

SUPPORTING TOY INDUSTRY

Government is providing all round support to domestic toy industry to make them more competitive. Some of the measures include promoting Made in India toys; designing of toys based on Indian values, culture, and history; using toys as a learning resource; organizing hackathons and grand challenges for toy designing and manufacturing; monitoring quality of toys; restricting imports of sub-standard and unsafe toys and promoting indigenous toy clusters.

Exports of toys have increased by 61.38 per cent in the last three years, from USD 202 Million in Financial Year (FY) 2018-19 to USD 326 Mn in FY 2021-22. The import of toys has reduced by 70 per cent in the last three years, from USD 371 Mn in FY 2018-19 to USD 110Mn in FY 2021-22. Some steps taken by Government to increase the domestic production and reduce imports of toys are: Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) has mandated sample testing of each consignment and no permission for sale unless the quality testing is successful. In case of failure, the consignment is either sent back or destroyed at the cost of the importer. Basic Custom Duty (BCD) on Toys-IHS Code-9503 has been increased from 20 per cent to 60 per cent in February, 2020. Government has issued Toys (Quality Control) Order, 2020 on 25/02/2020 through which toys have been brought under compulsory Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) certification with effect from 01/01/2021. As per the Quality Control Order (QCO), every toy shall conform to the requirements of relevant Indian Standard and bear the Standard Mark under a licence from BIS as per Scheme-I of BIS (Conformity Assessment) Regulations, 2018. This QCO is applicable to both domestic manufacturers as well as foreign manufacturers who intend to export their toys to India. Ministry of Education organized Toyceathon 21, a unique effort by 6 Ministries & Departments to crowd- source solutions to problems faced by toy industry. Over 1.2 lakh registrants for the event and submitted over 17,000 ideas and 13900 teams formed to win a large number of prizes up to Rs. 50 lakh. A Virtual Toy Fair 'The India Toy Fair, 2021 (TIFF)' was organized from 27th February to 04th March 2021. About 1074 exhibitors from 30 states and UTs covering 68 clusters were on board- ed onto the virtual platform. 11 States participated as 'Partner States'. More than 25 lakhs visitors participated in the fair. 103 eminent speakers across the globe attended 41 sessions/webinars. Under the Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI) of Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME), 19 toy clusters have been approved. Out of these 19 clusters, 9 are approved in Madhya Pradesh, 3 in Rajasthan, 2 in Uttar Pradesh, 2 in Karnataka and 1 each in Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. These clusters are Kondapalli Wooden Toy Cluster, Channapatna Lacware Toys Cluster , Sagara Woodcrafts Cluster, Toy Cluster Budni, Soft Toys and Sportswear Cluster, Bamboo based Indigenous Toys Cluster, Traditional Indian Bamboo and Wood based toys cluster, Wood based traditional Indian Toys and Associated Fabric Based Accessories Cluster, Bamboo Craft and Bamboo Toys Cluster, Soft Toys Cluster, Indore Mahila Garment Leather Toys and Jute Product Cluster, Wood Based Toys Cluster, Plush Toys Cluster, Wood Craft Cluster, Traditional Indian Fabric based Toys Cluster, Deep Hast Shilp Wooden Toys Cluster, Palm Leaves Toys and Leather Products Cluster, Wooden Toys and Carving Cluster and Lucknow Soft Toys Cluster. These clusters propose to benefit 11,749 artisans with a Government of India assistance of Rs. 55.65 crore. Ministry of Textiles has identified 13 clusters across the country with a view for the overall development of cluster artisans. These clusters are located at Channapatna, Kinhal, Kondapalli, Etikopaka, Nirmal, Tanjore, Cudappah, Varanasi Chitrakoot, Jaipur, Dhubri, Bishnupur and Indore. DPIIT organized 'Toy Business League' on 4th -5th January 2022 for enabling a meaningful dialogue between innovators and toys manufacturers with a view to creating collaboration opportunities for Toyceathon 2021 winners and realizing the vision of designing toys based on Indian values, culture and history.

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OFF 'D' CUFF

Blame Thy Self

Muslims. Referring to this battle, the Quran says:

Indeed, God has helped you on many occasions. On the day of Hunayn, when you took pride in your great numbers, they proved of no avail to you—for the earth, despite all its vastness, became [too] narrow for you and you turned back, in retreat. (9:25)

This is the Quranic way of thinking. According to Quranic teachings, if you face any kind of undesirable experience from another person or group, you should not try to protest against others or register your complaint against them. You should rather try to find out your own weakness, your own vulnerable point that gave the other party the opportunity to overcome you.

