

# ON TRADE®

THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE RESEARCH JOURNAL OF MVIRDC WTC MUMBAI

For private circulation

## Vaniya Utsav - on Export Promotion



## In Conversation



**Mr. Luc Arnouts**

Vice President  
International Relations &  
Networks, Port of Antwerp

## Viewpoint



**Dr. Amit Telang**

Consul General of India  
in Frankfurt



Remembering Bharat Ratna Sir Dr. M. Visvesvaraya  
on his 160<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary on September 15



Paying Homage to Shri. S. K. Wankhede on his  
107<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary on September 24



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**Bharat Ratna Sir Dr. M. Visvesvaraya**

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**50**  
*Years*



# One Man's **VISION** Opportunities for **MILLIONS**



**Dr. Vijay Kalantri**  
Chairman  
MVIRDC WTC Mumbai  
Board Director  
World Trade Centers  
Association, New York

“ MVIRDC World Trade Center Mumbai is named after Bharat Ratna Sir Dr. M. Visvesvaraya, an eminent engineer and architect of modern India. It epitomises M. Visvesvaraya’s vision to build a dedicated Center for the promotion of India’s international trade at Mumbai, the commercial capital of India. Every year, September 15 is celebrated as the “National Engineers’ Day” to recognise his immense contribution. Department of Posts, Govt. of India had also released the First Day Cover and a Commemorative Postage Stamp on the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of M. Visvesvaraya.

Set up in 1970 as a not-for-profit company, with the vision to be India’s preferred catalyst for world trade development, World Trade Center Mumbai, is today one of the foremost World Trade Centers among 327 WTCs in 90 countries. In 1971, it became a member of World Trade Centers Association (WTCA) New York, a global network, which serves over one million businesses. WTCA is a non-profit, non-political association with the mission “Prosperity through Trade and Investment” and is a powerful global network for promotion of world trade. ”

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Indian economy is showing remarkable recovery from the pandemic-induced slowdown, as is reflected in strong bounce back of exports, rising tax collections, increasing air passenger movement, freight traffic and other high frequency indicators. In the coming months, we hope this buoyancy in economic performance will translate into growth in private investment, bank credit off-take and job creation.

We also have a supportive policy environment as the central government has announced an ambitious asset monetization scheme in the infrastructure sector, set up bad bank to clean-up the banking system and announced production linked incentive schemes to promote manufacturing investment. It is also welcome that the government has taken a slew of decisions to support export sector, some of which are the announcement of RoDTEP rates, clearance of pending dues of MEIS and SEIS schemes and infusion of fresh capital into export insurance corporation ECGC. We are confident that these measures will provide further momentum to export growth, which has emerged as a major growth driver of Indian economy in recent months.



Various state governments have been organizing "Vanijya Utsav" to create awareness about the ambitious export target of USD 1 trillion by 2027-28 set by the central government on the occasion of 75 years of Indian Independence. WTCs in Mumbai, Jaipur, Bhubaneswar and Goa have been partnering with government agencies in their respective states for the success of the "Vanijya Utsav". As part of its continued endeavor to promote bilateral cooperation, WTC Mumbai has been organizing virtual exhibitions with Latin America & Caribbean countries and Zambia. In future, similar exhibitions will be conducted with countries in Asia and Europe as well.

All the three World Trade Centers observed Engineers Day to recall the extraordinary contribution of Bharat Ratna Sir Dr. M Visvesvaraya on his 161st Birth Anniversary on September 15, 2021. World Trade Center Mumbai is the living monument of the vision of Dr. M Visvesvaraya to establish an industrial research and trade development center in the commercial capital of India.

World Trade Day, which is a flagship event of WTC Mumbai, was observed by all the three WTCs by organizing interactive sessions to create awareness about benefits of international trade for regional development and also for small scale enterprises.

This edition of ONTRADE brings you a snapshot of all the events organized by World Trade Centers in Mumbai, Goa, Jaipur and Bhubaneswar in the July-September quarter. The edition also carries a cover story on recent trends in India's exports and how India can enhance shipments to European Union, Asia and the Americas. We have featured an interview with Mr. Luc Arnouts, Vice President, Antwerp Port Authority on how the Port can be a gateway for Indian exports to Europe. This edition also features an insightful perspective from Dr. Amit Telang, Consul General of India in Frankfurt, on India - Germany relationship, with special reference to small and medium enterprises.

We hope you enjoy reading the interviews, articles and event highlights featured in this edition. As the world comes out of the grip of the worst pandemic in living memory, we look forward to organizing trade events in physical format and enable in-person networking among our members, government officials and other stakeholders of trade and industry.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rupa Naik".

**Rupa Naik**

Executive Director

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India can enhance exports to EU, Americas and ASEAN countries

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### WORLD TRADE DAY 2021

Webinar

#### Global Transformation in the Post-Pandemic World

Wednesday, July 28, 2021 at 11:00 am IST

Moderator: **Mr. Siddhartha Rastogi**  
Expert - International Finance & Capital Markets

Guests of Honour: **Mr. Andrew Wilson**  
Special Policy Director  
International Chamber of Commerce

**Dr. Erik Berglof**  
Chief Economist  
Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank

#### 39 ▼ WTC BHUBANESWAR

#### 49 ▼ WTC GOA

Invite you to a webinar on

### Goa (India) - Benin (Africa) Bi-lateral Trade Promotion and Co-operation

5 August 2021

3:30 pm, India Time and 11:00 am, Benin (Africa) Time

#### 59 ▼ WTC JAIPUR

## India can enhance exports to EU, Americas and ASEAN countries

This article analyses India's performance in international trade vis a vis other countries in 2020 and highlights the extent to which Indian exporters meet the import demand of various regions across the world. The article concludes that India has scope to increase exports to European Union, Latin America & Caribbean, North America and ASEAN countries. The data for this analysis has been sourced from World Trade Organisation and the trademap of ITC, Geneva.

The World Trade Statistical Review 2021, released by World Trade Organisation on July 30, 2021, shows that India slipped three spots to the 21st rank in terms of value of merchandise exports in 2020 from 18th rank in the previous year. India's share in world merchandise exports declined marginally from 1.7% in 2019 to 1.6% in 2020, the report shows. India's merchandise exports declined 15% to USD 276 billion in the calendar year 2020 from the previous year as the pandemic affected the country's exports of engineering goods, petroleum products, gems & jewellery, textile, leather etc.

Vietnam, Switzerland and UAE improved their share in world merchandise exports from 1.4% to 1.6%, 1.7% to 1.8% and 1.5% to 1.7% respectively between 2019 and 2020. The rank of Vietnam improved from 23rd to 20th as its exports grew 7% even during the pandemic hit year of 2020. The export of Switzerland grew 2% and its export ranking marginally improved from 18th to 17th. Exports of UAE grew 9% while its ranking improved from 20th to 19th position.

China, USA, Germany, Netherlands and Japan retained their top five ranking in 2020, while Hong Kong (which is the special administrative region) of China pipped France to become the sixth largest merchandise exporter.

India retained its 10th ranking in the world merchandise import, with a share of 2.5% in 2020.

India's merchandise exports as a share of world exports almost doubled from 0.8% in 2003 to 1.5% in 2010. Since then, our export growth lost momentum and our share in world merchandise exports stagnated around 1.6%. We need to bring back the lost momentum in exports by improving our export competitiveness through investment in logistics infrastructure, cluster development, encouraging private investment in research and development etc.

India should focus on agriculture, chemicals, and engineering goods where we have improved export performance in the last decade. Central and state governments should provide incentives for small scale units in these sectors to grow their scale and become globally competitive. We need a highly focused sectoral approach to grow exports.

Sectors where India's share in world exports improved in last decade			
Sector	Rank in world exports	Share (%) in world exports 2010	Share (%) in world exports 2020
Chemicals	8	1.4	2.4
Agriculture goods	9	1.7	2.2
Food products	9	1.6	2.2
Iron & steel	6	2.5	3.5
Other commercial services	5	4.5	5.1
Sectors where India's share in world exports declined in last decade			
Textiles	3	5.1	4.2
Clothing	6	3.2	2.9
Source: World Trade Statistical Review 2021			

India's share in world exports of chemicals, agriculture goods, food products and iron & steel grew since 2010, as the above table illustrates. On the other hand, India's share in world export of textile and clothing declined because of intense competition from Vietnam, Bangladesh, Turkey and Indonesia.

**Trade in 2021**

The latest edition of World Trade Statistical Review also shows that India's merchandise exports grew 8% during January-April 2021 from the year ago period, which is the 9th highest growth among Asian countries. Among the world economies, India ranks 36th in terms of growth in merchandise exports during January-April 2021.

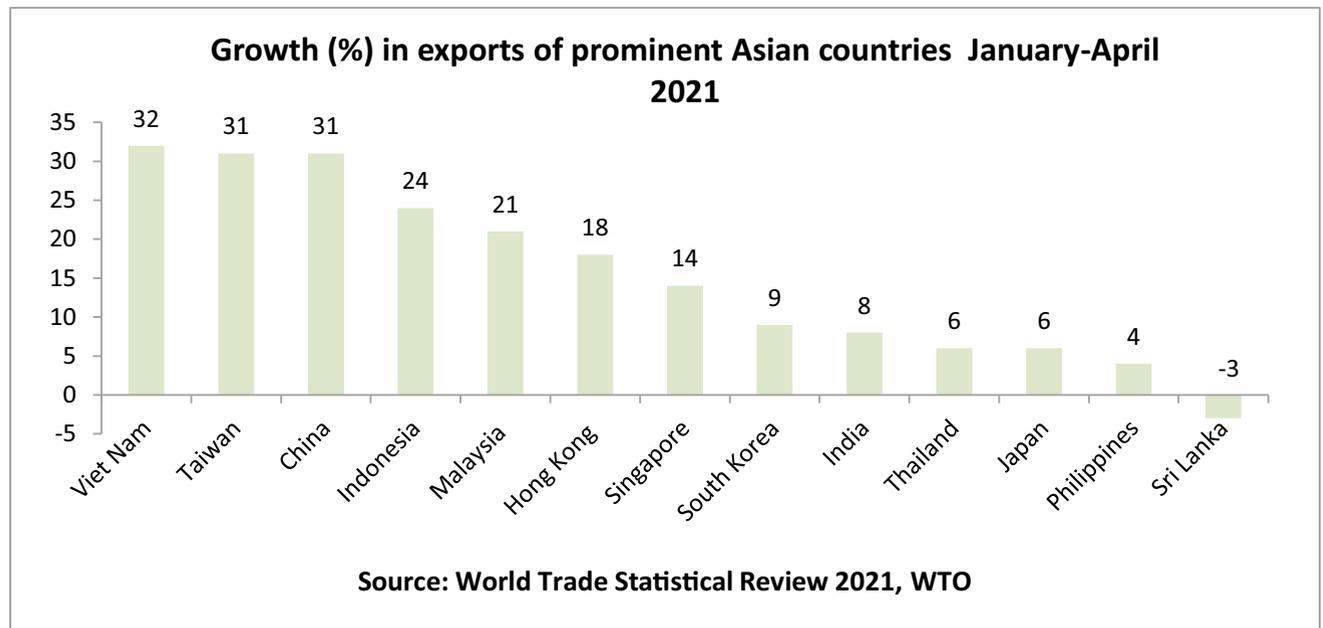
Vietnam, Taiwan and China recorded the highest growth in merchandise exports during the first four months of the current calendar year in Asia, with respective growth of 32%, 31% and 31%. Among other Asian economies, Indonesia, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore and South Korea also posted higher growth in exports than India. The following table shows the growth in merchandise exports of leading Asian economies during January-April 2021.

export products. Price of copper grew since October 2020 amidst swift economic recovery in China, which accounts for 50% of world copper consumption. Value of gold and other precious metals increased as these are considered as safe haven in this uncertain economic condition.

Merchandise export of the world's largest economy USA grew a paltry 1% in the first four months of the current calendar year, while exports of the fifth largest economy UK contracted to 3%. Exports of the European Union bloc grew 10% during this period.

**Commercial services**

India posted fourth highest growth of 3% in export of commercial services in Asia during January-April 2021, after China (25%), Pakistan (6%) and South Korea (6%). India held 11th rank in terms of growth in export of commercial services across the world. Major countries such as USA, UK, Japan, Germany and France witnessed contraction in services exports, while only 13 countries posted positive growth in services exports during January-April 2021. Many of these countries are small nations such as Serbia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Luxembourg and Estonia.



African countries such as Zambia and Ghana posted highest growth in merchandise exports during January-April 2021, with growth of 38% and 33% respectively. The growth in exports of these countries can be attributed to the rise in prices of copper and gold, which are their main

**Major import partners of India**

In the year 2019, India surpassed France, Germany and USA to become the second largest supplier of goods to the African continent after China. India meets around

5.3% of the total import demand of Africa and it is higher than 3.4% in 2008. Apart from Africa, India is also the major source of import for some countries in the Middle East Asia and South Asia. India is the fourth largest supplier of goods to the Middle East after China, USA and Germany. In 2020, India met 5.6% of the total import demand of Middle East countries, although this share declined from the high of 7.4% in 2013. India meets 4.3% of the total import of South Asian countries as of 2020. India's share in the imports of ASEAN, European Union, North America and Latin America is less compared to our share in the imports of Africa, South Asia and Middle East, as the following table shows:

<b>Share of India in total imports of various regions as of 2020</b>	
<b>Regions</b>	<b>Share of India</b>
Middle East Asia	5.6%
Africa	5.3%
South Asia	4.3%
ASEAN	2.3%
North America	1.8%
Latin America and Caribbean	1.4%
European Union (27 countries)	0.8%
<b>Source: ITC, Geneva</b>	

In this section, we have identified the countries which are the major importers of goods from India. India ranks among the top five sources of import of goods for 36 countries as of 2019, which is double the corresponding number of countries in 2008. Of these 36 countries, 26 are in Africa, five are in the Middle East Asia and another five in South Asia. The five Middle East countries are the UAE, Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, while the five South Asian countries are Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Maldives. Except for UAE, India was not among the top five sources of import for Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Turkey in 2008. India has been a top source of import for all the South Asian countries since

2008. In 2008, India was among the top five sources of import for 10 African countries, which subsequently grew to 26 by 2019.

The Annexure at the end of this article contains a table that provides the list of 36 countries for which India figures among the top five sources of imported goods. The table also mentions the list of other major sources of import and prominent agricultural and manufactured goods imported by these countries.

### Potential Markets

The above table does not have countries from European Union, North America, Latin America and ASEAN as India is not among the top five supplier of goods to these countries. This suggests that these regions are potential markets for Indian goods and Indian companies can cater to these markets if they figure out ways to outcompete the existing suppliers to these countries.

India is the 9th largest source of import for European Union (EU) after China, USA, UK, Switzerland, Russia, Japan, South Korea and Norway. India's exports to the EU grew more than five times between 2001 and 2011 to USD 45 billion, but stagnated in the subsequent years around this level. India's share in the total import of EU grew from 0.6% in 2008 to 0.9% in 2011 and since then, it has remained constant till now. Around 60% of goods imported by the European Union is sourced from countries within the bloc. The low share of India in the total import of EU reflects scope for expanding our exports in this bloc. In the last 20 years, countries such as Romania and Slovakia have increased exports to other countries within the European Union. Therefore, Indian exporters aspiring to foray into the EU market have to prove their competitiveness against exporters within the EU bloc.

India is the 11th largest supplier of goods to North American countries (viz. USA, Canada and Mexico) after China, Germany, Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, Switzerland, UK, Ireland, Italy and Taiwan. The share of India in the total import market of these three North American countries doubled from 0.9% in 2008 to 1.8% in 2020. In the last two years, countries such as Vietnam and Ireland have surpassed India in total exports to the North American countries. India, which accounts for hardly 1.8% of the total imports of the three North American countries, can improve its market share if it can out-

compete Vietnam and Ireland. India's exports to the North American countries grew at a CAGR of 21% between 2010 and 2013 and since then the growth momentum was lost, except during 2016-19, when exports grew at 8.8% CAGR. Major items imported by North American countries are: desktop computers, laptops, palm tops, and its accessories, mobile phones, passenger cars and auto-components, turbojets, medicines, vaccines, turbo propellers, vacuum pumps, electronic integrated circuits etc.

India is the 10th largest exporter of goods to Latin America and the Caribbean after USA, China, Germany, Brazil, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Italy and Spain. India's market share in the total import of Latin America and the Caribbean grew from 0.8% in 2008 to 1.4% by 2014 and since then, it has stagnated around this level. Major commodities imported by Latin America and the Caribbean are: smart phones & accessories, electronic integrated circuits, electrical transformers, computers, storage devices & other electronic apparatus, tractors & parts used in tractors, motor vehicles, articles of plastics, polymers of ethylene, pharmaceuticals, organic chemicals etc.

In the ASEAN market, India is the seventh largest source of import outside ASEAN bloc after China, Japan, South Korea, USA, Taiwan and Hong Kong. India's exports to the ASEAN countries grew 11 times between 2001 and 2011 to USD 34 billion, but stagnated around that level since then even though India's free trade agreement with this bloc came into effect after 2011. India's market share in the total import of ASEAN countries grew from 2.3% in 2008 to 3.1% in 2011, only to revert back to the level of 2.3% by 2020. Major products imported by ASEAN countries are electronic integrated circuits, mobile phones, computers and its peripherals, printing machineries, polymers of ethylene, polyacetals and other plastic articles, medical and surgical devices, articles of iron & steel, automobiles, organic chemicals etc.

The above analysis shows that there is scope for India to increase exports to European Union, Latin America & Caribbean, North America and ASEAN countries, where our share in their import market is less compared to our share in South Asia, Middle East and Africa. Indian exporters need to compete with Vietnam, Brazil, China, Mexico and the developing countries of European Union to increase its market share in EU, Latin America, North America and ASEAN.

## Annexure

### Countries for which India is among top five sources of imports (merchandise) in 2019

Sr. No	Countries	Rank of India	Share of India in the country's total imports	Sources of imports (other than India) - figures in bracket are share in total imports	India can improve its share further by exporting the following goods which are prominently imported by these countries from the world	
					Top 5 agroproducts imported from the world	Top 5 manufactured goods imported from the world
1	Bhutan	1	78%	EU (4.5%), South Korea (3.1%), China (2.5%), Japan (2.4%),	Rice, Soya-bean oil and its fractions, Milk and cream, concentrated, Bovine meat, fresh, chilled, Pasta	petroleum products, ferrous products, structures of iron & steel, copper wire, ferrous waste, & scrap
2	Nepal	1	65%	China (12.6%) European Union (3.1%), United Arab Emirates (1.7%), Argentina (1.3%)	Rice, Soya-bean oil and its fractions, maize, dried leguminous vegetables, soyabean oil residues	petroleum products, semi-finished iron products, cement, gold, self-propelled bulldozers

*Continued*

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Countries for which India is among top five sources of imports (merchandise) in 2019						
Sr. No	Countries	Rank of India	Share of India in the country's total imports	Sources of imports (other than India) - figures in bracket are share in total imports	India can improve its share further by exporting the following goods which are prominently imported by these countries from the world	
					Top 5 agroproducts imported from the world	Top 5 manufactured goods imported from the world
3	Sri Lanka	1	21%	India (21.1%), China (19.7%), UAE (7.3%), European Union (6.8%), Singapore (6.1%)	Wheat and meslin, rice, milk and cream, cane or beet sugar, dried leguminous vegetables	petroleum products, gold, other knitted or crocheted fabrics, automobiles
4	Tanzania	2	14%	China (20.7%), United Arab Emirates (10.2%), European Union (10.1%), Saudi Arabia (6.7%)	palm oil, cane or beet sugar, malt, corn, industrial monocarboxylic acids	petroleum products, medicines, automobiles, hot rolled products of iron, tractors
5	Mauritius	3	14%	European Union (20.7%), China (16.7%), South Africa (8.1%), United Arab Emirates (7.3%)	tobacco, dairy products, cotton, rice, wheat	petroleum products, automobiles, marine products, medicine, radio-telephony transmission tools
6	Benin	3	12%	EU (21%), Thailand (14%), Togo (9.3%), China (7.8%)	rice, palm oil, poultry products, sugar, wheat	petroleum products, electrical energy, pharmaceuticals, marine products, fertilizers
7	Gambia	3	12%	European Union (19.4%), Côte d'Ivoire (14.5%), China (10.6%), Brazil (10.5%)	rice, sugar, vegetable fats & oils, poultry, wheat or meslin flour	petroleum products, motor cars, other engines and motors, cement, electrical transformers
8	Uganda	2	12%	China (17.6%), UAE (11.7%), Saudi Arabia (9%), European Union (7.7%)	palm oil, wheat & meslin, rice, sugar, animal feed	petroleum products, gold, pharmaceutical products, hot rolled products of iron, motor cars
9	Bangladesh	2	12%	China (21.5%), Singapore (9.2%), EU (5.6%), Hong Kong (5.5%), Other (45.9%)	cotton, palm oil, wheat, soya bean, sugar	petroleum products, woven fabrics, cotton yarn, other made-up clothing accessories
10	Malawi	4	11%	South Africa (17.8%), China (14.7%), EU (11.3%), United Arab Emirates (6.8%)	wheat, tobacco, maize, other food preparations, soya bean oil	petroleum products, pharmaceuticals, nitrogenous fertilizers, mineral or chemical fertilizers

Continued

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Countries for which India is among top five sources of imports (merchandise) in 2019						
Sr. No	Countries	Rank of India	Share of India in the country's total imports	Sources of imports (other than India) - figures in bracket are share in total imports	India can improve its share further by exporting the following goods which are prominently imported by these countries from the world	
					Top 5 agroproducts imported from the world	Top 5 manufactured goods imported from the world
11	Guinea	3	11%	European Union (37.4%), China (14.9%) UAE (6.5%), USA (2.7%)	rice, sugar, palm oil, tobacco, wheat or meslin	petroleum products, pharmaceuticals, marine vessels, motor cars, self-propelled bulldozers
12	Kenya	3	11%	China (21.1%), EU (10.7%), Saudi Arabia (9.8%), UAE (8.4%)	palm oil, wheat, rice, cane sugar, maize	petroleum products, motor cars, pharmaceuticals, hot rolled iron products
13	Rwanda	3	10%	China (22.5%), European Union (10.8%), United Arab Emirates (8.7%), Kenya (7.3%)	sugar, palm oil, rice, wheat, maize	petroleum products, pharmaceuticals, motor cars, vapour generating boilers, radio-telephony transmission tools
14	Maldives	4	10%	UAE (18.1%), China (16.5%), Singapore (12.5%), EU (8.8%)	poultry, rice, milk & cream, beverages, tobacco	petroleum products, radio telephony transmission tools, other aircrafts, pebbles, furniture & parts thereof
15	UAE	3	9%	European Union (16%), China (15.5%), USA (8.5%), Japan (5.6%)	dairy, tobacco, rice, poultry, chocolate and other cocoa food	gold, radio-telephony transmission tools, motor cars, jewellery, diamonds
16	Ethiopia	5	9%	China (28.3%), European Union (12.3%), USA (10.7%)	palm oil, wheat & meslin, sugar, rice, sorghum	petroleum products, other aircrafts, pharmaceuticals, motor cars
17	Sudan	4	8%	China (17.4%), Russia (15.1%), Saudi Arabia (10.2%), European Union (8.1%)	wheat, cane or beet sugar, dried leguminous vegetables, milk & cream, coffee	petroleum products, motor cars, tractors, pharmaceuticals
18	Sierra Leone	3	8%	European Union (20.2%), China (16.8%), Turkey (7.2%), UAE (5.2%)	rice, wheat, cane sugar, palm oil, tobacco	motor cars, cement, iron bars, self-propelled bulldozers

Continued

## Annexure

Countries for which India is among top five sources of imports (merchandise) in 2019						
Sr. No	Countries	Rank of India	Share of India in the country's total imports	Sources of imports (other than India) - figures in bracket are share in total imports	India can improve its share further by exporting the following goods which are prominently imported by these countries from the world	
					Top 5 agroproducts imported from the world	Top 5 manufactured goods imported from the world
19	Mozambique	5	7%	South Africa (26.1%), European Union (17.4%), China (11.8%), UAE (7.6%)	rice, wheat, palm oil, maize, soyabean oil	petroleum products, aluminium, fluorosilicates, motor vehicles, pharmaceuticals
20	Burundi	5	7%	Saudi Arabia (17.2%), EU (13.6%), China (13%), UAE (8.8%)	cane sugar, wheat, maize, palm oil, malt	petroleum products, pharmaceutical products, fertilizers, motor cars, cement
21	Madagascar	4	7%	European Union (21.1%), China (17.5%), UAE (9.1%), South Africa (5.3%)	rice, wheat, palm oil, sugar, soyabean oil	petroleum products, pharmaceuticals, motor vehicles, wool
22	Eritrea	5	6%	European Union (23.3%), USA (15.9%) UAE (12.3%), Saudi Arabia (10.5%)		
23	Ghana	5	6%	European Union (18.6%), China (18.2%), USA (9.4%), UK (6.6%)	rice, wheat, cane sugar, palm oil, cereal grains	motor cars, cement, petroleum products, railway or tramway sleepers
24	Nigeria	5	5%	European Union (33.6%), China (19.4%), South Korea (10.8%), USA (7.3%)	wheat, cane sugar, milk & cream, malt extract, palm oil	petroleum products, marine vessels, motor cars, motor cycles, marine products
25	Qatar	5	5%	European Union (23%), USA (18.7%), China (11.9%), UK (6.6%)	goat meat, poultry meat, rice, live sheep & goat, bread, pastry & other bakers' wares	turbo jets, turbo propellers, motor cars, iron ores, other tubes and pipes, parts used in aircrafts
26	South Africa	4	5%	European Union (26.3%), China (18.5%), USA (6.6%), Saudi Arabia (4.2%)	rice, poultry, wheat, alcohol, cane sugar	petroleum products, motor cars, radio-telephony transmission tools, automatic data processing machines
27	Zambia	5	5%	South Africa (30.8%), China (14.1%), UAE (10.3%), European Union (7.7%)	palm oil, malted beers, poultry, soyabean oil, rice	petroleum oils, motor vehicles, chemical fertilizers, parts for machinery

Continued

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Countries for which India is among top five sources of imports (merchandise) in 2019						
Sr. No	Countries	Rank of India	Share of India in the country's total imports	Sources of imports (other than India) - figures in bracket are share in total imports	India can improve its share further by exporting the following goods which are prominently imported by these countries from the world	
					Top 5 agroproducts imported from the world	Top 5 manufactured goods imported from the world
28	Togo	4	5%	European Union (25.2%), China (21.8%), United States of America (6.6%), Japan (4.2%)	palm oil, cane sugar, rice, milk & cream, wheat & meslin	pharmaceuticals, polymers, petroleum oils, motor cycles, motor cars
29	Oman	4	4%	United Arab Emirates (45.9%), European Union (10.5%), China (5.9%), Qatar (3.5%)	milk & cream, rice, tobacco, poultry, live sheep and goat	petroleum products, motor cars, radio-telephony transmission tools, semi-finished iron products, iron ore
30	Côte d'Ivoire	5	4%	European Union (26.2), China (17.2), Nigeria (13.5), USA (5%)	rice, wheat, tobacco, malt extract, edible offal of bovine animals	petroleum products, marine products, pharmaceuticals, motor cars
31	Saudi Arabia	5	4%	European Union (22.5%), China (16.5%), USA (13.4%), UAE (8.9%)	rice, poultry, barley, other food preparations, milk & cream	motor cars, radio telephony for transmission tools, pharmaceuticals, petroleum products, gold
32	Botswana	5	4%	South Africa (57%), EU (8.2%), Namibia (7.9%), Canada (6.9%)	cane sugar, maize, beverages, beer, fruit juices and vegetables	diamonds, petroleum products, motor cars, pharmaceuticals
33	Turkey	5	3%	European Union (32.4%), Russia (11%), China (9.1%), USA (5.6%)	wheat, cotton, soya bean, maize, live bovine animals	gold, petroleum products, ferrous waste and scrap, motor cars & auto-components
34	Zimbabwe	5	3%	South Africa (38.7%), Singapore (25.2%), China (8.6%), European Union (4%)	soyabean, wheat & meslin, rice, maize, animal feed	petroleum products, pharmaceuticals, motor vehicles, nitrogenous fertilizers, electrical energy
35	Lesotho	4	3%	South Africa (70.7%), China (14.8%), Taiwan (5.3%), Japan (1.6%)	cotton, poultry meat, other cereal flours, wheat & meslin, tobacco	articles of iron & steel, petroleum jelly and other petroleum products, other knitted or crocheted fabrics, motor cars
36	Eswatini	5	2%	South Africa (73%), China (7.2%), European Union (4%), Mozambique (2.4%)	maize, beverages, rice, wheat, solid residues from soya bean oil	petroleum products, electrical energy, motor cars, pharmaceuticals, essential oils, cosmetics, perfumery or toilet preparations

Source: World Trade Profile 2020, published by World Trade Organisation;  
Compiled by MVIRDC WTC Mumbai

## Port of Antwerp promotes 'Brand India' by serving as a European Showroom for Indian products

Port of Antwerp is Europe's second-largest port and it is a key lifeline of the Belgian economy. The Port connects Europe with rest of the world through more than 300 line services to at least 800 destinations. In an interview to ONTRADE, **Mr. Luc Arnouts, Vice President, International Relations & Networks, Port of Antwerp** reasons why the Port can be a preferred Gateway for Indian exporters to Europe. Mr. Arnouts explains how Port of Antwerp International (PAI), the consultancy arm of Port of Antwerp adds value to the ports and logistics ecosystem of India. He also shares his views on the latest initiative of Port of Antwerp to promote 'Brand India' by serving as the 'European Showroom' for Indian products.



### Excerpt of the interview:

**Port of Antwerp is the second largest port in Europe. For an exporter in India, what are the advantages of using Port of Antwerp as a gateway to Europe over other ports such as Piraeus (Greece), Hamburg (Germany) and the Rotterdam (The Netherlands).**

There are distinct advantages of using the Port of Antwerp as a gateway over other Ports. Some of them are highlighted below:

#### 1. Excellent location

- 60% of purchasing power is within 500 kms from Antwerp
- Direct container services from Indian ports connected to the major EU industrial and consumption hubs
- Directly connected via multiple modes of road, rail, barges & pipelines to the main industrial and metropolitan areas in the

“ Containers passing via the Port of Antwerp grew by 1.3% in 2020, despite the pandemic and cancelled sailings.”

European hinterland

- Competitive proximity to production centers in Europe.

#### 2. Cost and time effective

- Competitive destination costs
- Attractive costs for terminal handling, warehousing, value added logistics, efficient customs where inspection authorities such as customs and border inspection are co-located to avoid delays.
- End to end supply chain visibility through several digital innovations such as NxtPort.

#### 3. People

- Dedicated port representative in India, several Europe based

representatives and Belgium Customs Attache based in New Delhi.

- Hands on mentality of the highly qualified workers
- Customs authorities are 'trade facilitators'.

**Antwerp Port is said to be the only seaport in the world with the highest Good Distribution Practice (GDP) standards for handling pharmaceutical and life sciences cargo. Can you highlight how your port can be a preferred partner for Indian traders in perishable goods, pharmaceuticals, engineering, and project goods?**

Antwerp Port offers the perfect mix between cargo handling combined with warehouses and industry close to the cargo handling. Warehouses/logistics that offer logistics activities and that create value to the goods at a place closer to the cargo hub. The Port also offers more than 1000 direct maritime

## “ Certified Pick Up is a neutral, central data platform which connects all stakeholders involved in the container import process.”

connections. The Port also has specialized handling facilities for multiple commodities within its premises. A few examples are

- We boast of five important cool assets to support Indian **perishables**, which are: excellent hinterland connections, controlled temperature warehousing capacity, gateway to a huge consumer market, specialised value added service providers, fast & efficient customs & phytosanitary procedures.
- Five deep sea container terminals and 15 break bulk terminals, value added services like six steel service centres, availability of state of art project cargo handling equipment even on hire, expert handling capability, wide choice of transport modes via road, rail, barge, shortsea and excellent connections to key markets makes us the most reliable project cargo gateway for Indian customers.
- 63000m2 of GDP certified & temperature controlled warehousing space, strong connectivity between air and sea ports, GDP compliant Port operations making it the only maritime gateway in the world to follow EU standards of handling pharma goods and options of consolidation for exports and deconsolidation for imports are possibilities available for Indian pharma shippers using the Port of Antwerp.
- Containers passing via the Port

of Antwerp grew by 1.3% in 2020, despite the pandemic and cancelled sailings. This is the best compared with most other ports in the Hamburg-Le Havre range. Hence, Indian engineering goods & other cargo moving in containers and using the Port of Antwerp as its gateway will be assured of reliability.

### Can you explain the benefits of the digital application 'Certified Pick Up' and how Indian exporters to the European Union can benefit from it?

