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IBTEX No. 31 of 2018 February 12, 2018

USD 64.29 | EUR 78.95 | GBP 89.06 | JPY 0.59

Cotton Market

Spot Price (Ex. Gin), 28.50-29 mm

Rs./Bale	Rs./Candy	USD Cent/lb
19099	39950	**79.13**

Domestic Futures Price (Ex. Gin), February

Rs./Bale	Rs./Candy	USD Cent/lb
20180	42212	**83.61**

International Futures Price

NY ICE USD Cents/lb (March 2018)	76.68
ZCE Cotton: Yuan/MT (Jan 2018)	14,950
ZCE Cotton: USD Cents/lb	**91.41**
Cotlook A Index – Physical	**87.2**

Cotton guide: The week gone by was volatile for cotton though ended slightly lower at 76.68 cents per pound down by 62 points from previous week's close. The May future also ended lower at 77.63 cents almost 100 points spread between March and May contract.

Two important points to notice is the **higher trading volume** and **lower open interest.** During the last week on an average more than 70K contracts were traded while open interest was steadily lower. Majority of trading volumes were from the spread trading between March & May and May & July contracts. The open interest made its highest figure on 20th January at 0.321 million contracts which slid to 0.286 million contracts a drop over 35K contract in the week. Certified stocks were at 77,284 bales, up 757 bales in new certs. There were 1,522 bales awaiting review.

There was no major clear understanding on the last week's released WASDE report where only the world ending stocks were placed higher amid expectation of higher production from China and cut in the US exports. However, US cotton production was kept unchanged at 21.26 million contracts.

On the price front market failed to break the critical support of 75.70 cents and made a low of 75.89 cents and rebounded from lower levels. Broadly the price band is now fixed at 75.50 cents to 79 cents per pound. Unless we see a breakout on either side the trend will continue to trade in the same range. While we observe the price trend the short term trend is on the negative side. Market now needs a fresh trigger to clarify if the support would break down and move the price towards 74 cents or gradually it may move towards 79+ cents per pound.

On the fundamental front, as per **National Cotton Council Seeding** in season starting Aug. 1 may rise to 3.7% to 13.1m acres, partly as prices improve compared with corn and soybeans and some farmers shift from wheat to cotton. Using average yield at 842 lbs/acre, output may be 19.4m bales, down 1.8m bales from latest 2017 estimate. Exports may drop to 14.3m bales from estimated 15m seen by council for current season. World crop may drop to 119.3m bales; mill use seen rising to 124.8m, highest in more than a decade as consumption "continued to increase for the past four years" with China leading gain this year. Cotton prices have maintained a stronger appearance since October 2017 despite the projected increase in world production and resulting increase in ending stocks.

On the domestic front, the Cotton Association of India (CAI) has released its January 2018 estimate of the cotton crop for the 2017-18 season (beginning October 1, 2017). **CAI has lowered its production figure to 36.7 million bales of 170 kgs;** the reduction of 800,000 bales is largely attributable to a lower expected total in Maharashtra following pest problems in that state. CAI's estimate of consumption remains at 32 million bales. Imports are expected to be in the region of 2 million bales (unchanged from December), and the export figure has been held at an estimated 5.5 million bales. The total cotton supply for the season is thus forecast by CAI to be 41.7 million bales, with closing stocks of 4.2 million bales.

By and large market was all these months bit dubious about the country's crop number which now seems to be coming closer to the actual estimates given the scenario mentioned above.

The spot price continues to hold steady near Rs. 40000 to Rs. 40500 per candy ex-gin. The daily arrivals have been slightly lower around 170K bales.

Going forward with the CAI estimates market would delve into a fresh direction. We believe if the arrivals number does not improve in rest of February then price of cotton for S-6 29mm may continue to hover around Rs. 40000 per candy in fact could make a base price near Rs. 39500 to Rs. 40000 per candy.

Coming to derivative front the MCX cotton future for most active February contract ended the week lower at Rs. 20020 down by Rs. 140 from previous week's close. This has been three consecutive week prices are down by almost Rs. 1200 per candy. We believe market may remain sideways while on the price front it may observe support near Rs. 19700 (previous week's low) while 20300 would be considered as strong resistance level.

