriate for its local region – then that facility and its products receive the Water<Less® distinction.

Through this targeted, contextual approach the brand believes it will make significant progress towards alleviating local water stress where it operates Furthermore, Levi Strauss is helping its key suppliers achieve the Water<Less® designation by 2025, utilizing tools and programs like its existing Water<Less® techniques, its collaboration with the Apparel Impact Institute's Clean by Design program, and its partnership with the International Finance Corporation's Partnership for Cleaner Textiles (PaCT).

Blue Jeans Go Green: The denim recycle programme

The Blue Jeans Go Green™ program collects cotton-made denim so that it can be recycled back to its original fiber state and transformed into something new - because cotton is a natural, sustainable fiber, and old and discarded denim can be kept out of a landfill and given a new life. A part of the garment industry's move towards circularity, Blue Jeans Go Green has made an impact in the US. Since its inception, more than 4.5 million pieces of denim have been collected, over 2,290 tons of textile waste has been diverted from landfills, and more than 9 million square feet of insulation has been manufactured.

Source: fashionatingworld.com– Aug 09, 2023

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Sri Lanka's apparel industry leaps ahead with sustainable compliance initiatives

Amidst the economic challenges confronting Sri Lanka and the introduction of stringent EU sustainability laws, a transformative shift is underway in the country's apparel sector. With a growing recognition of the need for enhanced compliance processes, companies are turning to certification programs, such as the Worldwide Responsible Accreditation Production (WRAP), to streamline their operations and champion sustainable practices.

Sri Lanka's apparel industry has emerged as a trailblazer in embracing responsible manufacturing. Under the WRAP umbrella, an impressive 27 companies and 112 factory sites have obtained the coveted Worldwide Responsible Accreditation Production Certification. A recent interview with AvedisSeferian, President and CEO of WRAP, commended Sri Lanka's apparel industry for its resilience in the face of economic turmoil and the ongoing pandemic. He highlighted the unwavering commitment displayed by certified companies to uphold social compliance and sustainability standards.

Seferian emphasized the strategic importance of independent certification in the current landscape. As economic uncertainties persist, streamlined due diligence processes are essential. WRAP's comprehensive audit reports and resolutions of non-compliances provide a powerful testament to responsible sourcing practices, making it a compelling alternative to duplicative audits. The proliferation of legislative requirements further underscores the significance of independent programs like WRAP.

The interview shed light on Sri Lanka's substantial progress in embracing Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) criteria. Seferian praised the industry's consistent commitment to social compliance and sustainability, driven by a long-term investment perspective. This approach has led to positive outcomes, as Sri Lankan factories often exceed minimum compliance standards, incorporating worker-benefit initiatives and women empowerment programs.

Yet, challenges persist in the global apparel sector. Seferian identified short-term thinking as a prevailing hindrance to sustainable practices. The pursuit of immediate gains often overshadows long-term investments in social responsibility and sustainability. Overcoming this mindset, particularly in fast fashion, remains a universal challenge.

For future compliance, Seferian highlighted key trends, including the imperative to address forced labor concerns, ensure supply chain traceability, and proactively embrace sustainability. He underscored the role of transparent, independent validation processes and holistic supply chain mapping in creating a responsible industry.

As Sri Lanka anticipates labor law reforms, WRAP's adaptive approach ensures alignment with evolving regulations. Seferian emphasized WRAP's commitment to combating audit fatigue by collaborating with both manufacturers and buyers. The program's emphasis on independent, efficient, and credible audits aims to drive more sustainable practices.

In essence, Sri Lanka's apparel industry is at the forefront of an industry-wide shift towards streamlined compliance and sustainable manufacturing. Through independent certification programs like WRAP, the sector is not only weathering challenges but also paving the way for a more responsible and resilient future.

Source: fashionatingworld.com – Aug 09, 2023

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Peruvian fashion shines at CIFF

Peru's Commission for Promotion of Export and Tourism (PromPeru) is set to lead a delegation of ten prominent Peruvian clothing and decoration brands to make their mark at the esteemed Copenhagen International Fashion Fair (CIFF 2023) from August 9th to 11th.

This milestone marks the first time Peru, under PromPeru's Trade Office in Rotterdam, will have a presence at the event, boasting a substantial 125-square-meter stand. The showcased collections will boast a unique fusion of ancient Peruvian culture and modern sustainable practices.