Certified Pick up started on January 1st, 2021, as a digital, secure and integrated solution for the release of containers and will gradually replace the current system of PIN codes. From July 1st, 2021, the Port is using Certified Pick Up in the first Antwerp container terminals and the roll-out

## “PAI is also actively engaged in discussions with stakeholders to transform another major Port on the East coast of India, into a robust chemical cluster such as the Port of Antwerp.”

of this phase will be terminal by terminal. All ocean carriers will assign a release right to their customers. To pick up a container at a terminal in the port, a unique PIN code is needed nowadays. The time between providing the PIN code to the shipping company and the driver entering this code at the terminal is considerable. Moreover, the PIN code is seen by various parties, which increases the risk of abuse. Certified Pick Up is a neutral, central

data platform which connects all stakeholders involved in the container import process. Certified Pick Up will make the supply chain process of release of containers from the Port of Antwerp more secure and efficient and hence will save time for Indian customers choosing Antwerp Port as a gateway.

### Can you elaborate how Port of Antwerp International (PAI), the consultancy arm of Antwerp Port, supports India in developing port-led industrialisation projects, inland waterways, port logistics etc?

Port of Antwerp International (PAI) is highly active in India and is collaborating with major Indian Ports such as JNPT via Indian Ports association (IPA), the Shipping, Ports & Inland Waterways Ministry and other stakeholders to share best practices and explore joint project opportunities. In the past, PAI has already executed feasibility studies on operational efficiencies at Kandla & Paradip Ports. Another project was

the assessment on the technical feasibility at the Garden Reach II site in the Port of Kolkata, with the aim of selecting the business-proposals with the best potential for GR II. PAI is also working on ongoing projects such as Port security for Major Ports and study of operationalization of Eden along with increasing the capacity of Haldia dock.

Antwerp Port has a robust active landlord model and knowledge



sharing on practices adopted in this regard is an interesting area to exchange expertise, as Indian Major Port's transition towards an active landlord model. PAI has already been approached by a significant major Port where in there have been some interesting exchanges in areas such as digital technologies and innovation, green energy etc. PAI is also actively engaged in discussions with stakeholders to transform another major Port on the East coast of India, into a robust chemical cluster such as the Port of Antwerp. Thus, these are some of the ways in which PAI is adding value to the Indian Port, maritime and logistics sectors.

**China's e-commerce giant Alibaba has set up a logistics hub at Belgium's Liège airport. Similarly, is there scope for India to collaborate with Port of Antwerp to promote India-EU trade through e-commerce?**

“Tremendous possibilities exist for India-EU trade via e-commerce using the Port of Antwerp gateway.”

Tremendous possibilities exist for India-EU trade via e-commerce using the Port of Antwerp gateway. The Port has made its ecosystem very robust for e-commerce trade and has distinct USPs. On top of these USPs, the proximity of the airport of Liege and the Port of Antwerp, responds perfectly to the need for increased combination of air- rail- and seafreight as modes of transport to serve the e-commerce markets.

1. Excellent foreland connections and Antwerp Port's ability to handle the biggest container vessels. We are specifically very strong on the intra-Europe trade, on the US, Africa and the middle East. In Antwerp, we are blessed with a nice balance between

import and export which makes us a very attractive port for carriers to call.

2. Available space inside the Port and in Belgium with logistics players as well as INVESTMENT opportunities - as well as inside the port as in Belgium. We offer logistics players inside and outside the port, who can handle their cargo from A to Z and offer any kind of Value added logistics (VAL). The aim is to capture e-commerce cargo flows through Antwerp. Investment opportunities inside and outside the port, i.e. in Belgium are also possible.

- Inside the port, the port authority will be their contracting party. We work with concessions.
- Outside the port, we can guide them to partners (real estate brokers, Flanders Investment and Trade, AWEX – the Walloon counterpart tc.) Today, Katoen Natie is the biggest e-commerce player inside the port. If

required / needed, they will build a warehouse and do the logistics.

3. We are the gateway (best positioned) to a huge e-commerce consumer market. Western Europe is the biggest online retail market, responsible for more than 80 % of the total turnover in the EU (82.22%). Antwerp Port is perfectly located (in the centre) to serve the biggest e-

“ One interesting idea we are focusing on and showcasing to customers is that of an ‘India hub at the Port of Antwerp.’ ”

commerce markets.

4. Through Port of Antwerp, we enjoy fast, reliable and cost-effective connections through air, rail and barge throughout Europe - Antwerp is situated at the heart of the Amsterdam-Paris-Frankfurt golden triangle, a very dense area of production that is unique in Europe. Location of Antwerp is in between the airports of London, Paris, Frankfurt, Schiphol, Bale. Port of Antwerp also has an extensive network of rail, barge, and short sea to reach the EU and UK hinterland.

5. Port of Antwerp is closely surrounded by last mile players. Moreover, the last mile players in Belgium and Europe have a dense network and collaborate to get the parcels quickly to the customer. Some examples of players are BPost, DHL (Antwerp), GLS (Puurs), PostNL (Edegem), DPD (Mechelen).

6. Customs act as partner in logistics operations.

“ We are the gateway (best positioned) to a huge e-commerce consumer market. ”

### Can you explain the virtual free zone and other facilities available with Port of Antwerp for Indian industries.

We have a long history of logistic activities in the port and hence the necessary expertise. We have about 900 companies in the port. The logistics players are able to offer services from A to Z (customs, transportation, value added services etc). The cluster of all warehouses and terminals at Port of Antwerp have bonded warehouse status, which results in the port being one big virtual free zone. This means that goods can be stored free of prepayment of taxes and customs rights and excises. We also have a facility of fiscal representation which is quite unique to Antwerp. It is applicable for

- **Cross border delivery** - Import in EU via Belgium + intra-community delivery
- **Domestic delivery** - Import in EU via Belgium + Belgium as final destination

Benefits:

- **No VAT** pre-financing
- **Increased** cash-flow
- **Combinable** with different customs solutions to boost your business

**What are the other areas where India and Port of Antwerp can partner to boost trade, industrialisation and sustainable development?**

One interesting idea we are focusing on and showcasing to customers is that of an ‘India hub at the Port of Antwerp’. This has generated strong interest amongst Indian companies, especially shippers and logistics service providers. The idea of a hub is like a centralised stocking and distribution point for Indian products destined for the European market. As a consolidation point for small exporters to stock at low costs and providing the facility of being a ‘European Showroom’ for Indian products, such an idea will enhance the visibility of ‘Brand India’ in

“ The Indian Hub at the Port of Antwerp is like the idea of being the European Showroom for Indian products which will enhance the visibility of ‘Brand India’ in Europe. ”

Europe. Recent global trade disruptions like the Covid19 pandemic and Suez Canal blockage have triggered the case of warehousing close to customer markets to maintain supply commitments. Such a hub will enable Indian SMEs develop further in-roads into the European market in a more sustainable way, boost trade between India and Europe and add an impetus to further industrialization.

## India's software skills and Germany's excellence in hardware make them ideal partner



“We celebrate the 70th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Germany.”

**“Mittelstand firms looking at India as an investment destination...”** says Dr. Amit Telang, Consul General of India in Frankfurt

ties. German companies appreciate the presence of skilled and educated workforce in India, while Indian companies recognize the value of German Research & Development. In this context, the Indian government has already undertaken various initiatives to upgrade Indian workforce under its 'Skill India program' in order to develop highly skilled Indian workforce especially suited to the German trade and working environments.

Major Indian companies such as Tech Mahindra, Infosys, Wipro and Tata Consultancy have significant presence in Germany and are

strengthening their presence, while several German 'Mittelstand' companies are looking at India as an investment destination.

Germany is a major manufacturer of high quality medical and surgical equipment. Indian companies can also collaborate with German companies for upgradation of medical facilities in India dovetailing import of such equipments. On the other hand, India's proven record in pharmaceutical sector makes it a reliable partner for Germany when it comes to import of various life-saving medicines. Thus, cooperation in healthcare sector has become

### Excerpt of the interview:

The trade relations between India and Germany have always been very close and Germany is one of our major trading partners. It is my pleasure to share my thoughts as we celebrate the 70th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Germany this year, as well as 75 years of India's independence.

As the contours of trade, investment, science and technology are changing in the aftermath of COVID pandemic and its effect on the changing world business environment, both Indian and German businesses are looking at exploring untapped business potential and investment opportuni-



“India's proven record in pharmaceutical sector makes it a reliable partner for Germany when it comes to import of various life-saving medicines.”

even more relevant in the aftermath of the Covid pandemic, where India and Germany would be able to harness the existing complementarities to the maximum extent.

India has a well-trained pool of talent in the IT service sector on the software side and Germany has leverage on the hardware side. Companies on either side may take advantage and set-up joint ventures or independent units in either of the two countries.

There is already significant presence of Indian IT companies in the Rhine Main Region. In recent past, leading Indian IT companies such as Wipro and Infosys have observed a huge number of deals coming their way

from German companies. Infosys and Daimler AG announced a long-term strategic partnership for a technology-driven IT infrastructure transformation. Wipro Limited, a leading global information technology, consulting, and business process services company, announced a significant strategic digital and IT partnership deal with METRO AG, the leading global wholesale company that is redefining the food service distribution industry. This can further be expanded in providing customized solutions to the German market in the field of digital payment systems by Indian companies.

Renewable energy is also a promising area for Indo-German cooperation and collaboration. India can partner with Germany in promoting green hydrogen as Germany wishes to reduce its dependence on coal. With a stimulus package of €2 billion allocated by Germany in the field for building partnerships with other countries, Indian companies can

participate in and contribute to this environment-friendly initiative which would help us combat the impact of climate change.

The focus on electric vehicle industry has increased both in India and Germany and government schemes in both countries are promoting the growth of the industry tremendously. India is a huge market for German electric automotive industry.

Let me conclude by reiterating that we stand together in our endeavor for further developing India-German trade relations, as we commemorate the 70th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations this year. I am confident that both Indian and German governments, in collaboration with Indian and German businesses, would be able to realize the full potential of this win-win partnership.

“Renewable energy is also a promising area for Indo-German cooperation and collaboration.”



## WTO member countries prepare for 12<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference

**W**orld Trade Organisation will hold its much awaited 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) from November 30, 2021 to December 3, 2021 in Geneva, Switzerland. The event will be attended by trade ministers and other senior officials from the 164 member countries of WTO. Hon'ble Minister of Trade and Integration of Kazakhstan Mr. Bakhyt Sultanov will chair the Conference. This Conference, which was originally scheduled to take place from June 8-11, 2020 in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, had to be postponed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ministerial Conference is the topmost decision-making body of this multilateral body and it usually meets every two years to discuss and take key decisions on any matter related to multilateral trade agreements. The 11th Ministerial Conference was held in Buenos Aires, Argentina in December 2017. The Conference discussed various issues such as regulation of harmful fisheries subsidies, work program on e-commerce and work program on integration of small economies into the multilateral trading system.

In continuation of the earlier Conference, the 12th Ministerial Conference will take up pending issues related to prevention of harmful fisheries subsidies, ensuring rapid and equitable access to medical goods for fighting the COVID pandemic, reforms in the agriculture sector, reforms in the WTO system, especially its dispute settlement system etc.

Ms. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Director-General of the WTO suggested all member countries to engage in constructive negotiation at the 12th Ministerial Conference and declared that even if the event delivers progressive result on two of the issues that would be a major outcome for the organization.

### Public Forum

Meanwhile, WTO's Public Forum, which is the largest annual outreach event of the multilateral trade regulatory body, was held on the title 'Trade Beyond COVID-19: Building Resilience' from September 28, 2021 – October 1, 2021. The event discussed the impact of the pandemic on trade, enhancing resilience of the world trading system against future crises and collective action towards sustainable trade. Public Forum attracts more than 1,500 representatives from civil society, academia, business, media, governments, parliamentarians and inter-governmental organizations.

### Annual Report of WTO

WTO released its latest Annual Report on July 9, 2021. The report provides a comprehensive account of its activities in 2020 and early 2021. A major highlight of the Annual Report is the information about the contribution of different member countries to the consolidated budget of the WTO. India's annual contribution to the consolidated budget of WTO stood at Swiss Franc 4.5 million in 2021. India's annual contribution doubled to 2.3% of the total contribution of all the 164 member countries in 2021 from 1.1% in 2010. The consolidated budget of WTO is used for meeting expenditure towards remuneration of staffs, fees for consultants, translators and other functionaries, general member services, trade & hospitality, procurement of office infrastructure, among others.

With this, India became the 13th largest contributor to the annual budget of the organization among its 164 member countries. Among developing countries, India ranks fourth in budgetary contribution to WTO after China, Hong Kong and South Korea. The largest contributors are USA (11.8%), China (10.4%), Germany (7.1%), France, Japan and UK (3.8% each), Netherland (2.9%), South Korea (2.8%), Italy (2.5%) and Singapore (2.4%).

### Global Trade Highlights

The Annual Report provides key highlights of the global trade development in the year 2020 and the activities of various departments of WTO in the last one year. The trade regulatory body expects world merchandise trade to grow 8.0% in the current calendar year after declining 5.3% in 2020 because of the adverse impact of the pandemic. At the same time, export and import of medical goods grew 16% in 2020, reaching USD 2.3 trillion as countries resorted to record import of COVID related healthcare items to combat the worst pandemic in the living memory. Amidst restriction imposed on movement of people, the trade in travel and transport services declined 63% and 19% respectively in 2020, the annual report mentioned.

### Trade measures

Member countries continued to take trade promoting measures and trade restrictive measures based on various considerations during the year. Specifically,

member countries took 335 COVID-19 trade and trade-related measures, as captured by the WTO trade monitoring mechanism since the outbreak of the pandemic. Most of these 335 measures were adopted on a temporary basis. Out of these 335 measures, 195 (58%) were trade facilitating measures, while 140 (42%) were trade-restrictive steps, the Annual Report mentioned.

Some of the trade facilitating measures taken by member countries are: expediting regulatory assessments and approvals for traded goods, recognizing certifications of foreign regulators and allowing online assessment procedures. Trade restrictive measures taken by member countries are: banning export of some critical medical equipments, food and other essential items to avoid shortage in domestic market. The pandemic-related trade-facilitating measures covered USD 227 billion worth of world trade, while trade-restrictive measures covered USD 180 billion of global trade, the report estimates.

### Anti-Dumping Investigation

India and the United States are the leading initiators of anti-dumping investigations, as they both accounted for more than 60% of the new anti-dumping investigations, the annual report mentioned. Under the provisions of WTO, countries can launch anti-dumping investigation against exporters of foreign countries if they feel that

these exporters are unfairly outcompeting local producers by charging lower price than the normal value of the goods.

India has been holding second position on initiation of new anti-dumping investigation since 2016. In the first six months of 2020, India initiated 57 anti-dumping initiations, a sharp rise from 18 in the year ago period. United States initiated 58 new anti-dumping investigations in the first six months of 2020 compared to 20 in the same period of the previous year.

In the first half of 2020, India initiated anti-dumping investigations largely against imports from China, followed by imports from Japan, South Korea, Thailand and Indonesia, to name a few. Against China, India initiated anti-dumping investigation on products such as glass articles, stainless steel, nylon yarn, aluminum foil, plastic and plastic products, organic and inorganic chemicals etc. India initiated anti-dumping investigation against Japanese exporters of digital offset printing plates, stainless steel, rubber products, crude naphtha and caustic soda. Against South Korea and Thailand, India is investigating unfair imports of copper products, rubber and organic chemicals. Against Indonesia, India initiated anti-dumping investigation on viscose spun yarn, polyester yarn, organic chemicals, aluminum foil, stainless steel etc.

#### Top 7 countries in terms of anti-dumping measures taken\*

Countries	2014	2020
United States of America	257	406
India	208	219
Brazil	127	146
Turkey	134	135
China	103	110
Argentina	79	100
Mexico	47	74

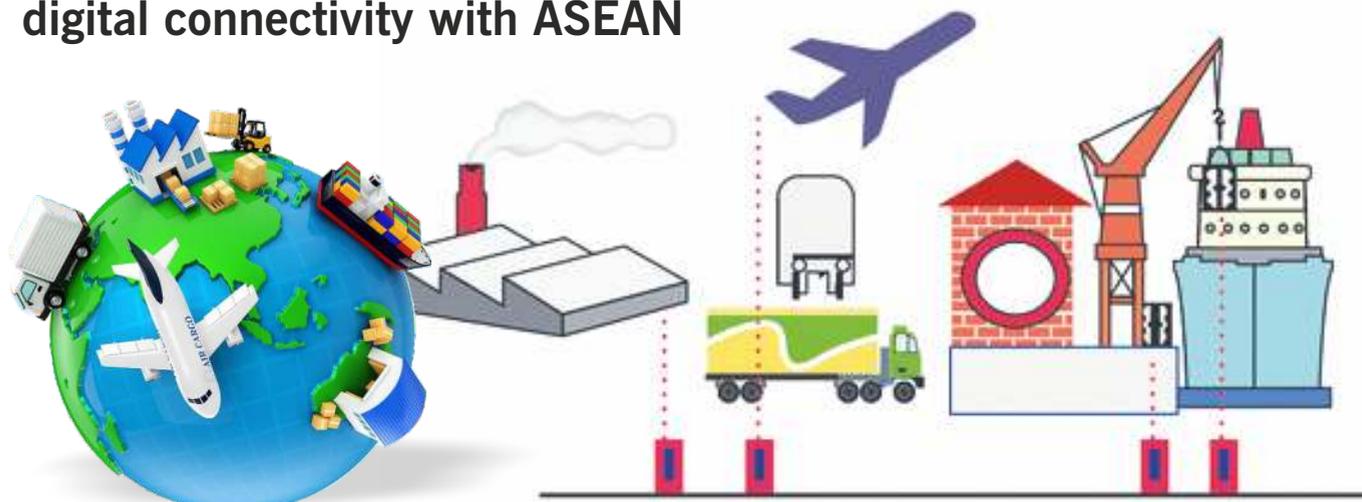
Source: World Tariff Profiles;  
\* Figures indicate final number of measures taken by the countries (in force)

#### Top 7 countries in terms of anti-dumping measures faced\*

Countries	2014	2020
China	498	636
South Korea	89	131
Taiwan	97	93
India	57	87
United States of America	73	71
Japan	57	68
Indonesia	53	56
Vietnam	25	52
Brazil	28	42
Turkey	15	33
Argentina	5	7
Mexico	19	26

Source: World Tariff Profiles;  
\* Figures indicate final number of measures faced by countries (in force)

## India seeks to bolster physical and digital connectivity with ASEAN



This section gives a round-up of the recent developments in the economic relation of the 10-member ASEAN bloc with other countries, including India. Government of India intends to review its free trade agreement (FTA) with ASEAN and emphasises on the need for improving cross-border physical and digital connectivity with the member countries. Meanwhile, the FTA between Cambodia and China is likely to come into force next year. Thailand and the European Union (EU) have also agreed to resume negotiations on an FTA, while South Korea's trade ministry has launched talks with ASEAN to update their FTA and further lower trade barriers.

### India-ASEAN FTA

On September 14, 2021, India's Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Ms. Anupriya Patel and Brunei Darussalam's Minister of Finance and Economy H.E. DatoDr. Amin Liew Abdullah, co-chaired the 18th ASEAN-India Economic Ministers Consultations, which was held virtually. During the event, Ms.

Patel suggested that India and ASEAN should strive to announce the review of the FTA between them before the year-end. She invited ASEAN countries to invest in India in potential sectors, including health and pharmaceutical sector. The ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement was signed in August 2009, and came into force in January 2010.

The meeting was attended by the economic ministers of all the 10 ASEAN countries. The Ministers resolved to complete the scoping process expeditiously to make the agreement trade facilitative, user-friendly with contemporary and streamlined customs and regulatory procedures. The Indian Minister suggested that the trade arrangement has to be reciprocal, mutually beneficial and should balance the aspirations of all the partners. She emphasised on the need for securing the FTA provisions to prevent misuse of preferential treatment, while highlighting the non-tariff measures faced by Indian exporters in accessing ASEAN market, especially in agriculture and auto sectors.

She opined that both sides should make earnest efforts to finalize the scoping paper before the ASEAN-India Leaders' Summit scheduled in October, 2021. She requested ASEAN to establish Joint Committees for the review of the India-ASEAN services and investment agreements without any delay.

### India-ASEAN cross-border connectivity

India's Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Mr. Sarbananda Sonowal addressed the ASEAN Summit on Future of India-ASEAN Connectivity Partnership on September 14, 2021. He has emphasised on the need for improving cross-border connectivity between India and emerging countries in Southeast Asia. According to the Minister, the India-ASEAN FTA is a key component of India's rising involvement with its eastern neighbours. The development of the Trilateral Highway to Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam will help improve connectivity and economic integration between India's northeast and the neighbouring ASEAN countries.

The Minister suggested that while India assisted in the construction of two critical parts of Myanmar's 1,360-kilometer trilateral expressway, work on numerous other sections and the upgrade of roughly 70 bridges has been slowed due to a variety of circumstances. This roadway will improve people-to-people ties and provide access to markets throughout the ASEAN area. He emphasised the importance of member countries forming National Transport Facilitation Committees (NTFCs) to facilitate cross-border transportation and trade.

According to him, small and medium-sized firms in border areas will be able to explore new commercial opportunities thanks to physical connectivity between India and neighbouring south-east Asian nations. He has emphasised the need for understanding that India and ASEAN are rapidly rising consumer markets with a growing middle class and a young population that is becoming increasingly technologically connected. As a result, in addition to the movement of commodities and physical connectivity, it is critical for the countries to explore strategies to improve digital connectivity. During the period 2021-23, India's data centre sector is predicted to add 560 MW, while the industry is likely to almost double size by 2023, from 447 MW to 1,007 MW.

### Cambodia-China FTA

The FTA between Cambodia and China has received unanimous support from the National Assembly's expert committee and is likely to come into force next year. The Minister of Commerce,

Government of Cambodia has emphasised the benefits of an FTA, including its providing better market access for vegetables, fruits and other agricultural products along with handicrafts and other goods.

He said that Cambodia has the ability to produce products that comply with China's rules and hygiene standards and train highly skilled staff to strengthen the Kingdom's service sector. He added that the FTA would provide more investment for Cambodia, giving opportunities to local businesses who want to expand the market for services and goods and increase exports to China and noted that companies will benefit from transfer of technology, knowledge and new skills. The deal with China also has the potential to attract foreign capital from elsewhere, by strengthening domestic production and improving the investment climate.

### Thailand-EU FTA

Thailand and the EU have agreed to resume negotiations on a FTA seven years after the collapse of negotiations in 2014 after a military coup in Thailand. If both the parties conclude the agreement, it will mark the EU's third FTA with ASEAN member states. The EU has FTAs with two ASEAN countries, Singapore and Vietnam.

The proposed Thailand-EU FTA can facilitate EU access to trade and investment in Southeast Asia's second-largest economy, and Thai exporters will benefit from lower tariffs. Many EU companies have Southeast Asian production in Thailand. Establishing an FTA will ease trade and investment barriers for EU companies and make

Thailand an even more attractive regional base. The EU and Thailand started FTA negotiations in 2013.

### South Korea-ASEAN FTA

South Korea's trade ministry has launched talks with ASEAN to update their FTA and further lower trade barriers, as the country seeks to diversify its trade portfolio and expand its presence in Southeast Asia. South Korea and ASEAN had implemented their FTA in 2007. ASEAN is the second-largest trading partner for South Korea. The country currently depends on China and the United States for around 40 percent of its exports.

South Korea has also proposed a new pact on digital trade with Southeast Asia to cope with the changing global business environment and forge deeper economic ties with the region. South Korea wishes to carry out joint studies on launching the pact, which is similar to the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement (DEPA), which currently comprises Singapore, New Zealand and Chile.

South Korea has recently officially declared its intention to join DEPA as well, in line with its efforts to broaden ties in areas beyond conventional free trade agreements, including digital identities, e-payments, data protection and cross-border data flows.

### Reference:

Press information Bureau, Government of India; [bilateral.org](http://bilateral.org)



## Experts suggest measures to build resilience of MSME sector



**M** VIRDC World Trade Center Mumbai organised a webinar on “Building a Resilient MSME sector for the new Normal” jointly with All India Association of Industries (AIAI). The event was organised to mark the International MSME Day, which is celebrated every year on June 27.

The webinar was addressed by Ms. Preeti Syal, Director, NITI Aayog, Mr Jacob Anil Kumar, Director, Timescan Logistics and a senior official from India’s leading public sector bank Bank of Baroda. Mr S. Prakash, Founder, SEE Change, India moderated the session.

In his introductory remarks, Mr. Prakash highlighted the benefits of digitizing the business operation of MSMEs and he emphasized that government, along with the private sector should train MSMEs in adoption of digital technologies to streamline their operations.

In her remarks, Ms. Syal informed, “NITI Aayog is working on setting up Digital Capability Center to transform India’s manufacturing sector in this age of the fourth Industrial Revolution. Already, NITI Aayog has

enabled, under its National Strategy on Artificial Intelligence, Centers of Excellence through its various MedTech zones, special technology zones and via AIRAWAT, which is a concept of shared technology resources to facilitate MSMEs access cutting edge technologies such as 3D printing and artificial intelligence. Ms. Syal also informed that various entities across Government of India, including NITI Aayog, Startup India, Invest India and Ministry of Commerce are working diligently to streamline single window clearances for foreign direct investors in the country.

Mr. Kumar suggested MSMEs to avail of the Authorized Export Operator scheme, deemed export scheme, Direct Port Delivery/Direct Port En-try facilities to optimize their operations and logistics cost. He also recommended MSMEs to make use of the free trade warehousing zones to store their exportable goods and get all export benefits from government even before physical shipment of these goods.

Earlier in his welcome remarks, Dr Vijay Kalantri, Chairman, World Trade Center Mumbai raised various

issues related to poor flow of formal credit to the MSME sector. He said commercial bank credit to SME sector has declined from 12.4% of total credit before 2008 to 8.3% in the sub-sequent period. Further, public sector banks are lagging behind the private sector in credit disbursement to MSMEs as the former extended hardly 5% of their credit to MSMEs compared to 40% by the latter.

Dr. Kalantri suggested all commercial banks to open dedicated branches for SMEs across the country. He also called for the conversion of SIDBI into full-fledged bank for SMEs with branches across the country.

He emphasized the need to settle MSME dues owed by insolvent companies on priority basis under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) mechanism. He said, “In the insolvency cases under IBC, dues owed to MSME suppliers are not given priority in the order of settlement of creditors’ dues. If MSME vendors do not get their dues settled on time, it is but natural that they will default on their bank loan obligation. Banks are not willing to extend accommodative treatment to MSME vendors who defaulted on their loan obligation because of delay in payment from their corporate buyers. Therefore, the government should bring provisions under the IBC Act for priority settlement of MSME vendors’ dues owed by the insolvent company.”

Dr. Kalantri urged the government to adopt a consultative approach with the MSME sector before policy formulation as was done by the Central Government under former

Prime Minister Mr. PV Narasimha Rao. He opined that NITI Aayog should hold stakeholder consultation with MSMEs and their associations before preparing policy framework for the sector. He also suggested the government to conduct per-budget meeting with

MSMEs before preparing budget document.

Ms. Rupa Naik, Executive Director, MVIRDC World Trade Center proposed vote of thanks for the event.

The webinar was attended by representatives of trade and industry, financial institutions, academia and consular corps.

**The webinar was held on July 2, 2021**

## WTC Mumbai presents overview of Western India to Taiwanese Delegation



### Ms. Rupa Naik

Executive Director  
MVIRDC World Trade Center Mumbai

Taiwan is the fifth largest trade partner of India in the North East Asia and the country holds immense potential for strengthening bilateral relations. Specifically, Indian industries can benefit from exchange of technical knowhow, partnership in skill development and joint research projects. In this context, the Taipei World Trade Center (TAITRA) organised an interactive webinar with a delegation of around 11 Taiwanese companies.

Ms. Rupa Naik, Executive Director, MVIRDC World Trade Center Mumbai was invited to speak at the event where she shared an overview of the Indian economy and the recovery that is underway in industrial activity with the easing of the pandemic restriction. Ms. Naik informed that Indian economy is poised for a 10% growth in 2021-22 after contracting 7% in the previous year because of the pandemic.

Ms. Naik highlighted the significance of the western region in the financial and industrial activity of India. She said, "The prominent states of Maharashtra and Gujarat contribute more than 22% to the economy of India and they are also the leading destinations for tourism, financial services and foreign direct investment (FDI). Mumbai is the hub for India's foreign trade as the two major ports located in this city handle more than 18% of EXIM cargos handled by all the Major Ports in the country."

She further informed, "Mumbai is the commercial and fashion capital of India. The city contributes 30% to Income Tax collection of the country and it hosts iconic tourist destinations such as Gateway of India and Elephanta Caves. Mumbai is also the capital of Maharashtra, the leading industrial state that attracts 30% of India's FDI, houses 728 industrial parks/clusters, 32 IT parks and nine special economic zones. India's first Greenfield smart industrial town-

ship Shendre Bidkin is located in Maharashtra."

Speaking about Gujarat, Ms. Naik remarked, "Gujarat contributes 8% to India's GDP, 17% to industrial output and it attracts 5.4% of foreign direct investment into India. Kandla Port Trust, which is one of the 12 Major Ports of India, is located in Gujarat and it carries 17% of EXIM cargo handled by all Major Ports in the country."

Ms. Naik also explained the economic potential of Goa, which is another state in the western region of India. She informed, "Goa is like Paradise on Earth as it has pristine beaches, splendid Portugal architecture, beautiful churches, clean roads, enchanting waterfalls and amazing nightlife. Goa is one of the wealthiest states in India, in terms of per capita income and the state has achieved 100% rural electrification. There are 26 industrial parks in the state and three notified special economic zones. Goa has strong presence of pharmaceuticals, metals and chemical manufacturing industries."

Pointing out that Taiwanese companies can find a huge market for their industrial products and consumer goods in these three

states, Ms. Naik informed that the World Trade Centers in Goa and Mumbai will be an effective platform to connect these Taiwanese companies with their potential partners in India.

The event was attended by delegates from around 11 Taiwanese companies manufacturing a range of goods, viz. industrial sewing machines, injection moulding machines, power supply equipments, baby strollers, IoT

Smart Care products, induction cookers, Tortilla Maker, Hand tools etc.

**The webinar was held on July 14, 2021**

## High Commissioner unveils India-Zambia online Expo



India is one of the major trade and investor partners of the Southern African country of Zambia. With the rapid industrialization in Zambia, bilateral trade and investment is only set to grow many-fold in the coming years. Recognising India's untapped trade potential with Zambia, WTC Mumbai organised a virtual exhibition on its new age digital platform Wetrade.org. Zambia Development Agency (ZDA) and Indo-Zambia Bank also partnered with WTC Mumbai to launch this exhibition. The exhibition will promote bilateral trade by facilitating buyer-seller meeting and lead generation in sectors such as agro commodities, auto components, electrical and electronics, technology, healthcare, pharmaceuticals,

metals, plastics, chemicals, textile and home décor.

The online exhibition, which will be live during July 15, 2021 – October 15, 2021, was inaugurated by H.E. Mr. Ngulkham Jathom Gangte, High Commissioner of India to Zambia at a webinar on 'Trade and Business Opportunities between India and Zambia'.

Speaking on this occasion, H.E. Mr. Gangte remarked, "India is a major trade partner in promoting industrialization, farm mechanization, employment and poverty reduction in Zambia on a sustainable basis. It is encouraging to note that India is one of the major trade partners of Zambia as its bilateral trade has

grown five fold in the last decade and India's cumulative investment in this country has crossed USD 5 billion with significant investment in telecom, tourism, healthcare, mining and other sectors."

In her video message, H.E. Mrs. Judith K.K. Kan'goma- Kapijimpanga, High Commissioner of the Republic of Zambia to India remarked, "Indian companies can export farm inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, farm machinery and agricultural finance to Zambia as there is huge demand for these products in our country. Besides agriculture, Indian enterprises can participate in construction projects such as hydel power plants, power transmission lines, airports, roads, railway lines,

residential and commercial buildings.”

In his remarks, Mr. Mukula Makasa, Director General, Zambia Development Agency informed, “Zambian Development Agency has also signed MoUs with several trade associations in India to promote exchange of trade and investment. In the days ahead, we hope to launch direct flight connectivity between Lusaka and New Delhi and Lusaka and Mumbai to facilitate the growing relations.”

The event was also addressed by Mr. Chabuka Kawesha, President,

Zambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ZACCI).

Earlier in his welcome remarks, Dr. Vijay Kalantri, Chairman, MVIRDC World Trade Center Mumbai suggested, “Zambia, which is rich in natural resources such as metals, oil & gas, can encourage its entrepreneurs to set up processing plants in India for value addition of these raw materials. Similarly, Indian manufacturers who have been exporting machineries, textiles, pharmaceuticals and automobile components, can set up manufacturing plants in Zambia and generate employment opportunities in

that country.”

During the webinar, Dr. Shrikant Kamat, Counsel - Commercial Laws, Academics Administrator suggested Zambian exporters to avail of the benefit under Government of India's Duty Free Tariff Preference Scheme (DFTP).

Ms. Rupa Naik, Executive Director, WTC Mumbai proposed vote of thanks for the event.

