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Reviving an age-old tradition of weaving

Business Line

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/todays-paper/tp-indiainterior/article25976355.ece>

Nagaland's famed loom looms are attempting a comeback

Weaving with the use of the traditional loom is a skill and occupation that is passed down generations among women in tribal communities in the North-East of the country. Even as women are engaged in cultivation, weaving is a secondary occupation, with every household owning a traditional loom.

Though women or girls may not necessarily undergo training in weaving, the skills are learnt through lived experiences and by participating in the activity from an early age while assisting their mothers or elders.

Traditionally, the loom has an economic significance as well and forms an important part of the socio-culture of tribal societies. But unfortunately, over the years, looms have been slowly disappearing and so is the weaving skill. "The younger generation no longer has the skill nor the knowledge as weaving is not done in their homes," says Sonnie Kath, Co-Founder of Exotic Echo Society, an organisation that is engaged in reviving the skill.

Showcasing tradition

Exotic Echo Society primarily focuses on bringing back the tradition through empowerment of traditional weavers while training and exposing them to festivals and exhibitions. The attempt is also to provide a sustainable livelihood to hundreds of unemployed rural women with special emphasis on young women, mostly school dropouts.

Recently Diezephe village in Dimapur, Nagaland, organised a festival to showcase Naga loom weaving. Textiles, designs, and other hand-crafted products were exhibited to bring the work of over 50 Naga women into the public domain for designers and women group representatives to see. The event also discussed issues pertaining to preservation of the art, promotion and enhancement of livelihood through the tradition.

The festival explored how the tradition could be protected through indigenous property rights and knowledge and mechanism to fight for copyrights. It needs mention in this context that in recent years the Naga shawl has been under the process of being registered under the Geographical Indication (GI) Act to ensure that similar products manufactured in any other parts of the world cannot be sold as Naga shawls.

The festival was hosted and organised by Exotic Echo Society. "Even as women want to earn a living through weaving, they are without the skills. And marketing and selling their produce is a challenge," says Kath, who registered her

organisation in 2008 and has since been working to resurrect the dying loom and help women find a sustainable livelihood.

Looking towards exports

Weaving primarily disappeared from many parts of the North-East due to several reasons. With cheaper cloth making, weaving no longer provided women a livelihood. The onslaught of modern technology in the textile industry took its toll on the traditional trade. Cheap ready-made garments flooded the North-East markets — a lot of it coming in from Thailand, China and other countries in the neighbourhood.

This is where organisations such as Exotic Echo Society come in. With new designs, relevant garments and a willingness to explore the export market, they hope to take products created on the loom to distant free markets.

Traditional weaving is not merely about making an apparel or a dress. It involves an elaborate process. Exotic Echo Society begin their work from the root. Cotton growing on a large-scale was initiated in rural Nagaland. This is the cotton that is further processed into yarn and dyed using local organic herbs and leaves. It is then made ready for weaving.

Though the traditional loom is time-consuming and produces less quantity than the shuttle loom, the quality delivered is far superior.

“Modern technology such as shuttle looms are meant for mass production, but our looms have perspective and ideology,” says Kath. “It is quality production that is eco-friendly and sustainable”.

On the positive side, in recent times, the demand for loom products and hand-made items is picking up.

“People have begun to prefer quality products and appreciate the work. We have our own niche buyers. It’s gaining momentum,” Kath says.

Over 200 women weavers in Diezephe village alone are members and associated directly or indirectly with the Exotic Echo Society. They work at home in their own space and time. The Society helps in networking and marketing its produce both within the country and abroad.

At Exotic Society the weavers do not limit themselves to producing only tribal shawls or other products with traditional designs. “We also make modern fashionwear, apparels, bags, cushion covers and lots more” adds Kath. She is hopeful that thousands of looms will bloom in the future.

Top fabric makers queue up to set up units at Solapur

The Hindu

<https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-business/top-fabric-makers-queue-up-to-set-up-units-at-solapur/article25975518.ece>

District may attract investments worth Rs. 1,000 crore

Leading fabric manufacturers Reliance Industries, Raymond Ltd., Siyaram Silk Mills, Wadia Group and Valji Group have expressed interest in investing in garment stitching units in Solapur district of Maharashtra to capitalise on the demand for ready-made uniforms from schools and corporates, an industry official said.

