

# EPCH Webinars continue, keep handicrafts fraternity updated & reassured

Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts

**WEBINAR**  
(Business Through Risky Controversy)

## GST

Goods and Services Tax  
**Minimising The Tax Burden**  
Interpreting the Latest Important Changes

12 Noon - 1<sup>st</sup> May 2020 (Friday)

TRADE PANELISTS

Mr. S.L. Khandelwal  
Mr. Rakesh Bhatia  
Mr. Mahesh Bhatia

REGISTER / JOIN

PANEL OF EXPERTS

Mr. Shashi Rastogi (IIT) & Services, IIT Guwahati

Mr. Rastogi has worked extensively in the CBEC in the past, having experience in Customs, Central Excise and Service Tax, of both Intelligence and Profiling.

Mr. Manoj Goyal  
Chief Executive Officer

Well known GST Expert and CA, Mr. Manoj Goyal who has authored 'GST Unlocked - for Export Industry' in 2018.

Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts

**WEBINAR**  
(Handicrafts & Wellbeing)

## Positivity and Wellbeing

Wellness in Balance

PRESENTATION HIGHLIGHTS

- Lockdown Goals: New exercises, new thoughts?
- Getting Stressed? How to manage it?
- Work @ Home: General Mindset for mind and body.
- General Mindset: For mind and body.
- Positive Practices: Applicable in our daily lives.

12 Noon - 5<sup>th</sup> May 2020 (Tuesday)

Dr. Ira Dutta  
PhD Psychologist, CNB-APCC, IAS  
Consultant Neurophysician & Life Wellness Coach,  
Fortis Healthcare, Kolkata

Dr. Ira has been the winner of The Times Young Psychologists Award in 2018. She also topped her class during her post-graduation in medical school. An expert in holistic management of Depression, Anxiety, OCD, Stress management & Life coaching, she is also active on social media, creating awareness through relatable videos and go on emotional well-being and mental health. Her mantra for life is 'Wellness in Balance'.

**FASHION UNSTOPPABLE**

Challenges and Opportunities for the fashion jewellery and accessories segment

2.00 pm - 7<sup>th</sup> May 2020 (Thursday)

PANELISTS

Mr. Pradeep Thakral  
Mr. Sagar Bhatia  
Mr. Somnath Singh Bhatia  
Mr. Neeta Singh  
Mr. Husna Adawani  
Mr. Vaseel Kumar Bhatia  
Mr. Chiranjit Gupta  
Mr. Nilesh Gargani  
Mr. J.P. Singh

**RESET - RECOVER - REVIVE**

DOMESTIC RETAIL & E-COMMERCE

Reset the Past  
Recover from Setbacks  
Revive for Better Future

12 Noon - 14<sup>th</sup> May 2020 (Thursday)

Presented at  
**Virtual Trade Fair**  
for Global and Domestic Volume Sourcing

PANELISTS

Mr. Ramesh Jethani  
Mr. Rakesh Goyal  
Mr. Ajay Kapoor  
Mr. G.S. Rao  
Mr. Shashi M.  
Mr. V.K. Jain  
Mr. Anupam Mahajan  
Mr. Suresh Kumar  
Mr. Shashi Tandon  
Ms. Shashi Gupta

PANELISTS

Mr. D.P. Prabhakar  
Mr. Prince Malik  
Mr. Avnish Agarwal

**Picking Up The Threads**

resume • remodel • restore

REVIVAL PLAN FOR FURNISHINGS, HOME TEXTILES & FLOOR COVERINGS

3.00 pm - 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020 (Wednesday)

Presentation on  
**Virtual Trade Fair**  
for the products segment

PANELISTS

Ms. Chiranjit Gupta  
Mr. S. S. Prabhakar  
Mr. Pradeep Thakral  
Mr. Suresh Kumar  
Mr. Shashi M.  
Mr. V.K. Jain  
Mr. Anupam Mahajan  
Mr. Suresh Kumar  
Mr. Shashi Tandon  
Ms. Shashi Gupta