**The webinar was held on July 14, 2021**

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## Experts from AIB and ICC address World Trade Day

**W**orld Trade Center Mumbai organised a webinar on “Global Trade Transformation in the Post-Pandemic World” to mark World Trade Day 2021 and create awareness about the emerging business opportunities for small enterprises on July 28, 2021.

World Trade Week is the flagship event of WTC Mumbai organised every year across Maharashtra to create awareness about importance of international trade for MSMEs and regional economic development. This year, on account of the pandemic, we organised this virtual program to mark World Trade Day 2021.

The program was addressed by Mr. Andrew Wilson, Global Policy Director - International Chamber of Commerce and Mr. Abhijit Sengupta, Senior Economist, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. Mr.

Siddhartha Rastogi, Expert - Behavioural Finance and Capital Markets moderated the session.

Mr. Rastogi informed that MSMEs can explore business opportunities in manufacturing of critical components for automobiles, bicycles and electronics, for which there is scarcity in the global market. MSMEs can also meet pent up demand for textiles, fashion and travel goods once economic condition normalizes.

Mr. Wilson remarked, “Policymakers should not be complacent about the health of the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Some Latin American countries that have withdrawn stimulus measures early have witnessed renewed stress and defaults by MSME borrowers. When stimulus measures are withdrawn, banks will again become risk averse in lending to small enterprises. Even now, around 30-40% of the MSMEs

are pessimistic about business outlook. Small enterprises are still struggling with weak balance sheets, huge burden of debt, unpaid invoices.”

Highlighting the initiatives of ICC to empower MSMEs, Mr. Wilson said, “We wish to support MSMEs in India and elsewhere through our app Trade Now, which facilitates access to trade finance. ICC also runs dedicated programs for capacity building to support MSMEs navigate through the challenging global trade environment.”

In his remarks, Mr. Sengupta pointed out, “AIB has proposed a USD 500 million program for India to Creating a Coordinated and Responsive Indian Social Protection System (CCRISP). The program will help national and state governments in India to modernize social protection systems for informal workers, migrant workers and



**Siddhartha Rastogi**  
Expert - Behavioural Finance  
& Capital Markets



**Dr Erik Berglof**  
Chief Economist  
Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank



**Andrew Wilson**  
Global Policy Director  
International Chamber of Commerce

returnee migrant workers. This program is proposed under the COVID-19 Crisis Recovery Facility of AIB and it is co-financed with the World Bank.”

Earlier in his welcome address, Mr. Vijay Kalantri, Chairman, MVIRDC World Trade Center Mumbai suggested multilateral institutions such as WTO and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) to offer capacity building programs for MSMEs in developing

countries and Least Developed Countries.

Capt. Somesh Batra, Vice Chairman, MVIRDC World Trade Center Mumbai proposed vote of thanks for the event. Speaking on this occasion, Ms. Rupa Naik, Executive Director, MVIRDC World Trade Center Mumbai suggested ICC to collaborate with WTC Mumbai in connecting local businesses to the global market. Ms. Naik informed about [wetrade.org](http://wetrade.org), which is the new age

digital platform launched by WTC Mumbai to connect Indian MSMEs to global market.

The program was attended by members of trade & industry, consular corps, financial institutions and academia.

**The webinar was held on July 28, 2021**

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## Indian and Caribbean companies can explore trade opportunities at the upcoming online bilateral exhibition being organised by World Trade Center Mumbai

“The upcoming virtual exhibition ‘Trade and Business Opportunities between India and Caribbean countries’ being organised by World Trade Center Mumbai, in association with Indian Missions in the Caribbean region, is important as the target beneficiaries are SMEs, female entrepreneurs and startups, who are significant contributors to our local economy”, said Senator the Hon. Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Trade and Industry, Trinidad and Tobago at the webinar on ‘Strengthening Bilateral Trade Relations

between India and Caribbean Region’.

The programme was jointly organised by MVIRDC World Trade Center Mumbai and High Commission of India in Georgetown, Guyana; High Commission of India in Kingston, Jamaica; High Commission of India in Trinidad and Tobago; Embassy of India in Havana, Cuba and Embassy of India in Paramaribo, Suriname.

Senator Gopee-Scoon remarked, “The Government of Trinidad and

Tobago, through the Ministry of Trade and Industry, continues to support and encourage firms to strengthen and adapt their business models using ecommerce and digital platforms to extend their range of products and services to both the local and international markets.”

Senator Gopee-Scoon suggested, “Trinidad and Tobago is open for investments in the areas of agriculture and agro-processing, tourism, maritime activities, financial services, manufacturing, logistics



and distribution. Apart from an attractive investment climate, businesses will have access to a consumer market of close to 1 billion people, through CARICOM and Trinidad and Tobago's bilateral trade agreements."

She emphasized that the governments of Trinidad and Tobago and India have expressed interest in entering into a new bilateral treaty and negotiations will commence in the coming months, which will assure investors of the government's commitment of promoting a stable, transparent and predictable domestic legislative environment.

In his address, H.E. Mr. Arun Kumar Sahu, High Commissioner, High Commission of India, Trinidad & Tobago said, "I thank the World Trade Center Mumbai for taking this commendable initiative of organising the upcoming online bilateral exhibition on the theme 'Trade and Business Opportunities between India and Caribbean countries.'"

H.E. Mr. Sahu opined, "In the last few decades, India has achieved tremendous success in biotechnology, genetic engineering, material and space sciences and nano

technology. Agro biotechnology is one such niche area. In Suriname, we will be undertaking a drone survey of land to estimate agricultural potential in collaboration with Indian companies. A project to extend the shelf life of fruits and horticultural products, based on individual quick freezing technology is also being contemplated for financial support."

He further expressed, "Many Caribbean countries are signatories to the International Solar Alliance, which is led by India. Under this Alliance, we propose to fund environment-friendly energy projects. I urge all countries to take advantage of this opportunity. Caribbean countries can also take advantage of India's world-class higher education, and pharma, textile and automobile prowess."

H.E. Mr. Sahu informed that MOUs on cooperation in and promotion of traditional medicines, including Ayurveda have been signed with countries such as Suriname, and are under active consideration in a few other countries. India is exploring a term contract with Guyana to purchase crude oil and acquire oil blocks in the future, and is executing

developmental projects amounting to USD 100 million in Guyana.

H.E. Mr. Sahu remarked, "Many Caribbean countries have citizenship by investment programme, and visa restrictions are minimal. Indians can travel to these islands for almost three months without a prior visa, and Indian investors should take advantage of these facilities. Guyana offers a range of tax incentives for investors such as in the mining, agriculture and renewable energy sectors, and Indian companies can access the Caribbean market through it."

Earlier in his Welcome Address, Dr. Vijay Kalantri, Chairman, MVRDC World Trade Center Mumbai said, "Trade between India and the Caribbean region is not very significant, and there is tremendous scope for the two regions to enhance trade in sectors such as Plastics and Chemicals, Information Technology, Pharma, Ayurveda and Wellness, Agro and Agro-biotechnology, Wind and Solar Energy, Textiles, Garments and Home Décor, Higher Education and Auto and Engineering.

With the objective of expanding commercial opportunities in these

sectors between Indian and the Caribbean region, WTC Mumbai, in association with the High Commissions of India in Georgetown, Guyana; Kingston, Jamaica; Trinidad and Tobago; and Embassies of India in Havana, Cuba and Paramaribo, Suriname is organising a three-month-long Online Exhibition, commencing from 16th August 2021. Businesses can explore opportunities arising out of the growing synergies between the

two regions.”

The event was also addressed by Ms. Diane Edwards, President, Jamaica Promotion Corporation, Mr. Richie Sookhai, President, The Chaguanas Chamber of Industry and Commerce and Mr. Paul Cheong, Chairman, Private Sector Commission, Guyana.

Ms. Rupa Naik, Executive Director, MVIRDC World Trade Center Mumbai proposed the Vote of

Thanks.

The programme was attended by government officials, Consular Corps, members of trade and industry and industry bodies in India and the Caribbean region.

**The webinar was held on August 6, 2021**

## Promoting India's Handloom products in global market

India has earned a unique place in the textile map of the world because of its centuries old legacy of exquisite handloom weaves. Handloom is intricately woven in the traditional and cultural fabric of India since the Indus Valley Civilization more than 5,000 years ago. However, in today's times, handloom products struggle to retain popularity in the market because of severe competition from powerloom products and lack of awareness about its unique features. Indian handloom weaves are made of natural fibers such as cotton, wool and silk and their production process is environmentally safe. There is an urgent need to revive this dying art and support the livelihood of 3.1 million families, who depend on this cottage industry across the length and breadth of the country.

IAMKHAADII Foundation, a Delhi-based non-for-profit social enterprise that promotes India's hand woven-hand spun fabric, organised a National Stakeholders' Consultation Virtual Meet to discuss ways to promote this handloom fabrics. The webinar discussed



**Ms. Rupa Naik**

Executive Director  
MVIRDC World Trade Center Mumbai

training, finance, marketing, innovative design, technology and branding to promote indigenous handloom products in the local and foreign market.

Ms. Rupa Naik, Executive Director, MVIRDC World Trade Center Mumbai addressed the event on the topic 'Role of WTC Mumbai towards export promotion of handlooms by redefining tradition and style'. Ms. Naik highlighted the various channels through which WTC Mumbai can play a key role in promoting exports of handloom in the global market. She remarked, "WTC Mumbai can leverage its unparalleled network of 315 WTCs across 90 countries to popularize our handloom products abroad. We work closely with India's diplomatic missions in foreign countries to

promote handloom exports. We can promote Indian handloom weaves abroad through our partner organizations, including chambers of commerce and trade support institutions in foreign countries. Another promising channel for promoting handloom export is the World Trade Point Federation, which has a global network of more than 100 trade information and facilitation centres, known as Trade Points across around 70 countries. WTC Mumbai is a member of this Federation, which assists Small and Medium enterprises (SMEs) trade globally through electronic commerce."

Ms. Naik suggested women handloom weavers of the country to benefit from the SheTrade platform, which is a mobile app launched by

ITC, Geneva to facilitate women-owned enterprises to sell their products and services abroad. WTC Mumbai, being the official verifier of the SheTrade platform, can help women handloom weavers onboard this platform and connect with potential buyers abroad.

Speaking about the recent initiatives of WTC Mumbai to enhance handloom exports, Ms. Naik pointed out, "WTC Mumbai has successfully organised a successful virtual Handloom Expo on its new age digital platform "wetrade.org" during October-December 2020. The Handloom Expo facilitated global market access for more than 140 exhibitors, who showcased at least 100 handloom products to visitors from more than five countries."

Highlighting the cultural and

economic significance of handloom sector, Ms. Naik said, "Around 95% of the world's handwoven fabric is produced in India. The cottage industry of handloom provides livelihood to 3.1 million families across the country and 72% of the weavers are women. India exports a wide variety of handloom products, including tablemats, floormats, bed sheets, curtains, carpets, durries and terrytowels."

She raised concern that India's exports of handloom products declined 30% in 2020-21 because of the pandemic. She suggested that Indian celebrity designers and iconic personalities must promote the popularity of handloom products in foreign countries by showcasing the unique designs and weaves of these handloom products. Fashion

designers can work with weavers and artisans to upgrade the designs and aesthetics of their products in keeping with the current market trends and consumer preferences across different countries. This will help Indian weavers find buyers in foreign countries, she said.

Ms. Naik concluded her remarks by reaffirming WTC Mumbai's commitment to support India's handloom weavers to facilitate export of handloom products through various trade promotion activities.

**The event was held on August 14, 2021**



## Uzbekistan attracts Indian investments in advanced pharma technologies

"Indian entrepreneurs are achieving increased economic presence in many sectors in Uzbekistan. However, the economic and trade potential between India and Uzbekistan is underutilized, and should be bolstered, as bilateral trade between the two countries stands only at USD 443 million", said H. E. Mr. Dilshod Akhatov, Ambassador of Uzbekistan to India at the webinar on 'India and Uzbekistan Economic Connectivity: Opportunities and Prospects'. The programme was jointly organized by World Trade Center Mumbai, Embassy of Uzbekistan in New Delhi and All India Association of Industries (AIAI).

H. E. Mr. Akhatov remarked,

"Uzbekistan is interested in attracting Indian investments in advanced technologies to produce modern competitive drugs, and creation of modern laboratories and research centres focused on development of original drugs. Through business partnerships, Indian companies can get access to the Uzbekistan market of about 35 million people, as also to 300 million consumers through Uzbekistan's FTAs with CIS countries and Georgia."

He further said, taking cognizance of the India's investment potential in the pharmaceutical sector in Uzbekistan, in 2019 a pharmaceutical Free Economic Zone was established in Uzbekistan, designed primarily for Indian investors. More

than 10 Indian investment projects are implemented with an investment of over USD 63 million.

H. E. Mr. Akhatov suggested, "Textile industry is of strategic importance to both the countries. Uzbekistan offers competitive advantage in this sector owing to its cheap and skilled labour, and low electricity costs, that reduce the cost of production. Textile companies of Uzbekistan enjoy low duties on import of raw material and equipment not produced within the country. Uzbekistan companies also enjoy preferential market access to EU countries, and Indian entrepreneurs can take advantage of this opportunity through joint collaborations with Uzbek companies."



Uzbekistan climate and fertile soil are favourable for production of more than 350 types of fruits, vegetables, nuts and agricultural products, exported across the globe. Indian and Uzbekistan businesses can collaborate in the agricultural, education, IT and tourism sectors. “We propose to hold joint programmes, including in online format, to boost tourism between the two countries”, he opined.

H. E. Mr. Akhatov emphasized that Uzbekistan’s development strategy in the last five years has depended on reforms and new initiatives, such as free currency conversion, free economic zones, development of tourism sector, abolition of monopolies, decrease in tax rates for foreign investors, opening of multi-billion credit lines from international banks such as ADB, World Bank, IMF and Islamic Bank, promoting open and free foreign policy, and restarting negotiations with EU for a Free Trade Agreement, among others.

Despite the negative consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, Uzbekistan has shown resilience. In

2020, Uzbekistan’s economy grew by 1.6 per cent. The reforms adopted by Uzbekistan have made it a favourable investment destination. Uzbekistan ranks 69th in the World Bank’s Ease of Doing Business rankings 2020.

In his remarks, H. E. Mr. Manish Prabhat, Ambassador of India to Uzbekistan said, “We congratulate Uzbekistan on its completion of 30 years of independence. On this occasion, India and Uzbekistan should collaborate to take their strategic partnership to new economic heights. India and Uzbekistan have witnessed significant growth in bilateral ties, with the visit of PM Modi to Tashkent in July 2015 and June 2016 and President Mirziyoyev’s visit to India in October 2018 and January 2019.”

He further expressed, “The two countries are working on a prospective bilateral investment treaty. The two governments are also promoting region-to-region and state-to-state business opportunities. There lie trade and investment opportunities ahead between the states of

Gujarat and Haryana in India and Andijan and Fergana in Uzbekistan.”

H. E. Mr. Prabhat opined, “Indian companies can explore trade opportunities in Uzbekistan in the pharmaceutical, traditional medicines, light machinery, plastic products, dyes and chemical products for textile industry, auto and auto components, agricultural products, infrastructure consultancy, EPC, tourism and entertainment sectors. India and Uzbekistan can solve connectivity issues by promoting the Chabahar port in Iran.”

Earlier in his Welcome Address, Dr. Vijay Kalantri, Chairman, World Trade Center Mumbai, Honorary Consul General, Honorary Consulate of Uzbekistan in Mumbai and President, All India Association of Industries said, “India’s major exports to Uzbekistan include medicines, vaccines, antibiotics, ayurvedic medicines, parts and accessories of vehicles, cotton combing machines, transmission shafts, oil seed crushing / grinding machinery, cumin seeds and food

preparations, among other products. India's pharmaceutical exports to Uzbekistan more than doubled in FY 2020-21. The two countries have potential to increase trade to USD 1 billion in the near future."

Dr. Kalantri further expressed, "Indian companies can also invest in chemicals, textiles, leather, information technology and telecommunication sectors in the Central Asian country. For this, we should organize bilateral programmes and exchange delegations between the two countries. The Export-Import Bank of India, on behalf of the Government of India, has extended a Line of Credit of USD 448 million to the Government of Republic of Uzbekistan in December 2020, for financing various infrastructure projects in Uzbekistan". Dr. Kalantri

appreciated Uzbekistan's efforts to help India fight the COVID-19 pandemic by gifting oxygen concentrators and other medical supplies.

The programme was also addressed by representatives of trade and industry from the two countries, including Mr. Oleg Rigichenko, Head of Department of Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan, Mr. Ashwani Lohani, CEO, GMR Services Ltd, Mr. Azamat Isayev, Head of Department of Investment Promotion Agency under the Ministry of Investments and Foreign Trade of Uzbekistan, Mr. Atul Ganatra, President, Cotton Association of India (CAI), Mr. Nishant Bajaj, cofounder of 'Zamed Pratiksha Bogishamol' medical clinic, Uzbekistan, Mr. Madhusudan Agarwal, Joint

Managing Director, Ajanta Pharma Ltd. and Mr. Sanjay Bhan, Director of 'Ediface' mining company, Uzbekistan, among others.

Ms. Rupa Naik, Executive Director, World Trade Center Mumbai, proposed the Vote of Thanks.

The programme was attended by Consular Corps, members of trade and industry and other stakeholders of both countries, who expressed interest in doing business in these countries.

**The Webinar was held on September 7, 2021**



## WTC Mumbai supports Maharashtra's Vanijya Utsav



(L-R) Dr. Vijay Kalantri, Chairman, World Trade Center Mumbai, Ms. Aaditi Tatkare, Minister of State for Industries, Government of Maharashtra, Shri. Subash Desai, Hon'ble Minister of Industries, Mining, Marathi Language, Government of Maharashtra, Shri. Raosaheb Patil Danve, Hon'ble Minister of State for Railways, Coal and Mines, Government of India, Shri. Baldev Singh IAS, Additional Chief Secretary - Industries, Government of Maharashtra, Shri. SBS Reddy, Additional Director General of Foreign Trade, Government of India, Dr. Harshadeep Kamble IAS, Development Commissioner - Industries, Directorate of Industries Maharashtra, Shri. Sanjay Shah, Convener, Diamond Panel Committee, GJEPC at the inaugural session of Vanijya Utsav held at WTC Mumbai.

**W**orld Trade Center Mumbai supported Government of Maharashtra in organizing Vanijya

Utsav - "MAHA EXPO CONCLAVE" to commemorate Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav (75 years of India's Independence) by providing venue

and conducting two panel sessions on the subject. The two-day event featured exhibitions from various export promotion councils and



(L-R) Mr. Siddhartha Rastogi, Managing Director, Ambit Capital Asset Management (Moderator), Dr. Harshadeep Kamble IAS, Development Commissioner – Industries, Directorate of Industries Maharashtra, Mr. Timur Vekilov, Head, Russian Export Center, Mr. Huseyin Aydin, Commercial Attaché, Consulate General of the Republic of Turkey, Mr. Dean Hoff, Consul – Economic, Consulate General of the Republic of South Africa, Ms. Vanesa Alvarez Franco, Economic and Commercial Counsellor, Embassy of Spain Mumbai, Mr. Seewraj Nundlall, Counsellor – Investment & Trade, Economic Development Board Mauritius, Ms. Rupa Naik, Executive Director, World Trade Center Mumbai.

thought provoking panel sessions with industry leaders and government departments.

The inaugural session of the event was addressed by Mr. Raosaheb Patil Danve, Hon'ble Minister of State for Railways, Coal and Mines, Government of India, Mr. Subash Desai, Hon'ble Minister of Industries, Mining, Marathi Language, Government of Maharashtra and other dignitaries.

In his remarks, Mr. Danve said, "Under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister, Indian economy has improved its GDP ranking in the world from 11th to 5th position today. Now, the government aims to transform India into a USD 5 trillion economy. We also aim to increase our annual merchandise exports to USD 400 billion this year, which is achievable, thanks to the slew of reform measures taken by the government."

Speaking on this occasion, Mr. Subash Desai remarked, "Government of Maharashtra invites

investors to set up plants in the proposed state-of-the art bulk drug park that will be set up in partnership with the central government at Raigad district in Maharashtra." Mr. Desai also informed about India's largest Gems & Jewellery park, which is being set up at Navi Mumbai and which has the potential to generate 1 lakh jobs in the sector.

In his address, Dr. Vijay Kalantri, Chairman, MVIRDC World Trade Center Mumbai remarked, "I am confident that India can achieve the USD 400 billion export target in the current financial year with appropriate policy support from the central, state governments and financial institutions to the industry. Policymakers should support the industry by providing logistics facilities and financial support to exporters. There is an urgent need to address the container shortage issue that has increased the cost of Indian shipments."

The central and state governments play an important role in promoting ease of doing business, supporting

exports and creating a conducive policy environment to attract foreign investment into the country. In order to understand the recent changes in the policy and regulatory environment in Maharashtra, a panel session was organized on the theme "State and Central Government Support for Export Promotion". The session was moderated by Ms. Rupa Naik, Executive Director, MVIRDC World Trade Center Mumbai. The panel session was addressed by Mr. Baldev Singh IAS, Additional Chief Secretary - Industries, Government of Maharashtra, Mr. Nikhil Meshram, Director (Finance), Maha Mumbai Metro Operation Corporation Ltd. and Mr. SBS Reddy, Additional Director General of Foreign Trade, Government of India. The session generated insightful perspectives on the role of Industries Department in Maharashtra, the role of DGFT and the customs department in promoting conducive policy for exports and investment in the state.

In her introductory remarks, Ms. Naik pointed out, "Maharashtra is the leading industrial state in India with a contribution of 15% to the



(L-R) Mrs. Rupa Naik, Executive Director, World Trade Center Mumbai moderating a session with panellists Mr. Nikhil Meshram, Director (Finance), Maha Mumbai Metro Operation Corporation Ltd., Mr. Baldev Singh IAS, Additional Chief Secretary - Industries, Government of Maharashtra, Mr. SBS Reddy, Additional Director General of Foreign Trade, Government of India and Dr. Harshadeep Kamble IAS, Development Commissioner – Industries, Directorate of Industries Maharashtra

country's GDP and 21% to its merchandise exports. In recent years, however, the share of the state in India's exports has declined from 24% in 2015 to 21% in FY21 and further down to 18% in Apr-Jun 2021. One of the reasons for the declining share of Maharashtra could be the faster growth in exports from states such as Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and other emerging states of Odisha, Madhya Pradesh & Chhattisgarh."

Ms. Naik concluded her remarks by suggesting Government of Maharashtra and the Central Government to promote the indigenous products of every district on the lines of the "One Tambon (meaning sub-district) One Product" exhibition conducted by Government of Thailand. This exhibition is one of the major trade fairs in Asia conducted by Thailand to promote the indigenous goods produced by different villages in that country.

In his remarks, Mr. Baldev Singh informed, "Government of Maharashtra is working on a

comprehensive policy for promoting exports from the state. As part of this initiative, the state government has prepared a district-wise export promotion plan by identifying potential exportable goods & services from every district and it has also set up District Export Promotion Councils and a task force to implement this initiative. The task force will identify supply side constraints and address them by creating necessary infrastructure, common facility centers, testing & quality certification labs, skill development facilities, upgrading logistics connectivity and linking production centers with sources of raw materials. The state government is also planning to address demand side issue by identifying potential markets for the exportable products, creating market linkages for small scale producers and entering into agreements with e-commerce companies such as Amazon."

Mr. Singh further informed that the state government is in the process of introducing a new policy for promoting Information Technology (IT) and IT enabled sectors. He also

highlighted other policy initiatives of the state government, some of which are: setting up a Bulk Drug Park in Raigad and the initiative to provide plug & play facilities for new investors in the upcoming MIDC areas etc.

Mr. Singh concluded his remarks by mentioning that the state's dedicated industrial policy for Women Entrepreneurs, which was introduced three years ago, has shown encouraging results. In future, as the state implements district export development plan, it will prepare special plan for encouraging women entrepreneurs from every district, he added.

Speaking on this occasion, Mr. SBS Reddy informed about the various schemes being implemented by DGFT to promote foreign trade in the country. Mr. Reddy suggested exporters to make use of the Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) and Advance Authorisation Schemes. DGFT has trained more than 1.15 lakh youth across the country on policies and regulations for import and export. DGFT is also working

towards the central government's ambitious programs of transforming every district into an export hub and One District One Product (ODOP) scheme.

In his remarks, Mr. Meshram explained the measures taken by the customs department of Government of India towards simplifying customs procedures. Specifically, he highlighted the faceless assessment scheme that enables importers to fulfill customs formalities online, without the need to visit the concerned office.

WTC Mumbai was also part of another panel session organized as part of the two-day Vanija Utsav program. This session was on the theme "Bilateral Trade Opportunities for Boosting Exports" and it was addressed by senior officials from the trade missions of various countries. Mr. Siddharth Rastogi, MD, Ambit Capital Asset Management moderated the session. The panelists of the session were: Mr. Dean Hoff, Consul Trade, Consulate General of Republic of South Africa, Ms. Vanesa Alvarez Franco, Director, Economic and Commercial Office, Consulate General of Spain, Mr. Seewraj Nundlall, Counsellor-investment & Trade, Economic Development Board, Mauritius, Mr. Huseyin Aydin, Commercial Attache, Consulate General of the Republic of Turkey, Mr. Timur Vekilov, Head, Russian Export Center and Ms. Rupa Naik, Executive Director, WTC Mumbai.

In his remarks, Mr. Vekilov hinted that there is strong demand for Indian products such as rice, shoes, articles of leather, teak and other goods of everyday use in Russia. He suggested Indian exporters to become competitive in the Russian

market by being unique and by adhering to the quality certifications and customs regulations of Russia. Sharing his views on this occasion, Mr. Aydin highlighted the potential sectors for import from India to Turkey and vice versa. He mentioned that Indian exporters can explore market for mineral oil, auto-components, chemicals, iron & steel and other intermediate goods that are used as inputs by the manufacturing sector in Turkey. Apart from these goods, Turkey also imports pharmaceuticals and rice from India, he added. On the other hand, India can import machineries for farming and food processing from Turkey, he suggested.

Mr. Hoff suggested Indian exporters to make South Africa as gateway to the entire African Continent, which has a population of 1.3 billion people and with GDP size of USD 3.4 trillion. The African Continent Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) has integrated 54 countries of Africa into one single market with seamless cross-border trade. Some of the potential sectors for India-South Africa trade are: auto-components, defence equipments, wine and other agro commodities.

Ms. Alvarez Franco informed that Indian exporters can explore market for chemicals, pharmaceuticals, apparel & clothing and agro products, which are prominently imported by Spain from India. On the other hand, India can import chemicals, plastics, pigments and machineries from Spain, she added. In the days ahead, Ms. Franco expects potential for bilateral collaboration in areas such as smart mobility, renewable energy and waste management sectors.

In his remarks, Mr Nundlall sug-

gested Indian exporters to set up business units in Mauritius and make it a gateway to the global market as Mauritius has preferential market access to 70% of the world consumer market. Specifically, exporters based in Mauritius enjoy preferential market access to USA, European Union, UK, China, Turkey, Pakistan and the entire Africa. He also suggested Indian exporters to make use of the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA), which came into force on April 1, 2021. Under this agreement, Indian exporters will have preferential market access to Mauritius across 310 export items including food stuff and beverages, agricultural products, textile and textile articles, articles of base metals, electrical and electronic items, among others.

Exporters of Mauritius can benefit from preferential market access into India for 615 products, including frozen fish, specialty sugar, biscuits, fresh fruits, juices, mineral water, beer, alcoholic drinks, soaps, bags, medical and surgical equipment and apparel.

Speaking on this occasion, Ms. Rupa Naik, Executive Director, MVRDC World Trade Center Mumbai suggested representatives of Indian industry to benefit from the global network of more than 316 World Trade Centers across 90 countries or regions. WTCs offer integrated trade services, including exhibition, trade promotion and reciprocity desk to connect local entrepreneurs to the global market by leveraging the vast network of WTCs, she added.

**The event was held on September 21, 2021**



## Industry players discuss hybrid format for conducting trade fairs



Exhibitions and trade fairs play an important role in providing a platform for buyers and sellers to network and conduct business deals. With the onset of the COVID pandemic, all the physical exhibitions and trade fairs have migrated to the virtual platform. As with other industries, the pandemic has also disrupted the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) industry by forcing adoption of digital technologies. With the gradual relaxation of the pandemic restriction, governments across the world are allowing in-person exhibitions and trade fairs. In this backdrop, India's premier magazine Exhibition Showcase organized the International M.I.C.E Showcase 2.0 – Virtual Summit to open dialogue on the preparedness of the MICE industry to open up effectively.

As part of this summit, a panel session was organized on the theme 'Perspective on Hybrid Events –

Combining Physical with Vertical'. The session was moderated by Ms. Rupa Naik, Executive Director, World Trade Center Mumbai. The speakers of the session were: Mr. Vivek Shukla, Director, Affairs Exhibitions, Ms. Chandrika Behl, Managing Director, Exhibitions India Group (EIG) and Mr. Rajesh Bhagat, Managing Director, Worldex India Exhibition & Promotion Pvt. Ltd.

Affairs Exhibitions is Asia's leading education fair & convention organiser with more than 26 years of experience and today it known as 'Education Fair Expert'. The Exhibitions India Group (EIG) is a leading trade promotion organisation and acts as an interface between government, industry, media and academia. Worldex India represents some of HKTDC's world-class international trade shows and signature conferences in Hong Kong in India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka markets.

In her introductory remarks, Ms. Naik highlighted the recent trends in the MICE industry and the shift towards hybrid mode of organizing trade fairs. By quoting an industry research study, she pointed out, "While physical events continue to dominate the trade industry, over 30% events are expected to be organised in hybrid format. Additionally, many event organisers believe that physical and hybrid events will represent more than 50% of their total income."

Speaking on this occasion, Mr. Shukla remarked, "The pandemic has forced the education sector to evolve with times by providing renewed impetus for digitization. It has accelerated digital adoption by exhibitors and visitors, which would have otherwise taken 10 years. We are the first organization in India to conduct online exhibition in the education sector after the pandemic. Our virtual exhibition received impressive response from

academic institutions, students and other stakeholders in the education sector. The pandemic has taught us that digital technology is something we cannot do away with. At the same time, when we are organizing global exhibition online, we should remember that our technology platform is so designed to support visitors from Africa, Nepal and other countries where the latest 4G internet connectivity may not be available. It is a continuous process of learning where we adapt our technology platform to improve ease of participation for visitors and exhibitors."

Sharing her views on this subject, Ms. Behl mentioned, "All through the pandemic period, our organization has organized several webinars to keep our players informed about the latest developments in the industry. We have organized global events online on smart cities and infrastructure sectors, where we brought together city leaders, including mayors from various towns in South East Asia, South America and other

regions. Although there was excellent response to our online events, we still feel that there is no match for in-person events as digital technologies cannot provide the same experience of physical display of products & services and personal interactions.

In his remarks, Mr. Bhagat opined, "The major challenge with online trade fairs is how to retain visitors and how to connect visitors with their potential business partners. We have launched our virtual fair and business matching platform Bee2Bee, which connects buyers and suppliers through online exhibitions across countries. There are two modules in this platform, viz. Virtual Fair Module and Business Matchmaking Module. Out of these two modules, the Business Matchmaking Module gets better response from visitors as it connects them with their prospective business partners. So far, we have organized virtual trade fairs on this platform to connect entrepreneurs in Asian countries such as Sri Lanka,

India, China etc. In future, we shall also connect buyers and suppliers from Turkey, Latin America and European Union countries through this platform."

Mr. Bhagat remarked that hybrid is the buzzword now as most event organizers are simultaneously conducting their shows, both online and in physical format. He pointed out that under the hybrid format, the responsibility of setting up digital infrastructure such as WiFi connectivity shifts from exhibitors to organizers, which adds to the overall cost of organizing hybrid events.

During the session, speakers also discussed other issues related to holding virtual global exhibitions, such as language barriers, time zone differences and promotion of events through right channels to attract relevant visitors, among others.

**The webinar was held on September 30, 2021**



**WORLD TRADE CENTER®  
JAIPUR**



WTC Jaipur is a member of the World Trade Centers Association (WTCA), New York which represents an unparalleled network of 324 WTCs in over 91 countries connecting one million businesses across the world. WTC Jaipur is promoted by M. Visvesvaraya Industrial Research and Development Centre (MVRDC), which is also the promoter of WTC Mumbai, the premium World Trade Center in India. WTC Jaipur will facilitate trade and investment promotion in the state and will assist local businesses to foray into global markets and help enhance competitiveness of Rajasthan.

### Join the Network

MSMEs, Exporters/Importers, Consulting Agencies, Institutions/Organisations, Trade Associations, Corporate Houses, Corporations and PSUs can join with WTC Jaipur to promote businesses globally at an annual membership fee.

### Membership Benefits

Enables active engagement by bringing together local and international governments and businesses on a single platform by undertaking activities to promote international trade, investment, tourism, technology and exchange of information through the services on offer.

