

# EPCH Delegation calls on Mr. Syed Zafar Islam, Hon'ble Member of Parliament from Uttar Pradesh

**New Delhi; 26th July 2021** | EPCH-Chairman, Mr. Raj Kumar Malhotra; Director General, EPCH, Dr. Rakesh Kumar; Executive Director, EPCH, Mr. R K Verma; and Mr. Avdesh Aggarwal, General Secretary, Moradabad Handicrafts Exporters Association and eminent EPCH member exporter from Moradabad, met Mr. Syed Zafar Islam, Hon'ble Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha), from Uttar Pradesh.

The delegation raised various issues pertaining to the handicrafts sector like restoration of provision of duty-free import of essential embellishments, trimmings, tools consumables for export purposes for the handicrafts sector; high freight charges for containers; establishment of regulatory body of shipping lines; early release of MEIS benefits; announcement of RoDTEP rates; Policy for B2B ecommerce, warehousing facility and others.

The Hon'ble Member of Parliament gave a patient hearing and assured all possible help to get issues resolved and hope the sector to grow at much faster rate in the future.



(L To R) Dr. Rakesh Kumar, Director General, EPCH and Mr. Raj Kumar Malhotra, Chairman, EPCH, presenting a bouquet to Mr. Syed Zafar Islam, Hon'ble Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha). Also seen are, Mr. Avdesh Aggarwal, General Secretary, Moradabad Handicrafts Exporters Association and Mr. R K Verma, Executive Director, EPCH

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## Canada assigns final dumping margins for China, Vietnam upholstery in Canada

The Canada Border Services Agency has assigned countrywide dumping margins of 188% and 179.5%, respectively, for upholstered seating from China and Vietnam sold in the Canadian market. CBSA issued separate margins ranging from 9.3% to 102.1% for 32 Chinese manufacturers and 9.9% to 179.5% for eight manufacturers in Vietnam. The Canadian International Trade Tribunal investigation of injury to the domestic industry from subject goods is ongoing, with an order finding expected by Sept. 2, and the margins issued might not reflect final duties applied to seating from Vietnam and China. In addition

to lowering China's countrywide margin rate, CBSA's final determination also calculated amount of subsidy as a percentage of export price, which in the case of nearly all manufacturers in both countries was in the low single digits. If the final margins are based on those figures, it could result in rebates of duties paid at a higher rate during the course of the investigation after CITT's final determination of injury to domestic Canadian manufacturers. Provisional duties will continue to apply on imports of subject goods until the date of the CITT's order or finding. ■

Source : Furniture Today

# Back-to-college shopping expected to hit record, total spending to reach \$71 billion

The back-to-college shopping season in USA is shaping up to be a strong one. Consumers plan to spend record amounts for both school and college supplies as families and students plan to return to in-person classrooms this fall, according to the annual survey released by the National Retail Federation and Prosper Insights & Analytics.

Total back-to-school spending is expected to reach a record \$37.1 billion, up from \$33.9 billion last year and an all-time high in the survey's history. College students and their families plan to spend an average of \$1,200.32 on college or university items, an increase of \$141 over last year. More than half (\$80) of this increase is due to increased spending on electronics and dorm furnishings. Total back-to-college spending is expected to reach a record \$71 billion, up from \$67.7 billion in 2020.

According to the survey, as of early July more than half (51%) of K-12 and college shoppers have begun shopping for the items they will need when classes resume later this year. And 39% say they took advantage of recent sale events such as Prime Day, Target Deal Days and Walmart's Deals for Days to shop specifically for school items.

On average, consumers reported that they had completed only 18% of their back-to-class purchases so far by early July. Among those with at least half of their shopping left to complete, 51% said it was because they did not yet



know what they will need, and 48% said they were still waiting for the best deals. Additionally, 43% of all back-to-class shoppers say they plan to use money they received from government stimulus to purchase items for the upcoming school year. While online shopping remains a top destination for back-to-school shopping, families are much more comfortable shopping in store this year than last year during the peak of the pandemic, the NRF reported. The top destinations for college shoppers include online (43%), department stores (33%), discount stores (30%), office supplies stores (29%) and college bookstores (28%). The survey of 7,704 consumers was conducted July 1-8 and has a margin of error of plus or minus 1.1 percentage points. ■

Source : NPD

# Delta variant spread dampening spending plans, concern hits highest level

A new consumer study conducted by First Insight indicates that the Delta variant is negatively affecting U.S. consumer confidence. The survey of more than 1,000 people saw a 25% increase over last month in the number of consumers who said they are “very or somewhat worried” about the Coronavirus, from 51% to 64%, the highest one-month jump recorded since March 2020. As a result, 56% of the consumers surveyed last week will be cutting back on their spending, an increase of 8% over last month. Moreover, the survey found that 90% of the unvaccinated have no plans to change course even as restaurants and businesses across the country are beginning to implement proof-of-vaccine mandates.

“I believe the trends we’re seeing may very well lead to families hunkering down again and curtailing experiential spending, especially for domestic and international travel, and shifting this spend toward physical products, including back-to-

school items,” said Greg Petro, CEO of First Insight. He noted that women are significantly less likely to be vaccinated than men, with fully one-third of women stating that they don’t intend to be vaccinated vs. only 18% of men. “Further, Millennials, the generation most likely to have school-age children, are also the least likely generation to be vaccinated,” Petro added.

Concern about Delta variant spread is prompting changes in consumers’ in-store behavior as well, the survey found. Fifty-three percent of respondents said that they feel unsafe trying on products in dressing rooms, 49% feel unsafe trying on shoes and 71% feel unsafe testing beauty products in store. Moreover, 56% feel unsafe working with a sales associate, a 30% increase from last month. The ripple effects are also impacting the restaurants and travel businesses. Two-thirds of those surveyed have said that they won’t go to restaurants or are cutting back significantly on dining out. ■ *Source: HFN Digital*