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Textile Insights

Delivering Inspiring Information

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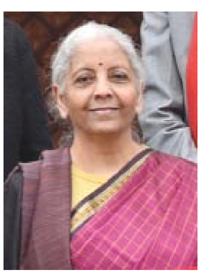

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Budget 2026-27 Lays Emphasis On Strengthening India's Textile Ecosystem

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The budget is a strong manifestation of the government's commitment to future-proof the textile and apparel sector, make it more resilient to global headwinds, and comes as a huge shot in the arm for the industry.

Ashwin Chandran, Chairman, Confederation of Indian Textile Industry (CITI)

The government has given importance for the growth of the textile industry by announcing National Fibre Scheme that focuses on strengthening the availability of raw materials, including man-made fibres and new age fibres.

Durai Palanisamy, Chairman, Southern India Mills' Association (SIMA)

Budget 2026-27 appears oriented towards strengthening long-term supply side and structural interventions across the textile value chain, rather than catalysing an immediate spurt in consumption or near-term demand.

Santosh Katariya, President, Clothing Manufacturers Association of India (CMAI)

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Union Budget 2026-27 on February 1, 2026 in the parliament. The budget aims to provide boost to the Indian textile industry through various schemes and initiatives and has been hailed by the textile industry at large.

The Confederation of Indian Textile Industry (CITI) has welcomed the Union Budget for the financial year 2026–27 presented by the Finance Minister for the decisive boost it may provide to the textile and apparel sector in raising its global competitiveness, increasing exports and safeguarding employment.

Commenting on the budget, Ashwin Chandran, Chairman, CITI, said, "The budget is a strong manifestation of the government's commitment to future-proof the textile and apparel sector, make it more resilient to global headwinds, and comes as a huge shot in the arm for the industry. We convey our heartfelt gratitude to the Prime Minister, the Finance Minister, the Textiles Minister and all senior officials for announcing measures that will help the industry attain greater heights, emerge in a stronger position to contribute to the Viksit Bharat mission, and create more and better-quality jobs."

The apex industry body believes that the launch of the National Fibre Mission, announcement of the Mahatma Gandhi Gram Swaraj initiative, Tex-Eco initiative, establishment of mega textile parks in challenge mode, textile expansion and employment to modernise traditional clusters, National Handloom and Handicrafts Programme, and the SAMARTH 2.0 skill development scheme will help local manufacturers become more efficient, innovative and sustainable, and expand their presence in global markets.

Referring to the three Kartavyas that inspired the budget, Ashwin observed: "The first Kartavya focuses on improving cost competitiveness. While we are studying the proposal, no direct announcement for the removal of import duty was made towards improving the cost competitiveness of Indian cotton-based products, which accounts for about 60 per cent of India's total textile and apparel market."

Hailing the Union Budget 2026-27, Durai Palanisamy, Chairman, Southern India Mills' Association (SIMA), stated that the government has given importance for the growth of the textile industry by announcing National Fibre Scheme that focuses on strengthening the availability of raw materials, including man-made fibres and new age fibres.

"The government has already allocated Rs 5,900 crore under "Mission for Cotton Productivity" that covers new age fibres. Man-made fibres being the growth engine and there being a huge potential to increase the market shares in all the FTA signed countries, the scheme would provide opportunities to capture new markets," says the SIMA chief.

Palanisamy is of the view that the announcement of Capital Support Scheme for Modernisation would enable the industry to upgrade the technology. The Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme, the flagship programme of the government, had attracted new investments of around Rs 4 lakh crore and now the investments had dwindled down as the TUF scheme was discontinued since April 1, 2022. He believes that given the high capital costs and the capital-intensive nature of India's textile industry, the dedicated capital support scheme would enable the sector to attract the envisaged investment of $100 billion by 2030.

"Moreover, coastal cargo scheme, allocation of Rs 10,000 crore for manufacturing, announcement of high speed rail corridors, scheme for emerging technologies and AI would also help the textile industry to enhance its global competitiveness," says Palanisamy.

"The budget appears oriented towards strengthening long-term supply side and structural interventions across the textile value chain, rather than catalysing an immediate spurt in consumption or near-term demand. The emphasis on fibre security, capacity building, skilling and sustainability lays a foundation for durable growth, with demand side momentum expected to build progressively. We feel that the current budget allocation of Rs 1,500 crore for Integrated Textile Programme for FY26-27 will have to be enhanced further in the coming years in order to make mean-

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Budget 2026-27 Lays Emphasis On Strengthening India's Textile Ecosystem

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By prioritising mega textile parks, strengthening the fibre value chain from natural to next-generation fibres, and promoting initiatives such as Mahatma Gandhi Gram Swaraj and enhanced skilling programmes, the government has laid the foundation for a globally competitive, modern and inclusive textile sector.

Rajinder Gupta, Chairman, Trident Group India

The Finance Minister's focus on self-reliance, competitiveness and jobs in the textile sector is a positive development for the sector's operating dynamics and planning visibility for manufacturers and exporters.

Priyavrata Mafatlal, Managing Director, Mafatlal Industries Ltd

We see the Union Budget 2026-27 as a comprehensive and forward-looking framework for strengthening India's textile ecosystem, particularly through its integrated approach to fibres, manufacturing, skilling and sustainability.

Madhu Sudhan Bhageria, Chairman and Managing Director, Filatex India Ltd

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ingful changes in the sector," states Santosh Katariya, President, Clothing Manufacturers Association of India (CMAI).

