

1. **INDIAN APPAREL INDUSTRY EYES COLLABORATION WITH GLOBAL SUPPLIERS OF MAN-MADE FIBRE**
2. **INDIA CONSIDERS REVIVING FTA TALKS WITH GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL**
3. **FOREX RESERVES SURGE BY \$4.34 BILLION TO \$581.21 BILLION**
4. **FINANCE MINISTRY WIDENS EMERGENCY CREDIT LINE GUARANTEE SCHEME SCOPE TO SMA-1 LOANS**
5. **COMMITTED TO CREATING CONDUCTIVE ECOSYSTEM FOR INDIAN BRANDS TO START EXPORTING: AMAZON**
6. **'MAKE IN INDIA THROUGH INDUSTRY 4.0 AN IMPORTANT TRANSITION IN MANUFACTURING SECTOR'**

=====

1. INDIAN APPAREL INDUSTRY EYES COLLABORATION WITH GLOBAL SUPPLIERS OF MAN-MADE FIBRE

Tie-up will help them overcome supply shortfall and improve production quality. Indian apparel exporters are looking to collaborate with global man-made fibre (MMF) suppliers to overcome the supply shortfall in the country and improve domestic production quality. Indian apparels are predominantly cotton-based. However, the bulk of the global demand is in the MMF segment. The global market for MMF garments is estimated at \$500 billion, including \$170 billion for sportswear. The share of MMF garments in India's total apparel exports is only \$1.6 billion, or about 10 per cent, whereas the world trade in MMF garments is to the tune of \$200 billion. The Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC) has identified man-made fibre-based garments as a sunrise industry due to strong demand in the domestic and international markets. "As the Indian apparel industry seeks to grab a good share of \$200-billion global man-made fibre (MMF)-based garment trade, India companies have sought help from international MMF suppliers to overcome the shortage of the fabric in the short run, and also to improve the quality of local production eventually," said AEPC Chairman A Sakthivel, while addressing a webinar on 'MMF Fabric Sourcing from International Suppliers', hosted by AEPC. India needs to import MMF from international suppliers to increase manufacturing in the country and for their export. "We are also interested in attracting investments in fabric processing in the country," he said adding: "India has abundant production of yarn, but is in short supply of good quality MMF fabric as domestic producers lack the latest processing technologies." There are production facilities in India, but do not have the latest technologies in processing. Indian apparel exporters are keen on a joint venture or technology transfer or 100 per cent investment. Meanwhile, the Indian government has also come out with incentives and initiatives such as establishment of seven mega textile parks to promote MMF production and textile exports. "AEPC will make all arrangements to facilitate any technology transfer, joint venture or direct investment in India," said Sakthivel. MMF suppliers from China and Taiwan participated in the webinar and discussed their business and requirements from India.

(Source: Business Line)

2. INDIA CONSIDERS REVIVING FTA TALKS WITH GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL

India is reconsidering a free trade agreement (FTA) with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) after the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the country's biggest trading member in the bloc, approached it to revive talks that got stalled in 2008. Early analysis has

identified about 1,100 products, including washing machines, ACs, refrigerators, spices, tobacco, cotton fabrics, textiles and leather that can see higher exports through the pact. (Source: *The Economic Times*)

3. FOREX RESERVES SURGE BY \$4.34 BILLION TO \$581.21 BILLION

After declining for two consecutive quarters, the country's foreign exchange (forex) reserves surged by USD 4.34 billion to USD 581.21 billion in the week ended April 9, according to the latest RBI data. In the previous week ended April 2, the reserves had dipped by USD 2.42 billion to USD 576.28 billion. It had dropped by USD 2.99 billion to USD 579.28 billion in the week ended March 26, 2021. The reserves had touched a lifetime high of USD 590.18 billion in the week ended January 29, 2021. In the reporting week ended April 9, 2021, the increase in forex reserves was on account of a rise in foreign currency assets (FCA), a major component of the overall reserves. FCA rose USD 3.02 billion to USD 539.45 billion. Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like euro, pound and yen held in the forex reserves. The gold reserves increased by USD 1.30 billion to USD 35.32 billion in the reporting week, the RBI data showed. The special drawing rights (SDRs) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) rose USD 6 million to USD 1.49 billion in the reporting week. The country's reserve position with the IMF rose USD 24 million to USD 4.95 billion in the reporting week, the data showed.

(Source: *Business Standard*)

4. FINANCE MINISTRY WIDENS EMERGENCY CREDIT LINE GUARANTEE SCHEME SCOPE TO SMA-1 LOANS

Keeping in mind the COVID-19 second wave, the Union Ministry of Finance extended the scope of the emergency credit line guarantee scheme (ECLGS) yet again - this time to SMA-1 category borrowers. "We wish to inform that the ECLGS 2.0 component of ECLGS has been expanded to SMA-1 borrowers also within its scope, other conditions remaining unchanged," a circular by the Department of Financial Services said. The SMA-1 category covers borrowers whose overdue period is between 31-60 days. The Rs 3-lakh crore ECLGS had been announced last year as part of the COVID-19 relief package rolled out by the Centre and involved offering COVID-hit businesses higher credit limits. According to the Finance Ministry, the latest iteration of the scheme involves extending credit of up to 40 per cent of total credit outstanding across all lending institutions as of February, 2020. The government earlier extended ECLG schemes up to June 30, 2021 or till guarantees worth Rs 3 lakh crore were issued.

