

# India opens for Exhibitions and Conventions

## Ministry of Tourism, GoI, acknowledges India Exposition Mart as leading MICE venue

**New Delhi; 17th June 2021** | - The whole world has been affected by ongoing pandemic for the last 16 months with physical economic activities related to trade fairs, conventions and expos at complete halt, now being undertaken. However, now with tapering off the 2nd wave and also a very extensive vaccination programme being carried out across the country, India is all set to open exhibitions and conventions for visitors from all across the globe at the State-of-the-Art India Expo Centre & Mart located in Delhi NCR.

The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, in its tweet on 17th June, 2021 (<https://twitter.com/tourismgoi/status/1405455758083297283?s=12>) has acknowledged India Exposition Mart as the leading venue for MICE events and for providing world class infrastructure to renowned Indian & international tradeshows. The Ministry also mentioned in tweet that given its huge venue size of over 2,35,000 sq. mt. in Greater Noida, IEML has hosted 9 out of 12 largest shows of India, across various industry sectors and has set the highest quality benchmarks in the industry. The Ministry also highlighted that IEML is coming up with its own in-house hotel accommodation for 128 rooms that will support the existing inventory of 15000 rooms of budget and 5 star hotels in the vicinity of the region. With purpose-built venues like India Expo Mart, India is ready to welcome the world of exhibitions and business opportunities.

Dr. Rakesh Kumar, Chairman, India Expo Centre & Mart and Director General, Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts, welcomed and thanked the Ministry of Tourism for the gesture and hoped that with such positive signs, normalcy would soon return as far as organisation of exhibitions and conventions in the country is concerned and further said that the

venue is all set to resume operations once again with all SOPs for adherence to Covid Protocols in place. During the brief period of normalcy just before the 2nd wave hit the country, two physical shows namely Indus Food and SATTE were successfully organised in the month of March, 2021. ■



# EPCH delegation meets Industries Minister, Govt. of Bihar

## EPCH assigned for development and promotion of Bihar State Handicrafts products

**New Delhi; 23rd June 2021 |**

EPCH-Chairman, Mr. Raj Kumar Malhotra; Director General, EPCH, Dr. Rakesh Kumar; and Executive Director, EPCH, Mr. R K Verma, met Hon'ble Industries Minister, Govt. of Bihar, Shri Syed Shahnawaz Hussain.

**The State Government of Bihar has assigned a project to EPCH for development and promotion of Bihar State Handicrafts products.** Under this project, EPCH will undertake

various activities like Skill Development of the artisans, Design support, Clusters formation amidst initiatives to present the handicrafts of Bihar at domestic and International markets. The Hon'ble Minister assured full support to EPCH for the same.

The State of Bihar has a rich historical past. Right from the ancient history to the present century it was always a centre of attention of historians. The unique features of art and crafts in Bihar are the intrinsic beauties and great creativeness. These creative beauties have been preserved in various forms like in ancient stone, wooden structures, grass-clothes, lacquer and metal-wares. Bihar's craftsmen have excelled in manufacturing artistic goods which have great demands in local and international market. Major crafts of State of Bihar are: Madhubani Painting, Rock Painting, Wooden Work, Pottery Works, Bamboo Works, Sikki works, Brass work, Tikuli works, Zari work, Kasida works, Textile painting, Jewellery, Patna kalam and Lacquer works. ■



## EPCH calls on Development Commissioner (Handicrafts)



**New Delhi; 1st July 2021 |** EPCH-Chairman, Mr. Raj Kumar Malhotra; Director General, EPCH, Dr. Rakesh Kumar; and Executive Director, EPCH, Mr. R K Verma, met Shri Shantmanu, IAS, Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India to brief the export performance of handicrafts sector during 2020-21.

The DC(H) and Addl. DC(H) interacted in detail and assured full support to the handicrafts fraternity for promotion of exports of handicrafts. ■

# A Strong but Changed Retail Industry Looks to the Future : NPD

The retail industry is now doing better than many retailers expected last year as stores, offices, and schools shut down across the country. In fact, compared to last year, discretionary retail sales revenue in the U.S grew 17% from January 1 through May 8, 2021, according to The NPD Group. Even more strikingly, retail sales increased 18% over 2019. Growth in the U.S. economy continues to rise as vaccination rates increase and as more consumers, as well as businesses and schools, begin to map their post-pandemic paths forward. In a recent "Future of Style" event, hosted by The NPD group, experts from NPD focused on the key opportunities and challenges faced by retail companies and brands, as retailers and consumers begin to emerge from the global pandemic. Four important overarching retail trends to watch in the coming months :



## Experiential spending returns

With vaccination rates on the rise, consumers will once again start spending on travel, dining out, and other experiences. This socialization shift will create more movement in products related to emerging needs. As consumer behavior starts to bounce back, leaders in the retail industry are looking beyond what happened last year to determine the behaviors that will change, as well as those that could remain in force for months, or even years, into the future. Consumers began to shop mainly for their immediate situations, rather than thinking about what they might need down the road or for the season ahead. One can expect some of that behavior to continue, even as more stores reopen and consumers get comfortable shopping in-person again, and retailers will need to adjust their seasonal planning in order to win the purchase.

