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NEWS CLIPPINGS –30-04-2018

**Pondy CM V Narayanasamy woos
Coimbatore industry**

Deccan Chronicle

<https://www.deccanchronicle.com/nation/politics/290418/pondy-cm-v-narayanasamy-woos-coimbatore-industry.html>

The Chief Minister of Puducherry, Mr. V Narayanasamy on Saturday invited industrialists from the western region of Tamil Nadu to invest in the Union territory. He was speaking here at the inaugural of the 'Indian Business Congress' awards function.

Speaking on the occasion, he said, "Karnataka is top among States in India which attracts 24 per cent foreign investment and Tamil Nadu received mere four per cent of total foreign investments that came into the country last year. However, Puducherry is expecting better contribution from local industrialists, particularly from western region of Tamil Nadu."

He noted that the present Congress-led Puducherry government has taken all steps to ensure a peaceful environment for running industries."The Puducherry government has ensured better environment for industries with allocation of required lands. We are taking steps to improve traffic movement, besides ease of doing business through single windows clearance. We invite industrialists from the textile hubs including garment and textiles from the western districts," said Mr. Narayanasamy.

The Congress Chief Minister alleged that demonetisation and the GST have led to poor growth in GDP rate in the country and these issues must be overcome immediately.

Amar Prasad Reddy, chairman of Entrepreneurs Council of India (ECI), and T N Vallinayakam, president of ECI were among those present on the occasion.

**Maharashtra to release ₹1,100 cr for crop
damage**

Business Line

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/maharashtra-to-release-1100-cr-for-crop-damage/article23720852.ece?homepage=true>

Cotton, paddy farmers are main beneficiaries

Press Trust of India

Under fire from the Opposition over delay in financial aid to farmers for crops damaged by pests, the Maharashtra government is set to release ₹1,100 crore for cultivators in the next few days, an official said.

Bijay Kumar, Principal Secretary, Agriculture, said on Sunday said that a sum of ₹1,100 crore will be released in the

coming week to the affected farmers.

The details will be announced soon as April 30 and May 1 are government holidays and banks will not be functioning on those days, he said.

"The State government has prepared a detailed list of the beneficiary farmers and their bank accounts. The money will be credited to their accounts," a senior official from the State relief and rehabilitation department said. As per the State government's primary survey, the pink bollworm and other pests last year affected cotton crop on 34 lakh hectares of land as against the total cultivation on 43 lakh hectares.

Recession hit Surat textile traders urge minister to intervene

DNA India

<http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-recession-hit-surat-textile-traders-urge-minister-to-intervene-2609748>

Hit by recession, textile businessmen in Surat have urged union textile minister to review the situation in the aftermath of demonetization and the roll out of Goods and Services Tax (GST) and intervene to turn around the situation.

They claim that the production of fabric has dropped from about four crore metre per day before demonetization to about 2.5 crore metre per day now, the number of working embroidery machines has fallen and the demand for new shops have also dropped.

"Exports of garments have dropped drastically. Fabric traders are not getting payment on time. We want the ministry to review our situation as it will be about one year that GST has been rolled out and about one and a half year of demonetization and take corrective action," said Champalal Bothara, general secretary of Federation of Surat Textile Traders Association (FOSTTA), which has appraised the minister about the situation arising out of demonetization and GST, terming the latest tax reform as a double whammy. "Just as we were coming out of the effects of demonetization, we were exposed to premature roll out of GST. Traders are facing shortage of working capital. Institutional loans are not available and private lending has also stopped after GST," said Bothara.

FOSTTA claimed that sales of local textile traders have dropped by about 30-40% and the payment have been delayed. Falling earnings have resulted in traders shifting to low rent shops and demand for new shops has dropped. Those who had availed loans are finding difficult to honour their EMIs. In one of the notes, FOSTTA said that post demonetization, the number of embroidery machines has dropped by 1.25 lakh, 89,000 odd power looms have been sold at the price of scrap, exports are on a continuous decline and women working in embroidery are becoming jobless. "We have brought the business scenario to the notice of the minister. We are clueless as to what the ministry wants to do about the sector. If prompt corrective actions are not taken, the situation can deteriorate," said Bothara.

Maharashtra to release Rs 1,100 crore to farmers for crop damage in pest attack

Money Control

<https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/india/maharashtra-to-release-rs-1100-crore-to-farmers-for-crop-damage-in-pest-attack-2559759.html>

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Many of the areas in eastern parts of Vidarbha were affected by other pests which damaged the rice and other kharif crops.

This prompted the government to increase its coverage of compensation.

