

# New Zero-Duty Gateway Opens for Indian Handicrafts as India-UK CETA

## EPCH welcomes landmark agreement that will boost Indian handmade, sustainable and design-led products in the UK market

**15th July 2026 :** EPCH has welcomed the entry into force of the India–United Kingdom Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), describing it as a landmark development that will usher in a new era of growth for Indian handicrafts in one of the world's most mature and high-value consumer markets.

The Agreement provides zero-duty access on nearly 99% of India's exports to the United Kingdom, covering almost the entire trade value. For the handicrafts sector, this is expected to significantly enhance competitiveness by eliminating tariff barriers and facilitating greater access to UK buyers, importers, retailers, wholesalers, designers and e-commerce platforms.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Neeraj Khanna, Chairman, EPCH, said, "The entry into force of the India–UK CETA is a transformative milestone for India's handicrafts sector. The Agreement gives Indian handicraft exporters zero-duty access to a high-value and quality-conscious market, enabling them to compete more effectively with other supplier countries. It will strengthen India's presence in the UK across home décor, lifestyle, furniture, furnishings, fashion accessories and other craft-based product categories."

Dr. Khanna further said, "The implementation of CETA opens new opportunities for India's handicrafts sector by improving market access and competitiveness in the UK. The dispatch of the first consignments on the very first day of the Agreement reflects the preparedness and confidence of our exporters. These consignments include metal planters, wooden trays, wooden bowls, metal jugs, decorative wooden articles and other home décor and lifestyle products. We are confident that this landmark Agreement will significantly boost handicrafts exports to the UK in the years ahead."



Dr. Rakesh Kumar, Director General in the role of Chief Mentor, EPCH, and Chairman, IEML, said, "CETA is not merely a trade agreement but a powerful market access platform that can substantially strengthen the India–UK handicrafts trade corridor. With tariffs removed and market access becoming more favourable, Indian exporters now have an opportunity to expand their footprint in the UK through design innovation, dependable supply chains, warehousing, fulfilment and digital commerce."

Highlighting EPCH's infrastructure initiatives in the UK, Dr. Kumar added, "EPCH-ExpoBazaar has launched its operations in the UK through a strategic collaboration with Vectra UK Limited, making the UK its third overseas market after the United States and EU. To support these operations, ExpoBazaar has established a fully operational third-party logistics warehouse, enabling a Just-in-Time fulfilment model. This will allow retailers and wholesalers across the UK to source ready-to-ship Indian handicraft and lifestyle products with shorter delivery timelines, improved inventory planning and enhanced supply chain reliability." He further noted that ExpoBazaar already serves more than 100 boutique stores across the UK through its Netherlands operations, generating approximately £30,000 in monthly sales. With CETA now in force, monthly sales are expected to increase to around £100,000 while also supporting expansion of the manufacturing base in India.

Mr. Sagar Mehta, Vice Chairman, EPCH, said, "The removal of tariff barriers under CETA will deliver immediate commercial benefits to handicraft exporters. It will improve the price competitiveness of Indian products, enhance order conversion and encourage UK buyers to increase sourcing from India. EPCH will continue to undertake focused market promotion through international trade fairs, buyer-seller meets, thematic campaigns and direct buyer outreach to help exporters build business partnerships in the UK."

Highlighting the Council's strategic roadmap, Mr. Rajesh Rawat, Executive Director, EPCH, said, "The UK has long been a significant market for Indian handicrafts, and the implementation of CETA provides the sector with a strong opportunity to expand exports and deepen market linkages. EPCH will adopt a focused strategy for the UK market through targeted buyer outreach, product-specific promotions, participation in major trade fairs and closer engagement with importers, retailers, wholesalers, designers and e-commerce platforms." ■