

India–UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and Export Essentials for the Handicraft Sector - Awareness Seminar at Chennai, Tamil Nadu; 11th April 2026



The seminar saw the presence of Mr. G Rajamurthy, Chairman, EPC, Chennai; Mr. S Ramakrishnan, Vice Chairman, EPC, Chennai; Mr. J Shivashankar, Vice President, EPC Madurai Chapter; Mr. U Balakrishnan, FTDO, DGFT; Mr. K Lekshmanan, Assistant Postmaster General, India Post; and Mr. J Somasundharam, President, EPC Chennai Chapter

EPCH's Southern Regional Office, Bangalore organised an awareness seminar on "India–UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and Export Essentials for the Handicraft Sector," in Chennai, in collaboration with the Export Promotion Centre (EPC), Chennai. The seminar was graced by Mr. G Rajamurthy, Chairman, EPC, Chennai; Mr. S Ramakrishnan, Vice Chairman, EPC, Chennai; Mr. J Shivashankar, Vice President, EPC Madurai Chapter; Mr. U Balakrishnan, FTDO, DGFT; Mr. K Lekshmanan, Assistant Postmaster General, India Post; and Mr. J Somasundharam, President, EPC Chennai Chapter.

A comprehensive and insightful presentation on the India–UK Free Trade Agreement was delivered highlighting key benefits such as improved market access for Indian handicrafts, reduced trade barriers, and new export opportunities. The session provided valuable guidance to exporters on effectively leveraging the agreement.

In addition, The EPCH Southern Regional Officer addressed the participants and explained in detail about the Council's various benefits for handicraft exporters. She also delivered a presentation on export essentials for handicraft products. The seminar witnessed the participation of over 100 attendees. It concluded with an interactive session, where the audience actively engaged and raised several questions.



Navigating Logistics Challenges Amid Global Shipping Disruptions: Strategies for Exporters

Awareness Seminar at New Delhi; 18th April 2026

EPCH organised an awareness seminar on "Navigating Logistics Challenges Amid Global Shipping Disruptions: Strategies for Exporters", designed to familiarise member exporters with the evolving logistics environment, especially disruptions affecting shipping routes, freight costs, insurance exposure, delivery schedules and buyer commitments. The seminar saw the presence of Mr. Sagar Mehta, Vice Chairman, EPCH; Mr. Ravi K Passi, Former Chairman and COA Member, EPCH; Mr. Varun Sharma, COA Member, EPCH; Mr. Rajesh Rawat, Executive Director, EPCH; and the session expert Mr. Vanish Ahluwalia, Group Vice President, M/s Seahorse Shipping Agencies Pvt. Ltd. Member exporters from Delhi/NCR also participated in the programme, making the seminar both informative and interactive in nature.

Mr. Vanish Ahluwalia in his presentation shared structure building around the global trade environment, India's export profile, major shipping chokepoints, recent disruption timelines, freight rate escalation, and actionable strategies for exporters. Among the strategies discussed were re-routing and diversification of logistics channels, managing freight and fuel cost increases, strengthening marine insurance and war risk coverage, building buffer inventory, reviewing contracts and force majeure clauses, diversifying suppliers, using air cargo selectively, monitoring market intelligence, focusing on value-based exports, and adopting digital visibility tools.

He further suggested reviewing Incoterms and insurance structures to reduce exposure. In particular, exporters were



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encouraged to consider comprehensive marine insurance, add war risk clauses where appropriate, and evaluate whether shifting from CIF-type exposure to FOB arrangements may help limit freight-side risk in volatile conditions.

The seminar concluded with an interactive Q&A session, where members raised logistics and shipment-related queries, and speakers provided practical guidance aligned with current export challenges. It served as a timely awareness initiative, enhancing understanding of emerging maritime risks and equipping exporters

with actionable strategies for better preparedness, cost control, compliance, and supply chain resilience in a volatile trade environment.



Expert faculty, Mr. Vanish Ahluwalia, addressing the participants at the seminar

Exporter's Clinic: Speak with Experts and get your Export Queries answered Online

DGFT 'RELIEF Measures' for Handicraft Exporters through ECGC; 21st April 2026

As part of its ongoing series of Exporters' Clinics, the Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH) organised the 8th session on 'DGFT RELIEF Measures' for Handicraft Exporters through ECGC. The session, held online on 21st April 2026 provided a comprehensive overview of the RELIEF Scheme, covering key aspects such as eligibility criteria, coverage, and claim procedures. It also highlighted the support available under ECGC policy cover and MSME reimbursement provisions, along with practical insights on effectively leveraging DGFT and ECGC benefits.

