Vol. XLVI No. 11 | NOVEMBER 2026 ISSUE

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FIEO NEWS

A FEDERATION OF INDIAN EXPORT ORGANISATIONS' MONTHLY



Strong Exports
A Bright Future

September Exports Jump 23% to US$44.40 Billion

- Total April–September Merchandise Exports reached **US$259.89 billion**, up 18.51%.
- Overall Merchandise + Services Exports during First Half of FY 2026-27 touched **US$476.20 billion**, up 13.84%.

KEY GROWTH DRIVERS IN SEPTEMBER

Electronics	Petroleum products	Organic & inorganic chemicals	Engineering goods	Cotton yarn/fabrics/ made-ups & handloom
+70.44%	+31.90%	+24.21%	+20.91%	+20.76%



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From the PRESIDENT'S DESK

Dear Esteemed Exporters,

With the vision of "Local to Global", FIEO continues to build bridges between India's diverse regional strengths and global markets, contributing to a stronger, more inclusive and export-led growth story for India. Carrying this vision forward, the Federation organised two Reverse Buyer-Seller Meets (RBSMs): one in Kolhapur, Maharashtra (September 29-30, 2026), and the other in Shillong, Meghalaya (October 8-9, 2026). The event at Kolhapur, organised jointly with the Maharashtra Small Scale Industries Development Corporation Ltd (MSSIDC), was inaugurated by Mr Jishnu Dev Varma, the Hon'ble Governor of Maharashtra, as the Chief Guest. He commended FIEO and MSSIDC for organising this important export-promotion initiative aimed at promoting exports from the state. He added that the event would create an ecosystem in which MSMEs could engage directly with international buyers and begin or expand their international business activities.

The 2nd Edition of the Reverse Buyer-Seller Meet (RBSM 2.0) in Shillong was organised by FIEO in collaboration with the Directorate of Commerce & Industries, Government of Meghalaya. The meet was inaugurated by Mr Sniawbhalang Dhar, the Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister and Minister in-charge of Commerce & Industries, Government of Meghalaya, as the Chief Guest. Mr Dhar emphasised that RBSM 2.0 would play a pivotal role in showcasing Meghalaya's distinctive products internationally and creating direct market linkages. He observed that such initiatives help local businesses scale up their operations, meet international standards and access new markets.

The RBI's recent decision to raise the policy repo rate by 25 basis points to 5.50 per cent and change its monetary policy stance to calibrated tightening is understandable in view of emerging inflationary pressures. However, the Federation is of the view that higher borrowing costs could increase the financial burden on exporters, particularly MSMEs, at a time when global trade is facing heightened uncertainty. It therefore urges the Reserve Bank of India to provide greater flexibility in export finance by extending the period of pre-shipment and post-shipment export credit from the existing 270 days to 450 days, in view of longer shipping and transit periods, logistics disruptions and delayed realisation of export proceeds. Such an extension would give much-needed breathing space to exporters and enable them to honour their international commitments without facing undue financial stress.

As part of its efforts to help Indian exporters explore new international markets and develop business links with potential partners, FIEO organised two interactive programmes. The first, titled "SOHAR Port and Freezone, Oman—Your Gateway to International Markets" (September 16, 2026, New Delhi), was particularly significant, as it was organised at an opportune time following the entry into force of the India-Oman FTA on June 1, 2026. The event was attended by H E Mr Issa Saleh Abdullah Alshibani, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to India, who spoke about the significant opportunities available to Indian businesses and encouraged greater engagement between Indian companies and Oman's business community.

FIEO also hosted a business delegation from Jordan on October 1, 2026, at Niryat Bhawan, New Delhi, focusing on textiles, fabrics and ready-made garments. The meeting was attended by Dr Ajay Sahai, Director General & CEO, FIEO; H E Mr Yousef Abdelghani, Ambassador of Jordan to India; H E Mr Zaher Al Qatarnah, Secretary General, Ministry of Investment, Jordan; and other key dignitaries.

In this issue of FIEO News, we are also pleased to present a special feature on "India-Fiji Trade and Investment Opportunities", enriched by insights from Mr Suneet Mehta, High Commissioner of India in Fiji (Suva). The feature explores emerging opportunities for expanding bilateral trade, investment and business partnerships.

India's overall exports during the first six months of FY 2026–27 reached US$476.20 billion, registering growth of 13.84 per cent over the corresponding period last year. Merchandise exports stood at US$259.89 billion, recording impressive growth of 18.51 per cent. Overall imports during the period reached US$551.13 billion, while merchandise imports stood at about US$437.53 billion. Particularly encouraging was the 23 per cent jump in merchandise exports during September 2026. More important than the headline number was the increasingly broad-based nature of this growth. Electronics, petroleum products, chemicals, engineering goods and other value-added sectors are contributing to the expansion of India's export basket, while exporters are simultaneously strengthening traditional markets and exploring new destinations.

Looking ahead, continued policy support, competitive export finance and predictable trade and logistics costs will be essential to faster market diversification and sustaining growth. This strong first-half performance provides a firm foundation for advancing towards India's US$1 trillion export ambition. The priority now is to translate this momentum into sustained orders and deeper market penetration. With an enabling policy environment, India can expand high-value and technology-intensive exports, build on its traditional strengths and strengthen its participation in global value chains. ■

S C Ralhan,
President, FIEO

Let me also wish all of you a very Happy & Prosperous Diwali!!

FIEO NEWS

Vol. XLVI No. 11 November 2026

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Table of Contents

RBSM in Kolhapur	6
FIEO seeks Extension of Export Credit	8
Oman: Gateway to International Markets	9
Meghalaya Connects with Global Buyers	11
Meeting Jordanian Delegation	13
FIEO, DTU join Forces	14
Certificate Course in International Trade	15
Meeting GCC Export Requirements	18
Opportunities at Autumn Fair 2026, Birmingham	21
FIEO Leads Business Delegation	24
India-Italy Sectoral Roundtable	26
Leather and Footwear Exports	27
Focus on Kataka, Odisha	28
EMI Scheme Outreach Session	29
Customs' Trade Facilitation	30
Improving Warehousing Efficiency	31
Export Readiness Awareness	32
FEMA Compliance for Exporters	33
FEMA Regulations 2026	34
Export Readiness for MSMEs	35
Globalising Indian Trade	36
E-Commerce Export Summit	37
Outreach on EMI Scheme	38
Certificate in International Trade	39
Focus on Sivagangai, TN	40







REGULARS

Focus Market	19
Weekly Interaction	22
Product Analysis	41
Trade Trends	43

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LAST MONTHLY ISSUES











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RBSM IN KOLHAPUR



Mr Jishnu Dev Varma, Hon'ble Governor of Maharashtra addressing the gathering

Mr Jishnu Dev Varma, Hon'ble Governor of Maharashtra, commended FIEO and the Maharashtra Small Scale Industries Development Corporation Ltd. (MSSIDC) for organising an important export-promotion initiative aimed at promoting exports from the state. He stated that exports were an important pillar of economic growth and described the RBSM as a practical step towards increasing India's exports. He added that the event would create an ecosystem in which MSMEs could engage directly with international buyers and begin or expand their international business activities.He was speaking at a Reverse Buyer Seller Meet (RBSM) in Kolhapur, Maharashtra, organised by FIEO jointly with MSSIDC on September 29 and 30, 2026. The event was held under the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) Scheme of the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Government of India, with support from the World Bank Group.



Dr Ajay Sahai, DG & CEO, FIEO delivering the welcome address



Ms Prerna Deshbhratar, Commissioner, MSME & Managing Director, MSSIDC addressing the gathering

He added that, "The number of registered MSMEs is increasing rapidly due to the collective efforts of all stakeholders. India now has about 96.1 million registered MSMEs. The MSME sector is one of the foundational pillars of our economy, contributing approximately 48% of the country's exports and 31% of GDP. MSMEs will play a pivotal role in achieving India's vision of becoming Viksit Bharat." He also emphasised the measures introduced under the Export Promotion Mission to strengthen India's export ecosystem and global competitiveness.

The RBSM was inaugurated on September 29, 2026, in the presence of Mr Varma and Dr Prashant Narnaware, Secretary to the Hon'ble Governor of Maharashtra; Dr Ajay Sahai, Director General and CEO, FIEO; Ms Prerna Deshbhratar, Commissioner, MSME, and Managing Director, MSSIDC; and Mr Khushwant Jain, Regional Chairman (WR), FIEO. Earlier, delivering the welcome address, Dr Ajay Sahai, Director General and CEO, FIEO, stated that "Indian exports recorded positive growth during the first five months of the current fiscal year, increasing by about 15% to USD 400 billion, compared with USD 356 billion in the corresponding period of the previous fiscal year. This growth is significant given the challenging global environment and continuing geopolitical turmoil."

Dr Sahai further mentioned that "India is on the path to achieving USD 1 trillion in exports during the current fiscal year. Maharashtra plays an important role in the nation's export performance: the state's exports reached a milestone of Rs 6 lakh crore in FY 2025–26, contributing about 16% of India's exports. Maharashtra's export landscape includes both traditional and emerging sectors, notably engineering and automobiles, plastics, textiles and yarns, and IT and ITeS. The State Government has also supported an export-friendly ecosystem through the State Export Policy announced in 2023, together with the Logistics Policy, IT and ITeS Policy, and Industrial and Investment Policy."

He noted that Maharashtra's exports were primarily concentrated in districts such as Pune, Mumbai, Thane, Palghar and Raigad. However, Kolhapur district had the potential to achieve USD 1 billion in exports across diverse sectors, led by engineering, textiles, and agro and processed foods. He added that the two-day RBSM would help build momentum for export growth in Kolhapur and neighbouring districts.



Mr Khushwant Jain, Regional Chairman (WR), FIEO delivering the Concluding Remarks

On her part, Ms Deshbhratar stated that Maharashtra was among the leading states in implementing activities under the RAMP initiative. She explained that RAMP focused on improving access to credit and markets,

SEPTEMBER GOODS EXPORTS JUMP 23%

India's merchandise exports surged 23 per cent year-on-year to US$ 44.40 billion in September 2026, lifting exports for the first half of 2026–27 by 18.51 per cent to US$ 259.89 billion. The strong performance came as imports rose by a comparatively modest 8 per cent to US$ 74.61 billion, narrowing the merchandise trade deficit to US$ 30.21 billion and underscoring the resilience of Indian exporters amid tariff uncertainties, geopolitical tensions and logistics challenges.

Welcoming the performance, Mr S C Ralhan, President, Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO), said: "September's strong export growth is an encouraging affirmation of India's competitiveness in a challenging global trading environment. Our exporters continue to respond to uncertainty with agility, strengthening their presence across markets and product categories. The broad-based contribution of traditional and emerging sectors adds depth to this performance." Merchandise exports during April–September 2026–27 reached US$ 259.89 billion, growing 18.51 per cent over US$ 219.30 billion in the corresponding period of the previous year. Higher shipments of electronic goods, engineering goods, petroleum products, chemicals, and agricultural products supported this expansion.

"The strength of the first-half performance lies in the diversity of its growth drivers. Technology-intensive exports are adding momentum alongside established sectors such as engineering, chemicals, and agriculture. Sustaining this balance, while expanding our market reach, will be crucial in the second half of the financial year," Mr Ralhan observed. India's total exports of goods and services are estimated at US$ 476.20 billion during April–September 2026–27, an increase of 13.84 per cent over US$ 418.31 billion a year earlier. Despite tariff-related disruptions, the United States remained India's largest merchandise export destination during the first half of the financial year. India's imports from the US also increased by 26 per cent to US$ 32.33 billion, compared with US$ 25.66 billion in the corresponding period last year. "The US retaining its position as our largest merchandise export market underscores the importance of this economic partnership. Alongside strengthening established trade relationships, we must accelerate efforts to diversify export destinations and create fresh opportunities for Indian businesses," the FIEO President said.

The combined merchandise and services trade deficit in September narrowed to US$ 13.30 billion, against US$ 14.17 billion a year earlier, even as combined imports increased to US$ 94.05 billion from US$ 86.93 billion.



Mr S C Ralhan, President, FIEO

Mr Ralhan described the improvement as a positive development, noting that stronger exports were helping contain the overall trade gap despite rising imports. Looking ahead, Mr Ralhan emphasised that continued policy support, competitive export finance, predictable trade and logistics costs, and faster market diversification would be essential to sustain growth.

"This strong first-half performance provides a firm foundation to advance towards India's US$ 1 trillion export ambition. The priority now is to translate this momentum into sustained orders and deeper market penetration. With an enabling policy environment, India can expand high-value and technology-intensive exports, build on its traditional strengths and strengthen its participation in global value chains," he added. ■



View of B2B Meetings

supporting technology upgradation, and strengthening institutional capacity. She added that Reverse Buyer Seller Meets were organised to provide MSMEs with easier access to international markets. MSSIDC had successfully concluded six RBSMs, making the Kolhapur event the seventh in the series. She welcomed the strong participation of international buyers from more than 25 countries.

Delivering the concluding remarks at the inaugural ceremony, Mr Jain said that the "The Reverse Buyer Seller Meet at Kolhapur will provide MSMEs with a valuable platform to connect directly with international buyers, explore new markets, understand global requirements and identify potential export opportunities. Such initiatives strengthen market access and help MSMEs expand their presence in international markets." He thanked and acknowledged the efforts of all key stakeholders and local authorities whose support contributed to the successful conduct of the RBSM in Kolhapur. During the two-day RBSM, more than 50 international buyers from over 25 countries participated in B2B meetings with more than 380 MSMEs from various districts of Maharashtra. The event facilitated over 700 pre-scheduled meetings. FIEO also organised industrial visits for the international delegates to Grasim Premier Fabric Limited, Kirloskar Oil Engines Limited and Kolhapur Zilla Sahakari Dudh Utpadak Sangh Ltd. (Gokul).

Alongside the B2B meetings, FIEO organised a series of knowledge sessions, including "Diversifying India's Exports with FTAs" by Dr Sahai; a session on recent changes in FEMA regulations by FEDAI; and sessions led by ECGC, State Bank of India and India Post. ■

RBI'S POLICY STANCE

FIEO SEEKS EXTENSION OF EXPORT CREDIT



Mr S C Ralhan, President, FIEO

FIEO has said that the Reserve Bank of India's decision to raise the policy repo rate by 25 basis points to 5.50 per cent and change its monetary policy stance to calibrated tightening is understandable in view of emerging inflationary pressures. However, the Federation cautioned that higher borrowing costs could increase the financial burden on exporters, particularly MSMEs, at a time when global trade is facing heightened uncertainty.

FIEO President Mr S C Ralhan said that the RBI's decision to raise the repo rate by 25 basis points is understandable against the backdrop of rising inflationary pressures and the need to maintain price stability.

At the same time, the Indian economy has demonstrated considerable resilience, with GDP growth at 7.8 per cent in Q1:2026-27 and merchandise as well as services exports maintaining strong momentum. It is therefore important that monetary tightening does constrain the working capital availability of export-oriented businesses, particularly MSMEs.

He added, "Exporters are currently operating in an exceptionally uncertain global environment. Geopolitical tensions, volatile energy prices, supply-chain disruptions, longer transit times and delays in payments are extending the export working-capital cycle. Higher interest costs in such circumstances can adversely affect the competitiveness of Indian exporters, especially those operating on thin margins.

Mr Ralhan urged the RBI to provide greater flexibility in export finance by extending the period of pre-shipment and post-shipment export credit from the existing 270 days to 450 days because of longer shipping and transit periods, logistics disruptions and delayed realisation of export proceeds. Such an extension would provide much-needed breathing space to exporters and enable them to honour their international commitments without facing undue financial stress.



File photo: RBI, Mumbai

> Greater flexibility in export finance by extending the period of pre-shipment and post-shipment export credit from the existing 270 days to 450 days, provide much-needed breathing space to exporters and enable them to honour their international commitments without facing undue financial stress

FIEO further suggested that targeted liquidity support and adequate availability of affordable export credit should accompany the calibrated tightening stance. This would help exporters absorb elevated input and financing costs while maintaining production, fulfilling overseas orders and exploring new markets.

FIEO noted that the RBI has projected real GDP growth at 7.1 per cent for 2026-27, while recognising continuing global headwinds arising from geopolitical tensions, energy-price volatility and tighter global financial conditions. The central bank has also projected CPI inflation at 5.2 per cent for 2026-27, with inflationary pressures expected from food, energy and other commodity prices.

Mr. Ralhan added that India's resilient growth trajectory provides a strong foundation for expanding our global trade footprint. Bilateral trade agreements, buoyant services exports and the recovery in merchandise exports can provide further impetus to the economy. However, maintaining export competitiveness will require continued access to affordable finance and appropriate policy support, particularly for MSMEs. ■

OMAN: GATEWAY TO INTERNATIONAL MARKETS



H E Mr Issa Saleh Abdullah Alshibani, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to India

HE Mr Issa Saleh Abdullah Alshibani, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to India, has highlighted the deep-rooted India-Oman partnership and the strong foundation for expanding bilateral trade and investment. He spoke about the significant opportunities available to Indian businesses and encouraged greater engagement between Indian companies and Oman's business community.

He was speaking at an interactive session titled "SOHAR Port and Freezone, Oman—Your Gateway to International Markets" that was organised by FIEO in association with the SOHAR Port and Freezone, Oman, at the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman, New Delhi, on September 16, 2026.



Dr Raid Al Rubaiey, CEO, SOHAR Freezone



Dr. Ajay Sahai, Director General & CEO, FIEO

> Indian businesses are encouraged to explore opportunities in manufacturing, logistics, investment and international trade

The programme brought together senior representatives of the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman, SOHAR Port and Freezone, FIEO and the Indian exporting community to explore opportunities in trade, investment, manufacturing, logistics and international market expansion through Oman.

The session formed part of FIEO's continuing efforts to help Indian exporters explore new international markets and develop business links with potential partners. It also gave participating companies an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the facilities, incentives and business opportunities available through SOHAR Port and Freezone.

Dr Raid Al Rubaiey, CEO, SOHAR Freezone and Deputy CEO, SOHAR Port, highlighted the wide-ranging opportunities available to Indian companies through SOHAR's integrated port, freezone and industrial ecosystem. He outlined its location, connectivity and infrastructure, and encouraged Indian businesses to explore opportunities in manufacturing, logistics, investment and international trade.

On his part, Mr Arvind Goenka, Regional Chairman (NR), FIEO, set the context for the session by highlighting the longstanding and growing economic partnership between India and Oman. He underlined the increasing opportunities for Indian businesses and exporters in Oman and the wider region, and emphasised SOHAR's importance as a gateway for Indian companies seeking to expand internationally.



