



# EXPORT PROMOTION COUNCIL FOR HANDICRAFTS

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## PRESS RELEASE

### **TEXTILES MINISTER ASSURES EXPORTERS TO TAKE UP ISSUES WITH THE FINANCE MINISTER**

#### **- EPCH TO SET UP HANDICRAFTS PRODUCTIVITY CENTRE AT JAIPUR**

**Jaipur – July 24, 2013 -- Union Minister of Textiles Dr. K.S. Rao met the exporters from Rajasthan here today during an Interactive Meet on Export Promotion of Handicrafts, Carpets, Wool, Textiles and Allied products and discussed the strategy for growth of export from the State of Rajasthan.**

Smt. Panabaaka Lakshmi, Union Minister of State for Textiles, Mr. Rajendra Pareek, Minister for Industry, Govt. of Rajasthan, Mr. Rakesh Srivastava, Addl. Chief Secretary, Government of Rajasthan and Mr. S.S. Gupta, Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) were also present during the Interactive meet.

While responding to the issues raised by the industry leaders present in the exporters meet the Union Minister of Textiles said that the demand of raising of the interest subvention for handicrafts and cottage sector from the existing 2% to 5% is genuine. He felt that the cost of funds as on today is high and needs to be reasonable so that people could invest more in their business and not in other investment avenues like gold and other fixed assets, which are not productive for the national growth.

The Union Minister urged the exporters that skill development is the need of the hour and it is important to establish worker linkages between MNREGA and the production in the cottage sector, he said and added that he would take up the matter in the Cabinet. Further, Dr. Rao also mentioned that he is likely to hold a meeting the Ministry of Finance and discuss issues related to Service Tax on participation in overseas fairs/exhibitions by exporters and also on Membership fees of the Export Promotion Councils.

Dr. Rao was also highly concerned about the issue of classification of items as handicrafts, which leads to delaying of shipments at the customs, he informed that he will take up the matter with Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC) and the Ministry of Finance.

The Minister disclosed that the Jodhpur Mega Cluster project will be kicked off in a time bound manner within 2 months.

The Minister also assured that the grant Rs. 10 crores for Handicrafts Productivity Centre would also be put into action at the earliest.

The Minister announced that the problem of wool sector related to quarantine at ports has also been waived off by the intervention of his Ministry.

The Minister also opined that it is the responsibility of the State Government to provide land to the entrepreneurs and also find tangible solutions to the pollution and the related issues. He said that his Ministry would provide all necessary funds for setting up of Effluent Treatment Plants (ETP) or other measures for its long-term solutions.

Dr. Rao, while discussing issues, emphasized that craftspersons and workers are the backbone of the industry and urged the industry to provide them their due. He also urged the exporters to come forward and take benefit of the funding schemes of the Central and State Governments which covers skill development, training and workshed housing.

A large gathering of over 500 leading exporters and stakeholders from handicrafts, carpets, wool, textiles and allied products attended the meeting along with Senior Central and State Government officials. The meet was organized by Export promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH).

The Interactive meet was followed by laying of foundation of **Handicrafts Productivity Centre** which is being implemented by the Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts with the partial funding from the Ministry of Textiles. The facility will come up in an area of 4000 sq. mtrs with an estimated cost of around Rs. 10 crores.

The Centre will include the facilities such as common facility centre for seasoning including chemical treatment of wood for the purpose of export production, integrated resource centre to provide information to the exporters on various aspects of exports like production techniques, marketing information, financing, documentation, internet, books and journals and testing laboratory for testing of wood and textile crafts for the handicrafts exporters from Rajasthan region.

While unveiling the foundation stone, Dr. Rao said, "This Handicrafts Productivity Centre would be a landmark project at Jaipur and would help the craftspersons, entrepreneurs and exporters in the years to come." He further congratulated EPCH and the handicrafts community for having conceptualized such facility at Jaipur and hoped to have a magnifying affect on the production and exports of handicrafts from the state in the future.

The Minister also urged the exporting community to achieve the target of USD 5 billion for Handicrafts sector against target of USD 3.8 billion for the year 2013-14

Mr. Lekhraj Maheshwari, Chairman EPCH, elaborating on the discussions said, "Today's interaction with the Ministers and senior Government Officials would pave way for better understanding of the needs of various export sectors of Rajasthan and help formulate the policies accordingly. He further added, that the initiative of Handicrafts Productivity Centre

would have a very positive impact on the production and exports from Rajasthan in general and Jaipur in particular”.

Mr. Rakesh Kumar, Executive Director-EPCH made a presentation on the concept of the Handicrafts Productivity Centre and provided details about the project and said “The centre will be able to cater to the needs of the exporters from Rajasthan and help them in development of modern skills, availability of trendy and new designs, knowledge of latest production techniques, quality and technological upgradation, mechanism in manufacturing and innovation in product lines and product development. This Centre will meet the demands of the exporters of the Rajasthan region would help double the exports which at present is 30% of the total Exports of handicrafts products”.

The exports of Handicrafts have shown an increase of Rs. 534.57 crores, from Rs. 3185.95 to Rs. 3720.52 crores, an increase of 16.78% in rupees terms and an increase of US \$ 73.88 millions, from US\$ 591.36 million to US\$ 665.24 million, an increase by 12.49 % in dollar terms during the first quarter of the current financial year i.e 2013-14 over the similar period in 2012-2013.

For Further Information, please contact

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