

## Seminar on agro-textiles concludes

### CORRESPONDENT

TEZPUR, Dec 28 – A day-long seminar on 'Uses of agro-textiles in Assam and its advantages' was held at the Krishi Vigyan Kendra of Sonitpur district recently.

The seminar was jointly organised by the Synthetic & Art Silk Mills Research Association (SASMIRA), Mumbai under the Union Ministry of Textiles and KVK, Sonitpur.

Inaugurating the seminar, Dr HC Bhattacharya, Director of Extension Education at AAU, Jorhat emphasised on the use of plastics in our day-to-day life as well as its growing demand on agriculture and allied sectors. In the beginning, Dr Promod Chandra Deka, Programme Coordinator of KVK Sonitpur delivered the welcome address. Dr KK Sarma, Chief Scientist of RARS, North Lakhimpur, Dr Prabal Saikia, Principal Scientist,

RARS, North Lakhimpur, scientists from SASMIRA, Dayal Croe, District Agriculture Officer, Sonitpur, a few NGO members and 75 progressive farmers of the district participated in the programme. The inaugural session was anchored by Popy Bora, SMS, KVK, Sonitpur.

In the technical session, scientists from SASMIRA, P Surwase and Ayub Shaikh, Dr K.K Sarma, Chief Scientist, RARS, North Lakhimpur, Dr Prabal Saikia,

Principal Scientist, RARS, North Lakhimpur, Dr PC Deka, PC, KVK Sonitpur and Dr Bikram Borkotoki, SMS, KVK Sonitpur delivered lectures on various aspects of the use of agro-textiles in agriculture and allied sectors. Utpal Das, a progressive farmer of Borchola, Sonitpur shared his experience in reducing his cost of cultivation as well as getting higher production by the use of plastic mulch in watermelon crops.

# NE should focus on textiles sector: Expert

*Haresh Mehta is a marketing guru in the field of retail. He began his journey in Mumbai as a salesman with a monthly salary of just Rs 65 and now he owns a company worth over Rs 300 crore. Mehta also exports his products to 12 countries. Not only that, he is also a resource person of leading organisations. Mehta highlights key issues of the North-east textiles sector during an interview with this correspondent.*

## BUSINESS POINT

Surajit Khaund

**Q:** The Indian textiles sector has been facing several challenges, including shortage of labour and aggressive marketing from China. So, how do you assess the situation?

**Mehta:** Despite the challenges, the Indian textiles sector is set to grow by 20%, buoyed by strong domestic consumption as well as export demand. As you know, India is the second-biggest producer of textiles and garments in the world and according to a study, the industry is likely to grow to a size of over \$200 billion. The textiles industry has been playing a pivotal role in the economic development of the country. This sector contributes 14% to the industrial production and 4%

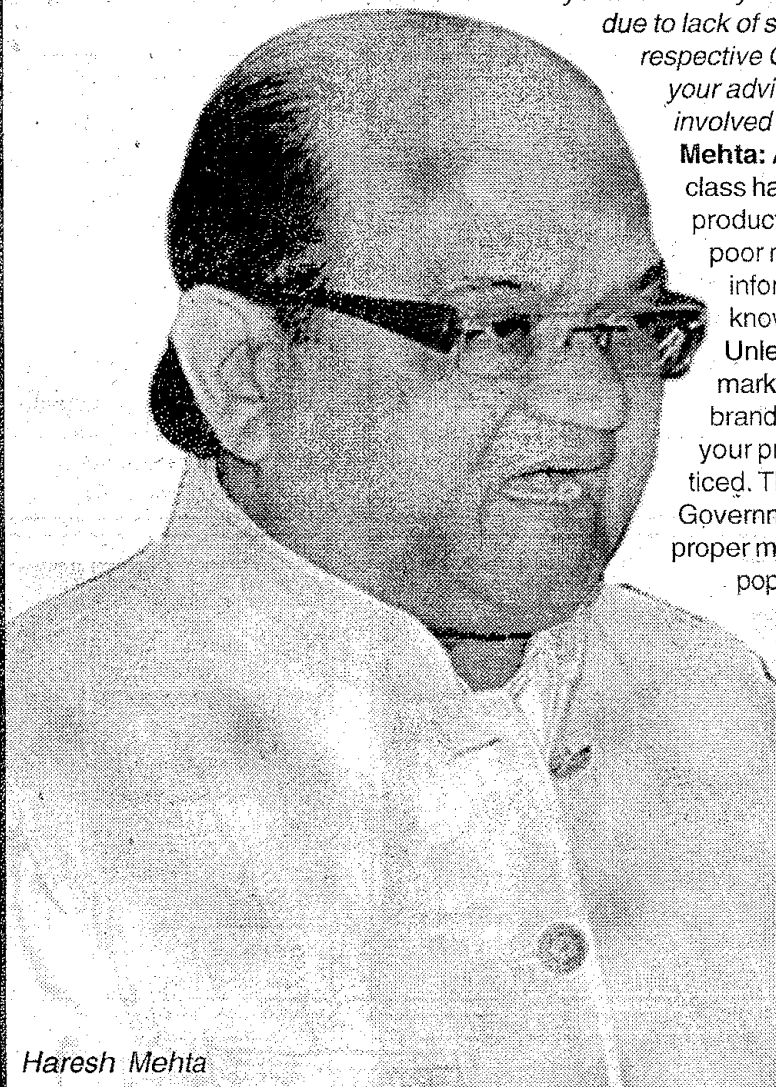
to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Our success is based on quality products and modern R&D facilities. Moreover, the present Government has offered a slew of incentives to this sector that will help the industry in the days to come. If we produce quality products, then our entrepreneurs will be able to gain a major share in the global market. What I feel is that we need to improve our existing infrastructure in order to attract foreign investors.