Mr. Arvind Goenka, Regional Chairman, FIEO (NR)

Dr Ajay Sahai, DG & CEO, FIEO, highlighted the significant potential to expand India–Oman trade and investment ties, particularly in the context of the India–Oman Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). He emphasised that the CEPA provides substantial market-access



View of the participants

opportunities for Indian exporters and businesses.

Dr Sahai also highlighted the growing scale of bilateral economic engagement. India–Oman bilateral trade reached US$11.18 billion in FY 2025–26, compared with US$10.61 billion in FY 2024–25, reflecting the potential for further growth. He noted that the operationalisation of the CEPA, combined with Oman's location and infrastructure, could create new opportunities for Indian exporters and businesses.

He further highlighted the importance of SOHAR Port and Freezone as a gateway for Indian businesses seeking access to the wider Gulf and international markets. He encouraged Indian companies to explore opportunities through its integrated industrial, logistics and port ecosystem.

Mr Yahya Al Dughaishi, Counsellor, Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman to India, highlighted in his opening remarks the close and historic relations between India and Oman and the growing scope for bilateral economic cooperation. He encouraged Indian companies to explore opportunities in Oman and develop stronger links with the Omani business community.

Mr Haitham Al Omairi, Head – Business Development, SOHAR Port and Freezone, outlined the opportunities available to Indian companies through the SOHAR ecosystem. He highlighted the facilities and support available to businesses considering Oman as a base for manufacturing, logistics, investment and international expansion, and explained the advantages of SOHAR's integrated port, freezone and industrial infrastructure.

Mr Anindya Das, CFO, Al Taman Ferro Alloys, SOHAR, shared his experience of operating within the SOHAR ecosystem and highlighted the business and industrial opportunities available to companies, establishing operations in the region. His practical insights gave participants a clearer understanding of SOHAR as a location for investment, manufacturing and business expansion.

INTERACTIVE Q&A WITH INDIAN EXPORTERS

The presentations were followed by an interactive question-and-answer session with members of the Indian exporting community. Participants sought clarification on various aspects of doing business in Oman, including market access, investment opportunities, logistics and connectivity, warehousing, manufacturing operations, customs procedures, freezone incentives and opportunities to establish business operations through SOHAR.

The SOHAR team responded to the queries and provided practical insights into the facilities and support available to Indian companies. Mr Pratik Lunavia, Business Development Manager–India, SOHAR Port and Freezone, addressed participants' questions and shared useful inputs. The interaction also helped exporters understand how SOHAR could serve as a base for reaching markets in the GCC and other international destinations.

The discussion reflected Indian companies' keen interest in exploring Oman not only as an export destination but also as a potential manufacturing, logistics and distribution hub for expanding their international operations.

The session concluded with a vote of thanks by Mr Ashish Jain, Deputy Director General & Regional Head, FIEO (NR), who expressed appreciation to the Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman, the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman, SOHAR Port and Freezone, the speakers and participating companies for their contribution to the programme.

He particularly appreciated the support and cooperation extended by the Embassy and the SOHAR team in organising the programme. He also highlighted the importance of continued institutional engagement and business-to-business interaction in advancing India–Oman trade and investment relations.

B2B MEETINGS WITH SOHAR TEAM

Following the formal session and lunch, business-to-business (B2B) meetings were organised between participating Indian companies and representatives of SOHAR Port and Freezone. The meetings were coordinated by Mr Lunavia who engaged with participating companies, listened to their specific business interests and requirements, addressed their queries and provided relevant guidance.

The meetings gave companies an opportunity to discuss investment, manufacturing, logistics, warehousing, market access and the establishment of business operations in Oman directly with the SOHAR team. The interactions enabled them to explore potential areas of collaboration and gain a better understanding of the opportunities and facilities available through SOHAR Port and Freezone.

The event provided a valuable platform for Indian exporters to interact directly with senior representatives of the Embassy of Oman and SOHAR Port and Freezone, and to explore opportunities in trade, investment, manufacturing, logistics and international market expansion.

The programme concluded with an emphasis on translating the strong India–Oman economic relationship into greater business-to-business engagement and increased participation by Indian companies in Oman's growing industrial and logistics ecosystem. ■

MEGHALAYA CONNECTS WITH GLOBAL BUYERS



L-R: Ms D M Suja, Joint Secretary, Commerce & Industries Department, Govt of Meghalaya; Mr Cyril V D Diengdoh, Commissioner & Secretary, Commerce & Industries Department, Govt of Meghalaya; Mr Sniawbhalang Dhar, Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister and Minister in-charge of Commerce & Industries, Govt of Meghalaya; Mr M L Wanshnong, Director of Commerce & Industries, Govt of Meghalaya and Ms Neha Mehra, Managing Committee Member, FIEO

Ms Neha Mehra, Managing Committee Member, FIEO, has highlighted Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of Ashtalakshmi, which recognises the eight Northeastern states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura as symbols of prosperity and engines of regional economic growth. She has underscored the immense economic potential of the Northeast and the importance of initiatives that translate this potential into greater market access, entrepreneurship and sustainable economic opportunities.



Mr Sniawbhalang Dhar, Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister and Minister in-charge of Commerce & Industries, Government of Meghalaya delivering keynote address

Her observations were made during the 2nd Reverse Buyer-Seller Meet (RBSM 2.0) that was organised by FIEO in collaboration with the Directorate of Commerce & Industries, Government of Meghalaya, at the State Convention Centre, Shillong, on 8–9 October 2026. The two-day event was held under the RAMP Scheme, with support from the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), the Ministry of MSME and the World Bank.

> RBSM 2.0 played a pivotal role in showcasing Meghalaya's distinctive products internationally and creating direct market linkages

The meet was inaugurated on 8 October 2026 by Mr Sniawbhalang Dhar, Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister and Minister in-charge of Commerce & Industries, Government of Meghalaya, as Chief Guest. Mr Dhar emphasised that RBSM 2.0 would play a pivotal role in showcasing Meghalaya's distinctive products internationally and creating direct market linkages. He observed that such initiatives help local businesses scale up their operations, meet international standards and access new markets. Reaffirming the State Government's commitment to export-led growth, he assured continued support to MSMEs, artisans, weavers and farmers in their efforts to enter international markets, and warmly welcomed the overseas buyers.



Mr Cyril V D Diengdoh, Commissioner & Secretary, Commerce & Industries Department, Government of Meghalaya, delivering his address



View of the participants



Ms D M Suja, Joint Secretary, Commerce & Industries Department, Govt of Meghalaya delivering the welcome address

Mr Cyril V D Diengdoh, Commissioner & Secretary, Commerce & Industries Department, Government of Meghalaya, described the meet as an important opportunity for Meghalaya's MSMEs to interact directly with international buyers, gain first-hand insights into overseas market requirements and build enduring business relationships. He encouraged enterprises to make the most of the structured one-to-one B2B meetings and the exhibition, with a clear focus on converting buyer interest into concrete export orders.



Ms Juin Choudhury, Regional Head, FIEO (ER) along with Mr Sniawbhalang Dhar, Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister and Minister in-charge of Commerce & Industries, Govt of Meghalaya and Mr Cyril V D Diengdoh, Commissioner & Secretary, Commerce & Industries Department, Govt of Meghalaya visiting to the stalls set up by the sellers

Ms D M Suja, Joint Secretary, Commerce & Industries Department, Government of Meghalaya, welcomed the dignitaries, international buyers and participating entrepreneurs. She stated that RBSM 2.0 reflected the State Government's sustained commitment to taking Meghalaya's entrepreneurial talent and indigenous products to global markets. She highlighted the importance of the partnership with FIEO under the RAMP Scheme and encouraged buyers to explore the diverse products showcased at the exhibition.

Mr M L Wanshnong, Director of Commerce & Industries, Government of Meghalaya, thanked FIEO for its close partnership and contribution to organising the event. He particularly acknowledged FIEO's export expertise and extensive international buyer network, which helped bring overseas buyers directly to Meghalaya.

RBSM 2.0

RBSM 2.0 marked an important step towards transforming Meghalaya's local strengths into global business opportunities. By bringing international buyers and local entrepreneurs onto a common platform, the initiative facilitated meaningful business engagements, enhanced export readiness and opened new pathways for Meghalaya's MSMEs, artisans, weavers and farmers to participate in international trade. FIEO will continue to work with the Government of Meghalaya to help participating enterprises convert these MoUs into export orders.

The meet brought together over 400 MSMEs from Meghalaya and 32 buyers from Canada, Sri Lanka, Uganda, Bhutan, the Netherlands, the UK, the US, Mauritius, Bangladesh, Kenya and India. The initiative aimed to create direct business linkages, expand export opportunities and help local enterprises establish a stronger presence in global markets.

The focus sectors of RBSM 2.0 included cane and bamboo handicrafts, water hyacinth products, wood carvings, stone carvings, handloom items, honey, food-processing products and black pottery. The inaugural programme featured a showcase of wedding dress designs created by students of the Executive Programme (Textile & Handloom) under the RAMP Capacity Building Initiative. The presentation highlighted the creativity, craftsmanship and emerging design capabilities of Meghalaya's handloom and textile sector, and its potential to appeal to discerning international markets.



Ms Neha Mehra, MC Member, FIEO delivering address

Over the two days, participating MSMEs engaged with visiting buyers through structured one-to-one B2B meetings and an exhibition of Meghalaya's distinctive products. The format gave local enterprises direct access to buyers, first-hand insights into overseas market requirements and opportunities to build long-term business relationships. Trade-facilitation stakeholders, including DGFT Kolkata, State Bank of India, Walmart and India Post, also participated in the event. They provided on-the-spot services to participating MSMEs, including IEC registration, export finance and related banking services, guidance on e-commerce exports, and information on the role of the Foreign Post Office in exporting small-value goods.

More than 100 Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) had been signed by the conclusion of RBSM 2.0, reflecting strong buyer interest in Meghalaya's products and the readiness of its MSMEs to engage with global markets. ■



One of the hosted foreign buyers with a MoU signed with a MSME from Meghalaya

MEETING JORDANIAN DELEGATION



On dais L-R: Mr Kapil Kumaria, Optimax; Dr Ajay Sahai, DG & CEO, FIEO; H E Mr Yousef Abdelghani, Ambassador of Jordan to India; H E Mr Zaher Al Qatarnah, Secretary General, Ministry of Investment, Jordan and Mr Ashish Jain, DDG & Regional Head, FIEO (NR)

FIEO hosted a business meeting with a delegation from Jordan on October 1, 2026, at FIEO, Niryat Bhawan, New Delhi, focusing on textiles, fabrics and ready-made garments. The meeting aimed to strengthen India-Jordan trade relations, promote bilateral business cooperation and create new opportunities for Indian exporters to expand their presence in the Jordanian market.

The meeting was attended by Dr Ajay Sahai, Director General & CEO, FIEO; H E Mr Yousef Abdelghani, Ambassador of Jordan to India; H E Mr Zaher Al Qatarnah, Secretary General, Ministry of Investment, Jordan; Ms Haya Imam, Director of Investment Promotion, Ministry of Investment, Jordan; Ms Noor Murad, Investment Promotion Officer, Ministry of Investment, Jordan; Mr Kapil Kumaria, Optimax; and Mr Ashish Jain, Deputy Director General & Regional Head, FIEO (NR). The dignitaries highlighted the importance of strengthening bilateral engagement and fostering closer business ties between India and Jordan.

The programme brought together Indian exporters and Jordanian business delegates for focused discussions on trade and investment opportunities in the textiles, fabrics and ready-made garments sectors.

The discussions explored potential areas of collaboration, market access opportunities and avenues for expanding bilateral trade, while encouraging stronger commercial engagement between businesses from both countries.

A key highlight of the meeting was the one-to-one business-to-business (B2B) meetings between Jordanian delegates and Indian companies. These interactions provided a valuable platform for direct business engagement, enabling participants to discuss specific sourcing requirements, exchange business information and explore potential partnerships and commercial opportunities. An open-house interaction further facilitated discussions with industry participants and encouraged greater engagement between the visiting delegation and Indian businesses.

The meeting served as an important platform for strengthening India–Jordan business relations, promoting Indian textile and garment exports, and identifying new avenues for trade and investment cooperation. The interactions also reinforced the importance of direct business engagement in developing long-term commercial partnerships and facilitating access to international markets. ■



One-to-One B2B Meetings between Jordanian Delegates and Indian Exporters to Explore Business Opportunities and Strengthen Bilateral Trade Relations

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FIEO, DTU JOIN FORCES



The signing ceremony was attended by Mr Binod Doley, Registrar, DTU; Dr Ajay Sahai, DG & CEO, FIEO; Prof Prateek Sharma, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, DTU; Prof Girish Kumar, Dean (R&D), DTU; Prof S K Garg, Director, East Campus, DTU; Prof Amit Mukherjee, Head, USME, DTU; Prof Rajiv Arora, Professor, USME, DTU; and Dr Sucheta Sardar, Coordinator for the MoU and Mr Sunil Dutt, Dy Director, FIEO; Mr Abhishake, Management Executive, FIEO

On the signing of the MoU, Prof Prateek Sharma, Vice Chancellor, Delhi Technological University (DTU), New Delhi, has said that the strategic MoU signed between DTU and FIEO opens up new horizons of academia-industry partnership, specifically in today's challenging global era of trade and technology. By combining cutting-edge academic research with an extensive industry network, DTU and FIEO will jointly drive high-impact studies on emerging trade dynamics, sustainable manufacturing, and modern compliance frameworks. This MoU will particularly focus on future-ready enterprises and guiding policy shifts that will enhance India's global competitiveness. He was speaking after the signing of the MoU on September 30, 2026 between FIEO and DTU. He said it'd strengthen academia-industry collaboration in research, training, knowledge exchange and professional development, with a special focus on preparing students and young professionals for emerging opportunities in global trade and technology.

The MoU was formally signed by Mr Binod Doley, Registrar, DTU, and Dr Ajay Sahai, Director General & CEO, FIEO in the presence of Prof Sharma. The signing ceremony was also attended by Prof Girish Kumar, Dean (R&D), DTU; Prof S K Garg, Director, East Campus, DTU; Prof Amit Mukherjee, Head, USME, DTU; Prof Rajiv Arora, Professor, USME, DTU; Dr Sucheta Sardar, Coordinator for the MoU; Mr Sunil Dutt, Deputy Director, FIEO; and Mr Abhishake, Management Executive, FIEO.

On his part, Dr Ajay Sahai, Director General & CEO, FIEO, said that the MoU seeks to connect technical talent with global market opportunities. The objective is to build export capabilities among students and inspire them to become innovators, entrepreneurs and exporters in sunrise sectors such as electronics, green technologies, advanced manufacturing and digital services. By combining academic expertise with industry insights, we aim to help young professionals translate ideas into globally competitive products and solutions. India's next export leap must be powered by technology, innovation and skilled talent. This partnership is a step towards nurturing that talent and strengthening India's participation in global value chains.

The MoU provides a framework for the two organisations to collaborate on joint research projects, training programmes, workshops, seminars, conferences and certificate programmes. It will also facilitate the exchange of faculty members, experts, academic and professional resources, course materials, case studies and research publications. The partnership will further facilitate joint research, consultancy assignments and research projects in areas of mutual interest.

The collaboration will focus on addressing contemporary challenges and opportunities in international trade and industry, including emerging trade dynamics, ease of doing business, tariff and non-tariff measures, environmental concerns and carbon footprints, forced labour, corporate governance and evolving compliance frameworks. The two organisations will also explore joint research projects and funding proposals, support PhD and post-doctoral research, and engage corporate leaders, entrepreneurs and policymakers through knowledge-sharing platforms. The partnership seeks to create stronger linkages between academic research, industry requirements and global market opportunities, enabling students and researchers to gain greater exposure to real-world industry challenges while helping industry leverage academic expertise and technological capabilities. It is also expected to contribute towards nurturing innovation, entrepreneurship and export-oriented talent in emerging and technology-intensive sectors.



The MoU was formally signed by Mr Binod Doley, Registrar, DTU, and Dr Ajay Sahai, Director General & CEO, FIEO, in the presence of Prof Prateek Sharma, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, DTU

Through this collaboration, DTU and FIEO aim to leverage their complementary strengths to foster research-driven innovation, industry-ready skills, entrepreneurship and export capabilities, while contributing to India's greater participation in global value chains and strengthening the country's position in emerging technology-led sectors. ■

TRAINING AT NIRYAT BHAWAN

CERTIFICATE COURSE IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE



Dr Ajay Sahai, DG & CEO, FIEO addressing the participants. On his left are Mr Arvind Goenka, Regional Chairman (NR), FIEO and Mr Sunil Dutt, Deputy Director, FIEO. On his right is Mr Ashish Jain, DDG & Regional Head, FIEO (NR)

FIEO organised a comprehensive five-day Certificate Programme on International Trade from September 14 to 18, 2026 at Niryat Bhawan, New Delhi. The programme was attended by entrepreneurs and budding exporters from various states of India, focusing on educating participants on all key aspects of international trade. The programme covered more than 29 important subjects, including product sourcing, trade finance, trade documentation, Incoterms, packaging and barcoding, logistics, digital marketing, e-commerce, export finance, supply chain management, currency risk management, letters of credit, export documentation, processing export orders, and government schemes and MSME initiatives for trade promotion.

The sessions featured faculty from institutions such as IIFT and ECGC, industry experts, Customs House Agents (CHAs) and FIEO, who provided valuable insights and practical knowledge to the participants.

INAUGURAL SESSION (DAY 1: 14 SEPTEMBER 2026)

While inaugurating the programme, Mr Ashish Jain, Deputy Director General and Regional Head (NR), FIEO, emphasised that the main objective of the Certificate Programme was to equip new entrepreneurs and managers with practical skills to understand the major facets of international trade. He highlighted that intense competition in global markets poses challenges for executives engaged in export marketing. To remain competitive, export executives must stay informed about emerging trends, developments in international business practices and innovative marketing strategies.

In his welcome address, Mr Arvind Goenka, Regional Chairman (NR), FIEO, highlighted the pivotal role of international trade in India's economic growth and emphasised the resilience and adaptability of Indian exporters amid geopolitical uncertainties, evolving trade policies and global supply-chain disruptions. Mr Goenka underscored the opportunities emerging from India's expanding network of Free Trade Agreements, including engagements with the UK, Oman, New Zealand and the EU. These are expected to enhance market access and strengthen India's integration with global value chains. Emphasising the Government's continued focus on export promotion and trade facilitation, he highlighted initiatives such as the ₹25,060 crore Export Promotion Mission, E-Commerce Export Hubs, District Export Hubs, PM Gati Shakti and the digitisation of trade processes. He noted that these measures are creating a more supportive ecosystem for Indian exporters, particularly MSMEs.

