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What Biden's PPP Changes Mean for Small Businesses

The U.S. Treasury Department on Monday made five changes to the Paycheck Protection Program to enable minority-owned and very small businesses to access loans needed to weather the coronavirus pandemic's economic impact.

One change will allow self-employed, sole proprietors and independent contractors to qualify for more money. Previously, most were excluded or received minimum funding because loan amounts were based on the number of employees. Another change comes on Wednesday when businesses with fewer than 20 employees will have an exclusive two-week period to apply for funding.

"Small businesses are the engines of our economic progress. They're the glue, and the heart and soul, of our communities," Biden said at a White House event. The updates ensure "we look out for the mom-and-pop businesses even more than we have," he added.

In three other eligibility changes, small business owners with student loan debt can now apply for and receive PPP aid. And non-citizens who are legally a U.S. resident can also apply for a PPP loan. The final change eliminates the restriction that bars small business owners with non-fraud-related felonies from receiving PPP funding.

Current guidelines prohibit an owner who has had an arrest or felony conviction relating to financial fraud in the past five years, or any other felony within the prior year, from receiving any aid. While the restriction for those with a financial fraud felony conviction would still remain, the mandate that covers "any other felony" to determine eligibility will now be removed.

The current funding round expires on March 31, and the Biden administration has not said yet whether the program would be extended. In December, the program received $284 billion as part of the $900 billion Covid-19 relief package. The funding allowed the program to be reopened to both borrowers and lenders on Jan. 11. If Biden's $1.9 trillion rescue plan is approved by the end of this week, another $7 billion could go into the program.

"This is a starting point, not the ending point," Biden said. "We need Congress to pass my American Rescue Plan."

Source: sourcingjournal.com– Feb 22, 2021

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Fashion Companies Straining to Pay 'Unexpected' Cargo-Related Charges: AAFA

Federal Maritime Commissioner Rebecca F. Dye said she will issue information demand orders to ocean carriers and marine terminal operators (MTOs) to determine if legal obligations related to detention and demurrage practices are being met.

The issue has been percolating for months and earlier this month Steve Lamar, president and CEO of the American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA), sent a letter to the Federal Maritime Commission (FMC) urging it to take immediate steps to stem the surge in contract violations and the spike in detention and demurrage charges.

"Because of the pandemic, our members are already facing enormous challenges, battling a huge slump in demand that has led to store closings, furloughs, layoffs and bankruptcies, while trying to respond to the crucial need for face masks and other personal protective equipment (PPE) and the swings in demand for different types of clothes, shoes, and accessories," Lamar wrote.

"Meanwhile, a convergence of issues, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has created unprecedented shipping problems and delays, for beneficial cargo owners (BCOs), for truckers, for ports, for terminals and for carriers," Lamar continued. "However, BCOs have borne the brunt of this impact. Despite having contracts in place, our members have had to pay unexpected and unplanned surcharges, premiums, and/or spot rates to get their cargo on ships. Even then, their cargo has still been rolled, forcing them to miss key delivery dates, leading to further lost sales (particularly for seasonal product) or further charges from their customers."

In addition, Lamar said AAFA members have faced a spike in detention and demurrage charges "for situations completely out of their control."

The FMC orders are being issued under Dye's authority as the Fact Finding Officer for "International Ocean Transportation Supply Chain Engagement." Targets of the orders will be ocean carriers operating in an alliance and calling the Port of Los Angeles, the Port of Long Beach, or the Port of New York & New Jersey. Marine terminal operators at those ports will also be subject to information demands.

The demand orders will also require carriers and MTOs to provide information on their policies and practices related to container returns and container availability for exporters. Failure of carriers and MTOs to operate in a way consistent with the Interpretive Rule on Detention and Demurrage that became effective on May 18 might constitute a violation of a statute that prohibits unjust and unreasonable practices and regulations related to, or connected with, receiving, handling, storing or delivering property.

"We urge the Federal Maritime Commission to fulfill its oversight role to ensure that contracts are honored and that its new policy on detention and demurrage charges is followed," Lamar addd.

The FMC said information received from parties receiving demands may be used as a basis for hearings, enforcement action or further rulemaking.

Source: sourcingjournal.com– Feb 22, 2021

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U.S. ban on China's Xinjiang cotton fractures fashion industry supply chains

Last month, Chinese cotton yarn maker Huafu Fashion sent a warning to investors.

"Multiple American brands have canceled orders," Huafu said in a Shenzhen stock exchange filing, citing U.S. sanctions. "It's brought negative effects to the company."

Huafu — which said it lost at least $54.3 million last year vs. a net profit of $62.5 million in 2019 — is one of the few suppliers to publicly acknowledge the sanctions' effects. But thousands of companies worldwide are affected after the United States blacklisted 87 percent of China's cotton crop — one-fifth of the world's supply — citing human rights violations against Muslim Uighurs in China's northwest Xinjiang region.

What's happening now in the fashion industry is rare in the history of global trade: a multibillion-dollar supply chain splintered almost overnight over a human rights issue.

Just a year ago, companies "were saying it's impossible" to stop buying textiles with Xinjiang cotton, said Scott Nova, executive director of the Worker Rights Consortium, a Washington-based advocacy group. "You can't leave. Or if you could leave, it would take three to five years to even execute such an exit."

Cotton picked in Xinjiang winds up in garments cut and sewn across Asia, from Bangladesh to Vietnam, textile industry executives say. The U.S. ban applies to products "made in whole or in part" with Xinjiang cotton, "regardless of where the downstream products are produced," U.S. Customs and Border Protection said.

The U.S. sanctions were prompted by the Chinese government's harsh reeducation campaign against Uighurs, a Turkic ethnic minority. Some Uighurs detained in internment camps in Xinjiang in recent years have said they were tortured and forced to work in textile factories as a condition of release.

The sheer scale of the campaign has horrified many in the West — especially as Beijing’s increasing global leadership ambitions generate friction with the United States — and led to economic retribution.

China has denied mistreating Uighurs, calling the sanctions a politically motivated campaign. In a statement to The Washington Post, China’s Foreign Ministry called reports of forced labor in Xinjiang “lies from head to tail.”

The United States began isolated sanctions last year on Xinjiang textile makers, including Huafu, which didn’t respond to a request for comment. On Jan. 13, CBP announced a blanket ban on all Xinjiang cotton.

“Companies can no longer claim ignorance as an excuse,” CBP said in a statement to The Post. “CBP’s message to the trade community is clear: Know your supply chains.”

Shifting production

Justin Huang, president of the Taiwan Textile Federation, said Taiwanese textile manufacturers received notices in September from Western brands to confirm their cotton sources. He said brands no longer wanted Chinese cotton, since it was difficult to confirm from which region of China it originated.

“U.S. manufacturers are very sensitive,” he said, “so before the announcement, U.S. traders had already begun to shift their production lines.”