**Q:** As a leading exporter of the country, how would you describe your success?

**Mehta:** Success does not just happen overnight, it requires a lot of patience and perseverance. I began my journey as a salesman in Mumbai with a monthly salary of Rs 65 and now I have a company worth over Rs 300 crore. Our company exports to 12 countries. We have a strong base in Dubai and the European countries. Besides, we are providing jobs to around 300 people. I have achieved this position by virtue of hard work and commitment. So, if you want to achieve anything in life, you need to be committed.

**Q:** The handloom and handicraft sector of the region is yet to make any mark in the global market due to lack of support from the respective Governments. What is your advice to the entrepreneurs involved in this sector?

**Mehta:** Assam produces world-class handloom and handicraft products. However, due to poor marketing and lack of information, very few people know about these products. Unless you have a proper marketing mechanism and brand promotional activities, your products will go unnoticed. Therefore, the Assam Government should frame a proper marketing strategy to popularize the famous handloom and handicraft products at the domestic and the global market, and at the same time, it is the duty of the Government to provide proper infrastructure, including power and connectivity so that entrepreneurs can run their business smoothly.



Haresh Mehta

## Air India flight attendants to wear Mysore Silk



*A file photo of models draped in Mysore silk sarees at a fashion show. – PHOTO: ANURAG BASAVARAJ*

R. Krishna Kumar

**MYSURU:** Flight attendants of Air India will now sport Mysore Silk saris. Karnataka Silk Industries Corporation Ltd. (KSIC) has bagged a hefty order of 10,000 saris from the public sector airline.

This single bulk order is worth Rs. 6.5 crore, according to the KSIC Chairman B. Basavaraju, who expects the product's popularity to soar sky-high. Speaking to presspersons here on Wednesday, he said Mysore Silk was selected after assessment of its quality in comparison with other brands.

Renowned internationally for its quality and splendour, the Mysore Silk sari has been accorded the GI (Geographical Indication) tag, which is held by the KSIC. Produced at the KSIC factory in Mysuru, the cost of the saris ranges from Rs.12,000 to Rs. 2.5 lakh each.

Apart from being exported to various countries, it is patronised by models and film

stars, he added.

Mr. Basavaraju said the KSIC gets orders even from the Rashtrapati Bhavan. The saris are presented to visiting dignitaries and the company makes elaborate logistic arrangements to despatch saris and shalyas, used by the men folk.

He said electronic jacquard machines for the manufacture of saris have further enhanced their quality, and 10 such machines will be installed at a cost of Rs. 60 lakh.

Besides, machinery worth Rs.1.35 crore will be imported from China to shore up the quality of yarn and fabric. This will be installed at T. Narsipura.

The KSIC will participate at the Vibant Gujarat international summit to be held from January 7 to 13. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has agreed to visit the stall, he added.

The KSIC is also aware that duplicate versions of Mysore Silk saris are being sold in the market, and authorities are cracking down on them.

City scan



Creative talent

Latent Talent, a platform to showcase and recognise creative talent, was launched in the Capital recently to tap the talent of new entrants in the field of fashion, art and entertainment. To facilitate this process, Luxury Lifestyle Exhibition was inaugurated to present creations in fashion, beauty and wellness. It culminated with a fashion show.