“They all are keen to invest in Solapur,” said Amit Kumar Jain, joint secretary, Solapur Garment Manufacturers’ Association. The association recently organised a fabric manufacturers’ fair to attract investments.

“Of late, Solapur has been gaining prominence as a sourcing hub for ready-made school and corporate uniforms. We expect Solapur to attract investments of Rs. 1,000 crore by 2022,” he said.

Mafatlal Industries had already started a stitching unit with 200 machines to make ready-made uniforms in Solapur, he added.

“Reliance, Raymond, Siyaram Silk Mills, Wadia Group, Valji Group and Mumbai-based Qmax World, Rupam Exports Amber Home, which make shirts for the European market, are next in the line,” he added.

Making uniforms

Currently, Solapur has about 400 stitching units making school and corporate uniforms. The association’s target is to scale it up to 2,000 units by 2022.

According to S.R. Gaikwad, Director of Textiles, Government of India, Solapur has the potential to become the uniform hub of the country.

“The Central government will extend all support in achieving the goal set by the Maharashtra (government),” Mr. Gaikwad said.

Industrial growth slips to 0.5% in November

The Hindu

<https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/industrial-growth-slips-to-05-in-nov/article25975670.ece>

A sharp contraction in manufacturing, especially consumer and capital goods, caused industrial output growth in November 2018 to drop to a 17-month low of 0.5%.

The previous low was in June 2017 when growth contracted by 0.3%.

The low growth is also partly attributable to the base effect — industrial output in November 2017 had grown by 8.5%. Growth for October 2018 was revised upwards to 8.4% from 8.1%.

Manufacturing sector

The manufacturing sector, which accounts for over three-fourths of the index, contracted 0.4%, with capital goods output declining by 3.4%.

Growth in the April-November period was at 5%, as against 3.2% in the same period last year.

GIM 2019 may see 140 MoUs signed

The Hindu

<https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-tamilnadu/gim-2019-may-see-140-mous-signed/article25975792.ece>

Manufacturing sector expected to get projects to the tune of Rs. 60,000 crore

The second edition of the Global Investors' Meet (GIM), to be held in Chennai on January 23 and 24, may see the signing of at least 140 memoranda of understanding (MoUs).

"We are still receiving proposals and our target is 200. As of now, there are around 40 MoUs pertaining to the manufacturing sector and about 100 'facilitation MoUs'," a senior official in the Industries Department said.

Apart from manufacturing, deals are expected to be inked in information technology, energy, housing and agro industries.

The 'facilitation MoU' is so called because the government is obliged, under the State Business Facilitation Act, to enable project proponents to get clearances from various departments and agencies.

The manufacturing sector is expected to get projects to the tune of Rs. 60,000 crore. As of now, the Cabinet has cleared projects worth Rs. 50,000 crore, which include the Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited (CPCL)'s Rs. 27,450-crore refinery project in Nagapattinam district. On January 18, the Cabinet is likely to hold a meeting wherein it will accord approval to some more projects, the official said.

Going higher

The official said the CPCL project will be the single largest among the MoU projects in terms of investment value. Its cost may even touch Rs. 33,000 crore eventually. The proposed plant will have a capacity of 9 Million Metric Tonnes Per Annum (MMTPA), and will replace the existing facility, which has a capacity of 1 MMTPA.

During the 2015 GIM, 98 MoUs were signed, envisaging investments of over Rs. 2.40 lakh crore (around \$36 billion). This time, the total value of investments is likely to either touch or exceed that of the deals inked during the previous edition of the summit.

Also, the authorities are now engaged in scrutinising the credentials of all the promoters of the projects. They will sign the MoUs only if the promoters pass the test of scrutiny, an official said, adding that the Aerospace and Defence Policy, cleared by the Cabinet last month, will be unveiled on the inaugural day of the summit.

MSMEs await for clarification on GST**The Hindu**<https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-tamilnadu/msmes-await-for-clarification-on-gst/article25975977.ece>

Micro units are the most affected because of the 18 % duty

Job working industries in engineering sector here hope to get clarifications in a couple of days on the modified composition scheme under Goods and Services Tax (GST).