"Overall, we assess the announcements as constructive and positive for the textile ecosystem. The package balances supply side reforms, farm-to-factory linkages, skills, sustainability and export orientation. We look forward to rapid and transparent implementation and stand ready to partner with the government to operationalise these measures, align them with cluster needs, and ensure benefits flow to farmers, artisans, workers and textile businesses across the country," adds Katariya.

"The Union Budget 2026–27 provides a strong boost to India's textile ecosystem. By prioritising mega textile parks, strengthening the fibre value chain from natural to next-generation fibres, and promoting initiatives such as Mahatma Gandhi Gram Swaraj and enhanced skilling programmes, the government has laid the foundation for a globally competitive, modern and inclusive textile sector. These measures will empower weavers, artisans and MSMEs while accelerating sustainable growth, domestic value addition and India's global market presence," stated Rajinder Gupta, Chairman, Trident Group India.

Priyavrata Mafatlal, Managing Director, Mafatlal Industries Ltd, avers that the budget marks a very important tone in the emerging Indian economy during a global shift in supply chain realignments. The Finance Minister's focus on self-reliance, competitiveness and jobs in the textile sector is a positive development for the sector's operating dynamics and planning visibility for manufacturers and exporters. The budget's continued support for fibre supply and the clear thrust towards scale and value addition will help stabilize input costs, improve margins, and enable companies to take a positive call on capacity expansion and export commitments. The thrust on modernization of textile clusters and technical and value-added manufacturing is expected to improve productivity, quality and speed-to-market, which are critical drivers of global competitiveness.

"Today, there is no doubt that there is a gap between the availability of jobs and the demand for skilled manpower in the industry. To position India in the global employability index, it is essential that there is upskilling of both the existing and new workforce in technology, digital and AI skills. The budget's emphasis on education, employment and enterprise will definitely help bridge this gap by ensuring that skilling is aligned with the needs of the new manufacturing sector, where automation, digital engineering and technology-driven services are being increasingly integrated," adds Mafatlal.

"We see the Union Budget 2026-27 as a comprehensive and forward-looking framework for strengthening India's textile ecosystem, particularly through its integrated approach to fibres, manufacturing, skilling and sustainability. The proposed National Fibre Scheme, with its focus on man-made fibres alongside natural and new-age fibres, is a timely recognition of how the global textile industry is evolving and of India's growing role within it," says Madhu Sudhan Bhageria, Chairman and Managing Director, Filatex India Ltd.

"The emphasis on the Text-ECON initiative further reinforces the industry's shift towards sustainable and globally competitive textiles, a direction that is closely aligned with Filatex's ongoing focus on circular recycling, responsible manufacturing and traceability through its Ecosis sustainability platform. Overall, we believe the budget lays a strong foundation for a more resilient, globally competitive and sustainable textile industry, encouraging capability building and investment across the value chain," added Bhageria.

"India's tariff-impacted textile sector and its entire value chain have received support from an ar-

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Budget 2026-27 Lays Emphasis On Strengthening India's Textile Ecosystem

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The Union Budget 2026 reinforces confidence in India's textile and apparel sector with its integrated and forward-looking vision. Continued thrust on public capex, champion MSMEs and labour-intensive sectors will strengthen global competitiveness.

Sanjay Jain, Group CEO, PDS Ltd.

The Union Budget 2026-27 outlines a comprehensive and integrated approach to strengthening India's textile ecosystem, with a clear focus on infrastructure development, capital access and skill augmentation.

Sanjay Gandhi, Group CFO, Pearl Global Industries

Competitiveness in textiles begins with raw material security and scale. The National Fibre Mission and mission-mode mega textile parks will strengthen supply stability, productivity and India's ability to capitalise on FTA opportunities.

Prabhu Dhamodharan, Convenor, Indian Texpreneurs Federation (ITF)

Continued from Page 4

ray of schemes announced in the Union Budget 2026-27. The proposed establishment of textile mega parks, coupled with initiatives such as the National Fibre Scheme, Textile Expansion Employment Scheme, Tex Echo Initiative, Samarth 2.0, and the Mahatma Gandhi Gram Swaraj initiative should enhance its long-term global competitiveness. This, complemented by free trade agreements, will expand market access for domestic textile makers," says Gautam Shahi, Director, Crisil Ratings.

Sanjay Gandhi, Group CFO, Pearl Global Industries, stated that the Union Budget 2026 outlines a comprehensive and integrated approach to strengthening India's textile ecosystem, with a clear focus on infrastructure development, capital access and skill augmentation. Initiatives such as SAMARTH 2.0 signal a renewed push towards industry-aligned skilling, while the emphasis on self-reliance in natural, man-made and new-age fibres is a positive step towards long-term raw material security.

"The strong focus on building technical textile capabilities is particularly significant as the sector moves up the value chain. From an apparel perspective, greater clarity will emerge once the detailed framework of the Text-ECON initiative is available, especially around its role in driving globally competitive and sustainable manufacturing. Overall, the budget seeks to enhance cost competitiveness across the textile value chain, enabling the industry to better leverage recently announced FTAs with Europe, the UK and other markets, and compete more effectively with manufacturing hubs such as Vietnam and Bangladesh. As always, the actual impact will hinge on timely execution, detailed guidelines, and the pace of on-ground implementation," adds Gandhi.

