

## Economy

# Handicraft exporters to attract global buyers virtually amid Covid curbs

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More than 200 exporters to participate in online exhibition from June 1-4

Exporters of handicrafts from areas such as Moradabad, Agra, Jaipur, Firozabad, Varanasi and Faridabad — hit by order cancellations and lockdown restrictions over the past two months — will now be able to display their wares for international customers through a virtual exhibition next week.

The Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH) is organising a virtual Indian Fashion Jewellery & Accessories Show (IFJAS) from June 1-4, 2020 in which more than 200 member exporters will be showcasing their products virtually. Exporters from Delhi, Mumbai, Noida and Lucknow, will also participate in the fair.

“Though it is the first initiative of organising a virtual fair, a vigorous publicity campaign has been undertaken by EPCH to motivate the buyers world over to take part in the same by sending them e-mailers and through tele-calling. Apart from this, Indian missions and embassies have also been taken into loop to disseminate information to buyers in their countries,” said Rakesh Kumar, Director General, EPCH.

Over its 12 preceding editions, IFJAS has been drawing quality buyers dealing exclusively in fashion jewellery and accessories from various importing nations such as the US, UK, Canada, Australia, several countries in Europe, South America and Africa, Japan and Hong Kong.

EPCH is hopeful that the virtual fair will generate a greater response than the previous fairs as buyers will not have to travel and will get access to a large variety of items at the click of a mouse.

Buyers participating in the fair will get an opportunity to explore a well spread product including fashion jewellery, semi-precious jewellery, belts and wallets, hand bags and purses, fashion accessories, head and hair Accessories, stoles and scarves, shawls, fancy footwear and artisanal apparel, Kumar said.

According to export council's estimates, handicrafts exports could dip by almost one-third this year due to the pandemic. In 2019-20, handicrafts exports from India was around \$3.5 billion which was slightly lower than the previous year's figure of \$3.6 billion.

"We have to be available for our buyers. We cannot afford to keep our markets closed. It is only when sellers are open, that buyers would come. Our sale may go down but trade has to continue," pointed out Rajesh Rawat, an exporter of handicraft items.

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### A letter from the Editor

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