

# RmKV modernises pneumatic handloom

R Sathyanarayana

**CHENNAI, DHNS:** In a bid to weave high quality silk fabrics and sarees with intricate designs, one of the leading textile manufacturers in India — RmKV Silk — has introduced the modernised pneumatic handloom (MPHL).

RmKV Silk has invented the MPHL method, and has also applied for its patent through the National Research Development Corporation.

The pneumatic loom uses compressed air to lift heave overhead jacquard assembly, and has a mechanised shuttle movement.

“We have introduced two innovations to the traditional handloom. Compressed air has been utilised to virtually eliminate physical strain, and an

electronic jacquard controller has been incorporated to eliminate traditional cards,” said K Sivakumar, managing director, RmKV Silks, on Tuesday.

## Tech plays vital role

“This practically eliminates the physical effort required by the weavers to weave a saree — what required a lot of strain before can now be accomplished with rap of your foot,” he said, adding the technology also enables consistent production and even weaves with perfect selvedge, which makes it easy even for beginners to take up handloom weaving.

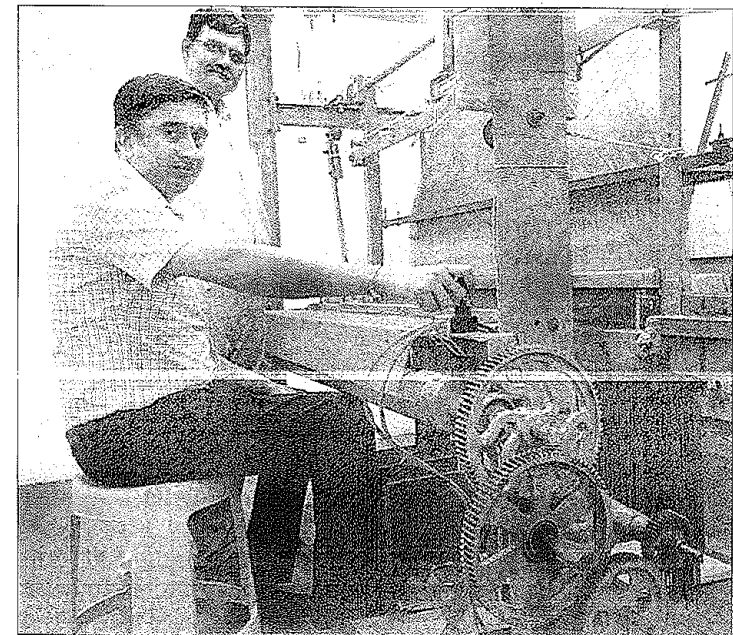
“Also, the replacement of cards by the electronic controller means that consumers can get unique customised products far more easily than before. Most importantly, given

the ease of operation, this innovation will empower women to get into weaving and supplement the family income by operating looms in their free time from their homes,” he said.

“Handlooms are generally difficult to operate and require more than one person to work on a single handloom.”

In actual operation, the weaver sits on the floor and operates the handloom using his legs, while performing multiple other tasks.

Typically, a weaver repeatedly lifts about 25 kg of load by pressing on wooden pedals as part of the saree weaving process. When it comes to weaving of sarees with intricate designs, this weight increases to about 50 kg. This is a strenuous and cumbersome process, he added.



RmKV director N Manikavasagam demonstrates how to use the Modernised Pnuematic Handloom method on Tuesday. Standing towards his left is RmKV Managing Director K Sivakumar.

## Fabric export to rise with MEIS inclusion

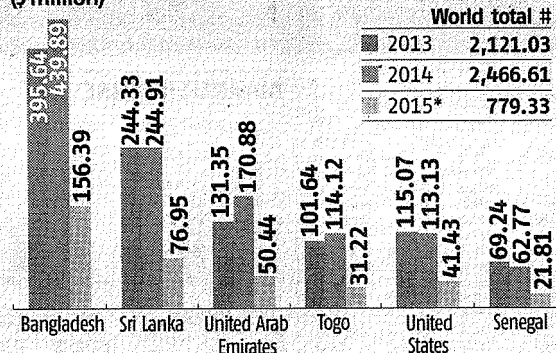
DILIP KUMAR JHA  
Mumbai, 22 July

Cotton fabric exports are likely to rise at least 10 per cent this year because of inclusion of the fabric in the Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS).

