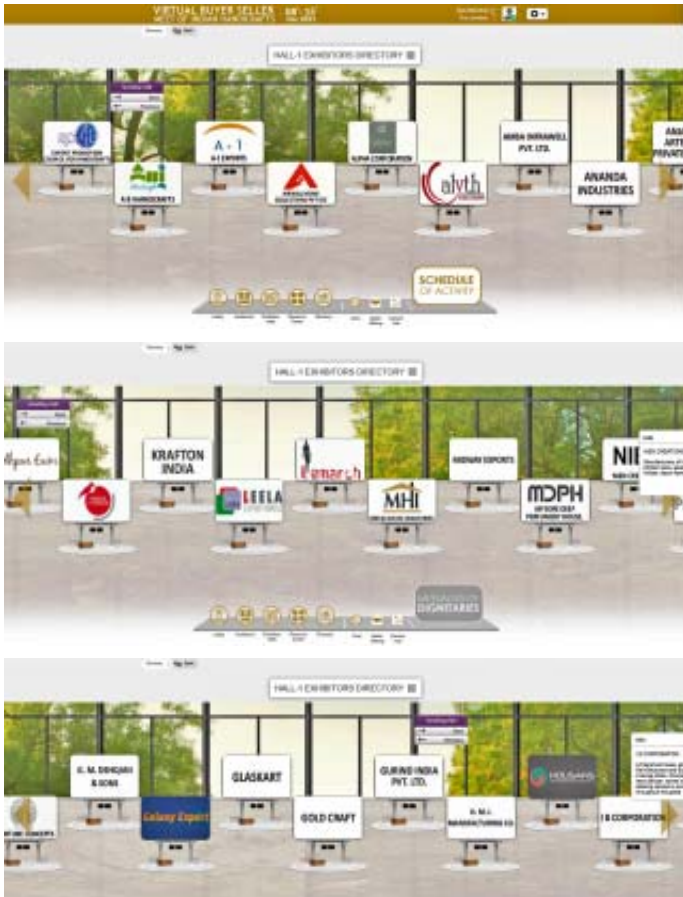


Virtual Buyer-Seller Meet

of Indian Handicrafts Manufacturers & Exporters
with buyers of focused AMERICAS Markets

8th - 15th December 2021





EPCH, in association with Indian Embassies, High Commissions & Consulates in USA, Canada & LAC Region and with support of Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Govt. of India, organised a Virtual Buyer Seller Meet of Indian Handicrafts Manufacturers & Exporters with buyers of AMERICAS Market from 8th to 15th December 2021 (initially planned for 4 days from 08 - 11 December 2021 and extended till 15th December 2021 to reach the maximum number of buyers from the region).

The American Market is the biggest market for Indian Handicrafts & Gifts items. Indian handicrafts exports to USA, Canada & LAC Region accounted for US\$ million 1364.07 during FY 2019-2020 & US \$ Million 1455.66 in 2020-2021. However, it has been a very difficult year as the major international fairs across the world that used to be organised in the month of January & February, were rescheduled. EPCH, with the willingness and active participation of its members launched this Buyer Seller Meet in a Virtual Trade Fair Mode with a robust online ecosystem combining most of a Meet's features with technology that made communication and transacting business between buyers and sellers a pleasurable experience in the age of social distancing.

59 accredited manufacturer exporters from all parts of India participated and displayed a wide range of handcrafted products in categories such as Houseware, Decorative & Gifts; Furniture & Home Accessories; Home Textiles; Furnishings & Floor Coverings; Fashion Jewellery; Fashion Accessories & Bags; Christmas Decorations; Candles & Incense; Lamps & Lighting and more on this virtual buyer seller meet platform. Virtual BSM Link: <https://indianhandicrafts.epch.in/>

The Indian Missions in UAS, Canada, Mexico & LAC Region and the Foreign Trade Division for NAFTA & LAC Division in Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Govt. of India extended their active support to EPCH for organising this Virtual Buyer Seller Meet (NAFTA & LAC Region) reflecting the indomitable spirit of the handicraft exporting fraternity to continue furthering the efforts to strengthen the Indian Handicrafts Sector.

