

LETTER

CONFEDERATION OF INDIAN TEXTILE INDUSTRY

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NATIONAL

India's Textiles Committee urges zero-defect manufacturing

India's Textiles Committee has marked its 62nd Foundation Day in Mumbai with a policy and compliance message for textile exporters, manufacturers and sourcing teams: zero-defect manufacturing, traceability and environmental conformity will be central to global competitiveness, the Ministry of Textiles said.

India's Minister of Textiles Giriraj Singh, who attended as chief guest, commended the Committee for its shift from a conventional pre-shipment inspection agency in the 1960s to an enabler for modern trade, research and quality compliance. He also reiterated the Prime Minister's 5F Vision—Farm to Fibre, Fibre to Factory, Factory to Fashion and Fashion to Foreign—and highlighted the expansion of Textile Export Facilitation Centres to simplify free trade agreement utilisation and export clearances for MSMEs, and urged the Committee to bring Indian textile certification in line with the highest international accreditation benchmarks.

Established on August 22, 1964 under the Textiles Committee Act, 1963, the Textiles Committee is a statutory body under the Ministry of Textiles, and has completed 62 years of work towards quality standards in textiles and textile machinery for domestic consumption and international markets.

The event was attended by Minister of Textiles, Government of Maharashtra Sanjay Savkare as guest of honour; textile commissioner and vice chairperson, Textiles Committee Vrunda Manohar Desai; joint secretary, Ministry of Textiles Manisha Chatterjee; development commissioner for handlooms, Ministry of Textiles Dr. M. Beena; secretary, Textiles Committee Kartikay Dhanda; senior government officials; heads of export promotion councils; industry representatives; ginners; and other stakeholders.

Savkare lauded Maharashtra's industrial powerloom hubs, including Bhivandi, Ichalkaranji and Solapur, and the Committee's testing infrastructure in Mumbai. He also pointed to scope for collaborative work in skill development, cluster-level testing clinics and sustainable waste recovery.

Beena emphasised the Committee's role in protecting authentic weaver craftsmanship through the India Handloom Brand and Handloom Mark, along with protection of handloom products under the Geographical Indications Act, 1999. Desai highlighted value-chain

interventions including GI tagging, post-GI handholding and the establishment of India's first municipal-scale Textile Recovery Facility in collaboration with the Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation.

Chatterjee highlighted the Committee's work in green chemistry through the UNIDO-GEF Project—Eliminating Hazardous Chemicals from the Textile and Fashion Supply Chain. She also referred to the Scheme for Capacity Building in Textile Sector, SAMARTH, which was launched to convert unskilled manpower into a skilled workforce across various parts of the textile industry. Dhanda outlined the Committee's evolution in response to changing sector requirements and thanked the Government of India, trade and industry for continued support.

Since its inception in 1964, the Committee has widened its technical and developmental role in line with domestic and global textile industry requirements. It operates a nationwide network of NABL-accredited eco-testing and physical testing laboratories, offering specialised restricted substance analysis and other testing services at accessible costs, particularly for MSMEs, according to the Committee.

The Committee also highlighted national branding and authenticity frameworks across the textile value chain. It said Handloom Mark gives India's handloom products a premium identity in domestic and international markets and serves as a symbol of authenticity for handwoven products. India Handloom Brand applies zero-defect quality benchmarks and chemical safety standards for certified, eco-friendly products while supporting fair returns to handloom weavers. Jute Mark India gives India's golden fibre a standardised identity for biodegradable packaging and diversified lifestyle products, while Bharat Wool Mark creates objective grading and quality standards for indigenous wool and supports pastoral communities across Rajasthan, Gujarat, Himachal and Uttarakhand.

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ReFiber tackles India's textile waste with nationwide recovery drive

Read more at : <https://www.just-style.com/news/refibre-india-garment-collection-drive/?cf-view>

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India to introduce new rules soon for ease of doing business, says Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal

Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said India will amend existing regulations and introduce new rules over the next two months to address concerns raised by companies seeking to set up manufacturing operations in the country. Speaking during a programme in Tokyo, Mr Goyal said he met two major corporations earlier in the day—one planning to establish semiconductor equipment manufacturing in India and another operating in the automotive components sector.