Under the composition scheme, it is said there is a provision for 6 % duty levied for units with annual turnover of less than Rs. 50 lakh. “We need more details on this. They have also increased the turnover limit for the scheme from Rs. 20 lakh to Rs. 40 lakh.

We do not know whether job working is included in this,” said R. Ramamurthy, president of Coimbatore District Small Industries Association.

One of the long-pending demands of the job working engineering units here, mainly those in the Micro, Small and Medium-scale sector (MSMEs), is reduction of GST to 5 % from the existing 18 % for these units.

The changes in the composition scheme were discussed at a meeting held here on Friday among members of nearly 20 industrial associations.

Micro units are the most affected because of the 18 % duty now as they face shortage of working capital.

The units will wait for the notifications on the composition scheme and decide on the future course of action, Mr. Ramamurthy said.

J. James, president of Tamil Nadu Association of Cottage and Micro Enterprises, and S. Surulivel, president of Coimbatore SIDCO Industrial Estate Manufacturers' Welfare Association, added that meanwhile, representatives of the MSME associations in Coimbatore would also meet Ministers in the State and Central Governments and explain to them the issues faced by the MSME job working units in the engineering sector and how they would benefit if the rate was reduced to 5 %.

Textile units welcome relaxations for MSMEs**The Hindu**<https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-tamilnadu/textile-units-welcome-relaxations-for-msmes/article25975978.ece>

Textile and clothing exporters, especially those in the Micro, Small and Medium-scale Enterprises (MSMEs) category, have welcomed the GST relaxations announced on Thursday.

K.V. Srinivasan, chairman of the Cotton Textiles Export Promotion Council, has said in a press release that the expansion of the Composition Scheme from the turnover threshold of Rs. 1 crore to Rs. 1.5 crore will be a relief to several small-scale tax payers.

They would now have to pay the tax on a quarterly basis and file the returns annually. The small-scale tax payers who were so far unable to file the returns on time would benefit from this. The GST exemption limit had also been increased from Rs. 20 lakh to Rs. 40 lakh. This would help the small or medium scale textile exporters and encourage growth in the textile sector.

According to A. Sakthivel, vice-chairman of the Apparel Export Promotion Council, the increase in GST exemption limit will benefit the knitwear industry and the MSMEs in Tirupur.

Units catering to the domestic or export market and have turnover of less than Rs. 40 lakh will now be exempted. There are many such units in the knitting, embroidery, and stitching activities and these do job work for larger units, he said.

Industrial growth falls to 17-month low of 0.5%

The Hindu

<https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-business/industrial-growth-falls-to-17-month-low-of-05/article25975503.ece>

Manufacturing sector contracts in Nov.

Industrial output growth dropped to a 17-month low of 0.5% in November on account of contraction in manufacturing sector, particularly consumer and capital goods.

Factory output, as measured in terms of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), had grown by 8.5% in November 2017, as per data released by the Central Statistics Office (CSO).

The previous low was in June 2017, when IIP growth contracted by 0.3%. Growth for October 2018 was revised upwards to 8.4% from 8.1%. During April-November period, industrial output grew 5% compared with 3.2% in the same period of the previous fiscal.

The manufacturing sector, which constitutes 77.63% of the index, recorded a contraction of 0.4% in November as against a growth of 10.4% a year ago.

The mining sector posted 2.7% growth during the month as against 1.4% in November 2017.

In terms of industries, 10 out of 23 industry groups in the manufacturing sector showed positive growth during November 2018.

Government lifts condition restricting export incentive under GST

Business Standard

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/government-lifts-condition-restricting-export-incentive-under-gst-119011101232_1.html

The government has issued a notification to withdraw a condition that restricts claiming of an export incentive under goods and services tax (GST), after various petitions were filed in courts against the curbs.

However, the petitioners say that they will not take back the petitions since the removal happened only

prospectively.

Earlier, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) and the customs department had imposed a condition that the advance authorisation scheme would be available to exporters only if imports have been undertaken by them.

This is termed pre-import condition, which was effective from October 13, 2017.

An advance authorisation licence is issued to allow duty-free import of inputs, which are used in exports. There was no such condition imposed on the scheme in the pre-GST period.

Change in the condition meant that imports done after exports cannot avail exemptions from IGST and compensation cess.

This led exporters and importers to move courts, including Delhi High Court, Gujarat High Court and Punjab and Haryana High Court as the directorate of revenue intelligence (DRI) started issuing notices to them.