TECHNICAL SESSIONS

DAY 1 (14 SEPTEMBER 2026)

Dr Namita Dixit, Professor, IILM, briefed participants on the Foreign Trade Policy 2023. She highlighted the importance of gaining and updating information on Indian government schemes such as Duty Exemption Licences (Advance Authorisation and Duty-Free Import Authorisation), the Duty Remission Scheme (Duty Drawback, including All Industry Rate and Brand Rate), Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) and RoDTEP. Opening a new area of potential exports, the policy has also included merchanting trade within its ambit.

Dr Preeti Tak, Assistant Professor, IIFT, elaborated on the importance of understanding cultural differences between India and target markets. She advised exporters to conduct sample surveys and obtain local feedback before exporting. Dr Preeti also highlighted the importance of Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning (STP) in international marketing strategies. She explained that segmentation involves dividing international markets into distinct groups based on criteria such as geography, demographics, psychographics and behaviour. This process becomes more complex in a global context but remains useful for market penetration.

DAY 2 (15 SEPTEMBER 2026)

Dr Ram Singh, Associate Professor, IIFT, delivered a detailed session on the importance of supply chain management in international trade. He explained the concepts of international trade logistics and provided practical insights. The session also covered the key elements of trade logistics, including customer service, containerisation, customs clearance, packing, labelling and marking.

Dr Singh also presented on the role of trade logistics in international trade. He explained that logistics is an integral part of export and import operations and that the most reliable mode of transport must be selected for air and sea cargo. He emphasised that business success depends largely on efficient logistics management, which helps exporters operate successfully. He also highlighted the customs-clearance process for both exports and imports.

Dr Aaqib Choudhary, IIFT, provided an in-depth overview of INCOTERMS® 2020, explaining the 11 globally recognised rules that define the responsibilities of buyers and sellers in international transactions. He highlighted the updated rules distinguishing between different



Distribution of Certificates to the Participants

modes of transport. Dr Madhab Chakraborty, Joint Director (Retd), Indian Institute of Packaging, discussed the importance of packaging in international trade, including how effective packaging can improve a product's appeal and help meet international standards.

Mr Amrit Garg, Director, ASAR, presented on the role of barcoding in international trade, outlining how barcodes can help exporters streamline operations and grow their businesses.

DAY 3 (16 SEPTEMBER 2026)

Flt Lt Malyendu Mukherji, IIFT, stressed the significance of logistics in exports. He outlined the different modes of transport, including air and sea shipping, and discussed key elements such as customer service, containerisation, customs clearance, packing and labelling. He also explained the vital role of Customs House Agents (CHAs) in exports and their interaction with various stakeholders to ensure smooth export operations. Prof Harkirat Singh, Professor and Consultant (Retd), IIFT, led a session on International Trade Payment Management, focusing on Letters of Credit (L/C) transactions. He discussed the importance of assessing trust levels with buyers and introduced the concept of Bank Payment Obligation (BPO) as a method of improving the efficiency of international transactions.

Ms Dhriti M Pipil, IIFT, provided a comprehensive overview of export finance, emphasising the importance of understanding financial needs, assessing eligibility and evaluating the risks associated with global trade transactions. Mr P T Srinath, Director, FIEO, presented EXIM GUIDE, an integrated digital platform available on the FIEO website that serves as a one-stop reference for exporters and importers. The presentation explained how EXIM GUIDE brings together essential information on foreign trade policy, customs and GST procedures, banking and foreign exchange regulations, and other trade-facilitation aspects in one place. He also highlighted the issue-submission and feedback features that enable exporters to raise concerns and share feedback.

Mr Amit Singhal, Chartered Accountant, delivered a detailed session on GST refunds available to exporters, covering eligibility, the refund process and the practical challenges involved. Mr Singhal explained that refunds are available across the broad category of zero-rated supplies, covering exports of goods, exports of services and supplies made to Special Economic Zones (SEZs). He added that exports of services must satisfy all five conditions under Section 2(6) of the IGST Act.

Describing the process, Mr Singhal said that, for goods exported with payment of tax, the shipping bill itself serves as the refund application. The refund is credited automatically once the GST returns match the shipping-bill data on the ICEGATE portal. In all other cases, namely exports of services, supplies to SEZ units and exports of goods without payment of tax, a separate refund application in Form RFD-01 must be filed for each period. He also highlighted that an application must be filed within two years of the relevant date.

DAY 4 (17 SEPTEMBER 2026)

Ms Manisha Jha, Deputy Director, FIEO, and Mr Sunil Dutt, Deputy Director, FIEO, outlined FIEO's services to the participants and gave a brief presentation on the subject. Mr Nishant Katyayan, Deputy Director, FIEO, explained how international exhibitions and Reverse Buyer-Seller Meets (RBSMs) generate trade enquiries and business leads for exporters in international markets.

Ms Sunena Sharma, Assistant Director, FIEO, delivered a detailed presentation on two portals developed by FIEO: the Indian Trade Portal (ITP) and the Indian Business Portal (IBP). She explained that ITP helps exporters make decisions when selecting markets for their products, understand trade agreements signed by India with the relevant markets, identify policies under which export subsidies can be availed, and explore opportunities to interact with buyers indirectly. IBP, meanwhile, provides exporters with a digital platform to showcase their products worldwide.

Dr Aaqib Choudhary, IIFT, updated participants on the policies, procedures and key concepts relating to the Certificate of Origin (CoO). He elaborated on the fundamental role of the CoO in international trade, highlighting that it serves as a critical document certifying that goods originate from a specific country. He explained its significance in enabling preferential tariffs under FTAs, facilitating customs clearance, supporting trade statistics and ensuring compliance with origin-based trade regulations.

Ms S Sakthi Rani, Assistant Director, Ministry of MSME, conducted a session on Udyam Registration, detailing the criteria for classifying enterprises as Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and the benefits of registration under Udyam. Mr Alok Kumar, Senior Manager, ECGC, elaborated on ECGC's role in protecting exporters against various risks, including political, commercial and economic risks.

VISIT TO AIR CARGO (EXPORT), NEW CUSTOM HOUSE, NEW DELHI, ON THE AFTERNOON OF 17 SEPTEMBER 2026

The main objective of the visit was to provide participants with practical exposure to cargo-handling operations. This was the second time FIEO had organised the field visit, which offered participants an excellent opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge from Customs officers at New Custom House and enhance their understanding of international trade operations.

DAY 5 (18 SEPTEMBER 2026)

Prof H P Singh provided an overview of export documentation and the processing of export orders, stressing the importance



Group photo

of preparing the necessary documents in advance and ensuring compliance with the latest government regulations.

VALEDICTORY SESSION (DAY 5: 18 SEPTEMBER 2026)

The valedictory session was attended by Mr Arvind Goenka, Regional Chairman (NR), FIEO; Dr Ajay Sahai, Director General & CEO, FIEO; and Mr Ashish Jain, Deputy Director General and Regional Head (NR), FIEO. They congratulated all participants on the successful completion of the five-day comprehensive training programme on international trade.

Mr Goenka encouraged participants to stay connected with FIEO and build a long-term association with the organisation. He also explained how to find international buyers, encouraging participants to take part in Reverse Buyer-Seller Meets, overseas fairs and exhibitions, and to tap international markets to generate trade enquiries. He further emphasised the need for an aggressive approach to exploring new markets and establishing business connections globally.

Dr Ajay Sahai, Director General & CEO, FIEO, highlighted India's export performance, which he said constituted 21% of the country's GDP. He also emphasised the Government's

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

MARMOMAC 2026 AT VERONA



Mr Lavanya Kumar, Consulate General of India, Italy, along with Mr Jon Alia, Trade & Investment Promotion Officer (TIPO), Consulate General of India, Italy and Mr Bhupinder Singh, Assistant Director, FIEO, during the inauguration of the India Pavilion

The India Pavilion at Marmomac 2026 in Verona, Italy, was inaugurated by Mr Lavanya Kumar, Consul General of India in Milan, along with Mr Jon Alia, Trade & Investment Promotion Officer (TIPO), Consulate General of India in Milan and Mr Bhupinder Singh, Assistant Director, FIEO, in the presence of participating Indian exhibitors. At Marmomac, FIEO successfully participated in the 60th edition of Marmomac from 22 to 25 September 2026, reinforcing India's growing engagement with the Italian market and its commitment to strengthening bilateral trade relations.

A strong contingent of 19 Indian companies showcased a diverse range of products, including marble, granite, stone flooring, stone blocks, wall cladding and veneer. The participation highlighted India's robust manufacturing capabilities, rich craftsmanship, product innovation, and increasing focus on sustainability and value-added offerings.

FIEO remains committed to promoting Indian exports globally and facilitating meaningful business connections that contribute to sustainable trade growth and stronger economic cooperation between India and Italy.

MARMOMAC

Marmomac is Italy's premier platform for sourcing professionals to discover manufacturers and suppliers from across the world in categories such as natural stones and materials, stone flooring, wall cladding, machinery, technology and services. The 2026 edition brought together global companies, buyers, architects, designers, project developers and decision-makers from over 140 countries, facilitating direct engagement between global exhibitors and Italian sourcing professionals, brands and retailers. Companies from Turkey, Brazil, Germany, India, Vietnam, China, the UK and the US participated, helping Italian businesses adapt to evolving global supply-chain dynamics.

Marmomac provided an important platform for direct engagement between Indian exporters and Italian buyers, facilitating new sourcing opportunities, strengthening supply chains and fostering long-term business partnerships. These interactions enabled exporters to better understand market requirements, enhance buyer confidence and expand India's export footprint in the EU. ■

MEETING GCC EXPORT REQUIREMENTS



Mr Khushwant Jain, Regional Chairman (WR), FIEO delivering the welcome address

Mr Khushwant Jain, Regional Chairman (WR), FIEO, has highlighted the importance of export inspection, certification and quality compliance in facilitating access to international markets, particularly the GCC region. He has emphasised the need for Indian exporters to remain informed about applicable regulatory requirements, product standards and conformity assessment procedures to ensure smooth export operations and minimise compliance-related challenges. He also reiterated FIEO's commitment to supporting exporters through knowledge-sharing initiatives and capacity-building programmes aimed at improving their international competitiveness.

He was speaking at a webinar on "Export Inspection, Certification, and Quality Compliance for GCC Markets" organised by FIEO in association with Cotecna Inspection India Pvt. Ltd. on October 14, 2026, and attended by over 180 participants. The webinar aimed to familiarise Indian exporters with the inspection, certification and conformity assessment requirements for accessing markets in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Oman and other GCC countries.

Mr Sumit Singh, Director-Agri & VoC, Cotecna Inspection India Pvt. Ltd., introduced Cotecna and briefed participants on the organisation's expertise and services in inspection, testing, certification and verification of conformity. Ms Madhura Dalvi, General Manager-Verification of Conformity (VoC), Cotecna India, subsequently highlighted Cotecna's presence and operations in India and its role in supporting businesses in meeting quality and regulatory compliance requirements.

The detailed technical presentation was delivered by Mr Noor Ul Hassan Mirza, Senior Manager–Verification of Conformity, GCC Contracts, Cotecna Inspection India Pvt. Ltd. He provided an overview of Cotecna's services, with particular emphasis on inspection, certification and Verification of Conformity (VoC) requirements relevant to GCC markets. He explained the importance of identifying applicable regulations and product-specific requirements in destination countries before initiating export shipments.

He also highlighted the role of conformity assessment in ensuring that products meet the prescribed quality, safety and regulatory standards of the importing country. His presentation covered the importance of proper documentation, timely completion of inspection and certification formalities, and adherence to applicable procedures to minimise the risk of shipment delays and facilitate smoother market entry. He further emphasised that exporters should assess the compliance requirements of their target markets in advance to avoid potential trade barriers and improve their competitiveness in the GCC region.

The technical presentations were followed by an interactive question-and-answer session, during which participants sought expert guidance on various aspects of export inspection, certification, conformity assessment and regulatory compliance. The speakers addressed their queries, providing further clarity on the practical considerations involved in accessing GCC markets. The webinar received an encouraging response and provided a platform for exporters to enhance their understanding of destination-country requirements and the importance of product quality and regulatory compliance in international trade.

The programme contributed to FIEO's efforts towards export promotion, capacity-building and trade facilitation by enhancing exporters' awareness of inspection, certification and conformity assessment requirements for GCC markets.

At the conclusion of the programme, Ms Rishu Mishra, Assistant Director, FIEO (WR), delivered the vote of thanks. She expressed her gratitude to Mr Jain for his guidance, the speakers from Cotecna Inspection India Pvt. Ltd. for sharing their expertise, and the participants for their active engagement. ■

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

ambitious target of achieving USD 2 trillion in exports by 2030. Despite the challenges posed by the global trade environment, Dr Sahai expressed optimism, citing government initiatives such as the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, which has shifted the focus towards high-technology sectors such as electronics and machinery. Dr Sahai also outlined India's export potential, supported by engagements such as FTAs with the UAE, the UK, the EU and Oman, aimed at enhancing market access and addressing challenges such as non-tariff barriers. Additionally, he shared insights into India's growing role in e-commerce exports and noted that the exploration of local-currency trading with countries such as Russia presents new avenues for growth.

On the final day, participants expressed their appreciation for the programme, which equipped them with essential tools and information to navigate the complexities of global trade. Participants came from Mumbai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Chennai, Abohar (Punjab), Surat, Delhi and the Delhi NCR region, including Noida, Gurugram, Faridabad and Sonipat.

The session concluded with the distribution of certificates to the participants. The programme was coordinated by Mr Sunil Dutt, Deputy Director, FIEO. ■

FIJI

FOCUS MARKET





With Inputs from Mr Suneet Mehta, High Commissioner of India in Fiji (Suva)

Fiji offers Indian exporters opportunities across consumer products, industrial supplies and services linked to tourism, healthcare and infrastructure. Its role as a Pacific transport and business centre can support regional connections, while each destination retains its own import and market access requirements. Indian companies should approach Fiji with a defined customer segment, a suitable local partner and a realistic plan for freight, stockholding and service.

The commercial relationship benefits from longstanding cultural and people to people links. These connections can support introductions and market familiarity, but successful trade requires products adapted to local demand and dependable execution. For Indian MSMEs, Fiji merits attention as a focused market where a well-supported product range may be more practical than an extensive launch.

THE TRADE RELATIONSHIP IN FIGURES

According to Department of Commerce figures reproduced by the High Commission of India in Suva, India's merchandise exports to Fiji reached US$96.26 million in FY 2025–26, compared with US$84.67 million in FY 2024–25, an increase of approximately 13.7%. Imports into India from Fiji rose from US$1.54 million to US$2.56 million. Adding these components gives bilateral merchandise trade of US$98.82 million in FY 2025–26, compared with US$86.21 million a year earlier, an increase of approximately 14.6%.

India's merchandise surplus was US$93.70 million in FY 2025–26. These figures relate to April–March financial years and exclude services. The High Commission also notes that trade routed through third countries may not be fully reflected in direct bilateral statistics.

The export increase provides a basis for broader commercial engagement, while the imbalance also points to scope for developing two-way business. Buyers and investors can explore complementarities in production, distribution and services rather than concentrate solely on finished goods trade.

TOURISM SUPPORTS DEMAND ACROSS THE SUPPLY CHAIN

Fiji's tourism activity creates a customer base extending beyond visitors to hotels, restaurants, transport operators and supporting businesses. Fiji Bureau of Statistics recorded 95,970 visitor arrivals in September 2026, up 3.9% from September 2025. This is a monthly indicator, not an annual visitor total.

The Reserve Bank of Fiji's 29 October 2026 statement reported that visitor arrivals in the year to September increased by 3.7%. It also noted positive consumption, investment and construction indicators, while identifying higher import costs and weather-related risks. These conditions support attention to hospitality supply chains but call for careful pricing and demand assessment.

Potential Indian offerings include hotel linen, uniforms, kitchenware, food service ingredients, furniture, lighting and selected maintenance equipment. Suppliers should establish whether purchasing decisions sit with an individual property, a hotel group or a local distributor. Samples, replacement schedules and replenishment capability can matter as much as the initial quotation.

FOOD PROCESSING AND AGRICULTURAL SUPPLY

Food and agriculture offer opportunities for Indian companies able to meet importer requirements on quality, shelf life, pack sizes and delivery. Suggested product avenues include spices, pulses, cereals, sauces and processed food ingredients. Local processing businesses may also be prospective customers for packaging, food processing machinery and cold chain equipment. These are commercial avenues for validation, rather than confirmed purchasing requirements.

Exporters must check product eligibility before shipment. The Biosecurity Authority of Fiji regulates plant and animal products, including relevant processed products, and commercial import requirements depend on the commodity. A product containing dairy or other animal derived ingredients may follow a different pathway from a wholly plant-based product. The importer should confirm permits, certificates and inspection conditions in advance.

TEXTILES, HEALTHCARE AND ENGINEERING

Textiles and apparel can be approached through wholesalers, retailers and institutional customers. Knitwear, cotton garments, home textiles and workwear merit targeted discussions, with pack assortments, sizes, fabric specifications and minimum order quantities adapted to the buyer. For hospitality textiles, suppliers should demonstrate wash performance and consistency across repeat orders.

Healthcare presents avenues for medicines,

medical supplies and selected nutrition products, subject to the applicable regulatory requirements.

In May 2025, Fiji has signed an MoU on recognition of Indian Pharmacopoeia. Indian businesses should identify whether the customer is a licensed wholesaler, pharmacy, hospital or public procurement body.

The Fiji Ministry of Health publishes guidelines for medicinal product import permits; the regulatory route should be confirmed for each product before supply. Health supplements should not automatically be treated as conventional foods or medicines without checking ingredients, presentation and claims.

Engineering suppliers can explore pumps, fasteners, seals, machinery components, fabricated assemblies and maintenance products. Infrastructure, water, energy and food processing activities create possible customer segments, as identified in the US International Trade Administration's Fiji market assessment.

A technical offer should include drawings or specifications, material grades, testing records, spare part availability and delivery commitments. For equipment requiring installation, a local service arrangement can improve the buyer's confidence. A small trial order may be a useful way to demonstrate quality before expanding supply.

