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1. Cotton body lowers estimate for 2017-18 crop to 367 lakh bales

The Cotton Association of India (CAI) has lowered its estimates for cotton crop for the ongoing 2017-18 crop year at 367 lakh bales. The association has released its January 2018 estimate of the cotton crop for the year 2017-18 beginning from October 1, 2017. The CAI has lowered its estimate for the ongoing season by 8 lakh bales. The reason is severe pink bollworm infestation, said Atul Ganatra, president of CAI. In accordance with the advice of the scientists, the farmers in several areas, particularly in Maharashtra and Telangana, have uprooted their cotton crop without waiting for further pickings, he said. The projected balance sheet drawn by the CAI estimated total cotton supply for the season at 417 lakh bales of 170 kg each, including the opening stock of 30 lakh bales at the beginning of the season, and the imports which the CAI estimated at 20 lakh bales for the 2017-18 crop year. The domestic consumption is estimated to be at 320 lakh bales while CAI estimates exports for the season to be 55 lakh bales. The carryover stock at the end of this season on September 30, 2018 is estimated to be 42 lakh bales. As per data received from each cotton growing local state association, the CAI estimates cotton arrivals up to January 31, 2018 at 211 lakh bales compared to 157.75 lakh bales arrived during the same period last season.

(Source: Financial Express)

2. New textile policy soon

A comprehensive road map on research activities will be a feature in the textile policy to be unveiled by the State Government soon, according to K. Phanindra Reddy, Principal Secretary (Textiles, Handlooms, Handicrafts and Khadi). "All ideas that came from various stakeholders will definitely be incorporated into the textile policy," he told. He was here to inaugurate the 'Textile Research Conclave,' organised by Tirupur Exporters Association, Indian Textpreneurs Federation, and NIFT-TEA Knitwear Institute with the support of Union Textiles Ministry. Mr. Reddy said that the government had started promoting technical textiles production in the State through a series of programmes. "The department is planning to hold a workshop on technical textiles to encourage young entrepreneurs take up technical textiles. The participants will be taken for visits," he added. Tirupur Exporters Association president Raja Shanmugam said that the bringing together of research organisations and industrialists on a single platform would help in product diversification. Prabhu Dhamodharan, convener of Indian Textpreneurs Federation, said that Indian apparel manufacturers had a great opportunity to grow considering the consumption potential in many of the untapped markets. "The market share of India even in our partner countries of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) left a lot to be desired. For example, Russia imported Rs. 65,000 crore of textiles in 2016 of which India's share was just Rs. 700 crore," he said. Raw materials, and product diversification among others, were deliberated at the conclave.

(The Hindu)

3. Textile policy for 2018-23 gets cabinet nod, aims to attract Rs 36,000-crore investment

The state Cabinet Tuesday gave its approval to the new textile policy for 2018-2023 with an aim to attract investment of Rs 36,000 crore in Maharashtra and generate 10 lakh employments. Sources in the government said some of the major aspects of the policy include reducing the power tariffs and

increasing capital subsidy to 45 per cent for spinning mills. Officials from the state textile department said the policy takes forward the Make in Maharashtra concept to strengthen the cotton industry and silk business. It aims to reduce the regional imbalance in the state as higher concessions would be given for setting up units in Vidarbha, Marathwada and North Maharashtra region. Separate emphasis will be on cotton producing regions, which have reported large number of suicide by farmers, said an official. Several schemes of Rs 4649 crore will be implemented under the new policy. The policy intends to create infrastructure for textile cluster and garment parks. The policy has also suggested preparing a proposal for setting up a textile university in the Vidarbha region. "We have made provisions in reducing power tariffs for spinning mills. Besides, spinning mills were given financial assistance in several installments. Now, we have decided to give them financial assistance in two installments only," said Subhash Deshmukh, state Textile Minister. Another official said one of the major reasons for spinning mills incurring losses is the higher power tariffs, compared to other states. "The power tariffs in Gujarat, Karnataka and a few other states are between Rs 4 and Rs 6 per unit while it is Rs 9 per unit in our state. So, the spinning mills will be encouraged to set up solar power plants on their land and the power generated from it will be utilized by the spinning mills. Hence, the power tariffs are likely to be reduced to Rs 3.5 per unit," said an official adding that it would give major boost to spinning mills. Besides, capital subsidy has been increased substantially for processing units, spinning mills, and modernisation of power looms. It proposes to give 45 per cent capital subsidy for processing units, and 25 per cent for spinning mills and modernisation of powerlooms. It has also proposed to give additional subsidy of 20 per cent for processing and garment units in Vidarbha, Marathwada and North Maharashtra.