Fashioned from locally sourced and biodegradable materials like cotton, alpaca fiber, toquilla straw, shiringa, and paiche (fish) leather, these exclusive creations pay homage to tradition while embracing innovation.

The lineup of Peruvian brands, including Sake, Fasce, Kero Design, Wisqa, Kuna from Arequipa, Tom Gutie, Kinua, Fringe, Amarena, and Pampa, proudly collaborate with communities in Cusco, Arequipa, Puno, and Amazonas regions, reinforcing the nation's commitment to sustainable fashion.

PromPeru's primary objective is to spotlight Peru's distinctive offerings for Scandinavian fashion professionals, international buyers, press, influencers, and sustainable fashion advocates. CIFF, Europe's dynamic and innovative sales platform since 1993, attracts over 2,000 brands to its 60,000 square-meter exhibition space, making it a crucial event for the global fashion industry.

The participation of Peruvian brands in the Consumer Show runway event on August 7th will kickstart Copenhagen's Fashion Week activities, amplifying the nation's influence in the European fashion sphere.

Notably, Scandinavian countries dominate the European fashion industry, united under Copenhagen Fashion Week (CFW) and CIFF's umbrella, which harnesses the region's collective talent and creativity. PromPeru's unwavering efforts, coupled with institutional support and technical guidance, have positioned Peru as a sustainable fashion trailblazer in Europe.

This initiative serves as a decisive response to escalating environmental consciousness in both consumer and corporate spheres, solidifying Peru's role in shaping a greener fashion future.

Source: fashionatingworld.com– Aug 09, 2023

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NATIONAL NEWS

Indian textile industry hails move to lower GST e-invoicing threshold

The Indian textile industry leaders have lauded the government's decision to lower the annual turnover limit for Good and Services Tax (GST) e-invoicing for business to business transactions to ₹5 crore, which came into effect on August 1. They view this change as beneficial for enhancing transparency, promoting business growth, and encouraging traceability and legal compliance.

Some industry experts also acknowledged challenges such as the need for experienced personnel and potential internet connectivity issues in remote areas but overall regarded the move as positive. They believe that e-invoicing will foster greater confidence in the market, restrict fraudulent practices, and be a step towards global competitiveness.

R Girirajan, managing partner of Siruvani Yarns, praised the Indian government's e-invoicing initiative but emphasised the need for experienced personnel to handle the work properly. He told Fibre2Fashion, “In one way, this is really a good move by the government. Even though there is nothing wrong with this matter, there should be exclusive, dedicated, and experienced persons to handle this work properly. We need to pay more for those experienced people. Certain remote places don't have proper internet connectivity, and this could be a challenge here. Of course, in due course of time, people will get used to it. Otherwise, it is a good move.”

S Duraisamy, managing director of Selvas Garments (Digsel), expressed that the new rule does not pose a threat or damage to businessmen and will, in fact, restrict the operation of fraudulent practices. He said, "There is no big threat or damage to businessmen because of this. When they include all their business transactions into this, their turnover will obviously increase, which will be helpful for them to approach the government for any kind of subsidy or loans based on their business volume.”

“They can't duplicate and manipulate the invoices once raised and filed through this. This rule will also make it easy for the movement of goods from one point to another. One more great advantage is that when we do e-invoicing, suppliers and customers are confident and happy that our company is a genuine one. People operating with bogus bills cannot have a free run in the market, which will help boost the business for all," Duraisamy added.

Kumaresan, managing director of Varna Clothings P Ltd (Alaya Cotton), said, "For better growth of the industry, and sustainability for any entrepreneur in the market consistently, there is a need not only for strict implementation of rules but also for hassle-free operational conveniences for all. In that way, this rule is a welcome one." R Rajnikanth, managing director of Eurocot Textiles India Private Limited, emphasised the importance of traceability in the textile industry, even for small products like towels. He believes that e-invoicing will offer traceability, being especially vital in a complex industry like textiles.

Rajnikanth told F2F: "Today, even a small towel demands an avenue for traceability. Thus, in my opinion, concepts like e-invoicing will provide an option for traceability, which is much needed in a multi-layer industry like textiles.

"Another advantage I see with respect to mandating e-invoicing is its impact on legal compatibilities. E-invoicing brings ease of business, and tools like Zoho and Tally have frugally enhanced the working environment. By 'legal', I also include aspects such as child labour, the number of women in the workforce, and more. In a highly critical industry, wilful defaulters will be identifiable."

