

EPCH conducts 38th Annual General Meeting

Six new members elected to Committee of Administration



Mr. Dileep Baid, Chairman-EPCH addressing the august gathering alongwith Mr. Neeraj Khanna and Mr. Sagar Mehta, Vice Chairmen-EPCH; Mr. R K Verma, Executive Director and Mr. Rajesh Rawat, Addl. Executive Director-cum-Secretary-EPCH during 38th Annual General Meeting held at New Delhi

New Delhi; 10th December 2024: EPCH successfully conducted its 38th Annual General Meeting (AGM) in New Delhi. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Dileep Baid, Chairman, EPCH, in the presence of Vice Chairmen- Mr. Neeraj Khanna and Mr. Sagar Mehta, along with leading member exporters and EPCH officials.

Prominent attendees included Mr. Ravi K. Passi, Mr. Raj Kumar Malhotra, Mr. D. Kumar, Mr. Avdesh Agarwal, Mr. Naved Ur Rehman, Mr. Salman Azam, Mr. Rajesh Jain, Mr. Ashok Arora, Mr. Simrandeep Singh Kohli, Mr. Arshad Mir, Mr. Najmul Islam, Mr. Vishal Agarwal, Mr. Parvez Alam, Mr. S. K. Goel, Mr. J. P. Singh, Mr. Deepak Gupta, Mr. Rishi Soni, Mr. Sandeep Chhabra, Mr. Vineet Bhatia, Mr. Manu Gulati, Mr. Naveen Yadav, and others. Key officials present included Mr. R K Verma, Executive Director - EPCH and Mr. Rajesh Rawat, Additional Executive Director-cum-Secretary - EPCH.

During the meeting, Mr. Dileep Baid briefed the gathering on the Council's initiatives and activities undertaken in 2023-24 to promote handicraft exports from India.

One of the agenda items of the 38th AGM was to constitute the vacancies as per available vacancies i.e. three vacancies in Northern Region and one each in North-West Region, Southern Region and North East Region. The House adopted all the agendas including the election of COA members.

The elected members are :

Northern Region : Mr. Ravi K. Passi (M/s R. K. Arts), Mr. Prince Malik (M/s Osyrus Overseas), and Mr. Arshad Hussain Mir (M/s Mir Handicrafts Pvt. Ltd)



Southern Region: Mr. K. N. Tulasi Rao (Ramakrishna Paramahansa & Co., Narsapur)

North-West Region: Mr. Dileep Baid (M/s Dileep Crafts Private Limited, Jaipur)



North-East Region: Ms. Jesmina Zeliang (M/s Heirloom Naga, Dimapur)

Mr. Baid expressed appreciation for the contributions of outgoing CoA member Mr. K L Ramesh, acknowledging his dedication and service to the handicrafts trade. He further urged the member exporters to work collaboratively for the betterment of the sector.



Growing interest in green outdoor spaces and plants in Europe May boost consumer demand for watering cans and misting equipment

As Europeans increasingly embrace green outdoor spaces and houseplants, the market for watering cans is seeing a surge in interest. With many households boasting gardens, balconies, and indoor plants, consumers are turning to watering cans that combine functionality and aesthetics. The growing trend of using plants to enhance living spaces and promote well-being, particularly for remote workers, is driving demand. Adding value through innovative design and sustainable features is becoming key to capturing consumer attention in this evolving market.

While watering cans are primarily designed for watering plants, they can serve as both functional tools and decorative items. Instead of being tucked away in a cupboard or garden shed, they can be proudly displayed on shelves or in the garden. However, functionality should always be the primary focus when designing a watering can. "Indoor watering cans often feature narrow spouts, allowing for precise water flow near the base of plants, minimizing spills. For outdoor use, wide-spout cans enable quick watering of plants and the surrounding soil. Many outdoor models include a removable sprinkle or rose attachment for gently watering delicate plants

without causing damage. Larger outdoor watering cans may come with two handles - one at the back and one across the top - for better balance and control during use.

Watering cans are crafted from a variety of materials, each offering distinct advantages. Metal, ceramic, and plastic are the most common, with wood often used for handles. Lightweight plastic cans are convenient for everyday use, and those made from recycled plastic are gaining popularity due to their sustainable appeal. Heavier metal cans are ideal for outdoor use, as they are less likely to be blown away by the wind. Galvanising and powder-coating protect these cans from corrosion.

Ceramic, glass, or copper designs are popular for their decorative value, though they are more fragile and better suited for indoor use. Functional watering cans tend to be simple in design, focusing on ergonomic handles and extra-long spouts for ease of use. More decorative options feature a variety of shapes, decorations, and material combinations. Plant misters, often designed with delicate materials like glass or copper, tend to adopt romantic, dainty aesthetics. ■ *Source: CBI, Netherlands*

Blood Donation Camp by Rotary Club of Jodhpur in association with EPCH EPCH Trade Facilitation Centre, Jodhpur; 1st December 2024



The Rotary Club of Jodhpur (Round Town), in association with the Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH), successfully organised a blood donation camp on 1st December 2024 at the EPCH Trade Facilitation Centre in Jodhpur.