## The continuing power of pandemic "lifestyle pillars"

Purchasing related to home-based work, education, fitness, entertaining, and healthy home all ramped up mightily last year, and the continuation of these lifestyle pillars continues to propel retail growth upward. Even so, these pandemic pillars will eventually start to moderate, as restrictions ease and consumers revive more of their pre-pandemic activities. Sports equipment, home products, consumer technology, and toys enjoyed strong sales last year.

## Retail's cadence is shifting

Consumers used to plan their shopping carefully weeks or even months ahead of time, but that forward-looking focus shifted appreciably last year. Due to all the uncertainty surrounding the pandemic, along with the convenience of one- and two-day shipping, curbside pick-up, and other convenient options, the retail cadence became much more immediate. Consumers began to shop mainly for their immediate situations, rather than thinking about what they might need down the road or for the season ahead. One can expect some of that behavior to continue, even as more stores reopen and consumers get comfortable shopping in-person again, and retailers will need to adjust their seasonal planning in order to win the purchase. There was a surge in softlines sales when kids went back to school this spring in some areas of the country. This is one example when the shift to buying when it's needed could disrupt traditional back-to-school shopping season.

## Fast-forward for digital transformation

Over the past few years, a big story in retail was the steady digital transformation of many sectors of the retail market. However, after the pandemic hit, the size of e-commerce growth for some industries leapt forward by three years while still leaving plenty of room to grow. Although beauty, fragrance, and apparel, still benefit more from in-store traffic, due to the need to see and try on products, housewares, sports equipment, and other retail categories will increasingly reap benefits from the consumer's accelerated migration to shopping online. When it comes to shopping, it's apparent now - consumer does not recognize any lines of demarcation at all. ■ Source : NPD

## US Toy Industry Sales Experience 27 Percent Increase

US toy industry dollar sales increased 27% or up \$1.5 billion between January and April 2021, according to The NPD Group. Both unit sales and average selling price (ASP) increased during the period, up 17% and 9% respectively.

Ten of the 11 supercategories tracked by NPD posted double-digit dollar growth versus 2020. Furthermore, all supercategories posted a positive 2-year compound annual growth rate (CAGR) with seven supercategories showing double digit growth rates versus 2019. After experiencing a dollar gain of \$324 million, Outdoor & Sports Toys continues to be the largest supercategory with \$1.6 billion in sales, while Plush had the fastest dollar growth versus 2020 at 44%.

“As we lap the lockdowns of 2020, the supercategories that had surging growth last year, like Games & Puzzles, appear to be slowing down,” said Juli Lennett, vice president and industry advisor, US Toys, The NPD Group. “However, it’s important to realize that sales are still strong for Games & Puzzles in 2021 which is reflected in the two-year CAGR growth of 34%, the fastest growth compared to 2019 of all supercategories.”

Strategic Trading Cards was the top dollar growth class among all 96 classes tracked by NPD, driven in large part by Pokémon, which was the top growth property year-to-date. While all price points grew, the fastest growth came from price points between \$40 and \$69.99. One quarter of the growth in this price segment was driven by Strategic Trading Card Games.

Rounding out the top ten properties were Pokémon, Barbie, Star Wars, L.O.L. Surprise!, Marvel Universe, Hot Wheels, Little Tikes, Nerf, LEGO Star Wars and Funko Pop! Collectively, these ten properties grew 48 percent while the rest of the market grew 22 percent from January to April 2021.

“We can’t underestimate the impact that federal stimulus payments had on toy industry performance this year,” said Lennett. “The follow up to that will be the child tax credit which will provide cash in the hands of parents each month starting in July and through the end of the year.” ■ *Source: NPD*

The year-to-date increase shows growth in outdoor and sports toys, games and puzzles, dolls and more.

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## Trend Alert: it’s official, Aussies love a bargain

Australia’s younger shoppers are becoming savvier when it comes to spending their money, with almost two thirds of Gen Z (61%) and more than half of millennials (55%) saying they have waited until an item went on sale before making the plunge to buy it online. In fact, according to the PayPal EOFY Sales Trends Report 2021, it’s not just the younger ones that love a bargain, as 50% of Australian consumers across the board report that they ‘hate buying at full price’. Even while shopping in-store, two in five Australians (40%) admit they’ve researched online prices on their mobiles, to ensure they are nabbing the best deal.

As the sales cycle gets busier than before, more millennial shoppers looking for deals to make their dollars go further. On the flipside, this means millennial shoppers can be reluctant to spend outside of sales season. Over a quarter (27%) said they

only shop when items are on sale or discounted with only one in ten (10%) saying they don’t care whether items are on sale or not. Nearly a third of Australians (31%) believe there are more sales on now than two years before, with about a quarter (23%) attributing this to the economic impact of Covid-19.

