

# Soon, buy handicrafts made by rural women on IRCTC portal

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Bengaluru:** Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC), one of the largest e-portals in India with millions of users logging in every day, will soon start selling hand-made products procured from rural women online, railway minister Suresh Prabhakar Prabhu said on Monday.

“Indian Railways is keen to engage society in its innovative works. While we have already involved a number of public communities and NGOs under our cleanliness drive, we are also encouraging self-help groups of rural women to manufacture products that the railways will sell online through its web portal. The products will range from traditional food to handicrafts, shawls and other ethnic dresses. We have already asked women from Kashmir and the northeast to be a part of our initiative, and will soon start selling their products,” Prabhu said during an interaction with 4,000 graduates and under-graduate students of Kristu Jayanti College.

Comparing IRCTC with online retail major Amazon, he said IRCTC can any day become as huge as Amazon, and in doing so help rural women become self-dependent and encourage commer-



Rural women from Kashmir and northeast asked to join in

## India to make, run bullet trains

“ We are bringing bullet trains for you soon. We have consulted six top companies who are helping us develop the best technology so that India can manufacture its own bullet trains . People should cooperate with us and stop complaining about ticket fares. Indian Railways already has a subsidised fare and is the cheapest rail service in the world. Also, if we want a comfortable train journey and luxurious rail service, we should be ready to pay for it.

—Suresh Prabhakar Prabhu | RAILWAY MINISTER

cialization of indigenous, hand-made products. “However, for attaining that level, we will never stoop low and sell doormats and shoes with the tricolour on them,” said Prabhu, alluding to the recent controversy over Amazon selling doormats featuring the Indian national flag on its Canada website.

The minister said the Rs 50 crore allocation made towards innovation in last year’s railway budget included the idea of e-commercialization of indigenous products, e-catering service, renovation of 400 stations and introduction of super-bullet trains. “We are trying to get more allocation for railways

in the coming budget so that all this work can be done faster,” he said, adding that the government is trying to increase the allocation to railways to Rs 4 lakh crore in the next three years.

Stressing on complete electrification of railways to avoid use of diesel and curb pollution, he said the railways is trying to get 90% of its trains to run on electricity in a few months.

“Soon, we’ll come up with a transformation office that’ll implement crowd-sourced ideas. In another five years’ time, 400 stations across the country will be renovated and will look like five-star airports.”