As part of its commitment to provide uninterrupted services to its member exporters via online mediums and boost their morale during the COVID 19 lockdown, EPCH initiated a series of webinars during April 2020. They continue till date. The topics have been issues of concern to the handicrafts fraternity. Each webinar is intended to be an opportunity to make use of the present situation to brush up

skills and find new ways of doing things, so that when businesses revive the handicrafts fraternity is well equipped to handle the latest/new demands and requirements. For a thorough understanding and a broader view of the topics, each webinar features an eminent expert faculty/guest speaker as the technical expert and practical experts - member exporters who present their views from experience in the particular segment/issue of concern. 5 webinars were organised during the month of May and were also graced by Chairman, EPCH-Mr. Ravi K Passi; Director General, EPCH-Mr. Rakesh Kumar; and Executive Director, EPCH-Mr. R K Verma. They presented their points of view and guided the member exporters on the given topics of discussion. Many of these webinars were for pan-India and saw over 500 attendees each on an average. Most saw registrations exceeding 1000.

# GST: Minimising the Tax Burden

## Interpreting the latest important changes in GST

Link to recording: <https://youtu.be/1INppFGon44>

**1st May 2020:** In order to apprise members exporters regarding various reliefs in terms of filing of GST returns and also to answer their queries on the subject, EPCH organised this webinar with Mr. Dheeraj Rastogi (IRS), Joint Secretary, GST Network; and Mr. Manoj Goyal, Chartered Accountant, M/s RHMS & Company, as key speakers and Mr. K L Ramesh from SRI Vijayalakshmi Agarbathi Works, Bangalore; Mr. Naresh Bothra from Bothra International, Jodhpur; and Mr. Mukesh Bansal from Transparent Overseas, Firozabad, as trade panelists. Moderated by Mr. Rajesh Rawat, Joint Director, EPCH, this was attended by over 400 member exporters from PAN India including Mr. Ravi K Passi, Chairman, EPCH; Mr. R K Malhotra, Vice Chairman, EPCH; Mr. Rakesh Kumar, Director General, EPCH; and Mr. R K Verma, Executive Director, EPCH.

**CA, Mr. Manoj Goyal**, briefed the audience about the various notifications issued by the Govt. of India related to GST to help member exporters, with emphasis on recent updates, rule changes and amendments. Speaking of all significant and major changes, he also mentioned of areas where exporters suffered due to non-clarity in the notifications. He offered detailed explanations on them including those issued in relation to impact of COVID 19. Mr. Goyal pointed out the issues related to Govt. orders that have been issued by the GST Department in the recent past. There were practical issues due to these orders and the same were conveyed to Mr. Dheeraj Rastogi.

**Mr. Dheeraj Rastogi (IRS), Joint Secretary, GST Council** said that change in dates for filing have been brought out to give benefits to the exporting community in the time of COVID-19. He also clarified the decision taken by the Govt. of India regarding HSN codes and value of exports to domestic and

international markets. He further clarified that any mismatch which is occurring on account of 'Risky Exporter', despite having an NOC, is facing problem of shipment, the matter has to be rooted through DG ARM so that there is proper connect between the field formations of the customs and the GST Commissionerate.

**Mr. Ravi K Passi, Chairman, EPCH**, said, times are sure to change soon as countries in the EU are reopening their businesses and the Indian Govt. has also decided to reopen the industry. In the end, Mr. Dheeraj Rastogi and Mr. Manoj Goyal welcomed questions and offered clarifications. ■

**GST**  
Goods and Services Tax  
**Minimising  
The Tax Burden**  
Interpreting the Latest Important Changes

12 Noon - 1<sup>st</sup> May 2020 (Friday)

**TRADE PANELISTS**

**Mr. K L Ramesh**  
Vijayalakshmi Agarbathi Works  
Bangalore

**Mr. Naresh Bothra**  
Bothra International  
Jodhpur

**Mr. Mukesh Bansal**  
Transparent Overseas  
Firozabad

### PANEL OF EXPERTS



**Mr. Dheeraj Rastogi (IRS)**  
Jt. Secretary, GST Council

Mr Rastogi has worked extensively in the CBEC in the past, having experience in Customs, Central Excise and Service Tax, of both Intelligence and Profiling.



**Mr. Manoj Goyal**  
Chartered Accountant

Well known GST Expert and CA, Mr. Manoj Goyal who has authored 'GST Unlocked - for Export Industry' in 2018.