Currency Guide: The week for domestic unit Indian rupee has started with a positive tone against the USD. This morning the currency is seen trading stronger by 14 paisa at 64.25 (spot) from the previous week's weaker close of 64.40. Positive Asian equity market trading this morning amid slight weaker USD against major currencies may have supported the domestic unit to be on a stronger tone. However, we believe as the day progressed the underlying would continue to witness volatility. As said above the movement of equity performance and USD index would play the key role in determining the trend for the Indian rupee. While, today in the evening two key data are releasing in the form of CPI number for the month January which is expected to be slightly lower at 5.10% and the other important data is the December Industrial production number. This figure is estimated to be much lower at 6% from the preceding month figure of 8.40%. Although these data are set to release post the markets are closed in India but market participants would eye the same to trade cautious during the day. On the price front the USD/INR pair may trade in the range of 64.08 to 64.32 with a mixed tone.

Compiled By Kotak Commodities Research Desk , contact us : mailto:research@kotakcommodities.com, Source: Reuters, MCX, Market source

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

China: Textile exports to China growing

HCM CITY — Though Việt Nam remains a big importer of textile feedstock and accessories from China, its rising exports to China is a promising sign, according to the Việt Nam National Textile and Garment Group.

Customs data shows imports from China in 2017 were high at US$9 billion, or 42.7 per cent of all textile-related imports, and 12 per cent higher than in 2016.

Việt Nam often imports raw materials also from South Korea and Taiwan. South Korean products cost a fourth of Chinese products while Taiwanese products cost a fifth.

Last year, Việt Nam's imports from China included over $6 billion worth of silk, $2 billion worth of leather and $800 million worth of threads.

However, according to the Việt Nam Textile & Apparel Association (Vitas), textile exports to China have been rising steadily, going up from $2.2 billion in 2015 to $3.2 billion last year. Vitas expects the figure to continue rising.

Vitas said China's imports of Vietnamese textile products are not taxed because of the ASEAN – China Free Trade Area while imports from countries such as India and Pakistan incur a 3–5 per cent tax.

China is one of Việt Nam's top five textile export markets.

Since that country has the world's largest population, its market can be extensively segmented offering a great opportunity for local textile products.

Việt Nam's textile and garment exports were worth $31 billion last year.

Source: tea-india.or- Feb 12, 2018

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Pakistan: Subdued trading on cotton market

KARACHI: Trading activity on the cotton market failed to pick up on Saturday as buyers remained away from the proceedings due to falling cotton prices globally and poor off-take of yarn locally.

Slow trading activity in the cotton market has caused liquidity crunch as buyers and sellers were unable to fulfil their commitments on time.

During the week, cotton prices were cut down by Rs1,000 per maund on ready counter, while official spot rates were cut by Rs300 per maund.

On the global front, New York cotton lost 9 cents to 76 cents per lb. The Chinese and Indian cotton markets also closed easy.

The flooding of Indian and Chinese grey – making its way in the country via Dubai and cleared through misdeclaration – is damaging the local industry as a large number of looms have been reported to have shut-down in Faisalabad, brokers said.

Falling cotton prices have also depressed phutti (seed cotton) price which is now being quoted at around Rs2,500-3,200 per 40kg for both Sindh and Punjab varieties.

Cotton analyst Naseem Usman said the crop size would be at around 11.6 million bales. A very small quantity of unpicked phutti has been left behind in the fields, he added.
The Karachi Cotton Association (KCA) spot rates were firm at the overnight level.

The following deals were reported to have changed hands on ready counter: 431 bales, station Hyderabad, at Rs6,000; 400 bales, Ghotki, at Rs7,075; 400 bales, Sanghar, at Rs6,100; 400 bales, Alipur East, at Rs6,700; 200 bales, Fort Abbas, at Rs6,500; 200 bales, Marrot, at Rs6,500; 400 bales, Chak Madrasa, at Rs6,400; and 558 bales, Alipur, at Rs6,400.

Source: dawn.com- Feb 11, 2018

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Bangladesh apparel products losing ground in US markets

The total export from Bangladesh to the US was $5.27 billion in 2017, down by 3.98% from 2016. Of this, only $204 million was from non-apparel products

Bangladesh lost its apparel export market share in US markets to close competitors last year, data released by the US government shows.

