

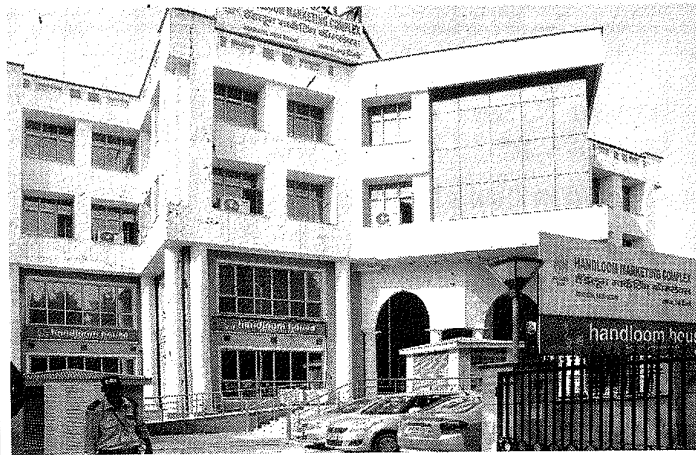
## Meghalaya observes National Handloom Day

SHILLONG, Aug 17: Weavers in Meghalaya joined their counterpart throughout the country in celebrating the launch of the First National Handloom Day at an event held at Nongpoh in Ri-Bhoi district recently.

In a small but impressive event it was informed that Meghalaya has over 32,000 weavers and their number was growing with government assistance. SK Barchung, Joint Director of State Sericulture department said that the State has nine handloom clusters. Six of these are in Garo Hills, two in Ri-Bhoi and one in Jaintia Hills district.

“Development of seven clusters has been completed and the process of developing the other two is underway,” Barchung said. Moreover, the Centre has sanctioned 72 new handloom cluster development programmes in the State, he added. – Correspondent

# Handloom creations



With the aim of thriving in the handloom industry, the Government of India is implementing development cluster plans, coupled with e-commerce marketing, to attract the younger generation of the industry.

"We are promoting the India handloom brand along with e-commerce marketing. We are already in talks with retailers like Flipkart, Ebay and smart weavers, a small online company in Hyderabad," said development commissioner (handlooms), Alok Kumar.

Highlighting different plans and schemes of the Government to promote handloom, the commissioner added, "The Government is lending support right from supplier to material. We extend our support for design, technical assistance and marketing as well. With this, we are providing 10 per cent subsidy on cotton, wool and silk yarn which is produced in India."

He added, "For production the Government is also providing professional designers from outside, who help the handloom clusters with new designs. Every weaver is entitled to take ₹10,000 margin money as a loan from banks. Funds are also being allocated to set up the dye houses. For marketing, we organise exhibition cum sale export of the handloom products."

Adding on the list is the latest handloom complex built by the government of India at Janpath. The Government has spent ₹50 crore for the project where one can find handloom products from every place in the country. Kumar informed, "We are also going to open an eating joint and arrange parking facility for our buyers."

The industry does not only have stiff competition from power looms but

there is a competition withing the industry. Kumar explained, "Handloom encompasses a very wide range of products from a *gamcha* to dhoti to a designer saree. So there is a competition for basic products. This is simple historical event of technology, you cant push it away. Our effort is to go for high value, unique design products where there is no competition from powerloom. The common need of common *lungi* and a basic bed sheet will go to powerloom because they offer cheaper cost."



Elaborating on the competition withing the industry, he added, "Here can be competition from anybody who is producing the same product but at a cheaper price. A producer who can produce a good quality product at a lesser price will always attract more buyers."

The commissioner highlighted the point that the market for handloom in India as well as abroad is promising and growing. "Handloom costs more as it demands human labour as compared to a machine made product. So the price share has to be maintained. People value a piece of cloth which is handwoven than machine made and they are ready to pay the price," said Kumar.

However, he added, "The market abroad is not increasing at a steep rate but wherever we have been able to make it a success, like in Japan or the US, we have got very positive response from there."