# Reset-Recover-Revive

## Post COVID-19 Domestic Retail & e-Commerce

Link to recording: [https://youtu.be/beml\\_1tLFps](https://youtu.be/beml_1tLFps)

**14th May 2020:** This webinar on domestic retail & e-Commerce post COVID 19 brought forth an interesting panel discussion by several stalwarts of the Indian retail industry. This was initiated by **Mr. Rajesh Rawat, Joint Director, EPCH** with an overview of the potential of the Indian retail sector for home lifestyle products and how India's manufacturer exporters are reaching out to this opportunity. This was moderated by **Mr. Karan Jethwani, EPCH's Convener for Domestic Retail & e-Commerce Promotions**, and was attended by more than 410 member exporters from across India (registrations were over 7680+). Besides the guest panelists, this webinar was graced by Mr. Ravi K Passi, Chairman, EPCH; Mr. Rakesh Kumar, Director General, EPCH; and Mr. RK Verma, Executive Director, EPCH.

"Reset, Recover and Rediscover are the three key elements of the new way of life for us to reset the past as things will not be the same again for a long time; recover from setbacks, there will be many of these, and rediscover the way we work," said Mr. Karan Jethwani and added that digital transformation will be the key now. Referring to his conversations with many of his industry colleagues, he said, the consensus is that "home & Home Decor will be the sunrise sector and will bounce back sooner than the others." He quoted examples of domestic retail volume manufacturers and established players in the field to portray the strength and business potential of the sector. He also touched upon EPCH's 'SR' initiatives at its trade shows that help domestic volume retailers identify interested exporters.

### PANELISTS

#### MODERATOR



**Mr. Karan Jethwani**  
Domestic Retail & E-commerce Promotions, EPCH



**Mr. Aashish Goel**  
Co-Founder & CEO, Urban Ladder



**Mr. Ajay Kapoor**  
President, Retail, Fab India



**Mr. C.K. Nair**  
SAARC Representative, International Houseware Association



**Mr. Mahesh M.**  
Convener - Home & Home+ Conclave 2020, CEO - Creativity



**Mr. Nitin Jain**  
J. Nitin Global, MV Home, HOME4U.IN



**Mr. Rajesh Mahajan**  
Owner - Maspar Industries Pvt. Ltd.



**Mr. Sudeep Sarcar**  
CEO, IEMIL (India Expo Centre & Mart)



**Ms. Shalini Tandon**  
Trading Head, Home Stop - Division of Shoppers Stop

**Post COVID-19**

# RESET - RECOVER - REVIVE

## DOMESTIC RETAIL & E-COMMERCE

**Reset the Past**  
Things will not be the same for a long time

**Recover from Setbacks**  
Supply chain disruption, cancelled orders

**Revive for Better Future**  
Home Improvement will be sunrise sector, Devise a strategy for the changed world scenario

**12 Noon - 14<sup>th</sup> May 2020 (Thursday)**

Excerpts from the panelists' views follow:

Offering his perspective on the subject of the webinar, **Mr. Ashish Goel, Co-Founder & CEO, Urban Ladder** said that every part of the supply chain in the retail business has to be reworked for COVID 19 era. They have compliant products on their stores and the demand is expected to come back 50-60% in near future, now that some markets (cities) are opening up. Urban Ladder being a furniture exclusive platform, they had to retrain their personnel to adapt to a new set of protocol for deliveries and product assembling thereafter. They have even introduced video walkthroughs for online customers where they have a team member for assistance. For post COVID-19, he said, "I think what nobody can deny is that the cost base for every organisation needs to be managed a lot tighter to control extra overheads. Companies that adapt to a completely new way of doing business and are able to build trust with customers that this brand is doing the right thing, and that they are taking care of you, etc. there is a positive future positive future ahead in 3-4 months. We should gear up for doing business in a slightly different way but business is going to come back."

Regarding sourcing from EPCH member exporters from furniture hubs of Jodhpur and Jaipur that make up a great supply chain, Mr. Goel shared that he has largely sourced furniture, some lighting and carpets & dhurries (experience has been wonderful) from them. He added, in furniture we can raise our game. In many importing countries furniture from India is seen as handicraft so through an eco-system developed with the intervention of EPCH, our furniture can cater to the mainstream and not occupy the 'accents' category. Upholstered would be a promising category as the process is quite laborious and India can have an edge here. Even furniture fixtures and hardware, for which we are dependent on imports, can be produced in India. Mr. Goel pioneered the concept of trading furniture online; was instrumental in promoting goods made by the EPCH members in domestic markets.