### Services Offered

- Export Counseling • Seminars / Workshops / Panel Discussions on trade-related topics • Networking Events
- Online Information on trade and investment opportunities • Providing International market connections
- Trade Missions to explore overseas markets • Access to World Trade Centres Association, New York network
  - Promoting inbound trade delegation from overseas • Promoting members online
- Free Registration with Trade Point Mumbai India (Member of World Trade Point Federation, Geneva) for generating business contacts • Participation in International Exhibitions • Access to publications of WTC Mumbai • Access to WTCA Card

Administrative office:  
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## Workshop on Start-up India Process Orientation



**Mr. Vishnu Nagaraj**  
Start-up Evangelist

**W**orld Trade Center Bhubaneswar, in association with Start-up Odisha, initiated a series of workshops in order to enable start-up enterprises enhance their market penetrating capacity. After a highly impactful session in this series on Government e-marketplace, this second and subsequent session was organized on Start-up India Process Orientation.

Mr. Vishnu Nagaraj, Start-up Evangelist, addressed the delegates



**Mr. Sudhanshu Pradhan**  
GeM Business Facilitator-Odisha

on the process of registration with Start-up India. He made a detailed presentation on the entire process as well as explained the benefits of DPIIT recognition. He deliberated on how under the Start-up India initiative, eligible companies can get recognised as Start-ups by DPIIT and access a host of tax benefits, reduce compliance burden, expedite IPR registration etc. He demonstrated the concept of pitch desk and note of innovation, and also briefed about the seed fund schemes which were

recently launched by Government of India.

Mr Sudhanshu Pradhan, GeM Business Facilitator-Odisha made a presentation on the fundamentals of GeM. He also explained in detail the 10 start-up subsectors, tender identification and participation process.

Earlier in her welcome address, Ms. Nimeshika Natarajan, Assistant Director, World Trade Center Bhubaneswar spoke about the importance of creating a dynamic start-up ecosystem in India and urged start-up firms to get themselves registered with the digital portals for the benefit of their businesses and attain the deserved outreach for their innovation.

A lively question answer session added much value to the program.

**The webinar was held on July 2, 2021**

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## WTC Bhubaneswar facilitates CSR projects to promote SDGs

**W**orld Trade Centre Bhubaneswar facilitated a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) project for Indian Oil Corporation Limited to support the Swachh Bharat Campaign initiated by Government of India.

The program witnessed virtual workshops on crucial topics such as menstrual hygiene and green environment. The session on

menstrual hygiene and health was organized in association with Dr. Reddy's. Dr Arati Nayak, MD, FICOG, FMAS, FICMCH & Senior Consultant at BMC Hospital, Bhubaneswar, on behalf of Dr. Reddy's facilitated the session by explaining the importance of hygiene and also generated awareness on the associated health issues which could be a serious cause of concern with ageing. An interactive talk with the attendees about the related health issues

added value to the program. The session also discussed the manner in which one should deal with the social stigma associated with menstruation, thereby curbing the mental and physiological impact it poses.

The second session on green environment was conducted to emphasise the concept of reuse and recycling. Mrs. Bhavna Patnaik facilitated the online workshop on

paper recycling wherein she demonstrated the process and explained simple techniques for preparing numerous utility products such as bags, decorative crafts etc. using waste paper and newspaper.

The session enthused participants to make effective use of waste paper emerging out of their household and also made them think on small scale business opportunities in this field.

While inaugurating the session, Mr. Srinibas Patnaik, General Manager (HR), Indian Oil (Pipelines Division) highlighted South Eastern Region Pipelines (SERPL's) work in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and how Women and Child Development (WCD) occupy a central position in the organization's social commitment. He spoke on



**Dr. Arati Nayak**  
MD, FICOG, FMAS, FICMCH &  
Senior Consultant



**Mrs. Bhavna Patnaik**  
Educationalist



**Mr. Srinibas Patnaik**  
General Manager (HR)  
Indian Oil (Pipelines Division)

why corporates need to take up CSR interventions in an impactful manner, targeting specific issues of the society and why CSR is incomplete and ineffective without large scale participation of the stakeholders. Mr. S. K. Samal, Chief HR Manager, SERPL, Indian Oil Corporation Limited also expressed his views on the Corporation's initiatives which aimed at inclusive

and impactful development of the society as a whole with the SDGs to be achieved in the long run.

Mr. Gaurav Jain, Manager (CSR), IOCL SERPL, proposed vote of thanks.

**The webinar was held on July 11 & 12, 2021**



## Women Led Start-ups and SHGs exchange ideas at B2B session



**Mrs. Sanjukta Badhai**  
Evangelist, Start-up Odisha



**Mr. Sudhanshu Pradhan**  
GeM Business Facilitator-Odisha

India can accelerate its progress in sustainable development if more and more women are encouraged to pursue entrepreneurship. Women-owned business enterprises play a prominent role in society by inspiring other women and generating more employment opportunities in the country. Already, change in the demographic characteristics of business and economic growth of the country is

evident with the increasing presence of women as entrepreneurs. Programs such as Startup India result in strengthening the women entrepreneurship ecosystem, through policies and initiatives, and creation of enabling networks. In this series of handholding Start-ups, World Trade Center Bhubaneswar and Start-up Odisha organized a B2B session for women-led start-up firms and Self Help Groups (SHGs).

The session focused on SHGs under the Mission Shakti program of Government of Odisha, as well as women-led start-up firms registered under the Start-up Odisha program. The session provided an opportunity for Start-up firms and SHGs to interact and exchange information about their innovative products and services, thereby creating an opportunity for B2B transactions to take place.

During the event, Mr. Sudhanshu Pradhan, GeM Business Facilitator-Odisha made a presentation on the basic features and advantages of Government eMarketplace (GeM) platform. He explained in detail about registration and tender participation process on GeM portal. He spoke about Womaniya (GeM

portal for Women) which facilitates procurement officers in various government ministries, departments and CPSEs to promote procurement of common use goods and services from women entrepreneurs. Mr. Pradhan informed that products such as handicrafts and handloom, accessories, jute and coir products, home décor and office furnishings are categorized for ease-in-procurement. Womaniya on the GeM portal is an initiative to achieve

the government's objective of procuring 3% of total government procurement from women entrepreneurs.

Earlier, Mrs. Sanjukta Badhai, Evangelist, Start-up Odisha, in her welcome address, spoke about special benefits extended by Start-up Odisha to women-led start-ups. She also shared that out of more than 1000 start-up firms registered under the program more than 35%

were women-led start-ups. Mrs. Badhai further informed that both seed funding and financial aid is being facilitated by the agency for women led start-ups.

Mrs. Nimeshika Natarajan, Assistant Director, World Trade Center Bhubaneswar proposed vote of thanks.

**The webinar was held on July 14, 2021**

## Start-ups learn digital technologies for success & sustainability

In the new era of doing business amidst the pandemic, digital technologies invariably are to be the focus areas for an enterprise to succeed and sustain. Digital avenues have though posed a great challenge to the technical competency of the relatively incompetent enterprise owners and their work force. In this context, World Trade Center Bhubaneswar, in association with Start-up Odisha, organized a session on "AI, Digital Marketing & E-selling". The session was organized as part of an ongoing series. The session aimed at providing insights to aspiring entrepreneurs & start-ups on ways to explore artificial intelligence, social media and e-commerce platforms such as Amazon for bringing in success and sustainability to their enterprise.

Prof. Surya Mishra, Faculty, KIIT School of Management and Founder, Gilehrio, in his address, made a detailed presentation on social media and digital marketing strategies. He explained about having a balanced approach towards digital marketing and social marketing. He further stressed on the importance of building influence,

content development, attractive website, display and video. Prof. Mishra also highlighted the complete details of inbound marketing process like creating attraction to creating delighted customers and further converting strangers to promoters.

Mr. Deepak Kumar, Senior Associate, Amazon India-Bengaluru spoke about e-selling and how it has emerged as a major support system to the businesses and its customers

across the globe, especially in the existing pandemic situation. He further explained the special initiatives of Amazon for craftsmen and women, namely Amazon Saheli and Amazon Karigar platforms. Mr. Kumar shared the process and benefits of getting listed through these special platforms. He also explained the general vendor registration process for the advantage of the attending start-ups.

Ms. Sanat N Das, Founder and

Director - AI & Digital, Navonmesh Labs Pvt Limited, Bengaluru in her address, made a detailed presentation on artificial intelligence in marketing & promotions and use of AI for e-selling and digital marketing strategy for start-ups. She explained how AI could transform a business into a smart business and aid in providing personalized customer experiences. Ms. Das also explained the vital parameters for which AI could be put to effective use such as designing market campaigns, competition analysis, sales forecast and customer service which could

actually help an organization build its strength. She further touched upon topics such as data driven marketing strategy, hyper personalization of customer experience and retail demand forecasting.

Mr. Rashmi Ranjan, Coordinator, Start-up Odisha, in his initial address, spoke about the relevance of the topic to the current scenario. He shared the latest initiatives of Start-up Odisha such as fund stack which aims at easing funds to the upcoming start-ups. Further, Mr. Ranjan recommended making

products that are market fit for which the current platform could be an effective guide.

Earlier, Ms. Nimeshika Natarajan, Assistant Director, World Trade Center Bhubaneswar, in her welcome address, took the opportunity to speak on the significance of this subject as well as introduce the speakers.

**The webinar was held on July 23, 2021**

## Creating sustainable business through branding, GI and GeM

A good brand, a product with affirmative origin, composition & quality and a good marketplace are the key elements to build the base for a sustainable business. Odisha has many unique possessions in terms of art, craft, heritage, agricultural produce etc. For the start-ups of the state to gain their due visibility and market share to the maximum capacity, it is essential that they come up with

robust and unique product specifications which shall create an exclusive market share. In this context, World Trade Center Bhubaneswar, in association with Start-Up Odisha, organized a virtual workshop on "Implications & Significance of Branding, Geographical Indications & GeM for Start-Ups". The session marked the valedictory session of the series of five workshops on GeM which were

collaboratively organized by both organizations.

Dr. Kamalesh Mishra, Academician, Entrepreneur & President of Sea Food Exporters Association of India, Odisha Region, in his address, spoke about branding as an assurance and a promise made to the customer for providing a particular level of satisfaction. Trying to highlight the importance of branding, he spoke about why and how branding emerged. Dr. Mishra also explained the principles of branding which an enterprise needs to consider in order to leverage its benefit. He further explained why packaging is a vital part of branding and why understanding the product vis a vis the competitors is important, in order to bring out the difference with a unique value proposition and dynamic pricing strategies.

Dr. Anita Sabat, Managing Trustee, Odita Trust & Director-Sabat Exports, in her address, spoke about the invaluable treasures of India

under the Government of India slogan "Atulya Bharat ki Amulya Nidhi" meaning the invaluable treasures of incredible India. She shared examples of products from all over India which have Geographical Indications (GI) tags and spoke about the difference in the valuation of these products. Dr. Sabat also shared insights on the various identities possessed by handloom, handicraft, processed food products etc. which have a vital role in promoting those products across the global markets. She

further specified upon certain GI products from Odisha such as Pattachitra paintings and art work. While she deliberated on the process of identification of GI products, she also explained as to why GI is important for building a brand and for promotion of the products

Mr. Sudhashu Pradhan, Facilitator of Government E-marketplace for Odisha, in his presentation, highlighted the basics about GeM and highlighted its key features.

Earlier, Ms. Nimeshika Natarajan, Assistant Director, World Trade Center Bhubaneswar, in her welcome address, took the opportunity to introduce the subject and apprised the delegates about the support offered by the Center to the participating Start-ups and emerging enterprises.

**The webinar was held on July 29, 2021**

## Digital Economy to boost India's trade ties with Southeast Asian Region

Southeast Asia is home to some of the world's fastest growing economies. The digital technology sector is currently booming in Southeast Asia, thanks to the rapid development of Internet of Things (IoT) and IT infrastructure. Mature markets such as Singapore and Malaysia harbor diversified ecosystems for tech start-ups to grow by providing significant source of revenue for e-commerce and digital services companies.

Southeast Asia is experiencing rapid growth of the internet, digital, social media and mobile activities. With the growing number of internet users in most segments and most countries of the region, the digital sector is booming and attracting a lot of interest. In this context, World Trade Center Bhubaneswar, in collaboration with Quocent, Batoi Systems Pvt. Ltd, Electronic & Software Export Promotion Council of India and Sri Sri University organized a virtual session on "Exploring Business with South East Asia with a focus on Digital Economy, Electronics & Information Technology, with Malaysia as the focus country."



Mr. Ashwini Rath, CEO, Batoi Systems Pvt. Ltd., in his address, highlighted the significant focus on cloud computing, Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things (IoT) and other frontier technologies in the last decade. He deliberated on the importance and pushed for the adoption of latest technologies in production, logistics and also the entire supply chain. He asserted that the idea of Industry 4.0 led to new ways of doing things. Analysing the situation created by the pandemic,

he spoke about multiple challenges being faced especially by SMEs and how difficult it has become to avoid a break in such interdependent supply chains. He advocated for collaboration among SMEs across geographies as the need of the hour. "Complementing the capabilities to create a robust supply chain - this will ultimately trigger successful outcomes for survival. The business will then thrive too," he said.

Mr. Manas Panda, Director, Software

Technology Parks of India (STPI), Bhubaneswar, in his speech mentioned the various initiatives of STPI in IT and Electronics Sector. He showcased the infrastructure development and reforms that took place in Odisha over the years and how it has added to the services export potential of the state. He also highlighted the achievements of the sector for which STPI has been pivotal.

Mr. Gurmeet Singh, Executive Director, Electronic and Computer Software Export Promotion Council of India, in his speech, highlighted the progress in the IT sector, especially after the outbreak of the pandemic. He spoke about the progress of digitalization in India over an era and how the transformation through visions such as Digital India took shape, making India one of the fastest growing IT hub. While hailing the vast scope and intellectual strength of the country, particularly in the IT sector, he advocated an affordable yet inclusive and transformative approach for rapid growth of the sector.

Dr. Moses Wong Sin Fatt, President, World Consumer Protection Chamber of Commerce (WCPCC), Malaysia, in his address, shared details of WCPCC. While explaining the inception of the Chamber, Dr. Moses outlined its objective of helping the MSMEs get connected with genuine companies and save them from being scammed. He also spoke on Cyber Security as a crucial factor for the flourishing digital economy across the globe which shall further ensure to accelerate trade relations among nations.

Mr. Vicky Tham Chun Loong, Co-Founder - Popillol Sdn Bhd Digital Communication and Creative Head - Quocent, Malaysia, in his deliberation spoke about digitalization and how it helps in enhancing connectivity. He spoke about the availability of aids for creating better accessibility to the global markets. He explained how the pandemic served as a catalyst for business and trade between India and Malaysia.

Mr. Saswat Panda, CEO, Quocent, spoke in brief about his experience and entrepreneurial journey of

establishing business in Malaysia.

Prof. R.N. Satpathy, Director O/o Vice-Chancellor & Dean of the Faculty of Emerging Technologies and Science (In Special Charge), Sri Sri University, made a presentation on the opportunities available in digital economy in terms of digital entrepreneurship and the road ahead with the industry, education and the Government services available.

Earlier, Ms. Nimeshika Natarajan, Assistant Director, World Trade Center Bhubaneswar took the opportunity to welcome the guest speakers and attendees at the webinar. She highlighted the objective of the webinar and also shared details about the various facilities and services offered by World Trade Centers and its network across the South East Asian region. She also proposed vote of thanks.

**The webinar was held on August 24, 2021**

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## WTC Bhubaneswar observes World Trade Day 2021

**W**orld Trade Center Bhubaneswar observed World Trade Day 2021 marked by a discussion on the theme "Global Trade Leading Odisha across Borders". World Trade Day was observed with a view to create awareness on international trade and its impact on economic development and regional growth of the state.

World Trade Day celebration stood as a unique platform for entrepre-

neurs of the State of Odisha to learn and discuss key issues pertaining to global business. The program also helped the MSMEs of the State to explore export opportunities with other countries encouraging them to participate in International Trade. Ms. Rupa Naik, Executive Director, World Trade Center Mumbai, in her address, welcomed all the dignitaries to the program and spoke about the challenges posed to the MSMEs and international trade opportunities due to the COVID 19 pandemic.

While highlighting the economic progress of the state despite the pandemic situation, she urged the fraternity to emerge out of this scene in a successful manner.

Mr. Uday Narayan Das, IAS, Additional Secretary, MSME Department, Government of Odisha, spoke about the true potential of the state as far as exports are concerned. He highlighted the significant jump in exports of the state since the year



2016. He also elaborated on the various steps taken by the state government to accelerate production of export quality goods and highlighted how Odisha is one of the few states that is strengthening its export potential right from the district level.

Mr. Anand Mohan Mishra, Deputy DGFT, O/o Director General of Foreign Trade, Kolkata, made a presentation where he highlighted the positive impact of the pandemic on Chemicals, Pharma, IT and IT Enabled Services. He spoke about the need to integrate into global value chain and improving trade by avoiding protectionist measures. He further shared insights on the role of the government, the policy framework and about its endeavours to protect trade.

Dr. Ashis Dash, Director (Foreign Trade), Directorate General of Trade Remedies, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India, shared insights on industrial development of a region and how value addition is a critical aspect of it. He informed that planned and collaborative measures work towards better infrastructure to aid

in the advancement of exports. Mr. Muzzafar Shah Hanafi, Trade Commissioner, Consulate General of Malaysia, India, expressed his views on how the ASEAN has emerged as one of the most favourable regions of the world for exports. He spoke about the increase in the trade deficit during



the pandemic situation mostly due to significant decline in travel and larger deficit in transport, telecommunications, computer & information as well as the charges for the use of IP.

Mr. Pawan Sureka, Convenor, EEPC India (Cuttack Odisha Chapter), in his address, stressed upon the need to identify a strong dynamic catalyst for enhancing exports from the state. While lauding WTC Bhubaneswar for functioning as one such catalyst, he

urged the exporters and the Government to look at the 'One District One Product' formula with a focused approach to achieve greater success in international trade.

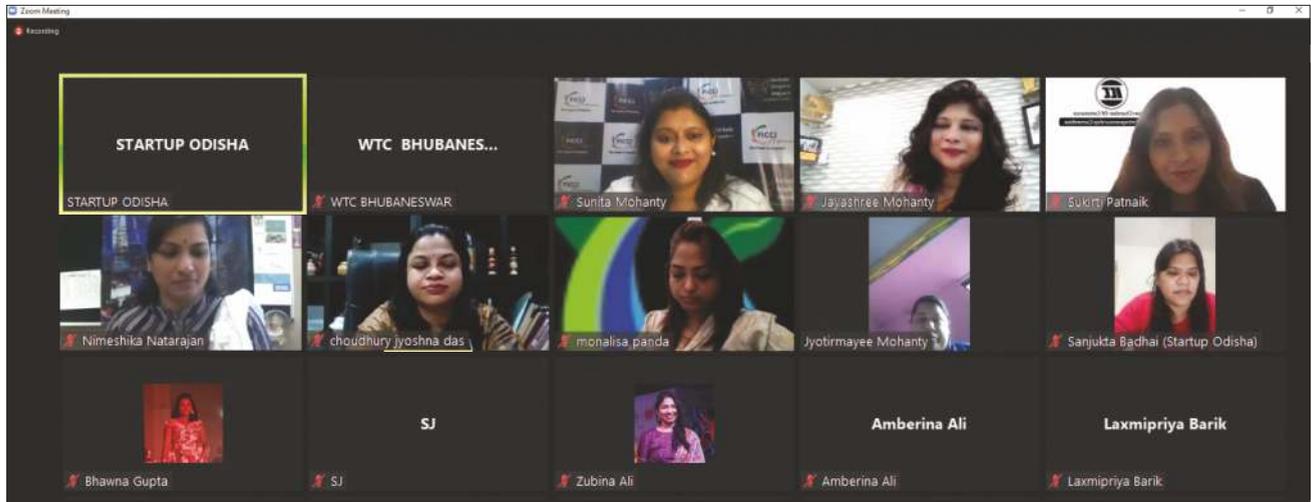
Mr. Y Sudheer, Regional Manager, Eastern Region, Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (ECGC) of India, in his address, spoke about ECGC's role in facilitating exports from the country and the various benefits provided by the Corporation to the exporters.

Mr. S.K. Jena, Director, Export Promotion and Marketing, Government of Odisha, in his address, spoke about Odisha as a favourable region for mega projects and also shared about establishment of State Promotion Councils. He outlined the potentials and achievements of the state on exports.

Ms. Nimeshika Natarajan, Assistant Director, World Trade Center Bhubaneswar proposed vote of thanks.

**The webinar was held on August 27, 2021**

## WTC Bhubaneswar Women Forum to Support Women Led Start-ups



The 2019 Google-Bain report estimated that women owned 13.5-15.7 million or 20% of all enterprises in India. Although the statistics does not reflect a strong women entrepreneurship ecosystem, it does somewhere underline the growing base of women owned businesses. Women-owned business enterprises are playing a prominent role in society, inspiring others and generating more employment opportunities in the country. In this context, World Trade Center Bhubaneswar's Women Forum became a part of Start-up Odisha's initiatives which is being framed by Government of Odisha. The Center was thus represented by its women forum in a virtual session by Start-up Odisha which aimed to discuss the pertinent issues being faced by Women Entrepreneurs and the measures being taken in order to ease their path of doing business. The session also aimed to invite valuable suggestions from the stakeholders.

Mrs. Sanjukta Badhai, Evangelist, in

her address, spoke about the various initiatives being framed by Government of Odisha specifically for Women led Start-Ups. She highlighted the recent financial grants which have been made available to these Start-ups and further spoke about the upcoming program "She Hub" of Government of Odisha. She illustrated that the hub shall provide need-based assistance to women and would be covered under the "O Hub" program of the government which shall provide physical infrastructure facilities as well as facilitate incubation support as well.

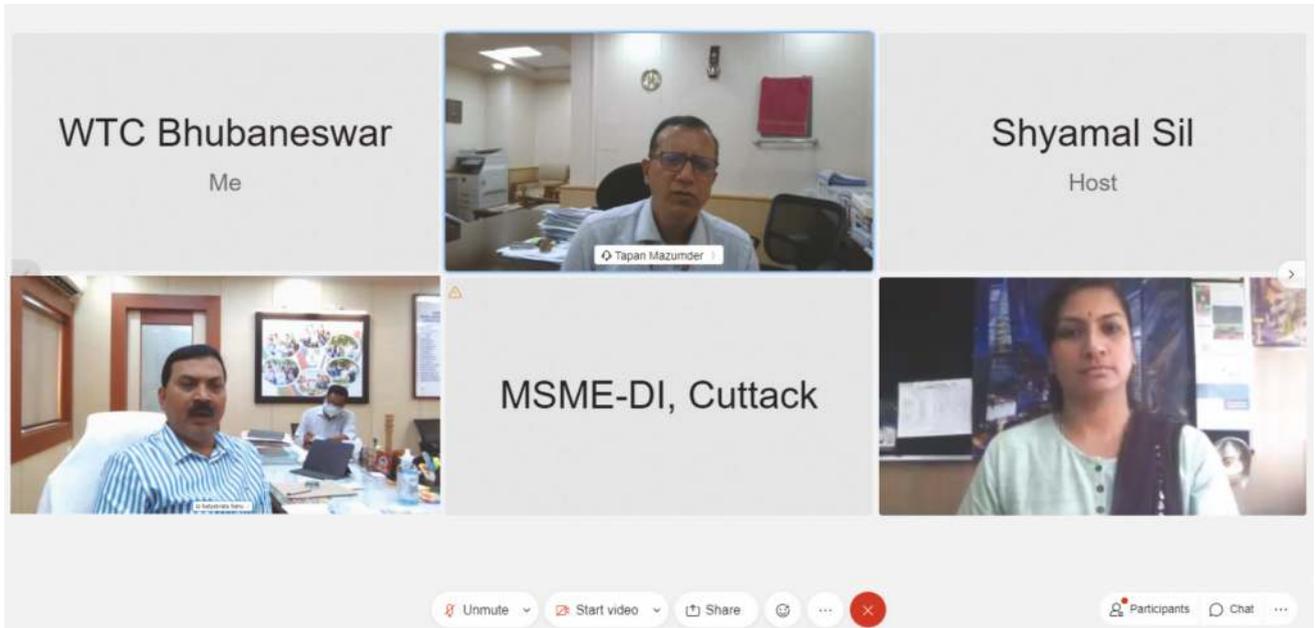
Mrs. Jyosha Das, Founder, Bivabari and Convenor of WTC Bhubaneswar Women Forum, in her address, made a detailed presentation on the various initiatives undertaken so far by the forum. She highlighted on certain vital assistance and facilitation services being provided by the forum to the women entrepreneurs registered under WTC Bhubaneswar. She spoke on how women entrepreneurs, with the

assistance of the WTC network, can connect to global platforms, network internationally and participate in global exhibitions. She further urged the attending women entrepreneurs to take advantage of the forum for creating effective market linkages both nationally and internationally. She also proposed key suggestions to the Start-Up Odisha for effective handholding of women led start-up firms and offered all feasible support to them by WTC Bhubaneswar Women Forum.

Other members from the industry including Ms. Jayashree Mohanty, Member Startup Taskforce & Chairwoman, CII- IWN (Odisha Chapter) and Ms. Sukirti Patnaik, Convenor, IWECC, Bhubaneswar also spoke about the initiatives for women empowerment undertaken by their respective organizations.

**The webinar was held on September 6, 2021**

## WTC Bhubaneswar members share grievances with government officials



World Trade Center Bhubaneswar actively participated in a virtual meeting called by the office of Additional Director General of Foreign Trade, New Delhi & Department of MSME, Government of Odisha. The primary objective of the meeting was to provide opportunity to the exporters to share their grievances in the post COVID situation and also to suggest policy measures to address these challenges.

World Trade Center Bhubaneswar facilitated participation of its exporter members in the meeting and was represented by Dr. Kamlesh Mishra, President, Sea Food Exporters Association of India Odisha Region and Mr. Rajen Padhi, Commercial Director, B-One Sea

Food Exporters. Major issues such as release of funds under MIES scheme, logistics issues with containers stuck at trade borders, inconveniences in the export documentation & clearance processes etc. were discussed by them in an interactive format.

Mr Tapan Mazumdar, Additional DGFT, New Delhi, in his address, spoke about the enormous support mechanisms being offered by the Central Government for enhancing exports from the country. While speaking about the challenges posed by COVID to international trade, he deliberated on the various schemes developed by the DGFT for handholding exporters during this challenging period. He urged the state government to work in collaboration with the central

government in implementing the initiatives being taken up and also support exporters.

Mr. Satyabrata Sahu, IAS, Principal Secretary, Department of Micro Small & Medium Enterprises, Government of Odisha exchanged views on strengthening the export ecosystem in the state. He suggested the Central Government to re-establish DGFT office in the state. The government officers present in the meeting took note of these issues and assured appropriate policy measures to address them.

**The webinar was held on September 15, 2021** ■

## WTC Bhubaneswar urges Tokyo Embassy to promote goods of Odisha



**W**orld Trade Center (WTC) Bhubaneswar, in collaboration with Department of Commerce/ DGFT and Indian Oilseed and Produce Export Promotion Council (IOPEPC) organised an interactive session with the Embassy of India (EoI), Tokyo. The objective of the session was to showcase and promote exportable goods from Odisha to Japan.

Mr. Mayank Joshi, Deputy Chief, Embassy of India (EoI), Tokyo opened the session with his address where he spoke about the trade relations between India and Japan. He added that the major exports from India to Japan are Granite, Cashew, Rice and Chemical products. He also mentioned that bilateral trade is being given renewed momentum with special agreements and provisions being drawn up for easing the trade process. Mr. Joshi further deliberated that both the nations are working towards skill matching and recruitments are being done from India. He also helped identify channels to source authentic trade

partners and experts who can guide the entrepreneurs on the export potential of their products.

WTC Bhubaneswar facilitated a part of the session by showcasing unique products which have immense export potential and

highlighted some of them during the session. Such products include silver filigree (Tarakashi) from Cuttack, Odisha, the prominent weaves of handlooms from Odisha, Handicraft products which are hand crafted and painted with ancient history, heritage and culture.

Mr. Bharat Ganatra represented Cuttack Tarakashi Association and spoke about the famous silver filigree work, also known as TARAKASI of Cuttack and explained how it had been developed more than 500 years ago. He explained how the artisans of Baniyasi and Mangalabag create beautiful artworks and artefacts using this technique and how it is used quite often on the idols of Goddess. He further drew attention to the cluster existing in Cuttack since ages making filigree items and few craftsmen endowed with twilling skills which are best in the world. "The highly skilled handmade items produced by a few very old craftsmen has great potential for the export market," mentioned Mr. Ganatra.

Ms. Jyoshna Das, Founder, Bivabari,

presented Odisha as one of the prominent states in the Handloom & Textiles map of the country. She highlighted how the sector is providing livelihood to the people in rural Odisha. She also explained about the making of the famous handloom products of the state like the silk ikkat weave. She highlighted Sambalpur, which is famous for its Sambalpuri sarees, as one of the famous centres for Odisha handloom. Ms. Das concluded her speech by explaining how she is creating sustainable and fashionable products out of the handloom.

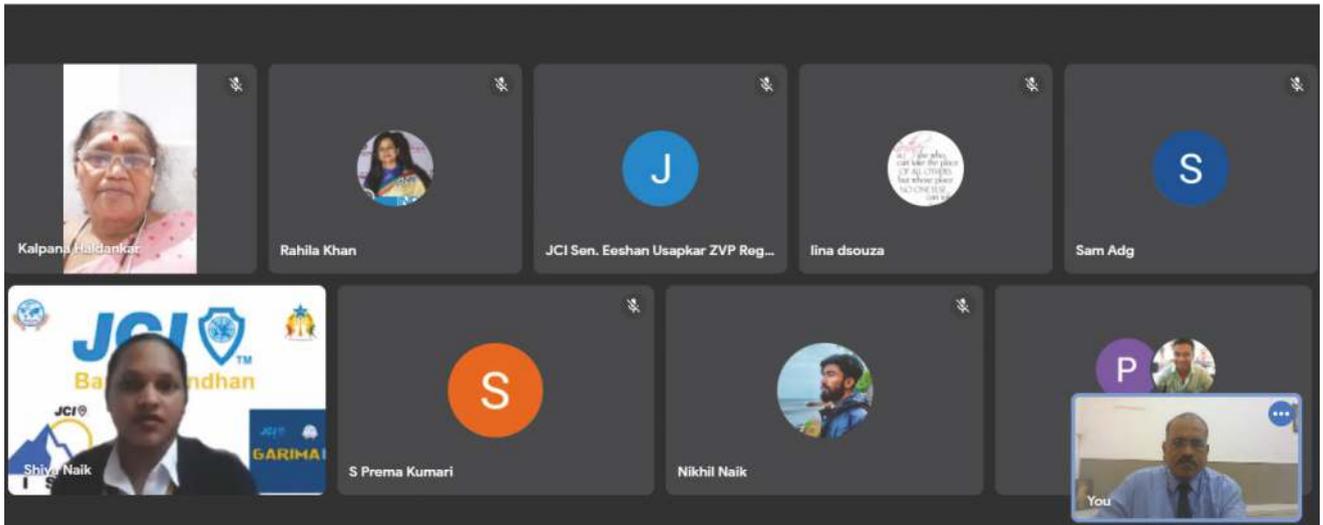
Mrs. Smaranika Mohapatra, Founder, Maavni Designs & Ms. Shiny Khuntia, Founder, Folkmate, represented handicraft products. Ms. Mohapatra remarked that hand painted and hand crafted home decor products are the pride of Odisha. She spoke about the Popular Arts and Handicrafts of Odisha which include Pattachitra, among others. Ms. Khuntia showcased unique handmade Paper Mache products and palm leaf work which were eco friendly and hand painted.

Ms. Nimeshika Natarajan, Assistant Director, World Trade Center Bhubaneswar concluded the session by seeking assistance from the Indian Embassy in Tokyo for enhancing the visibility of these products and establish channels which would benefit local exporters.

**The webinar was held on September 22, 2021**

■

## WTC Goa advises Startups in reaching Global Markets



The Startup ecosystem needs timely hand holding and value addition to bring out the best in them in order to thrive and succeed. Keeping this in mind World Trade Center Goa in association with Junior Chamber International (JCI) Bardez Bandhan, organised a webinar titled 'Startups in Goa and Market Expansion'

Ms. Priti Kerkar, Internal Mentor, District Rural Development Agency, (DRDA) Government of Goa, in her address stressed on the fact that all entities engaged in the food and beverage sector in a tourist State like Goa must have a proper license to operate. She urged delegates to follow the guidelines of the FDA in order to avoid compliance issues. While informing about the important documents and supportings required to obtain the food and beverage licenses, Ms. Kerkar highlighted that submitting an NOC from the local Panchayat to the Food and Drug Administration is mandatory, without which the formal license process cannot begin. She concluded her speech by offering

her services to all startups facing challenges in getting the required licenses.