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

Investment Fiji identifies opportunities across a range of sectors, while the IFC's private sector diagnostic highlights outsourcing, healthcare and agri logistics as areas with potential to diversify the economy. Indian firms can assess joint ventures, technical partnerships, processing activities and specialist service delivery where they have a clear commercial advantage.

Possible cooperation could combine Indian manufacturing and technology capabilities with a Fijian partner's distribution network and local operations. Food processing, renewable energy services, healthcare support and digital services are themes for further project level assessment. Investment decisions should be based on verified customer demand, operating costs, staffing and a credible route to revenue.

Investment Fiji's guidance states that foreign investors generally need to remit at least FJ$300,000 within three months of incorporation, subject to the applicable framework and possible ministerial waivers. Reserved and restricted activities require separate attention. Prospective investors should confirm the current rules, activity classification and approvals with Investment Fiji and the responsible authorities before committing funds.

PREPARING FOR MARKET ENTRY

A distributor should be assessed for customer coverage, storage, working capital and experience with the product category. Exporters should agree which party handles import clearance, regulatory submissions, stock rotation and complaints. Exclusivity is best considered alongside measurable performance expectations and a review mechanism.

Fiji Revenue and Customs Service requires accurate customs declarations and supporting documents and uses electronic ASYCUDA World submissions. The applicable duty and tax treatment depends on classification and the transaction. A landed cost calculation should include freight, insurance, duties, taxes, clearance, inland delivery and distributor margins. Concessions, where available, should be confirmed for the specific shipment rather than assumed.

Commercial terms should cover specifications, payment, delivery, acceptance and dispute handling. Consolidating appropriate orders may help freight economics, but shipment timing should match the buyer's storage and cash flow. Exporters should also consider packaging durability, humidity, shelf life and the availability of replacements or maintenance support.

BUILDING ON THE OCTOBER BUSINESS ENGAGEMENTS

FIEO's multi product delegation to New Zealand and Fiji from 5–9 October 2026 included B2B meetings in Suva on 8 October, supported by the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India, and the High Commission of India in Fiji, in association with Investment Fiji, the Fiji Commerce & Employers Federation and the Fiji Chamber of Commerce & Industry. Indian companies interacted with Fijian buyers and distributors across textiles, healthcare and engineering.

On 9 October, the delegation participated in "Veilomani Dosti – Trade Connect", jointly organised by the High Commission of India in Suva and the Suva Retailers Association. Hon. Sachida Nand, Assistant Minister for Industries, Commerce and Business Development, Government of Fiji, highlighted the cultural and commercial connections between the countries. Mr Suneet Mehta, High Commissioner of India in Fiji, welcomed the delegation and assured support for business expansion.

These engagements provide contacts for continued supplier matching and follow up. For Indian companies, the practical opportunity lies in responding to specific buyer requirements with consistent products and service. Closer cooperation between businesses, trade organisations and the High Commission can support a more diversified and sustainable commercial relationship. ■

ATTENTION MEMBERS!!!

Please update your correct e-mail address with FIEO's Regional Office. Also, please include the following e-mail addresses on your mailing safelist to ensure that you receive all email communications from FIEO

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OPPORTUNITIES AT AUTUMN FAIR 2026, BIRMINGHAM



FIEO Pavilion being inaugurated on September 6, 2026 by Dr Venkatachelam, Consul General, CGI Birmingham, UK. Also seen among others is Mr P T Srinath, Director (Policy), FIEO

The Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) led the participation of India companies at Autumn Fair 2026, held at the NEC, Birmingham, United Kingdom, from September 6-9, 2026, providing Indian exporters, particularly startups and micro enterprises, an opportunity to connect with UK buyers, retailers, importers, distributors and sourcing professionals.

The FIEO Pavilion was inaugurated on September 6, 2026 by Dr Venkatachelam, Consul General, Birmingham, UK, marking an important milestone in FIEO's UK trade-promotion initiatives.

The B2B sourcing exhibition showcased opportunities across handicrafts, home décor, textiles, gifts, lifestyle products, fashion accessories, furniture and sustainable merchandise. Buyer preferences highlighted the growing importance of distinctive designs, eco-friendly materials, ethical sourcing, product customisation, flexible order quantities and reliable supply chains—areas where Indian enterprises can leverage their craftsmanship and manufacturing strengths.



Dr Venkatachelam visiting Indian stalls along with Mr P T Srinath



Mr P T Srinath meeting Ms Nidhi Mani Tripathi, Minister (Economics), High Commission of India in London

INDIA–UK CETA AND MARKET ACCESS

The evolving India–UK trade framework, including the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), offers opportunities for expanding Indian exports. However, exporters need greater awareness of product-specific tariff treatment, rules of origin, customs documentation and UK product standards. During the visit, Mr P T Srinath, Director (Policy), FIEO, who also led FIEO's participation at the fair, on September 8, 2026 met with Ms Nidhi Mani Tripathi, Minister (Economics), High Commission of India in London on September 8, 2026. The discussions focused on addressing non-tariff barriers and promoting sector-specific CETA awareness among Indian exporters.

The visit also highlighted practical challenges concerning UK product testing, certification, VAT and cross-border payments to testing agencies, underscoring the need for accessible compliance guidance and cost-effective testing facilities for MSMEs.

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE UK MARKET PRESENCE

FIEO's assessment indicates that Autumn Fair is particularly suited to startups and micro enterprises seeking to test market demand, showcase differentiated products and establish initial buyer relationships. To convert these opportunities into sustained business, FIEO envisages a continuing UK market-development programme, including buyer–seller meetings, distributor outreach, e-commerce support, a UK Market Entry Toolkit, certification facilitation and structured post-exhibition follow-up.

A proposed buyer–seller meeting in London in May 2027 could further strengthen direct engagement between Indian exporters and UK buyers. Targeted virtual outreach on CETA benefits, rules of origin and regulatory requirements would also help exporters make informed market-entry decisions.

FIEO's participation further reaffirmed the importance of combining market intelligence, product innovation, compliance support and sustained buyer engagement to translate UK market opportunities into long-term export growth for Indian startups and micro enterprises. ■



WEEKLY INTERACTION

#TRADEQUERIES

FIEO OFFERS YOU OPPORTUNITY TO SEEK CLARIFICATION ON KEY ISSUES RELATED TO FOREIGN TRADE WITH DR AJAY SAHAI, DIRECTOR GENERAL & CEO, FIEO. DR SAHAI HAS SERVED MANY IMPORTANT OFFICES IN THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA IN VARIOUS CAPACITIES. AS JT. DGFT (POLICY) FROM 1996 TO 2003, HE PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN FORMULATING THE EXIM POLICY. FOR JOINING THE INTERACTION, ALL YOU NEED TO DO IS TO PRE-REGISTER ON **WWW.FIEO.ORG**. EXCERPTS FROM THE PREVIOUS WEEKLY INTERACTIONS ON TRADE QUERIES ARE REPRODUCED HERE.

Dr Ajay Sahai, DG & CEO, FIEO

EXCLUSIVE CHAT ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 57TH GST COUNCIL MEETING

What are the major benefits announced for exporters in the 57th GST Council meeting?

The Council recommended faster and more automated GST refunds, wider eligibility for refunds of accumulated input tax credit (ITC), removal of certain restrictions on export refund calculations and clarification of zero-rating provisions for exports of goods and services. These measures are expected to reduce working capital blockage, simplify compliance and improve the competitiveness of Indian exporters. The Council also proposed greater automation of refund processing, reducing dependence on manual scrutiny and departmental intervention.

Will exporters receive 90% of their GST refund automatically?

Yes, the Council recommended that 90% of eligible refund claims relating to zero-rated supplies and inverted duty structure should be sanctioned provisionally through an automated, risk-based system, without routine officer intervention. The period for issuing an acknowledgement or deficiency memo is proposed to be reduced from 15 days to 10 days, with deemed acknowledgement where neither is issued within that period.

In the second phase, the Council envisages automated sanction of the full eligible refund after risk assessment and adjustment of outstanding dues, wherever applicable. These changes should substantially improve exporters' cash flow once implemented.

Can exporters claim a refund of ITC on capital goods, and what changes have been recommended?

The Council recommended allowing refunds of accumulated ITC on capital goods in cases of zero-rated supplies. It also proposed including ITC on capital goods and input services in refunds arising from inverted duty structure.

This would be particularly beneficial to manufacturing exporters investing in machinery and modernisation. However, eligibility, commencement dates and transitional treatment will depend on the final legal provisions, although the recommended date is 1 April 2027, with the measure to be phased in over a period of 60 months. Exporters should distinguish between the existing ability to utilise eligible capital-goods ITC and the proposed wider entitlement to obtain a cash refund of accumulated credit.

Will services provided by an Indian company to its overseas branch qualify as exports?

The Council recommended removing Section 2(6)(v) of the IGST Act, which currently restricts export-of-services treatment where the supplier and recipient are establishments of a distinct person.

Consequently, services supplied by an Indian establishment to or through its overseas branch could qualify as exports, subject to the other prescribed conditions. This is expected to benefit IT companies, consultancy firms, global capability centres and other service providers operating internationally. It would also facilitate zero-rating and associated refund claims.

What relief has been proposed for Indian companies undertaking job work, processing, testing or repairs for foreign customers?

The Council recommended omitting Section 13(3)(a) of the IGST Act, under which the place of supply of certain services performed on goods physically made available by the customer is linked to the place where the services are performed.

Under the proposed change, the general rule under Section 13(2), which links the place of supply to the recipient's location, would apply. For example, an Indian company undertaking processing or testing of goods for a foreign customer could potentially qualify for export-of-services treatment, provided the other statutory conditions are satisfied. This could significantly benefit engineering, processing, testing and repair service providers.

Will supplies to overseas buyers through SEZs or Free Trade Warehousing Zones qualify for zero-rating?

Yes. The Council recommended an explanation to Section 16(1) of the IGST Act to provide zero-rating treatment where goods are sold to an overseas buyer but physically delivered to that buyer in an SEZ or Free Trade Warehousing Zone (FTWZ) for warehousing or further processing.

Payment must be received in convertible foreign exchange or Indian rupees, wherever permitted by the RBI. For example, an Indian manufacturer selling goods to a European buyer who arranges delivery to an Indian FTWZ could qualify for the proposed zero-rating benefit, even though the goods are not immediately shipped outside India.

Has the GST Council abolished the power to arrest taxpayers under GST?

The Council recommended the complete withdrawal of arrest powers by omitting Section 69 of the CGST Act, 2017. Importantly, CBIC Instruction No. 02/2026-GST dated 30 October 2026 has directed all Central GST field formations not to carry out further arrests under GST, even before the legislative amendment takes effect.

This is a major step towards a less coercive tax administration. However, the statutory amendment is still necessary, and the instruction should not be interpreted as automatically terminating existing investigations or criminal proceedings. Its direct application to State GST authorities also depends on corresponding State-level action.

Has the monetary threshold for prosecution under GST been increased from ₹1 crore to ₹5 crore?

The Council recommended increasing the monetary threshold for prosecution from ₹1 crore to ₹5 crore under Section 132 of the CGST Act. This would substantially reduce taxpayers' exposure to criminal prosecution in cases involving relatively smaller amounts.

The Council also recommended narrowing certain offences, including provisions relating to fraudulent ITC availment, and rationalising punishments. However, the revised ₹5 crore threshold is a legislative proposal and should not be treated as already effective. Further, prosecution for specified offences may remain possible under the amended law, subject to the final wording and applicable exceptions.

What changes have been recommended in GST penalties, particularly for non-fraud cases?

The Council recommended reducing the maximum general penalty under Section 125 from ₹25,000 to ₹10,000. In non-fraud cases, it proposed a reduced penalty of 5% where tax and interest are paid within 30 days of the adjudication order under Section 73, or within 60 days under Section 74A.

It also recommended removing the minimum penalty requirement of ₹10,000 in non-fraud cases. These changes would provide relief to businesses facing genuine classification disputes, accounting mistakes and other non-fraud compliance issues.

What safeguards have been recommended against arbitrary GST notices, adjudication orders and blocking of ITC?

The Council recommended comprehensive guidelines to improve the quality of show-cause notices, adjudication orders and appellate orders. Officers would be expected to invoke fraud, wilful misstatement or suppression of facts only where justified by the merits of the case, while observing the principles of natural justice and providing appropriate opportunities for personal hearings.

Additionally, the Council recommended amending Rule 86A to allow taxpayers to object to the blocking of their electronic credit ledger and obtain a personal hearing before the officer decides the objection. This would be particularly valuable for exporters whose refunds or working capital are affected by blocked ITC.

Can GST officers continue to stop and detain trucks carrying goods in transit?

The Council recommended restricting interception to cases based on specific intelligence, with authorisation from an officer not below the rank of Joint Commissioner. Generally, inspection and consequent detention or seizure would be confined to cases where the supplier or recipient is registered or located within the relevant State or Union Territory.

CBIC's instruction dated 30 October 2026 has operationalised these restrictions for Central GST formations. It also provides an exception where neither an e-way bill nor documentation establishing the origin or destination is available. The instruction prohibits confiscation of goods or conveyances in transit under Section 130.

What relief has been recommended regarding Rule 96(10), which affected GST refunds to exporters?

The Council recommended clarifying that the omission of Rule 96(10) of the CGST Rules should take effect from 23 October 2017, in accordance with the Supreme Court's decision. This is significant for exporters whose IGST refund claims were denied or subjected to recovery proceedings because of restrictions under the erstwhile Rule 96(10). The proposed retrospective treatment could help resolve longstanding disputes. However, the practical treatment of pending and concluded proceedings, including refund eligibility and limitation, must be examined in light of the final notification and applicable judicial decisions. ■

ATTENTION MEMBERS! HELP US TO SERVE YOU BETTER

Please let us know the changes in your contact information immediately, to help us remain in touch with you. In case of any changes, fill in the following and send it to FIEO:

1. Name of the Company: .....
2. Address: .....
3. City: .....
4. Telephone: .....
5. Fax: .....
6. E-mail: .....
7. Name of the Chief Executive: .....
8. Designation: .....
9. Name of Contact Person: .....
10. Designation: .....

FIEO LEADS BUSINESS DELEGATION



Mr Madan Mohan Sethi, Consul General of India in Auckland delivering keynote address during the B2B inaugural event on 5th October, 2026 at Auckland, New Zealand

Mr Rahul Singh, Assistant Director, FIEO led a Multi-Product Business Delegation to New Zealand and Fiji from October 5–9, 2026, that enabled Indian exporters to connect with buyers, distributors and business organisations across the two markets. Supported by the Ministry of Commerce & Industry (MoCI), Government of India, and the respective Indian diplomatic missions, the programme combined B2B meetings, chamber interactions and an industry visit.

The delegation's engagements in Auckland, Hamilton and Suva provided opportunities to present Indian products, understand local sourcing requirements and explore potential partnerships. Discussions covered food and agriculture, apparel and knitwear, health supplements, packaging, engineering, machinery components and material handling systems.

B2B INTERACTIONS IN AUCKLAND

The programme commenced with B2B meetings in Auckland on October 5, 2026. FIEO organised the interaction with the support of the MoCI and the Consulate General of India (CGI) in Auckland, and in association with the Auckland Business Chamber (ABC), ABEF and India New Zealand Chamber of Commerce and Industry (INZCCI).

The visiting Indian companies met New Zealand businesses across diverse sectors to discuss sourcing opportunities, introduce their product offerings and explore areas for cooperation. The meetings enabled exporters to engage directly with prospective business partners and better understand their requirements.

Mr Madan Mohan Sethi, Consul General of India in Auckland, welcomed the FIEO delegation and assured continued support for Indian businesses seeking opportunities in New Zealand. His remarks underscored the importance of sustained business engagement and the Consulate's support for Indian exporters exploring the market. The session was also attended by Ms Ali Hamlin-Paenga, CEO, Te Matapihi; Ms Anna-May Isbey, International Engagement Advisor, ABC; and Mr Singh from FIEO.

Alongside the Auckland B2B programme, the delegation interacted with distinguished members of the INZCCI on October 5, 2026. The discussion focused on market-entry opportunities, challenges faced by Indian companies and practical approaches to establishing a presence in New Zealand. Participants exchanged insights on local business expectations and explored how stronger connections with the business community could support Indian exporters.

The interaction was attended by Mr Sethi; Mr Sunny Kaushal, Chairman & CEO, INZCCI; and Mr Singh.

This engagement complemented the buyer-seller meetings by giving delegates an opportunity to discuss the wider business environment and the value of local partnerships when entering a new market.

B2B INTERACTIONS IN HAMILTON

On the second day of the visit, FIEO jointly organised B2B meetings with the Waikato Chamber of Commerce (WCC) in Hamilton on October 6, 2026, with the support of the MoCI and the CGI.

Mr Don Good, Chief Executive, WCC,



B2B Meeting in progress in Auckland on 5th October, 2026



B2B meeting in progress during the 2nd day of Business Interaction of Indian companies and Hamilton based companies on 6th October, 2026



Mr Suneet Mehta, High Commissioner of India in Fiji, welcoming the FIEO's Business Delegation during the event "Vielomani Dosti – Trade Connect" on 9th October 2026

delivered the welcome address. Mr Sethi delivered the keynote address and assured continued support for Indian businesses exploring opportunities in New Zealand.

The session was also attended by Ms Jenny MacGregor, Commercial Manager, and Mr Tony O'Brien from the WCC; and Mr Singh, Leader of the Delegation.

Indian exporters interacted with Waikato businesses across food and agriculture, apparel and knitwear, health supplements, packaging, engineering, machinery components and material handling systems. Discussions centred on sourcing requirements, supply capabilities and potential partnerships. The Hamilton programme extended the delegation's engagement beyond Auckland and enabled participating companies to connect with businesses in the Waikato region.

INDUSTRY VISIT IN NEW ZEALAND

The delegation also visited Service Foods, a major food distributor in Auckland, on October 6, 2026. The industry visit provided an opportunity to understand local food distribution operations and explore how Indian food exporters could connect with New Zealand's foodservice market. It complemented the formal business meetings by offering practical exposure to the distribution side of the market.

For participating exporters, the engagement helped place buyer requirements in a broader commercial context and identify avenues for further business discussions.

B2B INTERACTIONS IN SUVA, FIJI

The delegation commenced its Fiji programme with B2B meetings in Suva on October 8, 2026. FIEO organised the meetings with the support of the MoCI and the High Commission of India in Fiji, and in association with Investment Fiji, the Fiji Commerce & Employers Federation (FCEF), and the Fiji Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI).

Indian companies engaged with Fijian buyers and distributors across the textile, pharmaceutical and health-supplement, and engineering sectors. Discussions focused on sourcing requirements, product offerings and potential partnerships, with Fijian participants expressing strong interest in sourcing Indian products.