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**Mr. Rajesh Mahajan, Owner, Maspar Industries Pvt. Ltd.**

shared about the importance of brand building and how it has contributed to his success, through his journey from being a prominent EPCH member exporter to catering to the domestic market with his home textiles brand and including in it, one segment after another, even the ones they never did before (bath linen, duvet covers, for instance). He launched it at a time

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when the market was full of apparel specific stores. After much research, the Maspar store format came about. On the present situation, he said that this is a 'neo normal' scenario and time to take the online route for selling products and even hosting trade shows. But it is critical to build the right online retail format. Strategising is key in e-Commerce business to

achieve that 'breakthrough' and the 'right mix' is very important. The future will be in Omni channel. This may be a time with travel restrictions but it's an exciting environment for business and super creative ideas in the domestic retail front. "You can do small numbers in what you already have, test what is good, what is not and move further from that, learning from the experience in the process," he advised.

**Mr. Ajay Kapoor, President, Retail, Fabindia Retail** was

of the opinion that this is the time to 'reboot' as many of us are trying to get used to the new post COVID era and have to unlearn

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what we have learnt in terms of retail. Everything changes now to herald an era of gloves, masks, in-store sanitisation methods, (till now liberal) exchange policies, etc. Online stores are going to rule over brick and mortar stores for a considerable time to come. Referring to Fabindia's store and experience centre expansions that happened in

2019 with many proposed this year to mark the brand's 60th anniversary, Mr. Kapoor mentioned of the organic foods, wellness & personal care category that is growing fast, contributing to a major portion of online sales, especially in the lockdown period. This is a segment, set for growth besides handicrafts at Fabindia, he said. "Talking about bounce back that we think is going to be much faster, we are looking at 35% of our normal sales coming back on track, which is good given the limitations we are working with right now. Online will be a stronger platform now," he concluded.

**Mr. C K Nair, SAARC Representative, International Houseware Association**, shared a snapshot of his 30 years of retail business experience in setting up new business format stores (including significant decision making on the categories, identifying the proper product mix, etc. to appeal to the target consumers), building profitable businesses and consulting. He is credited for starting Homestop, India's iconic home decor & furniture store under the Shoppers Stop umbrella and after holding a variety of roles, he is now consulting to various retail brands as a strategist with strong execution skills, recognised proficiency in accomplishing corporate plans and goals successfully. Mentioning of Indian premium retailers' biggest categories in the 'home' mix, and how 80% of their sales could be attributed to imports, Mr. Nair pointed out opportunities of partnerships/collaborations for Indian brands that can compete with global standards (or those catering to international brands). Manufacturers affiliated with EPCH could have opportunities to partner with such retailers to develop their own private label business, not just for physical stores but also for e-Commerce, he emphasised, further adding about the significance of collaborative strategic partnership and both benefiting from the joint market penetration.

**Ms. Shalini Tandon, Trading Head, Home Stop-Division of Shoppers Stop**, credited with 20 years' experience in buying and merchandising, offered a macro level perspective of what goes into planning and product mix, actual product selection

and more importantly what qualities they look for while selecting their vendors. Calling customers, their age group, their preferences, what stores they want to go to and what kind of catchments those stores are catering to, their prime focus, Ms. Tandon said, on the other side of the spectrum are the vendors who can cater to such varied demographics and keep up with their expectations. Significant qualities in vendors include, capabilities, strengths they are known for and most importantly how much they can innovate, because beyond a point consumers want novelties. Compliance to government standards and the continuity of business are important too as one can't change the vendor panel every season. In fact, they look at vendors who can be their partners, grow and learn with them and be in a form of partnership where they get into mutually beneficial things. With COVID 19 bringing in a changed scenario, Shoppers Stop would also want to evaluate vendors on their future readiness, compatibility to cater to e-Commerce with quick production and deliveries. Referring to the congregation of exporters at EPCH's IHGF Delhi Fair as a testimony of the industry's vast potential and strength in the 'Home' category, Ms. Tandon said, "we have a lot to offer and we still end up importing, so definitely we have a lot to do at the back end to bring this business back to India."