Stakeholders say the country is facing this problem due to losing price competitiveness and lack of product diversification.

According to the US Department of Commerce's Office of Textiles and Apparel (Otexa) data, Bangladesh's export earnings from US saw a 4.46% fall to $5.07 billion in 2017, which was $5.30 billion a year ago. Bangladesh's market share in US apparel market came down to 6.31% from 6.58%.

Vietnam, one of the closest competitors of Bangladesh, registered over 7% growth in the US apparel market, followed by Mexico at 5.33%, India at 1.19% and Pakistan at 1% in the same period.

China, the largest exporter of apparel products, also saw a decline in export earnings as well as market share in the US. According to Otexa, China's export to US saw a 3.17% fall, while market share came down to 33.67% in 2017 from 34.69% in the previous year.

The total export from Bangladesh to the US was $5.27 billion in 2017, down by 3.98% from 2016. Of this, only $204 million was from non-apparel products.

"Right now, price competitiveness is a big challenge for Bangladesh in the global markets. The production cost has gone up due to safety improvement spending as well as wage hike. The advantage of cheap labour is over," Exporters Association of Bangladesh (EAB) president Abdus Salam Murshedy told the Dhaka tribune.

"Meanwhile our competitors have gained competitiveness due to government policy support and incentives," said Salam.

"The fall in Bangladesh's earnings from apparel exports to the US is bigger than the total drop in US apparel and textile imports," Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) Research Director Khondaker Golam Moazzem told the Dhaka Tribune.

According to Otexa data, US import of apparel products has seen a 0.49% fall to $80.28 billion in 2017, which was $80.68 billion a year ago.

American buyers have stopped placing work orders to factories in shared buildings, which is another reason behind the fall.

"But there is hope in the coming year as Bangladesh has made significant progress in workplace safety," said Moazzem.

Since the economic slowdown in the US still impacting the demand of clothing products, the buyers have cut prices of products, he added.

How to regain market share in the US

As buyers keep relocating their businesses from China to more competitive countries, Bangladesh needs to focus more on attracting these buyers and on new foreign investment. Product diversification is a must to retain consumers.

As per the data, Vietnam is the major beneficiary of China's shift in terms of work orders and investment as it has diversified products and has better infrastructure, said Moazzem.

The government and manufacturers have to concentrate on creating a congenial business and investment atmosphere tp do the same.

To remain price competitive in the global market, the government should focus on increasing its support to increase the industry's capacity, said Salam, the managing director of Envoy Textile.

"Automation is a key to reduce production cost but it needs more reinvestment," he said.

Source: dhakatribune.com- Feb 11, 2018

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APTMA chairman demands a uniform energy price

The All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA) Chairman Aamir Fayyaz has demanded a uniform energy price of Rs 600 per MMBTU to revive the $4 billion closed capacity in Punjab in addition to attracting new investment to the sector to generate billions of dollars of exportable surplus.

"Unless the government ensures an immediate restoration of the viability, the textile industry would be unable to compete and deliver for the economy," he stressed.

He deplored that the government was not proactive in controlling the price of energy for the industry, which becomes 35 percent of the conversion cost. Particularly, he added, the Punjab-based textile industry's viability is being hit hard due to the energy cost. According to him, the government has withdrawn system gas from the industry while leaving it totally relying upon the costlier RLNG. It is very difficult for the industry in Punjab to pay around Rs 1300 per MMBTU for the same RLNG, which is available at Rs 600 per MMBTU for the textile mills in Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Meanwhile, a surcharge of Rs 3.63 per kWh is being charged from the industrial consumers on independent feeders despite zero line losses. He said the textile mills in Punjab were paying for the power theft by other consumers on the system.

Eventually, the industry in Punjab is becoming uncompetitive as well as redundant with every passing day while the government policy makers are slumbering over the issue. Not only this, the country is being burdened by the widening gap of trade deficit, which can easily be overcome through increase in exports, he added.