Rajnikanth is of the opinion that if the Indian textile industry is to enter the global arena, some processes need to be in place. "I personally feel that e-invoicing is the first step for the Indian textile industry to stay ahead of the curve and compete in the global market. The textile industry is a cyclic one; at good times, we make money, and we need government policies that support us during our downtime. Policies like PLI are primarily for large companies. Growth-based PLI should be given to SME companies in terms of machinery, IT infrastructure, and others."

The limit has been reduced from ₹500 crore to ₹5 crore in a phased manner.

Source: fibre2fashion.com– Aug 09, 2023

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Govt has started trade with neighbouring countries in INR, says Anupriya Patel

The government has started trade in the rupee with neighbouring countries, including Nepal and Bhutan, Parliament was informed on Wednesday. Replying to a question in the Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Anupriya Patel said a significant part of the India-Nepal trade is being carried out in Indian Rupee (INR) and all bilateral trade with Bhutan is also transacted entirely in INR.

"Rupee trade mechanism has been initiated to facilitate trade in national currency with Russia. As of July 2, RBI has approved 34 applications from different Russian banks for opening SRVA in 14 Indian commercial banks," the minister said in a written reply.

RBI has issued guidelines for opening Special Rupee Vostro Accounts (SRVA) by foreign banks in Indian commercial banks. She said Sri Lanka has included INR in its list of designated foreign currencies. Authorised dealer (AD) banks in India have been permitted to open rupee vostro accounts.

Accordingly, these accounts "of eight corresponding banks from Sri Lanka have been opened with respective AD banks in India, with prior approval of the RBI," she added. With Iran, she said that an arrangement to facilitate bilateral trade payments between India and Iran was adopted on November 5, 2018.

India and Bangladesh have also formally launched a new mechanism to settle trade in INR on July 11. Two Indian and Bangladeshi banks each have been designated to settle bilateral trade in INR. These are SBI and ICICI Bank from India; and Sonali Bank PLC and Eastern Bank Ltd from Bangladesh.

"To formally launch trade in INR, a formal Exchange of the Letters of Credit, i.e, LC documents in INR between the first exporter and importer through their banks was also carried out on July 11, 2023," she said.

Source: economictimes.com– Aug 09, 2023

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Make in India initiative to make India a hub for manufacturing, design and innovation

Make in India initiative was launched on September 25, 2014, to facilitate investment, foster innovation, building best in class infrastructure, and making India a hub for manufacturing, design and innovation. The development of a robust manufacturing sector continues to be a key priority of the Indian Government. Since its launch, Make in India initiative has made significant achievements and presently focuses on 27 sectors under Make in India 2.0. which is implemented across various Ministries/Departments, Central Government, State Governments, including Tamil Nadu.

Government has taken a series of policy initiatives to improve the economic situation and convert the disruption caused by COVID 19 into an opportunity for growth. These includes the Atmanirbhar Bharat packages, introduction of Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme in fourteen (14) sectors, investment opportunities under National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) and National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP), India Industrial Land Bank (IILB), Industrial Park Rating System (IPRS), soft launch of the National Single Window System (NSWS), etc. An institutional mechanism to fast-track investments has been put in place, in the form of Project Development Cells (PDCs) in all concerned Ministries/ Departments of Government of India. All the above initiatives/schemes are implemented across various Ministries/Departments, Central Government, State Governments, including Tamil Nadu.

In addition to ongoing schemes of various Departments and Ministries, Government has taken various steps to boost domestic and foreign investments in India. These include the introduction of Goods and Services Tax, reduction in corporate tax, improving ease of doing business, FDI policy reforms, measures for reduction in compliance burden, measures to boost domestic manufacturing through public procurement orders, Phased Manufacturing Programme (PMP) and QCOs (Quality Control Orders), to name a few.

Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Schemes for 14 key sectors (with an incentive outlay of Rs. 1.97 lakh crore) are under implementation to enhance India’s manufacturing capabilities and exports. With announcement of PLI Schemes, significant improvement in production, skills, employment, economic growth and exports is expected over the next five years and more. As of now 733 applications have been approved across the country in 14 sectors including Tamil Nadu.

