

Big Indian presence to attract customers at China show

FIEO organized the participation of Indian companies in the 5th South Asian Commodities Trade Fair held from June 6 to 10, 2012 at Kunming in China's Yunnan province. The SACT Fair was held coinciding with the 20th edition of the China Import and Export Fair with focus on strengthening the country's economic ties with neighboring countries. Overall more than 30 countries and districts from ASEAN, South Asia, West Asia and East Asia participated in the exhibition spread over six hall, occupying 2485 booths and displaying a wide range of products. The SACT Fair was located at one of the halls dedicated to the South Asian countries – India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Maldives and Sri Lanka. The provincial government of Yunnan Province organised the event which was aimed at presenting Yunnan as an 'emerging gateway' for trade and commerce as well as attracting South East Asian and the South Asian countries to explore the trade potential of Kunming.

During the glittering opening ceremony attended by important dignitaries – including Mr Indra Mani Pandey, Consul General of India, Guangzhou, and Mr Ramesh Kumar Agarwal, Chairman, FIEO (Eastern Region) – the Governor of Yunnan Province Mr Li Jiheng said the annual event aims to uphold the role of Yunnan as a bridgehead gateway for the southwest of China with South Asia and South East Asia. He informed that in 2011 the total trade transaction value reached \$6.68 billion. This edition of the fair attracted around 400,000 visitors, with total trade transaction estimated at around \$15.8 billion.

The India Pavilion was inaugurated by Mr Pandey. The Indian contingent



Mr Li Jiheng, Governor of Yunnan Province addressing during the opening ceremony on 6th June. Front row (2nd from left) is Mr Ramesh Kumar Agarwal, Regional Chairman, FIEO (ER).



Mr Indra Mani Pandey, Consul General of India (3rd from left) inaugurating the India Pavilion. On his left is Mr Ramesh Kumar Agarwal, Regional Chairman, FIEO (ER).

comprised 31 companies from the small and medium segment of industry and dealt in various products like handicrafts, fashion jewellery, wooden handicrafts, gem stones, brass art-

ware, garments and made-ups. The National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC) also participated under the Federation's banner to give an opportunity to small scale enterprises. FIEO

has been participating in the fair consecutively for the last three editions and receiving encouraging response from participants who are keen to do on the spot sales.

On the sidelines of the fair was held the 7th China South Asia Business Forum (CSABF) which was organized by the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade and the SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry. More than 300 delegates from China and South Asian nations attended the three-day forum which kicked off on June 5, 2012 and where FIEO marked its presence for the first time. During one of the interactive sessions, Mr Ramesh Kumar Agarwal, Chairman (Eastern Region), noted that the trade relations between India and China have seen exponential growth in the last few years with total trade reaching \$67 billion in 2010-11. While elaborating on the importance of China, he mentioned that the country is the third largest receiver of Indian goods and the first largest source of our goods. While posing confidence in achieving the trade target of \$100 billion by 2015, Mr Agarwal noted the imbalance in trade is a matter of concern for India as the trade deficit for the period April 2011-January 2012 was \$33 billion which is even higher than the deficit in the last financial year. During the discussions, Mr Agarwal called for greater Chinese investments in India in the infrastructure sector and mooted the idea of entering into a comprehensive trade agreement with China, including goods and services to give greater market access for Indian products.

Mr Pandey also organized a seminar entitled "India-China Business Forum" in Kunming on June 6, 2012 alongside the above events to inform the Chinese companies about the potential of India as an investment destination and promote tourism exchange. The Consulate General of India, Guangzhou, during his welcome address mentioned that India has made efforts to expand its export bas-



Mr Ramesh Kumar Agarwal, Regional Chairman FIEO (ER) (2nd from left) during Parallel Session at CSABF with other dignitaries.



A view of visitors at India Pavilion.

ket to China and to encourage Indian companies to take advantage of the rising imports by China with a view to minimize this deficit.

The forum was also addressed by Mr Asit Tripathy, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, who expressed his optimism that in view of the trade growth observed between the two countries, the trade target of \$100 billion is likely to be achieved comfortably by 2015. He also observed that India has also been working with the Chinese Government for resolving market access issues which impede exports of India's goods and services in sectors such as IT and IT-enabled

products and services, pharmaceuticals, engineering goods and agricultural products.

While elaborating FIEO's initiatives to bridge the trade gap between India and China, Mr Agarwal mentioned that the Federation has been participating in various exhibitions in China including the Canton Fair, Chengdu Fair and SACT Fair to provide an opportunity for Indian companies to expand their trade with China and thus help to bridge the vast trade gap. Presentations were also made by other Indian Chambers on opportunities in goods and services, investment and tourism. ■