He said the government should ensure a single gas price of Rs600 per MMBTU across the country, as the existing difference in price for the mills in Punjab versus the rest of the country is unbearable. Similarly, the availability of electricity should be ensured at Rs7 per kWh without surcharge, which is a regionally competitive energy price.
Any further delay in resolving the issue may challenge the national security soon the oil prices hit through the roof internationally, he warned. Chairman APTMA has appealed to Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and Chief Minister Punjab Shehbaz Sharif to ensure single gas price across the country that should also be regionally competitive. He said the earlier announcement of competitive energy price and other measures taken by the Federal Textile

Board should be implemented immediately under a long term policy for the textile industry increase export for narrowing the trade deficit.

Source: dailytimes.com.pk- Feb 11, 2018

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Egypt to settle Cotton & Textile Industries' LE10B debt

CAIRO – 11 February 2018: Egypt's Minister of Public Sector Affairs Khaled Badawi discussed the settlement of Cotton & Textile Industries Holding Company's debt with deputy chairman of National Investment Bank (NIB), Mahmoud Montasser, according to an official statement.

The statement showed that Cotton & Textile Industries Holding Company's debt amounted to LE 10 billion ($565.04 million) due to the accumulation of interests.

The minister of public sector affairs said that a consensual agreement must be reached to serve the interests of both the National Investment Bank and the Cotton & Textile Industries Holding Company.

Badawi clarified that Cotton & Textile Industries Holding can ink a protocol to determine the method and the required procedures for the settlement of the debt within a clear schedule and assign some of its real estate assets to the bank.

Badawi suggested that the NIB participates in financing the restructure of the company according to feasibility studies prepared previously, especially in cotton and yarn companies.

In January, Egypt's parliament approved a new bankruptcy law to boost the investment climate; the law regulates the financial and administrative restructuring for failed projects and companies, and abolishes prison sentences in bankruptcy cases, limiting punishments to a monetary fine. It also aims to minimize the need for companies or individuals to resort to the courts and to simplify post-bankruptcy procedures.

The new law allows any business that is close to bankruptcy to have the option of conciliation with its creditors or of restructuring its financial position.

Source: egypttoday.com- Feb 11, 2018

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Ghana's ICU urges govt to address textile piracy menace

Ghana's Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU) has urged the government to urgently stop the piracy of local textiles and influx of cheap foreign prints in the market to sustain the industry. According to union general secretary Solomon Stephen Ashalley Kotei, piracy is slowly smothering and strangulating the local textile industry.

Criticising the government for being unable to curtail negative foreign influence on the Ghanian textile industry, Kotei urged it to attack piracy with absolute commitment and seriousness without being a spectator.

He was speaking recently at the inauguration ceremony of ICU's local union at Tex Styles Ghana Limited (TSG), formerly known as Ghana Textile Printing (GTP), in Tema.

Ghanaian markets are over-flooded with cheap, inferior and pirated Chinese textile prints, he was quoted as saying by media reports in Ghana.

As several appeals to the government to step in to save the local textile industry have not been heeded to, a coalition of textile companies will mobilize both their management and workers to demand protection rather than plead, he said.

The majority of textile products in the Ghanaian market are now smuggled and counterfeited and if this continues, the situation would turn worse, TSG managing director Erik Vander Staaij said.

Source: fibre2fashion.com- Feb 12, 2018

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Pakistan's PCCC working on cotton seeds policy

The Pakistan Central Cotton Committee (PCCC) in collaboration with different provincial research departments is working on a long-term policy to ensure availability of quality and healthy cotton seeds, its secretary Muhammad Ali Talpur said recently. PCCC would resolve all seed-related challenges and ensure availability of top quality seeds, he said.

The committee is taking various measures to promote cotton, its products, manufacturing and marketing and cotton scientists are also being imparted training at the international level to improve research techniques, Pakistani media reports quoted him as saying.

The PCCC has introduced more than 50 new varieties of cotton seeds and also got these approved.

Source: fibre2fashion.com- Feb 12, 2018

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NATIONAL NEWS

Eight tax officers to handle GST-related queries on Twitter

Highlights

- *The officers - all of them assistant commissioners - have been chosen from neighbouring commissionerates under the ministry.*
- *These tech-savvy officers will provide online solutions to queries related to the GST, he said.*
- *The GST is in force since July 1, 2017.*

The Finance Ministry has nominated eight tax officers to handle GST-related queries on social media site Twitter, according to an official order. It has been decided to assign the charge of handling of queries related to the Goods and Services Tax on Twitter/Email to the eight officers with immediate effect, it said.