The One District One Product (ODOP) is an initiative aimed at fostering balanced regional development across all districts of the country. The initiative aims to promote at least One Product from each District (One District- One Product) of the country for enabling holistic socio-economic growth across all regions. The ODOP initiative has identified more than 1000 products encompassing various sectors such as Textiles, agriculture, food processing, handicrafts and more from all 761 districts of the country. State-wise/district-wise list of products identified under the ODOP initiative, including products from various districts of Tamil Nadu is available on the following link: -

(https://static.investindia.gov.in/s3fs-public/2023-06/20230609_ODOP%20Product%20List.pdf)

Due to Make in India Initiative, FDI equity inflow in the manufacturing sector between 2014-2022 has increased by 57% over the previous 8 years i.e. 2006- 2014.

The activities under the Make in India initiative are also being undertaken by several Central Government Ministries/ Departments and various State Governments. Ministries formulate action plans, programmes, schemes and policies for the sectors being dealt by them, while States also have their own Schemes for attracting investments.

This information has been provided by the Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, Shri Som Parkash in a written reply in the Lok Sabha today.

Source: pib.gov.in– Aug 09, 2023

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Priority to logistics, MSMEs needed to boost India's exports: CareEgde

Continued priority on developing logistics infrastructure, offering incentives for participation of the private sector, especially micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and making new trade agreements as comprehensive as feasible require policy attention to strengthen the domestic industry and bolster export competitiveness, according to a recent knowledge paper by CareEdge Ratings.

Though India’s export basket has high complementarity with the import baskets of the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Belgium and Indonesia, these countries account for a low share of India’s total exports now, reflecting untapped potential markets, an analysis of the trade complementarity index in the paper noted.

The paper, titled ‘Trade: The Fulcrum of India’s Growth’, emphasises the critical role played by trade in enhancing the welfare of any economy.

Focus on logistic infrastructure is needed to reduce costs and boost domestic competitiveness. Continued and targeted policy action remains the key to eliminating the domestic structural challenges and leveraging the full potential of investments, the paper noted.

Incentivising private sector participation could hold the key to promoting domestic research and development and move up the value chain, it said.

Correcting duty anomalies is crucial to attracting investments in the manufacturing sector and improving India’s export competitiveness.

Sectors that are high export-intensive or have a high export potential must be prioritised while correcting the inverted duty structure anomaly, it suggested.

Source: fibre2fashion.com– Aug 09, 2023

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India defers cotton quality control order by 3 months

The Indian government has postponed by three months its decision to implement the Cotton Bales (quality control) Order, 2023.

The order will be implemented from November 27, instead of August 28, a gazette order issued by the Ministry of Textiles late on Tuesday night said.

The decision to defer the implementation came after a request from textile organisations and trade associations during a meeting with textiles ministry officials overthe weekend.

Specifications

The order, better known as cotton QCO (quality control order) was notified by the Union Textiles Ministry on February 28 and was meant to come into force 180 days after its publication in the gazette. It applies to processed cotton (ginned) and unprocessed or raw cotton (kapas).

The order prescribes norms for bales of ginned cotton as well as requirements for the materials used in the packing of bales.

The QCO specifies 8 per cent moisture content for cotton bales, mandates ginning mills to test at least 5 per cent of the bales, and restricts trash content in the bales below 3 per cent.

The QCO will apply to imported cotton too. The Tamil Nadu Spinning Mills Association (TASMA) had urged the Centre to postpone the order until a consensus could be reached among all stakeholders.

The Cotton Association of India (CAI) urged Commerce and Textiles Minister Piyush Goyal to defer the QCO by a “minimum of one or two years”.

Lack of infrastructure

CAI president Atul Ganatra said ginners will find it difficult to ensure 8 per cent moisture in cotton bales as it will be 10-12 per cent in lint (processed cotton) and 15-25 per cent in kapas (raw cotton) during October-December.

He pointed to the lack of adequate infrastructure to test the cotton bales, and also expressed difficulty in meeting the limit for trash content in cotton.

The Karnataka Cotton Association (KCA) sought a meeting between the textiles ministry and ginners to address and clarify "all the confusion" surrounding the QCO.

It wanted the QCO deferred until proper testing infrastructure is available, given the few labs that are accredited by the National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL).

It called for applying the quality parameters at the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) yards, which are the procurement centres for kapas.