The inaugural session of the Virtual Buyer Seller Meet (NAFTA & LAC Regions) was organised on 08th December 2021 on a virtual platform with active support and video messages received from His Excellency Shri Sanjiv Ranjan, Ambassador, (Embassy of India in Colombia); His Excellency Mr. Ajay Bisaria, High Commissioner, (High Commission of India to Canada); His Excellency Mr. Taranjit Singh Sandhu, Ambassador, (Embassy of India Washington DC, USA); His Excellency Mr. Subrata Bhattacharjee, Ambassador, (Embassy of India in Chile); His Excellency Mr. Suresh K. Reddy, Ambassador, (Embassy of India in Brazil); His Excellency Mr. Dinesh Bhatia, Ambassador, (Embassy of India in Argentina); His Excellency Mr. Mandarapu Subbarayudu, Ambassador, (Embassy of India in Peru); His Excellency Mr. Arun Kumar Sahu, High Commissioner, (High Commission of India in Trinidad and Tobago); Mr. Randhir Jaiswal, Consul General, (Consulate General of India, New York, USA); Dr. T.V. Nagendra Prasad, Consul General, (Consulate General of India, San Francisco, USA); Mr. Amit Kumar, Consul General, (Consulate General of India in Chicago, USA); Dr. Swati Vijay Kulkarni, Consul General, (Consulate General of India, Atlanta, USA); Mr. Manish, Consul General, (Consulate General of India, Vancouver Canada); Mr. Aseem R. Mahajan, Consul General, (Consulate General of India, Houston, USA); Ms. Apoorva Srivastava, Consul General, (Consulate General of India, Toronto Canada); Shri Amit Kumar Mishra, Consul General, (Consulate General of India in Sao Paulo, Brazil) and the Department of Commerce as well as Foreign Trade Divisions for NAFTA and LAC Regions in the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Govt. of India. The inaugural ceremony of the Virtual Buyer Seller Meet was broadcasted on the virtual BSM platform for buyers and exhibitors.



Mr. Ajay Bisaria, High Commissioner, High Commissioner of India, Ottawa, Canada said that Canada has started to emerge as a major destination for Indian exports at a current worth of over 21 million US Dollars. Its market trend favouring natural, handmade, organic and sustainably produced items offers an excellent potential for handicrafts manufacturers and exporters to target this market. He added, in addition to growing number of Indian origin people in Canada 1.7 million now also serve as an expanding market for Indian handicrafts here. The Canadian market is highly competitive and needs strong marketing and advertisement drive for a success with Indian geographical indicators now being utilised and recognised worldwide. The Ambassador assured that the Commerce Wing of the High Commission and the posts in Vancouver and Toronto remain available for supporting the export outreach by India's handicrafts manufactures and exporters.

H E Mr. Subrata Bhattacharjee, Ambassador, Embassy of India, Santiago said, for India, Chile is an important market in the Latin American Region. Chileans also have a spontaneous liking for many Indian products in this category. So, considering the importance of Chile in the region, there is a possibility of using Chile as a hub to export these products to the Latin American Region as the big retail chains of Chile have a regional outreach. He further said, with the current pandemic situation, virtual BSMs have become a cost-effective way to reach out to foreign markets.

H E Mr. Dinesh Bhatia, Ambassador, Embassy of India, Buenos Aires, Argentina opined that the Latin American

countries generally enjoy high GDP per capita and consequently a lucrative market for our exports. We have not been able to focus and exploit their full potential, particularly in handicrafts for which there is a liking and demand in these countries. While wishing all success to the participants and organizers of virtual BSM, he hoped that EPCH is able to physically bring a delegation to promote handicraft exports to Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay, during next year 2022.

H E Mr. Mandarapu Subbarayudu, Ambassador, Embassy of India, Lima, Peru complemented EPCH for holding yet another BSM that aims to facilitate direct contact between the producers & suppliers of India and trade partners & consumers in LAC. The BSMs and visits of business delegations organized in the past with the support of EPCH had received a good response of distributors and buyers of handicrafts in Peru. He added that, the size of Peru's handicraft imports is US\$2.7 billion. There is demand for handmade articles, fashion jewellery, copper utensils, lamps etc., and businesses in Peru are looking for new suppliers of products in this category, including toys.

H E Mr. Arun Kumar Sahu, High Commissioner, High Commission of India, Trinidad & Tobago said that Export Promotional Council for Handicrafts is organising its 2nd edition of virtual Buyer Seller Meet for the buyers for Americas including the buyers from Caribbean Nations. I recall EPCH organised the first edition of this meet last year. This virtual Buyer Seller meet is vital medium to provide viable matchmaking and marketing opportunities for global buyers and Indian handicrafts manufactures. The importers of Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean will take full advantage of this opportunity.



Mr. Randhir Jaiswal, Consul General of India, New York, USA said, “we derive immense strength and support from the work of EPCH as we collectively work for the promotion of India’s exports.” Speaking of the Govt. of India’s target to export US\$ 400 billion worth of goods this year, he said, “we want to expand the Indian trade basket with innovative and new-age products that we have to offer to the world. With a yearning among consumers for hand-made, nature-based and craft-based goods, there is indeed a new demand and appetite for Indian handicrafts, he concluded.