E-waste

Pluss Polymers, a material research and manufacturing company, in association with Advit Foundation organised an education drive on electronic waste management at Mount Abu School in Rohini recently to create awareness about impact of e-waste on our health and environment. Stress was also laid on the need for safe disposal of e-waste. The session was aimed at making school students understand the significance of waste management and encourage them to participate in a collective drive to deal with e-waste. The e-waste management programme covered topics like nature of e-waste, its impact on human health and why and how to recycle e-waste.



Game theory

To make its faculty members understand the concept of internal development, Noida International University organised a workshop on "Game Theory and Exciting and Innovative teaching Pedagogy." Game theory analyses how groups of people interact in social and economic situations. It is mainly used in Economics, Political Science, Psychology, as well as Computer Science and Biology. Two eminent Professors Prof. Krish Ladha and Prof. Ramamurthy were the chief guest at the workshop which was based on research orientation.



Grand victory

Mukesh Gupta, Chairman PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industries, called on the Prime Minister of Mauritius, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, during his visit to that country. He congratulated Sir Anerood for his grand victory in the recent general elections. Accompanied by other members of PHD, Gupta offered full support from the chamber of commerce and industry for the business growth between India and Mauritius.

## **Cotton Sector Shows All-round Growth in FY15, Says CAI**

**Mumbai:** The cotton sector in India witnessed an all-round growth and the production is estimated at 402 lakh bales during 2014-15, Cotton Association of India (CAI) has said. Cotton production in the country, which was 158 lakh bales of 170 kilograms each in 2001-02, has more than doubled and is estimated at 402 lakh bales during 2014-15.

"We are on the threshold of surpassing China in cotton production to become the world leader," CAI President Dhiren Sheth said at the organisation's 92nd Annual General Meeting here. The consumption too witnessed a healthy growth and is estimated at 306 lakh bales during 2014-15. India ranks second in cotton consumption, next only to China, it said. The country exported 117.9 lakh bales in 2013-14 and ranks second only to the USA in exports, Sheth said. The credit goes only to farmers who are bringing more and more acreage under cotton, he said, adding that GM cotton, Technology Mission on Cotton and government policies too have helped. Sheth said productivity of cotton still continues to be abysmally low and far below the world average. The world average is 802 kilograms per hectare against 540 kilograms per hectare in India. With 328 kilograms per hectare, Maharashtra, which has about a third of the country's cotton acreage, is at the bottom, he said. Excluding Maharashtra, the average productivity of cotton in the remaining states works out to about 645 kilograms per hectare. — PTI.

# Spirit of women

UTTARAKHAND'S FLOOD-AFFECTED TRIBAL WOMEN HAVE BEEN MOTIVATED TO SET UP AN ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF LIVELIHOOD, REPORTS KISHORI SUD

**I**n June 2013, a cloudburst in Uttarakhand, causing devastating floods, landslides and destruction made it the country's worst natural disaster since the Tsunami. Entire villages and settlements were obliterated, inflicting heavy damage and loss of lives. Though relief poured in from various sec-

tors, a need was felt for sustained effort to ensure people were rehabilitated and empowered through capacity building.

In a bid to fill the gaps for a sustained effort and rural development, Uttarakhand Artist Welfare Association is actively working with flood affected tribal women belonging to remote areas of Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand. This initiative has in turn motivated women to hone their skills further and work on their crafts to earn a livelihood, resulting in many tribal women coming together to create beautiful handmade and hand woven products.

To give a fair idea about the art of Uttarakhand in their textiles, these products were showcased in an exhibition themed Colours of Himalayas on 12 December at the Capital's Artizen Art Gallery. Inaugurated by Santosh Kumar Gangawar, the minister of state for textiles, the exhibition had an array of shawls, stoles, carpets, bamboo products and copper ware products. Paintings and photographs depicting Uttarakhand and its crafts were displayed. A mini fashion show too was organised.

The textiles had a combination of



designs that are naturalistic, geometrical, stylized and abstract. Some articles were made in their natural colour and without any design on them ~ loi, pankhi, chutka (coarse woollen rug, which is used as bedcover to provide warmth) and thulma (a very heavy type of furnishing, which is used to cover the bed or as a blanket to provide warmth). Embroidery is used and piece dyeing is followed for many articles such as shawls, stoles, mufflers and suit length. Printing is specially used for cotton bed sheets.

All proceeds from the sale went to the women artisans and weavers, helping and motivating them for an alternative livelihood. The exhibition was curated by Sonika Agrawal and Kumar Vikas Saxena, who witnessed these women gaining the spirit of wanting to move ahead and create a better living for their families and themselves rather than being helpless and dejected. In their words, "The immersion of the tribal women in crafts has given them a purpose in life and renewed their strength and courage, providing them with hope for the future."