Products notified under MEIS for any specific market are eligible for reward on the free-on-board value. Last week, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade announced inclusion of cotton fabrics into MEIS for export to Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, which would mean a two per cent export incentive. About 4,000 items are included in MEIS.

"Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are two major destinations for India's cotton fabrics, which get converted into garments and are then exported to Europe and the United States. Owing to the lack of conversion value, cotton fabrics are not exported from India directly to Europe and the US. So, inclusion of cotton fabric into

**DIRECTION OF INDIA'S COTTON FABRIC EXPORTS**  
(\$ million)



Period as calendar year

\* January-April, # includes other countries as well

Source: Texprocil

MEIS would increase India's competitiveness in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka with respect to other countries, including China, which will ultimately help increase India's fabric exports at least by 10 per cent," said R K Dalmia, Chairman, The Cotton Textiles Export Promotion Council (Texprocil) and senior president, Century Textiles.

Bangladesh and Lanka form 28 per cent of India's cotton fabric shipments. Their export to Bangladesh rose 11.2 per cent to \$440 million in 2014 (calendar year), while those to Sri Lanka grew only 0.2 per cent to \$245 mn the same year. India's total export of cotton fabric, however, surged 16.3 per cent to \$2,467 mn in calendar year 2014.

Fabric exports to Bangladesh and Lanka were hit between January and April because of unavailability of incentive schemes. Shipments to Bangladesh grew a marginal two per cent to \$156.4 mn in those months; those to Lanka fell 3.7 per cent to \$77 mn, from the same period a year before.

"Inclusion of cotton fabrics under MEIS to Bangladesh and Sri Lanka will certainly help India's exports," said D K Nair, secretary-general of the Confederation of Indian Textile Industry.

Although certain categories of knitted fabrics have been included under the scheme, lycra has been left out. Knitted fabrics with lycra are value-added products that are widely used. Texprocil has urged the government to include export of value-added products like cotton dyed and printed fabrics, and made-ups, to African countries under MEIS, too. These will give a needed impetus to exports in major markets, Dalmia said.

# After Bangladesh, Thailand shows interest in Indian cotton

**Nanda Kasabe**

**Pune, July 22:** Having succeeded in selling cotton to Bangladesh, India is all set to export the fibre to Thailand. One of the biggest mills in Thailand has shown interest in purchasing cotton from India, officials said.

Samples from India have been approved and the Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) has now set into motion a process to get buyers from Thailand registered on its website for daily e-auction, top officials from CCI told *FE*.

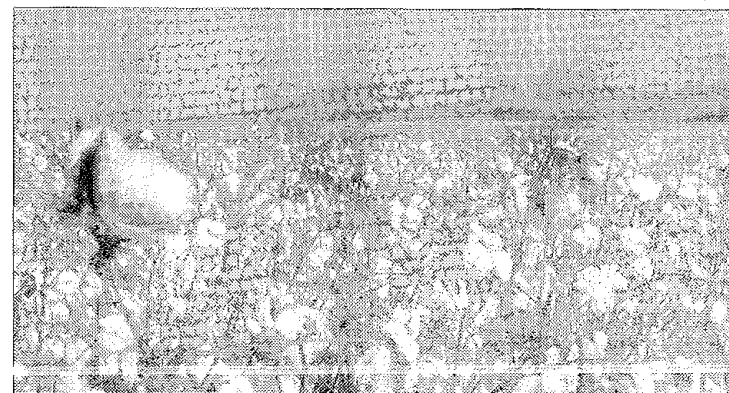
Thailand consumes 5-6 lakh bales of cotton.

Sales have been meagre for the last couple of days with

30,000 to 40,000 bales being put up for sale. India has sold some 50,000 bales to Bangladesh, the third largest importer of cotton in the world, till date.

Of the total procurement of 86.9 lakh bales, CCI has sold 37 lakh bales, leaving about 50 lakh bales in stock, BK Mishra, CMD, CCI said. As Thailand has shown interest, we are attempting to rope it into the system, he said without disclosing details of how much cotton could be sold to Thailand.