The minister said he assured them that within the next two months, India will amend its regulations and bring in new rules to accommodate their requests. Mr Goyal said, the government was willing to address issues faced by investors where their demands were fair and justified. On India-Japan economic ties, he said, the two countries were complementary economies, with Japan bringing technology and business practices while India offered a young workforce, scale and a large domestic market. Mr. Goyal added that India and Japan were in active dialogue on working together as trusted partners, including to address concerns around AI being weaponised or monopolised. He also said India's large domestic market and free trade agreements could provide Japanese companies with opportunities to manufacture in India and access global markets.

The minister is leading a nearly 200-business delegation to bolster economic ties between the two nations. The visit will cover Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka, with representatives from key sectors including manufacturing, semiconductors, clean energy, steel, automobiles, financial services, healthcare and start-ups.

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India and GCC discuss cooperation and Free Trade Agreement negotiations

India and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) held discussions on cooperation between the two sides, including Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations.

The discussions took place during a meeting between India's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Vipul, and GCC Secretary-General Jasem Mohamed Albudaiwi. The two sides also discussed regional and global developments of mutual interest.

In February, India and the GCC signed the Terms of Reference to guide the negotiations for the India-GCC FTA.

The GCC was established by an agreement in Riyadh in 1981 among Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE in view of their special relations, geographic proximity, similar political systems based on Islamic beliefs, joint destiny and common objectives.

Ties between India and GCC countries have deepened in recent years in various sectors, including trade, investment, energy, health, technology and cultural exchanges. Trade and Investment between India and the GCC continues to increase, with total trade of around USD 178 billion in FY 2024-25.

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US, Indian bizs keen on investing in Bangladesh: Commerce Minister

US and Indian businesses have expressed interest in investing in Bangladesh and have proposed several suggestions for creating a more conducive investment environment, according to the country's Commerce Minister Khandakar Abdul Muktadir.

Some Indian business representatives who recently visited Bangladesh have already invested in the country, he told a meeting in Sylhet.

Indian businessmen have expressed interest in making land ports between both the countries fully operational as their closure or limited operation raises the cost of raw materials for Indian businesses, he was cited as saying by domestic media outlets.

Indian business representatives have proposed forming a taskforce with Bangladesh businesses for investment in infrastructure and a joint trust for developing digital infrastructure.

The US trade delegation too recently expressed interest in investing in the country and Bangladesh is considering its proposals, he said.

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China and Switzerland update trade agreement, include first-ever human rights provision in a Chinese FTA

China and Switzerland concluded negotiations on an updated free trade agreement (FTA) on Thursday, 20 August, enabling 99.8% of Swiss exports to China (excluding gold) to enter the Chinese market duty-free, up from the previous 53.6%.

The updated FTA – set to be signed by the end of the year – has environmental and labour provisions never before seen in a Chinese FTA, and is the first one to explicitly mention the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

Signed between the two countries in 2014, the original FTA was the first such deal China reached with a European economy. Although it enabled tariff-free access for almost all Chinese goods (barring agricultural goods), nearly half of Swiss exports to China remained subject to duties.

Nonetheless, with bilateral trade reaching around \$43 billion in 2025, China is Switzerland's third largest trading partner, after the European Union (EU) and the US. Negotiations to optimise the agreement had been ongoing since 2024.

As China's Minister of Commerce Wang Wentao and Swiss President Guy Parmelin reached an agreement in Bern last week, around 100% of Swiss products – including watches, pharmaceuticals, machinery, and chemicals – that had previously been subject to partial tariff concessions became set to gain duty-free access. This also applies to agricultural goods such as cheese and coffee, following a 10-year phase-out period.

China's industrial goods will maintain their zero-tariff access, with agricultural goods gaining increased access and a quota-based relief system for sensitive products such as

certain fruits, vegetables. Processed agricultural goods will stay under the Swiss price compensation mechanism.

Both sides have also added new transparency rules, including: advance notices and consultations on export restrictions; publishing duties for export licences; safeguards against losing tariff concessions; looser rules of origin requirements, such as allowing third-country processing and removing the direct transport mandate; and the recognition of electronic certificates of origin.

The new agreement also outlines cooperation on boosting paperless trade.

An ESG-first for China

According to Switzerland's Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education, and Research (EAER), the agreement contains the environmental provisions that Switzerland typically agrees to in its FTAs – ones that China had never before accepted in a trade agreement.

Both parties have agreed to refrain from weakening their existing levels of environmental protection to secure trade advantages. They will implement multilateral environmental agreements ratified by both sides, including the Paris Agreement.

The agreement also contains specific provisions regarding climate change, biodiversity, forest protection, sustainable fisheries, and agriculture.

