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Indian Wood Products to invest in Kashmir

RITWIK MUKHERJEE
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Even as the debate over the actual socio-political situation on ground zero in Jammu & Kashmir continues, The Indian Wood Products (IWP) Co Ltd, the century old largest manufacturer of branded Katha (catechu) in India, has decided to shell out Rs 20 crore, in the first phase, to come up with a state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in Jammu, purely on business reasons (on the availability of raw materials), much to the pleasure of the Modi 2.0 government. In fact, the company is already in the process of investing in the new plant and commercial production would commence very soon, latest by the fourth quarter of the current fiscal, top company officials said.

The overall market of Katha, a vital ingredient for pan masala, is estimated to be nearly Rs 2,000 crore, which is dominated by the unorganized sector. At present, IWP has a market share of 35 per cent in the organised segment. With the implementation of GST and e-Way Bill, the unorganized katha sector is expected to shrink rapidly in the coming years and the organized sector is expected to eat into this large market, said Bharat Mohta, Director, IWP.