Speaking about Omni channel and the digital transformation, **Mr. Mahesh M., Convenor-Home & Home + Conclave 2020, CEO-Creativity** said, it's all about creating experience centers with a combination & strategic integration of physical and digital tools to make the experience more personalised than ever before. The buzzword, he said, is not to look at the Omni channel as an all-encompassing be all and end all but it is about how we are able to optimise the use of our channels whether it is the online, the mobile or the physical store channel and look at how we can integrate multiple elements of the entire customer journey, including when he switches between channels. So whether it's about integration in terms of price about product assortment between online offline and the app or whether it's about auto fulfillment (click and collect), about customers coming in and collecting from the store or the warehouse, or whether it

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is about even the integration on the service delivery side of it, there are multiple dimensions on which the integration can happen in order to give that seamless experience to the customer. He concluded that it is integral to keep the physical store completely in the center, the digital transformation around it and the customer on top of it.

**Mr. Nitin Jain, J. Nitin Global, INV Home, HOME4U.IN** who has donned many hats as a buying agent, a luxury retailer and e-Commerce player, spoke from his experience of being well versed with the export and domestic market. "We all need to definitely evolve. All the sectors need to evolve in totality to actually see what is happening and also innovate at the same time. Digital transformation is key," he emphasised. Giving examples of international brands, he said, retailers who did not have a very strong digital presence were edged over by those who did as the e-Commerce platform has really flourished.

Speaking of exporters venturing into the domestic market, Mr. Jain said, it is a very good parallel market and it's huge. We haven't even scratched the surface! I think EPCH has done a wonderful job at educating the expo supply chain to actually sell to the domestic market. Exporters on their part need to step up timely communications to keep this channel alive and growing!"

**Mr. Sudeep Sarcar, CEO, India Expo Centre & Mart,** host to EPCH shows like IHGF Delhi Fair, spoke of the pandemic causing this internationally sought after event, take a massive hit with

losses to the MSME and the export sector. "Hence, virtual platforms are the need of the hour so that part of these losses are contained, making a rebound possible," he said and added about how Mr. Rakesh Kumar, Chairman, IEML and Director General, EPCH envisioned virtual platforms to keep business connections alive during travel restrictions and in the absence of physical fairs. "Given the size of the platform with its various features, language interpretations, navigation tools, scope for chats & other means of communication, exhibitors' catalogue downloading options, etc. a virtual transition is not an easy task, but under Mr. Kumar's dynamic leadership teams from EPCH and IEML are making it possible," added Mr. Sarcar.

"Life has changed for all times to come and one cannot deny it," said **Mr. Ravi K Passi, Chairman, EPCH,** referring to the current situation and took the audience through a quick journey of how EPCH organised the first IHGF with 100 exhibitors, grew consistently with each edition and opened its doors to the Indian retail segment in 2014, sensitising its member exporters about the huge opportunities available, closer home. Referring to volatile overseas market conditions, he advised on a renewed focus on e-Commerce as well as the expansive Indian consumer base. He suggested that exporters can create a sub-team out of their existing teams to work on their e-Commerce platforms and develop the company's virtual presence as well as strengthen it by using various tools and softwares..

**Mr. R K Verma, Executive Director, EPCH,** spoke on EPCH's readiness to launch its virtual fairs and how teams at EPCH and India Expo Centre were working in tandem to make it happen successfully. Speaking of EPCH member exporters readiness to cater to domestic volume retail and the Council's support of making their presence stand out at fairs, Mr. Verma spoke of the 'SR' (Source for Retail) mark on stands of such exhibitors so that relevant buyers could easily seek them out. Many of them have made lasting business connections through contacts established there, he added.

EPCH conceptualised virtual trade fairs, to combat the challenge pose by current COVID 19 crisis, thus offering a most viable marketing platform in these difficult times. Looking at the current scenario, EPCH, under the leadership of Mr. Rakesh Kumar, its Director General, observed that virtual fairs are the new normal and are likely to be a major source of doing business in the next 6 – 12 months. It is very heartening to note that the handicrafts exporters fraternity has welcomed EPCH's initiative. ■