According to Mishra, CCI is also exploring countries like Vietnam for cotton export from the next season. There have been a few en-



quiries from other countries as well, he said, adding that the domestic requirement in the country is huge at 25 lakh bales.

China, the world's biggest buyer, has imported less fibre this year which has affected Indian exports. China has

been the largest importer of Indian cotton over the last three years.

Domestic textile producers, however, are operating on stock-to-consumption basis in which buyers prefer to buy cotton according to need to avoid unnecessary blockage

of working capital in building of inventory. But Mishra says some 50 lakh bales have been sold in the last couple of months. Selling 10 lakh bales a month is not a problem, he said.

Current cotton prices are hovering around ₹34,500-36,000 per candy, Mishra said, adding that CCI had never looked at distress sales at any point during the season.

Market sources reveal that CCI has sold cotton at approximately 74 cents per lbs from its stocks.

Taking the current pace at which sales have been happening, Mishra estimates to liquidate almost the entire stock by the end of the season

(September) with barely 10-20 lakh bales remaining with the cotton body. Exports could constitute 2-3 lakhs bales.

Meanwhile, cotton sowing operations has crossed 90 lakh hectares across major cotton growing areas of the country. According to Dr KR Kranthi of the Central Institute of Cotton Research at Nagpur, the rains were good in June at the start of the season and although there was a dry spell in July, monsoon has recovered in most parts except parts of Central Maharashtra, Pune and Marathwada.

In Gujarat, monsoon has recovered completely and there has been good rainfall

in north India and it has begun raining in Madhya Pradesh from last Sunday. Overall the situation is not bad and the country should see some 120 lakh hectares come under cotton plantation, Kranthi said.

Last year, cotton acreage had touched 129 lakh hectares.

Sowing operations are still continuing in Telanagana and parts of Andhra Pradesh. Most of the cotton growing states like Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat and parts of Maharashtra and Karnataka have started getting good rainfall. In Maharashtra, the acreage is likely to touch 40 lakh hectares.

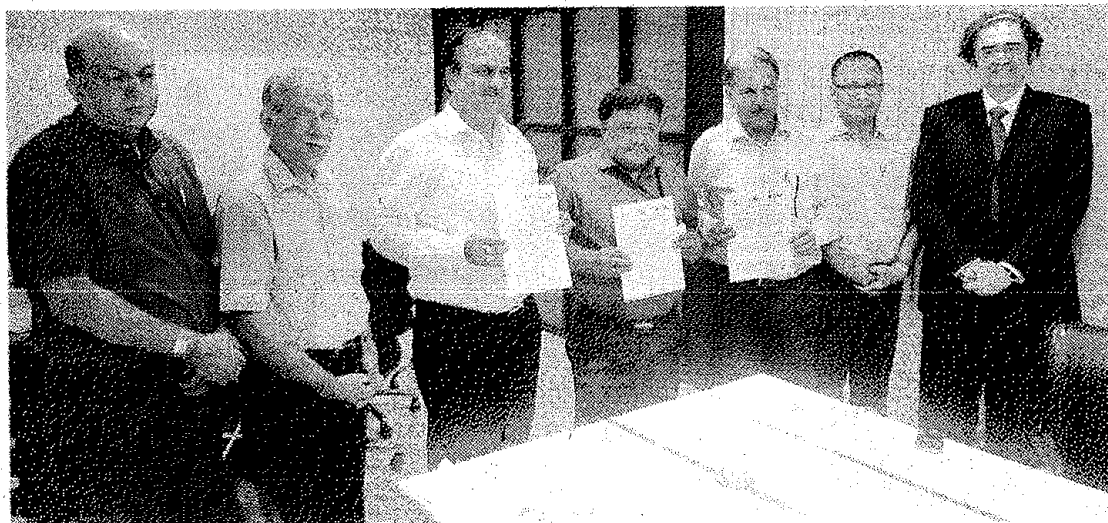


## **Cotton exports to China plunge 56.7% in 2014-15**

Cotton prices in the domestic market are subdued due to 56.72% fall in India's exports to China in 2014-15, Parliament was informed on Wednesday. "Export of cotton from India to China declined by 56.72% from 61 lakh bales in 2013-14 to 26 lakh bales in 2014-15.

