

BIMSTEC global seminar lays stress on MSME productivity

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The 4th International seminar of Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), organised by the Indian Council of Small Industries (ICSI) in Kolkata on Monday, highlighted the possible steps that could be undertaken to boost up small & medium enterprises (SMEs) productivity.

According to ICSI secretary general KK Sarkar, MSMEs need latest indigenous technology for its respective sectors. Speaking on the occasion, K Rangarajan, professor and head of centre for SME studies,

Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT), stated that more of industrial-level nodal agencies should be identified to address issues related to SMEs. A business forum should be formulated along the lines of a similar one that had been framed by the Great Mekong Subregion (GMS) countries that should comprise representatives from concerned ministries and industries for further interaction.

GMS primarily comprises Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Yunan provinces, which facilitate infrastructure facilities and aids in removing trade barriers. This apart, a network of 'think tanks' should

also be incorporated to facilitate the SMEs, he added.

GD Gautama, principal secretary of the SME sector, government of West Bengal, emphasised on the need to improve productivity and efficiency, apart from promulgating various issues of governance to help this sector.

Speaking on the session's topic of 'need of technology for capacity building of SME sector', Gautama stressed that provision of technology already exists but means of implementing them by creating awareness was lacking.

"More attempts of imparting hand-holding sessions, along with training pro-

grammes, should be worked upon," he added.

AK Mahapatra, managing director of West Bengal Consulting Organisation Ltd (WEBCON), said the sector needs some infrastructure upgradation for facing competitiveness from other quarters.

There are around 3 million registered and about 10 million unregistered SMEs in the country producing about 7500 varied items and employing around 178 lakh people.

However, this sector in India spends less than 2% on research & development (R&D) as against 14% used by developed countries, added Mahapatra.