

# ADB to fund UP's ODOP project, help local biz

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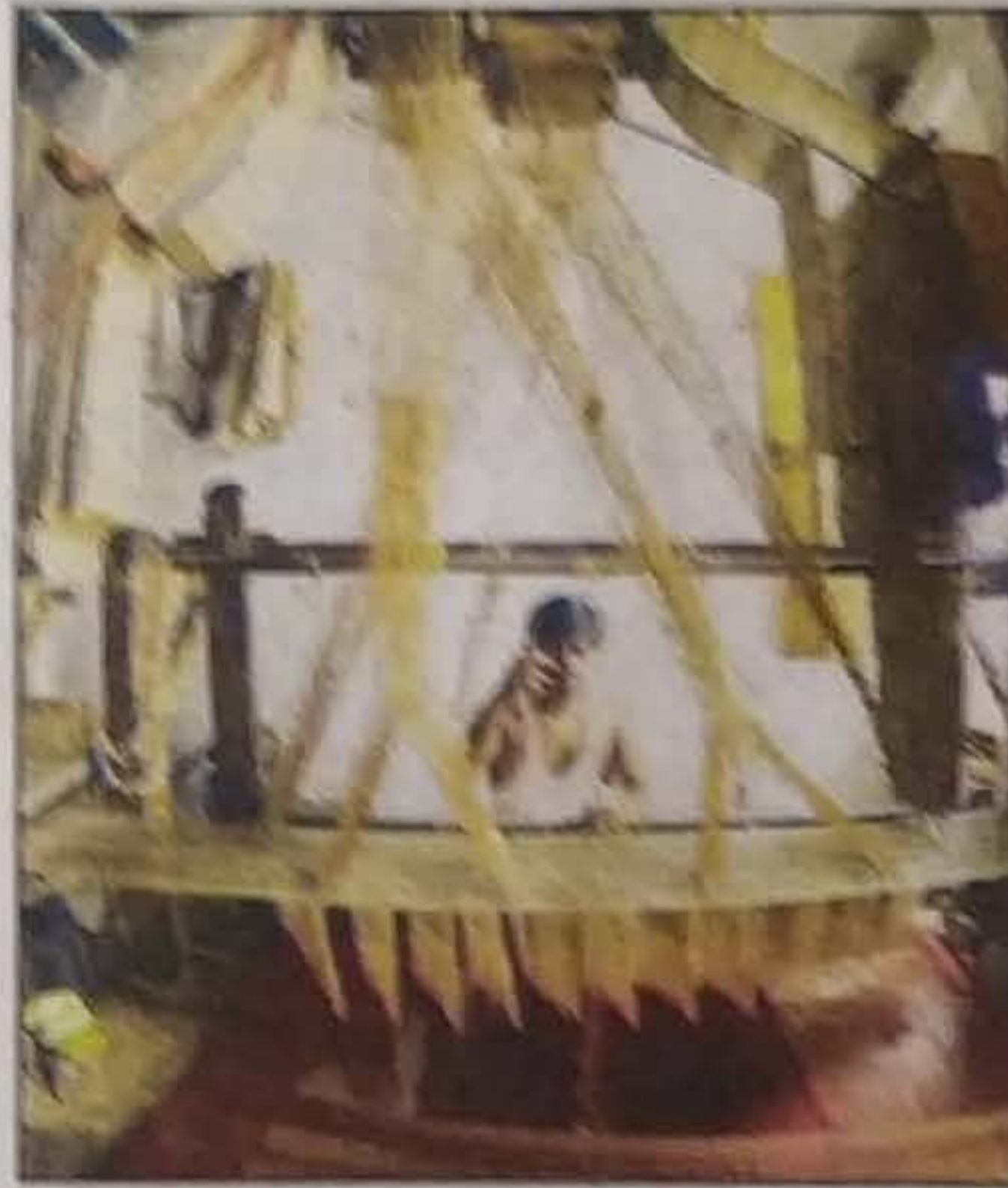
**Lucknow:** The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has promised to earmark a major chunk of \$500 million for UP government's one district-one product (ODOP) project.

This was finalised after a high-level ADB delegation had a meeting with the state government here on Wednesday. ADB's assistance will be mainly in three clusters, including prime minister Narendra Modi's constituency Varanasi where it will help weavers of silk saris and the sports goods industry in Meerut. The third cluster is to be finalised soon.

Apart from a record financial assistance, the ADB would also set up 20 entrepreneurship development centres in the state to groom local artisans and traders as potential entrepreneurs.

A formal declaration by the ADB will be made before chief minister Yogi Adityanath soon.

Principal secretary



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(MSME and Khadi development) Navneet Sehgal told TOI that he has held detailed interaction with ADB representatives on the growth of these clusters, identified under the ODOP project.

"ADB is armed with a corpus of \$500 million, which was to be utilised for financing facility of clusters in different districts. In the first phase, the government has identified 20 major clusters including Agra, Kanpur, Ba-

reilly, Meerut for focussed all-round development. These clusters have traditional small scale and medium sector industries but are not being able to compete at the international level as they lack proper marketing, packaging and technological upgradation," said Sehgal.

With ADB joining ODOP project, such handicaps would be addressed and traditional trades can compete at global level, said Sehgal.

The state government has invited big industrialists and corporate houses for engagement in the ODOP project. A number of investors has evinced interest in ODOP at the investors' summit in February 2018.

Sehgal, who also heads the ODOP programme, said that ADB has assured to develop 20 entrepreneurship development centres in various parts of the state which would help locals develop into entrepreneurs in 20 major centres including Kanpur, Agra, Azamgarh, Gorakhpur and Meerut.