The interactive session was led by Mr. Amit Kumar, AGM (NR), ECGC Ltd., and was attended by Mr. Rajesh Rawat, Executive Director, EPCH, along with member exporters from across India who joined



online. The session primarily focused on addressing queries from participants, with the expert offering detailed clarifications and practical guidance. It concluded on a positive and constructive note, providing participants with valuable insights to navigate export-related challenges more effectively. ■

RELIEF – Resilience & Logistics Intervention for Export Facilitation

Interactive Session at Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh; 22nd April 2026

An interactive session on "RELIEF – Resilience & Logistics Intervention for Export Facilitation" was organised at the Common Facility Centre (CFC), Saharanpur on 22 April 2026.

Mr. Ravindra Miglani, Chairman, Chamber of Industries and Services, welcomed Mr. Sandip Vyas, Branch Manager, ECGC, who led the session. The programme was also attended by Mr. Ram Ji Suneja, Mr. Mohd Anwar, and Mr. Shahzama, EPCH member exporters from Saharanpur.

During the session, Mr. Vyas delivered a detailed presentation on the RELIEF initiative, highlighting the importance of building resilience within the export ecosystem and ensuring efficient logistics support. He addressed key challenges faced by exporters, particularly MSMEs, and suggested practical measures to mitigate issues such as delayed payments, increased logistics costs, and global uncertainties.



The session was highly interactive, with participants actively engaging in discussions and raising queries related to the RELIEF scheme and claim procedures. Mr. Vyas responded with detailed explanations and real-world examples, enabling exporters to better understand and effectively utilise the benefits of ECGC schemes. ■

E-Commerce Led Exports – Challenges & Opportunities

Awareness Seminar at Jodhpur, Rajasthan; 24th April 2026

The EPCH NWR Office, Jodhpur organised an awareness seminar on “E-Commerce Led Exports – Challenges & Opportunities” on 24th April 2026 at the Trade Facilitation Centre (TFC), Jodhpur.

The seminar was graced by the presence of Ms. Astha Agarwal, Assistant Director (Admin), O/o DC (Handicrafts), Head Office, New Delhi; Mr. Rajesh Gupta, Chairman, YES Jodhpur Chapter; Mr. Ravi Veer Choudhary, Assistant Director, O/o DC (Handicrafts), Jodhpur; and Dr. Smita Shah, Board Member, National Traders Welfare Board, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India.

Ms. Astha Agarwal highlighted the Government of India’s initiatives to promote e-commerce exports through coordinated efforts with DGFT, Customs Authorities, the Department of Posts, and other stakeholders, with a focus on awareness, skill development, and resolving payment and banking challenges. Mr. Ravi Veer Choudhary outlined various schemes of the O/o DC (Handicrafts), emphasising that e-commerce provides access to global markets, enhances brand visibility, and helps businesses align with international standards and evolving trends. Mr. Rajesh Gupta stressed the importance of efficient port operations, warehousing, and integrated logistics systems to scale exports and reduce turnaround time. He also underlined the need for diversification and branding, noting that Indian exporters can gain a competitive edge through superior quality, unique product offerings, and strong brand identity. Dr. Smita Shah elaborated on the transformative role of e-commerce in India’s



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export ecosystem, particularly for artisans and MSMEs. She highlighted how digital platforms provide direct access to global buyers, leading to higher profitability and greater control over branding. Emphasising the importance of storytelling in product marketing, she noted that modern consumers value the origin, craftsmanship, and cultural narrative behind products, which enhances their appeal and builds buyer trust. She also encouraged the strategic use of Amazon, Etsy, Shopify, etc. The seminar was attended by 40 exporters, artisans and entrepreneurs. ■

28th Batch of CHEMS inaugurated

Moradabad; 26th April 2026

EPCH inaugurated the 28th batch of CHEMS (Centre for Handicrafts Export Management Studies) on 26th April 2026 at its premises in Moradabad. The program aims to nurture and develop skilled professionals for the handicrafts export sector by providing specialised knowledge and practical insights.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by Mr. Sushil Kumar Agrawal, Deputy Director, EPCH; and Mr. Rahul Ranjan, Programme Officer, EPCH, who welcomed the participants and highlighted the importance of structured learning in enhancing export capabilities. They emphasised that CHEMS has been instrumental in shaping future exporters and professionals by equipping them with industry-relevant skills. The physical batch of CHEMS started with 15 students.



