

DefExpo made Lucknow richer

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow emerged richer because of the DefExpo 2020 that closed on Sunday with industry people and business chambers believing that the city generated no less than ₹500 crore in the five days of the mega event.

Assocham Secretary General Deepak Sood said the spin-off from the DefExpo could be ₹500 crore on a conservative estimate. He told this reporter that this amount could be much more as all walks of life in Lucknow stand benefited from this five-day exhibition. Sood's estimates are not off the mark. All the hotels in the city were booked beforehand and majority of them were overpriced. The tariff of the room normally available for ₹10,000, touched the roof during DefExpo 2020 — priced at anything between ₹65,000 and ₹70,000.

Officials from around 1,800 companies manufacturing defence equipment took part in this edition of the DefExpo. There was a big crisis of rooms during the event. "Not to talk about big hotels, even the smaller ones were booked. We accommodated some of our guests in hotels in Kanpur," a senior official of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) said.

UIP Hotel and Restaurant Association's joint secretary Shyam Kishnani said that room

rent increased because of the demand. "More the demand, more is the price. If this formula holds good for the airlines and railways why not for hotel industry?" he asked.

The taxis faced the brunt of the rush as Ajay, one of the taxi drivers puts it, travel agencies hired taxis from neighbouring districts of Kanpur, Hardoi, Barabanki and Sitapur and still were not able to match the demand. It is too early to suggest how the DefExpo gave a boost to the economy of Lucknow because hotels and taxis are just one facet of this economic activity. Think about thousands of hoardings that were put up across the city. The flex agencies and even those people who put up hoardings on the sidewalks of the city have economically gained from the defence expo. This list does not end here. It goes on as it includes the roadside tea seller who did a good business and also the electrician who illuminated the road with led lights," Sood said.

Assocham President Dr Niranjan Hirandani interjected to say that even the tourism industry of Lucknow earned money during this event. "People from across the country and the globe came here and majority of them were visiting this city for the first time. They visited the historic places of the city. And this tourist activity added to the income of city," he said.