Source: thehindubusinessline.com– Aug 09, 2023

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GeM celebrates 7th Foundation Day marking unprecedented achievements

As Government e-Marketplace (GeM) commemorates its 7th Foundation Day, it stands tall as a beacon of progress in India's public procurement landscape. GeM has consistently demonstrated an unwavering commitment to fostering positive change, and its journey over the past seven years has been marked by remarkable achievements that have propelled it to become one of the largest public procurement portal in terms of both transaction value and the breadth of the buyer-seller ecosystem.

In an astonishingly short span of time, GeM has surpassed the achievements of renowned public procurement platforms such as South Korea's KONEPS and Singapore's GeBIZ. This year, in particular, has witnessed monumental growth for GeM, achieving a milestone of INR 2 lakh crore in Gross Merchandise Value (GMV) for the fiscal year 2022-23, representing a doubling of growth within a single year.

GeM's expansion into the services sector has played a pivotal role in driving its accelerated adoption. Presently, the platform boasts an impressive catalogue of over 2.75 lakh services spanning across more than 280 categories, complemented by more than 34 lakh products. This comprehensive offering positions GeM as the one-stop solution for all products and services required by government departments across the nation.

The portal's strategic expansion has led to a substantial increase in orders placed by various State Governments and related entities. The engagement has been very promising with States transacting order value of approximately INR 42,000 crore in FY 22-23, an increase of approx. 35% over transacted value in FY 21-22.

GeM's success extends to its presence at the grassroots level, as demonstrated by its integrated portal facilitating procurements by Panchayats. Additionally, the platform's inclusion of cooperatives and engagement with public sector banks for services such as system integration and core banking solutions underscores its commitment to inclusive growth.

Central buyers, including CPSEs and allied bodies, have floated over 70 bids worth over INR 100 crore on GeM in the fiscal year 2022-23. A historic milestone was achieved in February 2023 when NTPC Limited placed an order valued at over INR 20,000 Crore – the largest in GeM's history. Notably, the platform also played a vital role in the procurement of vaccines under the Universal Immunisation Programme of the Department of Health and Family Welfare.

GeM's collaborations with more than 20 industry associations have been instrumental in fostering support for local Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) and small industries. With nearly 6.5 million sellers and 70,000 government buyers registered on the platform as of July 2023, the cumulative GMV surpassed INR 4.5 lakh crore, showcasing the platform's enduring impact.

A hallmark of GeM's success lies in its dedication to cost savings, having enabled the government to save over ₹45,000 crore since 2016. According to the Economic Survey 2021-22, GeM's prices were 9.5% lower than other online platforms for 10 out of 22 commodities. GeM's transformative journey is a testament to transparency, efficiency, and inclusivity driven by cutting-edge technology and innovation.

Looking ahead, GeM is committed to maximizing its reach at the federal level while crafting tailored processes and policies to enhance public savings. GeM continues to pioneer an era of change, propelling India's public procurement sector towards greater heights of success and prosperity.

About GeM

Government e-Marketplace (GeM) is India's online marketplace for public procurement. Launched in 2016, GeM facilitates transparent and efficient procurement for government departments, organizations, and PSUs. With a vast array of products and services, GeM is transforming the landscape of public procurement in India.

Source: pib.gov.in– Aug 09, 2023

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Cott-Ally mobile app has been developed for farmers to increase awareness about MSP rates, nearest procurement centers, payment tracking, best farm practices etc.

Government has taken several measures for development of cotton sector and various facilities are provided by Government . Some of the major steps and facilities are indicated below:-

- Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare is implementing cotton development programme under National Food Security Mission (NFSM) in 15 major cotton growing states viz., Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh & West Bengal from 2014-15 with the aim to increase production and productivity. The assistance is being provided to the farmers on various types of demonstrations, trials on high density planting system, distribution of plant protection chemicals & bio agents, national & state level trainings. Under the scheme, an amount of Rs. 15.11 crores as central share has been allocated to States during 2022-23.

- To safeguard economic interest of cotton farmers and ensure adequate availability of cotton to the textile industry Govt. of India introduced a formula of 1.5 times of cost of production (A2+FL) for declaring MSP from 2018-19. For cotton season 2022-23, MSP of Fair Average Quality (FAQ) grade cotton had increased by about 6 % which has further been increased by 9% to 10% for ensuing cotton season 2023-24.

- To safeguard the cotton farmers from distress sales, Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) is appointed as a Central Nodal agency for undertaking MSP operations when prices of Fair Average Quality grade seed cotton (kapas) fall below the MSP rates.