Commenting on the budgetary proposals, Ketan Kulkarni, Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer, Allcargo Logistics, pointed out: "Budget 2026-27 offers a strategic response to a rapidly changing global trade environment by strengthening India's logistics and supply chain ecosystem. The focus on multimodal infrastructure including new freight corridors, inland waterways, cargo movement projects and last-mile connectivity for remote regions will be critical in improving efficiency and lowering logistics costs. The Rs 10,000-crore SME Growth Fund, supported by enhanced liquidity through mandatory TReDS adoption, credit-backed invoice discounting and GeM integration, will empower MSMEs to scale, formalise and participate more actively in export-led growth."

"The Union Budget 2026 reinforces confidence in India's textile and apparel sector with its integrated and forward-looking vision. Continued thrust on public capex, champion MSMEs and labour-intensive sectors will strengthen global competitiveness. The launch of SAMARTH 2.0 will modernise the skilling ecosystem through deeper industry–academia collaboration, enhancing productivity across export-oriented clusters. Initiatives such as Tex-Eco and renewed focus on PM MITRA mega textile parks will accelerate investment, reduce import dependence and boost exports, firmly aligning the sector with the vision of Viksit Bharat," said Sanjay Jain, Group CEO, PDS Ltd.

In the opinion of Prabhu Dhamodharan, Convenor, Indian Texpreneurs Federation (ITF), "Competitiveness in textiles begins with raw material security and scale. The National Fibre Mission and mission-mode mega textile parks will strengthen supply stability, productivity and India's ability to capitalise on FTA opportunities. Technology upgrades in clusters will be critical to building globally competitive supply chains."

According to Bhavini Parikh, Founder, Bunko Junko, "Budget marks a turning point for upcycling and recycling in fashion. With initiatives like Tex-Eco, cluster modernisation and Samarth 2.0, circularity is now core to India's growth strategy. Upcycling is no longer a side project, it is a policy-aligned, market-ready opportunity with jobs, climate impact and brand value built in."

Commenting on the allocation to MSMEs in the Budget, Mamta Binani, President, MSME Development Forum – West Bengal, stated: "The Rs 10,000 crore MSME Growth Fund announced in Budget 2026 is a transformational step for

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Budget 2026-27 Lays Emphasis On Strengthening India's Textile Ecosystem

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India's MSME ecosystem. At a time of liquidity stress and global trade disruptions, this fund will catalyse innovation, modernisation and global market access, reinforcing MSMEs as the backbone of India's industrial growth and exports." ing that the textile and apparel sector is predominantly MSME-driven. However, he says that that the industry has consistently sought a dedicated investment incentivisation scheme, particularly to support MSMEs in transitioning towards sustainable production models, particularly welcome," the CITI Chairman stated.

The SIMA chief stated that the budget could have considered the removal of 11 per cent import duty on cotton as the same is essential to meet the quality cotton shortage and meet the export commitments.

India's tariff-impacted textile sector and its entire value chain have received support from an array of schemes announced in the Union Budget 2026-27. Complemented by FTAs, this will expand market access for domestic textile makers.

Gautam Shahi, Director, Crisil Ratings

The Rs 10,000 crore MSME Growth Fund announced in Budget 2026 is a transformational step for India's MSME ecosystem. At a time of liquidity stress and global trade disruptions, this fund will catalyse innovation, modernisation and global market access.

Mamta Binani, President, MSME Development Forum – West Bengal

Budget 2026-27 offers a strategic response to a rapidly changing global trade environment by strengthening India's logistics and supply chain ecosystem.

Ketan Kulkarni, Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer, Allcargo Logistics

"The Budget sends a positive signal for manufacturing under the Make in India vision. The renewed focus on technical textiles, man-made fibres and mega textile parks addresses long-standing structural gaps. Integrated clusters and skilling initiatives like SAMARTH 2.0 can help India transition from volume-led to value-driven textile manufacturing," said Abhishek Sharma, CEO & Co-founder, Fashinza.

The CITI Chairman has welcomed the government's emphasis on nurturing champion MSMEs and supporting micro enterprises, noting that the textile and apparel sector is predominantly MSME-driven... which will also help in leveraging the upcoming India-EU FTA.

"While the details of the TexEco initiative are awaited, the absence of a direct investment support mechanism is felt. The proposal to extend the time period for export of final product from the existing 6 months to one year for exporters of textile garments, enhanced focus on improving logistics through freight corridors, the decision to establish a High-Page 2 of 2 Level Committee on Banking for Viksit Bharat, and simplification of export-import procedures are also

The duty exemption was available till December 31, 2025 and trade has started adopting the import parity price and the price has already increased by around 5 per cent when compared to the international price (Cotlook A) and 15 per cent higher than Brazilian cotton. The price gap is likely to widen in the coming months and would affect the financial viability of entire textile value chain that provides direct jobs to around 35 million people and accounts for around 75 per cent of the total textiles and clothing exports. ❑

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India–US Trade Deal: A Major Boost For Indian Textiles

The conclusion of a landmark US$ 500 billion trade agreement between India and the United States marks a decisive turning point in bilateral economic relations and offers a significant boost to India's textile and apparel sector. Announced by US President Donald Trump and acknowledged by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the agreement reduces US tariffs on Indian goods to 18 per cent from a steep 50 per cent, bringing substantial relief to exporters and restoring competitiveness in India's largest overseas market.

The deal follows nearly a year of difficult negotiations during which India faced some of the highest US tariffs globally. The escalation of duties in mid-2025 severely disrupted exports, particularly for small and medium textile enterprises and export-oriented clusters heavily dependent on the US market. The United States accounts for nearly US$ 10 billion in India's textile and apparel exports, which is about 28 per cent of total shipments, making tariff stability critical for the sector.