Patagonia announced in July it was “actively exiting the Xinjiang region,” and said it told suppliers that Xinjiang fiber and manufacturing was prohibited. Gap, which encompasses the Old Navy and Banana Republic brands, said it has prohibited suppliers from sourcing products, components or materials from Xinjiang, directly or indirectly.

Ikea said it “stopped all shipments” to the United States containing Xinjiang cotton after the CBP ban. Ikea and H&M both said their suppliers have stopped new cotton purchases from Xinjiang because of the Better Cotton Initiative’s decision last year to discontinue licensing cotton from the region.

Nike said it has confirmed its suppliers were not using textiles or spun yarn from Xinjiang and that it was communicating the new requirements to them.

There has been little transparency further up the supply chain, with few suppliers publicly explaining if and how they would comply with the sanctions.

One of the rare reports of a factory shift directly attributed to the sanctions came in October from the Vietnam Investment Review, a periodical run under Vietnam's Ministry of Planning and Investment. It said that Hong Kong-headquartered yarn giant Texhong, which has a Xinjiang subsidiary, was shifting some production to Vietnam because of the U.S. sanctions.

Texhong was more vague in its own financial update, which did not mention sanctions, only "uncertainties brought by the tension escalation between China and the U.S." It said new yarn factories outside China would serve overseas customers. Texhong declined to comment on U.S. sanctions effects or the Vietnam Investment Review report, saying "certain content seems to be based on speculation." The company said it has expanded production outside China for years to meet customer requests in different regions.

China's state-controlled media has published upbeat reports on the cotton harvest, with occasional cryptic mentions of industry trouble. This month, the official China Cotton Association said Xinjiang had a bumper crop of cotton last year but noted, without explanation, that some factories had "no choice" but to use foreign cotton.

Enforcement challenges

Labor activists caution that the fashion industry's shift out of Xinjiang is partial, with limited enforcement.

"Suppliers have certainly shown themselves willing over the years to deceive their customers," Nova said. "Sometimes the customers are happy to be deceived."

Bayard Winthrop, founder of American Giant, said that when Western brands order clothing in China, they often deal only with the final sewing factory and don't necessarily investigate where that factory is obtaining its fabric or yarn. Winthrop's company uses U.S. cotton and manufacturers in the United States.

In China, “that factory is probably buying fabric from Chinese producers, which buy yarn from China, and if they are buying yarn from China it’s almost surely made with cotton from Xinjiang,” Winthrop said.

Nate Herman, senior vice president of the American Apparel & Footwear Association, said U.S. brands were working to remove Xinjiang cotton from their supply chains but that the process is slowed by the pandemic.

“We’re getting closer, but we’re not quite there yet,” he said.

Herman said he has heard of about a dozen shipments stopped by CBP since the ban last month. CBP declined to confirm the number but said it’s actively enforcing the measure and that detentions of shipments “are expected to grow.”

There’s growing interest in chemical-tracing technologies to determine cotton origin, though they are not yet in widespread use. Tracing company Oritain is working with a “large number of brands” on gauging their supply chain risk from Xinjiang cotton, chief executive Grant Cochrane said.

China’s official trade data reflects mixed effects of the sanctions. China’s cotton imports rose by 16.7 percent last year, with the United States, Brazil and India the top suppliers. The country’s exports of garments fell 6.4 percent year-on-year, but exports of all textiles rose 9.6 percent.

A report in the state-run China Textile Times in September noted that the country had increased cotton imports to “decrease risk to textile exports to the U.S.”

Hibbie Barrier, a cotton broker at Avondale Futures in Nashville, said the ban may have contributed to rising demand for U.S. cotton in recent months, and a bump in global cotton prices, from 81 cents a pound in mid-January to over 90 cents a pound last week. But tough weather in several cotton-growing regions has also cut supply and boosted prices, he said.

Huang, of the Taiwan Textile Federation, said China probably is using its imported cotton for U.S. orders and shuffling Xinjiang cotton to other markets.

“The global market is only so big,” he said. “Last year, China’s textile exports, in fact, did not decline. Only sales to the U.S. were affected.”

Source: washingtonpost.com– Feb 22, 2021

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Dollar Cotton Potential Raises Concerns for Demand

Cotton prices have settled higher in at least one contract month for the past 11 days. Chinese prices have hit a 30-month high. That is just too much, but then the market is not actually trading cotton.

Cotton is being bought and sold all right, but a good portion of the price advance is a result of mills having to square futures market positions they established months ago. Thus, mills are paying for their promises made to honor past contract obligations. They bought the cotton, and, in many cases, they have already spun it into yarn and even sold the yarn. Now they must pay for the cotton per the futures contract obligation.

Too, there is plenty of cotton being sold and shipped daily. However, it is these “on-call sales” positions that are driving the market. This is occurring during a period of declining stocks and, in particular, during the disappearance of high quality grades. China will buy every single bale of U.S. high quality.

The rapid increase in prices caused mills to postpone fixing the price (as is usually the case), as mills expected prices would back off somewhat. This year, prices did not back off and mills are being squeezed. On-call sales positions for May and July suggest mills will need to continue as very strong buyers and push prices higher. Prices will continue to advance because so many futures contracts must be bought so mills can meet their futures market obligations. It is this buying that will drive prices higher.

Prices are on track to move to the dollar level and beyond. Sad to say, but that is just too high, and it will eventually harm cotton demand.

U.S. stocks are becoming scarce. USDA has forecast a 4.3 million bale U.S. carryover, but many expect it to be as low as 3.5 to 3.8 million bales. Thus, the new crop December crop has also seen its futures price advance.

Chinese prices have bumped up against a price resistance level that it has been fighting for some five years. However, on one occasion the ZCE Chinese price resistance was broken to the upside. Expect to see that again. Action in that market is very important to New York, so we must continue to watch it. However, both Chinese and Indian mills, as late as this week, reported good mill margins. Thus, demand, while possibly slowing, remains very solid.

At its annual outlook forum this week, USDA projected 2021 U.S. plantings at 12.0 million acres. Yield was projected at 840 pounds on harvested acreage of 10 million. Thus, 2021 production was estimated at 17.5 million bales. On the demand side of the price equation, domestic use was pegged at 2.5 million bales and exports at 15.5 million. Ending stocks were forecast at 3.8 million bales.

USDA did estimate that the average price received by growers in 2021-22 would average 75 cents per pound – up from its estimate of 68 cents per pound for the current season.

USDA's 3.8 million bale carryover projection is low enough to hold December futures above 80 cents for now. However, the market is currently trading on the belief that U.S. stocks will fall below 3 million bales, possibly as low as 2.3 million bales.

The uncertainty of U.S. and South American weather will keep the current fire under the new crop December contract into the U.S. planting season. An old crop rally to one dollar will pull the December to 90 cents. While I hope every grower gets at least that price, that is just too high to prevent the loss of cotton demand. Yet, this is the present, and December is trucking to 90 cents.