Subsequently, on March 17, the state government made changes into its compensation policy and submitted a proposal of Rs 3,373 crore to the Centre, and is awaiting response. "The state government, however, decided to go ahead and disburse its share in the financial assistance to farmers, instead of waiting for the Centre to release its contribution. The state is going to disburse Rs 1,100 crore to farmers," the relief and rehabilitation department official said.

The funds will be given to district collectors who will further transfer the amount into the accounts of farmers, he said. The beneficiary farmers' land records, cultivation crop entries on revenue document and bank accounts will be verified before the transfer of funds, the official added.

ATIRA's cotton gin upgrades to cut power use by 40%

Times of India

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/atiras-cotton-gin-upgrades-to-cut-power-use-by-40/articleshow/63955851.cms>

The Ahmedabad Textile Industry's Research Association (ATIRA) is in the process of developing a new technology for cotton gins (machines to separate seed from fibre), which will reduce power consumption during the ginning process by 40%.

ATIRA was given a year-long research and development project, to improve the cotton ginning process by the state government's department of industries and mines.

"The technology currently used is more than 30 years old and needs to be upgraded. The complex machinery currently used have several moving parts. We are making an effort to improve the process by reducing the number of moving parts in ginning machinery. This will help reduce power consumption by around 40%," said R M Sankar, principal scientific officer, ATIRA.

Researchers at ATIRA aim at completing the project in 10 months. This technology upgrade will help make maintenance easier and increase production, according to the scientists.

"As we are trying to reduce the number of moving parts, the consumption of spare parts will also be reduced. Therefore, maintenance costs will also come down by a significant 40%," said Sankar. Currently, production speed is around 70kg per hour, according to the researchers. This will increase by an 28% to around 90kg per hour, ATIRA officials said.

Act East Policy: A boom or doom for local traders?

The Sangai Express

<http://www.thesangaiexpress.com/act-east-policy-boom-doom-local-traders/>

Erstwhile "Look East Policy" promised dream of free exchange of locally available goods and movement of people along the international border for both Manipur (India) and Myanmar. However, dreams of formal trade in non agriculture goods and infrastructural developments were left unfulfilled. The recent "Act East Policy" is expected to yield in spectacular change in the minds of people. This article exclusively deals with impact of it on local traders.

Look East policy during 1990s allowed only a few items under exchangeable items which are mainly agro-product only. Items out of this agro product also, are not permitted to trade under formal trade. But people living in both sides have diverse choices which were not collected and included among the permitted list. However, people living in both sides along the international border have similar culture, tradition and food items. They are found to be interdependent on the various items available on both sides. Only political boundary makes it difficult to their movement and commodities legally. In order to acquire their needs, they will import the out listed items informally. This is the main drawback of those government agencies to decide on list without proper understanding and consultancy with the local people. One of the most interesting points in that agreement is that both sides should not export and import those commodities originated from a third country apart from India and Myanmar.

For India, those commodities are very sensitive to production in Indian side. Myanmar, according to India's policy makers is seen a country through where commodities from industrialized east Asian countries like south Korea, Japan, China and Thailand had been found to transit. These goods are mostly cloths and textile, electronic goods, commonly used day to day goods, etc. Such goods are produced in Indian side also and Indian policy makers keep them under sensitive list which are restricted heavily on their import. Such goods are made in those countries after analyzing the per capita income and demand structures of a developing country like India. These goods are dumping goods in their nature of prices and hence, India needs to check the import of such goods. However, people in NER whose Per Capita GDP is low, have strong desire to acquire them because they could not buy relatively costlier Indian

made goods. My published paper on “Dumping Potential and Intensity: A Case Study of Indo-Myanmar Border Trade” shows dumping potentials of these goods. Now they have two options ahead of them – either they should not consume the country made goods due to lack of income or they consume the foreign goods by importing them informally. India has produced commodities which ranges from agro based to highly sophisticated engineering goods and capital goods. However, the government policies permit to export those goods only through major ports.

Exports of those goods are strictly restricted in such border trade. Some of such goods are highly demanded in Myanmar also. In real those goods should be allowed to their export to Myanmar. But these goods are available in Manipur which is the main gate of Indo- Myanmar Border Trade. Owing to heavy demand from the Burmese people, traders in Manipur feel to export it by hook or crook. Hence, traders from Manipur get them legally in the name of their use and export it informally out of legal rules. The losers in such informal trade are central and state governments since they avoid of revenue which can be collected by levying in the form of import tariff. Gainers are informal traders, transporters and government servicemen who suppose to vigil on this informal trade. Local traders are highly beneficial from trade since they need not register to DGFT (Director General of Foreign Trade) for their export and import. With small amount of capital they can export and import paying a little greasing money (penalty) to smoothen trade flows. Such avoidance of official procedures persuades local traders whereas it dissuades official traders.

