

- Home
- News Update

## News

- Front Page
- Corporate
- Markets
- Info-Tech
- Marketing
- Money & Banking
- Agri-Biz & Commodities
- Industry & Economy
- Logistics
- Government
- Opinion
- Variety
- Corporate Results
- Columns
- States
- Web Extras
- Index
- Archives

## Features

- Investment World
- eWorld
- Brand Line
- Mentor
- Life
- Brand Quest
- The New Manager
- BL Club
- Smartbuy
- Books
- Gallery

## Stocks

- Quotes
- SE Diary
- Scoreboard
- Open-End Mutual Fund

## Foreign Exchange

- Rates

## Shipping

- Ports

## Archives

- Yesterday
- Datewise
- Resources
- In Focus

[Industry & Economy](#) - [Textiles](#)  
[States](#) - [Tamil Nadu](#)

## Bright prospects seen for technical textiles

Our Bureau

Coimbatore, Aug. 18

Indian-born Associate Professor of Texas Tech University Dr Seshadri Ramkumar is upbeat about the prospects for the technical textiles industry in India.

Speaking at the day-long International symposium on the 'Prospects for the Technical Textiles Sector in India', organised jointly by the Avinashilingam Deemed University here and the Texas Tech University, US, Dr Ramkumar cited the latest USDA report wherein the global cotton production for the current year has been estimated at 116 million bales against consumption of 119.7 million bales.

"There will be a shortfall this year. The rain however has been good so far and the supply target for the next year (2010-11) is expected to see the industry bounce back."

Reverting to the Indian scenario, he said, 'Cotton production is estimated at 5.7 million tonnes during the 2009-10 (October – September) cotton year and the consumption pegged lower at 4.4 million tonnes. This is expected to offset the global shortfall; there are signs of optimism."

Promote small, medium units

But Dr Ramkumar perceives that the industry at this juncture should diversify and look at the technical textiles sector. "We are not articulating huge investments. We are only promoting the small and medium business units (tailoring shops in technical textiles) with investments ranging upwards of Rs 2.5 crore up to Rs 15 crore."

Stating that the technical textiles sector in India is still nascent and fragmented, he cited an ICRA study, which estimated the current market size at around Rs 4 lakh.

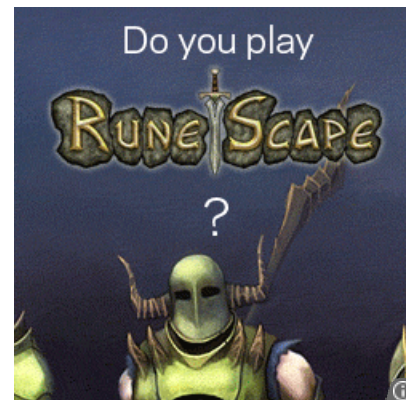
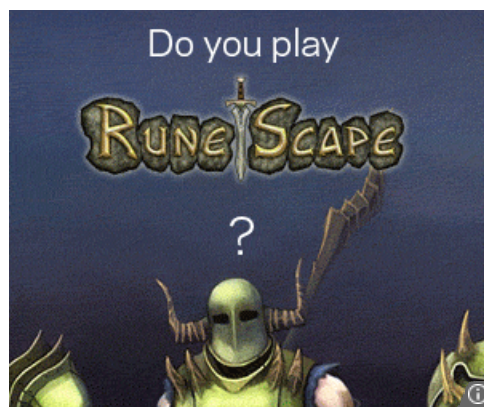
"This is expected to grow at 11 per cent and reach Rs 6.65 lakh by 2012-13."

Emphasising the immediate need for the converting sector in India, Dr Ramkumar called upon the stakeholders to focus on creation of converting clusters.

"The domestic demand and the need for consumer products at affordable rates is growing. One should therefore focus on skill development programmes."

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[China's ascent](#)

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[Nathu La border trade remains a no show this year too](#)

[Healthy diet](#)

[Yeddyurappa orders weekly meeting to take stock of swine flu situation](#)

[Norms for plastic recycling units in SEZs by mid-Sept](#)

[PFC, REC sanction Rs 9,506 cr loan for AP Genco projects](#)

[Bright prospects seen for technical textiles](#)

[SIMA fears cotton export move will lead to closure of small units](#)

[Coimbatore small industries body welcomes skill development scheme](#)

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