"As a result, there had been sluggishness in the domestic prices as compared to last year," commerce and industry minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in a written reply to Rajya Sabha. China's stock levels have reached over 8,000 million kg and due to this they are importing less, she said, adding "reduction in import quota granted to actual users of cotton thereby discouraged direct import by spinners and encouraged them to buy more of domestic cotton and also from government agencies holding stock".

# For a prosperous future



Rakesh Kumar, executive director, EPCH, Manoj K Das, director of IIE and RK Srivastava, executive director, NCDPD during the signing of the memorandum

A Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) was signed between Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH), Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE) and National Centre for Design and Product Development (NCDPD) in the Capital recently. The MoA was signed to achieve a common objective of capacity enhancement of handicraft exporters/manufacturers/artisans in North Eastern Region and to provide marketing opportunities to such budding

entrepreneurs.

It was signed by Rakesh Kumar, executive director, EPCH, Manoj K Das, director of IIE and RK Shrivastava, executive director, NCDPD.

EPCH is an apex organisation of trade and industry engaged in the promotion of indian handicrafts from country and project India's image abroad as a reliable supplier of high quality handicrafts items. IIE, Guwahati is focusing on development of small and micro enterprises and entrepreneurship devel-

opment by undertaking the training, research and consultancy activities. NCDPD is a leading organisation for design and product development and fulfill the gaps in the handicraft sector of soft and hard goods in the areas of design/product development and technology.

Through this MoA, EPCH, IIE and NCDPD will work jointly and collaborate their resources for betterment of handicraft exporters/manufacturers/artisans in North Eastern Region.

● Handloom high

# 'People are more receptive to fashion now'

She is one of the first designers who introduced street elements to the Indian audience through her collections, the memorable one being "High on Chai" that sold the very idea of India with a steaming hot cup of tea in print. The colours were bold and bright and resonated well with Nida Mahmood's philosophy of capturing India's soul through her clothes. It was this very collection that made her "kitsch queen".

The queen never required any stars to pull in crowd or trade queries at the fashion week, but the Delhi-based designer ensured she wasn't swept away by these overwhelming accolades and continued challenging her creative pursuits. She has delved into art and made installations; designed costumes for a kids musical; is designing interiors of a restaurant and has just finished working on the costumes and sets of an upcoming Bollywood film.

"I am not just a fashion designer. It is interesting to explore because you are applying yourself in different directions. There is a continuous need to be versatile and be able to understand requirements of a particular project," Mahmood tells *Metrolife*.

"And while working on it you bring in your own aesthetics on the table," she adds.

Fashion has a tendency to stereotype a designer, and a designer too has a tendency to slip into the comfort zone and continue producing what he or she knows the best. However, surprising it may seem, but Mahmood has been quietly working with weavers in Andhra Pradesh for the past two years. This is for her new handloom line – a drastic shift from her pop-culture design years.

"Everybody is looking for a new idea. And I personally feel that if we don't explore our vast repositories of handlooms... it would be a pity," she emphasises.

In subtle tones of grey, white and browns, Mahmood has stressed on keeping the basic style "classic", but is introducing flock printing (a technique where short fabrics are applied on an adhesive-



**"Things have become a lot easier now because of social media."**

Nida Mahmood

surface) and embroidery to give the fabric a modern twist.

"I haven't changed the base, but have added many layers to it. That tweaking was important because as a designer I have to do some value addition and at the same time I had to ensure the classic charm of the weave isn't lost," she points out, adding she has changed warp and weft of the fabric to introduce design elements.

Over the eight years she has been in the industry, Mahmood has managed to create a niche for herself. Be it her signature whites or quirky designs, or influence of ubiquitous street culture, her designs carry a distinctive mark that makes it easy to identify the label Nida Mahmood. "When I had started, it wasn't cool to pick up Indian influences. Now things have changed."

At the same time, a lot has changed in the Indian fashion industry, thanks to social media as it has given a platform to young designers to promote their brand. Also, the digital space has offered opportunities to designers to test new waters.

"Things have become a lot easier now because of social media. People have also become more receptive because they are exposed to fashion," she says.

"Branded clothes have become affordable and because of online retail space, designer clothes are also priced decently that they no more pinch. It is a lot easier now," she adds.