There is a constant need to involve our younger generation, and this can be done by two things, he said, "First, we need to provide them with competitive wage rate where they are satisfied with the rate. And the next things is their dignity. Their work and labour should be appreciated."

photo Sanjeev Kumar



# Weaving hope on timeless loom

**T**HE prime minister launched the Handloom Day on August 7 commemorating the *Swadeshi* movement launched by Gandhi on August 7, 1905. *Charkha* and *khadi* became symbolic of freedom and economic self-determinism.

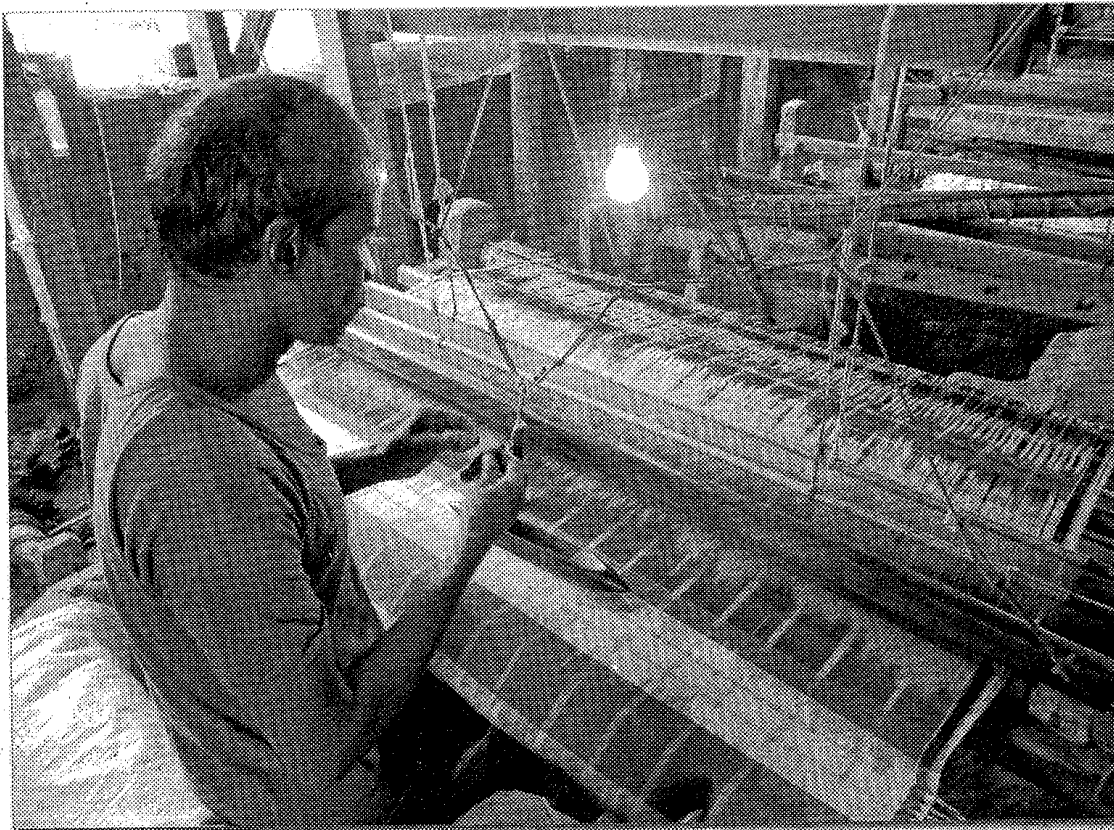
More than symbols, Gandhi understood the economic value of promoting handlooms to counter the erosive impact of British economic policies on the productive base of India and the livelihood of its people.

The prime minister's announcements on Handloom Day suggest that this is expected to be more than a symbolic gesture. This includes transferring assistance to individual weavers for building work sheds and purchasing loom and accessories directly from their bank accounts and augmenting assistance for developing a handloom cluster at the block level from Rs 60 lakh to 2 crore. Issues of ensuring proper wages, robust social security and technology upgradation were also mentioned.

The PM's *tana-bana* for supporting weavers' has already been evinced in his commitments to the Varanasi weavers that should unfold an economically viable plan for the handloom sector. One good effect of his interest in handloom revival was visible even before his Varanasi announcement, when the fears of handloom weavers that the items reserved for the sector would be de-reserved, were put to rest by the ministry of textiles statement that there would be no changes in the reservation order issued under the Handloom Reservation Act (HRA) 1985, protecting the interests of the weavers.