With tariffs now reduced to 18 per cent, Indian exporters gain a clear competitive edge over several major textile producing nations. Competing suppliers continue to face higher duties, including China at 34 per cent, Bangladesh and Vietnam at 20 per cent and Indonesia and Pakistan at 19 per cent. The improved tariff position is expected to encourage US buyers to rebalance sourcing strategies, potentially shifting greater volumes back to India.

Negotiations leading to the agreement began during Prime Minister Modi's visit to Washington in February 2025, when both countries committed to pursuing a trade framework and set a long-term target of expanding bilateral trade to US$ 500 billion by 2030. Talks progressed through multiple ministerial engagements but remained challenging, as the United States raised concerns over tariffs, non-tariff barriers, intellectual property and market access. Tensions intensified in mid-2025 when Washington imposed successive tariff hikes, at one stage linking penalties to India's continued

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India now stands in an advantageous position compared with competing textile-producing countries. The biggest beneficiary is likely to be the home textile sector, which has strong dominance in the US market and had temporarily come under pressure due to the tariff spike.

Dr. Gurudas Aras, Strategic Advisor and Independent Director

This landmark agreement marks a new era for Indian powerloom manufacturers and exporters. The tariff reduction to 18 per cent will significantly strengthen our global competitiveness and enable MSMEs to scale exports of fabrics, made-ups and home textiles to the US.

K. Sakthivel, Chairman, Powerloom Development & Export Promotion Council (PDEXCIL)

The sharp tariff reduction from 50 per cent to 18 per cent provides India with a cost advantage over competitors such as Bangladesh and Vietnam, strengthening global competitiveness.

Rajeev Gupta, Joint Managing Director, RSWM Ltd

India–US Trade Deal: A Major Boost For Indian Textiles

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purchases of Russian oil. Diplomatic engagement nevertheless continued, culminating in the breakthrough announced in early February 2026.

Under the agreement, the United States will reduce tariffs on Indian goods, while India will lower tariffs and non-tariff barriers on select US products and increase imports of energy, technology, agricultural and industrial goods.

Industry stakeholders have welcomed the agreement, viewing it as a timely intervention that restores confidence, revives orders and strengthens India's position in global textile supply chains.

Dr. Gurudas Aras, Strategic Advisor and Independent Director, described the agreement as a major positive for the sector. Aras said, "India now stands in an advantageous position compared with competing textile-producing countries. The biggest beneficiary is likely to be the home textile sector, which has strong dominance in the US market and had temporarily come under pressure due to the tariff spike."

He added, "Structural tailwinds are aligning to drive a multi-year export cycle. China's gradual exit from low-margin segments, combined with tariff advantages and evolving US sourcing strategies, positions Indian exporters for sustained growth. Trade agreements with the EU and the US could translate into higher order books, long-term contracts, improved capacity utilization and better margins."

He further said, "After a resilient 2025, the year 2026 could become a year of opportunity provided the industry continues to diversify its product basket, particularly by expanding MMF-based products."

K. Sakthivel, Chairman of the Powerloom Development & Export Promotion Council (PDEXCIL), emphasizing the agreement's importance for MSMEs, said, "This landmark agreement marks a new era for Indian powerloom manufacturers and exporters. The tariff reduction to 18 per cent will significantly strengthen our global competitiveness and enable MSMEs to scale exports of fabrics, made-ups and home textiles to the US. The agreement aligns with India's export ambitions under 'Make in India' and 'Viksit Bharat 2047' and promises enhanced market access for cotton, synthetic and blended fabrics. We expect a surge in US-bound exports, potentially adding over Rs 5,000 crore annually, while strengthening supply chains, generating employment in clusters such as Mumbai, Coimbatore and Surat and improving resilience against global trade disruptions."

Rajeev Gupta, Joint Managing Director of RSWM Ltd, highlighted the immediate commercial impact, "The sharp tariff reduction from 50 per cent to 18 per cent provides India with a cost advantage over competitors such as Bangladesh and Vietnam, strengthening global competitiveness. The agreement has already revived several stalled or delayed US orders, which account for nearly 28 per cent of India's textile exports. Combined with internal duty exemptions and policy measures aimed at strengthening domestic value chains, the timing is ideal to accelerate exports, support jobs across MSME clusters and improve margins in the coming quarters."

Sammir Dattani, Executive Director of Sanathan Textiles Ltd, noted the longer-term implications for manufacturers, "The agreement represents a meaningful reset for India's textile sector, bringing clarity after an extended period of tariff-related uncertainty. With the US accounting for nearly 28 per cent of exports, the reduction in duties materially improves cost competitiveness and provides a pathway for gradual recovery in demand. As buyers reassess sourcing strategies, Indian manufacturers are positioned to gain relative advantage over competing supplier countries, reinforcing India's role in global supply chains. This shift is expected to translate into a steady revival in order flows, improved pricing discipline and progressive margin stabilisation across the sector."

Beyond immediate tariff relief, the agreement carries broader strategic significance. At a time when global supply chains are undergoing rapid realignment, the deal signals deeper India–US economic engagement and strengthens India's position as a reliable sourcing destination. For the textile and apparel industry, the restoration of competitiveness in the US market could encourage fresh investment, capacity expansion and employment growth—potentially marking the beginning of a new export cycle. >> CLICK HERE TO READ ONLINE ❑

The agreement represents a meaningful reset for India's textile sector. With the US accounting for nearly 28 per cent of exports, the reduction in duties materially improves cost competitiveness and provides a pathway for gradual recovery in demand.