Recently, central government has transformed erstwhile Look East Policy into Act East Policy with eye on better infrastructure along wider scope for formal trade. However, vision of formal trade remains ambiguous since it is considered that official traders who are engaging at national ports may have dissatisfaction with government policy on this policy. A wide range of India-ASEAN bilateral trade takes place at these ports. Shifting of export/import direction through border trade may hamper the volume at these ports since there is advantage of transport cost due to short route. State government will be benefitted from large revenue collection in the form of customs taxes.

The big losers will be local traders since they have to register to DGFT for formal trade. Too much official procedures may dissuade them in their export and import. They may not be able to compete with mainland traders who specialise in both capital as well as expertise in trade. There might be condition where these traders dumped their capital into local market to wipe out local traders which may be followed with exclusive monopoly in export/import.

Benefits in trade will take place when there is fitting of local traders in the supply chain between producers and final consumers. In order to reap maximum benefit, state government should constitute expert committee comprises scholars, bureaucrats and policy makers who can introspect for time being. The committee should frame policies which can avail and galvanise the local traders in obtaining the maximum benefit from this border trade. One of the policies, they may frame is such that in the supply chain between producer and consumers in the state, only local traders should be allowed. This may keep mainland traders at bay from local demand and supply chain.

Government should construct special Economic Zones (SEZs) for the convenience of exporters and importers. At the same time, in order to remove xenophobic atmosphere which arises from the possible influx of non local people, government also should frame permit systems to check possible influx. These policies are not the last but least for border trade and government has to keep vigil for time being.

In spite of requests from Telangana government seeking a go-ahead to develop an international airport at Warangal, GMR is reluctant to allow a second airport within 150km radius of the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) at Shamshabad.

The united Andhra Pradesh government, while entering into concessionaire agreement with GMR Hyderabad International Airport Limited (GHIAL) to develop the Shamshabad airport, had incorporated a clause stating that no other airport would be allowed within 150km of RGIA. The clause was put in as a new airport nearby would impact the revenue of the international airport.

But now the state government desperately needs an airport at Warangal as it would help attract investments to the Kakatiya Mega Textile Park (KMTP), which is being developed in 1,200 acres. Chief minister K Chandrasekhar Rao laid the foundation stone for KMTP in November 2017.

Official sources said that industries minister KT Rama Rao is keen on airport connectivity to Warangal and the Telangana government has written three letters to GMR since 2014 seeking relaxation on the clause. But the GMRHIAL, in which the state government has 13% equity, is ignoring the request. KTR also took the issue up with former civil aviation minister Ashok Gajapathi Raju during his Delhi visits.

Director of Aviation (infrastructure and investment department) VN Bharat Reddy said “The GHIAL board has to take up the issue of relaxation. The state government is hopeful of getting a positive reply from them.”

He added that the Warangal airport has been included in the regional connectivity scheme by the Centre. Once GMRHIAL gives clearance and 420 acres land is acquired, Airport Authority of India (AAI) has agreed to develop and maintain the airport.

Telangana State Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (TSIIC) officials said the government is expecting about Rs 11,000 crore investments in KMTP. So far, the government has signed MoUs with 22 firms with investments of Rs 3,000 crore. But due to the lack of an airport in the vicinity, a couple of firms have already moved to Hyderabad “At the time of laying the foundation stone, 22 firms entered into MoU with the state government. Of these, eight submitted their detailed project reports to the TSIIC. Many Korean companies have evinced interest to set up firms,” a top official of TSIIC told TOI.

Industries department officials said that state government is only requesting for the revival of an old airport that existed during the Nizam regime and continued till the early 1980s. The united AP government, in March 2007, had entered into an MoU with AAI for upgrade of the Warangal airport, but it was not taken up due to the restriction clause. Despite repeated attempts, GMR officials were not available for comment.

GST alert: Soon, cashbacks to businesses, price benefit to customers for digital transactions; details here

Financial Express

<https://www.financialexpress.com/economy/gst-alert-soon-cashbacks-to-businesses-price-benefit-to-customers-for-digital-transactions-details-here/1149916/>

The government is working on a proposal to incentivise digital transactions by providing cashbacks to businesses and price benefits to consumers, a source said.

The government is working on a proposal to incentivise digital transactions by providing cashbacks to businesses and price benefits to consumers, a source said. As per the proposal being worked out by the Revenue Department, consumers paying through the digital mode would be offered a discount over the maximum retail price (MRP). The discount would be capped at Rs 100. Businesses, on the other hand, could get a cashback based on the quantum of turnover through the digital mode.