The deal is more expansive than Switzerland's existing FTAs, with a shared commitment to the clean energy transition, resource conservation, and the circular economy. China's role as the world's dominant supplier of clean energy technologies – including roughly 80% of the world's solar panels, 80% of lithium-ion battery cells, and 70% of electric vehicles (EVs) – may play a part here.

In regard to labour rights, the agreement commits to respecting fundamental principles and rights at work, such as the freedom of association, the right to collective bargaining, the abolition of child labour, non-discrimination in employment, and occupational safety and health.

Additionally, China has, for the first time, agreed to effectively implement the relevant ratified conventions from the International Labour Organisation (ILO). China has ratified 28 of ILO's conventions, with 21 currently in force.

Out of the ILO's eight fundamental conventions, China has ratified seven, excluding 'the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention'. This refers to workers' right to unionise, which contradicts China's trade union law that prohibits union activity except through the state's All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU).

The eastern superpower's typical trade agreements often omit labour provisions, with its largest agreement, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), lacking unified environmental and labour standards.

According to the United Nations (UN), China's 'poverty alleviation through labour transfer' programme enables forced labour, with an estimated 13.75 million instances of labour transfers through Uyghur-heavy Xinjiang's five-year-plan from 2021 to 2025. The Chinese government rejects these accusations.

The updated agreement follows a new wave of tariffs introduced by US President Donald Trump in July under Section 301 of the US Trade Act of 1974, targeting countries deemed to have failed to curb the import of goods produced through forced labour practices. Switzerland and China were among the countries hit by the tariffs, subject to the higher rate of 12.5%.

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Mexico and Chile Strengthen Their Free Trade Agreement

Mexico and Chile have decided to strengthen their trade relationship through new initiatives in cooperation, investment, and the development of regional value chains, during the 16th meeting of the Free Trade Commission (FTC) under the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the two countries.

At the meeting led by Luis Gutiérrez, Mexico's Undersecretary of Foreign Trade, and Paula Estévez, Chile's Undersecretary of International Economic Relations, the participants analyzed trends in trade and investment flows and identified opportunities to strengthen bilateral economic integration.

Similarly, the creation of a mechanism for exchanging trade statistics was proposed, with the aim of examining the implementation of existing agreements and generating information to support trade policy decision-making.

The delegations agreed to continue working to identify opportunities for the development of global and regional value chains. The agenda includes strengthening technical and

economic cooperation and capitalizing on the complementarity of production between the two markets.

Gutiérrez emphasized that Mexico and Chile have strengthened their trade relationship and reaffirmed their commitment to a more competitive and inclusive economic integration, based on fully harnessing the potential of the treaty, strengthening cooperation and trade facilitation mechanisms, and creating conditions that help generate greater opportunities for businesses, workers, and consumers in both nations.

The 16th Free Trade Commission also addressed regulatory, sanitary, and phytosanitary issues of mutual interest. Through these agreements, Mexico and Chile seek to strengthen the institutional processes of the FTA and move toward an economic relationship characterized by greater productive integration, competitiveness, and value creation.

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China becomes Ecuador's second-largest partner as trade tops \$9.8 bn

China has become Ecuador's second-largest trading partner, with bilateral commerce growing rapidly since the China-Ecuador free trade agreement (FTA) took effect more than two years ago, according to the commerce ministry.

Bilateral trade reached \$9.83 billion in the first half (H1) of this year, up more than 20 per cent year on year (YoY), a spokesperson said to China's news agency, marking a notable development for exporters, importers and companies monitoring trade channels between the two markets.

Earlier in the week, China's Ministry of Commerce and Ecuador's ministry of economic and productive development signed a roadmap for bilateral economic and trade cooperation and a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on supporting free trade and multilateralism, witnessed by the two heads of state, He Yadong, spokesperson for China's Ministry of Commerce, told a regular press conference.

The two sides agreed to strengthen economic and trade coordination and advance cooperation in areas including trade and investment, agriculture and food, e-commerce and sustainable development, he said.

They will also work together to implement the bilateral free trade agreement, avoid taking unjustified discriminatory economic and trade measures against each other, and maintain

communication and share information on trade measures involving third countries, the spokesperson added.

China is ready to work with Ecuador to implement the consensus reached by the two heads of state, make use of bilateral economic and trade cooperation mechanisms, promote higher-quality China-Ecuador economic and trade cooperation, and further deepen and advance the China-Ecuador comprehensive strategic partnership, he said.

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