B2B meeting in progress between the Indian companies and prominent Fiji companies

Mr Jeetender Rai, Board Member, FCEF, delivered the keynote address and assured support for Indian companies exploring entry into the Fiji market. Mr P P Menon, Second Secretary (Consular & Commerce), and Mr Dilip Nath, ASO Commerce, High Commission of India in Suva, facilitated the B2B interactions.

The programme provided a focused platform for the participating Indian companies to present their capabilities and establish contacts with relevant Fijian businesses.

"VIELOMANI DOSTI – TRADE CONNECT" STRENGTHENS BUSINESS DIALOGUE

On October 9, 2026, the delegation participated in "Vielomani Dosti – Trade Connect", jointly organised by the High Commission of India in Suva and the Suva Retailers Association. The programme brought the Indian delegation together with Fiji's business community for productive discussions on trade opportunities, sourcing and potential partnerships. Hon. Sachida Nand, Assistant Minister for Industries, Commerce and Business Development, Government of Fiji, graced the occasion as Chief Guest.

He highlighted the shared cultural ties and trade connections between India and Fiji and encouraged businesses from both countries to strengthen bilateral trade.

Mr Suneet Mehta, High Commissioner of India in Fiji, welcomed the FIEO delegation and assured continued support for Indian businesses seeking to expand their presence in Fiji. His remarks reinforced the High Commission's commitment to facilitating closer commercial engagement. Across the five-day programme, the combination of buyer-seller meetings, chamber engagement and industry exposure helped Indian exporters develop business contacts and gain a clearer understanding of opportunities in both markets.

FIEO acknowledges the support of the Indian diplomatic missions, partner chambers and business organisations in facilitating the visit and creating avenues for continued commercial cooperation. ■

INDIA-ITALY SECTORAL ROUNDTABLE



Ms Antonietta Baccanari, Trade Commissioner and Director of the Trade Promotion Office of the Italian Embassy in New Delhi addressing the participants

Ms Antonietta Baccanari, Trade Commissioner and Director of the Trade Promotion Office of the Italian Embassy in New Delhi, has underscored the importance of strengthening commercial ties between India and Italy. She has highlighted the potential for expanding bilateral trade through closer institutional engagement, enhanced business-to-business interactions and stronger partnerships between companies of the two countries. She has also emphasised the importance of platforms such as the sectoral roundtable in facilitating exchanges, identifying synergies and translating shared business interests into commercial opportunities.Her observations were made during the India-Italy Sectoral Roundtable and B2B Interactions at the Embassy of Italy in New Delhi on October 8, 2026, during a business mission from Confindustria Vicenza, Italy. It was organised by FIEO in association with the Italian Trade Agency (ITA). The event brought together around 12 Italian companies and over 50 Indian companies to explore business partnerships, trade opportunities and industrial cooperation.

Mr Ashish Jain, Deputy Director General & Regional Head, FIEO (NR), highlighted that bilateral trade between India and Italy reached approximately €14.25 billion in 2025, comprising Indian exports of €8.55 billion and Italian exports to India of €5.70 billion. With both countries targeting €20 billion in bilateral trade by 2029, he emphasised the need to strengthen business partnerships, technology collaboration, joint ventures and integration into global value chains. He highlighted the complementary strengths of the two economies, identifying opportunities in engineering, machinery,



Mr Ashish Jain, DDG & Regional Head, FIEO (NR) addressing the participants

pharmaceuticals, chemicals, automotive components, renewable energy, infrastructure, food processing, textiles, jewellery and specialised manufacturing. Referring to the India-EU Free Trade Agreement, for which negotiations concluded on January 27, 2026, he noted that the agreement could provide fresh impetus to India–Italy trade following its entry into force. He encouraged businesses to prepare for emerging opportunities through greater market engagement, compliance with international standards, technology partnerships and joint product development.

Mr Jain also highlighted FIEO's efforts to connect Indian exporters with Italian buyers and business partners through international trade fairs, business delegations, B2B meetings and Reverse Buyer Seller Meets (RBSMs). He encouraged greater participation by businesses from both countries in these initiatives to develop commercial relationships, facilitate market access and expand their presence in international markets. The programme featured sectoral presentations covering agricultural machinery, infrastructure and construction, oil and gas, chemicals and raw materials, aerospace, and artificial intelligence (AI), information technology (IT) and digital transformation. The presentations highlighted sector-specific opportunities for cooperation and provided participants with insights into areas where Indian and Italian capabilities could complement each other.

Mr Lakhbir Singh of International Tractors Limited shared perspectives on opportunities in agricultural machinery, while Mr Rajesh Kapoor of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) addressed developments and cooperation prospects in infrastructure and construction. Ms Jyoti Mukul of CII shared insights on oil and gas, chemicals and raw materials, while Air Marshal Anil Chopra (Retd.), SIDM, discussed opportunities in the aerospace sector. Mr Amit Vikram Sinha Roy of CII highlighted the role of AI, IT and digital transformation in enabling innovation, improving productivity and fostering cross-border industrial collaboration.

Ms Giulia Faresin, Vice President, Confindustria Vicenza, represented the visiting Italian business delegation and highlighted its interest in exploring partnerships with Indian companies. The delegation's participation reflected Italian enterprises' interest in engaging with Indian industry and identifying opportunities for business development, technology exchange and industrial cooperation.

The roundtable and B2B interactions provided a platform for Indian and Italian companies to identify potential business partners and explore avenues for trade, investment and industrial collaboration. The discussions enabled participants to exchange sector-specific insights, understand market requirements and assess opportunities for technology transfer, joint ventures and long-term commercial engagement. The initiative reaffirmed FIEO and ITA's shared commitment to strengthening India-Italy economic relations by facilitating direct business engagement, promoting sectoral cooperation and creating new avenues for mutually beneficial trade and investment. ■

LEATHER AND FOOTWEAR EXPORTS





Mr Ashish Jain, DDG & Regional Head, FIEO (NR) addressing the participants

Mr Ashish Jain, DDG & Regional Head, FIEO (NR), has highlighted the significant contribution of India's leather and footwear industry to the economy, exports and employment generation. During 2025-26, India's exports of footwear, leather and leather products stood at approximately USD 4.75 billion. He has noted that the sector benefits from abundant raw materials, a skilled workforce, improving technology and growing adoption of international quality and environmental standards. The industry provides employment to approximately 4.42 million people, with women accounting for around 40% of employment in the leather products segment. He was speaking at a virtual awareness session on "Quality & Compliance Requirements for Leather & Footwear Exports to UK & EU Markets" organised by FIEO in association with the Quality Council of India (QCI) on October 7, 2026. The session aimed to familiarise Indian exporters with evolving quality standards, product safety requirements, testing procedures and regulatory compliance obligations for accessing the UK and EU markets.

Apart from Mr Jain, the session featured Mr Amit Singh, Joint Director, National Board for Quality Promotion (NBQP), QCI; Mr Suman Chakraborty, Head-Leather & Footwear, India, Softlines, Intertek; Mr Ravindra Singh, Senior Laboratory Manager-Analytical Testing, Intertek; and Ms Manisha Jha, Deputy Director, FIEO (NR). Further, highlighting the importance of the UK and EU markets, Mr Jain noted that India's exports of leather, leather products and footwear to these markets reached approximately USD 838.8 million during April-July 2026, accounting for over 51% of the sector's total exports of around USD 1.6 billion during the period. He also highlighted opportunities arising from the India–UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) and the India–EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA), which are expected to improve the price competitiveness of Indian products. He emphasised that exporters must complement these tariff advantages with compliance with applicable quality, product safety, environmental and regulatory requirements. He underlined the need for MSMEs, in particular, to improve their understanding of testing, certification and conformity assessment procedures to enhance buyer confidence and ensure sustained market access.



Mr Suman Chakraborty, Head–Leather & Footwear, India, Softlines, Intertek and Mr Ravindra Singh, Senior Laboratory Manager–Analytical Testing, Intertek delivering technical presentation

On his part, Mr Amit Singh highlighted the importance of quality promotion, standardisation and conformity assessment in improving the competitiveness of Indian exporters. He emphasised the need for greater awareness and adoption of quality standards across manufacturing and supply chains, enabling businesses to consistently meet international buyer expectations. He also underscored the importance of a quality-oriented approach, particularly among MSMEs, to minimise compliance-related risks, improve product reliability and strengthen India's reputation as a dependable global sourcing destination.

Mr Chakraborty and Mr Ravindra Singh delivered a technical presentation on the quality, testing and regulatory requirements applicable to leather and footwear exports to the UK and EU. The presentation covered Intertek's testing and certification capabilities in India, including physical testing of leather and footwear, chemical testing, chemical management and sustainability services. It highlighted the importance of product safety, quality consistency, traceability and compliance with international requirements throughout the export supply chain. The speakers discussed key chemical restrictions and product safety requirements under the EU REACH framework, along with the corresponding regulatory landscape in the UK. Examples of product recalls involving nickel release from sandal buckles, chromium VI in handbags, lead and cadmium in slippers, and phthalates in flat shoes illustrated the commercial and reputational risks associated with non-compliance. The presentation also covered physical testing of finished footwear and raw materials, as well as restrictions concerning substances such as azo dyes, chromium VI, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), phthalates, lead, cadmium, formaldehyde, short- and medium-chain chlorinated paraffins (SCCP/MCCP), and dimethyl fumarate (DMFu).

The session reiterated that a proactive approach to quality, testing, certification, chemical management and sustainability will be essential for Indian leather and footwear exporters to leverage emerging trade opportunities, meet evolving international requirements and expand their presence in the UK and EU markets. The session also highlighted the relevance of the TRACE component of the Export Promotion Mission (EPM) in supporting eligible exporters with specified testing, inspection and certification requirements, subject to the applicable scheme guidelines. The initiative can help exporters, particularly MSMEs, improve their compliance preparedness and address technical barriers to accessing international markets. ■

FOCUS ON KATAKA, ODISHA



L-R: Mr Kamal K Sahoo, FIEO (Odisha Chapter); Mr Manoj Kumar Mohapatro, GM-DIC, Kataka, MSME Dept. Govt. of Odisha; Dr Ipsita Priyadarshini Mishra, O.A.S (S), A.D.M (Development), Kataka; Mr Himanshu Dhar Pandey, Dy Director General, DGFT, Kolkata; Mr Dattatraya Bhausaheb Shinde, Collector and DM of Kataka; Mr Manas Ranjan Sahu, Asst. Manager, ECGC Ltd; Mr Adarsh Samal, Zonal Mobilization Manager, Walmart and Mr Sourav Verma, Dy Director, BIS

Mr Himanshu Dhar Pandey, Deputy Director General, DGFT, Kolkata Regional Authority, has pointed out that the objective of the 'Districts as Export Hubs' initiative was to simplify global trade procedures for grassroots creators. Through modern digital interventions, DGFT was simplifying the registration process and making it easier to obtain an Import Export Code (IEC). Kataka's historic crafts had considerable premium value abroad, and by utilising India's active Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and low-cost postal e-commerce routes such as Dak Ghar Niryat Kendras, micro-entrepreneurs could reach global consumers directly, without intermediaries. Mr Dhar's observations were made at an event titled "District as Export Hub: Capacity Building and Export Awareness Programme" that focused on Katakia Tarakasi (Silver Filigree) and Maniabandha Handloom was held on September 18, 2026, at the New Conference Hall of the Collectorate Office, Kataka, Odisha.The programme was jointly organised by FIEO in association with DEP&M and the Department of MSME, Government of Odisha, and supported by DGFT, Kolkata. The event brought together senior government officials, MSMEs, entrepreneurs, start-ups, manufacturers, exporters, FPOs, SHGs and aspiring exporters to discuss export opportunities for GI products from Kataka district, government support schemes, export procedures, international market access and trade facilitation.

Mr Dattatraya Bhausaheb Shinde, Collector and District Magistrate of Kataka, said that Kataka is a land where history breathed through its crafts. From the ancient maritime glory celebrated at Baliyatra, where the Sadhabas sailed to distant lands for trade, commerce had always been in the region's DNA. Today, under the vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat, the objective was to revitalise that global spirit and transform Kataka from a traditional cultural centre into a thriving, modern global export hub. He said the capacity-building programme focused on two distinctive treasures: Katakia Tarakasi (Silver Filigree) and Maniabandha Handloom. Katakia Tarakasi had earned global acclaim and Geographical Indication (GI) status, reflecting precision, patience and unmatched skill. Similarly, Maniabandha Handloom, with its intricate tie-and-dye patterns, reflected the district's vibrant cultural fabric. Having survived local market fluctuations for centuries, these crafts were now ready to reach international markets.

Mr Adarsh Samal, Zonal Mobilisation Manager at Walmart Vriddhi, outlined a digital roadmap for local micro-enterprises to access global retail platforms. He said traditional craft clusters had considerable opportunities to move from local markets to international e-commerce platforms. Through digital empowerment initiatives such as Walmart Vriddhi, the aim was to equip Kataka's silver artisans and handloom weavers with the necessary business skills, digital tools and supply chain insights. Building strong domestic capabilities would help these MSMEs scale up to meet the demands of global supply chains and digital export platforms. Mr Sourav Verma, Deputy Director, BIS, stressed that compliance with global quality benchmarks was crucial for entering international markets. He said quality assurance was essential for trade in a highly competitive global environment. Katakia Tarakasi held considerable premium value internationally, but sustaining demand required rigorous quality checks, including BIS Hallmarking. For the Maniabandha Handloom cluster, standardised certifications would help ensure product authenticity and build consumer trust abroad. The Bureau of Indian Standards was committed to simplifying certification processes for regional MSMEs, enabling them to manufacture products that met global regulatory requirements.

Mr Aparajeet Pattanayak, IPoS, SSPOs, Cuttack City Division, addressed the technical session on the Department of Posts' evolving role as an enabler of global e-commerce. He said logistics and international shipping costs had traditionally been major obstacles for grassroots creators. To address these barriers, India Post had launched Dak Ghar Niryat Kendras (DNK). Through this facility, silver filigree artisans and Maniabandha weavers could upload customs declarations online, complete self-booking and access cost-effective cross-border shipping directly from local post offices. This digital integration would enable even small micro-entrepreneurs in Kataka to export retail parcels to consumers across international markets.

Mr Manas Ranjan Sahu, Assistant Manager, ECGC Ltd, addressed the technical session on protecting domestic micro-enterprises against international payment risks. He noted that expanding into international markets offered significant growth opportunities but also exposed MSMEs and grassroots artisans to cross-border payment defaults. Under the 'Districts as Export Hubs' framework, ECGC was committed to providing credit insurance. By insuring export receivables against commercial and political risks, it enabled filigree craftsmen and handloom weavers to trade confidently with overseas buyers, negotiate competitive payment terms and expand production without fear of bad debts. Mr Kamala Kanta Sahoo, Head, FIEO (Odisha Chapter), moderated the outreach programme. Mr Manoj Kumar Mohapatro, GM-DIC, Kataka, MSME Department, Government of Odisha, delivered the vote of thanks. ■

EMI SCHEME OUTREACH SESSION



Mr Amit Kumar Baretha, Head, FIEO (M P Chapter) addressing the participants. Sitting on dais are Mr Ashwini Kumar, Inspector, EMI & AEO Cell, Directorate of International Customs; Ms Bhanu Priya Meena, Joint Commissioner, Directorate of International Customs and Mr Ajay Kumar, Assistant Commissioner (Technical), Indore Customs

Ms Bhanu Priya Meena, Joint Commissioner, Directorate of International Customs, has delivered a detailed presentation on the EMI Scheme, explaining its key provisions, significance and practical implementation in the import process. She has elaborated on how the scheme facilitates eligible manufacturer-importers and addressed queries raised by participants, providing clarification on various aspects of the scheme. She made her presentation at an outreach session on the Eligible Manufacturer Importer (EMI) Scheme organised by FIEO jointly with the Directorate of International Customs (DIC) on October 5, 2026, in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, that was attended by 45 participants. The programme aimed to create awareness among participants about the provisions, benefits and application process of the EMI Scheme and its role in facilitating import procedures for eligible manufacturer-importers.

Mr Amit Kumar Baretha, Head, FIEO (M P Chapter), shared insights on the importance of trade facilitation and the need to familiarise businesses with the benefits of the EMI Scheme. Mr Ashwini Kumar, Inspector, EMI & AEO Cell, DIC, explained the online application procedure for the EMI Scheme. He provided practical guidance on completing the application form through the online portal and familiarised participants with the steps involved in submitting their applications. Mr Ajay Kumar, Assistant Commissioner (Technical), Indore Customs, was also associated with the programme.

The programme served as a useful platform for interaction between the customs authorities and the trade community, promoting awareness of customs-related trade facilitation measures and encouraging eligible manufacturer-importers to explore the benefits of the scheme. The interactive session enabled participants to gain a better understanding of the EMI Scheme, its operational aspects and the online application process. ■

DEFERRED PAYMENT FOR EMIS

FIEO, in association with Chennai Customs, organised an interactive meeting with Customs officials on the Deferred Payment of Customs Duty Scheme for Eligible Manufacturer Importers (EMI) on 25 September 2026, through an online session. The programme aimed to create awareness among manufacturers about the benefits and procedures for availing themselves of the deferred payment facility introduced for Eligible Manufacturer Importers (EMI) under Circular No. 08/2026-Customs.

The facility is available to eligible manufacturers with an annual turnover of INR 5 crore and above. It aims to facilitate faster customs clearance, improve cash-flow management and promote ease of doing business. The programme commenced with a welcome address by Ms S Selvanayagi, Joint Director, FIEO (SR). Mr N Naresh, Commissioner of Customs (Import), Chennai, delivered the opening remarks and highlighted the importance of trade-facilitation measures in supporting the manufacturing and exporting community.



Mr N Naresh, Commissioner of Customs (Import), Chennai addressing the participants

A detailed presentation on the Deferred Payment of Customs Duty Scheme for EMIs was delivered by Ms Anu Joshy, Deputy Commissioner (Import), Chennai Customs. The session covered the eligibility criteria, application procedure, compliance requirements and operational aspects of the scheme. Participants also had an opportunity to interact directly with Customs officials and seek clarifications on practical issues relating to the implementation and utilisation of the facility.

The interactive session enabled participating manufacturers to gain a better understanding of how deferred payment of customs duty can help streamline import operations, optimise working capital and improve overall supply-chain efficiency. The programme also highlighted the importance of customs compliance and adopting facilitation frameworks such as Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) accreditation.