The proposals to encourage digital transactions are likely to be placed before the GST Council, chaired by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley and comprising state ministers, on May 4. According to the source, the issue of providing incentive for digital transaction was discussed at a meeting held in the Prime Minister's Office.

During the meeting, three possible modes of incentivising businesses to go in for digital transactions were discussed. Apart from cashbacks, a proposal to allow businesses to obtain tax credit on the basis of turnover obtained through digital mode was also discussed. This would have worked like the input tax credit mechanism wherein businesses can credit for taxes paid on raw materials. Besides, the option of allowing businesses to offset their GST liability up to a threshold for using digital transaction was also deliberated.

The source said the Revenue Department has zeroed in on the option of cashback to businesses based on a threshold of digital transaction. This would be easier to implement and cannot be misused by unscrupulous elements. As a matter of precaution, the department will ascertain the veracity of the digital transactions reported by the businesses and then credit the cashback to their bank account.

During the PMO meeting, it was also discussed if any incentives could be given for digital transaction from the direct taxes side. The direct tax department, the source said, has outlined the steps it had taken to discourage cash dealings. Besides, for small businesses opting for presumptive taxation scheme, it had reduced the rate for calculation of deemed profit from 8 per cent to 6 per cent in respect of the amount of total turnover or gross receipts received through banking channel/digital means.

The source said since the incentives would have been on the basis of the turnover of the businesses, it was felt that the indirect tax department would be better placed to incentivise the businesses and hence the GST Council would have to give a final go ahead.

Uzbekistan keen to boost business ties with Punjab

Times of India

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/uzbekistan-keen-to-boost-business-ties-with-punjab/articleshow/63954386.cms>

Uzbekistan has expressed interest in furthering business and trade ties with Punjab, particularly in the areas of agriculture, education and tourism.

Uzbekistan's ambassador to India Farhod Arziev met Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh here today, and discussed cooperation in areas of mutual interest for the benefit of both India and the Central Asian country, said an official release.

The chief minister suggested export of various commodities, including wheat and rice, to Uzbekistan, pointing out that the direct air connectivity with Uzbekistan and Amritsar (Punjab) offered vast potential for trade promotion.

Farhod Arziev said Uzbekistan was also keen to utilise the air route to further bolster trade in fresh fruits, such as mulberry, apricot and peaches, as well as dry fruits that were organically produced in his country".

Passenger and cargo flights from Chennai to Uzbekistan could also be used to exploit the trade potential, said the envoy, also inviting Punjab to see the cotton plantations in his country, as they were keen to export cotton to India.

A suggestion was made during the meeting by Finance Minister Manpreet Badal to host exchange programmes for students from Punjab Agriculture University (PAU).

Singh asked his officials to explore the possibility of knowledge sharing and transfer of agricultural technologies in coordination with the Uzbek embassy.

Citing the deep shared roots of India and Uzbekistan, the envoy also called for joint promotion of religious and heritage tourism, pointing out that Bukhara, which the first Sikh Guru Nanak Dev was believed to have visited, had various historical sites of interest to the Sikh community.

Singh and Farhod Arziev agreed to explore the heritage tourism potential offered by the two regions in order to promote the industry.

Earlier, the visiting ambassador apprised the chief minister of his government's intent to play a key role in India's connectivity initiatives in the resource-rich and strategically important Central Asia.

Evincing keen interest in supplying fertilisers to Punjab, the ambassador said that the opening of Chabahar port would result in another avenue for boosting his country's trade share with India via the Iran route.

The envoy also suggested establishment of a joint hospital, as a private sector enterprise, in Tashkent, an official spokesperson said after the meeting. The chief minister agreed to look into the suggestion

Country remains the world's biggest clothing exporter, but oversupply, high labour costs and rising protectionism have eroded its competitiveness

At the bustling Canton Fair in southern China, second-generation textile manufacturer Pan Jing has drastically marked down her prices.

The sign at her booth says it all: "Stock very cheap, factory for sale ... stock clearance."

It wasn't an easy decision for Pan's family to sell the 32-year-old cotton mill started by her father in 1986, a time when China was emerging as the global centre for textile and clothing production. For years, they have been making household cotton products – from pot holders and oven mitts to dishcloths and towels – and exporting them to the United States and Europe.

More recently they tried to upgrade their product lines at the 40,000 sq m factory in the southern Guangxi region, adding recycled cotton shopping bags and pillows in the shape of emojis in a bid to bring in more customers. But rising labour costs and slow growth in overseas demand left Pan with no choice but to sell the business to a bigger textile manufacturer with a domestic focus, in the hope that new capital can keep it afloat.