According to the creation plan of God, our world is a world of challenge and competition. In this world, success is not the monopoly of any individual or group. It is futile to indulge in complaints and protests against others.

The only right thing to do is to engage in introspection in order to discover your own weakness and then to reassess your own planning. This is the only wise response to untoward situations. By self-correction, you can regain the target you failed to achieve.

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

There is a magnet in your heart that will attract true friends. That magnet is unselfishness, thinking of others first; when you learn to live for others, they will live for you.

-Paramahansa Yogananda

Don't disregard demands of Kashmiri Pandits

■ OMKAR DATTATRAY

Nothing is so big to be worried about and nothing is so little to be neglected and same is true for and with the Kashmiri Pandits because the powers cannot ignore, disregard and underestimate them and their demands. It is so ironic that the BJP which used the Kashmiri Pandit card to win elections state after state and exploited the Kashmiri Hindu sufferings to the hilt for political dividends and to be specific for vote bank politics is today indifferent and reluctant to address the genuine demand of the Kashmiri Pandit package employees who only and simply demand that they should not be coerced to live and work in an atmosphere of fear, insecurity and duress. But this genuine demand of the package employees fell on deaf ears of BJP government which seems unlikely to accept the demand of their relocation. It is very unfortunate and queer that the same BJP which cashed on the plight of the Kashmiri Pandits is today overlooking and ignoring their genuine demand. The package employees are protesting for their survival and safety and demand the right to life which stands guaranteed to all citizens and due to the prevailing conditions the Kashmiri Pandit package employees have been denied the right to life as guaranteed by the constitution of India under article-21 and as such these hapless souls should not be coerced to work in Kashmir against their free will and asking them to live and work in Kashmir where there is an atmosphere of fear, panic and in security and where the co members of this community and other Hindus from outside Kashmir were targeted and killed with sadistic pleasure by the crusaders of the Jihad. It is sad that the BJP which used to be so empathic about the sufferings of the Kashmiri Pandits is today ignoring them and paying not even a lip service to the uprooted community of the Kashmiri Pandits. The BJP government seems to be experimenting with the Kashmiri

Pandits as if they are experimental animals and laboratory products and the insensitive government should stop the experimentation with the Kashmiri Pandits. The BJP government needs to come to the rescue of the protesting Kashmiri Pandits and provide a succor to them so that they will heave a sigh of relief. Thus the BJP government of the centre under which the administration of J&K is today should pay heed to the demand of the protesting Kashmiri Pandits and accede the genuine demand of their relocation/shifting to Jammu division but the government seems least interested in addressing the only and genuine demand of their shifting to Jammu because in Kashmir they feel most in secure and inconvenienced and as such cannot perform their duties across Kashmir valley. It is the height of injustice that the BJP government has no time nor inclination to attend and address the genuine demands of the Pandit package employees who are protesting for the last 75 days and to be more specific from 12th may the fateful day when the community member of the Pandit package employee Rahul Bhat a clerk was murdered in broad day light in the crowded Tehsil office in Chadoora Budgam and this assassination created fear psychosis and left no option to the pandit package employees but to leave the Kashmir for the safety of their lives and take refuge in Jammu. Not only Rahul Bhat was killed in the line of his duty but Rajni Bala, a Jammu-based school teacher was shot dead in his school in Gopalpora Kulgam in most barbaric way, besides this a non local Hindu Bank manger from Rajasthan was killed in his bank in Arreh Kulgam. Again a Hindu laborer from Bihar, a women Sikh principal Satinder Kour in his school along with a teacher Deepak Chand in a Srinagar, a renowned Hindu chemist M L Bindroo were all killed by the terrorists and all these unfortunate killings created genuine fear and panic among package employees and they were