Startups also face a challenge as far as reaching a large market segment is concerned and Mr. Werner Egipsy Souza of SPARK+Technologies spoke on "Digital Baila" an online collaboration and marketplace platform for women entrepreneurs who could enhance their market reach and also interact with other women entrepreneurs in a seamless manner. Mr. Souza further informed that this platform has a very user friendly interface, and gave a detailed explanation about the same. He highlighted that this platform will enhance business opportunities for women entrepreneurs which could not only benefit the stakeholders but also the society at large. He hoped that more women entrepreneurs from across India could join the platform and in future women entrepreneurs from across the globe too could take advantage of the ecosystem that this platform offers.

Mr. Cyril Desouza, Assistant Director

- Trade Promotion, World Trade Center Goa, while addressing on the topic 'Get your Product from Local to National and International Market' highlighted that startups could succeed in the local market by observing their competition and the products and services they offer. The must also attend networking events, offer good customer service etc. He explained that the local market should act as a testing ground for building a brand and a product. Once the product is successful in the local market the entrepreneur should then try and sell the product or service in the national market. One can do so by taking part in Trade Fairs, acquiring a business in another state, joining a National Chamber of Commerce etc. Mr. Desouza pointed out that success in the local and national market gives the start up an advantage when entering International Markets, as part of the fixed costs of the company can be recovered from the domestic market and this would give them an edge in competitively pricing their products in the International Market. He further

explained that, to successfully take products to the international markets, it is imperative for an entrepreneur to learn and understand the culture of the country he wishes to sell his products in, a good Training in nuances of International Trade, Taking Part in International Exhibitions and membership with International Trade Bodies like World Trade Center Goa would all go

a long way in helping Entrepreneurs expand their product sales in International Markets. Mr. Desouza concluded his speech by informing the delegates about virtual courses on foreign trade and logistics held by the World Trade Center Mumbai, which are sure to help entrepreneurs prepare to enter international markets.

The webinar was moderated by Ms. Shiya Naik, President, Bardez Bandhan who also conducted a lively interactive session with the participants where in all their doubts and queries were addressed.

**The webinar was held on July 14, 2021**

## Experts discuss benefits for traders under revised MSME definition



On 2nd July, 2021, the Ministry of MSME, Government of India issued a circular accepting the long standing demand of including retail and wholesale traders under the MSME (Micro Small and Medium Enterprises) classification. This policy move makes retail and wholesale traders eligible for benefits as conferred under the priority sector lending by banks and financial institutions as per the guidelines set out by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

With the objective of feeling the pulse of the Retail and Trading community on this momentous

change, World Trade Center Goa organized a virtual panel session titled 'TRADEwins' which was moderated by Mr. Vikant Sahay, Senior Journalist based in Goa. The panel consisted of eminent personalities drawn from banking & finance, retail and automobile sectors.

Mr. Bhuvanish Sheth, Director, Mall De Goa, expressed that the Ministry of MSME, Government of India has taken an appropriate step by once again bringing sectors such as retail, trading etc. under the ambit of the MSME classification. He revealed that small retailers and traders will now be eligible for more benefits,

especially under the Priority Sector Lending norms of the RBI and they will now be able to expand their business, create more jobs, make more products available for consumption and thus make a positive impact on the economic development of the country.

Mr. Evencio Quadros, CEO & Promoter, Quadros Autotech Ltd. supported this move of the government. He expressed that this move would give a major boost to the automobile sector since it was looking forward to such kind of reclassification for a long time. Mr. Quadros further opined that the auto sector was one of the barometers through which the robustness of the economy could be measured and this step would surely help both, the automobile service sector as well as the Indian economy.

Mr. Pankaj Kumar, Chief Manager, State Bank of India, Commercial Branch, Panaji pointed out that now banks can offer priority sector lending to more MSMEs who will stand to gain tremendously from this move. He was also of the view that if required and authorised by

the Government of India, a help desk for the new entrants into the MSME fold could be set up. The lower rate of interest and faster processing of loans were some of the benefits that the trader and retail sector could benefit from under the priority sector lending norm of RBI.

Earlier in his introductory remarks, Mr Cyril Desouza, World Trade

Center Goa expressed hoped to see more benefits being given to the wholesale and retail sector on their re-entry into the classification as MSMEs. Mr. Desouza also apprised the participants of the forthcoming programmes of WTC Goa scheduled for the Month of August 2021.

The panel discussion ended with a lively question and answer session

between the speakers and the participants.

**The virtual panel discussion was held on July 17, 2021**

## Goan exporters explore trade opportunities with Benin

The world today is a complex marketplace and each country is trying its best to get a better understanding of the heritage, culture, fashion, trends, likes and dislikes of the citizens of other nations, so that they can find international markets for their goods and services.

In order to fulfill this objective and to facilitate bilateral trade, World Trade Center Goa organised a webinar to explore untapped trade potential between Goa and the west African country Benin. The webinar was addressed by senior officials from The Directorate General of Foreign Trade, Goa State Biodiversity Board, Goa Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Goa Chamber of Commerce - Women's Wing, Goa Cashew Manufacturer's Association and the National Council of Cashew Exporters of Benin.

Goa can offer Benin a host of products and services which include agro commodities, pharmaceuticals, IT and engineering, to name a few. However, in order to take the first step, this webinar concentrated on the agriculture sector where trade potential in two major crops viz. rice

from Goa and Cashew from Benin were discussed.

In his introductory remarks, Mr. Cyril Desouza, Assistant Director - Trade Promotion, World Trade Center Goa shared the objective of the webinar with the delegates. He also spoke about the strengths of Goa and Benin which could benefit the export of rice from Goa and the import of Cashew from Benin.

Mr. Anil Velde, DGM- Trade Promotion and Marketing, WTC Mumbai, in his opening remarks, spoke about the significant strides that have been taken in bilateral trade between India and Benin since the historical visit of India's Hon'ble President in the year 2019. He informed that currently there are close to 90 Indian companies successfully operating in Benin and the E-Visa facility that has been made available has significantly helped trade between the two nations.

Mr. Ramesh Holeyachi, Joint Director of Foreign Trade, O/o DGFT Mumbai, in his address, said that India and Benin are two secular and democratic countries having good trade

relations with each other. He went on to speak about the line of credit of USD 50 million made available to Benin by Government of India to help build its information technology ecosystem. He further mentioned about the allocation of HS Code 120 onwards that gave certain concessions to agricultural products on transportation. Mr. Holeyachi informed that the Indian Embassy in Nigeria looks into all trade related matters between India and Benin.

Dr. Pradip Sarkokadam, Member Secretary - Goa State Biodiversity Board, in his address, spoke about the rich agricultural resources that Goa has, especially the 43 varieties of rice that are available. He went on to say that the projects currently under Biodiversity resources include Rice, Banana, Coconut, Cashew and Jackfruit. Dr. Sarmokadam concluded his speech emphasising, "We need to cultivate the land in a sustainable way so as to keep it fertile for a long period of time."

Mr. Mahesh Patil, Chairperson - Goa Chamber of Commerce and Industry, (GCCCI) - Agriculture Committee, and Founder and Managing Director - N V Eco Farms



## Services export has untapped potential in Goa

WORLD TRADE CENTER  
GOA

Invites you to a webinar -  
**"Panel Discussion on Potential of Services Exports from Goa."**  
 14<sup>th</sup> August, 2021  
 11.30 am to 12.30 noon

**Esteemed Panelist**

**Mr. Prasad Sawant**  
 Associate Member, World Trade Center Goa & CEO  
 Buoyancy Consultants & Engineering LLP

**Mr. Girish Bharne**  
 Vice President- Engineering & Centre Head, Persistent Systems Ltd.

**Mr. Ashutosh Kharangate**  
 Associate Member, World Trade Center Goa & Managing Director  
 Mangal Analytics & Research Consulting Pvt Ltd

**Nirmal Sanzagiri**  
 Associate Member, World Trade Center Goa & Founder & CEO  
 Revati Consultancy Services Engineering and Management Consultants

**Sectors in Focus**

Information Technology (IT)  
Ship Design & Repair

Engineering Consultancy

Marine offshore Design & Engineering  
Financial Services

The beautiful state of Goa is majorly known for Tourism, Pharmaceuticals, Agro and the currently non operation Mining sector. However, a lesser known fact is that services export is a growing sector which is slowly but surely adding to the exports basket from Goa. Sectors such as Ship Design, Information Technology, Consultancy and Engineering services hold strong export potential and are adding their bit to the vibrancy of Goa's export basket.

In this backdrop, World Trade Center Goa organised a virtual Panel Discussion on 'Potential of Services Exports from Goa',

Mr. Prasad Sawant, Associate Member, World Trade Center Goa & CEO, Buoyancy Consultants & Engineering LLP, Mr. Girish Bharne, Vice President- Engineering & Centre Head, Persistent Systems Ltd.,

Mr. Ashutosh Kharangate, Associate Member, World Trade Center Goa & Managing Director, Mangal Analytics & Research Consulting Pvt Ltd and Mr. Nirmal Sanzagiri, Associate Member, World Trade Center Goa & Founder & CEO, Revati Consultancy Services Engineering and Management Consultants made up the esteemed panel which was moderated by Mr. Cyril Desouza, Assistant Director - Trade Promotion, World Trade Center Goa.

Mr. Prasad Sawant, in his speech, informed that India has a miniscule share of 0.4% in the global market for shipbuilding, off shore design, ship management and Ship life cycle management. The global market for this sector is dominated by Japan, China and South Korea which together command a whopping 70% of the market. He further informed that almost 95% of his firm's revenue is derived from the international market. Mr. Sawant was of the view that Goa has an ecosystem that can cater very well to this sector, however, proper planning, calibrated investment in infrastructure and technology combined with a mindset change would be a game changer for this sector.

Mr. Girish Bharne, while sharing his views on the IT sector, said that his firm too is solely driven by the revenues generated in the international markets. The need for

digitalization from global companies is fuelling demand and growth for his entity. Mr. Bharne mentioned that reaching out to and helping companies develop their own products will help them meet the challenges of their digital journey and also shore up revenues of firms from Goa operating in this sector. He further opined that to succeed in international markets, Goan firms need to work on different business models, work out their unique selling propositions and also cut costs by using available resources to the optimum.

The Consultancy and Financial sector too has a very good potential for services exports from Goa said Mr. Ashutosh Kharangate, while sharing his insights on this vital service sector. He said that business analytics, market research, project feasibility reports, services in mergers and acquisitions are some key drivers that can propel this vertical to its full potential and firms in Goa are capable of doing full justice in this area. Further, Mr. Kharangate said that the bulk of his firm's international revenue is derived from the North American, European and the Middle Eastern markets. Mr. Kharangate foresees that engineering research and development is a vital segment that will help augment Goa's market share in this sector in the coming years.

The Engineering Services sector in Goa, especially the Petroleum and Chemicals division, has limited opportunities in the Goan arena, said Mr. Nirmal Sanzagiri, while discussing the potential for this sector. This is exactly the reason why his firm operates mainly in the

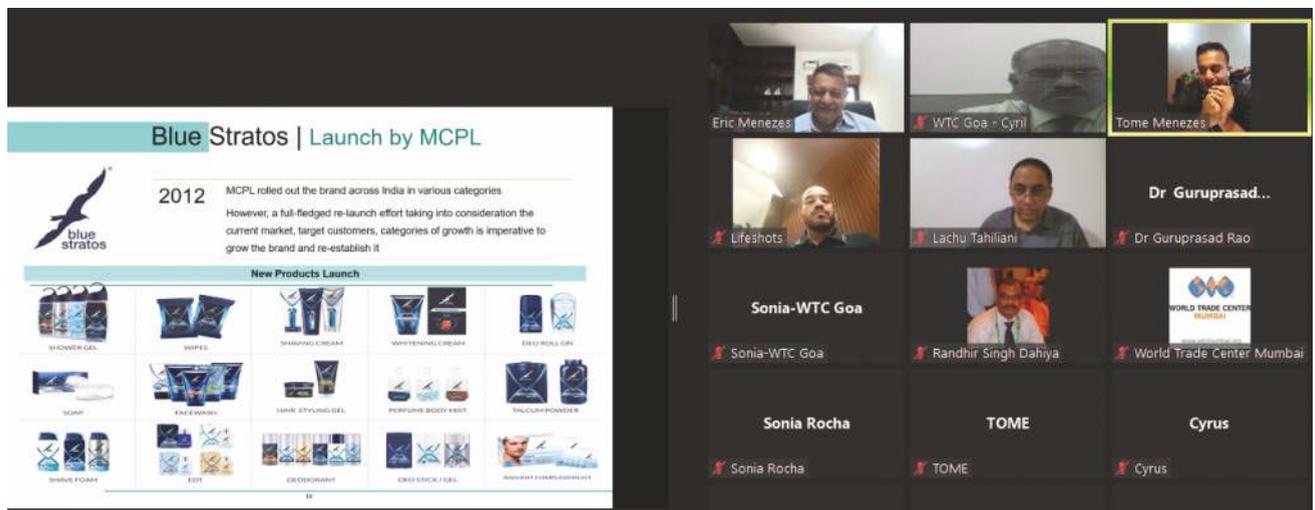
international market to tap the vast opportunities that are available there, Mr. Sanzagiri added. His firm earns almost 60% of its revenues from the international markets. He further added that a range of services such as engineering consultation, quality management, process design, technical safety, risk analysis and process due diligence

are some of the services that have a very high demand in the International markets. Mr. Sanzagiri emphasized that there is a dire need for a more efficient dialogue between industry and academia so that more engineers, especially in the chemical engineering sector, can be trained in Goa to meet the growing demand in the global

market. This would also help Goa gain more market share and reap the windfalls of better revenue, he concluded.

**This webinar was held on August 14, 2021**

## Webinar puts spotlight on investment opportunities in Goa



The beautiful western state of Goa has immense potential for trade and investment in manufacturing, services and agro-processing industries. In order to create awareness about the investment potential in the state, World Trade Center Goa organised an interactive meeting on this subject. The event was attended by delegates from World Trade Center Savannah, World Trade Center Las Vegas, World Trade Center Algiers and members of other World Trade Centers across the globe.

During the event, members of WTC Goa exchanged information about trade and investment potential in Goa with the participating delegates

from other World Trade Centers. Members of the participating World Trade Centers sought information about the sectors that hold untapped growth potential in Goa and assured their assistance in promoting investment in these sectors from potential investors.

A key highlight of the event was an interactive session between MPCL Pvt Ltd., which is an Associate Member Company of World Trade Center Goa, with its potential investors. WTC Goa identified 11 potential investors for MPCL Pvt Ltd, which operates in men's grooming industry since 1968. The company has a long association of nearly four decades with the world renowned

brand Old Spice and it wanted to spread its market reach to 30 countries across the globe for its acquired iconic brand Blue Stratos.

These 11 potential investors held a fruitful discussion with the promoters of MPCL Pvt. Ltd. to understand more about the company and conduct a due diligence before making a final call on investing in the company. MPCL Pvt. Ltd is looking to raise capital to ramp up production and expand global footprint.

**The webinar was held on August 17, 2021.**

## Members from Ponda Region suggest focused meetings



The COVID-19 pandemic has turned most of our interactions online on account of the restrictions that were imposed on travel and physical meetings.

However, in September 2021, taking into consideration the relaxations in the restrictions, World Trade Center Goa kicked off its physical meetings organizing an interactive meeting with its Associate Members from the Ponda Region of Goa.

The objective of the meeting was to bring into focus the current situation of COVID-19 and chalk out a way forward for promoting both local as well as global trade.

Rich inputs were received from members present at the meeting. All

the members agreed that such physical interactive meetings helped them to interact with each other at a much deeper level and have a better understanding of the products and services that each one has to offer, and how they could leverage their inherent strengths to enhance their business potential.

Further, the members deliberated on topics such as working smart rather than hard, showcasing and marketing of products and services, importance of smart and better packaging, best regional products, encouraging investments, organizing hands on trainings etc.

Members introduced their products and services and urged the functionaries of WTC Goa to organise

seminars, interactive meetings and exhibitions for the region once the pandemic restrictions are completely removed. This would help showcase the strengths of each respective member.

The members also suggested that a plan be worked out to initially organize such focused interactive meetings in different parts of Goa and then in prominent locations of India, and further depending on the success, this concept could also be taken to select countries across the globe.

Ponda, Margao, Panaji, Vasco and Mapusa were the places shortlisted for such meetings in Goa. Whereas Mumbai, Pune, Nashik and Coimbatore were the initial names of prominent national locations that were suggested to organize these focused interactive meetings pan India.

The meeting concluded with a working lunch.

**The meeting was held at Hotel Menino, Ponda Goa on September 3, 2021** ■

## Goa poised to offer Sheet Metal Engineering solutions to the Globe

There are a host of Goan Business verticals that could increase their footprints globally. Go-a-TRADE is a webinar series that will showcase the export potential of these business verticals through different episodes of webinars organized virtually.

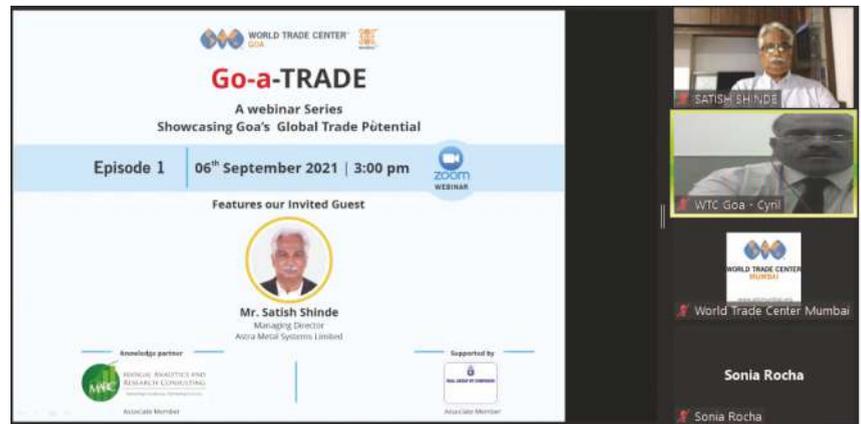
The first Episode of Go-a-TRADE was addressed by Mr. Satish Shinde, Managing Director, Astra Metal Systems Limited who is considered the doyen of Sheet Metal and Fabrication services in Goa. The focus of the webinar was Engineering Exports from Goa.

In his speech, Mr. Shinde mentioned about the severe challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic due to which there is a dearth of qualified labour with the right skills and mindsets. However, he expressed that this could be a boon for Goa, as job opportunities for skilled

personnel from Goa would receive a boost.

Most of the demand for Engineering Services is generated through Multinational Companies (MNCs) who want their suppliers to be in close proximity to their plants and this entails a huge capital expenditure for Goan Business entities to set shop globally. However, Mr. Shinde felt that this could be a boon as well as a bane for the Goan entrepreneurs. Boon because there will be greater demand for investments and bane because most engineering firms would find it tough to raise the required funds.

Mr. Shinde further highlighted that the success of his company is attributed to the new ways it has worked out to reduce costs, focus on quality and increase efficiency,



which have helped in making it competitive in the global markets.

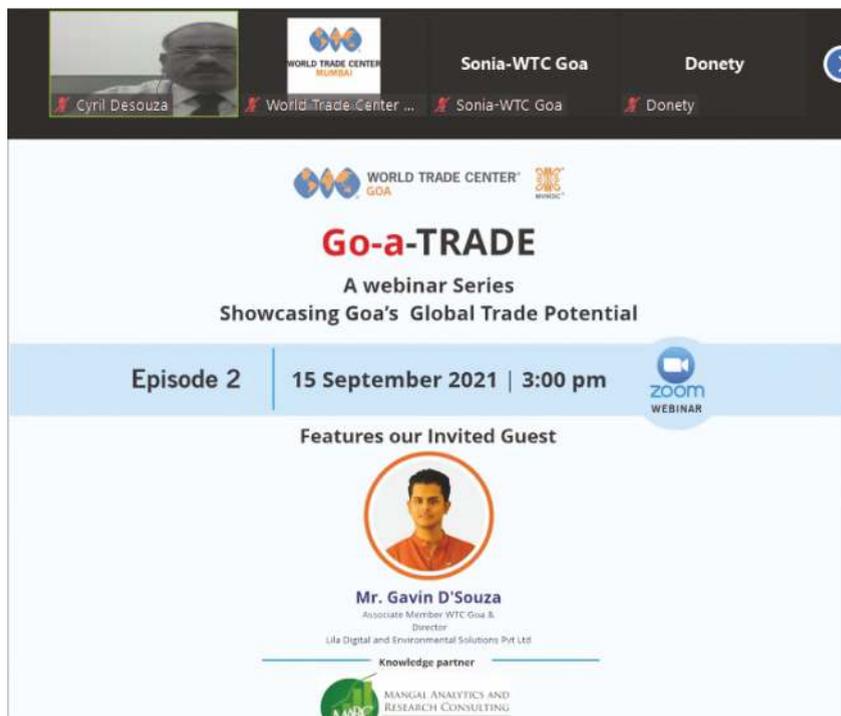
The Global Automotive Industry would greatly benefit from the Services of the Goan Engineering entities and with their rich experience of working with MNCs like Siemens, Cromptons and IFB, to name a few, Astra Metal Systems

Limited is poised to lead the Engineering Exports from Goa.

The webinar was attended by entrepreneurs from the engineering industry and academic institutions in Goa.

**The webinar was held on September 6, 2021**

## Goan firms can explore market for Engineering Service Export



World Trade Center Goa has been conducting a series of webinars on the theme “Go-a TRADE” to explore potential sectors in products and services for export from Goa. The discussions in these webinars will help contribute to the growth of exports from Goa.

The second webinar of the series featured Mr. Gavin D’Souza, Director, Lila Digital and Environmental Solutions Pvt. Ltd., who shared his views on the potential of the Environmental Engineering Services sector. He informed that the United Nations (UN) has estimated that there are 37 places around the globe that will face water shortage in the coming decades and the solutions for such

problems have to be worked as soon as possible with the help of Environmental Engineering.

He further explained, "Across the globe, there will be demand for that one key player who will monitor the entire process, from design to maintenance and also ensuring that all compliances are met. Firms from Goa could play a vital role in providing this service globally; which fits well with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 6, which is Clean Water and Sanitation."

Further, Mr. D'Souza explained that today environment is a global investment goal and fund managers are now slowly reducing and phasing out investments in non compliant or polluting companies and looking into rain water harvesting solutions

which will play a vital role in environmental sustainability. "Goa could take a lead in providing these services to the global markets," opined Mr. Dsouza.

Mr. D'Souza also highlighted how his company Lila Digital and Environment Solution came into existence. Speaking about his company, he mentioned that it is a one stop turnkey service provider which deals in storm water runoff, stagnation of water, sewage water treatment plant for large companies , effluent treatment plant, farming etc. He also stressed on the fact that his company was a distributor of Rain water irrigation system (having drip irrigation) which saves 50 to 60% of rainwater.

Mr. D'Souza concluded his speech by suggesting that R&D Support from

the government and the private sector, client referrals and an ecosystem to keep track and promote the work done in the Environmental Engineering Service sector will be vital for its growth and success.

Mr. Gavin D'Souza's views were collated by Mr. Cyril Desouza, Assistant Director - Trade Promotion, World Trade Center Goa who conducted the interview on the Zoom Platform

**The webinar was held on September 15, 2021**

## Goa has good potential for export of e-waste recycling services

Managing electronic waste is a global challenge that each country is trying to find solutions for, to avoid any upcoming environmental hazard in the near future. However, going forward, this challenge could also be a base for new and emerging business verticals in the form of recycling of the same.

To get an insight into this particular vertical, WTC Goa's Go-a-TRADE, Episode 3, of a series of webinars, focused on the Battery E-Waste recycling business vertical to discuss the potential of Goa to be a worthy player in this segment.

This episode was addressed by Mr. Ashley Delaney, Founder Member, Group 10 Plus which is a very

The screenshot shows a Zoom meeting with participants Cyril Desouza, Ashley Delaney, Sonia WTC, and World Trade Center. The main content is a slide titled "There are three fundamental ways to recycle Li-ion Batteries:"

- Mechanical:**
  - In this process the Li-Ion cells are mechanically processed
  - Only base metals like Copper, Aluminum, Iron and Plastics are recovered in this process
  - Black mass which contains Cobalt, Nickel, Lithium, Graphite etc is also separated
  - No further extraction is possible in this process
  - Black mass is sold to companies engaged in the other two process as described below
- Metallurgical:**
  - In this process al Li-Ion Cells are fed into the smelter
  - Umicore and Glencore follow this process
  - Because of the low melting point of Lithium, Lithium gets lost in slag and is not recovered
  - Using this process only Cobalt & Nickel can be recovered at 90%+ extraction efficiency
  - High Capex & High Opex process
  - Typically used by traditional smelting companies who are diversifying their input streams
  - Using this process low end Li-Ion calls like LFP (\*Which have 0% Cobalt & Nickel) cant be recycled profitably so the companies following this process charge a tipping fee for recycling low end Li-Ion cells
- Chemical (Hydro):**
  - In this process chemical leaching process are used for extraction of metals
  - Due to the complex reactions during recovery the extraction efficiency at commercial plants today is not more than 50% for Cobalt, Nickel & Lithium
  - Most new startup are experimenting using this process

At the bottom of the slide, the ATTERO logo is visible along with the text: "All content is the proprietary and confidential property of ATTERO, not to be copied or distributed." and the number 12.

successful Goan entity in the segment of E-Waste recycling.

Early in his career, Mr. Delaney was attracted to the world of electronics and computers. He sensed a business opportunity in the recycling of computers and electronic gadgets when he discovered that the manner in which they were being junked could pose a huge challenge to the environment.

"The lithium ion batteries are currently very popular and they power mobile phones to automobiles. These batteries have an advantage of holding large amount of electric power with a small

capacity. At the same time, their recycling is very difficult and this is where Goa can make a huge difference," suggested Mr. Delaney.

Countries in North America, Europe and Australia have very stringent rules and regulations related to disposal of E-Waste despite their culture of use and throw. Emphasis is on proper recycling facilities as well as proper handling of E-Waste.

Finland, Singapore, Canada and the USA are some of the countries where Goan Business professionals could look to set up recycling plants for harnessing the opportunities that this vertical has to offer.

The huge opportunity for research available in India, coupled with a more liberal licensing regime will benefit the companies venturing into this vertical. The availability of qualified personnel in Goa will also give a boost to employment opportunities, said Mr. Delaney.

**The webinar was held on September 21, 2021**



### World Trade Center (Goa) Association

A part of World Trade Centers Association, New York, which is an unparalleled Network of 323 WTCs in 90 Countries connecting 1 million businesses across the world, now in Goa.

## Connect Locally Trade Globally

### OBJECTIVE

- ✿ Facilitates Trade and Investment
- ✿ Provides Training and Educational Programmes
- ✿ Promotes Competitiveness through Research and Trade Promotional Activities

**SMEs, Corporate Houses, Institutions and Professionals with a focus on International Trade are invited to join this global network**

Administrative office:

**WORLD TRADE CENTER (GOA) ASSOCIATION**  
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WE GROW TRADE®



## Experts discuss role of skill development in promoting leather exports



**W**orld Trade Center Jaipur, in association with Sector Trade Courses Committee - Leather Sector (a committee formed by the Directorate General of Training, New Delhi) organized a virtual stakeholder consultation meeting. The event brought together subject matter experts from Government training institutions, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, sector specific councils, industry leaders, researchers, trade facilitators and technology services providers to discuss the importance of skill development to promote leather exports.

Ms. Rinku Soni, Training Officer, NSTI W, Jaipur, in her speech, introduced the National Skill Training Institute (NSTI) and mentioned that its objective is to train ITI students in the country. She further informed that vocational training facilities through National Skill Training Institutes have been established through a network of 14 NSTIs and 18 NSTI (W) at Noida, Mumbai, Bangalore,

Trivandrum, Panipat, Kolkata, Tura, Indore, Allahabad, Vadodara, Jaipur, Rajpura, Shimla, Agartala, Patna, Goa, Jammu and Trichy.

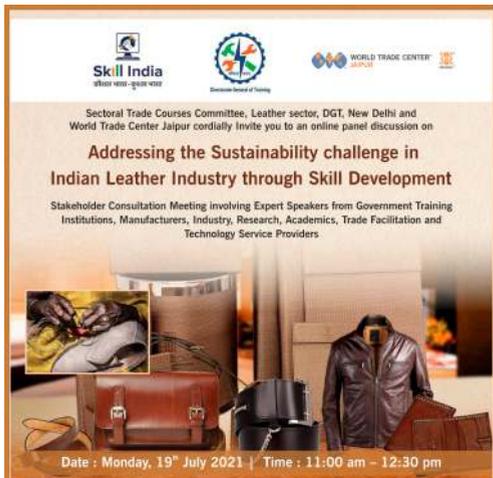
Mr. V. Babu, Dy. Director and Principal, NSTI, (W), Indore, while making a presentation on the Directorate General of Training (DGT), which is formed by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (ASDE) mentioned that DGT has about 15,000 Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) both government and private, located in various states of India. Several training programs are conducted through this network to meet the needs of approximately 24 lakh students, trainers and industry persons every year, providing skilled work force in different sectors with different levels of expertise.

Mr. V. Babu further elaborated about the major functions of DGT, a few of which are, i) formulating overall policies, norms and standards for vocational training, ii) diversifying, updating and expand-

ing training facilities for craftsman, iii) craft instructor training, iv) regulate and widen the scope of training of apprentices under the Apprenticeship Act, 1961, v) organizing vocational training programs for women, vi) providing vocational guidance and employment counseling to SC/ST persons as well as persons with disabilities etc.

Ms. Arpita Paul, Executive Director, Indian Leather Products Association, Kolkata, introduced (ILPA) as a premier representative body of manufacturers and exporters of leather and leather products across the country with a head office in Kolkata and a Regional Office in Chennai. "ILPA works actively to bring together manufacturer-exporters and merchant-exporters of leather products of India on a common platform to stimulate growth and development of the leather sector. It strives to develop and maintain a reciprocal relationship with professional bodies, import associations and the Chambers of Commerce abroad in order to support and promote export of leather products. Also, ILPA takes great pride in providing training and skill-development to the underprivileged youth of rural Bengal and helps them with job placements within the industry," mentioned Ms. Paul.

Key member to the Sectoral Trades Course Committee (STCC), Mr. Rajeev Mishra, HR Head, Dawar Footwear Industries, Agra, in his address, mentioned, "Sectoral Trades Course Committee (STCC) is constituted to standardize the processes of training, assessment



and certification system of a particular sector area. He further elaborated on the functions of the STCC, a few of which are i) assess and analyse demand of human resource in a sector periodically, ii) identify areas in which manpower is to be trained and prepare a roadmap for fulfilling skill training needs, iii) segregate demand nationally and internationally, and within national demand, further separate it state wise, based on economic activity mapping etc.”

Ms. Prena Verma, Director, Creative India, Kanpur, in her address, mentioned, “Given the fact that leather sector is recognised under the Government’s ‘Make in India’ programme, and the hide market exists for more than 150 years, there is vast requirement for skilled manpower, setup and upgradation of quality units and standardization in the processes, all of which can be made possible by adequate support from State and Central Government, investments in Research and Development by large units in the sector and setting up of formal training institutions in a Public Partnership mode.” Ms. Verma also recommended new entrants to diversify their product range and start exploring newer markets.

Mr. Kiran V.N., AD (H), HSC Jodhpur, Office of DC (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, who himself has been involved in initiation of a number of training programs for the sector, welcomed possibilities of conducting joint training programs for artisans in Jodhpur, Barmer and Jaisalmer. He also urged the younger generations of artisans to stand up to the challenges post the COVID 19 breakout and support their

family businesses after gaining thorough understanding of information technology, banking & finance, and marketing.

Mr. Atul Singh, Assistant Professor, Fashion and life style accessory Design Development Department, National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), Jodhpur while briefing the delegates about NIFT, mentioned that it is the pioneering institute of fashion education in the country and has been in the frontline of providing professional human resource to the textile and apparel industry. Mr. Singh further mentioned that over the years NIFT has also been working as a knowledge service provider for the Union and State governments in the area of design development and positioning of handlooms and handicrafts.

Mr. A. Fayaz Ahmad, Deputy Director, Council for Leather Exports (CLE), Chennai (sponsored by Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Govt. of India) shared that CLE’s activities are directed towards assisting its members in extending their global reach, thereby increasing their exports. CLE caters to the needs of the leather exporters and serves as a connecting bridge

between Indian leather exporters and buyers all over the world. This way, CLE acts as a facilitator for building relationships between overseas buyers/investors and their Indian counterparts to promote exports from the Indian leather industry. As a government sponsored nodal agency, CLE is a one-stop source for international investors to not only access all the information, but also avail the guidance they need, to set up a successful venture in the Indian marketplace.

Mr. Ahmad further added, “CLE’s status as the apex Leather Export Promotion Organization in India calls for its active involvement with the Central and State Governments in the evolution of suitable action plans and formulation and dissemination of pro-active Government policies to promote exports as well as the infrastructure and fiscal support available to exporters. Its dedicated efforts have fetched rich dividends, which is exhibited in the form of current high export growth rates and India’s significance in the global leather market.”