"I don't see a future in continuing to sell these low-value goods," said Pan, who has been attending the Guangzhou fair for over a decade. The trade fair, which runs until May 5, is the country's oldest and biggest export-oriented event.

Five years since the nightmare of Rana Plaza, what changed for Bangladesh garment workers?

China's textile and apparel makers are going through a painful industrial restructuring. While the country is still the world's largest clothing exporter with enormous production capacity, oversupply at home, high labour costs, and rising global protectionism have all eroded its competitiveness. Pan's company brochures for the trade fair over the years reflect the changes in the industry. Six years ago, the tag line was "To be proud of Made-in-China", while last year's was "Low-carbon and environmentally friendly cyclical development". This year they just had a flier made to advertise the stock clearance. China's market share by value in the global textile and clothing industry fell from 38.6 per cent in 2015 to 35.8 per cent in 2016, with a downward trend in major apparel importing regions such as the US, European Union and Japan.

Since 2014, exports of Chinese textiles and clothing have declined sharply from about US\$236 billion in 2014 to US\$206 billion in 2016, according to the World Trade Organisation. Chinese customs data showed exports of clothes and accessories fell by 0.4 per cent last year from 2016, while textiles exports saw annual growth of 4.5 per cent last year. Meanwhile, labour costs in China have been rising steadily. The minimum wage in the southern boomtown of Shenzhen is now about US\$336 per month – more than double the rate in some Southeast Asian countries.

How ethical fashion is growing in Asia-Pacific and five sustainable clothing brands to watch

Hit by the industry restructuring, some of the big clothing brands have struggled to make a profit and secure finance. Revenues have been sliding at Fuguiniao, a Hong Kong-listed menswear and shoe manufacturer based in Fujian province, since 2015. The company had a net loss of 10 million yuan (US\$1.57 million) in the first half of last year, a bond default this year, and it has racked up debts of at least 3 billion yuan.

Although analysts say Chinese textile and clothing makers are at low risk from the looming trade war between China and the US, given that they export so little to America compared to other sectors, US brands are starting to diversify their sourcing. A survey of 34 executives from leading US fashion companies last year found that, for the first time, fewer US brands were looking to China for products, even though the country remains the top sourcing destination for the industry worldwide. "US fashion companies are not 'putting all their eggs in one basket', and the most common sourcing model is shifting from 'China plus many' to 'China plus Vietnam plus many,'" according to the US Fashion Industry Association, which conducted the survey.

For many US brands, a third of their products now come from China, a third from Vietnam, and the rest is from other countries, the survey found.

Can Chinese manufacturers ever be clean, green and profitable? Garment factories search for the answer

But Sheng Lu, assistant professor of fashion and apparel studies at the University of Delaware, said "made in China" products were not losing their price competitiveness because of the overall supply chain efficiency. "It is also important to recognise that China is playing an increasingly important role as a textile supplier for apparel exporting countries in Asia," Sheng said. According to Sheng's research, Bangladesh's textile imports from China, measured by value, rose from 39 per cent in 2005 to 47 per cent in 2015, and similar trends could be seen in Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia and other developing countries in Asia. "A meaningful indicator to watch in the future is the value of "made in China" goods within other Asian countries' clothing exports to the world," he said.

Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurates Skill-cum-Common Facility Centre for Filigree Craftsman at Cuttack	Orissa Dairy http://orissadiary.com/union-minister-dharmendra-pradhan-inaugurates-skill-cum-common-facility-centre-filigree-craftsman-cuttack/
<p>Cuttack: In a significant step towards employment generation in Odisha, Union Minister for Petroleum & Natural Gas and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship Shri Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurated the Skill-cum-Common Facility Centre for Filigree Craftsman at Cuttack today and launched the Urja Ganga Gas Pipeline Skilling Project to impart formal certification and training to semi-skilled and unskilled workers engaged in the Jagdishpur – Haldia & Bokaro – Dhamra natural gas pipeline (JHBDPL) project being laid in the state.</p>	
<p>The projects were launched on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Utkal Gourab Shri Madhusudan Das, who laid the foundation of industrialisation in Odisha. They have been conceptualised as a mark of respect for Utkal Gourab Shri Madhusudan Das to carry forward his legacy.</p>	
<p>The Hon'ble Minister also launched a Pipe Fitter-City Gas Distribution (CGD) course which will commence at the Skill</p>	

Development Institute in Bhubaneswar.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan said, "it is our endeavour to provide world-class facilities for skill training and to promote the traditional art and crafts of Odisha. As a part of this journey, we are delighted to announce the launch of Prime Minister Kaushal Kendra, a state-of-the art centre that will meet the local demands and hope this will definitely encourage the craftsmen of Cuttack and their craftsmanship to reach the whole world and they will get an opportunity to sell their products in different countries".