Advance authorisation is generally used for importing goods after exports are undertaken, as against the pre-import condition imposed, said Abhishek Rastogi, counsel for the petitioners. As such, the condition defeats the purpose of the scheme, he added.

After much hue and cry, the customs department and DGFT on Thursday issued a notification, withdrawing the condition.

However, the condition has been withdrawn from January 10 only. Though the scheme is available till March 31, 2019, sources said it may be extended further like in the past. The petitioners contested this and refused to withdraw their pleas in courts.

"This would not provide relief to imports made between October 13, 2017 and January 9, 2019, thereby the petitions filed will continue to seek relief in respect of such exports," Rastogi said.

Govt revenue will take Rs 1-trillion hit due to GST rate cuts: Jaitley

Business Standard

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/govt-revenue-will-take-rs-1-trillion-hit-due-to-gst-rate-cuts-jaitley-119011101290_1.html

The government will forego revenue of close to Rs 1 trillion on all the items whose rates have revised to lower slabs under the goods and services tax (GST) regime, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said on Friday. He also said the various income tax benefits given to the middle class during the Narendra Modi government's existing tenure will lead to revenue foregone of Rs 97,000 crore.

Jaitley gave these numbers in his latest blog, titled "How the Poor and the Middle Class Benefitted Most from the Modi Government Policies?"

"The GST is the single most important 'consumer friendly measure' in India. Taxes of most commodities have been brought down. Commodities have been made cheaper, even though the revenue sacrificed now after the rates

revision, would be close to rupees one trillion," Jaitley wrote.

After the last round of rate cuts in the December GST Council meeting, of the 1,216 commodities which are used, broadly 183 are taxed at zero rate, 308 at 5 per cent, 178 at 12 per cent and 517 at 18 per cent. Only 23 items remain in the highest slab of 28 per cent, which includes items like tobacco products, luxury vehicles, molasses, air-conditioners, aerated water, large TVs, dishwashers, cement and auto parts. "Even though the taxation slab is Rs 2.5 lakh, those with an earning upto Rs 3 lakh need not pay any tax. A Rs 40,000 standard deduction has been given to all employees. Similarly, all investments in housing, insurance and other saving instruments, have been increased in the last four years. The cost of this to the exchequer is almost Rs 97,000 crores per annum," Jaitley said.

On the recently passed 10 per cent reservation for economically weaker sections in government jobs and educational institutions, he said, "The Prime Minister's decision to force an agenda for poverty based reservation is the single greatest recognition/concern for poor across the general categories and the need to eliminate poverty," and accused the main opposition party Congress of paying "lip sympathy" and grudgingly supporting the Constitution Amendment Bill, passed by Parliament earlier this week.

"Poverty is a secular criteria" and it cuts across communities and religions," he said adding that "poverty as criteria for a carve out does not in any way contravene the basic structure of the Constitution".

Jaitley said that the original Constitution (unamended) in its Preamble mentions equality of opportunity and justice for all whether political, social or economic to be ensured by the state.

He also highlighted other government's initiatives like housing for every rural poor, universal health scheme - Ayushman Bharat -, and interest subvention, for economic upliftment of the poor.

"This is the first time that during the five-year tenure of a government a Rs 2 trillion annual tax rebate for both direct and indirect taxes is given to the middle class tax payer without a single tax being increased," Jaitley said.

"There is a method for economically empowering the poor. Their purchasing power has improved. This helps trade and businesses which impacts positively on the economy.

"This is the first five year tenure of a government where India has consistently remained the fastest growing economy in the world," he said.

UP, Maharashtra warm up for summer power demand	Financial Express https://www.financialexpress.com/economy/up-maharashtra-warm-up-for-summer-power-demand/1441163/
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Cautioned by spot power prices rising to record levels due to coal shortage at power plants in the last summer, states have started making arrangements to tie up power supply agreements on a short-term basis right from the beginning of the new year.

Four such auctions have already been conducted this year, through which Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra seek to tie up a cumulative 2,850 MW capacity for May and June, 2019. Stressed power projects, vying for new avenues of

electricity sale, were among the lowest bidders.

The tariffs quoted by power producers against such bids range between Rs 5.09/unit-Rs 7.49/unit.

