

Indonesia's textile connect

Envoy: Sector of competition and cooperation

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MARITIME security and Indo-Pacific strategy are areas of close cooperation for India and Indonesia today. But the Indonesian embassy is cementing ties through textile as well.

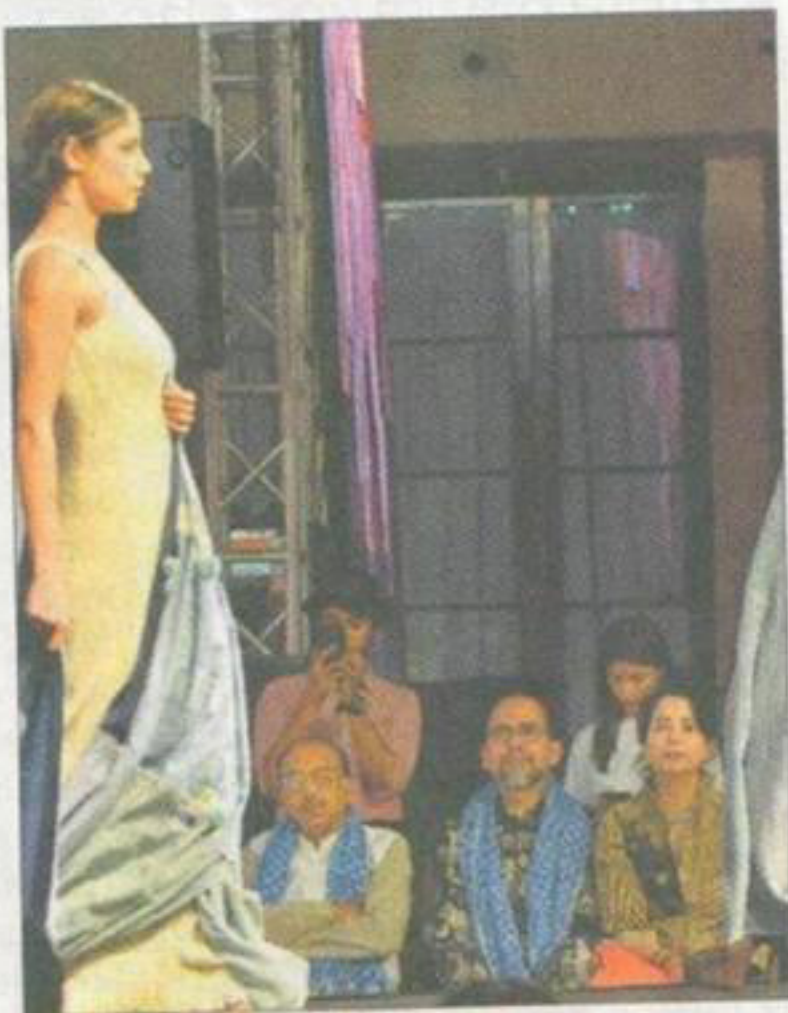
The embassy hosted an event organised by the New Delhi Social Workers Association for promoting khadi fabric along with skill training to under-privileged and disabled women from the villages adopted by MP Dr Udit Raj. It coincided with the 127th birth anniversary of Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar.

The cultural and musical evening saw models sashay down the ramp in creations of reputed designers Varun Bahl, Rina Dhaka, Charu Parashar and Pallavi Singh for the fashion show themed 'Ahimsa Silk and Khadi — The fabric of freedom and harmony'.

"We have convergence of interest here. On our part, we support social cause. This is also an important part of promoting Indonesia in India and our bilateral ties," said Ambassador Sidharto Reza Suryodipuro, while welcoming friends, political leaders and foreign diplomats to the event.

Indonesia is ranked among the top 10 textile producing countries in the world. China still controls a dominant 35 per cent of the global market, but the Indonesian government targets to contribute to around 5 per cent of global exports by 2030. Interestingly though, despite being a cotton producing country, given its volatile supply Indonesian textile manufacturers prefer to import higher quality cotton, particularly from USA, Australia and India. Ambassador Suryodipuro believes garments can be a sector of competition as well as cooperation with India.

"Textiles and manufacturing is where we have a lot of room to grow. India and Indonesia are competitors in this sector. But what we



Ambassador of Indonesia Sidharto Suryodipuro (C) with his wife and Union Minister Vijay Goel at a fashion show in New Delhi. PHOTO: MANAS RANJAN BHUI

need to do is to find where we can have synergy. That's a purpose of the event, to know each other better and to see how we can find new opportunities," said the envoy.

Flaunting an Indonesian Batik shirt, the Ambassador also emphasised that fabric is an important strand of the socio-cultural thread binding the two countries. Batik, a traditional textile produced by using a technique of wax-resist dyeing applied to cloth, was recognised as a World Cultural Heritage by UNESCO in 2009.

Indonesia is particularly famous for its Batik from the island of Java. "The fabric connect goes back thousands of years to the time of Rama, Sita, Pandavas and Kauravas. The shirt I am wearing now is Batik. We imported the technique from India a long time ago and further refined it in Java," added Suryodipuro, as the crowd raised a toast to the harmonious threads that bind.