Dr. T.V. Nagendra Prasad, Consul General of India, San Francisco, USA said, the virtual format is a very convenient and appropriate engagement and in the current circumstances off course. The Consulate General of India in San Francisco covers 11 States on the West Coast and in the adjoining region, residence to about 1.5 million Indians. So, particularly Indian goods will have a huge market here, only thing is one need to connect with right people here to market their product, he emphasised.

Dr. Swati V Kulkarni, Consul General of India, Atlanta, USA conveyed her best wishes and called the event a commendable initiative to promote Indian hand-made and hand-crafted products. She hoped the interaction between Indian American businesses for productive and useful discussions on possible opportunities and alliances through the BSM bears fruit.

Mr. Manish, Consul General, Consulate General of India, Vancouver, Canada invited importers, wholesalers, distributors and retailers in Canada and other countries in the region to take advantage of this BSM and establish direct business links with

Indian manufacturers and suppliers. The Indian products are known for their quality, affordability, traditional appeal and innovative designs. They are preferred in North America and especially in Western Canada which is part of my jurisdiction. The region has a growing population and thereby a growing market for these items, he further added.

Mr. Aseem R. Mahajan, Consul General of India, Houston, Texas, USA The comprehensive partnership between USA and India is broad based with growing engagement and a steady stream of bilateral engagements that continue to register a healthy growth. He hoped for a resonance of the same through interactions between both sides at the BSM.

Ms. Apoorva Srivastava, Consul General of India, Houston, Ontario, Canada called EPCH, a great partner in promotion of overseas trade in Indian handicrafts and valued the professionalism in conducting trade promotion events. She added that this event is an excellent initiative in the same direction and urged buyers from Canada to benefit from it.

Mr. Amit Kumar Mishra, Consul General of India, Sao Paulo, Brazil recalled about EPCH’s physical BSMs and complimented the successful virtual versions in course of the pandemic. Hoping that this virtual meet in continuation, will extensively engage with Indian terms of exports, he wished the best to all involved and hoped it will further contribute to the trend of registering positive growth to India’s handicraft exports.

Speaking on the occasion, **Mr. Raj Kumar Malhotra, Chairman-EPCH** welcomed all Buyers and Sellers. He informed, as travel restrictions are still in place and many international in-



person or physical B2B fairs are still in a state of temporary suspension, buyers from world over are looking forward for online sourcing opportunities to cope up with such extraordinary times. EPCH has created this online eco-system to provide a platform to both the exhibitors and buyers to interact and negotiate business through the virtual buyers seller meets - a viable business option in this situation. It is expected that this Virtual Buyer-Seller-Meet in association with Indian Missions will lead to a growth in region, trade, economy and people to people relations.

Dr. Rakesh Kumar, Director General, EPCH & Chairman, India Exposition Mart Ltd. informed that this is the 6th Virtual Buyer Seller Meet that is being organised by EPCH. On face of the pandemic, the Council has been able to set a complete supply chain management as well as the marketing effort through these interactive virtual Buyer Seller Meets. The response to the earlier Buyer Seller Meet has been excellent. The products produced by our entrepreneurs who are participating in this Buyer Seller Meet will definitely evoke a great response amongst the buyers of these countries.

Mr. R K Verma, Executive Director EPCH informed, when physical meeting is not possible in COVID-19 time, use of

technology is the best opportunity to connect with buyers. EPCH already organised 12 virtual fairs and BSMs. These virtual BSMs connected buyers & sellers through digital mode and they have successfully undertaken businesses. Mr. Verma expressed the

commitment of EPCH to continue providing B2B match making to all the buyers and exhibitors and thanked the Ministry of Commerce, Govt. of India and Indian Missions of NAFTA countries and LAC Region in promoting the Virtual BSM amongst buyers in their respective countries.

The Virtual Buyer Seller Meet (NAFTA & LAC Region) has been the fulcrum and the catalyst for the growth of the Indian Handicrafts Exports to American Markets and this Virtual Buyer Seller Meet is so meaningful not only for the business opportunities it provides to both big and small manufacturers and exporters but also for the networking it facilitates and brings all stakeholders on to a common platform to this degree in the Spring and Autumn season.

This Virtual Buyer Seller Meet received 371 buyers from Canada and USA in North America; Mexico, Panama, Colombia, Venezuela, Brazil, Guatemala, Suriname, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay, Chile, Argentina and Uruguay in Latin America; and Cuba, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago in the Caribbean and nearby countries. The Indian handicrafts exhibitors participated in this Virtual Buyer-Seller Meet received positive number of business enquiries from the buyers. ■