Sammir Dattani, Executive Director, Sanathan Textiles Ltd

With tariffs now reduced to 18 percent, Indian exporters gain a clear competitive edge over several major textile producing nations. Competing suppliers continue to face higher duties, including China at 34 percent, Bangladesh and Vietnam at 20 percent and Indonesia and Pakistan at 19 percent. The improved tariff position is expected to encourage US buyers to rebalance sourcing strategies, potentially shifting greater volumes back to India. Negotiations leading to the agreement began during Prime Minister Modi's visit to Washington in February 2025.

India–EU FTA: A Turning Point For Textile And Apparel Exports

After nearly two decades of negotiations, the India–European Union (EU) Free Trade Agreement (FTA) is being hailed as a defining moment for India's textile and apparel sector, with zero-duty access to one of the world's largest import markets. The landmark FTA is expected to reshape export dynamics, sourcing strategies and employment generation across the value chain.

The Confederation of Indian Textile Industry (CITI) has welcomed the conclusion of negotiations, calling it a historic development that could significantly accelerate textile and apparel exports in the coming years. CITI Chairman Ashwin Chandran said the agreement comes at a critical juncture for the industry, which has been under pressure following steep US tariffs imposed on Indian goods since August 2025.

"Coming at a time when India's textile and apparel sector continues to be weighed down by the steep US tariff, the announcement on the FTA with the EU comes as a huge confidence boost since it creates possibilities for increased market access and more business to flow in," Chandran said, noting that the European Union is currently India's second-largest export market for textiles and apparel after the United States.

One of the most significant outcomes of the agreement is the elimination of tariffs on textile and apparel exports to the EU, which earlier averaged up to 12 percent. Industry leaders believe this move will immediately enhance India's cost competitiveness and provide exporters with a strong alternative to the US market, where duties on certain categories have risen to as high as 50 percent. With readymade garments accounting for nearly 60 percent of India's textile exports to Europe, duty-free access is expected to improve buyer sentiment, unlock higher order volumes and trigger fresh investments across spinning, weaving, processing and garmenting.

Highlighting the export-led opportunity, Sanjay Jain, Group CEO, PDS Ltd, said the FTA could materially shift sourcing decisions in favour of India as global brands reassess supply chains amid geopolitical and regulatory pressures. "Zero-duty access is expected to improve price competitiveness, expand labour-intensive segments such as handlooms, and drive capacity expansion across key states, boosting employment for artisans, weavers and women workers," Jain said. He added that nearly 33 per cent of PDS's annual revenue of US$ 1.5 billion already comes from Europe, and the company expects to benefit through higher order volumes and longer-term sourcing commitments from EU brands, particularly via its manufacturing arm, Knit Gallery.

The textile industry is under massive stress due to US tariffs. The EU deal provides much-needed relief, but success will depend on how well Indian manufacturers meet Europe's compliance, sustainability and certification requirements.

Rahul Mehta, Chief Mentor, CMAI

Textiles remain among the biggest employers in the country, and zero duty on exports to the EU will be beneficial not just for the industry but for the wider economy.

Gautam Singhania, Managing Director, Raymond Group

From an industry-wide perspective, the deal offers timely relief as exporters grapple with global trade disruptions. Rahul Mehta, Chief Mentor, Clothing Manufacturers Association of India (CMAI), described the India–EU FTA as a potential game changer. "The textile industry is under massive stress due to US tariffs. The EU deal provides much-needed relief, but success will depend on how well Indian manufacturers meet Europe's compliance, sustainability and certification requirements," Mehta said, adding that exports could grow by up to 25 percent over the next few years if factories align products and processes with buyer expectations.

Echoing similar views, Gautam Singhania, Managing Director, Raymond Group, underlined the

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India's Textile Exports Stay On Growth Track Despite Global Volatility

India's textile and apparel (T&A) sector continued to display resilience and steady momentum despite a soft global trade environment, supported by diversified markets, value-added manufacturing and labour-intensive production capabilities. Export data for December 2025 shows the sector registering its second consecutive month of growth, with outbound shipments rising 0.40% year-on-year to US$ 3.27 billion, following strong performance in November 2025.

Growth in December was broad-based across major product categories, led by Handicrafts (7.2%), Ready-Made Garments (2.89%) and MMF yarn, fabrics and made-ups (3.99%). The performance reinforces India's competitive positioning in value-added products, traditional craft clusters and employment-rich segments, even as global consumer demand remains uneven.

On a calendar-year basis (January–December 2025), T&A exports remained stable at USD 37.54 billion. Within this, Handicrafts (17.5%), Ready-Made Garments (3.5%) and Jute products (3.5%) posted notable gains. Maintaining export stability at this scale amid geopolitical risks, inflationary pressures and shifting sourcing strategies in major markets reflects the sector's structural depth and diversified product mix.

One of the standout features of 2025 has been strong market diversification. Between January–November 2025, India recorded export growth across 118 countries and destinations versus the corresponding period in 2024, marking a broad-based expansion of global reach. Robust gains were registered in both traditional and non-traditional markets including the UAE (9.5%), Egypt (29.1%), Poland (19.3%), Sudan (182.9%), Japan (14.6%), Nigeria (20.5%), Argentina (77.8%), Cameroon (152.9%) and Uganda (75.7%). Growth was also steady across key European destinations such as Spain (7.9%), France, Italy, the Netherlands, Germany and the United Kingdom.