(Source: *The New Indian Express*)

5. COMMITTED TO CREATING CONDUCTIVE ECOSYSTEM FOR INDIAN BRANDS TO START EXPORTING: AMAZON

E-commerce major Amazon said it is committed to working with government agencies and partners to create a 'conductive ecosystem' to lower entry barriers for Indian businesses to start and expand their exports business. Amazon Vice President (International Marketplaces and Retail) Eric Broussard said more than 70,000 businesses in India are part of the company's global selling programme that enables merchants to reach customers across the world thousands of our sellers from India played a key role in serving customers globally during this period (of pandemic)...In this

changed world, the pace of technology adoption has accelerated. There has been a structural shift in online shopping behaviour,' he said at the Amazon Smbhav Summit. He pointed out that more customers are now coming online for their shopping needs, a trend that is being seen in the US, Europe, India and other parts of the world. 'As we emerge from this unprecedented pandemic, the cross-border e-commerce industry will usher in a new era of growth opportunities through digitisation and tech innovation. Businesses shall take this opportunity to reflect and reshape strategies for long-term growth,' Broussard said. Amazon Global Selling will continue to make exports easier, simpler and more accessible to businesses of all sizes, he added. He cited the example of global sale events like Black Friday and Cyber Monday, wherein Indian businesses on Amazon Global Selling had seen a 50 per cent growth in business year-on-year. 'The host of initiatives from the government to strengthen manufacturing, nurture entrepreneurship and promote digital enablement are playing a key role in supporting the development of global businesses. This puts India in a great position to expand further and build global Indian brands,' Broussard said. He added that the company's teams in India are working with industry players, state and central governments and other partners to 'create a conducive ecosystem to lower the entry barrier for Indian businesses to start or expand their exports business'. The top executive said with Amazon Global Selling, Indian exporters can list their products on 17 international marketplaces/websites of Amazon, get access to 150 million paid Prime members and over 300 million customers in 200 countries and territories across the world. In January last year, Amazon chief Jeff Bezos had announced an investment of USD 1 billion at the maiden edition of Amazon Smbhav event to digitally enable 10 million Micro, Small and Medium enterprises (MSMEs), enable e-commerce exports worth USD 10 billion and create one million additional jobs in India by 2025. Earlier this month, Amazon said more than 2.5 lakh new sellers have joined Amazon since the announcement, and that it has enabled more than USD 3 billion in exports through its Global Selling programme. Broussard outlined a new initiative 'Spotlight Northeast' by Amazon India that is focusing on enabling e-commerce exports from the North East region of India. Under this, Amazon will forge partnerships with local trade organizations and work with SMBs to boost exports. He suggested that brands looking at tapping into the international demand should 'think global, build selection based on customer demand, and focus on building global brands that customers trust'.

(Source: Business World)

6. 'MAKE IN INDIA THROUGH INDUSTRY 4.0 AN IMPORTANT TRANSITION IN MANUFACTURING SECTOR'

NITI Aayog member V K Saraswat recently said that there is a need to push the Make in India and Atmanirbhar Bharat programs in the Indian manufacturing ecosystem. "A service-based economy is prone to market risks and manufacturing is going to facilitate a stronger and stable growth. Atmanirbharta calls for high reliance on imports that limits our holistic growth, hence we need to have more indigenous production," he added. Addressing the virtual 'FICCI-UNIDO Dialogue on Swachh Udyog- Manufacturing Excellence in India', Saraswat said that Make in India through Industry 4.0 is an important transition in the manufacturing sector that will bring new technologies, new operations, and will impact all sectors. This will bring competitiveness, Atmanirbharta, and make our manufacturing sector a bigger contributor to the GDP, he added. Saraswat, while highlighting the manufacturing vision of 2030, said that we will see factories that are green and sustainable. Factories should be in areas that are closer to

both the workers and the customers. The Indian production system should be designoriented, he added. Further on, he said that our Industry 4.0 must be a human and process-oriented simulation and digitalization to ensure a major role for the workers. The 6-R approach in the manufacturing sector includes re-manufacture, redesign, recover, recycle, re-use and reduce and is what we want to achieve by 2030-35, added Saraswat. He further stated that R&D plays a crucial role in manufacturing and there is a need for smart manufacturing R&D centres to showcase new technologies so that industries can use them to grow further. "This will also help in proving Atmanirbharta in these areas and we will not be dependent on importing these technologies," he said. Addressing the introductory session, Alka Arora, Joint Secretary, Ministry of MSME said that manufacturing is the future of the world. "We all know that manufacturing is not at the level at which we would have wanted it to be. COVID-19 posed a challenge to the MSMEs to get up and start working on chapters that will take them to the next level. There are challenges, apart from the financial ones that MSMEs need to overcome. Arora said that the change in the definition of MSMEs gives an opportunity to MSMEs to play a role in the global market. "We need to be a part of the global value chain. We are also working to make India an export hub. We will shortly be coming up with a Global MSME Intelligence System to aid MSMEs towards this effect," she added. Shyam Bang, Chairman, FICCI Taskforce on Manufacturing Excellence said that profit is not an indicator of excellence, therefore manufacturing excellence initiatives are essential to increase competitiveness. Suresh Khandelia, Co-Chairman, FICCI Committee on Textiles and Technical Textiles & Advisor to Executive Chairman, Sutlej Textiles, and Industries Ltd. said, "A dialogue like this is important to spread the awareness about how technologies around the globe are shaping the manufacturing space to achieve excellence. Indian industry, including MSMEs, have been adopting Industry 4.0 technologies." Rene Van Berkel, UNIDO Representative, Regional Office in India said that there is a dependence on the contribution of clusters of manufacturing MSMEs in India and there is a need to make the factories effective, efficient, and mature.

(Source: SME Times)