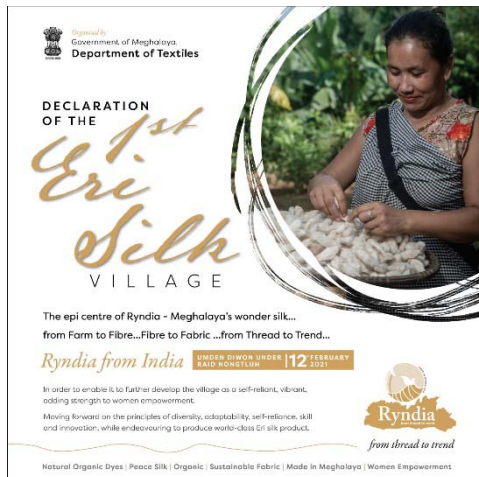


## CURTAIN RAISER: FOR DECLARATION OF WORLD'S FIRST ERI SILK VILLAGES

**Umden-Diwon village may be world's first Eri Peace Silk Village: Declaration on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2021**



In recognition of the age old rich Textile tradition of the state's indigenous tribal communities, in particular, the weavers and spinners of Umden- Diwon, the Government of Meghalaya



through the Textiles Department will be formally declaring Umden-Diwon under Raid Nongtluh as possibly **the State's first Eri Silk villages** in the world on February 12<sup>th</sup>, on the lines of Hai An Silk Village in Vietnam & Sualkuchi closer home in neighbouring Assam.

Umden-Diwon with its vibrant culture, rich textile heritage, scenic surroundings, gender power presents a varied bouquet of attractions that are a multi-sensory overload. You will feel the heartbeat of nature, hear the sounds of the looms, witness silkworms, experience the touch of warm hospitality & connect with the pulse of spinners and weavers. The area will instantly provide a visitor with a perfect symphony of sights, sounds, textures, patterns & weaves bursting with colours.

But above all its the Eri textiles of these villages that have earned a name for themselves for their singular Ahimsa Peace Silk, organic dyes, natural colours, vibrancy, eye for detail, woven and spun by its weavers & spinners in their villages and adjoining areas, right from pre cocoon to post cocoon & owing to its favourable climatic conditions, topography, flora and fauna, rich association with its timeless legacy sand tradition, the Umden-Diwon village has emerged as the epi-centre of Eri Culture in the state, Sericulture and Handloom involves over 70% of full time active weavers. It continues to draw researchers & visitors for its exceptional products which are ethically produced and





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organically sourced.



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In collaboration with NIFT, a Design Resource Centre (DRC) will be set up for the collective benefit of all its stakeholders. The DRC will portray professional presentations of Eri Silk products and design research outcomes in specially designed display areas. In addition, DRC will provide unique branding and identity to the Eri Silk Village by depicting the speciality of the region, in terms of the colour, motif, usage and looms through appropriate visual merchandising. DRC will also facilitate an

interactive platform for the artisans, industry and design students through display areas, specialized labs, resource centre and design activities



What sets Umden-Diwon silk village apart from the silk communities like San Kamphaeng silk village of Thailand, Van Phuk silk village of Vietnam, Takeo silk village of Cambodia or the Saulkuchi silk village of Assam, is the striking unique features found in the Eri Peace Silk popularly known as the Ahimsa Silk. The "Ahimsa" silk processed from cocoons without killing the larvae inside, has thermal properties, making it cool in summers and warm in winters. In keeping with the accountability to life itself, the sensitive

treatment in the production of this unique silk is pro-life at its very core, making it, a 100% eco-conscious and organic fabric.

Another added attraction is that the Eri Silk fabrics locally known as the *Ryndia*, are exclusively is hand woven by the weavers with organic and natural dyes. From a limited range of only three natural colours, the weavers and spinners have expanded the colours four-fold to twelve distinct colours and by careful blending, this is further increased to more than double the colours, with twenty-three different shades and colours available presently. Ryndia silk is steadily emerging as a luxe fabric. Minimalism and slow life are interwoven seamlessly. The consequence of this creative and cultural interface becomes a perfect blend for both casual and party elegance.



Another striking feature of this village lies in the fact that the entire

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production process is done entirely within the community, from pre-cocoon to post co-coon stage - from farm to fibre, fibre to fabric and now from thread to trend.



The role of the Department of Textiles, Government of Meghalaya is to provide visibility and availability of the product by facilitating the weavers from farm to fibre and fibre to fabric while hand holding the entire process from thread to trend. Brand positioning and a striking and meaningful logo has been conceptualized for greater visibility of the Eri Silk products., while ensuring that the Ryndia narrative remains essentially anchored in the community and stays community-owned. Local and

upcoming designers from Umden will also be getting an opportunity to showcase their myriad Eri costumes and creations, some of which are already available in the Eri Corner which was recently opened by the Department in Shillong to showcase the interesting and varied range of Eri products woven in the state.

The Department of Textiles, this time round is also roping in the renowned folk-fusion musical outfit Summer salt to package the age-old story of the Ryndia in an audio-visual form. The journey has been ecstatic yet purposeful for the folk-fusion group. The nitty-gritty of the narrative was captured during the numerous trips of Summer salt to Umden-Diwon Village. In this ongoing effort, Summer salt has taken the audio studio into the wild by professionally capturing the voice of some village singers and non-singers as well. The melodies of the old ladyis reminiscent of the purity of the long lost melody inextricably attached to Ksai Ryndia while being sung by her grandmother while weaving.



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