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India–EU FTA: A Turning Point For Textile And Apparel Exports

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broader economic and employment implications. "Textiles remain among the biggest employers in the country, and zero duty on exports to the EU will be beneficial not just for the industry but for the wider economy," he said, also noting that a strong EU agreement could strengthen India's bargaining position in future trade negotiations with the United States.

CITI believes the FTA will significantly improve India's competitiveness against countries such as Vietnam and Bangladesh, which currently enjoy tariff advantages in the EU market. "By removing the duty hurdle, the India–EU FTA will make our textile and apparel products more competitive in the European Union, potentially enabling exporters to increase revenues from the EU," Chandran said, while cautioning that exporters must strengthen innovation, sustainability and value addition, as FTAs "open doors but do not automatically guarantee business."

At the cluster level, hubs such as Tiruppur are expected to be among the key beneficiaries. European brands and retailers are already reassessing sourcing strategies, with Tiruppur's strength in knitwear and ready-made garments positioning it favourably for increased orders from major EU markets such as Germany, Italy and France. Higher capacity utilisation, renewed capital expenditure and stronger order pipelines are anticipated once the agreement comes into force, with similar benefits expected for clusters like Karur, Surat and Ahmedabad.

Currently, India's textile and apparel exports to the EU stand at around US$ 7.2 billion, a relatively modest share of the bloc's total import market. However, with tariff barriers removed, industry estimates suggest exports to Europe could grow by 20–25 percent annually after full implementation. The agreement also complements India's expanding trade architecture, following the signing of CEPA with Oman and CETA with the UK in 2025, as well as the conclusion of FTA negotiations with New Zealand.

Meanwhile, negotiations with the United States on a bilateral trade agreement are ongoing. The US remains India's largest textile and apparel export market, accounting for nearly 28 percent of total sectoral exports. In FY 2024–25, shipments to the US were valued at around US$ 11 billion, out of total textile and apparel exports of nearly US$ 38 billion. The imposition of 50 percent US tariff since August 2025 has raised concerns over margins and employment, underscoring the strategic importance of diversifying export destinations.

While the India–EU FTA still awaits formal ratification and operationalisation, expected over the next couple of years, stakeholders agree that preparedness will be crucial. Investments in sustainability, traceability, compliance, logistics and technology adoption will determine how effectively Indian manufacturers capitalise on expanded access.

Overall, the India–EU FTA signals a structural shift for the textile and apparel industry. By eliminating tariffs, strengthening India's competitiveness and diversifying export markets, the agreement positions the country as a more reliable sourcing destination for Europe and could play a catalytic role in achieving the sector's long-term target of US$ 100 billion in exports by 2030.

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CAI Revises India's Cotton Pressing Estimate For 2025-26 Season To 317 Lakh Bales

The Cotton Association of India (CAI) has raised its estimate for India's total cotton pressing in the 2025-26 season to 317 lakh bales of 170 kg each (+/-3%), an increase of 7.5 lakh bales from the previous estimate of 309.5 lakh bales. This revision follows the virtual meeting of the CAI Crop Committee on 13 January 2026, attended by 22 members representing cotton-growing regions across the country. Inputs were collected from eleven state-level cotton associations and other trade sources to arrive at the updated state-wise estimates and cotton balance sheets.

Among the states, Telangana saw the largest increase of 4.5 lakh bales, followed by Maharashtra (+3.0 lakh bales), Karnataka (+1.0 lakh bales) and Tamil Nadu (+0.5 lakh bales), while Madhya Pradesh (-1.0 lakh bales) and Orissa (-0.5 lakh bales) recorded slight reductions.

The CAI has estimated India's total cotton consumption for the 2025-26 season at 305 lakh bales, compared with 314 lakh bales last year. Up to 31 December 2025, domestic consumption is estimated at 76.25 lakh bales. Cotton imports are projected at 50 lakh bales, consistent with earlier forecasts and higher than the 41 lakh bales imported in 2024-25.

By the end of December 2025, approximately 31 lakh bales had arrived at Indian ports. In contrast, cotton exports have been revised downward to 15 lakh bales, compared with 18 lakh bales in the previous season, with around 4.5 lakh bales shipped by the end of December 2025.

Overall, the total cotton supply for the 2025-26 season is estimated at 427.59 lakh bales, including the opening stock of 60.59 lakh bales, pressing of 317 lakh bales, and imports of 50 lakh bales. This represents a significant increase from last year's total supply of 392.59 lakh bales.

The total available surplus for the season is projected at 122.59 lakh bales, while the closing stock at the end of the season on 30 September 2026 is expected to reach 107.59 lakh bales, up 47 lakh bales from the previous year. As of 31 December 2025, the available stock stood at 166.03 lakh bales, comprising 66 lakh bales with textile mills and 100.03 lakh bales with the Cotton Corporation of India, state federations, ginners, traders, and other stakeholders, including cotton sold but not yet delivered. ❑

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Global Cotton Output Will Be Lower In 2025–26 As Consumption Stabilises, Says USDA