The officers - all of them assistant commissioners - have been chosen from neighbouring commissionerates under the ministry.

They are Raj Karan Agarwal, Rajni Sharma, Raunaq Jamil Ansari, Shantanu, Bullo Mamu, Heera Lal, Manish Chaudhary and Anshika Agarwal, the order said.

"The decision to appoint the officers was taken as lots of queries are being raised through social media platforms," a senior finance ministry official said.

Top Comment

Shoddy implementation & grievances redressal of GSTaishvaraya gupta

These tech-savvy officers will provide online solutions to queries related to the GST, he said.

The GST is in force since July 1, 2017.

Source: timesofindia.indiatimes.com- Feb 11, 2018

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Lankan apparel giants give up on breaking through production efficiency conundrum

An efficiency conundrum hounding the Sri Lankan apparel industry over the past two decades has seen giants such as MAS Holdings giving up on trying break through the production efficiency barrier to focus on the complete supply chain.

“The focus in the past has been about efficiency, and if you talk about efficiency, when I joined the industry in 2000, and when I look at it in 2018, you still wonder why our factories are operating at 65 percent efficiency when they did the same in 2000 at the same efficiency,” MAS Holdings Group Human Resource Director Shakthi Ranatunga said.

Curiously, Ranatunga did not choose to discuss what the causes were for efficiency not moving upwards.

“So trying to understand why we haven’t been able to move the needle was an interesting question to ask ourselves,” was the only extent to which he moved this dialogue.

Ranatunga, who has spent his entire 17 years in the apparel industry at MAS Holdings, was speaking at the International Conference on the Apparel Industry which discussed the themes of productivity improvement, disruptive innovation and leadership.

Although technology has enabled production which took 6 weeks in 2003 to improve to 4 days today, while the duration from purchase order to delivery which was 8 weeks in 2003 has fallen to 6 days in 2018, and the sizes of small orders have fallen from 10,000 to as low as 200 in the same period, the efficiency rate in comparison has not changed at all, according to him.

Therefore, improving efficiency alone has become irrelevant, Ranatunga added.

“In the context of just focusing on the middle point, the process, the needle point, it’s out the window. It doesn’t mean anything anymore,” he said. In order to further minimize wastage and increase delivery times, the firm has adopted other strategies.

“I think we have as an organization—I am not at a position to talk about the industry as a whole but I believe it stands true for the industry as a whole in

Sri Lanka—lean manufacturing has played a big part in eliminating waste across the value chain and bringing these timelines and lead times down," he added.

Ranatunga said that MAS Holdings learnt from the automobile industry on how to seamlessly adapt resources to produce differing styles of the same product with minimum wastage and delay.
He said that employees on the production floor are now well trained in at least three skills, in order to allow them to rotate and not have production disrupted by absenteeism or skill shortages. Logistics too was an area MAS Holdings placed greater attention on early as they realised that efficiency wasn't boosting.

"Productivity in isolation from our perspective as manufacturers does not mean much, because you're as strong as your weakest link. If a supply chain takes one and a half to two months to get a fabric out the door, no matter how fast you are in manufacturing, if your supply chain doesn't support that, you're still slow," he said.

University of Warwick WMG Professor Jan Godsell who also spoke at the conference praised MAS Holdings' processes as being the "best that I have ever seen and way ahead of anything in the UK".

Source: dailymirror.lk- Feb 07, 2018

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Government nod to change criteria for classifying MSMEs

The Union Cabinet today approved the change in criteria for classifying MSMEs from 'Investment in Plant & Machinery' to annual turnover.

As per the new classification, enterprises having annual turnover less than or equal to Rs 5 crore fall under the 'micro' category.

Units having turnover between Rs 5 crore to Rs 75 crore will be classified as small enterprises, whereas those having turnover between Rs 75 crore and Rs 250 crore will be classified as classified as enterprises.

According to the government, the move will encourage ease of doing business, make the norms of classification growth- oriented and align classification norms to the new tax regime revolving around GST.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi here.

Section 7 of the Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises Development (MSMED) Act 2006, will accordingly be amended to define units producing goods and rendering services.

