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* **IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI**

+ W.P.(C) 14361/2022

M/S PASHMINA EXPORTERS AND MANUFACTURERS
ASSOCIATION AND ORS

.....Petitioners

Through: Mr. Tanveer Ahmed Mir, Advocate

versus

UNION OF INDIA AND ORS

.....Respondents

Through: Mr. Anurag Ahluwalia, CGSC and
Mr. Abhigyan Siddhant, GP for R-1
to 3, 6 & 8

Mr. Vivek Singh and Mr. Ritik
Dwivedi, Advocates for R-11

Mr. Rajeev Kumar Mishra and Ms.
Yashna Ahuja, Advocates for R-12

CORAM:

HON'BLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE TUSHAR RAO GEDELA

ORDER

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05.11.2024

1. Present public interest petition has been filed to improve, augment and enhance existing forensic testing infrastructure available to all Forensic Science Labs engaged in analysis of suspected *Shahtoosh* Shawls.
2. Today, learned counsel for respondent/Union of India states that to assist the seamless trade of Pashmina products, the Export and Promotion Council for Handicraft (EPCH) has signed an MoU with the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Dehradun, for setting up a '**Pashmina Certification Centre**' (PCC) in WII Campus on 05th January 2023.



3. He further states that on 19th May 2023, PCC was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, with tagging the first unique ID barcode and issuing the PCC e-certificate. This PCC was set up to streamline the Pashmina Trade and to provide a one-stop testing facility to certify genuine Pashmina Products in advance before the trade that it is free from any prohibited fibers. The service of PCC is extended to all the associated manufacturers, exporters, and traders of Pashmina on a payment basis. All the tested Pashmina products are labeled with a traceable unique id tag with individual e-certificates (with the product's image) downloadable from the WII's server, enabling a seamless trade of such products in national and international markets. In the absence of such a facility in the country, commercial woolen products are scrutinized to rule out the presence of prohibited fibers at the country's exit points (by Customs). The PCC at WII, Dehradun assists honest exporters and traders involved in the trade of genuine Pashmina products.

4. He states that setting up such a facility in India has been a game changer for the seamless trade of genuine Pashmina products with authentic and tamperproof certification from a reputed Central Government's Scientific Agency (WII, Dehradun). Till date the PCC at WII, Dehradun has certified more than 13000 products received from various associated traders. The existing PCC facility at WII, Dehradun is already being used by the traders of Pashmina products.

5. He also states that with the support from EPCH, the PCC at WII is going to receive a Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM) at the end of this month (November 2024).



6. He lastly states that WII has a well-furnished and fully equipped functional DNA testing laboratory and provides wildlife Forensics support to the enforcement agencies using the same. Over the years, the WII has produced more than 2500 forensic reports using DNA test. However, due to heavy processing of finished Pashmina products, DNA extraction and testing was not consistent and could yield only 40% success from the earlier tested samples. Hence, DNA testing for finished Pashmina products could not be recommended due to its limitation. (i.e., possibility of excessive false negative reporting).

7. In view of the aforesaid statements, which are taken on record, the present writ petition is closed.

MANMOHAN, CJ

TUSHAR RAO GEDELA, J

NOVEMBER 5, 2024

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