- Brand name for Indian cotton as “Kasturi Cotton India” was launched on 7th October 2020. MoU signed between CCI on behalf of Govt. of India and TEXPROCIL for Traceability, Certification and Branding of KASTURI Cotton India with Corpus fund of 30 crores by joint contribution of Industry and MoT over a period of 3 years during 2022-23 to 2024-25.

- Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare has sanctioned a special project on cotton titled "Targeting technologies to agro-ecological zones-large scale demonstrations of best practices to enhance cotton productivity" with a budget outlay of Rs. 41.87 crores under NFSM during 2023-24. This projects targets technologies such as High Density Planting System (HDPS), closer spacing and production technology for ELS cotton focusing on a cluster-based and value chain approach in Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) to farmers.

- Ministry of Textiles constituted Textile Advisory Group (TAG) on 25th May 2022 as an informal body which facilitates inter-Ministerial coordination and represents stakeholders from the entire cotton value chain to deliberate & recommend on the issues of productivity, prices, branding, etc.

- Cott-Ally mobile app has been developed for farmers to increase awareness about MSP rates, nearest procurement centers, payment tracking, best farm practices etc.

- Government ensures availability of Cotton to Textile Industry through a mechanism namely Committee on Cotton Promotion and Consumption (COCPC). COCPC keeps constant watch and reviews cotton scenario in the country and aptly advises the Government generally on matters pertaining to production and consumption of cotton.

This information was given by the Union Minister of State for Ministry of Textiles, Smt. Darshana Jardosh in a written reply today in the Lok Sabha.

Source: pib.gov.in– Aug 09, 2023

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Government focusing on multilateral and bilateral commercial relations, trade facilitation, industrial development, investments in new and upcoming technology

Government has undertaken significant initiatives to promote economic growth besides converting the disruption caused by COVID 19 into an opportunity for growth and investment. These includes Atmanirbhar packages, introduction of Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme in fourteen (14) sectors, investment opportunities under National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) and National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP), India Industrial Land Bank (IILB), Industrial Park Rating System (IPRS), soft launch of the National Single Window System (NSWS), etc. An institutional mechanism to fast-track investments has been put in place, in the form of Project Development Cells (PDCs) in all concerned Ministries/ Departments of Government of India. All the above initiatives/schemes are implemented across various Ministries/Departments, Central Government, State Governments.

Further, to improve Ease of Doing Business ecosystem in the country, DPIIT coordinates with Ministries/Departments and States/UTs for initiatives to reduce compliance burden on citizen and business activities. The objective of this exercise is to improve Ease of Doing Business and Ease of Living by Simplifying, Rationalizing, Digitizing and Decriminalizing Government to Business and Citizen Interface across all the States/UTs. In order to have a continuous evaluation framework, DPIIT initiated a dynamic reform exercise called Business Reforms Action Plan (BRAP) for assessment of business environment in the States/Union Territories (UTs).

Under BRAP, States and UTs are assessed on the basis of implementation of designated reform parameters contained in the Action Plan. BRAP covers both the Business-centric and Citizen-centric reforms spread across various reform areas. Some of the reform areas are Investment Enablers, Access to Information and Transparency, Online Single Window System, Land Allotment, Construction Permits Enablers, Labour Regulation Enablers, Environment Registration Enablers, Inspection Enablers, Obtaining Utility Permits, Contract Enforcement, Citizen-centric Certificates, Public Distribution System, Healthcare, etc.

To attract more FDI, the Government has put in place an Investor friendly Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) policy, wherein most sectors, except certain strategically important sectors, are open for 100% FDI under the automatic route. Further, the policy on FDI is reviewed on an ongoing basis, to ensure that India remains an attractive and investor friendly destination. FDI policy provisions have been progressively liberalized and simplified across various sectors such as Pension, Other Financial Services, Asset reconstruction Companies, Broadcasting, Pharmaceuticals, Single Brand Retail Trading, Construction & Development, Power Exchanges, e-commerce activities, Coal Mining, Contract Manufacturing, Civil Aviation etc. In the recent past, reforms in the FDI Policy have been undertaken in sectors such as Defence, Insurance, Petroleum & Natural Gas and Telecom. Further, all proposals seeking Government approval under FDI route are now filed on National Single Window System (NSWS) Portal.

