

# FIEO Function Marks Commerce Secretary Changeover

FIEO organized a glittering function to bid farewell to former Commerce Secretary Dr Rahul Khullar and to welcome Mr S.R. Rao as the new Commerce Secretary. The function was attended by Mr M.F. Farooqui, Special Secretary, MOEF; Mr Rajiv Kher, Additional Secretary; Mr Madhusudan Prasad, Additional Secretary; Mrs Anita Agnihotri, Addl. Secretary & Financial Advisor; Dr Anup Pujari, DGFT; Mr Vineet Ohri, Chief Commissioner of Customs; Mr Arvind Mehta, Joint Secretary; Mr Asit Tripathy, Joint Secretary; Mr J.S. Deepak, Joint Secretary; Mr D.S. Dhesi, Joint Secretary; Mr Amar Sinha, Joint Secretary; Mr J.K. Dadoo, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Commerce; Mr Sumit Jerath, Addl. DGFT; Mr D.K. Singh, Addl. DGFT; Mr N.P.S. Monga, Addl. DGFT; Mr S.K. Srivastava, Addl. DGFT; and other senior officers of the Ministry of Commerce and DGFT.

Mr Shyamal Ghosh, former Secretary; Mr L. Mansingh, former Secretary; Mr N.L. Lakhanpal, former Secretary; Mr K.T. Chacko, Director, IIFT; Mr N. Shankar Chairman, ECGC; President, FIEO, Vice-President, FIEO, Chairmen of Export Promotion Councils; Members of FIEO Managing Committee, and leading member exporters also participated in the function.

While welcoming the guests at the function, Mr Ajay Sahai, Director General & CEO, FIEO, said that it is an honour for FIEO to arrange the farewell function for Dr Khullar and welcoming Mr Rao. Mr Sahai said Dr Khullar took over as Commerce Secretary at a most difficult time when the impact on the global slowdown slowly became visible in the Indian economy. Dr Khullar was instrumental in provid-



Former Commerce Secretary Dr Rahul Khullar (right) discussing with the new Commerce Secretary Mr S R Rao.



Mr M Rafeeqe Ahmed, President, FIEO (left) with Mr N Shankar, Chairman and Managing Director, ECGC.

ing the stimulus to the exports which put the sector back on track and eventually led us to realize the target of \$300 billion in the last fiscal.

Dr Khullar is more an economist than a bureaucrat who warned exporters much before the signs of the

global slowdown became visible. He cautioned exporters about the present Euro crisis much earlier which helped them to equip themselves to meet the present challenges. Complimenting the new Commerce Secretary, Mr Sahai said Mr Rao has varied experienced of social and economic



**LEFT:** Vice President, FIEO Mr J K Jain (extreme right) discussing with the new Commerce Secretary Mr S R Rao (centre). At extreme left is Mr Khalid Khan, Member FIEO Managing Committee. **RIGHT:** Dr Rahul Khullar, Former Commerce Secretary discussing with the new Commerce Secretary Mr S R Rao. On Mr Rao's right are Mr N L Lakhanpal, former Secretary to Govt. of India; Mrs Lakhanpal; Mr Khalid Khan, Member FIEO Managing Committee; Mr Rajiv Chitalia, Chairman, Plastic EPC; Mrs J K Jain; and Mr Rajiv Jain, Chairman, Gem & Jewellery EPC.



**LEFT:** Mr Rafeeqe Ahmed addressing the gathering. **RIGHT:** Mr Ajay Sahai, Director General & CEO, FIEO addressing the gathering.

Ministries which will help in attempting inclusive growth through exports. Mr Rao was instrumental in changing the face of Surat after the plague broke out in the western Indian city for which he was conferred the Padma Shree. He is an administrator par excellence and the exporting community hopes he will provide his midas touch to exports as well. Though Mr Rao is taking over at a most challenging time, if the past is an indication, he relish challenges and delivers the best in most the difficult situations.

Mr M. Rafeeqe Ahmed, President, FIEO, welcoming the two dignitaries, said he has learned a lot working with Dr Khullar while inter-

acting with him from the platform of FIEO as well as from Council for Leather Exports. Dr Khullar is a tough negotiator who got the best for India at the WTO. He was instrumental in clinching the MFN status from Pakistan which will be gradually granted as Pakistan has already moved away from the positive list to a negative list for import from India. Mr Ahmed said that Dr Khullar is known as a stickler for rules but he applied the same in the most objective and impartial manner. Mr Ahmed said Dr Khullar has been appointed as Chairman, TRAI, when major reforms are needed for the sector and he is confident that Dr Khullar will contribute to the

strengthening and expansion of the telecom sector.