At the inauguration session of CHEM’s 28th batch Mr. Sushil Kumar Agrawal, Deputy Director, EPCH; and Mr. Rahul Ranjan, Programme Officer, EPCH, welcomed the participants and highlighted the importance of structured learning in enhancing export capabilities

The programme commenced with an orientation session, where participants were introduced to the course structure, faculty and various industry exposure opportunities. The batch comprises aspiring exporters, entrepreneurs and professionals keen to build a career in the handicrafts export sector. ■

MSME Schemes for the Handicraft Sector and Export Procedures, Documentation & Marketing Platforms through EPCH

Awareness Seminar at Artisan Training Institute, Karaikkudi, Tamil Nadu; 28th April 2026

The Southern Regional Office of the Council organised an awareness seminar in association with the Artisan Training Institute, Karaikkudi, Sivagangai District, Tamil Nadu. This was held at the conference hall, Canara Bank Rural Self Employment Training Institute (CBRSETI) on the theme "MSME Schemes for the Handicraft Sector and Export Procedures, Documentation & Marketing Platforms through EPCH." The seminar was attended by Mr. Raghunathan, Director, CBRSET; Mr. Riyaz Khan, Senior Manager, Canara Bank, Karaikkudi; and Smt. R Uma Chandrika, Assistant Director, MSME Development Institute, Madurai.

In his keynote address, Mr. Raghunathan encouraged participants to leverage the Council's various marketing verticals to strengthen their entrepreneurial journey. The EPCH Regional Officer presented an overview of the Council, highlighting its phenomenal growth, and delivered a detailed presentation on export procedures and documentation.

Mr. Riyaz Khan elaborated on the diverse loan schemes offered by Canara Bank, including financing options for startups, MSMEs, and women entrepreneurs, with funding support up to Rs. 20 crore. Key schemes highlighted included Canara Start-Up Loans, Canara MSME Smart Professional, Canara Stree Shakti, and Canara MSME Inn.

Smt. Uma Chandrika spoke about government support for small businesses through credit facilitation, technology upgradation,

The seminar saw the presence of Mr. Raghunathan, Director, CBRSET (seen addressing the gathering); Mr. Riyaz Khan, Senior Manager, Canara Bank, Karaikkudi; and Smt. R Uma Chandrika, Assistant Director, MSME Development Institute, Madurai



infrastructure development and marketing assistance. She also highlighted major central schemes such as CGTMSE, PMEGP and the MSME Champions Scheme. The seminar witnessed a good turnout of participants and beneficiaries also displayed their products at the venue. The programme concluded with an interactive question-and-answer session. ■

Export Marketing - Awareness Seminar at Patna, Bihar; 30th April 2026



The EPCH Patna office organised an awareness seminar in association with Upendra Maharathi Shilp Anusandhan Sansthan at its premises. During the session, the EPCH representative apprised participants of the Council's activities and the marketing support extended to exporter members.

Mr. Avinash Singh, Guest Faculty, conducted a session on export marketing, covering key aspects such as buyer identification, product promotion strategies, the importance of regularly updating advertising themes in line with market trends and the effective use of catalogues for product display. He also emphasised branding, digital marketing, participation in exhibitions, customer engagement and product adaptation to meet evolving market demands, thereby enhancing growth in both domestic and international markets. ■

Design and Technology Development Workshop (DDW) on Shola Pith Fusion with Wood Craft - Puri, Odisha; 5th February 2026 - 24th April 2026

EPCH Eastern Region successfully organised a Design and Technology Development Workshop (DDW) on Sholapith Fusion with Wood Craft at Puri, Odisha, under the Skill Development in Handicrafts Scheme (SDHS) of the Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts).

The workshop was inaugurated on 5th February 2026 by Mr. Veer Bharat Marandi, Handicrafts Promotion Officer (HPO), Handicrafts Service Centre (HSC), Bhubaneswar, in the presence of Mr. Narasingha Khuntia, Master crafts person and Awardee; and Mr. Jyoti Ranjan Sahoo, Empanelled Designer. During the inaugural session, the objectives of the programme were outlined, with emphasis on product diversification, skill upgradation, and employment generation through such developmental initiatives.

Throughout the programme, artisans received hands-on training, technical guidance and design inputs, enabling them to develop market-oriented products while preserving the traditional essence of the craft. The workshop significantly contributed to enhancing artisan skills, fostering innovation and strengthening sustainable livelihood opportunities, while promoting the rich craft heritage of Odisha.

The workshop concluded on 24th April 2026 with a closing ceremony attended by Mr. Paramjit Sinha, Handicrafts Promotion Officer (HPO), of the Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Handicrafts Service Centre (HSC), Bhubaneswar; along



Throughout the programme, the participating artisans received hands-on training, technical guidance and design inputs, enabling them to develop market-oriented products while preserving the traditional essence of the craft

with Mr. Sudhanshu Patnaik, HPO, DIC Puri; Mr. Narasingha Khuntia, Master crafts person and Awardee; and Mr. Jyoti Ranjan Sahoo, Empanelled Designer, who guided the artisans throughout the workshop. Mr. Paramjit Sinha praised the dedication and craftsmanship shown by the participating artisans. He highlighted the innovative prototypes created during the workshop, recognising them as excellent examples of blending traditional artistry with modern design approaches. The artisans were advised to keep exploring new design ideas and products.