Source: cottongrower.com– Feb 22, 2021

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Philippines promotes advantages in PPE manufacturing at Japanese event

The Philippine government, in partnership with the Japan Hygiene Products Industry Association (JHPIA), recently organised an online briefing with JHPIA members to promote investment opportunities in the former for manufacturers of personal protective equipment (PPE), hygiene products and medical supplies based in Japan.

The country is now producing over 80 million face masks, 10.2 million pieces of medical-grade coveralls and 65,700 face shields every month.

The webinar showcased the competitive advantage of the Philippines as a manufacturing base for companies not only from Japan but also from neighbouring markets like Taiwan, South Korea and Malaysia, according to an official press release.

The Philippines currently has an active and productive PPE manufacturing sector, with 300 businesses engaged in the textile and garments industry and a highly skilled workforce of 510,000 capable of efficiently producing PPEs.

The Philippines also has a large and well-established chemical and chemical products sub-sector. The medical supplies industry there is estimated to contribute at least $165 million in sales annually.

To date, 42 production lines including textile factories, garment plants and yarn spinning mills have been repurposed to manufacture PPE, and over 1.5 million litres of alcohol, sanitizer and hand spray are now produced monthly in the Philippines.

The Japanese face mask manufacturer Yokoisada is one of several international businesses to successfully set up operations in the Philippines.

Source: fibre2fashion.com– Feb 23, 2021

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Australian cotton farmers hit by spat with PRC discover new markets

Australian cotton farmers who suffered due to the China-Australia trade spat are being hopeful with new customers in sight. Australia's cotton industry has diversified since China stopped buying. Cotton growers, who are expected to receive high returns for their produce this year, are making some inroads into Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam and Bangladesh.

Australian growers and shippers claim Chinese spinning mills were told last October to stop buying Australia-grown cotton, and the billion-dollar a year trade essentially stopped.

The Australian department of agriculture will not say what the cost to farmers has been of higher tariffs and unofficial customs bans across a range of commodities.

"It's not all doom and gloom," Toowoomba-based cotton trader and industry analyst Pete Johnson was quoted as saying about China's exit from the Australian market by an Australian newspaper.

Johnson estimated growers would lose a $10-$20 a bale premium without China in the market, but that returns to growers this year were expected to be ‘historically high’.

"Spreading that risk is ultimately not a bad thing for the industry,” he added.

Source: fibre2fashion.com– Feb 23, 2021

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UK should be ready for post-lockdown spending boom: CACI

UK residents are optimistic about life post lockdown, according to recent consumer survey research by consumer and location intelligence specialist CACI, which found the United Kingdom should reap the benefits of an economic boost through a spending boom. Consumers responded positively to vaccine rollouts, with 86 per cent saying they would get the vaccine.

With 74 per cent of consumers' finances having improved or stayed the same due to the pandemic, consumers are likely willing to spend once businesses reopen and people can move around more freely.

However, consumer behaviour has changed, as 88 per cent of respondents want to feel safe in stores, and 55 per cent of respondents would like to see safety precautions in place forever while shopping.

While one in five consumers plans to shift their fashion shopping online, an equal number intends to spend more on in-store purchases. Therefore, shopping malls and retailers need to create more omnichannel options for consumers, said CACI.

Sustainability and brand ethics have become increasingly important to consumers throughout the pandemic, with 67 per cent of respondents saying that the contribution a brand makes to overcome global challenges transparently will affect where they spend their money.

"The nation can now see a way out of the pandemic, and for a large part of the population, the successive lockdowns have given them the chance to save money as there has been little opportunity to spend," stated Alex McCulloch, director of CACI property consulting group, in a press release.

"While it is highly promising that economic confidence is taking a turn for the better due to the vaccines, the data also shows it is key that destinations and brands do not revert to old behaviours and attitudes because consumer behaviour has changed permanently," he said.

Source: fibre2fashion.com– Feb 23, 2021

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Intertextile Shanghai & Yarn Expo editions postponed

The spring editions of the three fairs, Intertextile Shanghai Apparel Fabrics, Intertextile Shanghai Home Textiles, and Yarn Expo Spring, which were to be held from March 10-12, 2021, will be postponed, with a new date to be announced shortly. Messe Frankfurt and the co-organisers of the shows made the decision to comply with local authority guidelines.

“In compliance with the Shanghai Municipal Centre for Health Promotion’s pandemic prevention and control guidelines for exhibition activities, and after careful evaluation and discussion with relevant stakeholders, we have decided to postpone the three fairs to a later date.

We have begun a discussion with the three fairs’ stakeholders as well as the fairground regarding a new date, and aim to hold the rescheduled shows within March to minimise the impact to our exhibitors and buyers and still accommodate their buying needs for the current spring / summer season. While the new dates will be announced shortly, we are grateful in the meantime for the understanding and patience of all those involved,” Wendy Wen, senior general manager of Messe Frankfurt said in a press release.

Intertextile Shanghai Apparel Fabrics is co-organised by Messe Frankfurt; the Sub-Council of Textile Industry, CCPIT; and the China Textile Information Centre. The co-organisers of Yarn Expo are Messe Frankfurt and the Sub-Council of Textile Industry, CCPIT. Intertextile Shanghai Home Textiles is co-organised by Messe Frankfurt; the Sub-Council of Textile Industry, CCPIT; and the China Home Textile Association (CHTA), according to Messe Frankfurt.

Source: fibre2fashion.com– Feb 22, 2021

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Vietnam earns $2.6 bn from garment exports in Jan

Vietnam earned $2.6 billion from exports of textiles and garments in January 2021, up by 3.3 per cent year on year, according to the ministry of industry and trade, which recently said the textile production index and the apparel production index increased by 16.6 per cent and 9.9 per cent respectively during the month over the same period in 2020.

The production of fabrics was estimated at 92.4 million sq. m during the month, up by 20.4 per cent.

According to Vu Duc Giang, chairman of the Vietnam Textile and Apparel Association (VITAS), the pandemic will continue to affect the sector until 2022.

If COVID-19 vaccines are available in the first and second quarter of 2021, the pandemic is expected to be controlled by the end of 2023. Then, the textile and garment market could witness a recovery, Giang said.

He said textile and garment businesses must change production and business models as the pandemic has made global purchasing power for apparel products, including many traditional export garment products of Vietnam, fall by 70-80 per cent.

This is a big challenge for the Vietnamese textile and garment industry. Businesses need to learn about changes in domestic and global markets to find solutions in production and business this year, Giang was quoted as saying by a Vietnamese media outlet.

The textile and garment industry also needs to have a sustainable development strategy, including changes in production and business models according to the needs of brands and global consumers. They should pay attention to standards, certificates of origin and certification of environmental assurance, energy saving, renewable energy and product safety.