The programme concluded with a question-and-answer session, during which participants raised queries relating to eligibility, procedural requirements and compliance under the scheme. The session provided a useful platform for strengthening industry–Customs interaction and enhancing the export readiness and competitiveness of manufacturing exporters. ■

EMI SCHEME

CUSTOMS' TRADE FACILITATION



Mr Ishendra Kashyap, Joint Commissioner, Directorate of International Customs (DIC), New Delhi addressing the participants. Sitting on dais are Ms K Swapna, Assistant Director, DEP&M, MSME Dept. Govt. of Odisha; Mr Tusar Kumar Panda, Officer-II, DEP&M; Mr Akhaya Kumar Sahoo, Sr Manager–Taxation, IMFA, Bhubaneswar; Mr K Venkateswara Rao, Asstt Commissioner, Bhubaneswar Customs (Preventive) and Mr Kamala Kanta Sahoo, Head, FIEO (Odisha Chapter)

Mr Ishendra Kashyap, Joint Commissioner, Directorate of International Customs (DIC), New Delhi, has delivered a detailed presentation on the EMI Scheme that covered the scheme's provisions for eligible manufacturer-importers, including the facility to defer payment of customs duties for up to 30 days under the "Clear First, Pay Later" mechanism. The scheme is intended to support eligible manufacturer-importers who are not currently authorised under AEO Tier 2 or Tier 3, helping them manage working capital more effectively while improving their trade facilitation capabilities. He was speaking at an outreach programme on the "Eligible Manufacturer Importer (EMI) Scheme" that was held on September 11, 2026, in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. The programme was jointly organised by FIEO, the Directorate of International Customs (DIC), New Delhi, and the MSME Department, Government of Odisha. The event brought together senior government officials, importers, exporters, industry leaders and financial institutions to discuss the EMI Scheme, which enables eligible manufacturer-importers to import inputs or capital goods for use in manufacturing their final products. Mr K Venkateswara Rao, Assistant Commissioner, Bhubaneswar Customs (Preventive), addressed the participants on customs-related procedures and trade facilitation.

His session provided an opportunity for industry stakeholders to understand the importance of customs import compliance and the role of facilitation mechanisms in improving the ease of doing business. Mr Tusar Kumar Panda, Officer-II, DEP&M, then provided an overview of DEP&M, highlighting its mandate and role in supporting exporters and importers. He emphasised the relevance of the outreach programme in the current global environment, where geopolitical uncertainties are increasingly affecting import trade flows.

The workshop also featured a session on AEO Registration and Its Benefits, delivered by Mr Akhaya Kumar Sahoo, Senior Manager–Taxation, IMFA, Bhubaneswar. The session highlighted the relevance of AEO certification in facilitating international trade and helping businesses improve their compliance systems and operational efficiency. The EMI Scheme also offers a pathway for eligible businesses to progress towards AEO Tier 2 or Tier 3 certification. Mr Kamala Kanta Sahoo, Head, FIEO (Odisha Chapter), moderated the outreach programme. Ms K Swapna, Assistant Director, DEP&M, MSME Department, Government of Odisha, delivered the vote of thanks. ■

ELIGIBLE IMPORTERS GAIN FACILITATION



Mr Ishendra Kashyap, Joint Commissioner, Directorate of International Customs, GoI giving presentation



Dr Kavita Bhatnagar, Principal Commissioner, Directorate of International Customs, GoI, interacting with the participants

The Directorate of International Customs (DIC) and the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), in association with the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO), jointly organised an outreach session on the "Eligible Manufacturer Importers" (EMI) Scheme in Ludhiana on September 25, 2026. The session was conducted by Dr Kavita Bhatnagar, Principal Commissioner, Directorate of International Customs, Government of India, New Delhi, and Mr Ishendra Kashyap, Joint Commissioner, Directorate of International Customs, Government of India. During her address, Dr Kavita Bhatnagar said that the objective of the session was to further strengthen India's manufacturing sector and facilitate ease of doing business for eligible manufacturer-importers.

Under the scheme, eligible manufacturers can import inputs or capital goods for use in manufacturing their final products while availing deferred payment of customs duties for up to 30 days under the "Clear First – Pay Later" mechanism. The facility is available to eligible manufacturer-importers from April 1, 2026, to March 31, 2028, and is expected to facilitate faster customs clearance of imported goods. The scheme is particularly relevant for manufacturer-importers who are not currently authorised under AEO-T2 or AEO-T3, thereby extending customs trade facilitation benefits to a wider segment of the manufacturing industry.

Mr Ishendra Kashyap gave a detailed presentation on the EMI Scheme, covering the eligibility criteria and conditions, application and enrolment processes, and the benefits available to eligible manufacturer-importers. He elaborated on the procedural aspects of customs clearance under the scheme, including the requirements and processes to be followed by participating importers. The presentation also provided insights into the transition towards AEO-T2/T3 certification, along with practical aspects, documentation, compliance requirements and operational considerations for effective implementation of the scheme.The session was attended by nearly 60 delegates representing prominent business houses across Punjab. ■

IMPROVING WAREHOUSING EFFICIENCY



Cdr. Pawan Kumar, Regional Manager–Delhi NCR & Uttarakhand, CWC addressing the participants

Cdr Pawan Kumar, Regional Manager-Delhi NCR & Uttarakhand, Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC), has highlighted the importance of efficient warehousing and logistics infrastructure in facilitating export operations. He has emphasised CWC's role in supporting exporters through its network of logistics facilities and integrated services. He also encouraged exporters to familiarise themselves with the available facilities and explore opportunities to address operational challenges by engaging with CWC.

He was speaking at an interactive virtual session organised by FIEO with the CWC on October 13, 2026, to strengthen engagement with exporters and explore opportunities to improve logistics and warehousing efficiency. The key speakers at the session apart from Cdr Kumar were Mr Ashish Jain, DDG & Regional Head, FIEO (NR); Ms Pragati Sharma, GM (Marketing), CWC; and Ms Manisha Jha, Deputy Director, FIEO (NR).

On his part, Mr Jain highlighted India's strong export performance and the critical role of logistics in enhancing the global competitiveness of Indian exporters. He noted that India's total exports of merchandise and services crossed USD 860 billion in FY 2025–26, while exports continued to maintain strong momentum during April-August 2026-27.

Emphasising the Government's vision of transforming India into a USD 2 trillion

CONTINUED ON PAGE 35

AWARENESS ON EMI SCHEME

Mr Rajesh Kumar Meena, Joint Commissioner, Directorate of International Customs, has delivered a detailed presentation on the EMI Scheme that was introduced in the Union Budget 2026. It enables eligible manufacturer-importers to clear imported inputs or capital goods before paying customs duty, with payment deferred for up to 30 days under the prescribed monthly payment system. He was speaking at an awareness programme on the Eligible Manufacturer Importer (EMI) Scheme organised by FIEO in collaboration with the Directorate of International Customs (DIC), Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs (CBIC), on September 18, 2026, at Guwahati. The programme aimed to familiarise participants with the Scheme, its eligibility requirements, the "Clear First-Pay Later" mechanism, enrolment and application procedures, and its link with Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) Tier 2/ Tier 3 certification.



Mr Rajesh Kumar Meena, Joint Commissioner, Directorate of International Customs delivering presentation

The presentation covered eligibility criteria, including importer and GST registration requirements, manufacturing or job-work conditions, minimum EXIM document thresholds, turnover and business continuity requirements, financial solvency and legal compliance. Eligible applicants generally need to have filed at least 25 import/export documents in the previous financial year, while MSMEs may apply with 10 EXIM documents. Participants were briefed on the operational process, from online application through the AEO India portal and verification by DIC to system activation. The presentation explained the role of the nominated nodal person, OTP-based authentication through ICEGATE, and the selection of Payment Flag "D" while filing the Bill of Entry to avail deferred duty payment.

The session also highlighted the payment schedule and compliance requirements. Customs duty for eligible consignments cleared during a month is generally payable on the first day of the following month, except for consignments cleared in March, for which payment is due by March 31. Continued access to the facility depends on timely payment and continued fulfilment of eligibility and compliance conditions. The updated application process, under Circular No. 39/2026-Customs dated September 3, 2026, was also discussed. The revised format simplifies application details and reduces the number of documents to be uploaded, retaining, where applicable, the UDYAM certificate for MSMEs, a Chartered Accountant's certificate bearing UDIN, and an authorisation letter for the authorised signatory. Earlier, welcoming the participants, Mr Himraj Das, Head, FIEO (North East Chapter), highlighted the importance of creating awareness about emerging customs facilitation measures and encouraged participants to understand the Scheme's provisions and compliance requirements. The session concluded with an interactive Q&A followed by a vote of thanks by Mr Das. ■

EXPORT READINESS AWARENESS



At Karaikal: *Mr Amal Bahuleyan K, Assistant DGFT, O/o Zonal Additional DGFT addressing the participants (Virtually). Sitting on dais are Mr J Jaykumar, Deputy Director, FIEO (SR); Mr K Jayasankar, Marketing Executive, Mr Prashant Coordinator, PIPDIC, Pondicherry, Post office and Mr S Sivaraman, Subject Expert*

Mr Amal Bahuleyan K, Assistant DGFT, Office of the Zonal Additional DGFT, Chennai, has highlighted the significance of the Export Promotion Mission in strengthening India's export competitiveness, particularly among MSMEs. He has emphasised the importance of improving export readiness, diversifying markets and addressing challenges faced by exporters.

His observations were made at an Export Readiness Awareness Programmes for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Karaikal on 8 October and Puducherry on 9 October 2026 under the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) Programme that was organised by FIEO in association with the Puducherry Industrial Promotion Development and Investment Corporation Limited (PIPDIC). The two programmes collectively attracted over 220 MSME representatives, reflecting growing interest among local enterprises in exploring international markets.

The programmes aimed to equip MSMEs with practical knowledge and guidance on commencing export operations, strengthening export capabilities and accessing international markets. The sessions covered Importer Exporter Code (IEC) registration and DGFT onboarding, export procedures and documentation, export finance and payment mechanisms, government support schemes, market identification, regulatory requirements and strategies for engaging with overseas buyers.

A key feature was assistance with Importer Exporter Code (IEC) registration, the first step for enterprises seeking to commence exports. Participants received guidance on the application process, with the IEC application fee eligible for reimbursement under the programme.

Mr J Jaykumar, Deputy Director, FIEO (SR), outlined FIEO's services and support for MSMEs, particularly in connecting Indian exporters with overseas buyers, facilitating market development and creating opportunities for international business networking.

Mr S Sivaraman, Subject Expert, conducted an interactive session on export readiness and market access, providing practical guidance on identifying suitable overseas markets and buyers, assessing demand, selecting exportable products and developing competitive pricing strategies. He also emphasised the importance of appropriate packaging, product presentation, compliance with destination-market requirements and sustainable packaging practices.

At the Karaikal programme, Mr Prashant, PIPDIC, explained the schemes and support initiatives available to MSMEs under PIPDIC, including assistance through the RAMP Programme. Mr K Jayasankar, Marketing Executive, Nagapattinam Division, India Post, highlighted international postal services, export documentation, parcel and logistics facilities, and e-commerce export opportunities available to MSMEs. At the Puducherry programme, Mr S Ratchaganathan, Marketing Executive, Puducherry Division, India Post, explained postal and logistics solutions for exporters.

Mr Dinesh Babu, Project Manager, Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII), Puducherry, highlighted the importance of export packaging standards, labelling regulations, suitable packaging materials, product protection during transportation, and sustainable, cost-effective packaging solutions in enhancing international competitiveness.



At Puducherry: *Mr Dinesh Babu N, Project Manager Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII), Puducherry addressing the participants*

The programmes form part of a series of export capacity-building initiatives being undertaken by FIEO and PIPDIC across the Union Territory of Puducherry in preparation for the proposed Reverse Buyer-Seller Meet (RBSM). These initiatives seek to strengthen the export preparedness of local MSMEs and enable them to engage more effectively with international buyers. ■

FEMA COMPLIANCE FOR EXPORTERS



Mr Unnikrishnan K, Jt Director General, FIEO (SR) delivering welcome address. Sitting on dais are Ms Selvanayagi, Jt Director, FIEO (SR); Mr Arvind Kanagasabai, Executive Vice President & Head -Integrated Treasury, Tamilnad Mercantile Bank Ltd and Mr Abin Daya, Expert

Mr Unnikrishnan K, Joint Director General, FIEO (SR), has highlighted the importance of keeping exporters informed about evolving foreign exchange regulations and ensuring timely compliance with RBI guidelines. He emphasised the need for close coordination between exporters and banks to resolve operational issues and facilitate smooth export transactions. His observations were made at a sensitisation programme on "FEMA Compliance: What Every Exporter Needs to Know: Recent RBI Amendments, Export Proceeds Realisation and Repatriation" organised by FIEO in association with Tamilnad Mercantile Bank Ltd. (TMBL) in Chennai on October 16, 2026. The programme aimed to familiarise exporters with the latest regulatory developments under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), recent amendments issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), and compliance requirements relating to the realisation and repatriation of export proceeds.

On his part, Mr Arvind Kanagasabai, Executive Vice President and Head, Integrated Treasury, TMBL, Chennai, delivered the inaugural address and highlighted the importance of banking support and regulatory compliance in facilitating international trade.

The technical session was conducted by Mr Abin Daya, a FEMA expert from Bengaluru, who explained the key provisions of FEMA and recent RBI amendments affecting exporters. The presentation covered export proceeds realisation and repatriation, documentation requirements, extensions of realisation timelines, write-off provisions and common compliance risks encountered by exporters. The session also addressed practical challenges in managing export transactions and adhering to prescribed regulatory timelines.



Mr Arvind Kanagasabai, Executive Vice President & Head -Integrated Treasury, Tamilnad Mercantile Bank Ltd addressing the participants

Mr Jebananth Julius, International Banking Division, TMBL, Chennai, made a presentation on relevant banking services and compliance requirements for exporters, highlighting the role of banks in facilitating foreign exchange transactions and supporting exporters in meeting regulatory obligations.

A key highlight of the programme was the discussion on important changes introduced under the Foreign Exchange Management (Export and Import of Goods and Services) Regulations, 2026, effective from October 1, 2026. The revised regulations prescribe a period of nine months for the realisation and repatriation of export proceeds, reduced from the 15 months specified in the January 2026 regulations. For exports invoiced and/or settled in Indian rupees, the prescribed period has been reduced from 18 months to 12 months.

The changes also allow Authorised Dealer banks to handle specified export, import and merchanting trade transactions undertaken before October 1, 2026, that previously required RBI approval. Exporters who were on the RBI Caution List as of September 30, 2026, will continue to be governed by the applicable existing orders until their removal from the list. The session emphasised the importance of monitoring outstanding export receivables, adhering to the revised timelines and coordinating with banks to ensure timely regulatory compliance.

An interactive question-and-answer session enabled participants to seek expert clarification on FEMA compliance, delayed export payments, documentation and related banking procedures. The discussions provided practical insights to help exporters manage foreign exchange transactions more efficiently and minimise compliance-related difficulties. ■



View of the participants

FEMA REGULATIONS 2026



Mr Arvind Goenka, Regional Chairman (NR), FIEO giving welcome address

Mr Arvind Goenka, Regional Chairman (NR), FIEO, has shared an overview of the prevailing global trade scenario and emphasised the need for Indian exporters to remain informed about changing regulations, strengthen their compliance practices and adopt digital solutions to enhance their competitiveness in international markets. He underlined that greater regulatory awareness and efficient compliance management are essential for exporters to explore new markets and expand their international business.

He was speaking at an outreach session on "Foreign Exchange Management Regulations (FEMA 2026)" organised by FIEO in association with the Indian Banks' Digital Infrastructure Company (IBDIC) in New Delhi on October 14, 2026. The session aimed to familiarise exporters with the key regulatory changes under the revised FEMA framework, simplify their understanding of export declaration requirements, particularly for service exports, and introduce digital solutions to facilitate smoother export compliance. The programme was attended by over 100 exporters and representatives of local trade bodies.

Apart from Mr Goenka, the programme was attended by Mr Laxman Joshi, Global Trade Expert, IBDIC; Mr Ravi Malanee, Head-Product Management, IBDIC; Mr Ashish Jain, Deputy Director General & Regional Head, FIEO (NR); and Ms Sunita Tatwal, Joint Director, FIEO (NR). The technical sessions were conducted by Mr Joshi and Mr Malanee. They provided detailed insights into the revised FEMA regulations and their practical implications for exporters, importers and Authorised Dealer (AD) Banks. They explained the key changes introduced under the Foreign Exchange Management (Export and Import of Goods and Services) Regulations, 2026, and the amendments effective from October 1, 2026. The discussions covered the simplified regulatory framework, enhanced powers of AD Banks, streamlined documentation requirements, revised timelines for realisation of export proceeds and greater operational flexibility in cross-border transactions.

A key focus of the session was the introduction of the Export Declaration Form (EDF) for service exports, including software exports. The speakers explained the unified declaration process, applicable filing timelines, monitoring of export proceeds and the role of AD Banks in processing declarations and facilitating the closure of outstanding entries in the Export Data Processing and Monitoring System (EDPMS). Participants were also briefed on the integration of SOFTEX into the EDF framework and the importance of timely declarations and proper documentation for smooth export realisation and compliance.



Mr Ravi Malanee, Head–Product Management, IBDIC giving presentation

The session also featured a presentation on OneCompliance, IBDIC's digital platform designed to simplify export-import compliance through a standardised and integrated process. The presentation demonstrated how exporters can prepare and submit EDFs, upload invoices and supporting documents, digitally sign declarations, track payment realisation and facilitate the closure of export entries. The platform's features, including invoice validation, data integration, automated processing, monitoring of outstanding entries and support for electronic Bank Realisation Certificates (e-BRCs), were explained to highlight the potential of digital infrastructure in reducing manual effort, minimising errors, improving processing efficiency and streamlining export compliance across banking relationships.

Mr Jain interacted with participants and addressed their queries concerning the revised FEMA regulations and export-related compliance requirements. He provided practical clarifications and guidance to help exporters understand the regulatory framework and identify suitable solutions to their business-related challenges. Mr Jain also guided participants on exploring opportunities for business expansion, improving operational efficiency and strengthening their preparedness to enter new international markets. His interaction helped connect the technical discussions with the practical requirements and challenges faced by exporters in their day-to-day business operations.

The programme concluded with an interactive question-and-answer session, during which participants raised queries relating to service-export declarations, export proceeds, documentation, bank procedures, e-BRCs and the implementation of the revised regulations.