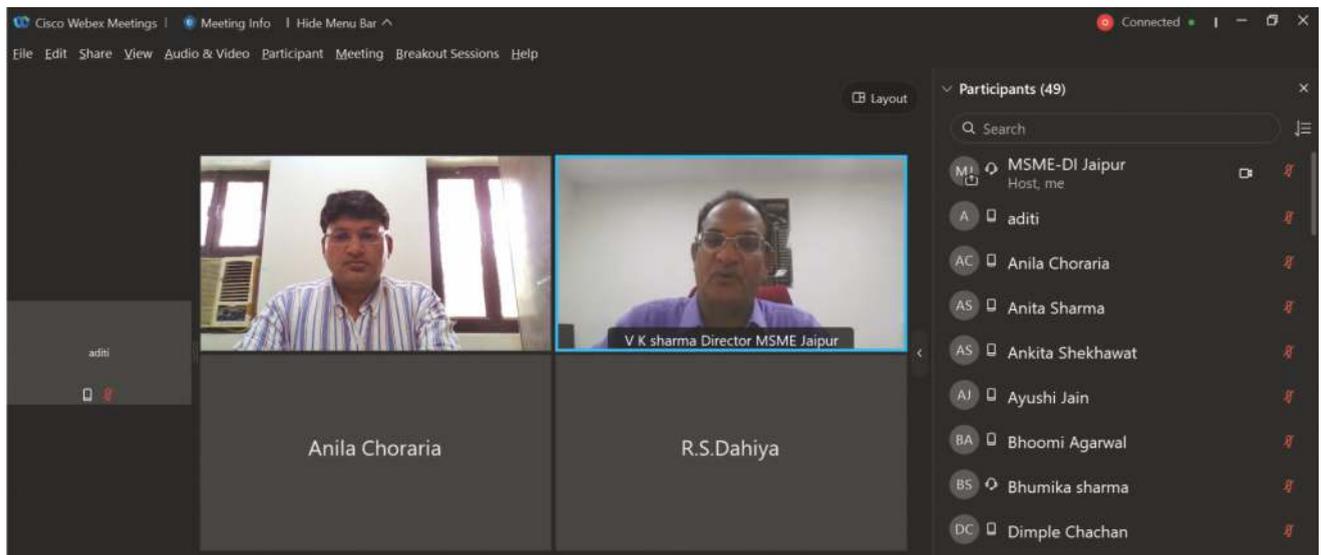
During the program, industry experience was shared by Mr. Wasim Khan, Director, Saju Art and Craft, Jodhpur, National Awardee, Mr. Mohan, Specialist in manufacturing Polo Shoes from Jodhpur and Mr. Subhash Bakolia, Proprietor, S. Leather Handicrafts, Jaipur.

Mr. Navneet Agarwal, Assistant Director, World Trade Center Jaipur proposed vote of thanks for the event.

**The webinar was held on July 19, 2021**



## Experts highlight policy measures to promote entrepreneurship



**W**orld Trade Center Jaipur, in association with the Ministry of MSME, Government of India, organized a two day industrial motivational campaign to bring together expert speakers from the banking sector, Department of Industries, exports and faculties from national technological institutes. The objective of the campaign was to motivate youth to take up entrepreneurship as a career option and dwell upon various opportunities that have been thrown open by COVID-19 situation.

Mr. V. K. Sharma, Director, IEDS, MSME-DI Jaipur, Ministry of MSME, Government of India, in his keynote address, while elaborating on the procurement platform of government and the enormous opportunities it has presented to MSMEs said, "Government E-Marketplace gives any new seller the opportunity to have direct access to all government departments. It is a one stop shop for marketing with minimal efforts, has a single window for bids, allows

reverse auction on products and services, and provides new product suggestion to sellers giving dynamic pricing options where price can be changed based on market conditions. Apart from this, it also gives the seller a friendly dashboard for selling and monitoring his/her supplies and payments and entails consistent and uniform purchase procedures. Given the extremely transparent nature of the platform, today any youth can not only look at creating a successful business model using GeM, but also motivate others as well," mentioned Mr. Sharma.

Mr. K.C. Meena, IEDS, Assistant Director, MSME-DI Jaipur, while elaborating on the Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY), mentioned, "It is a scheme launched by the Hon'ble Prime Minister in 2015 for providing loans up to Rs. 10 lakh to the non-corporate, non-farm small or micro enterprises. These loans are classified as MUDRA loans under PMMY. These loans are given by commercial banks, Regional Rural

Banks (RRBs), small finance banks, microfinance institutions (MFIs) and NBFCs. The borrower can approach any of the lending institutions mentioned above or can apply for a loan online through this portal [www.udyamimitra.in](http://www.udyamimitra.in). Under the aegis of PMMY, MUDRA has created three products namely 'Shishu', 'Kishore' and 'Tarun' to signify the stage of growth/development and funding needs of the beneficiary micro unit / entrepreneur and also provide a reference point for the next phase of graduation/growth."

Mr. P.B. Bunkar, LDM, UCO Bank Jaipur, in his address, explained the key features of the Stand-Up India Scheme. He said, "The scheme is aimed to facilitate bank loans of Rs. 10 lakhs to Rs. 1 crore to at least one Scheduled Caste (SC) or Scheduled Tribe (ST) borrower, and at least one-woman borrower per bank branch for setting up a Greenfield enterprise. These individuals have to be above 18 years of age." Further, Mr. Bunkar spoke about another promising scheme called UCO

Trader, where working capital and the term loan needs between Rs. 1 lakh to Rs. 5 crore are made available for clients engaged in retail, wholesale trading activities and services sector, provided these clients are willing to furnish mortgage of property and or other acceptable security of adequate value.

Mr. Shiv Om Meena, Assistant Professor, Department of Chemical Engineering, Malviya National Institute of Technology, Jaipur spoke on promoting sustainability through avoidance of single use plastics and cautioned all new entrepreneurs

about the harm caused to environment by excessive use of the same. "We need to do away with convenience over durability attitude and think of the long-term impact. Switch to alternate material like Polyethylene terephthalate which is one of the most frequently recycled plastics and also use reusable bags and bottles," urged Mr. Meena.

Mr. Trilok Chand, Assistant Director, District Industries Center, Jaipur, said, "Government of Rajasthan is desirous of providing a push to the MSME ecosystem in the state. Among other initiatives, the state has taken a lead in setting up of

MSME Business Facilitation Centers (MBFC) to provide assistance to MSMEs in a dedicated and coordinated manner. One of the intended purposes of the MBFCs is also to ensure that MSMEs are able to avail the benefit of related schemes by Government of India."

Mr. Navneet Agarwal, Assistant Director, World Trade Center Jaipur proposed vote of thanks for the event.

**The webinar was held on July 22-23, 2021**

## Encouraging entrepreneurship in eco-friendly activities

<b>Keynote Address</b>  <b>Mr. V. K. Sharma, IEDS</b> <small>Director, MSME-DI Jaipur Ministry of MSME, GOI</small>	<b>Chief Guest</b>  <b>Prof. (Dr) Rakesh Bhatnagar</b> <small>Vice Chancellor, Amity University Jaipur, Rajasthan</small>	<b>Guest of Honour</b>  <b>Prof. (Dr) Amit Jain</b> <small>Pro-Vice Chancellor, Amity University Jaipur, Rajasthan</small>	<b>Theme address by</b>  <b>Mr. K. C. Meena, IEDS</b> <small>Assistant Director, MSME DI Jaipur Ministry of MSME, GOI</small>
<b>Distinguished Guest Speakers</b>			
 <b>Dr. Sudipti Arora</b> <small>Assistant Director &amp; Research Scientist Dr. B. Lal Institute of Biotechnology Jaipur</small>	 <b>Mr. Trilok Chand</b> <small>Assistant Director, DIC Jaipur, GoR</small>	 <b>Mr. P M Bunker</b> <small>L.D.M., UCO Bank Jaipur</small>	

In continuation of the previously organized program, MSME DI Jaipur, World Trade Center Jaipur and Amity University, Jaipur organized a two-day Industrial Motivational Campaign to enlighten the participants on the various attributes of becoming a successful entrepreneur. The event also emphasized the need for becoming a more responsible citizen by reducing consumption of single use

plastics and shifting to alternate materials. The program was attended by more than 160 delegates.

Prof. (Dr.) Rakesh Bhatnagar, Vice Chancellor, Amity University, Jaipur, while sharing his mantra for success, remarked, "There are no shortcuts to succeed; one must be passionate, proactive, agile, confident and persuasive. One must always believe

in their own strengths and capabilities. Most importantly, one must learn to differentiate and create a niche for their product or service." Prof. (Dr.) Amit Jain, Pro-Vice Chancellor, Amity University, Jaipur urged all young entrepreneurs to run their businesses with a sense of responsibility and accountability. He explained, "In today's competitive times, ethical entrepreneurship is essentially a business discipline and a phenomenon that drives fiscal growth internationally. One should not hesitate to experiment and learn from failures. The most important is to be creative, and then can an idea work."

Distinguished Guest speaker for the program, Dr. Sudipti Arora, Assistant Director & Research Scientist, Dr. B. Lal Institute of Biotechnology, Jaipur, in her speech, highlighted, "Microbial biotechnology has great capabilities to address the plastic waste disaster. The most effective way to improve efficacy and reduce ecological influence of plastics is

self-deterrence to casual wastage and frequent discard of plastics. Effective waste management strategies could be i) reusing, ii) recycling and iii) disposing only when not fit for any use." Ms. Arora further added, "Careful research studies in biotechnology are proving to provide promising results towards development of biodegradable polymers which can be commercially and cost-effectively brought to use."

Earlier, Mr. V.K. Sharma, IEDS, Director-MSME DI Jaipur, Ministry of MSME, GoI and Mr. K C Meena, IEDS, Assistant Director, MSME DI Jaipur, Ministry of MSME, GoI made a presentation on the ASPIRE scheme of the ministry. Elaborating on the same, Mr. Sharma explained, "ASPIRE- A Scheme for promoting

Innovation, Rural Industry & Entrepreneurship aims to implement the incubation and commercialization of business Ideas through technical or research institutes, including those in the field of Agro based industry. The scheme also provides funds for the incubator/incubation and creates necessary synergy between this scheme and the livelihood business incubators/technology business incubators and incubation schemes of MSME / NSIC / KVIC / Coir Board / Other Ministries/Departments as well as Private incubators."

Mr. Trilok Chand, Assistant Director, DIC, Jaipur, Government of Rajasthan shared that the Department of Industries, Government of Rajasthan, through creation of MSME Investment

Facilitation Centers, intends to provide assistance on applicability of schemes relating to investments in Rajasthan, provide assistance on International collaboration and help in district-wise potential sector analysis.

Mr. P.M. Bunker, L.D.M., UCO Bank, Jaipur shared various schemes of the bank, especially UCO Udyog Bandhu Scheme, UCO Mahila Uthan Scheme and Advance to Medium Enterprises scheme.

Mr. Navneet Agarwal, Assistant Director, World Trade Center Jaipur proposed vote of thanks for the event.

**The webinar was held on July 28 & 29, 2021**

## Webinar raises awareness on Udyam Registration for MSMEs

The Ministry of MSME, Government of India launched an online system of MSME or Udyam Registration that provides a single-page registration for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in July, 2020.

World Trade Center Jaipur and MSME-DI Jaipur jointly organized a webinar titled 'Udyam Registration-Process and Inclusion of Trading Activity' to create awareness about this new registration system.

While delivering the keynote address, Mr. V.K. Sharma, Director, MSME-DI Jaipur, explained the benefits of obtaining an Udyam Registration number. Some of the benefits of this portal are: Protection against delayed payments and against material or services sup-



From left to right, Mr. Dinesh Soni, Assistant Director, MSME-DI Jaipur and Mr. V.K. Sharma, Director, MSME-DI Jaipur and second row, Mr. Arun Agarwal, Executive president, Forti, Jaipur

plied, ease of obtaining registrations, licenses, and approvals, eligibility for CLCSS (credit linked capital subsidy scheme), possibilities of representation in International trade fairs, ISO certification support,

benefits under Public Procurement Policy, additional edge in government tenders and much more. "One should not miss the opportunity of getting registered and availing maximum benefits of

Udyam Registration,” emphasised Mr. Sharma.

Mr. Dinesh Soni, Assistant Director, MSME-DI Jaipur, while explaining the process and inclusion of trading activity in Udyam Registration, said, “Any person who intends to establish a micro, small or medium enterprise may file Udyam Registration online on the Udyam Registration portal, based on self-declaration with no requirement to upload documents, certificates or proof.”

Mr. Soni further explained, “Upon registration, the enterprise (referred to as ‘Udyam’ in the Udyam Registration portal) will be assigned a permanent identity number known as ‘Udyam Registration Number’. An e-certificate, namely, ‘Udyam Registration Certificate’ shall be issued on completion of the registration process. It is important to remember that if an enterprise crosses the ceiling limits specified for its present category in either of the two criteria of investment or turnover, it will cease to exist in that category and be placed in the next higher category. However, no

enterprise shall be placed in the lower category unless it goes below the ceiling limits specified for its present category in both the criteria of investment as well as turnover. All units with Goods and Services Tax Identification Number (GSTIN) listed against the same Permanent Account Number (PAN) shall be collectively treated as one enterprise and the turnover and investment figures for all of such entities shall be seen together and only the aggregate values will be considered for deciding the category as micro, small or medium enterprise.”

Mr. Soni further elaborated, “The form for registration shall be as provided in the Udyam Registration portal, and there shall be no registration fees for the same. Aadhaar number shall be required for Udyam Registration. In case of a proprietorship firm, the Aadhaar number required will be that of the proprietor, in case of a partnership firm the managing partner’s Aadhaar number and of a karta in the case of a Hindu Undivided Family

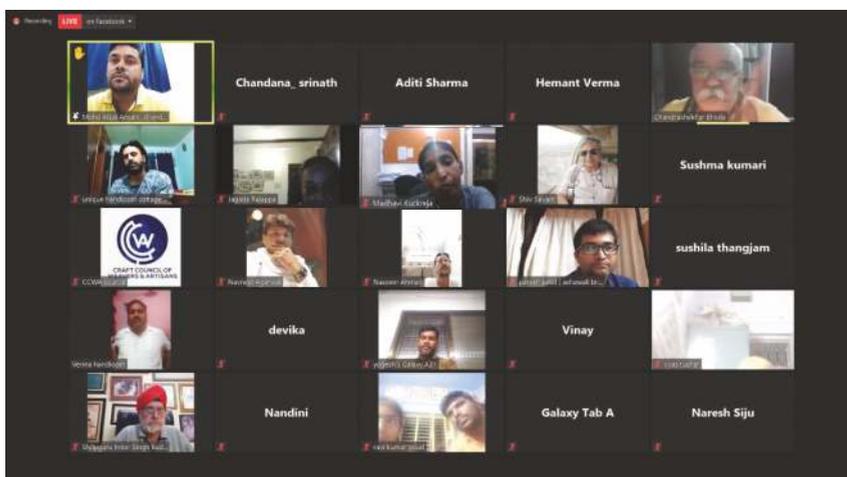
(HUF). In case of a Company or a Limited Liability Partnership or a Cooperative Society or a Society or a Trust, the organization or its authorized signatory shall provide its GSTIN and PAN along with its Aadhaar number. In case an enterprise is duly registered as an Udyam with PAN, any deficiency of information for previous years when it did not have PAN shall be filled up on self-declaration basis. Also, no enterprise shall file more than one Udyam Registration: Provided that any number of activities including manufacturing or service or both may be specified or added in one Udyam Registration.”

Mr. Sharma and Mr. Soni also responded to multiple queries raised by the participants.

Mr. Navneet Agarwal, Assistant Director- Trade Promotion, World Trade Center Jaipur proposed vote of thanks.

**The webinar was held on August 5, 2021**

## Young Handloom Weavers are Torchbearers for Sustainable Development



On the eve of the 7th National Handloom Day, WTC Jaipur and CCWA Jaipur organized a webinar to bring together weavers and patrons of art from all parts of our country to discuss various ways in which our youth can be empowered to create better entrepreneurship models. The program also focused on understanding the problems and resource requirements of master artisans. More than 70 weavers participated in the program and showcased their art online as well.



Noted weavers who joined and shared their products online were Mr. Mushtaq Ahmad, Pashmina Weaver, Owner, Unique Handloom Cottage Industries Ltd., Srinagar, Mr. Vinay Namori Vankar, Bhujodi Shawl Weaving, Bhuj Kutch, Gujarat, Mr. Devaraja A., Arkaat Pure Silk Products of Handloom, Azadnagar, Banglore, Mr. Paresch Patel, Weaver, Founder, Royal Brocades, Ms. Sabnam Bano, Gamcha Weaver, Barabanki, Uttar Pradesh, Mr. Afjal Ansari, Chanderi Weaver, Madhya Pradesh, Ms. Chandana from Telangana, Ikat Weaving, Koyalagudem, Ms Sushila, Innaphi Weaving, Imphal, Ms. Kalyani,



Darmavaram Weaving School, Yemmiganur, Andhra Pradesh, Mr. Ravikumar, Saree Weaving, Yemmiganur, Andhra Pradesh, Mr. Azharuddin Ansari, Kota, Rajasthan, Mr. Yogesh Awankar, Paithani Master Weaver, Maharashtra.

Mr. Chandrashekhar Bheda, Textiles and Handcraft Product Designer, Installation Artist & Mentor moderated the session and discussed various aspects of design, production and marketing of finished products with the weavers present.

Earlier, Mr. Brij Ballabh Udaiwal, Director, CCWA, welcomed all the



participants and guest speakers. He urged to work for the betterment of an industry that has negligible power usage, low environmental concerns and high potential for innovation.

Mr. Navneet Agarwal, Assistant Director-Trade Promotion, World Trade Center Jaipur proposed vote of thanks.

**The webinar was held on August 7, 2021**

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## Preserving Heritage, Empowering Weavers - Building Nation

World Trade Center Jaipur and CCWA Jaipur organized a round table meeting at Weaver Service Center Jaipur to discuss the emerging role of youth in Indian Handloom Sector and to hold a live demonstration by weavers from various districts of Rajasthan. The objective of the event was to acknowledge the valuable contribution of the weavers in bringing sustainable development in the state.

Mr. Tapan Sharma, Deputy Director, Weavers Service Center, Jaipur, who has led and motivated the weaver fraternity by speaking in several knowledge sessions on design and cost controls, welcomed the

participants. He remarked, "Our country is home to millions of handloom workers who have given their best to maintain global dominance and patronage in the sector, and earned a reputation for themselves. There is need to now build upon this and the responsibility of the same now lies in the hands of the rural and urban youth, who through formal education and training, can once again bring back the lost market share and much needed financial stability through better marketing and positioning of their products."

Dr. Toolika Gupta, Director, Indian Institute of Craft and Design (IICD), in his speech, explained the Institute's

vision and mission. He remarked, "IICD's vision is to train craft leaders who combine personal values with social concern. Our focus is to transform students into 'change agents' who will bring about a significant positive change in the lives of the craft community. Excellence, in both academics and co-curricular aspects, is an integral value of education that we offer to students. One can benefit and grow by enrolling in multiple and diverse programs of IICD."

Ms. Saumya Sharma, Managing Director, Kalaneri Art Gallery, suggested that each design school should team up for design and product development and could



take a region where their students work together with local NGOs. Further, these students must take feedback from big local wholesale buyers, cottage industries etc. and develop coordinated ranges of products. She also recommended that kids from the weaver and artisan families should get privilege in admissions / scholarships in craft and design colleges. She concluded her speech by emphasising that there should be more initiatives for skill development programs and revival of dying art and crafts in the

form of workshops, online campaigns, etc. for younger generations. In her speech, Mrs. Shivani Kumari, Executive Director, Invictus, Jaipur recommended, "Effective implementation of Integrated Handlooms Development Comprehensive Welfare Schemes, Marketing & Export Promotion Schemes and Diversified Handloom Development Scheme can tackle the emerging challenges in the sector."

The program was attended by many National Awardees in the field who

gave valuable suggestions for bringing inclusive growth for the art and welfare of weavers at large.

Mr. Navneet Agarwal, Assistant Director, World Trade Center Jaipur proposed vote of thanks.

**The meeting was held on August 9, 2021.**

## Program Creates Awareness on Vendor Opportunities and Government Schemes

**W**TC Jaipur organised a program in association with MSME DI Jaipur and Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) to create awareness about government schemes for MSMEs and also procurement opportunities with IOCL. The online general awareness program explained the procurement policy, procurement process followed in IOCL and various other Goods / Services & Works required in IOCL on all India basis. The role of MSE vendors in IOCL Procurement process was also

explained during the meet.

Welcoming the participants, Mr. Sanjay Meena, Assistant Director, MSME-DI Jaipur, while sharing important schemes with the delegates explained, "MSME Market Development Assistance (MDA) scheme is a part of a comprehensive policy package for MSMEs, which has been announced with a view to increase exports from MSMEs. The provision of MSME-MDA scheme has been modified recently. MDA is offered in three forms: i)



**Mr. Sanjay Meena**  
Assistant Director, MSME-DI Jaipur

Participation in the international exhibitions / fairs - for registered



Right to left: Mr. I. H. Ansari, DGM (Contracts) NRO, Indian Oil Corporation Ltd., New Delhi and Mr. Devansh Juhari, (Contracts) NRO, Indian Oil Corporation Ltd., New Delhi

preference in Central Government purchases - for individual MSMEs.”

Mr. I. H. Ansari, Deputy General Manager (Contracts), NRO, Indian Oil Corporation Ltd., New Delhi, in his speech, highlighted that Indian Oil is a diversified and integrated energy major with

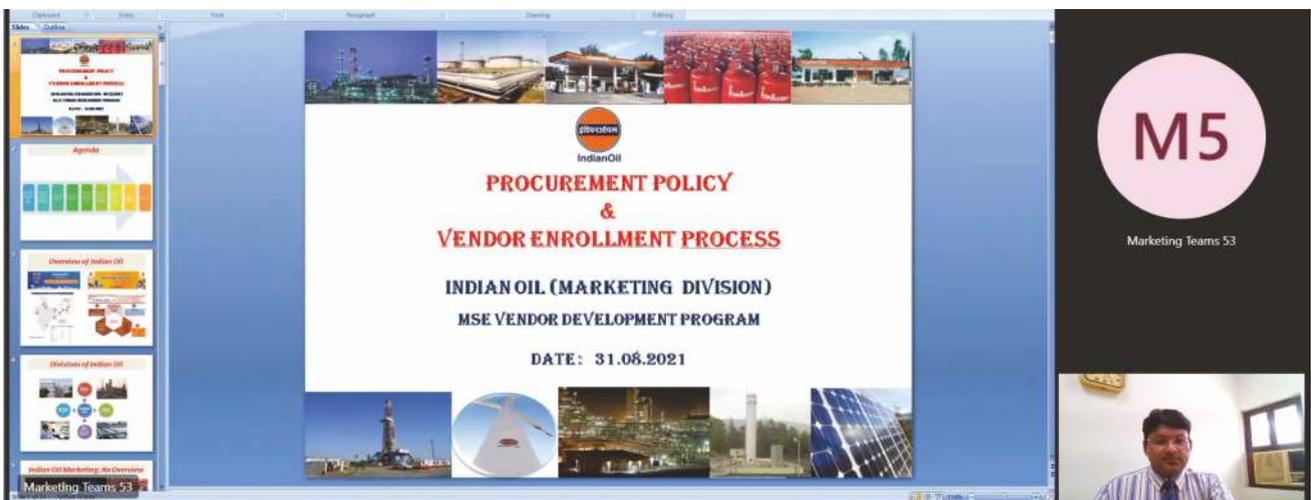
presence in almost all the streams of oil, gas, petrochemicals and alternative energy sources; It has high-calibre people, state-of-the-art technologies and cutting-edge R&D, with a biosphere of best practices, quality-consciousness and transparency. “We tap energy in all its forms most responsibly and deliver it to consumers most affordably,” said Mr. Ansari. He also added, “The government’s eProcurement System of the National Informatics Centre is a step towards computerization and assurance towards their Suppliers and Contractors. The entire process is aimed at reducing the tendering cycle time and curb most of the incidental costs.”

Mr. Devansh Jauhari, Assistant Manager (Contracts), NRO, Indian Oil Corporation Ltd., New Delhi, gave a detailed presentation and responded to multiple queries related to educating and training new vendors and encouraging entrepreneurship in Rajasthan. “With a head office in Mumbai, there are four Regional Contract Cells which form part of the procurement set up of IOCL. The government has simplified the process of Public Procurement by issuing Public Tender / Global Tender through Central Public Procurement Portal leading to Sustainable Procurement with a Transparent Process (Integrity Pact Agreement). Further, EMD exemption will be given to all Micro and Small enterprises irrespective of whether the tendered item is registered or not.”

Mr. Navneet Agarwal, Assistant Director- Trade Promotion, World Trade Center Jaipur proposed vote of thanks.

**The webinar was held on August 31, 2021**

small & micro manufacturing enterprises with DI/DIC, ii) Financial assistance for using global standards (GS1) in barcoding and iii) Recognized importance of barcoding and avail financial assistance through Office of the Development Commissioner Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (DC - MSME). Further, in case of Purchase and Price Preference Policy, which is administered through Single Point Registration Scheme of NSIC, under which, as many as 350 items are reserved for exclusive purchase from MSME by the Central Government. Other facilities include tender documents free of cost, exemption from earnest money and security deposit, and 15% price



## Engineering Ideas and Innovations have truly transformed lives



(L-R) Mr. Navneet Agarwal, Assistant Director, World Trade Center (second from left) and Dr. Nand Kumar Matwa, Head of the Department, Architecture and Planning, Malviya National Institute of Technology (fourth from left) with delegates.

**O**n National Engineer's Day, which is celebrated on the birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna Sir Dr. M Visvesvaraya, World Trade Center Jaipur, in association with the Department of Architecture and Planning, Malviya National Institute of Technology organized a

Memorial Speech on "How Technology is driving Excellence in Architecture & Design" at MNIT, Jaipur.

Present for this meeting were delegates from MNIT - Dr. Nand Kumar Matwa, Head of the depart-

ment, Dr. Satish Piaralia, Dr. Ashwani Kumar, Architect Himanshu Yogi and Dr. Girendra Kumar. Also present were Mr. Navneet Agarwal, Assistant Director, World Trade Center Jaipur and Ms. Deepika Sharma, Director, Blackwood Design Inc.

Dr. Nand Kumar remarked, "Adoption of technology in architecture has definitely allowed creativity to rise exponentially and opened doors to a universe of opportunities for students and professionals. Technology utilization has also resulted in attaining cost effectiveness and economies of scale.

Dr. Satish urged the delegates to cultivate best practices in engineering to attain excellence in the art of designing and architecture.

Use of metadata and data linkages with augmented reality (AR) technology for building maintenance services was also discussed during the programme

**This programme was held on September 15, 2021**

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## Retaining ownership status for our traditional art and craft

**I**n this age of rapid technological advancement, it is easy to create duplicate version of original artworks and promote them as authentic in the market. In order to create awareness about this malpractice and sensitise the general public about the gravity of the issue, WTC Jaipur organized a webinar on "Traditional Design Imagery: Process, Innovation and

Ownership, The Way Forward".

The webinar was organized in association with itokri.com, Devlok Silk Jaipur and CCWA Jaipur. It was attended by more than 125 thought leaders, product designers and artisans.

Session moderator and Textile & Handicraft Product Designer Mr.

Chandrashekhara Bheda said, "An artisan has to be provided some sort of cognizant relief so that the sanctity of his art and craft is undamaged against multiple duplicates flooding the markets without any logos or royalty payments to the original manufacturer or designer."

Mr. Nitin Pamnani, Co-Founder,



itokri.com, in his speech, pointed out, "Despite being intangible, our rich cultural heritage can be preserved, as law definitely provides a way for the same in terms of registering intellectual property rights." He urged the young generation to take responsibility of passing and sharing this information to the new entrants in the field by using the all-powerful social media tools.

Dr. Madan Meena, Director, Adivasi Academy, Tejgadh, Gujarat, speaking about the Adivasi Academy, said that it was established to create a unique educational environment for the

study of tribal communities. The Academy is aimed to become an institute for the study of tribal history, folklore, cultural geography, social dynamics, economy, development studies, medicine, music, arts and theatre. "With its multidisciplinary approach and related interventional measures, the Academy is striving to create a new approach of academic activism," highlighted Dr. Meena.

Earlier Mr. Brij Ballabh Udaiwal, Director, CCWA Jaipur welcomed all participants and distinguished guest

speakers and conveyed gratitude to itokri.com and Devlok Silf for lending their support to the program.

Guest speaker Mr. J. Niranjana, National Merit Awardee, Kalamkari Painting - Andhra Pradesh, said, "We cannot afford to lose our heritage and legacy, which, if lost, cannot be revived, and advancement in the field definitely does not mean that we distort with originality or copy it."

"Mr. Vikram Joshi, Managing Director, Rangotri and Director, Jaipur Bloc advocated that technology cannot be misutilized to create replicas of original work. He further gave an example of the world famous Sanganeri art, which may become a victim of such misuse of technology, but can be adequately safeguarded by adhering to Geographical Indicators that gives due importance to the origin of an art.

Mr. Navneet Agarwal, Assistant Director, World Trade Center Jaipur proposed vote of thanks.

**The webinar was held on September 17, 2021**

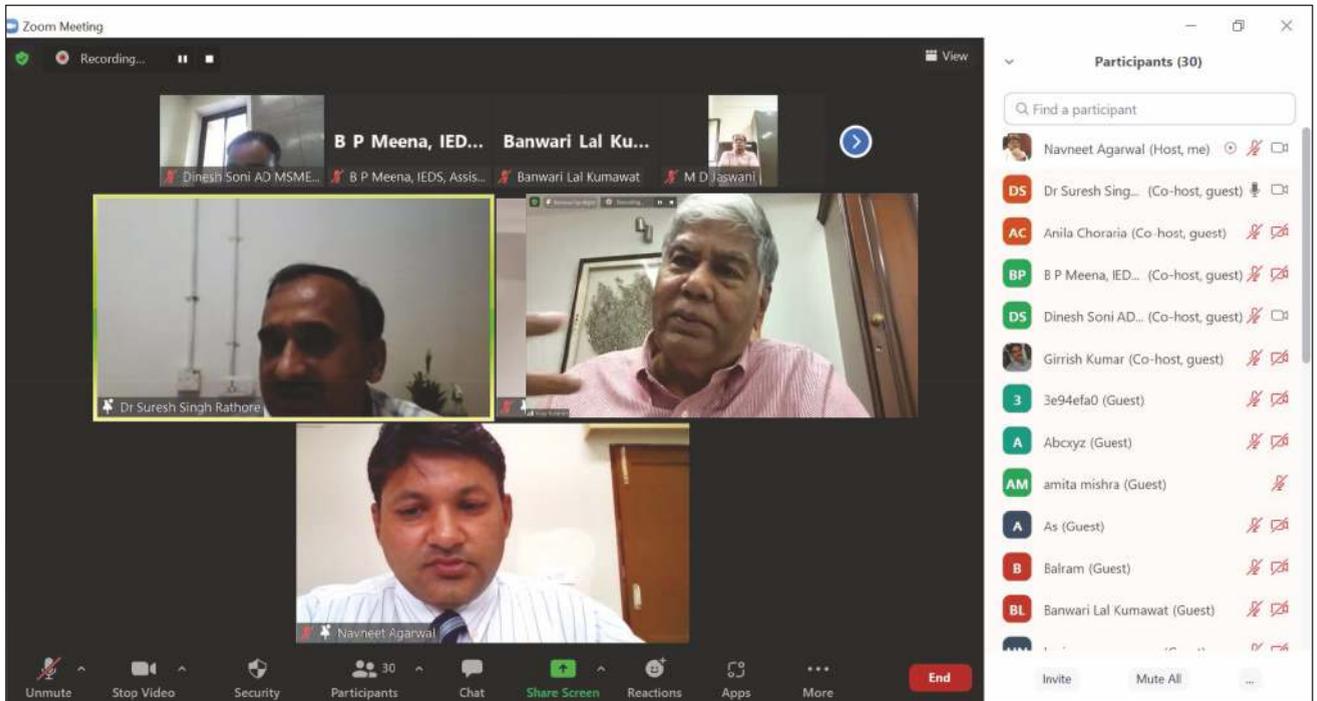
## Celebrating the language that binds us together – Hindi !

World Trade Center Jaipur in association with MSME-DI Jaipur organized the Nationally significant Hindi Pakhwada (fortnight to mark the Hindi Diwas). The event marked the underlying significance of the declaration made by the Constituent Assembly of India that Hindi language in the Devanagari script is our Nation's official language.

Dr. Vijay Kalantri, Chairman, World Trade Center Jaipur and Board Director, World Trade Center's Association, New York highlighting the importance of the program, mentioned, "Hindi as our official language brings us all together and binds us in one religion called Indian, wherever we are in the world, the language is one single most common and the strongest factor

that draws attention and builds confidence." Dr. Kalantri also encouraged participants to interact more and more in Hindi language and often try to make formal communication letters and official notes of everyday use in Hindi too.

Dr. Suresh Singh Rathore, Department of Hindi, Rajasthan Central University, Ajmer, Rajasthan,



said, "Hindi as a language is not only the identity of India, but it is also the true conductor, communicator and representative of our values and culture. Hindi being a very simple, easy and accessible language, is probably understood, spoken and sought by a large number of people all over the world."