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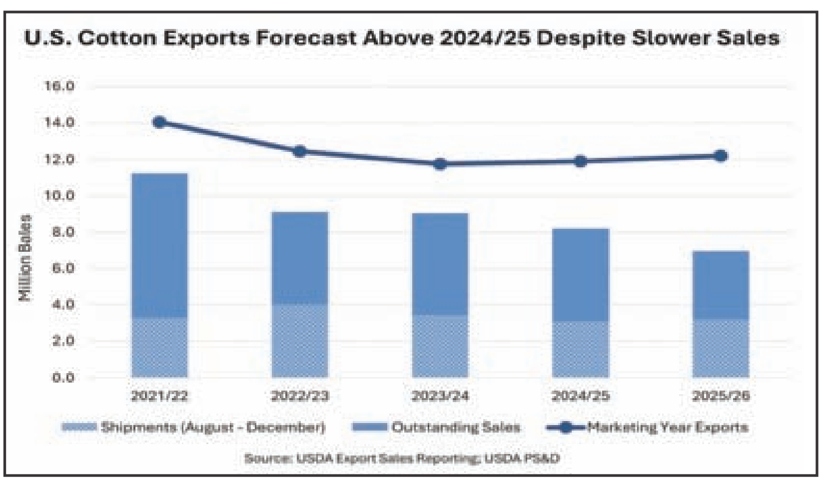
Global cotton production for the 2025–26 marketing year is projected at 119.4 million bales, down nearly 400,000 bales from earlier expectations, according to the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) in its January 2026 World Markets and Trade report. Lower output in India, the United States, Argentina and Turkey is expected to more than offset higher production in China.

Global cotton consumption is forecast to rise marginally to 118.9 million bales, supported primarily by increased mill use in China, while lower demand in Turkey and Nicaragua tempers overall growth. Despite a year-on-year increase in global production of nearly one per cent, consumption is projected to remain largely flat.



Global cotton trade is expected to remain broadly stable at around 43.8 million bales, with higher exports from Australia and India compensating for reduced shipments from Argentina and Turkey. On the import side, higher purchases by India are offset by reduced demand from Turkey and Nicaragua.

Global ending stocks are forecast to decline by nearly 1.5 million bales to 74.5 million bales, reflecting lower carryover inventories in India, the United States, Australia, Argentina and Turkey, despite higher stocks in China.

US cotton exports for the 2025–26 season (August 2025–July 2026) are forecast at 12.2 million bales, around 300,000 bales higher than the previous season. During the first five months of the marketing year, shipments reached 3.2 million bales, exceeding last year's pace, even as export sales lag historical levels.

As of January 1, outstanding US export sales stood at 7.0 million bales, compared with 8.2 million bales a year earlier. USDA attributed the slowdown to spinning mills increasingly purchasing cotton only for near-term needs amid stagnant global textile demand and evolving tariff regimes. Brazil's growing dominance as the leading cotton exporter during the early part of the season has also weighed on US sales momentum. ❑

From Fake Goods To Forced Labour: The Hidden Human Cost Of Illicit Trade

Strengthening labour governance, improving transparency in supply chains and enhancing international cooperation will be critical to breaking the cycle in which fake goods and human suffering are produced side-by-side: OECD–EUIPO study

Illicit trade in counterfeit goods is often discussed in terms of lost revenues, damaged brands and unfair competition. Yet a growing body of research shows that the problem runs far deeper.

A recent OECD–EUIPO study reveals a strong and systemic link between counterfeit production and labour exploitation, including forced labour, hazardous child labour and unsafe working conditions. The findings highlight that illicit trade is not merely a commercial or intellectual property challenge, but also a serious social and human rights concern.

Globally, counterfeit and pirated goods account for a significant share of trade, estimated at up to US$ 467 billion annually, or about 2.3% of world trade. This underground economy thrives by operating outside regulatory frameworks, enabling producers to cut costs through tax evasion, substandard materials and critically, exploitative labour practices.

Workers in such supply chains are often drawn from vulnerable populations, including migrants, informal workers and children, who have limited bargaining power and little access to legal protection.

The study finds a clear pattern: countries most frequently identified as sources of counterfeit goods often show higher levels of forced labour, informality and workplace risk. Weak labour governance, limited enforcement capacity and inadequate occupational safety systems create conditions in which both counterfeiting and worker exploitation can flourish. In these environments, businesses operating illegally face minimal oversight, allowing them to evade labour standards and suppress wages to remain competitive against legitimate manufacturers.

Labour exploitation is not incidental to counterfeit production — it is frequently central to the business model. By paying extremely low wages, imposing excessive working hours or coercing workers, illicit producers reduce production costs and increase margins. Econometric analysis in the report suggests that even small increases in forced labour prevalence are associated with measurable growth in counterfeit trade, highlighting the economic incentives that link the two phenomena. Lower minimum wage protections and high levels of informal employment further reinforce this dynamic.

The problem extends across the entire illicit supply chain. Investigations in multiple regions have uncovered clandestine workshops where undocumented migrants work in hazardous conditions, as well as cases of children engaged in packaging or assembling counterfeit products. In some instances, trafficking victims have been forced to sell counterfeit goods in street markets to repay debts imposed by criminal networks. These overlaps illustrate how counterfeiting, human trafficking and other forms of organised crime increasingly intersect, sharing logistics networks, distribution channels and financial structures.

Structural factors play a decisive role in enabling such practices. High levels of informality, weak rule of law, limited labour inspections and low levels of unionisation reduce the likelihood of detection and enforcement. At the same time, poor governance and corruption can allow illicit operators to manipulate documentation or bypass controls. The result is a parallel production system in which exploitative practices become routine and accountability is rare.