(Source: *The Indian Express*)

4. Maharashtra approves seven new industrial policies

Ahead of the investment summit Magnetic Maharashtra, the state government approved seven industrial policies regarding GST concession, electric vehicles, logistic parks, garments and use of coir. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will unveil these policies during the event on February 18 at the Bandra-Kurla Complex. Aiming to boost investments in the coming years, other approved policies include Aerospace and Defence Procurement Policy. "The government is aiming for 200 crore dollar investment in the next five years and employment generation figure of about a lakh. The American Aerospace Industry is a one lakh crore dollar and growing with three to four per cent every year. This growth can be utilised by developing country like India to produce the requirements," said an official from the industries department. "Under the defence policy, the state government will set up production centers (defense hubs) at Pune, Nagpur, Ahmednagar, Nashik and Aurangabad," the official added. Another important policy unveiled in the cabinet meeting was related to electric vehicles. "The state is targeting to increase the number of electric vehicles to 5 lakh. With electric vehicles, parts, batteries, assembly enterprises and charging facilities, the industry is expected to bring an investment of Rs 25,000 crore. The electricity required for these vehicles will be given at the same tariff as residential electricity," said an official. In the Maharashtra Logistic Park policy, the state's emphasis will be on creating 25 logistic clusters across Maharashtra. At present, the state lacks professional logistic facilities. With the help of the policy, the facilities will be made available, the official added. With a view to make employment available to 1.2 million people, the government has chalked out the Industrial Parks for Readymade Garment Production Policy. It is expected that women would play a major role in the garment industry. Also, as the city is known for its diamond market, the Gems and Jewellery Policy will help in making incoming investments easy. After implementing the GST, the state government is going to offer some concessions to the industries. "The concessions given to industries in earlier VAT scheme would continue in this policy and will be applicable for inter-state sales. In vehicle production business, the vehicles registered in the state will get concession in state GST," the official said.

(Source: *The Asian Age*)

5. E-way rollout deferred due to technical glitches

The government deferred the launch of e-way bill system, citing technical problems in bill generation. The Central Board of Excise and Customs in a tweet said: "In view of difficulties faced by the trade in

generating e-way bill due to initial technological glitches, it has been decided to extend the trial phase for generation of e-way bill, both for inter and intra state movement of goods. It'll be applicable from a date to be notified." The new transportation system was to be in force from February 1 after a 15-day trial period that began on January 16 ended on January 31. During the trial run, 2.84 lakh e-way permits were issued on the GSTN portal. However, on the first day of formal launch of the bill, the system faced technical glitches. According to reports, along with inter-state electronic bill generation by all states, 17 states also started generating e-way bills for intra-state movement of goods, which created pressure on the portal. The e-way bill system was introduced under GST provision. The new system requires transporters to carry an electronic bill for moving goods. E-way bill was to be implemented last year, but due to lack of technical preparation, the launch was postponed. Last year in December, the GST Council decided to implement the e-way bill throughout the country from February. In a notification, the GSTN informed the transporters that E-way bill would become mandatory for inter-state movements of goods from February 1, 2018. It further said that the nationwide e-way bill system would be ready to be rolled out on a trial basis by January 16. E-way bill can be generated from the GSTN portal. It can also be generated or cancelled through SMS. When an e-way bill is generated, a unique e-way bill number (EBN) is allocated and is available to the supplier, recipient, and the transporter.

(Source: Business Today)