To implement a sustainable development plan for the textile and garment industry, VITAS has proposed the ministry and the government to release the textile and garment development strategy for the 2030-2040 period. That would create favourable conditions to call investment to industrial zones to produce material that faces a supply shortage.

Le Tien Truong, chairman of the Vietnam National Textile and Garment Group (Vinatex), said that in addition to the efforts of garment makers, the government should consider lowering borrowing costs so that they can meet new requirements as well as invest in producing materials to meet rules of origin contained in new free trade agreements.

He also suggested the government introduce specific policies to support the garment sector's development and direct the relevant agencies to reduce logistics costs and other tax burdens.

Source: fibre2fashion.com– Feb 23, 2021

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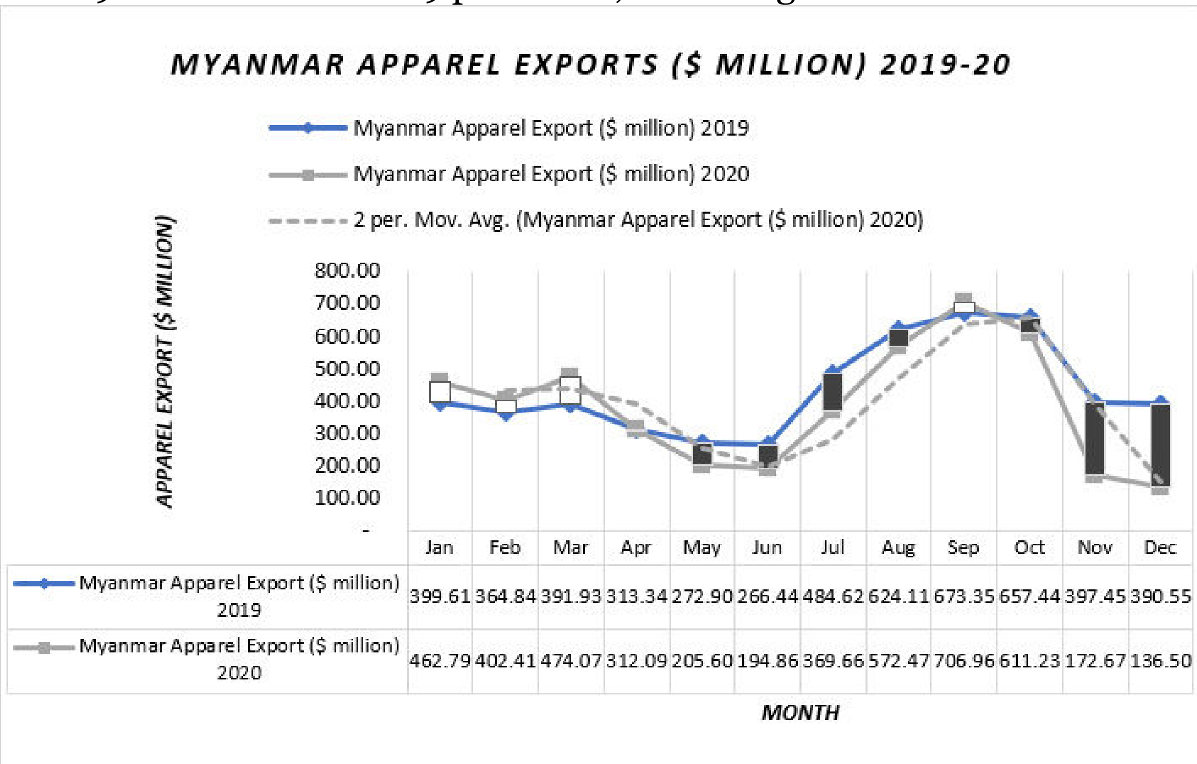
Military coup to further affect Myanmar's apparel industry

Myanmar, one of the growing economies in apparel market, may further experience a drop in its exports with recent military coup and arrests of ministers of the ruling democratic party. Apparel export of the country dropped 11.75 per cent to $4,621.31 million in 2020 from $5,236.58 million in 2019 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, according to data from TexPro.



	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Myanmar Apparel Export ($ million) 2019	399.61	364.84	391.93	313.34	272.90	266.44	484.62	624.11	673.35	657.44	397.45	390.55
Myanmar Apparel Export ($ million) 2020	462.79	402.41	474.07	312.09	205.60	194.86	369.66	572.47	706.96	611.23	172.67	136.50

Myanmar's apparel industry is a significant contributor to its overall exports (approximately 1/3rd of country's total export). As the apparel sector is an important pillar of this economy, it could be difficult for the country to recover further with expected cancellations of upcoming shipments and sanctions from the prime export destinations such as EU and US which have given a duty-free access to goods from Myanmar under US GSP (Generalised System of Preferences) and EBA (Everything But Arms Act), respectively.

Approximately over 0.5 million population in the country have been involved in apparel business, with most of them being women. The country had started to recover from the aftereffects of pandemic, but the recent military takeover has broken the momentum. Most of the workers have participated in the protests.

The bigger brands have kept the country under review and this political turmoil may impact Myanmar's status as a prime apparel sourcing destination.

With this military coup, apparel exports may further drop as some of the apparel factories operate in the military controlled industrial zones. Average monthly apparel export of the country in 2019 was $436.38 million and decreased to $385.11 million in 2020 with drop of 11.75 per cent. It may further drop to average monthly apparel export to $327.34 million in 2021 with a drop of 15.00 per cent.

Source: fibre2fashion.com– Feb 22, 2021

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Finland offers new solutions to textile industry challenges

Finland recently claimed it is leading the revolution towards sustainable materials and business models in global textile business. The country offers groundbreaking solutions and knowhow at every level of the sustainable textile ecosystem, from waste handling, treatment, sales and usage, collection and recycling to identification and waste handling, it said.

The currently available raw materials cannot meet the constantly growing demand for fibers and textiles. At the same time, on a global scale, an estimated 92 million tonnes of textile waste is produced every year of which 75-85 per cent is either burned or ends up in landfills.

Leading Finnish firms experts like Rester, NordShield, Emmy, Spinnova and Infinited Fiber Company offer innovations across the textile ecosystem, the government said in a press release.

"By replacing primary raw materials with recycled components or using, for example, wood-based textile fiber, and by keeping already existing materials in the economy as long as possible, we have the opportunity to impact the huge global system and value chains," said Marika Ollaranta, head of the Bio and Circular Finland programme of Business Finland, Finland's trade, investment and travel promotion and innovation funding organisation.

"Finnish innovations offer revolutionary solutions that cover the whole life cycle of a textile. Governments, consumers and the industry itself are waking up to the challenges of a very single-use oriented industry, but more work is needed to build awareness and change mindsets and behaviour to make the cycle more sustainable, while also maintaining the level of quality and reasonable costs."

Rester collaborates closely with Southwest Finland's municipal waste management company LSJH in a project that brings together the private and public sectors in textile waste handling.