Welcoming the new Commerce Secretary, the FIEO Chief said Mr Rao has varied experienced and he does not carry any baggage. He was the Chairman of the Vizag Port Trust which he turned around in a very short span of time with his team efforts. Mr Rao changed Surat from being one of the dirtiest cities of India to its cleanest one. He has taken charge at a time when exports are down and we all look up to him to reverse the trend. The FIEO President said Indian exporters are resilient and will bounce back with the support of the Government. He re-

quested the Commerce Secretary to provide the necessary support to the export sector particularly the labour intensive one at this difficult time and try to make the export procedure seamless for exporters.

Dr Khullar, who is now Chairman, TRAI, in his address, recalled that when he took over, the then FIEO President briefed him about the challenges faced by the exporters in view of the global slowdown. Fortunately the government had the fiscal resources to provide the stimulus to exports as well as the industry which insulated India from the global slowdown. However, when the country is facing another crisis in exports along with the mess in the EU, our financial position does not give room for much fiscal support. The fiscal deficit is already high and, therefore, little maneuvering has to be done within the existing resources. Dr Khullar said diversification of exports should be the priority of the exporters and in the wake of the rupee's depreciation, exporters should move to new markets to offer the most competitive price.

Dr Khullar expressed his satisfaction with India's economic engagement which provides better market access to exports. He hoped that very soon we will be completing negotiation on India-EU FTA as well. He thanked all officers in the Min-



Mr M Rafeeqe Ahmed (left) presenting a bouquet to Dr Rahul Khullar.



Mr M Rafeeqe Ahmed (left) presenting a bouquet to Mr S R Rao.



LEFT: Dr Rahul Khullar addressing the gathering. RIGHT: Mr S R Rao addressing the gathering.



**LEFT:** Mr L Mansingh, former Secretary to the Govt. of India (centre) welcoming Dr Rahul Khullar. At extreme left is Mr Shyamal Ghosh, former Secretary to the Govt. of India. **RIGHT:** From left, Mrs Anup K Pujari; Mr K T Chacko, Director, IIFT; Mrs Anuradha Mansingh; Mrs Shyamal Ghosh; Mr Shyamal Ghosh; Mr L Mansingh; and Dr Rahul Khullar.



**LEFT:** Mr M Rafeeqe Ahmed (right) with Dr Anup K Pujari, DGFT welcoming the guest. **RIGHT:** (Extreme left) Mr M.F. Farooqui, Special Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forest welcoming Dr Rahul Khullar. Also seen in the picture Mr M Rafeeqe Ahmed (2nd from left) and Mr Suresh Madan, Director, Ahuja Radio.



**LEFT:** From left, Mr Shyamal Ghosh; Dr Anup K Pujari and Mr S R Rao. **RIGHT:** Mr S R Rao (2nd from left) and Dr Rahul Khullar (3rd from left) with Mr M Rafeeqe Ahmed, (extreme right); Mr J K Jain (2nd from right) and Mr Ajay Sahai (extreme right).



**LEFT:** From left, are Dr Anup K Pujari, DGFT; Mr D S Dhesi, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Commerce; Mr Asit Tripathy, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Commerce; Mr Rajeev Kher, Addl. Secretary, Ministry of Commerce; Mr S R Rao, Commerce Secretary; Dr Rahul Khullar, Former Commerce Secretary; Mr J K Dadoo, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Commerce; Mr J S Deepak, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Commerce; Mr Arvind Mehta, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Commerce; and Mr Amar Sinha, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Commerce.



**RIGHT:** Mr M Rafeeqe Ahmed, President, FIEO (3rd from right) with FIEO officials.

istry of Commerce and DGFT who worked with him to enable him to realize the export target in the most difficult circumstances. He offered his assistance to everyone in his new capacity as well.

Mr Rao said he has no exposure of the Ministry of Commerce and is still in the learning mode. However, he said he will have close interaction with trade and industry to bring exports back on track. Contraction of demand in India's traditional markets, particularly in the Euro-zone economies, is hurting exports, said the Commerce Secretary. He admitted that we are still not out of

the woods as bailing out of Greece and Spain is still in progress. Mr Rao informed that he will be having sector specific discussions so that specific strategies can be devised for promoting exports in a very short span. He expressed hope that the impetus given to market diversification, softening of crude prices and expectations of a normal monsoon would ensure export growth in the near future.

The Commerce Secretary said the Ministry was recalibrating its strategy to find a solution to achieve the 20 per cent growth target in exports for the current fiscal, an-

nounced in the recently released Foreign Trade Policy. Mr Rao admitted that being a successor of Dr Khullar, who achieved so much during his tenure, is going to be a challenge. He exuded confidence that with so many brilliant officers available in the Department of Commerce and DGFT, he would be able to deliver. Mr Rao said that procedural simplification, reducing the transaction time of exporters would be a priority for the government. The Commerce Secretary assured more frequent interactions with trade and industry so that regular feedback is available to the Government for fine tuning the policy and procedure. ■



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