The event witnessed the gracious presence of several dignitaries, including Mr. Atul Bhansali, MLA, Jodhpur City; Mr. Hansraj Baheti, COA Member, EPCH, Jodhpur; Mr. Nirmal Bhandari, prominent member exporter, EPCH; Mr. Ghanshyam Ojha, National President, Laghu Udhog Bharti; Mr. Radheshyam Ranga, Member, EPCH NWR Regional Committee; Mr. Manish Salecha, President, Rotary Club,

Jodhpur; Mr. Ashish Mehta, Secretary, Rotary Club, Jodhpur; Mr. Mahaveer Chopra, President, Laghu Udhog Bharti, Jodhpur; and Mr. Suresh Vishnoi, Joint General Secretary, Laghu Udhog Bharti. Additionally, prominent member exporters of EPCH such as Mr. Uttam Salecha, Mr. Mohit Mohnot, Mr. Priyesh Bhandari, Mr. Siddarth Mehta, Mr. Lalit Johari, along with members of the Rotary Club of Jodhpur, actively participated in the event.

A dedicated team of doctors was also present to facilitate the smooth functioning of the camp. More than 500 units of blood were donated. ■

US home stores saw a big drop in store visits, but recovered in Q4 Discount and dollar stores led growth in 2024

Though in-store traffic at the home and furniture channel saw the steepest decline last year, there is a potential silver lining in the data. For the full year, visits to home and furniture stores tumbled 5.7% in 2024, according to Placer.ai's 2024 Retail Foot Traffic Recap report. The channel experienced its biggest declines in visits from January to July 2024 – but began building back in the latter half of the year. And the channel finished the year with a strong 3.5% jump in Q4 traffic. Placer.ai characterizes the year-end performance as “a promising sign for 2025.”

Overall retail foot traffic was anemic in 2024, rising just 0.4%. In a year when consumers were focused on value and essentials, it is not surprising that discount & dollar stores (2.8% visit growth YoY) and superstores (1.7% growth YoY) outperformed other retail categories.

Placer.ai's full results by channel from best to worst included: Discount & dollar stores: +2.8%; Superstores: +1.7%; Beauty & spa: +1.6%; Clothing: +1.5%; Shopping centers: +1.3%; Groceries: +1.0%; Office Supplies: -0.4%; Hobbies, gifts & crafts: -0.4%; Home improvement: -1.5%; Recreational & sporting goods: -1.6%; Gas stations & convenience stores: -1.6%; Drugstores & pharmacies: -2.1%; Electronics stores: -3.5%; Home furnishings and furniture stores: -5.7%.

“Still, looking at 2024 as a whole revealed that the year did outperform 2023, with overall retail visits up 0.4% – suggesting that consumer behavior remains resilient and that 2025 could mark a further turnaround if cooling inflation meets consumer expectations,” Placer.ai analysts Ezra Carmel & Noam Maman wrote. ■ *Source: Home Textiles Today*

Fashion, healthy treats among top pet gift trends for 2025

Pet owners, especially millennials, are shopping big for their pets in 2025

As pets become more integrated into daily life, the demand for unique, thoughtful gifts that cater to both pets and their owners is on the rise. For independent retailers, offering pet gifts can be a lucrative way to attract customers, enhance store appeal and tap into a market that has steadily grown in recent years. Some are:

Bona-fido Fashion

Many devoted pet parents enjoy having their pets dressed in style, and this is especially true of millennial pet parents. In the 2025 Gift Book Consumer Survey, millennials were the most likely generational group to purchase pet clothing and accessories. While pet collars and leashes make sensible gifts for any pet owner, offering stylish, high-end accessories that make a fashion statement allows customers to spoil their pets with something special.

Geometric patterns such as triangles and chevrons are popular for their modern and minimalist appeal while vintage floral designs offer a touch of sophistication to any pet's ensemble. Designer pet accessories, such as dapper bow ties or chic bandanas can add additional upsell opportunities, especially when merchandised as part of a set demonstrating the value and significance of the pet's role in the family – think fashion for the whole wedding party, groomsgod included – or matching sibling pajamas for Christmas with a coordinating bandana for the family cat.

Pawsitively Wholesome Gifts

According to the 2025 Gift Book Consumer Survey, treats top the list as the most-bought pet item among pet owners followed closely by toys. In particular, organic treats, free from artificial additives and preservatives are on the rise, catering to health-conscious pet owners who want to assure their pets live long and happy lives, as well as

aligning with broader wellness trends. Additionally, creatively packaged seasonal treats or gift sets that include a treat and a ball toy or even a toy and a matching accessory for the pet owner, are becoming increasingly popular, allowing these beloved companions to join in the festive fun during the holidays. Pet advent calendars will also continue to rise.

Gifts for Mom and Dad

For pet owners themselves, trending gifts include humorous and whimsical items celebrating their bond with their furry friends. Tea towels featuring pet-related puns, novelty socks adorned with playful dog illustrations, and home decor signs that joke about a pet's mischievous behavior or their love of food can add a personal and lighthearted touch to a pet lover's home, making them perfect for showcasing their affection or serving as charming conversation pieces with other pet owners. ■ *Source: Gifts and Decorative Accessories*