forced to fled Kashmir for their safety. The Pandit package employees are protesting in Jammu and are demanding the safety and survival but the insensitive BJP government of the centre and the LG administration of J&K are not paying any heed towards demands of the protesting employees. The height of the matter is that none of UT's BJP leaders has paid a visit to the site of the protesting Pandit employees. It seems neither the BJP as a political party nor the BJP heading NDA government is paying any attention towards the package employees and both are disregarding and ignoring the genuine demand of the Kashmiri Pandits. The BJP government is under the wrong impression and notion that if the package employees are transferred to Jammu division, it will be the triumph of the terrorism and will be a failure of the Return and Rehabilitation policy of the government. But the government should know that the shifting of the Pandit package employees to Jammu will not tantamount to the triumph of the terrorists and will not make Kashmir a Pakistan and nor will it mean failure of the Return and Rehabilitation policy. The BJP which used to en-cash the sad plight of the Kashmiri Pandits is today mute and silent on the sufferings of the Kashmiri Pandits and has no time to redress the genuine demand of the protesting Pandit employees which is concerned with their very survival. In the two terms of the BJP headed NDA government from 2014 and 2019 it has done nothing to address the genuine demand of the Kashmiri Pandits. The Prime Minister in whom the exiled Kashmiri Pandits has high hopes did not find it proper to pay a visit to the Kashmiri Pandit localities/camps. The BJP government has done nothing for the uprooted Kashmiri Pandits during its terms. The special employment package is the creation of UPA government of Dr Manmohan Singh who announced it in 2008 and implemented it

though in a faulty manner in year 2010. It is the then prime minister Manmohan Singh who had paid a visit to the migrant camp to show concern for the exiled Kashmiri Pandits. The BJP headed NDA government does not pay any attention towards the genuine aspirations, demands and sentiments of the Kashmiri Pandits including package employees who are on indefinite protest. It is very disturbing and sad that PM package employees are forced to choose between the livelihood and life and thus they are in a precarious position, if they choose livelihood they will have to face the risk of being killed and if they choose life, they cannot sustain it because of the paucity of money. The sad plight and sufferings of the Kashmiri Pandits was also the theme of the BJP politics but unfortunately today they are insensitive to the demand of the right to life and it disregards and ignores the genuine demand of the protesting Pandit employees. If the BJP government has any concern for the uprooted Kashmiri Pandits which perhaps it has not now, should pay heed towards the genuine demand of their shifting to Jammu so that they are saved from the bullets of the terrorists and this is possible only if the powers shifts /relocates them to Jammu. The fate of about 5000 package employees is at stake and the BJP government should remain indifferent to the demands and sentiments of the package employees. Asking the package Pandit employees to go to Kashmir for performing their duties is synonymous to their killing and thus the BJP government which in the past was championing their cause should now see the reason and sanity and order the relocation / shifting of the package employees. In short no employment package is practicable and worth for uprooted Kashmiri Pandits if it is bereft of compassion.

(The author is a Columnist and Social Activist).

Extension of central laws established equitable society across J&K

■ KARAN MALHOTRA

With the extension of 890 Central laws applicable to Jammu and Kashmir; repeal of 205 state laws and modification of 129 laws after the abrogation of Article 370, a system of equitable justice has been established in J&K for all sections of people. The rights of weaker sections like Scheduled Tribes, other traditional forest dwellers, Scheduled Castes and Safaikaramcharis are now ensured by the application of relevant Acts. Rights of children and senior citizens are now being ensured. In order to create a just and equitable society, reservation rules have been amended to extend benefits of reservation to left out categories like Pahari speaking people and economically weaker sections. Union Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman while tabling 2021-22 budget for J&K said, "OBC reservation benefits have been increased from 2 per cent to 4 per cent and income ceiling has been raised from Rs 4.50 lakh to Rs 8 lakh". "Sections of society which have been discriminated since ages such as displaced persons of PoJK and Chhamb, West Pakistani refugees and residents of border areas have been benefited under various schemes," she said. Special attention is being paid to Kashmiri migrants, she added. For the first time the spouse of a J&K domicile shall also be deemed as a domicile. Earlier, spouses of Permanent Resident Card holders were considered at par but were not considered domiciles. Children of central government officials posted for over ten years in Jammu and Kashmir will also continue to be considered domiciles. The implementation of several path breaking

central legislations after the revocation of Article 370, like the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forests Rights) Act, 2007, the Scheduled Caste and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1954, among others, is bringing a new era of progress and development in J&K. The Forest Rights Act 2006 was implemented in J&K after 14 years of its existence in other states of India. On the special attention of the UT Government, Community claims' and 'individual claims' are being settled by administration of respective districts. Education for Tribals "After a wait of more than 14 years, due rights have been conferred upon the tribal community by implementing the Forest Rights Act, 2006, keeping in mind the basic spirit of social equality and harmony as guided by the Constitution of our country and Parliament," J&K Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha said. The Lieutenant Governor, who is taking a personal interest in tribal development recently launched the 'Smart Schools' Project in Jammu and Kashmir for tribal communities. Under this maiden project, modernization of 200 schools in Tribal areas will be completed in 2022. He also said that the poor and weaker sections of society were neglected for many years in J&K but on the historic day of 5 August 2019, Article 370 and Article 31A were abolished and the citizens of Jammu & Kashmir were given all the Constitutional rights. "In J&K we have charted a new development path after August 2019. For decades, infrastructure was in tatters despite huge amount of money sent by the centre. The non-development agenda of seven decades