From waste handling to a textile's physical features, NordShield's patented technology enables natural antimicrobial treatment of textiles, free of heavy metals.

Spinnova and Infinited Fiber Company have come up with innovative ways of making fiber out of wood pulp and discarded textiles, while Emmy

Clothing Company has created a transparent resale-as-a-service for clothes, which makes it possible for all actors in the ecosystem to participate in prolonging a textile's life cycle.

Responding to the growing issues of textile waste, new textile recycling regulations will come into force in the EU in 2025. However, Finland aims to start the process already by 2023.

Rester, together with LSJH, is opening a textile refinement plant in Paimio, Finland, that will refine end-of-life textiles into raw material fibre that can be used in new products. The plant could become one of the biggest textile refinement plants in Northern Europe, making Finland one of the Nordics' recycling hubs, the government said.

The plant's two production lines will process post-consumer textiles from households and pre-consumer textiles from the business-to-business sector. At its launch, the plant will process 12,000 tonnes of end-of-life textiles annually. The plan is to scale up the volume in the future to double the capacity.

Finnish firm Spinnova makes fibre directly from wood pulp or pulp made of side streams without dissolving and the use of harmful chemicals. The manufacture of sustainable textile fibre made with Spinnova's method generate nil waste or side streams, nil microplastics and has minimal carbon dioxide emissions and water use.

Finnish biotechnology company Infinited Fibre Company is known for technology that can turn discarded textiles into a premium regenerated textile fibre, called Infinna. Infinna has the soft and natural look and feel of cotton and it offers a circular alternative to less sustainable conventional textile fibres that rely on virgin raw materials. The company was recently listed on the 2021 Global Cleantech 100 list.

Infinited Fiber Company is also leading the European Union-funded New Cotton Project, a consortium of brands, manufacturers, suppliers, innovators and research institutes that is breaking new ground by demonstrating an entirely circular model for commercial garment production.

This is a world first in the fashion industry. Over a three-year period, textile waste will be collected, sorted and regenerated into Infinited Fiber Company's unique, cellulose-based textile fibers which will be used to create different types of fabrics for clothing designed, manufactured and sold by global brand Adidas and companies in the H&M Group.

Finnish biotechnology company NordShield has created natural-based anti-microbial technology that works against bacteria, fungi and viruses. It is free of heavy metals and instead harnesses the ancient power of Nordic forests. In its various forms, the technology can be applied to textiles and fibres as well as medical devices, plastics and even skin.

The recently launched NordShield® BioLayr is a durable antibacterial solution for making consumer textiles anti-microbial. The NordShield® Brilliant technology can be applied to a variety of products, such as for sanitizing hands, feet, surfaces and even community face masks.

Emmy Clothing Company is a leading Nordic online marketplace for pre-owned premium clothing. The webstore enables consumers, apparel retailers and fashion brands to easily and efficiently resell, discover and buy high-quality fashion, with complete transparency regarding quality, availability and delivery options.

Source: fibre2fashion.com– Feb 22, 2021

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Pakistan: Govt urged to address cotton yarn price hike issue

All Pakistan Cotton Powerlooms Association (APCPA) chairman Rana Azhar Waqar said the price of cotton yarn in the local market has gone up by 30-35 percent in the last three months due to shortage of cotton.

If the government does not address this issue immediately, it is feared that 200,000 workers will lose their jobs. They demand the government to reduce the shortage of cotton and yarn prices or allow them to import yarn from India.

If the government does not take any step, a protest camp will be set up at Chowk Ghanta Ghar in collaboration with all the industrial and trade associations in which other protest options will also be used.

Rana Azhar Waqar said the government's lack of interest in increasing cotton production has upset the exporters of the local value-added textile sector.

Export orders for many textile products are available in the global market, but Pakistani textile exporters are reluctant to accept new export orders due to unavailability of cotton yarn at the required quantity and prices.

He said the present situation demanded that the government should allow the import of cotton yarn with 32 single and less counts at zero rate duty.

Until the prices of cotton yarn are brought under control, all exporters, importers and manufacturers should be allowed to import cotton yarn from any country.

Vice chairman All Pakistan Cotton Power Looms Association Muhammad Ajmal Kasuri said 25 percent units in Faisalabad have been shut down due to shortage of yarn. Due to which orders received from abroad have also started to be canceled.

We get yarn every day and that's why our production is down to fifty percent. If the government does not open the Wagah border, we will be completely closed in a few days.

Exporters are also worried that 50% of orders received from abroad will be canceled due to extra rates.

We are not able to compete in the market because of the rate at which we are getting yarn.

There are orders in the market but we don't have a thread. Textile industrialists have also threatened to protest next week over rising yarn prices and unavailability.

Source: brecorder.com– Feb 23, 2021

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We must modernise textile engineering education in Bangladesh

The present government has correctly emphasised the need to develop and expand technical education in the country. It has set up various engineering universities and some engineering colleges, which provide BSc level courses in various technical subjects. The roles of these colleges are fully controlled and managed by the universities they are affiliated with. Every year, many students get admitted to the government engineering colleges with the dream of contributing to the economy and the country. How effective are these colleges in making these dreams come true? The general contention is that they provide very mediocre education that does not fulfill the needs of the students.

The textile sector is the source of over 80 percent of foreign exchange earnings in Bangladesh; it is called the country's economic backbone. The garment industry's growth rate in 2019 was 11.49 percent, compared to 7.8 percent in 2017. However, growth has slowed down due to Covid-19. To continue the growth trend, the government has set up a few textile colleges, including a textile university. However, challenges remain, which we bring to the fore to address key issues that are critical to improving the textile engineering colleges.

There are seven textile colleges in Bangladesh; several more are under construction. Each college trains about 480 students. In Pabna Textile Engineering College, it was found that there are four assistant professors, eight lecturers, six t-instructors, and a few other teachers, but no professors. The conditions of the new colleges are deplorable.

The first problem in every college is a crisis of teachers. Where one teacher is recommended for every 12 engineering students, there are too few teachers in service to meet the student-teacher ratio. Thus, guest teachers conduct many classes.

Some colleges have been upgraded from offering Diploma to BSc degrees, where Diploma teachers are being promoted to take classes. Although new teachers are hired occasionally, additions to the teaching staff are negligible compared to the need. Lacking adequate training, despite their best efforts, these teachers cannot give the students their best.

The appointment of departmental teachers is critical for the development of any educational institution. However, there is a crisis of departmental teachers and technicians in textile education. Students cannot make much progress due to the lack of seminars, as well as required information and useful guidelines.

Consequently, they are very frustrated, and many students want to pursue higher education abroad.

Regarding laboratories, students cannot do their thesis work properly due to lack of equipment and budgetary allocations for laboratory research. There is no equipment in the laboratories that deals with modern textiles and technical textiles like microfibre, fibre composition, and modern dyeing. Thus, thesis work is based on using conventional instruments. How is it possible to improve technical education in the country if we continue in this way?