Adding to this, Shri Pradhan said that such initiatives will also boost tourism in Cuttack and more numbers of tourists will come to Cuttack to not only buy filigree but also other famous products of Cuttack including Khandua Textile, horn and terracotta work.

Speaking on this occasion, Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab, Hon'ble MP, Cuttack said, "I am very happy that, the Government of India has strengthened its support for such great initiative which will help in boosting Cuttack's economy and make Odias self-reliant."

Shri Rajeev Sethi, Designer, Scenographer and Art Curator hailed this as a great initiative by Shri Dharmendra Pradhan. Cuttack has renowned artists. "We need to take care of such traditional art, we need to encourage such artisans and make them world class. Let the world know what filigree is all about. There should be filigree international festival where the world gets to know what we are capable of. It is a great initiative which will boost the confidence of small artists and also make them entrepreneurs. This market oriented training and common facility centre is a great idea by Shri Dharmendra Pradhan", he said.

The Hon'ble Minister inaugurated the Skill-cum-Common Facility Centre for Filigree Craftsman at Cuttack. NSDC and Gems and Jewellery Skill Council of India, in association with EduJobs Academy, are setting up the state of the art training facility specifically for Tarkashi artisans and goldsmiths to transform the folk art form of Gems and jewellery.

With the establishment of the Centre, the artisans will not only get an opportunity to upgrade their skills but will also get a window to connect with the global expo market. If any worker wants to take industry level training, he can do so at the Common Facility Centre with latest technology. The Centre will also provide training on marketing strategies, including e-commerce, so that the artisans can be self-sustained and engage directly with buyers.

GAIL (India) Limited, which is implementing the JHBDPL, has entered into a quadripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), Skill Development Institute-Bhubaneswar and LabourNet-Bengaluru for Skill Development Activities and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for generating employment in various aspects of the pipeline project, popularly known as Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga.

RPL will recognise the prior experience of workers and they will get formal certificates which will help boost their income. Safety training will also be an integral part of their training and around 1,400 people will be covered initially. Later, more people will be trained as the pipeline work progresses.

This skilling project, being rolled out in Jajpur and Bhubaneswar in Odisha will offer training to unskilled youths in various trades such as Welder, Fitter, Electrician, Earth Moving Equipment Operator, etc. The training program will

consist of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Bridge Course of 52 hours duration on the specific trades and is expected to cover workmen from Urja Ganga Gas Pipeline Project in UP, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha & West Bengal. NSDC shall be the Project Implementation Consultant (PIC) & LabourNet shall be the Project Implementation Agency (PIA) for the Skilling Project.

Most of the workers involved in the pipeline project with low educational level or with absence of formal training, have learnt skills on the job. RPL gives them a platform to assess their skills and get certified, adding credibility to their skills. Through RPL combined with Bridge Training, the workers get a chance to improve their skills and learn new methods of increasing their productivity and efficiency at the workplace.

Hon'ble Minister Shri Pradhan also launched the Pipe Fitter-CGD course, being conducted by SDI Bhubaneswar in collaboration with GAIL, to provide much-needed skilled manpower for on-going City Gas Distribution projects in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack as part of Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga.

The Pipe Fitter-CGD is a special course which provides employability in City Gas Distribution, Oil Refineries, Power Plants, and other manufacturing industries with piping, vents and ducts for gas, liquid or air. It will be a three months residential programme in which students will be provided free boarding and lodging on the campus apart from uniforms, bags, study material, insurance, shoes, etc. They will also be given placement / self-employment assistance at the end of the course. Initially, 30 students will be trained in the first batch.

GAIL, India's premier natural gas company, is implementing the prestigious 2,655 Km long JHBDPL project which was commenced by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India in July 2015. The project is progressing in full swing and GAIL till date has committed over Rs7,400 crores for the project which will pass through the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Odisha. The project will usher industrial development in eastern part of India by supplying environmentally clean natural gas to fertilizer and power plant, refineries, steel plants and other industries.

On this occasion, amongst other dignitaries Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab, MP, Cuttack, Shri Sameer De, former Minister Govt. of Odisha, Dr. Sanjay Panda, former Chief Secretary, Tripura and former Secretary Textiles to the Government of India, Shri Rajeev Sethi, Designer, Scenographer and Art Curator, Padma Vibhushan Dr. Raghunath Mohapatra, an Architect and Sculptor, Shri Rajesh Aggarwal, Joint Secretary, MSDE, Shri Premkumar Kothari, Chairman, Gems & Jewellery Skill Council of India, Shri Pramod Agrawal, Chairman, Gems & Jewellery Export Promotion Council, Dr. Ashutosh Karnatak, Director (Projects), GAIL, Shri Ram Mohan Mishra, Additional Secretary & Development Commissioner, MSME, Shri N N Rao, CEO, SDI, Bhubaneswar, Ms. Gayatri Vasudevan, CEO, Labour-Net were also present at the occasion.