in J&K mired the UT in a low growth syndrome. Under the guidance of Prime Minister J&K is witnessing a new dawn. Tribals are getting land rights, 11,000 government jobs have been provided within record time with complete transparency and major steps have been taken to ensure the empowerment of women, marginalized and weaker groups," Lt Governor said. Following rationalisation of the percentage of reservation of different categories in direct recruitment, the residents of backward areas will now have 10 per cent reservation, Pahari speaking people (4 per cent) and Economically weaker sections (10 per cent). The Jammu and Kashmir government, in a big relief to the socially and educationally backward classes, has also enhanced the income ceiling from Rs 4.50 lakh to Rs 8 lakh for them to avail of benefits of reservation as per provisions of the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation Act, 2004. As per provisions of the Act, reservation in employment and admissions in professional institutions, among others is provided to the persons belonging to Socially and Educationally Backward Classes categorised as Weak and Underprivileged Classes (Social Castes), Residents of Areas adjoining Actual Line of Control and Residents of Backward Areas. However, there is an income bar/ceiling for availing this reservation. The objective of prescribing the income ceiling in the Act is to prevent such persons, as have crossed or shall cross the threshold level of backwardness commonly known as 'Creamy Layer' from availing benefits of reservation under the categories of socially and Educationally Backward Classes.

PROGRESSING J&K Citizens hailing path-breaking digital initiatives of J&K Govt J&K setting benchmark in implementing PM's Digital India campaign

J&K Government has launched several path breaking citizen centric IT initiatives aimed at bringing greater transparency in governance and ease of living for citizens. In the last two years, dedicated efforts have been made by J&K Administration to create an enabling environment for digital inclusion and promoting digital literacy to bridge the gap between government programs and citizen requirements. J&K, through innovation, implementation and inclusion is setting unprecedented benchmarks in digital initiatives and leading by example in Prime Minister's Digital India campaign. Pertinently, J&K is number one in the ranking of UTs in e-governance. Host of initiatives like E-office, BEAMS, Avam ki Awaaz, MyGov, e-Umat, DigiLocker, Aapki Zameen Aapki Nigrani have brought transparency & accountability in governance and made transformational changes in the lives of people. As many as 209 government services have been integrated with Rapid Assessment System for real time feedback of citizens. Under Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities on "Aapki Zameen Aapki Nigrani", the government organized special camps at Tehsil and Block level offices, Niabats, Patwar Khanas and Panchayat Ghars to educate public about this digital platform by which people can access their land records with one click. "We are grateful to the present

administrations at Center and UT level for launching such technological innovations in all spheres of development making the lives of people comfortable and convenient", said Sikamndar Noorani, District President All Jammu Kashmir Panchayat Conference while appreciating this historic initiative. 'Apki Zameen Aapki Nigrani' has empowered common people to check their land records on their mobiles getting rid of moving from pillar to post for the same and safeguarding our land. I thank LG administration for this revolutionary step", he added Similarly, Showket Ahmed Rather of Tenggpora Srinagar is all praise for the government's initiative, who says, "It is really a good step, everyone will be benefited. Earlier getting revenue extracts used to take months. With Land passbook, now everything is with the people. We have been relieved of the cumbersome process and nightmare of visiting revenue offices". For Khurshed Ahmed Reshi of Tenggpora, the initiative will expose people who grabbed government land and built infrastructure on public land. Rinky Chauhan, a college student of Jammu says that digital initiatives by the Government have empowered the student community to access the books, study material even without enrolling for regular courses. Similarly, Showket Ahmed of Bandipora, said, "In times of state subject, it was the most tiring process to physically move documents