The experts provided practical explanations and highlighted how the adoption of digital solutions, along with timely compliance and coordination with AD Banks, can help exporters streamline their processes and focus more effectively on business development.

The session served as a knowledge-sharing platform for exporters and trade representatives to understand the implications of the revised FEMA framework and the growing role of digital infrastructure in facilitating international trade. The programme reinforced the importance of regulatory awareness, technology adoption and industry engagement in improving ease of doing business and strengthening the competitiveness of Indian exporters. ■

OUTREACH IN YANAM

EXPORT READINESS FOR MSMES



Mr Shivraj Meena, Regional Administrator & Sub Collector, Yanam, Govt of Puducherry addressing the participants. Sitting on dais are Mr G Raghunadha Babu, Deputy Director, FIEO (A P Chapter); Mr Krishna, DIC, Yanam; Mr Vijayaraju K, Deputy Director, National Productivity Council and Mr J Surya, Subject Expert

Mr Shivraj Meena, Regional Administrator and Sub-Collector, Yanam, has encouraged MSMEs to explore global market opportunities and expand their businesses beyond domestic markets. Mr Amal Bahuleyan K, Joint Director General of Foreign Trade, highlighted the role of the Export Promotion Mission in supporting MSME exports and their integration into international trade. Mr Krishna, District Industries Centre (DIC), Yanam, spoke about capacity-building initiatives and the assistance available under the RAMP Programme. Mr G Raghunadha Babu, Deputy Director, FIEO (A P Chapter), outlined the various services and support FIEO extends to exporters. They were speaking at an Export Readiness Awareness Programme for MSMEs in Yanam under the RAMP Programme on October 16, 2026. It was organised by FIEO in association with the Puducherry Industrial Promotion Development and Investment Corporation Limited (PIPDIC) on October 16, 2026. More than 40 MSME representatives from Yanam and neighbouring regions participated in the programme.

The programme aimed to enhance export awareness, strengthen the export capabilities of MSMEs and provide practical guidance on accessing international markets. Special emphasis was placed on Importer Exporter Code (IEC) registration, onboarding on the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) portal and the reimbursement support available to help MSMEs commence export operations.

Expert sessions covered key aspects of export readiness, international market access, sustainable packaging, energy efficiency and water conservation. The sessions were designed to help MSMEs understand export requirements, improve their operational preparedness and adopt sustainable business practices to enhance their competitiveness in global markets. Through these programmes, FIEO and PIPDIC seek to encourage more MSMEs to enter the export sector, diversify their markets and contribute to the growth of exports from Puducherry. The programme forms part of a series of export capacity-building initiatives being undertaken by FIEO in association with PIPDIC across the Union Territory of Puducherry. These initiatives aim to prepare local enterprises for participation in the proposed Reverse Buyer-Seller Meet (RBSM), facilitate engagement with international buyers and strengthen the region's export ecosystem. ■

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

export economy by 2030, he underlined the importance of an efficient, integrated and technology-driven logistics ecosystem.

He also highlighted key government initiatives, including the National Logistics Policy, PM Gati Shakti, the Unified Logistics Interface Platform (ULIP) and the Export Promotion Mission. He observed that CWC's warehousing infrastructure and integrated logistics services could help exporters, particularly MSMEs, optimise logistics costs, improve cargo handling and increase supply chain efficiency. He expressed confidence that the session would provide valuable insights into CWC's services and facilitate greater collaboration between CWC and the exporting community.

Ms Sharma delivered a presentation on CWC's infrastructure, services and logistics solutions for the export-import sector. She highlighted CWC's extensive network of 953 warehouses, 22 ICDs and CFSs, 25 Railside Warehouse Complexes, 18 bonded warehouses and three cold storage facilities.

The presentation covered a range of services, including industrial and bonded warehousing, container train operations, rail and road transportation, third-party logistics, Direct Port Entry (DPE), cold storage, and pest control and phytosanitary services.

The presentation also highlighted the infrastructure and facilities available at ICD Tughlakabad and ICD Loni, including covered and open storage spaces, empty-container yards, rail and road connectivity, and technology-enabled gate and yard management.

Ms Sharma outlined the competitive export tariffs for container movement from ICD PPG to major ports such as Mundra, Pipavav and JNPT. She also explained the promotional benefits available to exporters, including free storage, priority handling, guaranteed dispatch and gateway port connectivity, subject to applicable terms and conditions. The presentation further addressed common logistics challenges faced by exporters, such as high transportation costs, container availability, shipment delays and limited cargo visibility, and highlighted CWC's solutions through multimodal connectivity, time-bound delivery commitments, digital visibility and dedicated customer support.

The session provided a platform for exporters to understand CWC's warehousing infrastructure, logistics services and promotional schemes, while offering an opportunity to discuss operational challenges and explore potential business collaborations.

The interaction reinforced the importance of efficient, cost-effective and integrated logistics solutions in improving supply chain performance and strengthening the competitiveness of Indian exports. The interaction also provided an opportunity to improve coordination between CWC and the exporting community. ■

GLOBALISING INDIAN TRADE



Mr Akshay Ghulati, Co-founder, Shiprocket interacting with the participants

Mr Akshay Ghulati, Co-founder, Shiprocket, has said that, "Managing logistics smartly can help Indian exporters save more on their logistics expenses and in turn add to the cushion to offer better pricing to their buyers. The shipping and logistics sector is a key pillar of India's economy and is projected to grow past INR 32 lakh crore by 2032. It comprises of ocean freight, domestic express delivery, warehousing, and multimodal transport systems. He was speaking during an interactive session on "Globalizing Indian Trade" organised by FIEO in association with Shiprocket at Ludhiana on October 8, 2026. The session was attended by more than 100 participants representing various export and business houses from the region. He added, "Shiprocket is a leading Indian e-commerce enablement platform that provides automated shipping solutions for small and medium businesses. It aggregates multiple courier services, allowing sellers to manage orders, print shipping labels and track shipments from a single dashboard".

The objective of the session was to bring subject experts and Indian exporters on a common platform to understand numerous global opportunities available for Indian exporters and what will be the perfect route for taking Indian businesses to global stage. Experts from Shiprocket, eBay, Lucria, Payoneer and FIEO joined the session to share their views and expertise during the session.

Mr Haneet Kaushal, Head of Customer Success, eBay, said, "E-commerce exports from India offer enormous potential, and the Government of India has also set a target of more than US$300 billion by 2030. Overseas buyers are showing keen interest in Indian apparel, jewellery, handicrafts and wellness items. eBay is a global e-commerce company that connects millions of buyers and sellers across 190 markets. The platform facilitates both consumer-to-consumer and business-to-consumer sales." Mr Nikhil Dhar, Onboarding and Enablement Manager, Payoneer, said, "Payoneer is a leading global financial technology company that streamlines cross-border payments for businesses, freelancers and digital marketplaces."

Mr Sumedh Sachdev, Founder and CEO, Lucria Consult, shared information about the profile and compliance support services offered by the organisation. Mr Vinay Sharma, Deputy Director, FIEO (Ludhiana Chapter), said, "FIEO has taken several important initiatives to promote exports from the country. FIEO organises more than 50 international trade exhibitions across the world, covering all kinds of products, along with business delegations to various trading blocs and countries to promote India's exports. In formulating India's Foreign Trade Policy, FIEO works very closely with the Government of India and takes up exporters' important issues with departments such as Customs, GST and DGFT, and with banks, through various joint working groups or committees at State and national levels for favourable outcomes." ■

INDIAN BRANDS TARGET AMERICAS


View of the interactional buyers interacting with the Indian exhibitors

To promote India's exports in the agriculture and allied sectors to the Americas, FIEO participated in the 30th edition of The Americas Food and Beverage Show & Conference, held from September 14 to 16, 2026, at the Miami Beach Convention Centre, Miami, USA. Twenty-four Indian companies participated in the exhibition, showcasing a wide range of products, including spices, rice, organic food, honey, confectionery items and disposables. The event was supported by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The exhibition attracted more than 11,700 trade visitors and 990 exhibitors. It proved to be an important platform for Indian companies to engage with buyers from Latin America, Caribbean suppliers, US importers and global distributors, explore business opportunities and navigate the evolving challenges of the global marketplace. Mr Vaibhav Wadhawan, Deputy Director, FIEO, facilitated the participation of Indian companies at the FIEO India Pavilion.

Trade and commerce form a core component of the India-US Global Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. In 2025, India's total goods exports to the US reached USD 103.82 billion, while US exports to India totalled approximately USD 45.6 billion, taking bilateral goods trade to USD 149.42 billion. Bilateral services trade in 2025 stood at USD 92.23 billion, with India exporting USD 48.67 billion worth of services to the US and importing USD 43.56 billion. According to initial feedback from Indian exhibitors, participation proved useful, enabling them to meet a large number of business representatives and generate leads for further follow-up. The FIEO India Pavilion witnessed a substantial footfall. ■

E-COMMERCE EXPORT SUMMIT



L-R: Mr Jayprakash Goel, Head, FIEO (Gujarat Chapter); Mr Anil H Gor, President, Bhuj Chamber of Commerce and Industries Federation (BCCIF); Ms Deepshikha, Asst DGFT, Ahmedabad; Mr Manish Palan, Committee Member, Federation of Kutch Industries Association, (FOKIA) and Mr Montu V Joshi, Asst. Superintendent of Post (Tour) Kachchh Division.

Ms Deepshikha, Assistant DGFT, Ahmedabad, and her team have outlined the current international business scenario in India. The DGFT, she said, has been conducting various activities under the Districts as Export Hubs initiative to disseminate information among existing and potential exporters and generate substantial export growth from individual districts. She was speaking at an E-commerce Export Summit and Export Awareness Camp organised by FIEO jointly with the Office of the Additional DGFT, Ahmedabad, Bhuj Chamber of Commerce and Industries Federation (BCCIF); and the Federation of Kutch Industries Association (FOKIA), on September 11, 2026, at Bhuj, Kutch district, Gujarat, that was attended by around 85 participants. Further, she analysed Kutch district's export data and advised exporters to explore potential markets beyond a few traditional destinations. E-commerce, she noted, makes this process easier. She shared websites that exporters could use to research potential markets and develop suitable strategies. She also delivered a step-by-step guide to becoming a successful exporter, emphasising that access to information is essential to remaining competitive in global markets. She appreciated the Government's efforts to address this need and made a detailed presentation on the potential of e-commerce exports and their simplified procedures.

Ms Deepshikha presented data showing the accelerated growth of cross-border e-commerce and highlighted the untapped potential for small and medium-sized Indian exporters in international markets. She also covered streamlined customs procedures for international shipments, major e-commerce platforms and logistics coordination options for executing cross-border transactions. In addition, she outlined key amendments to the Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) 2023 and the various forms of assistance provided by the Office of the DGFT to help new entrepreneurs become exporters.

Mr Anil H Gor, President, Bhuj Chamber of Commerce and Industries Federation (BCCIF), on his part, expressed his sincere gratitude to DGFT and FIEO for organising the summit and awareness camp for Kutch district. He stated that Kutch is geographically very large and offers immense potential for trade. He briefed the participants on the wide range of products available in the region and encouraged entrepreneurs to enter the export business.

Mr Manish Palan, Committee Member, Federation of Kutch Industries Association (FOKIA), welcomed Ms Deepshikha along with Mr Montu V Joshi, Assistant Superintendent of Post (Tour), Kachchh Division, Bhuj; Mr Dhruv Keshwani, Area Sales Manager, DHL Express (I) Pvt Ltd, Ahmedabad; Mr Deepak Patil, Sr. Enabler, Walmart; Mr Jayprakash Goel, Head, FIEO (Gujarat Chapter); and all the participants.Welcoming the dignitaries, he observed that although the district has many manufacturing units, most cater to domestic demand. Due to a lack of information, they do not venture into international trade. E-commerce, however, makes it easier to enter international markets with minimal risk. He added that informative sessions involving Central and State Government officials provide entrepreneurs with an opportunity to understand export-import (EXIM) business and explore its potential.

Mr Joshi introduced various postal services available to exporters. He said exporters could approach the department directly for guidance and assistance in executing transactions through DNK. He explained the Dak Niryat Kendra (DNK) facility available in the Kutch region and highlighted the benefits of using Foreign Post Offices (FPOs), including the seamless procedures available to exporters at competitive rates.

Mr Patil thanked the organisers for the opportunity to engage with MSMEs and entrepreneurs on the growing potential of digital commerce, cross-border e-commerce and access to global markets. He explained that through the Walmart Vriddhi programme, Indian businesses could build their capabilities, leverage digital marketplaces and expand their presence across domestic platforms such as Flipkart, while also exploring export opportunities through Walmart Marketplace to reach customers in the United States.He also outlined marketplace onboarding, knowledge resources, mentorship, listing and catalogue assistance, and ecosystem linkages, which help MSMEs take meaningful steps towards building sustainable and globally competitive businesses.

Mr Keshwani highlighted the strong growth potential of cross-border e-commerce and explained how Indian exporters could access global markets through appropriate logistics and compliance frameworks. He outlined DHL Express's end-to-end international capabilities, CSB-V-compliant shipping, customs clearance advantages, landed-cost visibility through DHL tools, and solutions such as On Demand Delivery and Break Bulk Express (BBX) to simplify cross-border trade. He added that DHL helps build a robust partner ecosystem by providing access to high-quality logistics services and solutions.

Mr Goel delivered a presentation on Export Promotion Councils and their role. He also explained how exporters could benefit from the Indian Trade Portal and the Indian Business Portal.

The vote of thanks was proposed by Advocate Sandip Shah, Joint Secretary, Bhuj Chamber of Commerce and Industries Federation (BCCIF), but not before an interactive question-and-answer session with the speakers had taken place. ■

FIEO-DIC-CBIC INITIATIVE

OUTREACH ON EMI SCHEME



Sitting on dais: Ms Juin Choudhury, Regional Head, FIEO (ER); Mr Ishendra Kashyap, Jt Commissioner, Directorate of International Customs; Mr Saikat Das, Superintendent of Customs, AEO Cell and Mr Partha P Banerjee, DGM and Regional Manager, ECGC Ltd

FIEO, in collaboration with the Directorate of International Customs (DIC) and the Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs (CBIC), organised an "Outreach Programme on the EMI Scheme" in Kolkata on 28 September 2026. The programme aimed to create awareness among the EXIM fraternity about the newly introduced Eligible Manufacturer Importer (EMI) Scheme. Introduced in the Union Budget 2026, the EMI Scheme is a flagship initiative intended to support eligible manufacturer-importers by providing greater flexibility in the payment of Customs duties. Under the Scheme, eligible manufacturer-importers importing inputs or capital goods for use in manufacturing their final products can defer payment of Customs duties for up to 30 days under the "Clear First-Pay Later" mechanism.

The programme provided participants with a detailed understanding of the Scheme, including its eligibility criteria, benefits, application process and compliance requirements. It also highlighted how deferred duty payments can help eligible businesses improve their working capital and liquidity by allowing them to clear imported goods before paying Customs duty. Ms Juin Choudhuey Choudhury, Regional Head, FIEO (ER), delivered the opening remarks. Mr Partha P Banerjee, DGM and Regional

CONTINUED ON PAGE 40

SIDA DEFENCE EXPO 2026

The South Indian Defence Suppliers and Startup Association (SIDA), in associate partnership with FIEO, organised SIDA Defence Expo 2026 in Coimbatore on September 25-26, 2026. It is South India's dedicated exhibition for defence manufacturing, aerospace and dual-use technology, organised to advance India's Atmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliance) mission. The expo featured around 50 stalls in total, of which five were in the FIEO Pavilion, including FIEO's own stand. SIDA Defence Expo 2026 is a major South Indian exhibition for defence, aerospace and security, hosted in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. Organised by the South Indian Defence Suppliers and Startups Association, the event was built around a simple but important idea: India's defence self-reliance cannot be achieved by a handful of national giants alone. It also depends on thousands of MSMEs, engineering workshops and startups across South India's manufacturing corridor.

The expo brought together Defence Public Sector Undertakings, DRDO representatives, Tier-1 contractors, startups and engineering firms under one roof. The Coimbatore region already has an established base of precision engineering, textile and automotive component manufacturers. The expo specifically targeted these industries for diversification into defence-grade manufacturing.



FIEO's Stand at the Exhibition to Promote its Services to the Exporters

The expo was organised around ten focus areas, giving visitors and exhibitors a clear picture of the opportunities available:

1. **Defence Manufacturing:** Core production and component supply.
2. **Aerospace Technologies:** Components, systems and maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) capabilities.
3. **UAV and Drone Systems:** A fast-growing segment covered in dedicated sessions on Day 2.
4. **Defence Electronics:** Sensors, communication and embedded systems.
5. **Artificial Intelligence:** AI in modern defence operations, featured in a Day 2 workshop.
6. **Robotics and Automation:** Unmanned ground systems and automated manufacturing.
7. **Cyber Security:** Protecting digital defence infrastructure and information-warfare readiness.
8. **Precision Engineering:** High-tolerance manufacturing for defence-grade components.
9. **Textiles:** Technical and ballistic textiles for defence applications.
10. **Export Opportunities:** Pathways for Indian manufacturers to enter global defence supply chains.

The following government and defence organisations participated in business-to-government (B2G) interactions with manufacturers:

- Indian Air Force, Sulur
- ADRDE-DRDO
- Munitions India Limited (MIL)
- Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL)
- Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Limited (GRSE)
- Troop Comforts Limited (TCL) – Ordnance Clothing Factory, Avadi
- Bharat Earth Movers Limited (BEML)
- Army Design Bureau (ADB) – Indian Army

■

FIEO'S 3-DAY COURSE

CERTIFICATE IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE



Group Photo of the participants

Mr Swaminathan, Deputy Director, FIEO (Coimbatore Chapter), has highlighted the role of diplomacy and foreign policy in fostering economic trade between governments and encouraging exports and imports for the benefit of all trading parties. He has noted that India is working towards achieving US$2 trillion in exports by 2030 and that new exporters would play an important role in reaching this milestone. He was speaking during a three-day certificate course on "International Trade" organised by FIEO from September 29 to October 1, 2026.

The course was designed for new entrepreneurs and budding exporters, providing a practical approach to understanding the major aspects of exports. The main topics included how to start and manage an export business and the step-by-step process of identifying potential products, markets and buyers. A total of 43 participants attended the course.

Mr Swaminathan went on to explain the services offered by FIEO to the export community and the benefits available to its members. He highlighted FIEO's role in helping exporters keep pace with changing requirements through training programmes, seminars and workshops. He also underlined FIEO's role as an important interface between exporters and the Government.