**Cotton Cultivation Should Be Completed
Till End Of May**

Urdu Point

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/pakistan/cotton-cultivation-should-be-completed-till-e-331244.html>

Agriculture experts have advised the growers to complete the cultivation of cotton by the end of May for getting bumper yield. Spokesman of agriculture department told here on Sunday that although best time for cotton cultivation is before mid of May, however, farmers can complete its cultivation before end of May.

He said that farmers should use certified cotton seeds for cultivation of cotton over maximum space because its

production not only plays a pivotal role in meeting the food and cloth requirements of the people but it also helps growers in mitigating their financial issues.

Textile sector rejects budget 2018-19

Daily Times

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/233875/textile-sector-rejects-budget-2018-19/>

Textile industrialists have expressed dissatisfaction over the Federal Budget 2018-19 announced by the Government stating that the Budget focused general industry & trade while export sector was neglected.

Muhammad Jawed Bilwani, Chairman, Pakistan Apparel Forum said continuation of Zero-Rating Regime was appreciable, however, exporters demand to transform regulatory mechanism from SRO to Act was still awaited. Export sector is the lifeline to uplift economy but remains a low priority area because of non-commitment, non-seriousness and unwillingness to release refund claims of billion of rupees on part of the Government. Exporters problems will multiply owing to liquidity crunch and as result Trade Deficit will further widen from US\$27.3 billion. From last consequent 19 weeks SBP Reserves have been drastically declining and currently stand at US\$10.90 billion, Bilwani mentioned.

Nevertheless, Jawed Bilwani, appreciated several positive steps taken to facilitate general trade and industry like continuation of Tax Credit on BMR on new investment / establishment of new industry; reduction in tax slabs; curtailment of discretionary power of tax collectors and reverted back to the Federal Govt instead of FBR with the approval of Minister-Incharge; reduction of Customs Duties on certain items; rationalization and reduction of Tax Rates for individuals, AOPs and Companies. Bilwani was of the view that to achieve a milestone, major breakthrough and unsurpassed export, it is crucial to immediately release the DDT Claims under PM Package and long withheld refunds, otherwise, the situation already heading towards alarming scenario may turn to disaster.

Bilwani added that in this Budget, once again, hopes and assurances given but no firm commitment. PML(N) led Govt. gave export Package of Rs180 billion and only Rs21.5 (16.38% of the total package) was released to-date. The Prime Minister, earlier, gave assurance to release all pending refunds and rebates by 15th February, 2018 which again turned as an eye wash. Rather than making any firm commitment and giving one date, again a new ambiguous timeline of 1st July, 2018 was given to clear refunds in phases in next 12 months whereby the sitting Govt will be no more into power. Surprisingly, Govt. has not yet released exporters DDT 2017-18 claims worth Rs55 billion approx. and various Refunds of billions of rupees. On the other hand, the Government has given another hope to announce New Big Export Package. Bilwani urged the government to accord genuine considerations to exporters recommendations:

Abolish Export Development Surcharge and collection should not be made till the huge amount of unutilized of EDF is exhausted;

Reduce 1% tax on export to be reduced to 0.5%;

Transform Zero Rating from SRO System into an Act;

Immediate disbursement of exporters' approved refunds;

Farmers have commended Government for improving cotton prices through introducing the auction system.

Vice President Constantino Chiwenga recently indicated that the crop would soon be marketed through the auction system to ensure competitive prices.

Zimbabwe Commercial Farmers Union (ZCFU) president Mr Wonder Chabikwa last week said Government's planned move was likely to bring competition that will positively impact on prices.

"The idea could have been influenced by the need by Government to bring competition in the buying of cotton," he said.

"We need the highest possible prices to enhance viability and eventually increased production.

"We are still to get the full details from Government.

"This idea was once introduced in the mid-90s and we hope this time it will come to fruition."

Zimbabwe Farmers Union (ZFU) vice president Mr Berean Mukwende said there was need to ensure that farmers were duly paid for their produce.

"The auction system will likely see a number of merchants taking part in the purchasing of cotton, leading to the firming of prices," he said.

"The development will generate interest among farmers and boost production of the commodity.

"We are happy with the recent announcement by Vice President Chiwenga. This will see prices go up to viable levels."

Farmers also called on Government to improve the payment system for cotton farmers during the forthcoming marketing season to reduce incidences of side-marketing.