Last year, students of certain institutions pursued their theses on fibre composition, but it was not practical due to the lack of modern laboratory equipment. Where such equipment is available, research is hampered for a lack of skilled technicians. Thus, the progress of the nation's engineering colleges and the quality of the graduates are questionable. Where research is the lifeblood of an engineering institution, these colleges do not have a budget for research, nor do they have trained technicians and faculty. One wonders why a decent budget is not allocated to conduct research in our engineering colleges.

Let us also take a glance at the curriculum. The truth is that many of the subjects are old-fashioned. Although the industries have become modern in keeping pace with the times, the curriculum has remained the same. Students also have a two-month long internship in the last semester and a "mill inspection" every semester to improve their technical capacity. These experiences could be improved in great measure. Graduating students thus face a very embarrassing situation when they land their first jobs in the industry: they lack adequate and modern knowhow.

The present world also demands a move from traditional textile to technical textile. The entire sector needs to change in tandem with the needs of the rest of the world. And for this, we need a rich technical education system based on research. About four million people are directly or indirectly involved in this sector in Bangladesh, where only three lakh people were employed in 2000. In most of the factories, foreign engineers occupy the top positions due to a lack of skilled local engineers. By developing local competence, it can reduce the country's reliance on foreign engineers and enable the locals to play a pivotal role in taking the country forward. Support from the textile industry through joint programmes and funding support would be the icing on the cake.

Source: thedailystar.net– Feb 23, 2021

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Bangladesh: Apparel suppliers must do due diligence on ailing brands

As we all know, the past 12 months have seen many apparel retailers go bust, leaving a trail of financial destruction in their wake. Often, their creditors are owed millions, and by far the most significant creditors in most cases reside in the ready-made garment sector.

This is a serious global issue which we, as suppliers, need to address as a matter of urgency.

My question is, are suppliers learning from the mistakes of the past? The reason I ask is that, in many cases, retailers which have gone bust were in fact an accident waiting to happen. In some cases, this is the second or even third time this has happened. With this in mind, witnessing suppliers queueing up to do business with the newly created company can often feel like a slow-motion car crash. Likewise, watching suppliers gladly leaving themselves open to debt worth hundreds of thousands of dollars owed by struggling retailers, can feel like an accident waiting to happen.

The underlying issue I am driving at here is one of due diligence. Are we as suppliers doing enough research on our potential customers? Could some of the situations we have seen of late, when suppliers have been left out of pocket to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars, have been avoided with better due diligence?

I think certainly, in some instances, this is the case. What do I mean by due diligence? I mean knowing your customer and understanding their financial situation. To put this in simple terms, you would not lend money to a friend if you knew that friend had serious financial problems, which meant he or she was unlikely to ever be able to pay you back. And yet as suppliers, we regularly extend credit to customers that many in the industry know to be lame ducks. It's a strange, unfathomable state of affairs.

Due diligence comes in many shapes and forms. There are degrees of due diligence and an element of common sense is required when deciding who to do business with. If you were about to acquire a business, for example, you would want a full top to bottom financial/accounting appraisal of the company and would likely bring in a third party to carry this out.

When choosing who to do business with, the due diligence process is less onerous, but can certainly make a difference.

Step one, I would suggest, is to develop a broad picture of the company you are looking to work with—especially how big the company is, and what is its market cap (if this is publicly listed).

Larger companies, as a rule, tend to have more stable revenue streams and less volatility. The smaller one goes, the more fluctuations one is likely to see in terms of revenues and earnings.

Relating to this is the broad issue of financials. Look at metrics such as revenues, profits and margin trends. Look at net income trends for the past two years and you should gain a general picture of the direction things are going in. Major downward fluctuations are a serious red flag.

If you wanted to go a little deeper, you could review profit margins to see if they are generally rising, falling, or remaining the same. It is possible to find specific information regarding profit margins by going directly to the company's website and searching their investor relations section for their quarterly and annual financial statements. Suppliers need to use this information to their advantage.

Going a step further, it might be worth comparing a company's margins with those of two or three competitors. This benchmarking process is important to get a better feel about how stable a business is.

I don't want to get too bogged down in balance sheets and accounting issues here. If one is looking to work with a business partner, however, a cursory examination of their accounts is helpful. Review their consolidated balance sheet to see the overall level of assets and liabilities, paying special attention to cash levels—this is the ability to pay short-term liabilities and could impact whether you are likely to find your company not getting paid.

Also look at the amount of long-term debt held by the company. A lot of debt is not necessarily a major red flag—this really depends more on the company's business model than anything, but it is another metric which enables one to build a larger picture.

What else to examine? In the case of some ailing retailers, it has become common knowledge that they have struggled to get insurance, which tells you all you need to know.

Another key thing is to keep a close eye on the international press, as well as social media sites such as LinkedIn. Information about a company that may be struggling often works its way onto social media quicker than it does in mainstream media, so it is worth keeping one's ear close to the ground.

Talk, also, to business colleagues and associates. Have they done business with the client you are looking at working with? What were their experiences and what were the clients like as payers? What were their payment terms, did they pay on time and did they ever default on payments?

Another thing to consider is, could groups of suppliers—say from one country—get together to develop a common approach to appraising brands? Such an approach could potentially be coordinated by an industry trade body, to ensure a consistent approach (and this would save time for individual factories carrying out their own due diligence; a possibility to consider).

However, I am reluctant to be too critical of my fellow suppliers here. I understand how difficult things have been these past 12 months and my guess is that a lot of suppliers have accepted orders like those mentioned above just to keep their factory operational and not have equipment lying idle; it is desperation in other words.

Looking ahead, however, surely there is a need for a collective change of mindset among suppliers. One where we attempt to put the shoe on the other foot. We are used to being assessed by brands to see whether we are deemed worthy of their orders. Perhaps it is time for us to ask some questions of them too: do we really need them as a customer or is working with them likely to lead to financial heartache?

Source: thedailystar.net– Feb 23, 2021

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NATIONAL NEWS

India, Mauritius ink landmark economic cooperation agreement

India on Monday signed a landmark Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA) with Mauritius, the first if its kind with an African nation, making the strategically-located country a launch-pad for business expansion into the huge African continent.

"Today is indeed a special day in our special relationship," External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said while jointly addressing the media with Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth here after calling on him.

"India is privileged to have entered into a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA) with Mauritius. This agreement is India's first-such agreement with an African country," Jaishankar said.

He said it will provide a timely boost for the revival of the post-COVID economies and also enable Indian investors to use Mauritius as a launch-pad for business expansion into continental Africa helping the prospect of Mauritius emerging as a 'hub of Africa'.

Prime Minister Jugnauth also noted that the CECPA is the first of its kind signed by India with an African country.

"This landmark agreement is far-reaching and will unleash new and expanded opportunities in trade in goods and services, investment, economic cooperation and technical assistance," he said.