According to sources, stressed power assets such as the 1,320 MW Jaypee Nigrie plant and the 1,200 MW Essar Mahan unit are among the lowest bidders to Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra's invitations for bilateral power contracts. Coastal Energen's 1,200 MW Mutiara plant, another stressed unit, has also been shortlisted for meeting Uttar Pradesh's requirements.

Chhattisgarh has also invited 500 MW short-term capacity cumulatively for January and February. Adani Power's Mundra plant is one of the lowest bidders to these tenders, sources added.

Though there are instances where the bids have been cancelled by discoms due higher prices, experts have pointed out that the aforementioned tariffs — though higher than the average electricity rates — would insulate the discoms from the pricing vagaries at electricity exchanges. Last year, spot prices of electricity breached the Rs 10/unit several times in these months due to surge in electricity demand and coal supply issue at a number of power plants.

After Monsanto patent ruling, farmers hope for next gen GM Seeds	Business Line https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/after-monsanto-patent-ruling-indian-farmers-hope-for-next-gen-gm-seeds/article25967704.ece
<p>A court ruling in India this week that upheld a Monsanto patent on genetically modified (GM) cotton seeds has raised hopes among farmers that the company would now launch its next-generation seeds, the application for which it pulled two years ago.</p> <p>India approved Monsanto's GM cotton seed trait in 2002 and an upgraded variety in 2006, helping transform the country into the world's top producer and second-largest exporter of the fibre. But newer traits have not been available since the company withdrew an application in 2016 seeking approval for the latest variety due to a royalty dispute with the government and worries over patent claims.</p> <p>Nevertheless, the new herbicide-tolerant variety seeped into Indian farms and many cotton growers openly sowed them last year, prompting a government investigation that is ongoing. Monsanto has said local seed companies have illegally attempted to “incorporate unauthorised and unapproved herbicide-tolerant technologies into their seeds”.</p> <p>“We don't understand legal issues but we want new technologies,” Shrikant Kale, a cotton grower in Yavatmal district in the western state of Maharashtra, said. “If the court verdict helps seed companies in bringing new technology, then it would be good for us as well.”</p> <p>Nearly a dozen other farmers in three Maharashtra districts said they planted the illegal cotton variety in June after buying seeds from the grey market, and that they would be happy to use it legally if Monsanto launched it.</p> <p>READ Monsanto verdict will bring in crop innovation: industry</p> <p>“Illegal sales mean that there's always a risk of buying spurious seeds and we buy such smuggled seeds as there is no</p>	

alternative,” said Vijay Niwal, another cotton farmer in Maharashtra.

“We don't mind paying a few hundred rupees more for seeds if they help us in saving thousands of rupees on managing weeds.”

Monsanto owner Bayer welcomed the Supreme Court's decision, saying it “prima facie validates our patent” and that it was confident of “defending any challenge to our patent by presenting solid scientific evidence”.

Monsanto did not immediately comment on future plans, including any launch of its new seeds.

But two industry sources aware of the company's plans said that a dispute over royalties paid by local companies that licence its technology remained a hurdle to seeking fresh approval to sell a new variety of cotton seeds. India's agriculture ministry has twice slashed royalties in the past two years, apart from cutting cotton seed prices.

“The government could step in again to decide the rate of royalty, which could be really miniscule in comparison with the cost of developing a really good product,” said one of the sources, declining to be named as they were not authorised to speak to the media.

“Biotechnology research is very expensive and if the government arbitrarily fixes the rate for expensive, cutting-edge technologies then that becomes a major hurdle in launching new products.”

The agriculture ministry did not respond to an email seeking comment.

“SELF-RELIANCE” GROUP

The court ruling has been criticised by a nationalist group that has links to Bharatiya Janata Party and favours non-GM technologies and “India first” economic policies. The Swadeshi Jagran Manch, which loosely translates to National Forum for Self-Reliance, said the government needs to amend the country's patent law to negate the court verdict.

Industry executives say several foreign agrichemical companies had to scale down projects, fire scientists, or pull applications to sell products in India because of government-mandated cuts in royalties and a lower court's order in April that rejected Monsanto's patent claim.

They said the Supreme Court verdict overturning the lower court order could set a precedent for any future patent dispute and encourage fresh investments in one of the world's biggest farm markets, whose seed industry is worth around \$3 billion a year.