Power looms dominate India's textile production, with 60 per cent share. Hand-

Amita Sharma



OPENING NEW DOORS: PM's idea of launching national Handloom Day is a step towards revivalism

looms follow with 15 per cent, although a higher employment quotient. The threat to weavers is not just cheaper cloth but handloom imitations by power looms at a lower cost.

It is ironic and anachronistic that handlooms are protected by a definition under an Act originating in colonial times, viz., a handloom is any loom other than a power loom, and a power loom is a loom worked by power, as defined under the Factories Act 1948. This itself is an index to the threat India's hand-woven fabrics face.

The number of weavers has significantly declined to 43.32 lakh as per the Handloom Census of 2009-10 from 65 lakh as per the 1995 census. This may be due partly to the impact of the global recession in 2008 and partly to the

competition from power-looms. However, a fair share of weaver woes arise from structural problems in the sector that remain unaddressed by policy deficit or poor implementation or inadequate resource support.

Despite the government schemes, systems to ensure efficient supply chain management from availability of raw materials up to sale of finished goods are yet not set. The 3rd Handloom Census shows that 44.6 per cent weavers depend on master weavers for their credit, and 13.4 per cent upon moneylenders. Poor infrastructure plagues the handloom hubs with scarce water, sanitation, effluent treatment plants and electricity. Almost half the weavers live in poverty and in indebtedness, largely

non-literate, working in conditions detrimental to health. The biggest sufferers are women who constitute more than 70 per cent of workers in this sector.

If handlooms have to survive not just as heritage, but as a vibrant industry then making more announcements is not enough. A number of reform measures already recommended by the steering committee on handlooms and handicrafts for the 12th five year plan (2012 - 2017) need to be implemented. In addition, programmes once relevant such as the *Ambedkar hastshilpa vikas yojana* need review so that, weavers move forward from being just beneficiaries of poorly delivered services and subsidies to becoming professionals in their

own right.

Professional development of the weaver is the only way forward. But present schemes of ad-hoc 15 days trainings with high designer fees, and no follow up leave no footprint. The model of skill-finance-market model of government intervention needs to be replaced by the educate-empower and integrate model. This requires educating weavers not just on design but on language, finance, computer skills and e-commerce so that they acquire the competence to access market information, designs, and new skills to diversify products according to market dynamics. This process needs professional facilitators, at all levels, and not bureaucratic functionaries with no stakes in whether the sector performs or fails.

Professionalising the sector needs investment in research, for which the large network of academic and research institutes should be motivated. Such research should involve the weaving community as equal partners. In fact, developing research interests in academic institutes in handloom may open the way to weaving becoming a professional choice, like any other profession, and not an inherited condition.

Over 80 per cent of handlooms are located in rural India, employing and skilling people, spinning off ancillary employment to other village professionals — carpenters, dyers and transporters — all 'making in India' through eco-friendly work. Yet, handloom has to find its place in the current Skill India and Make in India priorities. Hopefully, the prime minister's Handloom Day signals that India has not given up on its weavers.

(The writer is former additional secretary, MHRD)

## Promoting books at Metro station

**NEW DELHI, DHNS:** Now, commuters boarding or deboarding trains at Vishwavidyalaya Metro station can buy books on the premises. The Sahitya Akademi has opened a shop at the station on Wednesday.

“The idea of this initiative is to promote the Indian Literature by providing quality books in vernaculars also to cultivate reading habits among Metro commuters and employees,” said DMRC.

Metro passengers can avail

15 per cent discount on books purchased from this book shop by showing their Delhi Metro Smart Card. Limited edition of DMRC publications will also be made available for sale from the Metro bookshop.

It was inaugurated by Vishwanath Prasad Tiwari, Chairman of the Sahitya Akademy with senior DMRC and Sahitya Akademy officials. The DMRC had two bookshops in association with National Book Trust at Kashmere Gate and Vish-

wavidyalaya Metro stations in 2014.

“The DMRC has taken up the initiative of tying up with various government bodies like National Book Trust, Delhi Tourism, Sahitya Akademy, India Habitat Centre and Ministry of Textiles authorising them to use the Metro premises in such a way that they are treated as a hub for promotion of Indian art, culture, literature, craft and tourism,” it added.