Some of the key measures and initiatives undertaken to promote exports and enhance market access are holding Periodic engagement at G-G level with partner countries. One such engagement is that of the West Asia and North Africa (WANA) region under the existing Institutional mechanisms with specific objective to propel bilateral Trade and Investments forward including through addressing any issues/hurdles affecting Trade and Investments. Various Export promotion events, including under the Market Access Initiative (MAI) scheme, have been organized in target markets in the WANA region, by the Department, in association with Export Promotion Councils, Industry Associations, and respective Indian Missions in the region. For instance, India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) signed the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) in February, 2022, on the side-lines of the India-UAE Virtual Summit which provides for an institutional mechanism to encourage and improve bilateral Trade and Investments between the two countries.

Make in India initiative was launched on September 25, 2014, to facilitate investment, foster innovation, building best in class infrastructure, and making India a hub for manufacturing, design and innovation. The development of a robust manufacturing sector continues to be a key priority of the Indian Government. Since its launch, Make in India initiative has made significant achievements and presently focuses on 27 sectors under Make in India 2.0. which is implemented across various Ministries/Departments, Central Government, State Governments.

In addition to ongoing schemes of various Departments and Ministries, Government has taken various steps to boost domestic and foreign investments in India. These include the introduction of Goods and Services Tax, reduction in corporate tax, improving ease of doing business, FDI policy reforms, measures for reduction in compliance burden, measures to boost domestic manufacturing through public procurement orders, Phased Manufacturing Programme (PMP) and QCOs (Quality Control Orders), to name a few.

Further, in order to build a strong ecosystem for nurturing innovation, startups and encouraging private investments in the startup ecosystem of the country, the Government launched the Startup India initiative on 16th January 2016. Since the launch of Startup India initiative in 2016, DPIIT has recognized 98,119 entities as startups as on 30th April 2023. The recognized startups have reported to have created over 10.34 lakh direct jobs.

Keeping in view India's vision of becoming 'Atmanirbhar', PLI Schemes for 14 key sectors have been announced with an outlay of Rs. 1.97 lakh crore (over US$26 billion) to enhance India's Manufacturing capabilities and Exports.

With the announcement of PLI Schemes, significant creation of production, employment, and economic growth expected over the next 5 years and more. The PLI Schemes will help achieve following objectives:

- Attract investments in sectors of core competency and cutting-edge technology;
- Ensure efficiency and economies of scale in the manufacturing sector; and
- Make Indian companies and manufacturers globally competitive so that they can penetrate global markets and integrate with global value chains.

The 14 key sectors are: (i) Mobile Manufacturing and Specified Electronic Components, (ii) Critical Key Starting Materials/ Drug Intermediaries & Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients, (iii) Manufacturing of Medical Devices (iv) Automobiles and Auto Components, (v) Pharmaceuticals Drugs, (vi) Specialty Steel, (vii) Telecom & Networking Products, (viii) Electronic/Technology Products, (ix) White Goods (ACs and LEDs), (x) Food Products, (xi) Textile Products: MMF segment and technical textiles, (xii) High efficiency solar PV modules, (xiii) Advanced Chemistry Cell (ACC) Battery, and (xiv) Drones and Drone Components.

PLI Schemes for all 14 Sectors have been notified by the concerned Ministries/ Departments after approval of the Union Cabinet. These Schemes are in their various stages of implementation. Approvals to 733 applications have been accorded under all 14 PLI Schemes so far.

This information has been provided by the Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, Shri Som Parkash in a written reply in the Lok Sabha today.

Source: pib.gov.in– Aug 09, 2023

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The crucial role of mega textile hubs in establishing India's global leadership

Dr S N Modani, Managing Director, CEO, Sangam India is also the Chairman of the Rajasthan Textile Mills Association. With 33 years of experience in the textile industry, he has led Sangam India Ltd. to become a vertically integrated textile conglomerate. He holds a PhD in "Strategic Management Practices for Sustainable Future" and his research benefits strategists, academics, and corporate executives.

Indian textile industry has long been recognized for its rich heritage and vast potential. With a history spanning centuries, textiles have been an integral part of India's economic and cultural fabric. The nation's textile sector has witnessed significant growth and modernization in recent years, positioning it as a prominent player in the global market. Establishing mega textile hubs is crucial to further elevate India's standing as a leading global textile hub. These hubs serve as catalysts for innovation, efficiency and sustainability, propelling India to the forefront of global textile industry.