“The entire biotechnology space has been liberated,” said Ram Kaundinya, director general of the Federation of Seed Industry of India that represents foreign and local seed companies including Monsanto and Syngenta.

“There was uncertainty in this area for the last three to four years, which led to a reduction in investments. There are still some issues regarding price control but those are not as big as validity of patents.”

Many biotechnology companies working on corn and other GM crops will now push hard to get government approvals for their seeds, he said, declining to name the companies.

DowDuPont, which in August last year told the Indian government it was putting off trials needed for approval to sell a GM corn variety, did not respond to a call seeking comment.

A public relations firm for Syngenta directed Reuters to Kaundinya for comment.

But permitting GM food crops is a big call for India, which so far only allows genetically modified cotton seeds.

The country spends tens of billions of dollars in importing food, as dated technologies, poor yields, shrinking farms and unreliable weather patterns afflict the country of 1.3 billion people. But opponents of GM crops say they threaten the country's biodiversity and are too expensive for Indian farmers.

Annual sales of GM cotton seeds is estimated at \$500 million, and Monsanto-developed seeds now control 90 percent of India's cotton acreage.

DGFT removes pre-import condition to avail IGST exemption on imports under Advance Authorization

KNN India.com

<https://knnindia.co.in/news/newsdetails/sectors//dgft-removes-pre-import-condition-to-avail-igst-exemption-on-imports-under-advance-authorization>

The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) has removed the pre-import condition to avail exemption from the payment of IGST on imports under Advance Authorization.

This exemption which will be available till March 31, 2019 has also been extended to deemed supplies, said DGFT in a notification.

It said "Para 4.14 of Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) is amended to remove pre-import condition to avail exemption from Integrated Tax and Compensation Cess and exemption from Integrated Tax and Compensation Cess is also extended to deemed supplies."

Earlier as per para 4.14 of Foreign Trade Policy 2015-20, imports against Advance Authorizations are exempted from the payment of Integrated Tax (IGST). However, this exemption is subject to pre-import condition.

The Cotton Textiles Export Promotion Council (TEXPROCIL) along with other EPCs / Trade bodies had represented to the government to remove the condition of pre-import for IGST exemption against Advance Authorizations.

Farm loan waivers against economic principles: ADB India

Live Mint

<https://www.livemint.com/Politics/9AcsSu7lky6w49WML8a7L/Farm-loan-waivers-against-economic-principles-ADB-India-chi.html>

Joining the debate on farm loan waivers, Asian Development Bank (ADB) Country Director Kenichi Yokoyama Friday said such write-offs were against economic principles and cannot effectively address the agrarian distress.

Yokoyama also advocated for direct transfer of funds to targeted beneficiaries as it would cut down leakages. On

farm loan waiver, he said most of the people are sceptical about it as an economic principle and has moral hazards.

“There is a need to address agriculture sector distress...but economic principle wise, farm loan waiver is not an effective means to address farm distress,” he said.

Earlier this week, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said any generalised farm loan waiver adversely impacts the credit culture and the behaviour of borrowers, amid various states announcing waivers. He said loan waiver is related to the fiscal space that a particular state government has.

Farm loans totalling around Rs 1.47 lakh crore were waived off by Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh after the Congress came to power last month.

In 2017, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Punjab announced to write off unpaid loans. The country’s largest state waived off farm loans worth Rs 36,400 crore.

Appreciating the fact that India has a platform to provide direct benefit transfer through Aadhaar, Yokoyama said analysis has to be done on how the government can launch universal basic income (UBI) scheme in the most efficient way.

Asked if there was a stress on fiscal deficit, Yokoyama said ADB has no doubt about the government meeting the target.

“I think a clear framework is there and mandate given under the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act. We don’t have any doubt over it,” he said.

The Centre has budgeted to contain fiscal deficit at 3.3 per cent of the GDP in the current fiscal, lower than 3.5 per cent in 2017-18.

Last month, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had exuded confidence of meeting the fiscal deficit target of 3.3 per cent for the current fiscal.

