

## KVIC LAUNCHES “BANARASI PASHMINA” TO BOOST SELF-SUSTAINABILITY & ARTISANAL CREATIVITY

Relevant for: Indian Economy | Topic: Issues relating to Growth & Development - Industry & Services Sector incl. MSMEs and PSUs

From the Himalayan highlands of Leh-Ladakh to the banks of River Ganges in Varanasi – the heritage handicraft of Pashmina has got a brand new identity. The premium Pashmina products prepared by the highly skilled Khadi weavers of Varanasi was launched by Chairman KVIC, Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena in Varanasi. This is for the first time that Pashmina products are being produced outside the region of Leh-Ladakh and Jammu & Kashmir. KVIC will be selling the “Made-in-Varanasi” Pashmina products through its showrooms, outlets and through its online portal.



Pashmina is famed as an essential Kashmiri art form but rediscovery of Pashmina in Varanasi, the spiritual and cultural Capital of India, is unique in many ways. The production of Pashmina prepared in Varanasi liberates this heritage art from the regional confines and creates a fusion of diverse artistry from Leh-Ladakh, Delhi and Varanasi. The first two Pashmina shawls produced by the weavers in Varanasi were presented to Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi by Chairman

KVIC, Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena on 4<sup>th</sup> March, before the formal launch of Pashmina products in Varanasi.

The journey of Pashmina production in Varanasi begins with collection of raw Pashmina wool from Ladakh and which is brought to Delhi for de-hairing, cleaning and processing. The processed wool, in the form of roving, is brought back to Leh where it is handspun into yarn by women Khadi artisans on modern Charkhas provided by KVIC. The finished yarn is then sent to Varanasi where it is woven by trained Khadi weavers into final Pashmina products. As a mark of authenticity and belongingness, the name of the weavers and the name of the city Varanasi will also be subtly marked on the Pashmina products made by Varanasi's weavers.

KVIC Chairman said that Pashmina production in Varanasi alone would add nearly Rs 25 crore to Khadi's turnover in Varanasi.

The main idea behind this rediscovery of Pashmina in Varanasi is to generate sustainable employment opportunities for women in Ladakh and diversify the skills of traditional weavers in Varanasi, as envisaged by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. As a special case, the Pashmina weavers in Varanasi are being paid over 50 percent extra wages which comes as a big boost for these artisans. As compared to Rs 800 wages for weaving a normal woollen shawl; Pashmina weavers in Varanasi are paid wages of Rs 1300 for weaving a Pashmina shawl. Pashmina weaving in Varanasi would ensure round-the-year livelihood to women artisans in Leh-Ladakh where spinning activities are suspended for nearly half the year due to the extreme cold. To facilitate this, KVIC has also set up a Pashmina wool processing unit in Leh.

Notably, Pashmina weaving in Varanasi is being done by 4 khadi institutions namely: Krishak Gramodyog Vikas Sansthan, Varanasi, Shri Mahadev Khadi Gramodyog Sansthan, Ghazipur, Khadi Kambal udyog sansthan, ghazipur and Gram Sewa Ashram, Ghazipur.

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