from official to official. Now Domicile certificate is provided after applying at the comfort of home". Likewise, Irfan Ahmed Bhat, an employee of a Fruit company thanks administration for providing cent percent subsidy under industrial policy after applying through online mode. Notably, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha recently inaugurated Digi-Mela in all districts to generate awareness about digital solutions and new technologies. Emphasising on the need to take effective measures providing last mile solutions in digital services for the people of J&K, the LG directed the stakeholders to formulate short-term goals of three-six months and long-term vision statements to transform core ICT infrastructure, governance, and services for ease of living, accessibility, and innovation to transform J&K into digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. He also launched the 'Digi Dost' programme aimed at developing a strong network of digitally empowered young volunteers at the district, block, and panchayat level who could work as the brand ambassadors for Digital J&K and Digital India to achieve maximum mobilisation and awareness on digital services. 'Digi Dost' volunteers would also assist in digital service delivery, data collection, training, spreading information regarding the Digital India campaign, and making people aware of cyber hygiene and cyber-crimes.

J&K witnessing democratic decentralization post Art-370

■ SUNIL ABROL

The resolve of the Central Government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to return power to the people of J&K is reciprocated by the people of the UT to turn to democratic decentralisation to achieve better governance and development. To strengthen the grassroots democracy, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) amended the J&K Panchayati Raj Act, 1989 for the first time in October 2020 and paved the way for the creation of District Development Councils (DDC). "27 functions were transferred as per 73rd amendment. In 14th Finance Commission Rs 1727.50 cr devolved under MNREGA, Mid-Day meal scheme and ICDS. Panchayats were empowered to generate resources," a senior official said. DDC is a directly-elected local government body in each district with jurisdiction over the entire district excluding areas designated as a municipality or municipal corporation. The newly created DDC along with Halqa Panchayats and Block Development Councils (BDCs) are ensuring a three-tier Panchayati Raj system for the first time in the region. The elected third tier of the Panchayati Raj institution marks the implementation of the entire 73rd Amendment Act in J&K, which was never made effective by previous governments. The District Development Council (DDC) elections in Jammu and Kashmir provided self-rule and autonomy, and empowered leaders from the grassroots to take their own decisions as committed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to empower the people at the grassroots. DDC Elections in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir were a part of a 3-tier system to strengthen democracy at the grassroots level which J&K has never witnessed in the past 70 years. The Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), through which the self-government of villages is realized, have been entrusted with the task of economic development, strengthening social justice and implementation of Central and State Government schemes at grass-roots level. The democratic exercise of free, fair and peaceful Panchayat elections were held in the UT which led to the constitution of vibrant Panchayati Raj institutions. In a significant achievement, these Panchayat elections recorded a substantial 74.1 per cent voter turnout. A total of 3,650 Sarpanchs and 23660 Panchs were elected to lay the foundation for the 3-tier Panchayati Raj system for the first time across J&K. After the successful conduct of the Panchayat elections, elections for Block Development Councils (BDCs) were conducted for the very first time in history of J&K. The BDC elections saw an overwhelming voter turnout of 98.3 per cent in which 276 chairpersons were elected in a transparent manner. Finally, District Development Council elections were held in 8 phases which witnessed a tremendous voter turnout of 51.7 per cent. The process elected 20 DDC Chairpersons and 20 Vice-Chairpersons; a total of 278 DDC members were also elected thus completing the implementation of the 3-tier Panchayati Raj system in its total form. To give these institutions financial strength, a historic district level planning process was accomplished in accordance with the constitutional mandate. The preparation of the plan adopted a bottom-up approach-first at the Panchayat level, then at the block level and then at the district level. "District plan was approved for all 20 districts via online meeting with participation of all DDC chairpersons, district administration and concerned departments," said a senior official, adding that, "Plan allocation was more than doubled in 2021-22, i.e. Rs 12600 cr in comparison to Rs 5136 cr in 2020-21." For the first time since independence, elected grass-root representatives get formal protocol-hoist the National flag on Independence Day/ Republic day. The elected representatives were given honorarium and formal position in the warrant of precedence and a regular system of interaction of district officers with Panchayat representatives was institutionalized. Regarding the key focus areas of UT, the Lieutenant Governor has said that after the democratic decentralisation in spirit of the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendment Act, 14 sectors have been identified for investment at a large scale with a special focus on tourism and employment. The PRI representatives were trained through a slew of capacity building and training programmes to further enhance their skills and efficiency in reputed training institutions like IMPARD and outside institutions as well. Besides, induction courses on digital literacy training, gram Panchayat development plan training and training workshops have been organized for newly elected BDC Chairpersons. About 711 elected representatives have been provided training cum exposure visits outside UT.