The CECPA will encourage Indian entrepreneurs to invest both in Mauritius and across the region, thus helping the ambition of the country to become a strategic regional economic hub and a centre of excellence, Jugnauth said in his remarks.

The CECPA provides preferential access to Mauritius for bulk of the trade and also for many aspirational items for the future into the Indian market of over a billion people. These include frozen fish, speciality sugar, biscuits, fresh fruits, juices, mineral water, soaps, bags, medical and surgical equipment, and apparel.

The current global imports of India on these products is well over USD 15 billion. "This is therefore a significant opportunity for Mauritius to benefit from access to the Indian market," Jaishankar said.

He said Mauritius will get preferential access for export of 40,000 tonnes of sugar into India at an early time frame. Similarly, there will also be access for the export of 7.5 million pieces of apparel.

Jaishankar said that in the trade in services sector, India has offered 95 sub-sectors from 11 broad services sectors.

"Services contribute, I believe, 76 per cent of the GDP of Mauritius, and CECPA will surely boost the dynamism of the services sector in Mauritius.

The CECPA could also facilitate Indian investment in the Services sector in Mauritius, especially in the Information and Communication Technologies sector as Indian companies could benefit by leveraging the bilingual prowess of Mauritius for investments in Francophone Africa, the minister said.

Jaishankar noted that during his meeting with Prime Minister Jugnauth, they held a lengthy review of the comprehensive and important bilateral relationship.

"Our discussions, I believe, were very productive and forward looking, and we really reviewed all aspects of the relationship as well as status of implementation of various projects," Jaishankar added.

Source: business-standard.com– Feb 22, 2021

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CBIC provides facilitation for exporters having IGST refund issues

It claims that such a measure will address the problem of refund blockage by allowing refunds subject to undertakings/submission of CA certificates by the exporters and post refund audit scrutiny.

Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Custom (CBIC) on Monday announced initiative to address exporters' woes on account of delay in getting IGST refund.

"CBIC has extended the time limit for sanction of pending IGST refunds in such cases where records have not been transmitted to ICEGATE due to GSTR1 and GSTR3B mismatch error," the board said in a statement.

It claims that such a measure will address the problem of refund blockage by allowing refunds subject to undertakings/submission of CA certificates by the exporters and post refund audit scrutiny.

This facilitation would be applicable to all shipping bills filed up to March 31.

The CBIC has also extended the facility for resolving invoice mismatch errors through customs officer interface on permanent basis. Earlier this facility was provided for a limited period i.e., in respect of shipping bills filed up to December 31, 2019.

The exporter may avail the facility of correction of Invoice mismatch errors in respect of all past shipping bills, irrespective of its date of filing subject to payment of a nominal fee.

It is seen that a considerable number of exporters have been facing difficulties in getting their IGST refund sanctioned either due to lack of facility to amend GST 3B return or bona-fide clerical/human errors while filing the documents. Now, with the issuance of circular, CBIC expects all such pending IGST refund claims issue to be resolved.

Source: thehindubusinessline.com– Feb 22, 2021

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New scheme for service exports with max sops for MSMEs proposed

Ahead of the new foreign trade policy, industry has proposed a new incentive scheme for services exports that would give higher benefits to exporters in the MSME sector.

The Services Export Promotion Council has suggested the government to consider a Duty Remission on Export of Services Scheme (DRESS) to refund taxes to services exporters wherein small and micro exporters would be eligible for a 7% incentive while the large ones would get 4%.

The scheme is touted as a replacement for the Service Export from India Scheme and is on the same lines as Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) for goods exports. “We have received a proposal from the council. We are studying it,” said a senior official in the know of the development.

Aimed at refunding taxes already paid back to services exporters, DRESS is proposed to include all service exports created in India and exported from the country in modes 1 and 2 of service delivery. Mode 1 refers to cross border trade and Mode 2 means consumption abroad. The scheme proposes remission rates of 7%, 5% and 4% for micro and small, medium and large enterprises.

These taxes include those on employee related expenses such as cab services, construction services or fuel where GST credits are prohibited, excise duty and VAT on petroleum products, electricity taxes and stamp duties.

“The extent of unrefunded taxes in the export chain are in the range of 5-9% of the exports value and it is proposed that these taxes be reimbursed to make the service exports competitive,” said Maneck Davar, chairman, SEPC.

Source: economictimes.com– Feb 23, 2021

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Here's how to avail GST credit if your supplier has not uploaded invoices

The problem of buyers not being able to avail Goods and Services Tax (GST) credit for more than one year is not unheard of. Many buyers have their Input Tax Credit (ITC) blocked or the credit lapses because their supplier has not uploaded their invoices or has not filed their GST return in time.

This results in either the working capital getting blocked or the entire ITC amount being lost.

Why am I unable to use my GST credit?

One of the reasons behind this is that either the supplier has not uploaded the buyer's purchase invoice on the GST portal, or has made an error while doing so, resulting in less or no ITC.

The ITC in the buyer's account reflects as soon as the seller uploads the invoice, but in case of a delay, the buyer's ITC cannot be availed for that particular month.

In an email interview with Business Insider, Tally Solutions' director of product management, Mohan D said that currently the Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN) portal does not have any mechanism to communicate with the supplier. This forces both the parties to communicate outside of the GSTN.

Is there a workaround that lets you avail GST credit in such cases?

According to Rule 36(4) of the Central Goods and Services Tax Rules, 2017, the buyer can avail up to 5% of the GST that has been credited to his account, in the form of provisional credit.

Check out the following example:

S. No.	Particulars	Amount
A	Total eligible ITC	₹1,00,000
B	Eligible ITC as per GSTR-2B	₹60,000
C	Provisional ITC (5% of B)	₹3,000
D	Total ITC for the month	₹63,000
E	ITC not available	₹37,000

The amount of ITC that is not available in this month will become available once the seller uploads the corresponding invoice(s) in their subsequent GST returns.

So, if the buyer's GST liability is ₹80,000, they will have to pay the balance amount of ₹17,000 in cash (₹80,000 - ₹63,000). If the entire ITC was available, the buyer would not have had to pay anything in cash.

'Government should not deny ITC on minor technicalities'

Currently, even if there is a minor mismatch in invoices like incorrect invoice number or date, the ITC is denied to the buyer until the seller corrects the errors. Mohan says that the government should not deny ITC based on these minor technicalities.

Mohan added that GSTN is currently working on a notification system to alert the buyer and seller for reporting such mismatches. Once this system goes live, a communication mechanism between both the parties will be established, which should help reduce these mismatches.

Source: businessinsider.in– Feb 22, 2021

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CAIT writes to PM Modi about GST issues, alleged violation of e-commerce rules by e-tailers

Ahead of its "Bharat Bandh" call on February 26, traders' body CAIT on Sunday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi raising issues related to the GST regime, and alleging violation of e-commerce rules by major e-tailers.