Raising GST exemption threshold will help SMEs: SRTEPC

Fibre 2 Fashion

<https://www.fibre2fashion.com/news/textile-news/raising-gst-exemption-threshold-will-help-smes-srtepc-246684-newsdetails.htm>

The decision of the GST Council to raise exemption threshold and increase in Composition Scheme limit will help small and medium enterprises (SMEs) significantly, The Synthetic & Rayon Textiles Export Promotion Council (SRTEPC) has said. For hilly states and those in North East, the exemption threshold has been doubled to ₹20 lakh from the earlier ₹10 lakh.

At its 32nd meeting, the GST Council has “taken encouraging decisions” by relaxing the tax exemption limit to ₹40 lakh of annual turnover from the earlier cap of ₹20 lakh and increasing the composition scheme (without input tax credit and no recovery of taxes on output liability) limit to ₹1.5 crore from present ₹1 crore, SRTEPC said in a press release.

“By expanding the Composition Scheme, the government is helping the small players under the SMEs segment who are not in a position to file returns in time, which was expected by them since long,” said SRTEPC chairman Narain Aggarwal.

The GST Council also took other industry friendly decisions. Those providing services or mixed supplies (goods and services) with a turnover up to ₹50 lakh will now be entitled to avail composition scheme.

Secondly, service providers and those who render mixed supplies of goods and services with a turnover up to ₹50 lakh in the informal sector will be entitled to the composition scheme under the GST regime. The composition rate for services has been put at 6 per cent.

Moreover, composition tax payers will pay tax quarterly, but file returns annually.

“These exemptions and relaxations will certainly facilitate ease of doing business and smooth functioning of the SMEs. This will also encourage SRTEPC members in their efforts to increase exports of Indian MMF textiles,” Aggarwal said.

TEXPROCIL welcomes increase in GST exemption & Composition Scheme threshold limits

KNN India.com

<https://knnindia.co.in/news/newsdetails/sectors/texprocil-welcomes-increase-in-gst-exemption-composition-scheme-threshold-limits>

Textiles Export Promotion Council (TEXPROCIL) has welcomed the steps taken by the government to increase GST exemption and Composition Scheme threshold limits.

Welcoming the decision, Chairman of The Cotton TEXPROCIL, Dr. K.V. Srinivasan said, “This decision will help the small and medium sized businesses and will encourage growth in the textiles sector”.

“The expansion of the Composition Scheme has come as relief to a large number of small tax payers who are not in a position to file returns on time”, according to the Chairman, TEXPROCIL.

The 32nd meeting of the GST Council held on January 10, 2019 has raised the GST exemption threshold limit from Rs.20 lakhs to 40 lakhs effective from April 1, 2019.

For the North Eastern states, the threshold has been doubled to Rs 20 lakh from Rs. 10 lakhs.

Srinivasan thanked the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi and the Finance Minister, Arun Jaitley for these two very important decisions which will have a positive impact on the overall economy of the country.

The GST Council has also raised the existing Composition Scheme turnover threshold from Rs. 1 crore to Rs 1.5 crore effective from April 1, 2019.

Businesses under the scheme will now pay tax on a quarterly basis but returns will have to be filed annually

Vietnam eyes more garment exports in 2019	Xinhuanet.com http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-01/11/c_137736702.htm
<p>Vietnam will achieve garment and textile export turnovers of 40 billion U.S. dollars this year, up 10.8 percent from last year, the Vietnam Textile and Apparel Association said on Friday.</p> <p>To this end, Vietnam is focusing on producing items with high competitiveness in the world market, and improving its garment and textile supply chain, the association said, noting that increasing local and foreign investments are pouring into the Vietnamese weaving, dyeing, material and accessory segments.</p> <p>Vietnam, the world's third biggest garment and textile exporter, earned over 36 billion U.S. dollars from exporting garments and textiles, including T-shirts, jackets and dresses in 2018, up more than 16 percent from 2017, said the association. Its main export markets included the ASEAN, Japan, South Korea, the European Union and the United States.</p> <p>However, Vietnam had to spend over 3 billion U.S. dollars importing cotton, 2.4 billion U.S. dollars on yarn, 12.9 billion U.S. dollars on fabric, and more than 5.7 billion U.S. dollars importing materials and accessories for production of garments, textiles and footwear, according to the General Statistics Office.</p>	