Shilpa Raina



COURTESY STYLES PVDOTIN

QUIRKY  
Nida Mahmood

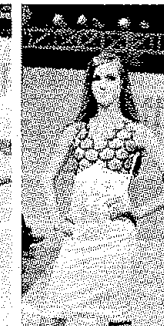




# Glamour and glitz galore

## OUR CORRESPONDENT

**AFTER GATHERING** inspiration from various elements and concepts like flowers, geometry, colour blockings and historical monuments, the graduating students of Raffles Millennium International showcased their works at Reflection 2015, a fashion show, organised by the aforementioned institution as part of its annual curriculum, in the



national Capital. The creations of the Fashion Design students was showcased under 9 sequences comprising of 42 garments.

The students' creation was presented on ramp by supermodels of different countries. Guests present for the show were Interior Designer Lipika Sud, Fashion Designer Preeti Singhal, Senior Editorial Cartoon-

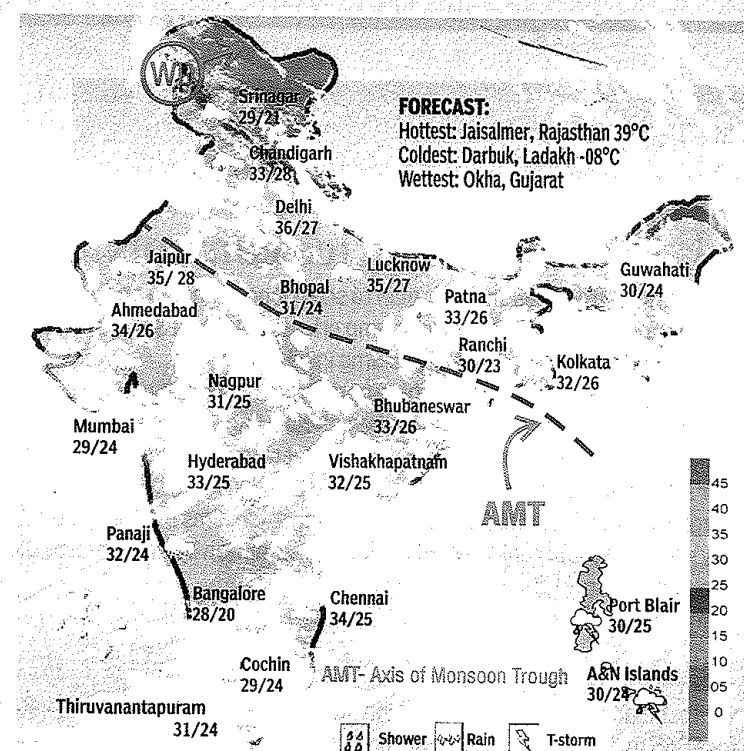
ist and Graphic Designer Shekhar Gurera, Saurabh Singh-DGM, Design Studio Head, Maruti Suzuki India and Blanca Moreno, Store Manager-Inditex/Zara.

The students who were awarded for their work in their respective field are Vibhor Gulati for Product Design, Kavleen Bains for Graphic Design/Multimedia Design, Charul Vidhani for

Fashion Design, Manorama Baswa for Fashion Marketing, Karishma Ahuja for Interior Design and Iruvanthika Chowdhary for the Best Collection.

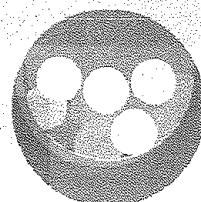
Frankie Lim, Director, RMI Delhi said, "The Graduation Show marks an important stage for the students from all the Design programmes who showcase their best works in industry."

## WEATHER TO BUY OR SELL



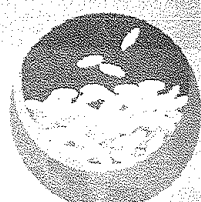
Heavy rain at few places over Gujarat and Konkan-Goa. Scattered rain over MP, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, WB, coastal Karnataka and Kerala. Scattered rain over rest parts except south Karnataka, Rayalaseema and TN.

Read as S: Dust Storm CS: Cyclonic Storm D: Depression, DD: Deep Depression  
L: Low Pressure, W.D.: Western Disturbance, Copyright Skymet Company 2015. All rights reserved.