In its letter to the prime minister, the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) called for setting up of a "special working group" at the central level comprising senior officials, CAIT representatives and independent tax experts to review the GST structure and make recommendations to the government.

It also suggested that a "District GST working Group" may be constituted in each district to monitor smooth GST implementation and to take steps for widening of tax base and augmentation of revenue.

In the letter, CAIT said that a few recent amendments in GST have given "arbitrary and unfettered powers" to the government officials.

It said this goes much against the PM''s mission for "minimum government, maximum governance", and these amendments have created a state of "tax terrorism" in the country.

"The principle of natural justice has been greatly violated through such amendments where the traders have been denied any sort of show-cause notice or opportunity of hearing before taking any penal action," the traders'' body said in the letter to PM.

It alleged that the domestic e-commerce landscape has been greatly vitiated by some major e-commerce companies "who are continuously and openly violating the FDI policy, law and rules without any fear of law". They are indulging in predatory pricing, deep discounting, loss funding, controlling inventory and sale of branded products, CAIT alleged.

"These e-commerce companies have found various escape routes in Press Note No.2 of the FDI policy and therefore, a fresh Press Note blocking all escape routes and abolishing all such provisions that may prompt these companies to violate the rules or policies should be prepared," CAIT said.

It also called for setting up of a regulatory authority for the e-commerce sector. Such authority should be empowered with due rights to take any penal action against those who violate the law or policy, the traders'' body said.

Besides, it suggested that a robust e-commerce policy should be formulated and released in a time-bound manner prescribing defined parameters for e-commerce business in the country.

Source: moneycontrol.com– Feb 22, 2021

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Rs 5,50,270 cr UP budget presented in Assembly to make state 'atmanirbhar'

With a target of making Uttar Pradesh ‘atmanirbhar’, the Yogi Adityanath government on Monday presented a Rs 5,50,270.78 crore budget for 2021-22 in the state Assembly.

With Assembly elections in the state less than a year away, the budget includes new schemes of Rs 27,598.40 crore. The budget presented by Finance Minister Suresh Kumar Khanna, in the presence of the chief minister, is over Rs 37,410 crore more than the previous year’s budget size, making it the largest fund allocation.

Reading out the budget speech from a laptop, Khanna said the target was to make Uttar Pradesh “atmanirbhar” and ensure all round development of the state.

This is the Adityanath government’s first paperless budget. It is also the fifth budget of the present government in the state before the next UP Assembly polls

Source: financialexpress.com– Feb 22, 2021

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New industrial policy puts more districts on investment map, not just Chennai

Package gives more weightage for investments in southern TN and other industrially backward areas

The new industrial policy of Tamil Nadu government has added more measures and incentives to ensure balanced industrial development across the State, says Neeraj Mittal, MD & CEO of Guidance Tamil Nadu, the State nodal agency for investment promotion.

Apart from being a manufacturing hub for automobiles, chemicals, petrochemicals, food processing and electronics, the State also has a strong base in software and IT services. The manufacturing sector contributes to about 25 per cent to the State economy. Also, in recent years, Tamil Nadu has been attracting investments in new segments – in what are called sunrise sectors.

But, Chennai and its surrounding corridors have always been the preferred destinations for global companies for setting up manufacturing plants due to several advantages.

‘Promoting South’

Despite the measures undertaken by successive governments in the past decade or so, the State has not been successful in diverting some big investments to other areas – particularly industrially-backward southern districts -- in order to ensure inclusive development.

To address this, the Tamil Nadu Industrial Policy 2021, which was unveiled last week, has put in place more attractive sops for investments in regions other than Chennai.

“One of the key objectives of the new industrial policy is to achieve inclusive industrial growth. Of course, investment decisions are taken by the companies based on several factors – not just attractive sops. Some want to stay near cities and some want better air connectivity. A few others look at social infrastructure. But we keep showing the other districts and their advantages to convince investors to go there,” Mittal said.

The team at Guidance has made 50-odd visits to places like Tiruchi and Tuticorin even during the lockdown to promote investments in these locations and work out the incentives.

“There were occasions when people took a call to go to these places. But they later changed their decision to be in Chennai or nearby locations,” said Mittal.

‘Need one big investment’

The State government has introduced a flexible capital subsidy framework in its Tamil Nadu Industrial Policy 2021.

If a company invests ₹1,000 crore, it will get up to ₹400 crore worth of incentives in the best circumstances based on the new package of sops that give more weightage to investments in southern districts and other industrially-backward ones.

“Lands are available in southern districts and private industrial parks are also coming up. Labour is available. Power will not be an issue and port connectivity is there. Only social infrastructure needs to improve. We just need one big-ticket investment to come up in this area as it will completely change the scenario,” he said.

An industry representative said the new Ennore-Tuticorin natural gas pipeline may also make investments attractive for some industries that will use natural gas as feedstock, while port connectivity will be an added advantage.

Source: thehindubusinessline.com– Feb 22, 2021

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Gujarat govt clears Rs 6k-crore investments

In a positive beginning to 2021, the Gujarat government has approved five big-ticket investment proposals by four companies, which will invest close to Rs 6,000 crore in diverse sectors. The companies will set up manufacturing facilities in Dholera and Halol.

The state industries and mines department has approved a proposal of ReNew Saksham Urja Private Limited (a 100% subsidiary of ReNew Power Private Limited), which has pledged an investment of over Rs 4,000 crore investment to set up a 2 to 4 GW solar module, cell manufacturing and lithium-ion battery production plant at Dholera. Government has approved 100-acre land allocation for the said project at Dholera Special Investment Region (DSIR).

Spate of approvals

Baby diaper manufacturing brand Avgol's proposal for setting up a Rs 1,000 crore new technical textile plant at Halol has also been approved. The company has proposed to manufacture technical textile products and hygiene products at their Gujarat plant.

Leading furniture manufacturing company Merino's proposal to establish a plant with an investment of Rs 630 crore at Halol has been approved. Merino has proposed setting up facilities for wood processing for particle board, pressing for particle board, pressing for pre-lam particles board, coating on pre-lam particle board, and cutting edging and drilling of furniture.

Another leading company Trafalgar's Rs 250 crore investment proposal has also got the nod of the state government.

The company has sought to produce state-of-the-art natural fibre-based industrial sacks, a substitute of plastic. The company has also proposed an investment of Rs 325 crore for manufacturing value added products for the automotive and glass industry.

Manoj Das, additional chief secretary (ACS) in chief minister office (CMO) and in charge ACS, industry & mines department said the investments will be made in diverse sectors like renewable energy and technical textiles.

“Despite the impact of Covid-19 worldwide, the state has been able to attract fresh investments in 2020 and this year too, the number of investment proposals is encouraging.

Under ease of doing business (EoDB) mandate of central and state government, we are proactively facilitating all investment proposals,” Das said.

Source: timesofindia.indiatimes.com– Feb 23, 2021

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