Earlier, Mr. V.K. Sharma, Director, MSME-DI Jaipur and Mr. Dinesh Soni, Assistant Director, MSME DI Jaipur welcomed the participants and motivated them to make maximum usage of Hindi language in written communication, events and invites that are organized.

Mr. Navneet Agarwal, Assistant Director- World Trade Center Jaipur proposed vote of thanks.

**The webinar was held on September 20, 2021**



Mr. Navneet Agarwal with Mr. Dinesh Soni at MSME- DI Jaipur State office during the webinar

## APAC WTC Regional Meeting



**W**orld Trade Centers Association, New York organized the 2021 India/APAC WTC Regional Meeting to provide a platform for all the WTC licensees in the Asia Pacific region to showcase their facilities and trade promotion services offered to their members.

The program started with a brief update by Mr. Robin van Puyenbroeck, Executive Director, Business Development, World Trade Centers Association on the recent initiatives of the association to support members. This was followed by updates on Asia Pacific (APAC) member advisory councils (MACs) for Agriculture, Trade Services and Conference & Exhibitions. Meetings of the WTCA APAC Members' Advisory Council (MAC) are held every three months to facilitate dialogue among member WTCs on forging partnerships, sharing best practices,

expanding networks, strategizing future activities, soliciting members' views, and cooperating with MACs in other regions on designated categories.

This was followed by updates from various WTCs in the Asia Pacific region. WTCs from Mumbai, Goa, Bhubaneswar and Jaipur presented the member services offered by them during the COVID pandemic and their future action plan to support trade in their region.

WTC Mumbai highlighted the various programmes it conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, to help businesses sail through the crisis, enhance their market reach and explore foreign destinations for trade and investment such as the Philippines, Panama, Afghanistan, Winnipeg, Trieste, Ghana, Argentina, Egypt and the European Union.

WTC Mumbai also showcased the various online exhibitions it

conducted between October 2020 and August 2021, on handloom, handicraft, healthcare and wellness, and home interior sectors, and on celebrating the spirit of womanhood. WTC Mumbai is conducting bilateral exhibitions with Zambia and the Caribbean countries to explore trade and business opportunities with these regions. The upcoming exhibitions of WTC Mumbai include 'Promoting Business in India and Vietnam' - 28 September 2021 - 28 December 2021, 'Trade Opportunities in India and Peru' - 4 October 2021 - 4 January 2022, and 'Trade and Business Opportunities between India and Germany' - 18 October 2021 - 17 January 2022.

In its presentation, WTC Goa mentioned that it is an ideal meeting place for trade, industry, government, business and academia to build a global footprint and it assists local businesses foray into global

markets. Tourism, agro and marine products, services exports and other sectors such as manufacturing and entertainment are the mainstay for Goa, and WTC Goa can collaborate in these sectors in areas such as trade facilitation, conferences, B2B meetings, networking opportunities and providing trade information.

Even during the pandemic, WTC Goa conducted online programmes on topics as varied as Reaping benefits of digitalization, Enhancing use of solar power, Empowering entrepreneurship through self help groups, Promoting Goan arts and handicrafts, Registering on Government e-Marketplace portal etc. The Center organized programs on creating awareness about Intellectual Property Rights, Exploring the concept of each Goan district being an export hub, Valuing water - UN's Sustainable Development Goal and Celebrating women entrepreneurship. In order to promote bilateral trade & investment, WTC Goa conducted programmes such as Goa (India) – Benin (Africa) bilateral trade promotion and co-operation, Goa-France for business cooperation for MEDECOM, Encouraging investments into Goa, and Promoting big ticket manufacturing, among others. WTC Bhubaneswar highlighted its activities as providing trade promotion services - market linkages, creating global connect, facilitating inter-member B2Bs and digital marketing initiatives, and trade education services such as handholding sessions on government schemes, provisions offered by bankers, assistance by export promotion agencies, skill development series, healthcare and wellness, policy discussions, advocacy and capacity building.



WTC Bhubaneswar opined that immediate challenges during and post-COVID have been driving the business members to think out of the box and prompting them to frame digital models in place of conventional mechanisms.

WTC Jaipur suggested that Jaipur, Rajasthan is India's promising business destination, with opportunities to do business in more than 10 sectors. These sectors include gems and Jewelry, garments and textiles, agriculture, handicrafts and tourism as the major ones. WTC Jaipur has worked collaboratively with state government agencies, leading sector councils and central government institutions.

During the pandemic, WTC Jaipur organized over a dozen in-person programs, besides online seminars, Management Development Programs and Vendor Development Programs, bringing together maximum business houses from across the state to interact with government nodal agencies and represent issues arising due to the Covid-19 crisis. The objective of these programmes has been to help solve issues relating to taxation,

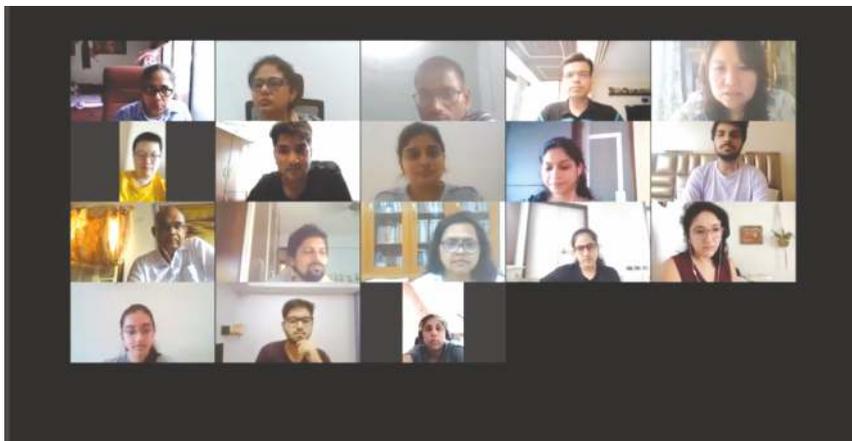
customs compliance, excess inventories, business relocation advisory and medical device import, and encourage local businesses to host drives for labor and staff vaccination.

WTC Jaipur aims to encourage greater participation in virtual exhibitions and sector specific round table meetings to partner with institutions, research agencies, agricultural research stations, export promotion agencies, incubation agencies and WTCA family for promoting regional trade, inbound investments and creating entrepreneurship avenues for young aspirants.

WTCs from other APAC regions such as Chennai, Binh Duong New City, Kuala Lumpur, Metro Manila, Nagpur and Noida, among others, and WTCA Foundation also made presentations during the programme.

**The webinar was held on September 23, 2021**

## WTI Commences Chinese Business Conversations Course



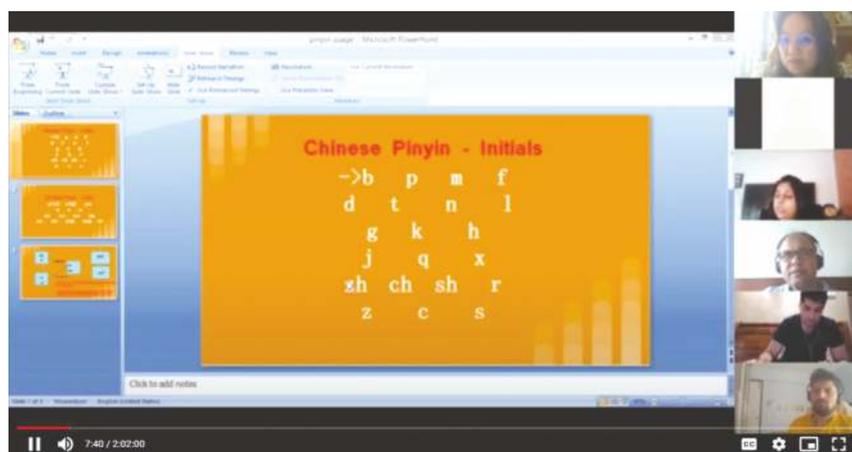
familiarise with the structure of Chinese characters to be able to recognise and write approximately 200 Chinese characters.

In view of the untapped export potential for India to Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan and other Chinese speaking territories, a strong base in the Chinese language for business purposes is of paramount importance. Besides, learning Chinese language and culture would help aspiring Indian exporters engage with their potential trade partners or customers and explore market potential in these countries.

**W**orld Trade Institute commenced its three-month Basic Chinese Practical Business Conversations Course, which is conducted in a format of two-hour online session every Saturday for 12 weeks. Chinese language is the most spoken language across the world and is emerging as a common language for international business. In the light of this, the business communication course has been designed to enable accurate and appropriate business communication (listen, speak, read and write) in simple Chinese to professionally transact cross-border trade.

The course was conducted by Ms. Jennifer Makhecha, an expert on Chinese language covering areas such as greetings, introductions, identification of people and objects, expression of gratitude, acknowledgment to remarks, making of appointments, creating invitations, purchase of goods,

seeking opinions, making suggestions, etc. Additionally, the course enabled participants to establish a foundation in order to



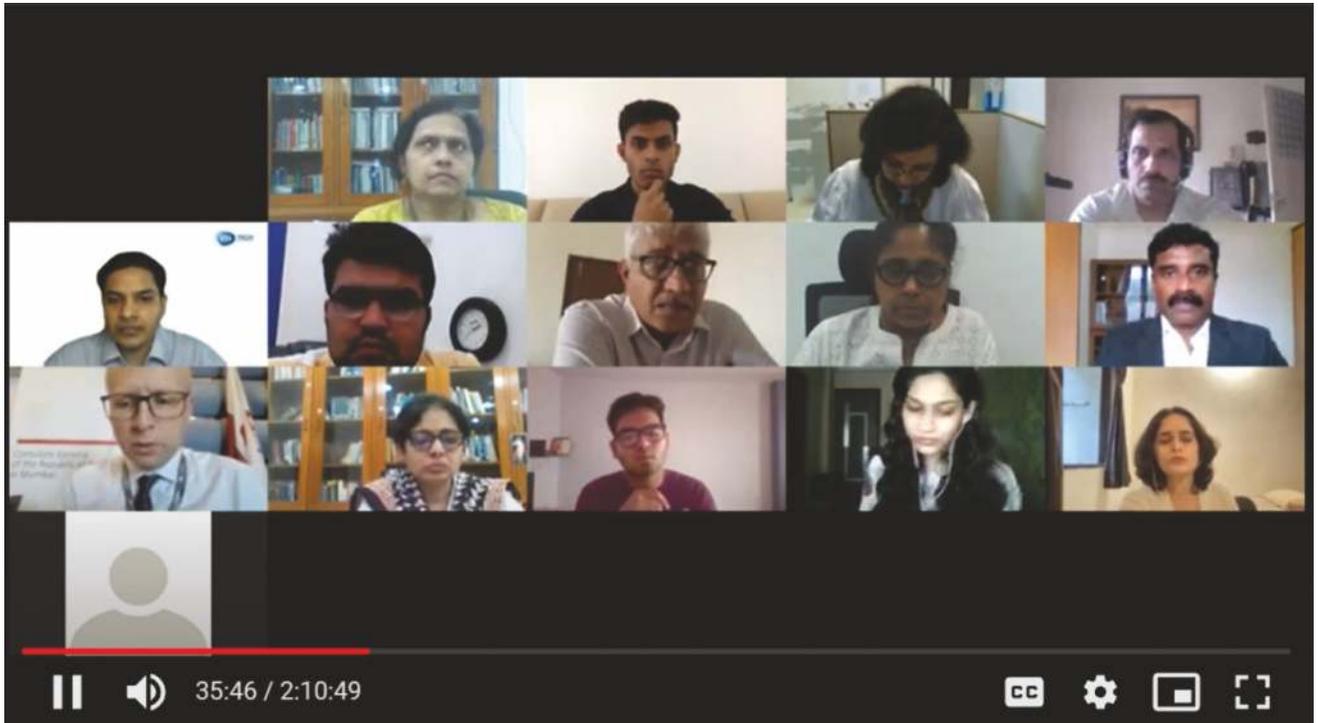
pursue studies in Chinese language at an advanced level, if so desired.

Participants were taught the Chinese phonetic system in order to correctly pronounce words with appropriate intonation, help understand basics of Chinese grammar, create awareness on aspects of Chinese culture embedded in the language,

The Basic Chinese Practical Business Conversations Course will be subsequently followed by the Advance Chinese Practical Business Conversations Course.

**The virtual course commenced on July 24, 2021**

## GMAP puts spotlight on Poland as Gateway to Central and Eastern Europe



India's exports to Poland has grown more than six percent in 2020-21 despite the pandemic, while overall exports to the world declined seven percent. In the light of this important development in bilateral trade, a one-day Global Market Access Market Programme (GMAP) titled 'Poland: Gateway to Central and Eastern European Region' was organised. GMAP assumes relevance as businesses in India and Poland are gearing up to explore each others' market.

The six-hour programme gains significance in view of Poland being the seventh largest destination of Indian goods in the 27-member European Union bloc. As of 2020-21, India-Poland trade volume stood at USD 2.3 billion, with India exporting

USD 1.6 billion worth goods, while importing USD 700 million worth merchandise from Poland. The Indian government is creating new investment opportunities in the post-COVID scenario. This reflects the future growth potential in bilateral trade.

The programme was conducted by Mr. Damian Irzyk, Consul General, Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Mumbai. Mr. Siddhartha Rastogi, an Expert on Behavioural Finance and Capital Markets, provided an overview of the business climate and also spoke of the strengths and potential sectors for collaboration in agro and food processing, information technology, textile, mining and energy, pharmaceutical and chemicals, besides cultural and education exchanges.

Besides providing an overview of business climate of Poland, GMAP brought to light the emerging opportunities to forge fruitful collaboration, giving rise to new prospects in India.

Participants of GMAP were acquainted with identifying key trends and forces shaping various sectors and further to help them understand the benefit of emerging opportunities that are on offer.

**The virtual programme was held on August 20, 2021.**

## Three-month Virtual Certificate Course on Export Import Business Provides Edge to Entrepreneurs



The 11th batch of the Certificate Course on Export Import Business (CCEIB) held under the auspices of MVIRDC World Trade Center Mumbai was held virtually.

The online course which is held thrice a week on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, from 6-8 pm comes in the backdrop of India's witnessing historic growth in exports in the past few months, despite the economy being in the shadow of the pandemic.

During the course, experienced faculty will impart in-depth knowledge across five modules with case studies by shedding light on new concepts, and update and prepare participants in the arena of international trade.

The course curriculum is curated keeping in mind individuals, who are in business or managing family-owned firms, aspiring entrepreneurs and also provides an edge to aspirants exploring better job prospects in this field.

This career-oriented course provides insights on overseas markets, marketing methods, documentation, finance, insurance, shipping and logistics as well as importing goods from other countries, foreign exchange and regulations pertaining to exports and imports.

**The virtual course commenced on September 18, 2021.**

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Batch 11

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## WTC Highlights



Dr. Vijay Kalantri, Chairman, World Trade Center Mumbai in a meeting with Ms. Nirmala Sitharaman, Hon'ble Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs of India.

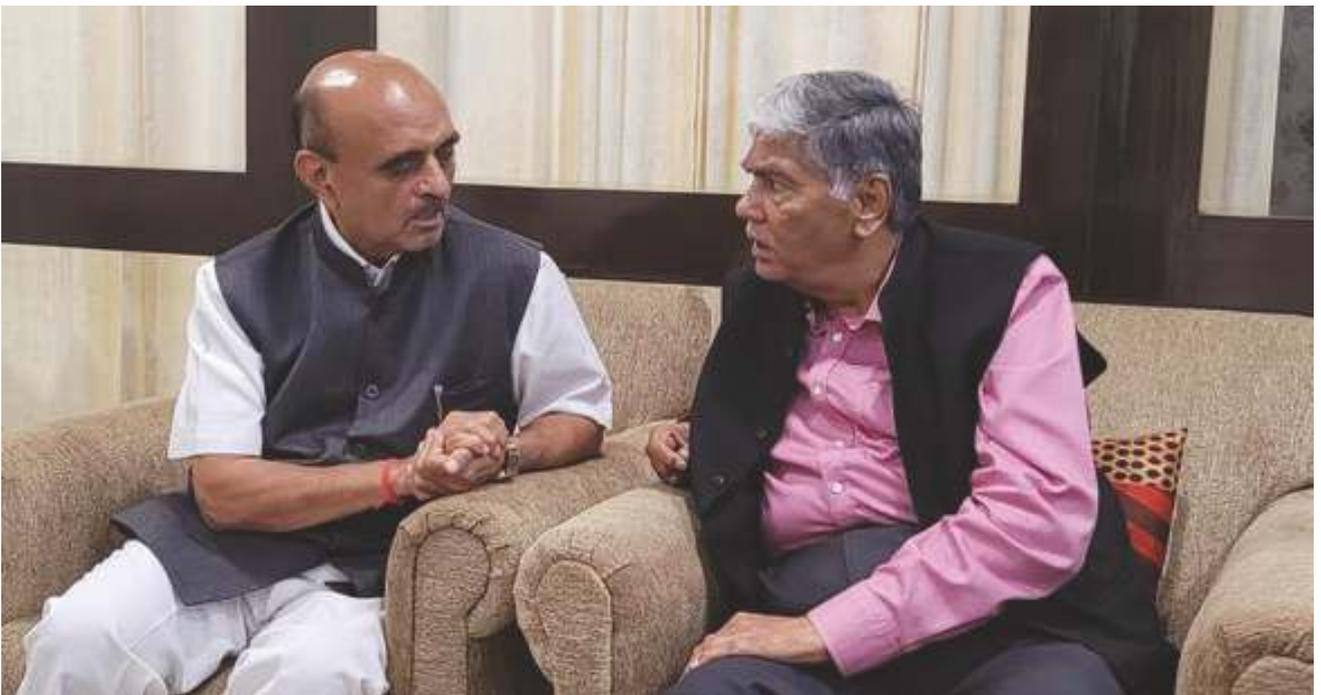


Dr. Vijay Kalantri, Chairman, World Trade Center Mumbai (second from right) with Shri. Uddhav Thackeray, Chief Minister of Maharashtra (extreme left), Shri. Subash Desai, Hon'ble Minister of Industries, Mining, Marathi Language, Government of Maharashtra (second from left) and Dr. Mangala Gomare, Chief Health Officer, Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai

## WTC Highlights



Dr. Vijay Kalantri, Chairman, World Trade Center Mumbai discussing incentives for MSMEs with Shri. Narayan Rane, Hon'ble Minister of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises of India.



Dr. Vijay Kalantri, Chairman, World Trade Center Mumbai spent an evening with Shri. Bhagwat Karad, Minister of State for Finance.

## WTC Highlights



Ms. Anupriya Patel, Minister of State for Commerce and Industry of India with Dr. Vijay Kalantri, Chairman, World Trade Center Mumbai



Dr. Vijay Kalantri, Chairman, World Trade Center Mumbai with Shri. Kapil Patil, Hon'ble Minister of State for Panchayati Raj



Shri. Satej Patil, Minister of State for Home, Housing, Transport, Information Technology, Parliamentary Affairs & Ex. Servicemen Welfare, Govt of Maharashtra with Dr. Vijay Kalantri, Chairman, World Trade Center Mumbai



Dr. Vijay Kalantri, Chairman, World Trade Center Mumbai with Mrs. Kishori Pednekar, Hon'ble Mayor of Mumbai during her visit to World Trade Center Mumbai



(L-R) H.E. Mr. Akhatov Dilshod Khamidovich, Ambassador, Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan in India with Dr. Vijay Kalantri, Chairman, World Trade Center Mumbai



Mr. Attia Abou Elnaga, Consul General, Consulate General of Egypt in Mumbai discussed with Dr. Vijay Kalantri, Chairman, World Trade Center Mumbai about developing business with India, in sectors like Healthcare, Spices, Rice, Capital Goods, Auto Components, Industrial Products etc.

## WTC Highlights



(L-R) Mr. V. Cheetoo, Designate at Consulate of the Republic of Mauritius in Mumbai, Dr. Vijay Kalantri, Chairman, World Trade Center Mumbai and Mr. Seewraj Nundlall, Counsellor, Investment & Trade, Consulate of the Republic of Mauritius discuss bilateral trade between India and Mauritius



Dr. Vijay Kalantri, Chairman, World Trade Center Mumbai with Mr. Rajiv Dube, Honorary Consul of the Kingdom of Morocco.

## World Trade Center Mumbai donated laptops to the Mumbai police force as a goodwill gesture to honour the valuable service of police personnels



(L-R) Shri. Veeresh Prabhu, Additional Commissioner, Mumbai Police- Crime , Mr. Milind Bharambe, Joint Commissioner-Crime, Mumbai Police, Dr. Vijay Kalantri, Chairman, World Trade Center Mumbai and Mr. Ajay Ruia, Vice Chairman, World Trade Center Mumbai

## WTC Highlights

**WTC Mumbai Officials at the 75th Independence Day celebrations in Mumbai, hosted by Shri. Aaditya Thackeray, Hon'ble Minister of Tourism and Environment to strengthen the Consular culture.**



(L-R) Dr. Vijay Kalantri, Chairman, World Trade Center, Mumbai with Shri. Aaditya Thackeray, Hon'ble Cabinet Minister for Tourism and Environment, Capt. Somesh Batra, Vice Chairman, World Trade Center Mumbai



(L-R) Dr. Vijay Kalantri, Chairman, World Trade Center Mumbai, Mr. Aleksei Vladimirovich Surovtsev, Consul General, Consulate General of Russian Federation in Mumbai, Mr. David J. Ranz, Counsel General, Consulate General of the United States of America in Mumbai and Capt. Somesh Batra, Vice Chairman, World Trade Center Mumbai

## WTC Highlights

### Paying Homage to Bharat Ratna Sir Dr. M Visvesvaraya, Founder - MVIRDC World Trade Center Mumbai, on his 160<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary on September 15.

An engineer by profession, Sir Dr. M Visvesvaraya's contribution to the country has been immeasurable. A great visionary who devoted his life to build Modern India and made a difference in the lives of millions. India thus celebrates his birth Anniversary as Engineers' Day,



(L-R) Mr. Avijit Das, General Manager, (IMD) IDBI Bank, Capt. Somesh Batra, Vice Chairman; Dr. Vijay Kalantri, Chairman; Mr. Sharad Upasani, Vice Chairman; Ms. Rupa Naik, Executive Director; MVIRDC WTC Mumbai. Mr. Aditya Rasiwasiya, Member of the Council of Management.



Paying Homage to Shri. S. K. Wankhede on his 107th Birth Anniversary on September 24.

## WTC Highlights



(L-R) Dr. Vijay Kalantri, Chairman, World Trade Center Mumbai, Honorary Consul of the Republic of Uzbekistan and Chairman Honorary Consular Corps Diplomatique, Mumbai with Mr. Ralph Hays, Consul General, Consulate General of New Zealand and Chairman, Council Corps Association of Mumbai, H.E Abdulla Husein Salman Mohamed Al-Marzooqi, Consul General, United Arab Emirates and Mr. Kobbi Shoshani , Consul General , Consulate General of Israel at the interactive meeting organised by HCCD and CCAM to discuss activities of HCCD & CCAM.



(L-R) Dr. Vijay Kalantri, Chairman, World Trade Center Mumbai along with Mr. Charu Sharma, Commentator, Anchor and Sports Promoter and Mr. Will Obeney, First Secretary (Financial Services), British Deputy High Commission Mumbai.

## WTC Highlights



(L-R) Ms. Rupa Naik, Executive Director, World Trade Center Mumbai, Mr. Ravindra Rajput, Deputy Collector, Entertainment Tax, Mumbai, Mr. Rajiv Nivatkar, IAS, Collector and District Magistrate, Mumbai, Dr. Vijay Kalantri, Chairman, World Trade Center Mumbai and Mr. Y. R. Warekar, Advisor, World Trade Center Mumbai.



Dr. Vijay Kalantri invited by the NewsX channel to speak about Policy and Politics with Tarun Nangia

## WTC Highlights



Dr. Vijay Kalantri, Chairman, World Trade Center Mumbai at the inauguration of Mumbai Coin Society with Mayor of Mumbai Smt. Kishori Pednekar ji and DY .Mayor of Mumbai Adv. Suhas Wadkar ji .



Dr. Vijay Kalantri, Chairman, World Trade Center Mumbai with Shri. Aaditya Thackeray, Hon'ble Cabinet Minister for Tourism and Environment on the occasion of Mexico National Day



Dr. Vijay Kalantri, Chairman, World Trade Center Mumbai in a meeting with Mr. Rakesh Kumar, AGM, Canara Bank to discuss the funding and financial assistance to MSME Sector.



Dr Vijay Kalantri, Chairman, MVIRDC World Trade Center Mumbai sharing views on India's stance on various issues related to WTO at an interactive program organised by newsX



Members of the Board of World Trade Center Mumbai at the AGM for the financial year 2020-2021. (L-R) Mr. Aditya Rasiwasiya, Mr. Ravinder Manchanda, Ms. Rupa Naik-Executive Director, Capt. Somesh Batra – Vice Chairman, Dr. Vijay Kalantri – Chairman, Mr. Sharad Upasani – Vice Chairman, Mr. Ajoykant Ruia – Vice Chairman, Mr. Parag Mehta, Capt. R. K. Gulati, Mr. Abhijit Das, Mr. Amit Sarda and Mr. Arun P. Meghani.

## Vanijya Utsav - Maha Expo Conclave



(L-R) Dr. Harshadeep Kamble, Development Commissioner (Inds.) & Commissioner (Exports) - Govt. of Maharashtra, Dr. Vijay Kalantri, Chairman, World Trade Center Mumbai, Shri. SBS Reddy, Additional Director General of Foreign Trade, Government of India, Shri. Raosaheb Patil Danve, Hon'ble Minister of State for Railways, Coal and Mines, Government of India, Shri. Subash Desai, Hon'ble Minister of Industries, Mining, Marathi Language, Government of Maharashtra, Ms. Aaditi Tatkare, Minister of State for Industries, Government of Maharashtra, Mr. Sanjay Shah, Convener-Diamond Panel, GJEPC and Shri. Baldev Singh, IAS, Additional Chief Secretary - Industries, Government of Maharashtra.



(L-R) Mrs. Rupa Naik, Executive Director, World Trade Center Mumbai, Mr. Siddhartha Rastogi, Managing Director, Ambit Capital Asset Management (Moderator), Dr. Harshadeep Kamble IAS, Development Commissioner - Industries, Directorate of Industries Maharashtra, Mr. Timur Vekilov, Head, Russian Export Center, Mr. Huseyin Aydin, Commercial Attaché, Consulate General of the Republic of Turkey, Mr. Dean Hoff, Consul - Economic, Consulate General of the Republic of South Africa, Ms. Vanesa Alvarez Franco, Economic and Commercial Counsellor, Embassy of Spain Mumbai, Mr. Seewraj Nundlall, Counsellor - Investment & Trade, Economic Development Board Mauritius.



(L-R) Ms. Rupa Naik, Executive Director, WTC Mumbai, Mr. Sabyasachi Ray, Executive Director, GJEPC, Mumbai, Dr. Harshadeep Kamble, Development Commissioner (Inds.) & Commissioner (Exports) Govt. of Maharashtra, Mr. Shyam Jagannathan, Development Commissioner, SEEPZ, Mumbai and Mr. Satya Raju, Dy. Director, DGFT

## Balancing between Enterprise and Regulation

The government has announced the National Monetization Pipeline with an estimated value of Rs. 6 lakh crores over four years. Through this programme, the government intends to engage the private sector in developing and operating brownfield projects that are currently not fetching enough revenues to the government. With this exercise, the government intends to improve efficiencies in running these projects, while utilizing the revenues generated towards building greenfield infrastructure projects.

The government is also undertaking reforms in the power sector by reducing dominance of PSU discoms and bringing in private entities in the power distribution business. The objective is to improve the viability of distribution companies by reducing the burden of cross subsidies on industrial consumers and addressing leakages by replacing power subsidies with direct benefit transfers in the accounts of the poor and the marginalized, thereby improving their share in development.

However, while the intent of the government may be well-meaning, entry of the private sector in strategic infrastructure sectors may lead to creation of monopolies or oligopolies, and exploitation of the less privileged sections of our society. Although fraught with challenges of inefficient management, PSUs focus on social and regional development, which may not be the case with private entities as they are profit-oriented.

The profits generated by PSUs are used for financing various government schemes and programmes to support national interests. PSUs help in reducing income and wealth inequalities among the people, and utilize locally available resources such as labour and raw materials, thereby emphasizing on self reliance for meeting the goals of the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' programme.

Thus, roping in the private sector in carrying out developmental projects calls for formation of stringent regulatory institutions that monitor and keep a check on the functioning of these projects and the business practices of the operating companies.

Further, although imperative for development, infrastructure projects leave an environmental footprint. These projects may cause exploitation of natural resources, and generate pollution, thereby leading to natural calamities and human catastrophes. These projects also lead to displacement of people, and exacerbate income inequalities. Further, the private corporates involved in building and running these projects may not report their activities transparently.

It, therefore, becomes imperative that the government lays emphasis on sound environmental, social and governance disclosures while engaging private entities in the National Asset Monetization Pipeline projects and the power distribution projects.

Too few players in big industries and too many competitors in small industries are unhealthy in an

economy. For example, while the securities markets are witnessing all-time highs, shrinking margins made by brokerage houses warn the failing of the industry. Low fees being charged by brokerages can lead to misuse of client funds and securities, non-payment of client dues in time, and inability to pay settlement dues or debt leading to defaults.

Thus, what looks like an investor-friendly trend can actually harm investors. There is an increased risk to the capital market if a broking house becomes non-viable and defaults without settling its liabilities.

Given the increase in private sector participation in the economy, it therefore, becomes pertinent that we have sound regulatory institutions. In the above case, for example, it becomes pertinent that SEBI intervenes suggesting a minimum brokerage fee threshold to counteract 'zero' brokerage.

While bringing about reforms, it is also necessary that these percolate at the ground level in order to ensure success of these reforms. The IBC, for example, despite of being a landmark reform has failed to improve Ease of Doing Business in India, as many resolution plans have overshoot their time limit and NPAs are being sold at substantial haircuts. The primary objective of introducing IBC was timely resolution of insolvency cases and maximization of recovery value for creditors.

While the reasons for bankruptcy could be many such as lower investor interest in a slowing

economy, cost strings attached with the ailing company such as huge liabilities, non-viability of the business which only took off because of political backing, etc. and the delays in resolution could be owing to lack of adequate technical staff with the regulator to handle litigations etc., turning to the private sector as a panacea for all developmental challenges may not be the answer.

However, regulation of the private sector may in itself be a challenge for the government as over-regulation can deter entrepreneurs from taking risks and nudging investments towards productive purposes. Thus, the growing tradeoff between the developmental requirements of the economy and conducting businesses ethically calls for a balancing act by the government, as it has a tight rope to walk on.

We, therefore, suggest that the government's stance of 'Minimum Government, Maximum Governance' be matched with sound regulations, which are difficult to trespass, as also use of digital technologies that enhance transparency of business activities.

We hope our suggestions will be taken into consideration.

■

## Need for faster adoption of digital technologies

The government has enhanced the corpus of the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) for on-lending to the MSME sector, to Rs. 4.5 lakh crore in June 2021. However, the RBI has in its recent Financial Stability Report, July 2021, suggested that, "Since 2019, weakness in the MSME portfolio of banks and NBFCs has drawn regulatory attention, with the Reserve Bank permitting restructuring of temporarily impaired MSME loans (of size upto Rs. 25 crore) under three schemes... Despite the restructuring, however, stress in the MSME portfolio of PSBs remains high... Given the elevated level of debt of the stressed cohort, the implications of business disruptions following the resurgence of the pandemic could be significant."

The government will, therefore, have to be prepared for honouring its commitment towards the loans extended under ECLGS that go awry due to the adverse impact of the Covid-19 crisis. Further, the Finance Minister has recently announced a Loan Guarantee Scheme to provide working capital or personal loans to people in the tourism sector to discharge liabilities or restart

businesses impacted due to Covid-19.

However, the scheme needs to be extended to all travel and tourism entities registered under GST, and not be restricted to only those travel agencies that are registered with the Ministry of Tourism, as they contribute towards the development of the tourism sector in the country. Further, there is need for extending interest subvention and offering a longer payback period for loans to the hotel industry as it is highly capital-intensive, and its fixed costs of operations are becoming highly unsustainable.

It is also being feared that the inclusion of retail and wholesale traders in the MSME sector may dilute the benefits of public procurement of goods by government departments and PSUs from MSME manufactures and service providers, as traders may divert imported products towards government purchases. However, the government mandate of giving preference to locally manufactured goods and services for sourcing on the GeM portal makes it an attractive selling platform for Indian MSMEs.

Still, a major challenge faced by MSMEs is access to timely cash-flow based financing. Despite of the presence of platforms such as the Trade Receivables Discounting System (TReDS), SMEs find it difficult to avail uncollateralized cash-based loans. There is, therefore, a need to usher in reforms to ease the working capital requirements of MSMEs, mainstream their participation in the government procurement programme through the 'GeM SAHAY' app, and augment their revenues.