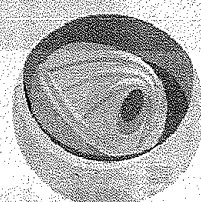
### SOYBEAN

Weak global cues and intermittent rains lashing Madhya Pradesh and neighbouring states for the past few days have arrested uptrend in soybean. Plant deliveries were also quoted lower at Rs 3,450 on sluggish demand in soya oil. According to the commodity analysts, bearish trend in soybean prices will continue in the coming days.



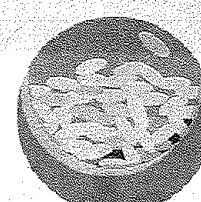
### PADDY

Drought conditions in Thailand may cut the country's main rice crop by as much as 10 percent, the Thai Rice Exporters Association said. Though drought has eased in the world's second-biggest rice exporting nation, widespread dry conditions earlier this year may have had an impact on the paddy crop, said the president of the Thai Rice Exporters Association.



### JUTE

The National Jute Board strongly recommending the use of geo-textile for road construction, the Rs. 6,500-crore Indian jute industry could hope for a revival. The application of jute for protection of river banks, beds of waterways, stabilization of embankments and slopes can be a real game-changer for the ailing jute industry.



### WHEAT

Egypt, one of the world's largest wheat importers, received offers from Russia, Romania, Ukraine & France in its latest wheat tender. The lowest offer presented was \$193.75 per tonne, on a free-on-board basis for 55,000 tonnes of Russian wheat, said the traders. Russia, Romania, Ukraine and France are major wheat producing countries.



### SUGARCANE

Sugar prices were declined in future and spot markets in India. A surge in Indian white crystal sugar sales from huge domestic stocks could drive down the premium for refined white sugar over raw sugar and squeeze refiners' margins. At Vashi spot market in Maharashtra, sugar prices for S-grade variety dropped by Rs 10-25 per quintal.

### COTTON

Cotton fabric exports are likely to rise at least 10% this year because of inclusion of the fabric in the Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS). Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are two major destinations for India's cotton fabrics, which get converted into garments and are then exported to Europe and the United States.

### MAIZE

On account of declining arrivals and good demand, maize prices were increased in the major markets of the India. At Sangli market, maize prices were upto Rs 1615 per quintal. The bullish trend in maize prices will continue in coming days due to higher demand from poultry feed industry, said a commodity analysts.

### CARDAMOM

Continued upsurge in cardamom arrivals at major markets of south India have created bearish trend in the market. The buyers have slowed down hoping the prices would decline further as the harvesting progressed. Cardamom prices were remained steady last week at auctions held in Kerala and TN.



## 'Textile industry must look at new areas to scale up'

### OUR BUREAU

Coimbatore, July 22

The Indian textile industry will need to introspect and look into areas where there is scope for scaling up and upgrading the fabrics sector. The industry's long-term prospects "are undoubtedly bright", Prem Malik, Chairman, Confederation of Indian Textile Industry said here on Wednesday.

Inaugurating the Natural Fibre Conclave at Hotel Le Meridien at Chinnampalayam in Coimbatore, Malik said the textiles industry in China was slowing down and Pakistan's growth - constrained by power and other problems and the garment industry's growth in Bangladesh - is expected to reach a saturation point sooner than later. Diversion of garment orders to India has already begun. "There is therefore a need to scale up and upgrade our fabrics industry," he reiterated.

The CITI Chairman also stressed the need for enhancing the yarn consuming capacities within the country, admitting that external

issues such as a slowdown in the EU and policy jolts from China could have an adverse impact. "But there are more crucial issues such as infrastructural infirmities, transaction costs - which are way above our competing countries - inordinate delays in getting duty refunds, high cost of export credit and many more," he said.

### Policy intervention

The most important policy intervention required at present is making TUF effective. The scheme has no funds available for new investments and the budget allocation is not enough even to cover the backlog of the last fiscal in full, he said.

Reverting to the fibre scenario, he said, "While India's cotton production exceeds consumption, we continue to import cotton because of deficit in certain slots, especially the extra long staple cotton. We also face supply shortage of short staple cotton as there is little presence of BT technology in this segment."