

## Experts urge trade tariff hike to offset imports

JK handicrafts, saffron, horti products get beating from predatory pricing such as "dumping" from countries like China

RISING KASHMIR NEWS

**Srinagar, June 19:** To offset import of goods that affect Kashmir handicrafts, Saffron and horticulture products in Indian markets, experts Saturday called local stakeholders to ask for 'anti-dumping' measures from New Delhi by increasing trade tariff on imported commodities.

In a capacity building workshop on 'WTO agreements and implications for select industries in Jammu and Kashmir' organized by Federation of Indian Export Organisation (FIEO) New Delhi and Centre for WTO studies Department of Commerce GoI in association with JK Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI) here today, experts said the duty was not increased due to unorganised nature of handicraft and saffron industry in the Valley.

"The goods produced here get beating from predatory pricing such as "dumping" from other countries like China. This has dealt severe blow to the handicrafts

### TRADE TARIFF ON IMPORT

PRODUCT	BOUND DUTY	APPLIED DUTY
Honey	100	60
Fresh apple	50	60
Apple*processed	150	30
Saffron	150	30
Paper machie	40	10
Shawls	80	10
Mixture nuts	150	30

and saffron industry," experts concluded at the workshop.

Advocating increase in duty of imported goods, Professor Center for WTO Sajan Sudesh Ratna said the producer here should get organised and approach the Indian policy makers for increasing the duty on imported goods to stabilize the prices.

About Saffron, Ratna said India has agreed on 30 per cent increase on applied duty, which can be cranked up to 150 per cent to its bound duty.

"You can take action by imposing higher duty. If you are sitting here and not raising the issue with the concerned ministry, your products are bound to get beat-

ing," said Ratna.

"The current applied duty on carpets is only 10 per cent which can be raised to a bound duty of 50 per cent. There is a lot of cushion for you," informed Ratna.

As imported products are sold at less than their fair value, it causes considerable injury to the domestic firms, for which, experts suggested for filing antidumping petitions with WTO.

"Domestic firms can file an antidumping petition, which determines the injury to the domestic produce and accordingly the prices would be stabilized. You have to make a cause and appeal New Delhi to protect it," said Ratna.

Ratna said there is a huge gap between the supply from India and demand in the European countries.

"European Union imported saffron worth USD 718000 from India when the market demand only in Spain is about USD 56 million," informed Ratna.

He said India exports nuts worth USD 16,000 to United Kingdom

when there is a demand worth USD 85 million.

"We also export nuts worth USD 2 million to Germany when the total demand there is USD 17 million," said Ratna.

Speaking on the occasion, Professor Centre for WTO Studies Shashank Priya said WTO provides for various trade defense instruments for imposing tariff duty beyond the bound rates, which can protect the domestic firms.

Priya suggested traders from Jammu and Kashmir to combine and tie-up with Uttar Pradesh for joint application before WTO.

"Kashmir handicrafts have global market. People have to be made aware about the trade policies to get a better deal," he informed.

To protect Kashmiri handicrafts, Centre has sanctioned Rs 70 crore for Mega Cluster Project for Handicrafts especially carpets.

"We will also provide required facility, machinery and material to promote the carpet industry here," said Associate Professor JKEDI Dr S Khurshid-ul-Islam.