## कमजोर मानसून से पांच फसलों पर संकट

नई दिल्ली। कमजोर मानसून के कारण खाद्यान्न उत्पादक चार प्रमुख राज्यों और पांच फसलों के उत्पादन पर संकट मंडरा रहा है। रेटिंग एजेंसी क्रिसिल के अनुसार, देश में कुल खाद्यान्न उत्पादन में एक-तिहाई से ज्यादा की हिस्सेदारी रखने वाले चार राज्य और कुल उत्पादन में 25% हिस्सेदारी वाली पांच फसल कम बारिश से बुरी तरह प्रभावित हुई है।

क्रिसिल के कमजोर बारिश प्रभाव मानदंड (ड्रिप) के अनुसार, बिहार, कर्नाटक, महाराष्ट्र और उत्तर प्रदेश कमजोर मानसून से सबसे अधिक प्रभावित हुए हैं और भारत के कुल खाद्यान्न उत्पादन में इन राज्यों की हिस्सेदारी 34 फीसदी है। इसी प्रकार ज्वार, सोयाबीन, तुअर, मक्का और

बिहार, कर्नाटक, महाराष्ट्र  
यूपी में कम हुई है बारिश

ज्वार, सोयाबीन, तुअर,  
मक्का और कपास की  
फसल हुई है प्रभावित

कपास की फसल कम बारिश से सबसे अधिक प्रभावित हुई है। कपास को छोड़कर शेष चार फसल कुल खाद्यान्न और तिलहन के उत्पादन में 26 फीसदी हिस्सेदारी रखते हैं। क्रिसिल रिसर्च ने अपने बयान में कहा है, 'कुल मिलाकर अगर इस वित्त वर्ष के दौरान भी मानसून कमजोर रहता है तो लगातार दूसरे साल मानसून विफल रहेगा और इससे निपटना आसान नहीं होगा।' एजेंसी



## शान-ए-पाकिस्तान सांस्कृतिक पहल का आयोजन 10 से



नई दिल्ली (ब्यूरो)। तीन उपमहाद्वीपों के फैशन कौशल के प्रति जागरूकता पैदा करने और दोनों देशों के बीच संबंध मजबूत करने के लिए भारतीय और पाकिस्तानी फैशन प्रतिभा को अपनी कला का प्रदर्शन करने के लिए एक मंच के रूप में तीन दिवसीय सांस्कृतिक पहल 'शान-ए-पाकिस्तान' का आयोजन किया जा रहा है।

इसके तहत पाकिस्तानी डिजाइनर, ब्रांड और भारतीय डिजाइनर भारत में दुल्हन के फैशन से लेकर हाई-स्ट्रीट फैशन का प्रदर्शन करेंगे। नई दिल्ली में 10

सितंबर से 12 सितंबर 2015 तक आयोजित किए जाने वाले शान-ए-पाकिस्तान में एक प्रदर्शनी का भी आयोजन किया जाएगा, जिसके तहत उपमहाद्वीप के सबसे प्रसिद्ध कारीगरों के शिल्प कौशल और संस्कृति का प्रदर्शन किया जाएगा।

फैशन और लाइफ स्टाइल का यह तीन दिवसीय आयोजन गाला नाइट के साथ एक शाम पाकिस्तान के नाम' गुरुवार 10 सितंबर 2015 को शुरू होगा। इस आयोजन के तहत भारत और पाकिस्तान के भोजन और जायके का भी आनंद लिया जा सकता है।

## Business Line, Delhi

Thursday 20th August 2015, Page: 19

Width: 6.11 cms, Height: 4.66 cms, a4, Ref: pmin.2015-08-20.41.165

### **Jaipur to host textile fair 'VASTRA'**

Jaipur, August 19

The fourth international textile and apparel fair 'VASTRA' will be held here from September 28-30, projecting India as a prominent sourcing hub and investment destination in the textile sector. The fair, organised by Rajasthan State Industrial Development and Investment Corporation Ltd (RIICO), in collaboration with FICCI, will be supported by the Union Ministry of Textiles, said Veenu Gupta, Managing Director of RIICO. PTI