The bulk of the cotton produced this season was grown under the Presidential Input Support Scheme.

Last season, farmers in the remote areas, especially in the eastern border-lying areas, ended up selling their cotton to buyers in Mozambique who had ready cash.

Agricultural economist Mr Midway Bhunu said there was need to investigate reasons behind side-marketing of the crop last year to come up with lasting solutions.

"The common problem with contract farming is moral hazard between the agent and the principal," he said.

"At times contractors do not own up their contractual obligations, while farmers, on the other hand, do not

understand the implications of a contract.

“Both sides should have dialogue and engagement so they come to an understanding.”

Cotton production had been on a downfall over the past years due to unviable market prices.

Government had to intervene to fund cotton production to revive the cotton sector.

This season, 400 000 cotton farmers benefited from the Presidential Inputs Support Scheme.

CLOTHES RECYCLING APP HAS DESIGNS ON TEXTILE CIRCULARITY

Resources.com

<https://resource.co/article/clothes-recycling-app-has-designs-textile-circularity-12557>

The UK’s first app for the recycling of unwanted clothing has been launched today (18 April) as research claims 73 per cent of consumers no longer wear up to half of the items of clothing they own.

According to the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), an estimated 300,000 tonnes of clothing ends up in landfill in the UK every year. The reGAIN app seeks to contribute to diverting clothing from landfill by organising collections of unwanted clothing in return for discount coupons for major retailers and lifestyle brands such as Superdry, Asics, boohoo and Expedia.

The app was developed by Jack Ostrowski, founder of Yellow Octopus, which provides commercial sustainability solutions to the fashion industry and has worked with brands such as ASOS, John Lewis, Primark and all major UK supermarkets for the past 12 years. It aims to change people’s behaviour and perceptions when it comes to clothing, encouraging reflection on the value of clothing and the destination of our unwanted garments.

Commenting on the app, Ostrowski said: “We are realists, not idealists. We know that we can’t stop people from buying clothes, but we can incentivise them to change their habits and divert hundreds of tonnes of clothing from UK landfill. Our long-term goal is a world in which clothes never become waste.

“The reGAIN app turns commercial sustainability into action and provides a modern solution for fast fashion lovers by rewarding sustainable behaviour. Stopping clothes from going to landfill is the first step towards a circular economy.”

The UK has a particular problem with fast fashion, with research carried out by reGAIN finding that one in ten people throw their clothes away rather than give them to charity or recycle them, while 73 per cent of people admit to no longer wearing up to half of the items of clothing they own.

reGAIN aims to address this issue by raising awareness of the importance of recycling clothing, and by providing a simple and rewarding way for people to recycle more. After downloading the app, users can ship their old clothes, shoes and accessories to reGAIN free of charge from over 20,000 drop-off points across the UK. In return, they will receive a discount coupon so they can shop for less.

In order to keep the carbon footprint to a minimum, reGAIN app only accepts one drop per week per customer, with

a minimum of 10 items in each shipment. Once the clothes reach reGAIN app, they are either reused and reworn, recycled, upcycled or used as combustibles for energy production.

It certainly seems counterintuitive to try and incentivise more responsible clothing and textile use by offering people discounts on clothing from high street retailers, the home of fast fashion, when we should be trying to reduce the amount of clothing we use in the first place. What is even more questionable is the fact that reGAIN would send clothing to burn for energy production; while we certainly need to be diverting textiles from landfill, burning them is not a solution that should be considered for this waste stream.

Despite this, the app has certainly stirred up some enthusiasm for textile recycling, with a survey carried out by reGAIN finding that the majority of respondents said they would use the reGAIN app to get their unwanted clothes reused and recycled. The survey also found that 67 per cent of people would recycle more if they were rewarded for doing so; 66 per cent would recycle more if it was free and easy to do so; and 56 per cent would recycle more if they knew how much environmental damage sending clothes to landfill causes.

Ostrowski added: “The reGAIN app provides consumers with a three-fold ‘Do Good’ scheme: firstly, to do good for their living space through decluttering; secondly, to do good for their wallet, by receiving coupons and shopping for less; and thirdly, doing good for the planet, by diverting clothing from UK landfill. With 49 per cent of people we surveyed planning to do a spring clean of unwanted clothing this month, we hope many of them will consider using reGAIN app to prevent these items from becoming waste.”

The launch of the app coincides with Fashion Revolution Week, which starts next week (23 April) and will see a series of events taking place around the world to prompt consumers to think about how their clothes are used and made. reGAIN has also taken inspiration from the Ellen MacArthur Foundation’s Circular Fibres Initiative, which is working to advance a circular economy for textiles.