Similarly, with increased digitization, many MSMEs are getting themselves registered on e-commerce platforms and e-marketplaces. These online aggregators have a digital trail of the financial footprint left behind by the registered MSMEs. Thus, these online intermediaries can synthesize lenders' credit products as part of their core offerings, without significantly investing in technology or tying-up with multiple lenders individually. Financing will, thus, be based on continuous cash flows rather than income and assets.

With an ecosystem of Aadhaar-based eKYC, eSign, UPI, and Account

Aggregator framework in place, we are now at the doorstep of integrating these digital initiatives with MSME data owned by online intermediaries for seamless access of credit by MSMEs. The government / RBI should, therefore, oversee faster adoption of these technological initiatives in order to ensure smoother working capital flows to MSMEs.

Further, it is a welcome move that the Ministry of MSME wants to introduce credit rating for MSMEs in order to enable entities having a sound track record in terms of financial and business operations get credit at concessional rates, thereby enhancing their profitability and scale of operations.

However, the key lies in identifying needy businesses and handholding

them even in the absence of proper book-keeping practices and absence of tax filings. This can be done through financial targeting with the help of fintech companies. This will also ensure that only deserving entities, that are less likely to default, get financial assistance.

With increased mobile penetration, individuals and firms leave a huge digital footprint of their transactions such as payments, remittances and choices. These enable fintech firms to make informed decisions about the credit worthiness of these borrowers and offer credit within a short span of time. Factors such as availability of cheap smart phones, affordable high-speed data plans and increase in the digital mode of transacting due to the Covid-led disruptions enhance the possibilities of the evolution of a dynamic

fintech sector in India that can cater to the unbanked population.

The government's well-meaning efforts to address the woes of distressed MSMEs bearing the brunt of the Covid-19 crisis and digital push to help them sail through these uncertain times lay the foundation for an efficient MSME ecosystem in the times to come. However, many of these enterprises are facing survival issues and call for increased support and improvement in governance systems so that they can sail through the crisis. The government should, therefore, ensure faster adoption of digital technologies that improve financial targeting to handhold weak MSMEs.

We hope our suggestions will be taken into consideration.

■

## Memorandum for Reforms in GST System

Four years have passed since the introduction of Goods and Services Tax (GST), which is billed as a major reform in India's indirect tax system since independence. In the last four years, the new tax system underwent several modifications to eliminate teething troubles, reduce compliance burden, address tax evasion and improve revenue collection.

Significantly, the government has allowed quarterly filing of returns and monthly payment of taxes to reduce compliance burden on micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) with turnover of up to Rs 5 crore. In a step further to improve ease of doing business, tax payers have also been allowed to file NIL returns through SMS.

Tax evasion was a major issue hindering the revenue buoyancy of GST system. The tax department has used cutting edge technologies and data analytics to detect tax evasion through generation of fake invoices and bogus claim of input tax credits. These anti-evasion measures boosted GST revenue collection month after month in recent times. Monthly GST revenue collection has been more than Rs. 1 lakh crore for the last 10 months, except in the month of June 2021, when the collection fell below the Rs. 92,849 crore amidst lockdown measures to combat second wave of COVID pandemic. The number of registered taxpayers almost doubled from 66.25 lakh in 2017 to 1.28 crore in 2021.

While these milestones are laudatory, there is still huge scope for improving the current system to reduce compliance burden, improve revenue collection and eliminate the cascading impact of indirect taxes. Specifically, there is an immediate need to introduce facility for invoice matching, correcting errors in filed returns, setting up of GST appellate tribunal and the National Appellate Authority for Advance Ruling (NAAAR).

In this regard, we are pleased to send you the following suggestions, compiled based on feedback from industry and audit firms such as Khimji Kunverji & Co LLP, to improve the current system of GST.

### Rationalization of the GST rate structure

**Issue:** Indian GST has a broad structure of four slab rates namely, 5%, 12%, 18%, and 28%. Also, there are special rates for precious metals such as gold, silver, etc. Multiple tax rates complicate the structure and increase both administrative and compliance costs.

**Suggestion:** Rate rationalization would be a good step in fine-tuning the complex structure. The GST Council should begin with the rate rationalization exercise at the earliest and merge the slabs of 12% and 18%.

### Bringing petroleum products under the ambit of GST

**Issue:** Currently, five petroleum products are outside the purview of GST. This is resulting in cascading effect of taxes which is against the stated objective of GST.

**Suggestion:** Inclusion of Petroleum Products in the GST framework at an early date is essential to bring GST closer to the One Nation-One Tax theory. Doing this will remove cascading effect of taxes and make Indian products competitive in the domestic as well as global markets. It will give a boost to the realization of our grand vision of "Aatma Nirbhar Bharat".

### Seamless flow of input tax credit

**Issue:** The number of rules governing the input tax credit scheme under GST has made it far from easy for a taxpayer to avail its benefits. A taxpayer can only claim the input tax credit based on what the supplier reports. If the supplier does not

report a particular invoice, then the recipient taxpayer is not allowed to claim the input tax credit of GST on such invoice. Further, a registered person is not eligible to claim the input tax credit in respect of any invoice of a particular financial year after the due date of furnishing return for the month of September following the end of that financial year or furnishing the annual return for that financial year, whichever is earlier. Also, in terms of section 17(5) of the CGST Act, there are certain items which even though used for business purposes are not fungible. This results in cascading effect of taxes.

**Suggestion:** Supreme Court in various cases has held that ITC is a vested right of every taxpayer and the core of any value added tax mechanism. Though every right is subject to reasonable restrictions, taxpayers should not be asked to do the impossible. The invoice matching system as envisaged in the GST law should be implemented at the earliest. Till that time, a facility should be enabled on the GST portal whereby taxpayers who are unable to avail ITC due to non-reporting or fault of the supplier can report such vendors and invoices. This will enable the government to initiate action against such delinquent suppliers.

Further, the time limit prescribed for claiming the input tax credit should be extended till the time of filing the annual return of that particular financial year.

To give a boost to the Make-in-India initiative and promote domestic manufacturing, GST paid on goods and services used for construction of factory building should be available as ITC. Also, GST paid on cab services

availed by employees under corporate plans should be allowed as ITC.

### Revision of Returns

**Issue:** In the current framework, amendment or revision or modification of the GST return i.e.; GSTR-3B is not possible. In case of any error, mistake, or omission, the effect of the same has to be given in subsequent returns. This gives rise to reconciliation issues.

**Suggestion:** In the previous regime, all statutes namely Central Excise, Service Tax, State VAT, CST, etc had the provision to file revised returns. The expectation of the government that taxpayers should be perfect all the time is unreasonable. It is strongly recommended that taxpayers be given at least one chance to revise the return before the filing of the annual return. This will reduce the chances of litigation and shall improve "Ease of Doing Business".

### Reduce the compliances under Reverse Charge Mechanism (RCM)

**Issue:** The list of transactions subject to GST under the reverse charge mechanism has almost doubled in the past four years. Under the reverse charge mechanism, the recipient taxpayer has to pay GST first and thereafter can claim ITC of the same subject to various conditions. Taxpayers are facing challenges in identifying such transactions, verifying conditions attached to them, and facing Issues in accounting the same. Further, self invoice and payment vouchers have to be generated for each such transaction.

**Suggestion:** It is recommended that government reconsiders the transactions covered under reverse charge and rationalize the same. Further, exemption from payment of GST under reverse charge should be given to those taxpayers who are eligible for full input tax credit. This will reduce the procedural compliance of making payment of GST liability under RCM first and then claiming input tax credit of the same. The requirement to generate a self invoice and payment voucher should be done away with and the GST challan through which the payment has been made should be made the default document for claiming the input tax credit.

### **GST Audit by Chartered Accountants should be restored**

**Issue:** The requirement to get the books audited by the Chartered accountant or Cost Accountant from a GST perspective has been done away with.

**Suggestion:** Removal of GST audit should not be seen as a step towards ease of doing business. Doing away with GST audit will create a greater problem such as tax evasion and increase in non-compliance of provisions in the days to come since there will be no concept of maker checker. It is strongly recommended that GST Audits by Chartered Accountants be reinstated for taxpayers having turnover above a prescribed threshold to keep an effective check on revenue leakages, tax evasion, and non-compliance with GST laws. This will provide support to the tax administration and reduce avenues for long-drawn litigation.

### **Relaxation in generation of e-way bills for taxpayers who are required to generate e-invoice**

**Issue:** Currently, there is a requirement for the generation of the e-way bill as well as e-invoices for taxpayers whose turnover is above a prescribed limit.

**Suggestion:** Taxpayers who are required to generate e-invoice should be exempted from the requirement to generate e-way bills. Requisite fields to be reported in the e-way bill which are currently not captured in the e-invoice should be incorporated in the e-invoicing system. This will avoid duplication and reduce the compliance cost.

### **Relaxation in Pre-deposit requirement to file appeals under GST law**

**Issue:** Any person who is aggrieved by any decision or order passed by authority can file an appeal to the appellate authority only after making payment of a certain percentage of the disputed tax amount. No appeal is admitted before payment of the mandatory pre-deposit. This creates a financial burden on business entities which are under financial distress especially in the COVID-19 scenario and in cases where the department officers pass unreasonable orders.

**Suggestion:** The requirement to make payment of pre-deposit before filing an appeal should be relaxed in cases where taxpayers are not able to deposit the said amount due to financial crisis. Also, power should be given to the appellate authority to cap the amount or waive the pre-deposit requirement in cases where

it prima facie appears that the demand is unreasonable.

### **Constitution of the GST appellate tribunal**

**Issue:** Even after four years of the implementation of GST, the appellate tribunal has not been constituted. If any assessee is aggrieved by the order of the appellate authority he is not able to file an appeal to the appellate tribunal and has to approach the high court through writ jurisdiction.

**Suggestion:** Constitution of the GST appellate tribunals is an absolute necessity and there is an immediate need to set up the same in the interest of the public at large.

### **Mode of service of notice should be reasonable**

**Issue:** Section 169(1) of CGST Act, 2017 prescribe that modes of service of notice, orders, summons, shall be by any one of the following-

(a) by giving or tendering it directly or by a messenger including a courier to the addressee or the taxable person or to his manager or authorized representative or an advocate or a tax practitioner holding authority to appear in the proceedings on behalf of the taxable person or to a person regularly employed by him in connection with the business, or to any adult member of the family residing with the taxable person; or

(b) by registered post or speed post or courier with acknowledgment due, to the person for whom it is intended or his authorized representative, if any, at his last known place of business or residence; or

(c) by sending a communication to his e-mail address provided at the time of registration or as amended from time to time; or

(d) by making it available on the common portal; or

(e) by publication in a newspaper circulating in the locality in which the taxable person or the person to whom it is issued is last known to have resided, carried on the

business, or personally worked for gain; or

(f) if none of the modes aforesaid is practicable, by affixing it in some conspicuous place at his last known place of business or residence and if such mode is not practicable for any reason, then by affixing a copy thereof on the notice board of the office of the concerned officer or authority who or which passed such decision or order or issued such summons or notice.

The officers have the right to select any of the modes as per their convenience.

**Suggestion:** It is recommended that the officer follows the modes of service stated in section 169(1) in a sequential manner rather than preferential because no taxpayers would check the portal regularly or they may not read the newspapers.

## India needs to reform its insolvency resolution regime

This memorandum calls for reforms in the insolvency resolution framework, which has failed to achieve the stated objectives of timely resolution of bad assets, with value maximization for lenders. It has been five years since the enactment of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) 2016 which is a landmark legislation to create legal framework governing insolvency resolution and reorganization of corporate persons, partnership firms and individuals. The objective of the legislation was to resolve and revive insolvency in a time bound manner by empowering stakeholders through a collective mechanism rather than stressing only on recovery of loan by the creditors.

It is highlighted that the legislation has brought several desirable changes in the economic and investment climate in the country. Specifically, India's ranking in World Bank's Ease of Doing Business ranking has improved from 136 in 2017 to 52 in 2020, while the average time taken for insolvency resolution has declined from 4.3 years in 2017 to 1.6 years in 2020.

At the same time, we bring to your kind notice that the Bankruptcy Code has not ensured timely resolution of insolvency cases and maximization of value for lenders, which were the key objectives of this reform. The legislation facilitated settlement of big ticket insolvency cases in the steel sector. However, this positive outcome in resolution of some high profile steel compa-

nies, could not be sustained in the subsequent cases and in most instances, lenders had to bear huge haircut to resolve cases. In its report submitted to the Lok Sabha on August 3, 2021, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance raised concern about the low recovery rate under the IBC framework with haircut as much as 95% and inordinate delay in resolution of

Key Drawbacks of the IBC System
Many cases are settled with recovery value as low as 10% or even 3% in some cases. As a result, bankers have to take huge haircut in some of the cases
Resolution for around 80% of the cases are delayed beyond 270 days
Entrepreneurs lose ownership of their business even if the reason for their default is poor economic condition or circumstances beyond their control
Section 29 (A) reduces the number of interested buyers for the assets and thereby reduces the bid value for these assets
Around 50% of the benches in NCLT remains vacant

cases. There are 13,170 cases pending before the NCLT with cumulative value of more than Rs. 9 lakh crore. Of this, around 71% of the cases have been pending for more than 180 days because of delay in admission of cases, delay in approval of resolution plans, litigation and stay orders granted by judiciary from time to time.

For the effective functioning of insolvency resolution process, there is a need to overhaul the functioning of National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), resolution professionals and committee of creditors, which are the key pillars of the resolution framework.

In this regard, we propose the following recommendations to achieve the stated objectives of timely resolution of insolvency cases with value maximization for creditors.

**Provide opportunity for loan restructuring:** Bankers should provide an opportunity for defaulting promoters to restructure their loans in cases where default happens because of poor economic condition or circumstances beyond the control of the borrowers. Such a one-time restructuring mechanism can prevent the cases from going to IBC and thereby reduce the burden on NCLT.

**Fixing accountability and credibility of CoC and RPs:** The current framework of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) absolves the Committee of Creditors (CoC) and Resolution Professionals (RPs) from any obligation with respect to the process and decision taken. As a result, many a times, decisions are taken only with a view to conclude the process rather than with the aim

to maximize the recovery value, which is the primary objective of IBC. Therefore, in order to attain the cherished objective of the IBC process, the government may hold the Committee of Creditors and Resolution Professionals responsible for the outcome of this process.

**Fixing bankers' responsibility for defaulted cases:** Once a case is referred to the IBC, the responsibility of bankers in resolving that case reduces. There are instances where the promoter has become insolvent because of her inability to access timely credit at affordable interest rate. Bankers should be held responsible for their failure to disburse credit at the right time and in such cases, they should resolve the case mutually with the promoter rather than referring it to IBC.

**Remove right of Operational Creditors to appoint Resolution Professional:** There are instances where a company is dragged to the IBC because the promoter could not repay the dues of operational creditors. Such cases involving default of dues owed to operational creditors should be settled mutually between the promoters and the operational creditors, rather than being brought under the IBC. Also, the government may remove the right of the operational creditor to appoint resolution professional for such cases.

**Benchmark for "hair-cut":** The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) may set a benchmark for the quantum of "hair-cut", compared to global standards. Such a benchmark may be based on the global best practices in recovering the maximum possible value while resolving insolvency cases. Identifying global standards in

recovery will serve as a guide for Committee of Creditors, Resolution Professionals and NCLT.

**Setting up of a unified regulatory body for RPs:** The regulation of Resolution Professionals (RPs) should be vested with a single body, unlike the current practice of vesting this regulatory role to multiple Insolvency Professional Agencies (IPAs).

It is argued by experts that the existence of multiple Insolvency Professional Agencies (IPAs) that regulate the conduct of their members, gives rise to conflict of interest between the regulatory and competitive roles of these agencies. Therefore, the IBBI may set up a single professional regulator, on the lines of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI), to monitor and regulate the functioning of resolution professionals.

**Adherence to bidding deadlines by Committee of Creditors:** Under the current dispensation, Committee of Creditors can exercise discretion on accepting bids that are submitted by buyers after the specified deadline. This discretion encourages unscrupulous buyers to outbid the highest bidder by waiting till the result of the bidding is announced. It also discourages genuine buyers from submitting bids within the deadline on concern that any new applicant may outbid her when the result of the auction is announced. This discretion to accept late bids erodes the sanctity of the bidding process and creates room for litigation by unsuccessful bidders. Therefore, the government may amend the IBC code to the effect that bids submitted after the deadlines are not entertained.

**Appointment of High Court judges at NCLT Benches:** Many a times, the judgements passed by NCLT benches are appealed at NCLAT and further at High Courts by the aggrieved parties.

The quality of judgements passed by NCLT Benches have come under scanner with the frequent overturning of the NCLT verdicts by NCLAT or by High Courts. In order to improve the quality of judgments of NCLTs, the government may appoint judges of Hon'ble High Court at the NCLT benches so that the insolvency resolution process may benefit from the judicial experience of these judges. Also, there is a need for capacity building by providing intensive training for members at the NCLT benches.

**Filling vacancies in NCLT and creating dedicated benches:** One of the reasons for delay in resolution of cases under the IBC is the huge vacancy in NCLT benches. According to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance, there is vacancy of 34 benches out of the sanctioned strength of 62 members in NCLT.

Another reason for delay in hearing IBC cases is that there is no dedicated bench in the NCLT for such cases. Currently, there is a common bench in the NCLT for hearing cases related to Companies Act and cases related to IBCs. If the government creates a dedicated bench at the NCLT for IBC cases, it will reduce the workload of the judges and enable timely settlement of cases.

**Amendment to allow part sale of insolvent company:** Currently, there is no clarity in the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) on whether the Resolution Professional

can sell different parts of an insolvent company to different bidders by preparing separate resolution plan for individual part.

There is a view among the Committee of Creditors and Resolution Professionals that the IBC requires disposal of the entire business and operations to one bidder under one plan.

There are instances where a single bidder may be interested to buy only one division of the insolvency company. Under such circumstances, the resolution professional should be allowed to invite separate bids for different verticals of the company and prepare separate resolution plan. To provide this flexibility to the resolution professional, the government may amend the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code to allow resolution professional to sell different assets of the corporate debtor to multiple bidders.

Regulation 32 of the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) allows resolution professional to sell the assets to multiple bidders. Amendment in the IBC to this effect will make it in sync with CIRP and thereby eliminate ambiguity in this regard.

**Digitization of resolution process:** In order to expedite the resolution process under IBC, the government may digitize the entire process of admitting, hearing and resolving cases. Especially, the government may introduce facilities for virtual hearing of cases in NCLT and NCLAT to reduce the hassle of physical presence.

**Extension of pre-pack scheme for large loans:** In April 2021, the government introduced a pre-pack

scheme for prompt resolution of insolvency cases involving loan amount less than Rs. 1 crore. This scheme allowed insolvent promoters in the micro, small and medium enterprise category to negotiate with the lenders on a resolution plan while retaining control of their business.

This scheme was intended to offer an alternative route for insolvency resolution under IBC and thereby help reduce backlog of cases in the NCLT. The government may extend this scheme for debtors with outstanding loan amount more than Rs. 1 crore so that a wide range of promoters, who defaulted out of adverse economic condition, may benefit from this scheme.

**Priority to MSME Dues:** The corporate resolution process under IBC should ensure that the due of MSME suppliers owed by the corporate debtor is given priority while settling the dues of other creditors.

Under the "waterfall" mechanism of IBC, MSME suppliers are considered operational creditors and their dues are paid after settling the outstanding loan of secured creditors. If MSMEs do not receive their dues from corporate buyers, it will affect their working capital cycle and put pressure on their balance sheet, which may in turn trigger a chain of loan default by small enterprises.

Therefore, in order to prevent sharp rise in the bad loan in the banking sector, the government may provide priority to the settlement of dues of MSME suppliers owed by corporate debtor.

■

## Jai Bhuvan Group



### Name of the Company -

JAI BHUVAN Group

### Name of the MD -

Mr. Bhuvanish Sadanand Sheth

### Description of the Company -

Since 1991, JAI BHUVAN Group has been instrumental in changing the landscape of GOA and has set benchmarks for the industry to follow. The Group's flagship company is Jai Bhuvan Builders Pvt. Ltd. The Group has diversified into Hospitality Industry. It is a professionally driven group with focus on maximizing benefits to its stakeholders. All the projects have been developed keeping this in mind. For the end users they mean a great lifestyle and for the investors they mean best returns.

### Product / Services offered -

Real Estate Services, Hospitality Services and Retail Services through Malls. Their subsidiary Nizanta Retail Ventures Pvt. Ltd. has multi stores in shopping malls in Goa and has under their umbrella International brands like Calving Klein, Tommy Hilfiger, and United Colors of Benetton etc to name a few. Given the demand for High Fashion clothing both domestically and internationally they are looking to foray into the manufacturing of high quality clothing for exports to the international markets.

### Achievements -

Mall De Goa which is owned by Jai Bhuvan Group was awarded the Business Goa Award for Corporate Excellence 2019 for Retail Venture of

the year and for bringing high street brands to Goa.

### Company looking for sales/marketing/partner/market , etc

Looking to export garments and fabrics to the European market, Italy in particular.

### Already exporting to countries -

Currently not exporting to any country

### Want to export to

the European market, Italy in particular.

### E-mail -

jaibhuvan.2009@rediffmail.com,  
bhuvanish.sheth@jaibhuvan.com

## Tanjore painting – a masterpiece that combines divinity with aesthetics



A Tanjore painting of deities Sita, Ram, Lakshman and others

**T**hanjavur painting, also known as Tanjore painting, is a classical South Indian style of painting, which originated from the town of Thanjavur (now called Tanjore), in Tamilnadu. In the late 16th century, the Marathas expanded their kingdom upto Thanjavur in South India and encouraged art forms to prosper, as well as supported artists to grow. It was during this period and under the patronage of the Nayaks and Marathas that the art of Tanjore painting truly flourished and developed into the form and style in which we recognise it today.

During those days, these paintings were done on the walls of temples and palaces. Hindu Gods, Goddesses and Saints were painted in vibrant colours as the prime subject depicting scenes from the Holy Vedas (Hindu religious texts). The artists, through generations religiously followed the distinct traditions of this artform in which painting divine forms of Gods and Goddesses was considered so sacred, that most master craftsmen usually chose to be anonymous considering their art as devotion for their respective deity.

The deities or the main subject of the Tanjore paintings are always shown face front and depicted with rounded faces, almond-shaped eyes, rounded bodies with well

defined outlines etc. Also, they are often enclosed with arches, curtains, borders etc. painted around them. Usually distinguished by its famous gold coating, many a times, cut glass, pearls, precious and semi-precious stones are also used by the artists to highlight the jewellery and ornate dresses of the deity.

The most important aspect of this artform is the expression on the face of the deity, especially the depth in its eyes, which determines the true quality of the Tanjore painting. According to tradition, painting or opening of the eyes which is traditionally called as "Netronmeelanam" is the final step of the painting. Artists recite the following Mrityunjaya Japa after choosing an auspicious moment "Idam chitam mayaa praneetham sada bhootva sthapithavyam, sannidhyam kuru me Deva netronmeelana puniya kala" which means "This picture created by me should remain forever, Come before me Oh Lord! and bless the opening of the eyes". Onlookers are often left mesmerised with a sense of calmness and devotion looking into the divinely glowing eyes of the deity in the paintings. Therefore, people honour these paintings by placing them in Puja alters as images of worship.

Apart from Hindu deities, many a times, Jain, Sikh,



Embedding precious stones on a Tanjore painting



An artist working on a Tanjore Painting.

Muslim, other religious and even secular subjects are depicted in Tanjore paintings.

Tanjore paintings were also known as palagai padam – meaning “picture on a wooden plank” – as they were usually painted on boards made from jackfruit tree or teak wood, which are now replaced with plywood. Traditionally, colours and dyes used for this artwork were

natural and made out of vegetables and minerals. However, over time, artists have started using chemical paints as they are easily available, enhance the sharpness and also provide better shades and contrast. Shades of reds, blues and greens are the most used colours in this artwork and the richness and dense compositions of these paintings, ensure that they stand out from other Indian artforms. Common themes in Tanjore paintings include Bal Krishna, Lord Rama, as well as other gods, goddesses, saints and subjects from Hindu mythology.

Creating a masterpiece Tanjore painting along with its signature dense composition is as laborious as it looks. This process usually requires a team of expert artisans consisting of a well-trained embosser, a visage impressionist, 22 carat gold leaf gilder and a master artist who specialises in painting the faces of deities with the appropriate expressions.

In the last decade, the popularity of the Tanjore artform has been revived by Government of India as it was given a Geographical Indication status in 2007–08. Also, workshops and training camps are being held regularly, to ensure that this artform continues to thrive and reach a mass audience. In recent times, Tanjore paintings are often seen adorning various fashion and commercial objects such as sarees, dresses, shawls, cushion covers, ladies hand bags, wallets, book covers, jewellery, accessories etc. However, this overwhelming popularity has disguised the general decline in the quality of this artform which has become a matter of concern for many art lovers, who expect that great care be taken to retain all the rich, traditional and artistic elements that make up the essence of the artform of Tanjore painting.



Tanjore painting of Radha Krishna on a saree



Tanjore Painting on a Rakhi



Tanjore Pendant



Tanjore on a decorative Cushion Cover



Tanjore art on a Ladies Handbag

## Dussehra - Celebrating victory of Good over Evil



The ritual of burning effigies of Ravan, Kumbhakaran and Meghnath during Dussehra

Indian Hindus, speak diverse languages, yet most of them are bound by common religious practices prescribed in the sacred scriptures known as Vedas. Based on the mythologies and epics contained in the vedas, Hindus celebrate various festivals round the year. Over ages, these festivals have shaped the religious, socio-cultural and economic life of Hindus. Some of these festivals such as Navaratri, Diwali and Onam are celebrated with great fanfare by Indians as well as the Indian diaspora across different countries.

This article explores the significance of the auspicious day of Dussehra which is celebrated at the end of the nine-day Hindu festival of Navaratri. Navaratri signifies the feminine spirit of the divinity as devotees worship the nine manifestations of Goddess Durga, according to Hindu scriptures.

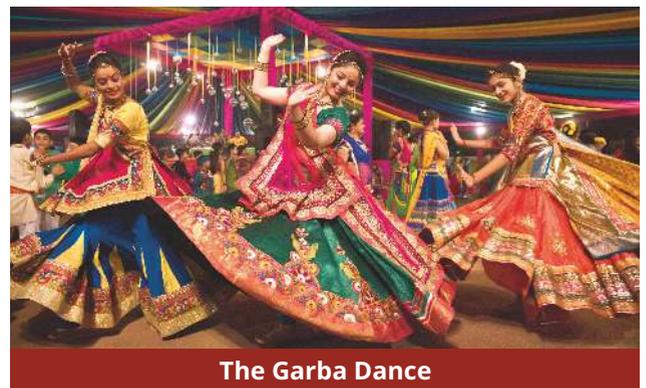
According to the Hindu tradition, four Navaratri are observed in a year, of which two - Chaitra Navratri and Sharad Navratri are popularly celebrated. Dussehra falls on the 10th day of Sharad Navratri, which falls in the month of Ashvin (September–October), or the seventh month of the Hindu calendar. Dussehra is also celebrated as Vijayadashami, which signifies the triumph of good over evil.

Each day of this nine-day festival is dedicated to one avatar (incarnation) of Goddess Durga. These avatars are Mahishasura Mardhini, Bala Tripura Sundari, Raja Rajeshwari, Annapoorna, Kali, Kanaka Durga, Lakshmi, Saraswati and Gayatri Devi. The tenth day is then celebrated as Dussehra where Goddess Durga's idol is immersed in water signifying her return to her heavenly abode. In Western India, especially in Gujarat, people fast for nine days and during the nights they gather together

for special festivities and dances known as dandia and garba in honour of the Goddess

According to the Hindu epic Ramayana, Lord Ram, in order to rescue his wife Devi (Goddess) Sita, fought and defeated the 10 headed Rakshash (Demon) king Ravan who had abducted her. During the battle, Lord Ram cut off all the 10 heads of Ravan and hence this day came to be celebrated as Dussehra, which in Sanskrit stands for Dasha (ten) hara (defeat) meaning the defeat of the demon king Ravan.

Two more significant events took place on this day, first being Goddess Durga's victory over a very powerful Asura (demon) called Mahishasur, who created havoc by defeating all the Devas (Demigods). In order to put an end to the demon's mayhem, the holy trinity of Gods viz.



The Garba Dance

Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva combined their energy to form one single powerful energy called Shakti to vanquish Mahishasur. Shakti then took the form of Goddess Durga and fought valiantly against Mahishasur for nine days and nights. Finally, on the tenth day, Mahishasur was defeated and killed by Durga.

Secondly, as mentioned in the Hindu epic Mahabharata, it was on the day of Dussehra when Arjun annihilated the Kuru clan, including great warriors like Bhishma, Dhrona, Karna and Ashwathama, in the epic battle of Kurukshetra which was a fight of righteousness against the unlawful.

Dussehra or Vijayadashami has various stories behind it and so the festival is celebrated in different ways across India. In the North and some parts of Western states of India, Dussehra is celebrated to honour Lord Ram's victory over Ravan. Plays enacting the life of Lord Ram and the battle between him and Ravan are performed in open grounds for large audiences and at the end, effigies of demons such as Ravan, Kumbhakaran (Ravans brother) and Meghanad (Ravan's Son) are burnt down to remind people that Dharma (good) will always be victorious over Adharma (evil).

In the Eastern States of India such as West Bengal, Assam and Odisha, this day is celebrated as Vijayadashami in honor of Goddess Durga's victory over the demon Mahishasur. As for the celebrations, it is believed that on the seventh day (known as Mahalaya) prior to the main festival, Goddess Durga after having vanquished the Demon Mahisasur commences her journey from Mount Kailash where she resides with her eternal consort Lord Shiva, to come to her maternal home Earth with Lakshmi (the goddess of wealth and prosperity), Saraswati (the goddess of knowledge and music), Ganesh (the god who removes obstacles), and Kartikeya (the god of war) who in the Bengali and Odia traditions, are considered to be Durga's children and are also worshipped during this festival.

On the third day post Mahalaya i.e. four days prior to Vijayadashami, the arrival of Durga with her children is celebrated with a special welcome puja. This day is called shashti. And finally on Vijayadashami, i.e. the tenth day, after various pujas, the idols of Durga and her children are immersed into the sea, thus bidding farewell to the



Immersion of Goddess Durga

goddess. These idols are specially made out of clay which dissolves when immersed into the water. Hence, it is believed that Durga and her children merge into nature, thus marking their return back to their heavenly abode



Ritual of Sindoor Khela during Dussehra

Kailash, to unite with Lord Shiva. Right before the immersion, Bengali women indulge in a ritual called Sindoor Khela, wherein they apply vermillion (sindoor) on each other and wear red clothing which signifies Goddess Durga's victory.



Saraswati Puja

Interestingly, some places in the South of India celebrate the 9th day of Navaratri in honour of Goddess Saraswati (the Hindu Goddess of knowledge and arts). On this day, in order to please the Goddess, students worship their books which is considered to be Saraswati herself. Apart from this, people specially clean and worship their instruments of livelihood and seek the Goddess's blessings. Saraswathi Puja is also performed by many South Indian families for initiating their children into education as Vijayadashami is considered to be the day where knowledge triumphed over ignorance.

Although the festival is celebrated in different ways by Hindus all over the country, the basic essence of it remains the same and that is the victory of good, positivity, knowledge, light and dharma over evil, negativity, ignorance, darkness and adharma respectively.





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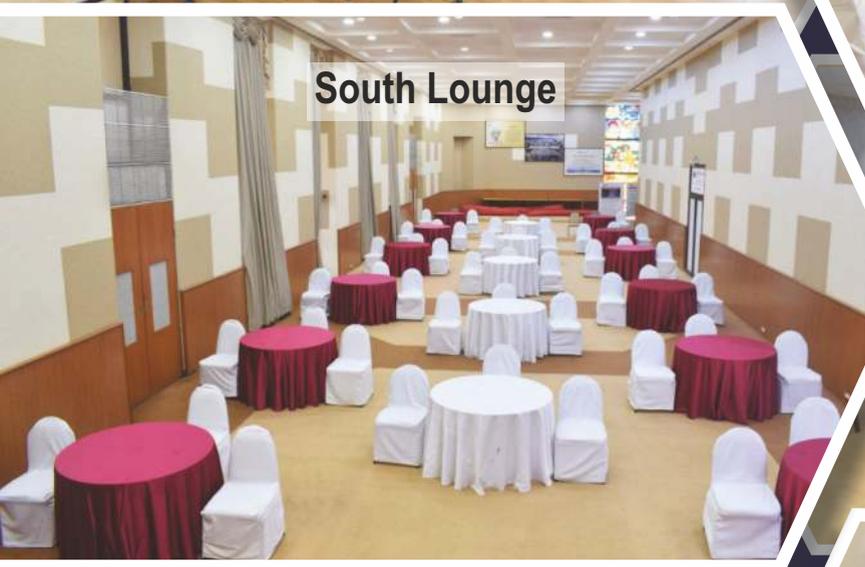
**50 participants**



Board Room



Centrum Hall



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