At present, the MSMED Act Section 7 classifies MSMEs on the basis of investment in plant and machinery for manufacturing units, and investment in equipment for services enterprises.

Source: economictimes.indiatimes.com- Feb 07, 2018

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Drop in yields, cotton output estimates lowered in region

BATHINDA: The state agriculture department and trade bodies expect the cotton production to be lowered further by nearly 60,000 bales from the previous estimates of 10.97 lakh bales (1 bale=170kg) in Punjab for the 2017-18 crop year (September 1, 2017-August 31, 2018). The latest estimation of production of cotton, which is Punjab's second biggest kharif (summer sown) crop after paddy including basmati, has been put at 10.37 lakh bales as on January 31.

At the start of cotton procurement season in September 2017, cotton output estimates in Punjab were 12 lakh bales, which were revised in December to 10.97 lakh bales. Cotton had been sown over 3.82 lakh hectares in Punjab this season whereas in 2016, area under the fibre crop was 2.57 lakh hectares.

In the 2016-17 crop year, Punjab had an output of 8.57 lakh bales of raw cotton with an average yield of 655 kg per acre. In the current season, the yield is expected to decrease to 550kg per acre.

STATISTICS ON COTTON CROP

State	Area under cotton (lakh hectares)	Output estimates in Dec 2017	Revised output estimate on January 31, 2018
Punjab	3.82	10.97L bales	10.37L bales
Haryana	6.56	25.15L bales	24.5L bales
Rajasthan	5.03	21.90L bales	21.15L bales

Till January 31, 2018, arrivals of 6.92 lakh bales of cotton were recorded in the markets of Punjab whereas in the corresponding period last year, arrivals were 5.91 lakh bales. Cotton output target has also been lowered in neighbouring Haryana and Rajasthan.

Farm department and experts are citing deficient rainfall in July-August 2017 and less availability of canal water as the reasons for the drop in yield of cotton this season. Apart from getting lower yields, farmers are also impacted by weak rates of raw cotton. Currently, raw cotton is selling at Rs 5,100-5,200 per quintal, down from Rs 5,600-5,700 in the corresponding period last year.

"We were expecting the yield to remain around 650kg per acre. However, it's likely to drop to about 550kg per acre due to deficient rain and hot and humid weather conditions in July," said Sukhdev Singh, joint director of Punjab agriculture department.

Union government agency Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) has also lowered the estimates of cotton output in the region. CCI's Bathinda branch manager Brajesh Kasana said, "Earlier it was expected that over 11 lakh bales will be produced in Punjab. However, going by the drop in yields, we expect arrivals at nearly 10.4 lakh bales."

I J Dhuria, director (raw material) of leading textile manufacture Vardhman Textiles, said though cotton scene at the national level seemed good, the yield had come down in Punjab which might lower the total output.

Farmer Krishan Singh of Bhagi Wander village in Bathinda, who has sown cotton in six acres, said "We are expected good yield like the previous year but it has gone down." Another farmer Gurdev Singh from Kot Shamir village said lower yields would lead to dip in their returns from the crop.

Source: timesofindia.indiatimes.com- Feb 09, 2018

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BJP main rival of Left Front in Tripura: Jaitley

AGARTALA: The BJP has emerged as the main rival of the ruling CPM-led Left Front in Tripura, Union finance minister Arun Jaitley said here on Sunday.
"There are two political spaces in the state -- the non-Left and the Left. The BJP has filled up the entire non-Left space ... It has emerged as the main contender of the CPM," he told reporters, after releasing his party's Tripura poll manifesto -- 'Vision Document Tripura-2018'.

The saffron party has joined hands with the Indigenous People's Front of Tripura (IPFT) to take on the Left Front in the February 18 assembly election in the north-eastern state.

The finance minister also claimed that the Left Front would meet the same fate in Tripura as it did in West Bengal.

"The CPM's terror tactics in West Bengal had led to hatred among the people there, resulting in its downfall. Even in the (recently held) bypolls, the party ended up in the third or fourth position," he said.
Tripura had remained "backward" as the CPM never welcomed private capital in the state, Jaitley said, adding, "As long as the party continues to use the Marxist jargon against private capital, there is no chance of development here."