The closing ceremony with Mr. Paramjit Sinha, Handicrafts Promotion Officer (HPO), O/o DC (Handicrafts), HSC, Bhubaneswar; along with Mr. Sudhanshu Patnaik, HPO, DIC Puri; Mr. Narasingha Khuntia, Master crafts person and Awardee; and Mr. Jyoti Ranjan Sahoo, Empanelled Designer



Comprehensive Skill Upgradation Programme (CSUP) on Temple Kalamkari Craft Thiruppanandal Cluster, Tanjore District, Tamil Nadu; 28th August 2025 - 27th April 2026



The programme's inauguration saw the presence of Mr.A K Roopchandar, Assistant Director, O/o the DC Handicrafts; Mr.KN Tulasi Rao, Southern Region Convenor and COA Member, EPCH; Mr.R Krishnamoorthy, Kalamkari Living Craft Treasury Awardee; and Mr. Lakshminarayanan, Master craftsperson

EPCH's Southern Regional Office, Bangalore, facilitated culmination of a five-month Comprehensive Skill Upgradation Programme (CSUP) on the Temple Kalamkari Craft of the Thiruppanandal Cluster, under the Skill Development in Handicrafts Scheme (SDHS) of the Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts).

Mr. A K Roopchandar, Assistant Director, O/o the DC Handicrafts; Mr. K N Tulasi Rao, Southern Region Convenor and COA Member, EPCH; Mr. R Krishnamoorthy, Kalamkari Living Craft Treasury Awardee; and Mr. Lakshminarayanan, Master craftsman.

The dignitaries interacted with the participants, highlighted the uniqueness of Temple Kalamkari and its cultural significance, encouraged the artisans to make the most of this training opportunity, and extended their best wishes for the successful completion of the programme.

The workshop concluded on 28th April 2026 with a valedictory function in the Temple Kalamkari craft cluster at Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu. Mr. A K Roopchandar, Assistant Director, O/o the DC Handicrafts; Mr. K L Ramesh, Co-opted Member, EPCH; and Mr. Lakshminarayanan, Master craftsman were present on the occasion.

The dignitaries encouraged the artisans to continue practicing the skills acquired during the training and guided them on marketing their products in international markets through e-commerce and other global marketing platforms. The artisans showcased prototypes of Temple Kalamkari craft during the event. Certificates were distributed by the dignitaries to all participants who successfully completed the training programme.



The programme's valedictory function saw the presence of Mr.A K Roopchandar, Assistant Director, O/o the DC Handicrafts; Mr.KL Ramesh, Co-opted Member, EPCH; and Mr. Lakshminarayanan, Master craftsman

Comprehensive Skill Upgradation Program (CSUP) in Cherial Painting Craft

Cherial Cluster, Siddipet District, Telangana; 16th September 2025 - 29th April 2026



The inauguration saw the presence of Mrs. Suvarchala, Assistant Director, O/o DC (Handicrafts), Hyderabad and Mr. Rakesh, Master craftsman

EPCH's Southern Regional Office, Narsapur successfully organised a five-month Comprehensive Skill Upgradation Programme (CSUP) in Cherial Painting Craft at the Cherial Cluster in Siddipet District, Telangana. This was inaugurated on 16th September 2025, in the presence of Mrs. Suvarchala, Assistant Director, O/o DC (Handicrafts), Hyderabad, and Master craftsman Mr. Rakesh.

During the inaugural session, the significance of Cherial Painting was highlighted, with a focus on its rich cultural heritage, distinctive narrative style, global appeal and increasing market demand. Artisans were encouraged to actively participate in the program to enhance their technical skills and creative capabilities. The dignitaries extended their best wishes for the participants' successful learning journey and professional growth.

Upon completion of the training, EPCH organised the closing ceremony at the Cherial Cluster on 29th April 2026. The event was attended by Mrs. Suvarchala, Assistant Director, DC Handicrafts, HSC

Hyderabad and Designer Mr. Aishwin Kumar, along with EPCH officials. The dignitaries appreciated the dedication and efforts of the trainees and commended the program's role in strengthening artisan skills.

They emphasised on preserving traditional crafts like Cherial Painting while aligning them with contemporary design sensibilities and market trends. Artisans were encouraged to explore sustainable livelihood opportunities through handicrafts and to focus on creating eco-friendly, value-added products.

Additionally, through an online interaction, Mr. K N Tulasi Rao, COA Member, EPCH and Convenor, International Lace Trade Centre (ILTC), addressed the artisans, encouraging them to make the best use of the training programme to enhance their skills and improve their livelihoods. He extended his best wishes for their future success.

The ceremony concluded on a positive note, with a shared vision to further strengthen the handicrafts sector and support artisan communities.



The programme's closing ceremony saw the presence of Mrs. Suvarchala, Assistant Director, DC Handicrafts, HSC Hyderabad and Designer Mr. Aishwin Kumar, along with EPCH officials