Frankfurt: the hotspot for high-tech textiles	Innovation on Textiles https://www.innovationintextiles.com/frankfurt-the-hotspot-for-hightech-textiles/
<p>Technical textiles for all applications and a wide range of textile technologies will be on show from 14-17 May 2019, when Techtexil brings together more exhibitors from even more countries than before. Around four months before it opens its doors, Techtexil is almost fully booked, exceeding once again booking levels for the previous event at the same time of year. With its trend theme, Urban Living – City of the Future, the leading international trade fair also takes a look ahead to see how technical textiles will shape urban life in the future</p> <p>Every two years, Techtexil mirrors the range of applications for textile materials. Leading international experts from the most diverse industries – be they from architecture, the automotive industry, medicine, the fashion industry or personal protection – come together at Techtexil in search of lightweight, durable and sustainable materials,” said Olaf Schmidt, Vice President Textiles and Textile Technologies, Messe Frankfurt. The suppliers at Techtexil represent the complete spectrum of technical textiles and nonwovens. There is a significant increase in the number of suppliers in the fields of technology, as well as fibres and yarns. Suppliers of woven fabrics, coated textiles and functional apparel textiles are also strongly represented.</p> <p>Textile solutions for life in the city of the future</p> <p>In collaboration with <i>Creative Holland</i>, the Dutch creative industries, Techtexil is dedicating an exhibition space to life in the city of the future with the <i>Urban Living – City of the Future</i> special event. According to the United Nations, nearly 70% of all people are expected to be living in metropolises and megacities by 2050. This poses new challenges for living and mobility concepts, as well as food supplies and health services provision.</p>	

Functional apparel, with smart functions for example, could also play an even more important role in people's everyday lives in the future. The Techtextil and Texprocess exhibition area will be presenting examples of textile applications. In addition, an accompanying complementary programme will offer insights into the industry.

Open platform for exchange

On all four days, the trade fair will offer a new format of lectures, discussions and interactive sessions with the Techtextil Forum. The forum, which replaces the Techtextil Symposium, will take place directly in exhibition Hall 4.1 and all Techtextil participants will be able to access it free of charge. Trade visitors can look forward to contributions in the following thematic areas: sustainability, digital transformation, smart textiles, urban textiles, composites, and technical textiles in medical technology. In addition, both the Dornbirn Global Fiber Congress (GFC) and the textiles competence centre at the General Association of the German Textile and Fashion Industry are organising a thematic block.

Myant Unveils blood pressure monitoring smart shirt

Knitting Trade Journal

<https://www.knittingtradejournal.com/flat-knitting-news/13616-myant-unveils-blood-pressure-monitoring-smart-shirt>

LAS VEGAS - Smart textile developer Myant Inc., has announced the development of the world's first cuffless blood pressure monitoring technology inside its SKIIN Textile Computing Platform.

Myant's SKIIN Textile Computing platform integrates innovative sensor and actuator technology into fabrics, including, the company says, the world's first smart garment that delivers continuous, cuffless blood pressure monitoring in a comfortable and machine-washable knitted polo shirt.

According to Myant, which opened a Digital Textile Factory with Stoll in 2018, a collaboration that is to aiming to help commercialize the smart textile industry, SKIIN Smart Shirt eliminates the hassle of regular blood pressure monitoring and adds automatic data tracking to share data and trends with clinicians.

The company is now aiming to release both its SKIIN Smart Underwear for heart health detection (with ECG, HRV, activity, sleep and temperature monitoring) and its SKIIN Smart Shirt with continuous blood pressure monitoring this year. Planned additions to the SKIIN platform include slip and fall detection, driver fatigue, ovulation and a suite of chemical sensing markers. The result is smart clothing that enables users to proactively manage their health, stay connected and lead longer and more comfortable lives, the company says.

Tony Chahine, CEO and founder of Myant Inc., explained: "Myant's vision is to build a new platform for human-computer interaction that helps individuals manage and anticipate their health and wellness 24 hours a day, across all life stages. "The addition of cuffless blood pressure monitoring to our SKIIN Textile Computing platform is a major step forward in empowering continuous monitoring in a comfortable garment."

Founded in 2010, Toronto-based Myant Inc. is creating the world's first Textile Computing platform that connects humans to the world around them through textile-based solutions. In 2018, Myant's latest developments were unveiled at this week's consumer tech exhibition CES in Las Vegas.