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Jute sector must modernise diversify to reduce govt dependence Union min

PTI

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Kolkata, Nov 12 (PTI) Union minister Darshana Vikram Jardosh on Saturday said that the jute industry has to modernise and diversify its products range to reduce reliance on government purchase of gunny bags.

Speaking on the sidelines of a Bharat Chamber of Commerce event here, the minister of state for textiles and railways said, "A lot has to be done for the jute industry. There is negligible value addition and the sector is dependent on government procurement. Modernisation and diversification of products is essential for the sector to become sustainable sans government support."

A major portion of the Rs 10,000 crore sector is dependent on jute bags procured by the government for storage of foodgrains and other essential items.

The sector employs around 2.5 lakh workers and around 30 lakh jute growers depend on it for livelihood.

In response to a question, the minister said the jute and handicrafts industries require state government's support, and cited the example of Assam government coming forward for silk production.

However, she did not elaborate on the assistance her ministry was expecting from the West Bengal government, while only stating, "If you want to lay a railway track, you will require land."

The minister said that the Railways was supporting the handloom sector by opening kiosks under the 'one station one product' policy.

Eastern Railways Additional General Manager Jaideep Gupta said that 57 stations under the zone have been identified and the scheme is operational for the last three months.

Under the scheme, a handicraft artist or a vendor can reserve a kiosk for a small amount of fee for 15 days.

In another event, the Golden Jubilee celebrations of Federation of Hosiery Manufacturers' Association of India (FOHMA), the minister said that the Union government is making efforts to make the textiles industry self-reliant and it has substantially increased funding on research.

FOHMA sought the minister's intervention in developing a mechanism to help small textile players handle volatility in the industry.

South Indian Hosiery Manufacturers Association president A C Eswaran urged FOHMA to include various small vendors and associations across India as its members. PTI BSM COR

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(This story has not been edited by THE WEEK and is auto-generated from PTI)