While slightly more still shop the sales in-store (55%), the scales are shifting with the majority saying they prefer to shop the sales online (51%). This preference to shop online is significantly higher for younger shoppers, with millennials leading the charge (70%). Aussie shoppers see a variety of benefits to shopping the sales online rather than in-store. Over a third of Australians say it is faster and more convenient to shop sale events online (39%), that there is more product choice online (37%) and that they get better deals online (36%). ■ *Source: Giftguide Online*

## Social Media's Influence on Fashion Industry Sales

There is something to be said about the sense of community when it comes to who and what users follow on social media. Consumers put a lot of faith in the experiences and recommendations of people whom they may not know first-hand. As a result, social media has transformed from a place of sharing to a place of discovery, and even shopping, particularly as it relates to fashion. The NPD Group ([www.npd.com](http://www.npd.com)) recently surveyed consumers to determine how they learn about or discover fashion brands and retailers. Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest landed at the top of this list, educating 41%, 35%, and 21% of consumers about brands, respectively. When asked what platforms converted advertising and other content into actual purchases, a little over half (51%) said Facebook and Instagram content resulted in buying products.

The pandemic accelerated the ongoing retail shift from brick-and-mortar stores to online purchasing years into the future.

Ready or not, with consumers sheltered at home last year, fashion retailing needed to adapt, and that adaptation had to happen quickly. With this shift, impulse purchasing also shifted. **As these platforms make purchasing even easier, social media will continue to gain more impulse-purchase attention.**

In a recent thought leadership survey done in conjunction with partner CivicScience, when NPD asked consumers if they made any unplanned purchases of clothing, footwear, or accessories while scrolling through social media, younger consumers said they were more inclined to buy on impulse. In fact, one in three consumers between the ages of 13 and 24 had some sort of purchase interaction when it came to fashion and social media. Twelve percent said they made an unplanned purchase, 17% said they were not opposed to it in the future, while only 6% said they would not purchase fashion products via social media sites again. ■ *Source: NPD*

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## Apparel, footwear and beauty top consumer shopping lists

Across discretionary consumption, apparel (50%), footwear (37%) and beauty (32%) are the categories consumers most expect to purchase within the next 60 to 90 days, NPD Group's May 2021 Omnibus Survey has found. The second tier consists of consumer technology (25%), home goods (25%) and books (24%). NPD's list rounds out with office supplies (20%), tickets to events or travel (19%), gift cards/restaurant certificates (18%), video games (17%), accessories (17%), automotive aftermarket (15%), sports/fitness equipment (13%) and toys (13%).

In the near-term, summer events and gatherings are expected to be a boon for the soft lines categories that struggled throughout much of the pandemic. Though



consumers now show willingness to spend on a number of categories, purchase behaviors have fundamentally changed," he said. "As a result, brands and retailers must identify and stay ahead of these shifts to capitalize on evolved consumption patterns. Some experiential spending is already rebounding. Consumers are beginning to place more emphasis on appearance and health, and starting to spend more on products related to travel and other experiences.

However, as this pent-up demand works itself out in the coming months, one can also expect those rising sales to throttle back a bit in apparel, footwear, and other categories. ■

*Source: Home Textiles Today*

## Gen Z consumer inspired by Sustainability and Self-expression

Gen Z's shopping behaviours are "strongly influenced" by brands commitments to social and environmental sustainability, according to a new report from marketplace Depop and consultancy firm Bain and Company. Based on a survey of 2,000 Gen Z Depop buyers and sellers in the UK, US and Australia, the 'Futureproof: How Gen Z's empathy, awareness and fluidity are transforming business as usual' report shows that Gen-Z consumers have shifted how they shop and that they are concerned about consumption, sustainability and self-expression.



When it comes to sustainability, 90% of Gen Z consumers surveyed said they have made changes to be more sustainable in their daily lives and more sustainable fashion practices play a central role.

70% added that they are influenced by commitments to fair wages and safety, while 60% want to know a brand's commitment to diversity and inclusion. In addition, 60% are driven by a brand reducing its footprint and 45% are influenced by eco-friendly materials.

Gen Z are changing fashion consumption with their approaches to self-expression and identity, and by redefining the way newness is understood and appreciated. This is a generation leading change at global scale - they

are increasingly influencing the consumption behaviours of older generations, and are rapidly gaining spending power. In order for fashion businesses to succeed with current and future consumers, they must believe in and serve the interests of these audiences. Fluidity, constant evolution and clear values are the means to be a futureproof brand - and we use those principles to guide the development of our social,

purposeful, community-driven fashion marketplace.

The survey also revealed that 75% of Depop users use the platform to buy second-hand fashion as a way to reduce their consumption, while 65% added it allows them to purchase clothing at a lower price, and 55% said it was to buy one-of-a-kind items. Brands will need to make sure they understand the unique customers that are Gen Z: they may be young, but they have strong opinions and have high expectations for the brands with which they interact.

Values such as sustainability and equity are paramount to them and heavily influence their purchasing choices. As Gen Z gains spending power, building a lasting connection and dialogue with these new consumers will be key for brands to be successful. ■ *Source: Fashion United*