Talking about his party's manifesto, the Union minister said Prime Minister Narendra Modi had always worked for the country's progress and that was the reason the BJP had focused on development projects in its vision document for Tripura.

"After forming the government in Tripura, the BJP will set up special economic zones (SEZs) for different sectors like food processing, bamboo, IT textiles," Jaitley said.

The results of the Tripura polls will be announced on March 3.

Source: timesofindia.indiatimes.com- Feb 11, 2018

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Cotton output this season likely to be 367 lakh bales: CAI

The cotton production for the 2017-18 season is expected to be 367 lakh bales, of 170 kg each according to the January estimates of Cotton Association of India (CAI).

The cotton crop estimate for the ongoing season is lower by eight lakh bales due to severe infestation of the cotton crop by pink bollworm, CAI said in a release here.

To tackle this, farmers in several areas in Maharashtra and Telangana have uprooted their cotton crop without waiting for further pickings as advised by scientists, it added.

However, the estimate is higher than last year (2016-17) production, which was 337.25 bales.

Total cotton supply for the season was at 417 lakh bales, including the opening stock of 30 lakh bales at the beginning of the season and the imports which is estimated at 20 lakh bales for 2017-18 crop year, CAI said.

Domestic consumption is estimated to be 320 lakh bales while exports for the season is likely to be 55 lakh bales.

The carry over stock at the end of this season on September 30, is estimated to be 42 lakh bales, CAI added.

Source: india.com- Feb 09, 2018

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The Diva of Textiles Spins a New Tale in Handloom

Handloom resuctionist, innovator and founder of the Andhra chapter of Dastkar, Uzramma Bilgrami was 47 years old when she decided that for traditional textile crafts to exist, weavers should be freed from centralisation trap in cotton spinning. Then a homemaker and a trained goldsmith from Britain, and now the ultimate revivalist of the age old local methods of making cotton, time has not dimmed her passion at seventy five. “The love for handlooms and handicraft propels me to do more,” says the elegant silver-haired Hyderabad-based handloom expert.

Her new project is Malkha Marketing Trust for reviving the 5,000-year-old Malkha cotton, which once made India the queen of cotton weaves the world over. The petite sari-clad textile diva says, “When I was working with hand weavers, I realised that getting yarn was a problem for handlooms because yarn is not specifically made for them.” She was so passionate about the arts and handicrafts of her state that she started the NGO, Dastkar Andhra, in 1995.

“It was very tough to make people understand that handlooms need a different kind of yarn from the one used by mills and powerlooms,” says Uzra, who is also credited with starting the Malkha Marketing Trust. “Malkha doesn’t need high maintenance. The fabric becomes softer after each wash and the saris need neither falls nor much ironing. Our team works with our own small-scale spinning mill operators and hand weavers. We do not directly work with cotton farmers, but collaborate with NGOs who do,” she says.

The process explores an alternative to the present situation where small-scale yarn-making units are replacing large-scale spinning mills. Malkha is a form of rural cotton textile industry, which uses local raw material and local skills. “The project envisages a way in which both farmers and weavers benefit from each other, and in which spinning also becomes a rural occupation. It allows people to work near their homes rather than having to move to the ghettos in mill and powerloom textile hubs in urban areas. It empowers rural society socially and politically,” says the soft-spoken Bilgrami.

Malkha eliminates bale-pressing of cotton lint before spinning. Both are damaging to cotton fibre but are part of mainstream cotton yarn spinning.Bilgrami, who studied engraving in goldsmithing in the UK, says, “The idea of Malkha comes from the history of cotton cloth-making in India.

Malkha is an attempt—the first in modern history—to make yarn specifically for the handloom, to rid the artisanal textile chain of its dependence on large spinning mills that distort the small-scale, village-based nature of handloom cloth making.”

Malkha fabric has a rustic Indian feel as the weavers use only natural dyes, desi motifs and designs. There are five Malkha centres in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh; more are coming up as demand for Malkha fabrics grows."It is a joy to see scores of elegant and understated 'ordinary' looking saris, kurtas, shirts, yardage and dupattas in the Malkha store. Each piece beckons you to touch and feel them," says Uzra, who herself wears Malkha saris most of the time.

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