Mr Shivaraman, Export-Import Consultant, delivered a presentation on the introduction to international trade on the first day. He explained that starting and managing an export business requires market research and a business plan outlining the business niche, products and target markets. He also discussed sourcing products, establishing prices, securing finance, building a network of buyers, managing logistics, handling international payments and complying with regulations.

Mr Jatin Sanghvi, Chartered Accountant and GST Consultant, presented the basics of GST, covering types of supply, invoicing procedures, conditions for availing Input Tax Credit (ITC) and refunds, supported by case studies. He explained that the GST structure offers exporters several benefits compared with domestic businesses.

Mr Vijayan Gokul, retired Superintendent of Customs, presented the procedures for exports. He emphasised the importance of preparing pre-shipment and post-shipment documents to ensure smooth processing by Customs. He also explained AD Code registration, duty drawback, other incentives available through Customs and warehousing facilities.

Ms Triveni, Young Professional, Office of the Additional DGFT, Coimbatore, presented the role of DGFT and the benefits available under Free Trade Agreements. She highlighted the importance of updating the Importer-Exporter Code (IEC) annually between April and June. She also explained how the Government supports exporters through the EPCG and AAS schemes, which enable the duty-free import of machinery, raw materials and components to manufacture goods for export and earn foreign exchange for the country.

Mr Kartik Navalarasu, Forex Expert, Kotak Mahindra Bank, explained Incoterms, EDPMS, terms of payment, Letters of Credit and FEMA regulations. He outlined the various trade finance options available to exporters, including pre-shipment and post-shipment finance. He also explained that exporters could apply for loans online through net banking by submitting the required documents without visiting a bank branch.

Ms Bittu Jha, Executive Officer, ECGC Ltd, Coimbatore, presented the role of ECGC and explained how exporters could mitigate credit risks. She outlined the various policies available according to the size of the business and the buyer's country. She explained that ECGC provides claims ranging from 80% to 100%, depending on the policy. The Small Exporter Policy supports new exporters with a minimum premium of Rs 5,000, adjustable against premiums due on shipments made under the policy.

Mr Sivakumar, Marketing Executive, India Post, Coimbatore, explained how India Post supports exporters handling smaller business volumes. He outlined the different products available according to the nature of the goods and frequency of dispatch. Exporters can access India Post's services through their nearest post offices by making a special request to the department. He highlighted the key advantage of sending export parcels through the Dak Ghar Niryat Kendra, where charges are based on actual weight rather than volumetric weight.

Mr Rajendran, Assistant Director and DDO, MSME DFO, Coimbatore, presented the basic requirements, procedures and eligibility criteria for availing loans under MSME schemes. He also explained the role of the Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE), jointly established by the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Government of India, and the Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) to facilitate the flow of institutional credit to micro and small enterprises.

At the conclusion of the course, certificates were issued to participants by Mr Swaminathan. ■

FOCUS ON SIVAGANGAI, TN



Mr Sivagnanam Sivapanchanathan, FTDO, O/o Addl DGFT, Coimbatore addressing the participants

Mr P Akash, District Collector, Sivagangai, has highlighted the global demand and high export potential of Geographical Indication (GI)-tagged agricultural goods, agro-processed items, traditional crafts, coir and spices from Sivagangai district. His observations were made at a Capacity Building Programme on FTAs and Trade Facilitation, under the theme 'District as an Export Hub' that was organised by FIEO, jointly with the Office of the Additional DGFT, Coimbatore, on October 1, at Karaikudi. It was attended by more than 100 participants. The programme aimed to create awareness among exporters, entrepreneurs, start-ups and trade professionals about business opportunities arising from India's Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), the Export Promotion Mission and various trade-facilitation measures.

Apart from Mr Akash, it was addressed by Mr Sivagnanam Sivapanchanathan, FTDO, Office of the Additional DGFT, Coimbatore; Ms S Rajini Devasena, Assistant Commissioner, Customs Intelligence, Trichy; Ms Chitra, Assistant Superintendent of Post Office, India Post, Karaikudi; Ms R Uma Chandrika, Assistant Director, MSME DFO, Sivagangai; Mr N S Krishnan, General Manager, District Industries Centre, Sivagangai; Mr R Renganathan, Programme Associate-CBT, Walmart; Mr S Pravin Kumar, LDM, Indian Overseas Bank, Sivagangai; Mr A Elavarasan, Business Development Manager, APEDA, Chennai; Mr Razy P N, Extension Assistant, Spices Board of India, Sivagangai; and Mr Yasar Shariff M, Executive Assistant, FIEO (SR).While welcoming the participants, Mr Shariff, Executive Assistant, FIEO (SR), emphasised the importance of awareness of government schemes and support measures. He also briefed the participants on FIEO and its services in facilitating international trade. A presentation on FIEO's role in international trade, outlining the organisation's support services for exporters, including market-access initiatives, capacity building and trade-promotion efforts was also made.

Mr Sivapanchanathan delivered a detailed presentation on the Foreign Trade Policy (FTP), its various schemes and FTAs. He also provided participants with insights into export incentives and market-access benefits under different agreements. Ms Devasena delivered a comprehensive session on export procedures and customs compliance. She explained the documentation required for exports, customs-clearance procedures and key trade-facilitation measures designed to support MSMEs. Ms Chitra briefed the participants on postal export procedures, international parcel services, customs formalities, cost-effective logistics and the Dak Ghar Niryat Kendra (DNK) initiative supporting MSMEs and small exporters.

Mr Krishnan highlighted the various schemes and support available for MSMEs and potential exporters, including assistance for establishing and expanding businesses. He also briefed participants on the major agro-based, coir, handicrafts, food-processing and other industries in the Sivagangai and Karaikudi region. Mr Renganathan explained the onboarding process, seller requirements, product listing and opportunities for accessing global markets through digital platforms, encouraging MSMEs and aspiring exporters to expand their international business. Mr Razy briefed participants on market promotion, trade-information services, quality-testing laboratories, development and promotion schemes for exporters, and financial subsidies and other benefits available to them. Mr Elavarasan spoke on legal compliance and authorisation, financial assistance and subsidies, and market promotion and global access for exporters.

Mr Kumar explained the various trade-finance options available to MSMEs and exporters. He also briefed participants on export credit and financing, government-scheme linkages, and advisory and institutional support for exporters.An interactive question-and-answer session took place and the programme concluded with a vote of thanks. ■

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 38

Manager, ECGC Ltd, Eastern Regional Office, attended the programme and shared his views on the Scheme.The session was conducted by Mr Ishendra Kashyap, Joint Commissioner, Directorate of International Customs (DIC). Mr Saikat Das, Superintendent of Customs, AEO Cell, was also present and interacted with industry participants. The presence of the Customs official gave participants an opportunity to understand the Scheme directly from the implementing authorities and seek clarification on specific queries.

The programme also highlighted that the EMI Scheme is primarily intended for manufacturer-importers who are not currently authorised as AEO Tier 2 or Tier 3. It provides eligible businesses with an opportunity to benefit from deferred duty payments while also offering a pathway towards obtaining AEO Tier 2/Tier 3 certification. An interactive Q&A session was also organised during the programme, which saw participation from members of the EXIM fraternity and the manufacturing-importing sector, who gained practical insights into the newly introduced EMI Scheme.

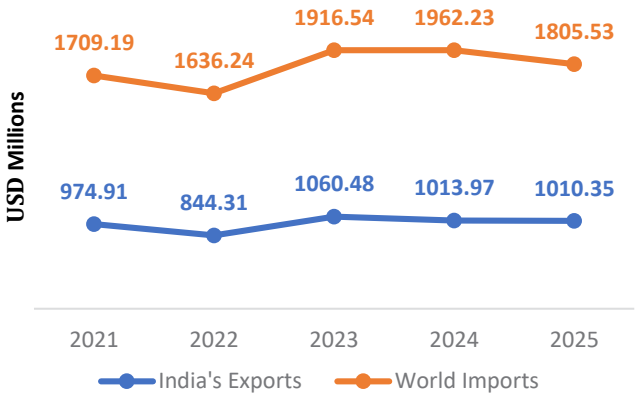
The session also enabled participants to raise their queries directly with officials from DIC and Kolkata Customs and seek clarification on issues relevant to their businesses. The programme gave industry participants a better understanding of how the EMI Scheme can support manufacturing businesses through improved liquidity and streamlined Customs processes. Through this awareness and outreach programme, FIEO continued its efforts to promote awareness of new Customs initiatives and support the EXIM fraternity in adopting trade facilitation measures. ■

PRODUCT ANALYSIS

PRODUCT: 090421 (FRUITS OF THE GENUS CAPSICUM OR OF THE GENUS PIMENTA, DRIED, NEITHER CRUSHED NOR GROUND)

- India's export of this item grew at a CAGR of 0.90% in the last 5 years, alongside a positive growth of 1.38% in global imports during the same period.
- India's exports occupied an average share of around 54.32% in global imports of the item over the last 5 years.
- It is the largest exported item under the category of 0904 (Pepper of the genus Piper; dried or crushed or ground fruits of the genus Capsicum or of the genus Pimenta).
- India has around 43.59% market penetration for this item from 2021-2025.

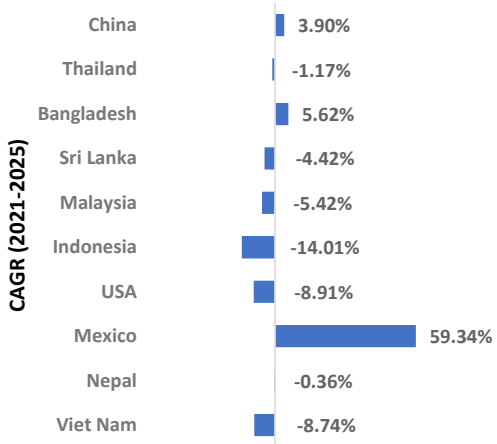
World Imports vs India's Exports



PRESENT MARKETS
China
USA
Thailand
Malaysia
Mexico
Bangladesh
Sri Lanka
Indonesia

POTENTIAL MARKETS
Spain
Germany

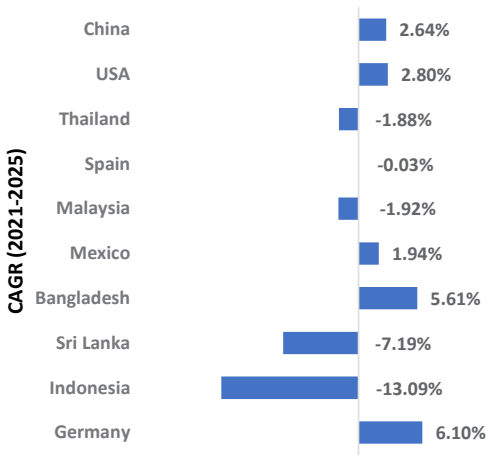
***India's Top 10 Export Destinations**



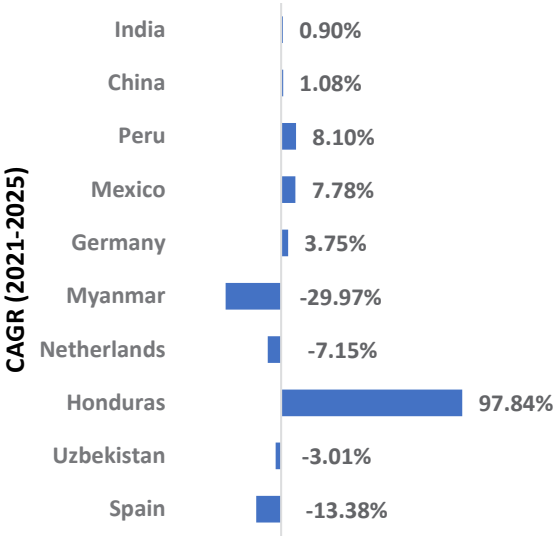
POTENTIAL OF MARKETS *(Based purely on their import as reported on ITC trade map)*			
COUNTRY	IMPORTS IN USD MILLION 2025		INDIA'S RANK AS SUPPLIER
	FROM WORLD	FROM INDIA	
Spain	112.78	0.96	10th
Germany	47.58	0.31	16th

** The countries are placed in descending order in terms of their export/import value*

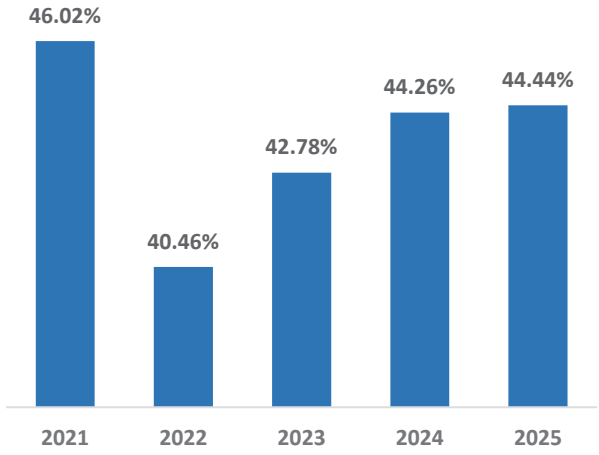
***Top 10 World Importers**



***Top 10 World Exporters**



Index of Market Penetration (%)



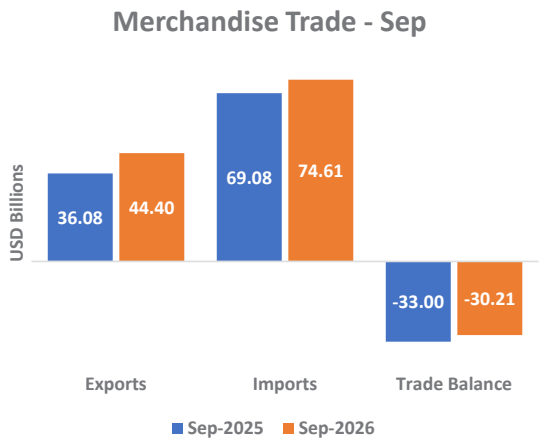
TARIFF IN POTENTIAL MARKETS			
COUNTRY	**HS CODE**	**MFN (in % unless specified)**	**Trade Agreement Tariff**
Spain, Germany	0904211000	9.6	GSP: 6.1% (General)
	0904219020; 0904219080	0	-

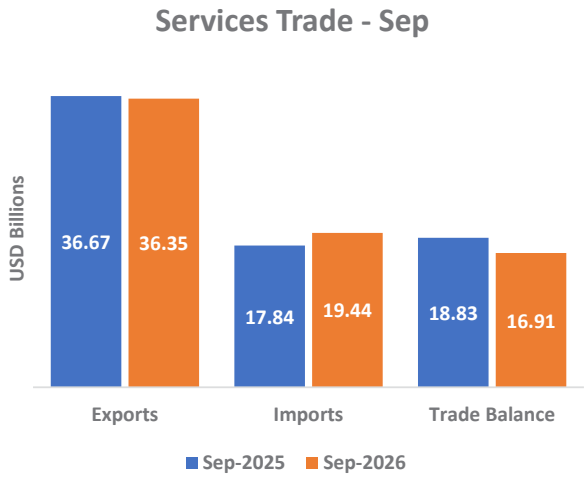
For feedback or product analysis for your product, please write at prashantseth@fieo.org

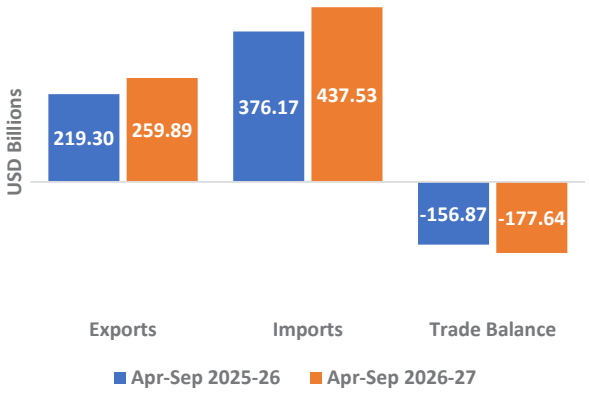
For checking country-specific corresponding product tariff data, please visit www.indiantradeportal.in

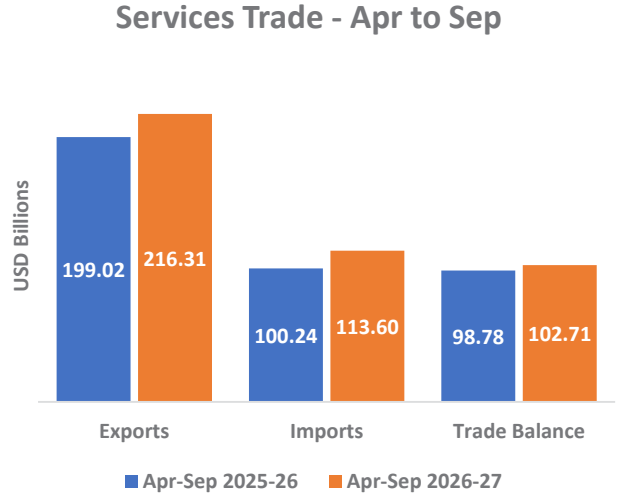


TRADE TRENDS
SEPTEMBER 2026









Major commodities with export growth/decline in Sep 2026 (YoY%)

(1) Engineering Goods (20.91%)
(2) Petroleum Products (31.9%)
(3) Electronic Goods (70.44%)
(4) Gems & Jewellery (18.95%)
(5) Organic & Inorganic Chemicals (24.21%)

(1) Fruits & Vegetables (-6.24%)
(2) Ceramic products & glassware (-15.61%)
(3) Tobacco (-4.49%)
(4) Tea (-5.78%)
(5) Oil Meals (-47.53%)

Out of 30 major export commodities, 22 such commodities witnessed positive growth, which, in addition to the above, Drugs & Pharmaceuticals; RMG of all Textiles; Cotton Yarn/Fabs./made-ups, Handloom Products etc.; Rice; Plastic & Linoleum; Marine Products; Meat, dairy & poultry products; Mica, Coal & Other Ores, Minerals including processed minerals; Man-made Yarn/Fabs./made-ups etc.; Leather & leather products; Spices; Cereal preparations & miscellaneous processed items; Handicrafts excl. hand-made carpet; Coffee; Carpet; Oil seeds; and Other cereals.

Date of Posting 07-08/11/2026
Date of Publication: 06-07/11/2026

Delhi Postal Registration number: DL-SW-01/4083/2024-26
POSTED AT LPC DELHI RMS, DELHI-110006
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