Mega textile hubs fostering growth

Mega textile hubs concentrate resources, infrastructure, and expertise in a single location, fostering a highly conducive textile manufacturing and trade environment. By bringing together diverse elements of the textile value chain - from raw material suppliers to garment manufacturers and exporters - these hubs create economies of scale and enhance the industry's overall competitiveness. Centralization also reduces logistic complexities and streamlines processes, making India an attractive destination for investors and international buyers.

Innovation is the lifeblood of any thriving industry. Mega textile hubs act as innovation centers, encouraging collaboration among businesses, research institutions, and design studios. This collaborative ecosystem leads to exchanging ideas, technologies, and best practices, facilitating the development of cutting-edge products and processes. By fostering innovation, India's textile sector can diversify its product range, meet global demand, and stay ahead in an increasingly competitive market.

Employment and investment opportunities The crucial role of mega textile hubs in establishing Indias global leadership2

Establishing mega textile hubs generates significant employment opportunities, particularly in rural areas with higher unemployment rates. Skilled workers and artisans find employment in these hubs, and the influx of jobs helps alleviate poverty and promote inclusive growth. Additionally, the presence of training and skill development centers within these hubs ensures the continuous upskilling of the workforce, enhancing their efficiency and expertise. A robust infrastructure and a favorable business environment attract foreign investors to India's textile sector. Mega textile hubs offer a one-stop destination for international buyers, reducing lead times and costs associated with sourcing. Increased FDI infuses capital into the economy and brings advanced technologies and best practices, further enhancing the industry's capabilities. With these improved production capabilities, India can significantly augment its textile exports and establish itself as a preferred global supplier.

As the world increasingly prioritizes sustainability, the textile industry must adopt eco-friendly practices. Mega textile hubs can lead the charge by implementing sustainable technologies, recycling initiatives, and promoting a circular economy. By adopting green manufacturing practices, reducing waste, and optimizing energy consumption, these hubs can positively impact the environment while attracting environmentally conscious consumers and businesses from around the globe.

Policy and government support way forward

The Indian government plays a pivotal role in developing mega textile hubs. Policymakers must create a supportive regulatory framework that fosters entrepreneurship, encourages private investments, and facilitates seamless operations. Additionally, the government should consider offering incentives and subsidies to promote the establishment of these hubs in underdeveloped regions, fostering balanced regional growth.

With mega textile hubs in place, India can leverage its abundant resources, skilled workforce, and rich textile heritage to emerge as a global textile leader. By offering various high-quality products at competitive prices, India can outperform its competitors and capture a more substantial share of the global textile market. The rise of India as a textile powerhouse will bolster its economic growth and solidify its position on the world stage.

Source: fashionatingworld.com– Aug 09, 2023

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India tops global e-commerce with 18% parcel growth in 2022

India is leading the global e-commerce surge with an 18 per cent parcel volume growth in 2022. This growth surpasses all other countries in Pitney Bowes Inc's parcel shipping index. India shipped, received, and returned around 3.2 billion parcels in 2022, far exceeding pre-pandemic forecasts. This figure represents a significant increase from 2021's 8 per cent growth, with an average of 8.8 million parcels shipped daily or 102 parcels per second.

The per capita parcel volume surged from a 7 per cent increase in 2021 to 16 per cent in 2022, translating to 10 parcels shipped per household, signifying a growing reliance on e-commerce in India, shipping and mailing company Pitney Bowes Inc said in a press release.

In contrast, global parcel volumes increased by only 1 per cent in 2022, impacted mainly by China's lockdowns. China's parcel volume grew by a mere 2 per cent, the slowest rate in the index's history.

The index predicted India's parcel volume to reach 5 billion by 2028, with a 6.5 per cent compound annual growth rate (CAGR) from 2023 to 2028. Carrier revenue in India reached $5,392 million, a 3 per cent increase from the previous year. SafeEx led the revenue generation with $874 million, followed by BlueDart, Delhivery, DTDC, and Amazon Logistics.

"After a sharp decline in parcel volume at -21 per cent in 2020 and marginal growth of 8 per cent in 2021, it's fitting to see India's recovery with the highest surge in global parcel volume at 18 per cent, indicating a future brimming with opportunities for India's e-commerce ecosystem," said Pankaj Sachdeva, managing director, India Innovation, Pitney Bowes. "The substantial increase in India's per capita parcel volume further demonstrates the growing reliance on e-commerce for the daily needs of Indian families."

Source: fibre2fashion.com– Aug 10, 2023

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