Governments are beginning to recognise the need for stronger and more coordinated responses. New regulatory initiatives, including measures to restrict imports of goods produced with forced labour, aim to curb demand for products linked to exploitation. However, the report emphasizes that trade restrictions alone are not sufficient. Effective action requires cooperation among customs authorities, labour inspectorates, law enforcement agencies and financial regulators to identify and dismantle the networks that sustain illicit trade.

For businesses, the findings highlight the importance of robust supply chain due diligence. As global value chains grow more complex, companies face increasing scrutiny from regulators, investors and consumers to ensure that their sourcing practices do not indirectly support forced labour or counterfeit production. International frameworks, including OECD due diligence guidelines, provide tools for risk assessment and mitigation, but implementation particularly in lower-tier suppliers remains uneven.

Beyond its human-rights implications, labour exploitation also distorts markets. Legitimate manufacturers that comply with labour and environmental standards face unfair competition from illicit producers operating at a fraction of the cost. This not only erodes industry profitability but also discourages investment in responsible production and innovation. Addressing labour abuse, therefore, is essential not only for protecting workers but also for maintaining a level playing field in global trade.

The central message of the OECD–EUIPO study is clear: counterfeit trade and labour exploitation are deeply interconnected challenges. Efforts to combat illicit trade must move beyond seizures and intellectual property enforcement to address the underlying social and economic conditions that enable exploitation. Strengthening labour governance, improving transparency in supply chains and enhancing international cooperation will be critical to breaking the cycle in which fake goods and human suffering are produced side-by-side. ❑

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Manmohan Singh, Chief Marketing Officer, Grasim Industries Ltd

Scalability Is A Critical Determinant Of Cost Competitiveness In Fibres: Manmohan Singh

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MMCFs play a critical role in the blended textile ecosystem. Their natural touch, superior drapability, enhanced breathability and effective moisture management make them highly relevant, says **Manmohan Singh.**

The global textile industry is currently navigating demand moderation, inventory corrections and pricing pressures. How do you assess the present market environment for man-made fibres, particularly viscose, and where do you see early signs of recovery?

The demand moderation reflects broader slowdown in consumer sentiment across end markets (apparels, home textiles) largely on account of tariff, trade tensions and macroeconomic softness. This has translated into elevated inventories, cautious purchase, sustaining near-term headwinds for MMF, particularly MMCF. Pricing pressure and inventory corrections are symptomatic of demand moderation and elevated inventories and key core element to current cyclical trough reflecting end-market demand restraint and not structural oversupply.

Cautious optimism in business sentiment is driven by structural drivers – gradual spend on capex, new applications focusing on specialty and sustainable fibre, broader application in niche segments. Current cycle may be approaching a trough, as the demand tailwind aligns towards stabilization and gradual recover.

Consumption trends in key export markets such as the US and Europe remain cautious. How is this influencing order visibility, pricing discipline and capacity utilization in your segment?

The average price realization is under pressure in current export market situation, but differentiation and customer segmentation are increasingly critical to protecting margins. Prices of key raw material (fibre) are dropping – cotton/polyester has come down sharply in the last few weeks. Raw material price stability is linked to utilization discipline, therefore, the current challenges in the US and EU region are making the supply chain more disciplined and selective in taking a strategic positioning ahead of the eventual demand normalization.

Volatility in raw material and energy costs continues to challenge the industry. How does Grasim manage cost competitiveness while ensuring stability for downstream textile manufacturers?

Feed stock security and portfolio balancing through long term supply contracts, diversification of product supplies across geographies through reduction of single source supply, deep focus on yield improvements and input optimization ensure lower volatility at the conversion level, even when absolute raw material price fluctuates.

With polyester and recycled synthetics gaining market share, how is the value proposition of viscose and specialty fibres evolving in today's market conditions?

Scalability is a critical determinant of cost competitiveness in fibres. Polyester is a clear precedent, its journey to price neutrality required more than a decade of sustained capacity build-up, technology maturation and supply chain integration. A similar trajectory is expected for man-made cellulosic fibres (MMCFs), where increasing scale, process efficiencies and broader adoption will progressively reduce effective costs and narrow the price gap with synthetics.

Inter-fibre coexistence is structural to the textile industry and will continue. No single fibre can meet the full spectrum of end-consumer performance expectations. While 100% synthetic fabrics deliver strength and durability, they often compromise on comfort parameters such as breathability and hand feel. Conse-

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Scalability Is A Critical Determinant Of Cost Competitiveness In Fibres: Manmohan Singh

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quently, blended fabrics combining synthetics with natural or cellulosic fibres have become the preferred solution to balance performance and comfort.

MMCFs play a critical role in this blended ecosystem. Their natural touch, superior drapability, enhanced breathability and effective moisture management make them highly relevant, particularly when sustainability considerations are increasingly influencing material choices. Compared to purely synthetic fibres, MMCFs offer a more sustainable and consumer-preferred alternative without sacrificing functional performance.

Current market trends, especially in sportswear and athleisure, underscore this relevance. Leading brands are increasingly incorporating MMCFs into synthetic blends to achieve the optimal combination of strength, comfort, breathability and moisture control. This positions MMCFs as a strategic fibre of choice in high-growth apparel segments where not only durability, but comfort is equally important.

From a policy perspective, how effective have recent Indian textile initiatives been in supporting man-made fibres and the downstream value chain? What structural gaps still need to be addressed?

Indian textile policy initiatives have delivered measurable progress in strengthening man-made fibres and downstream textile value chains. Targeted interventions have catalysed investments, enabled export growth, expanded domestic capacities and supported incremental value capture across the ecosystem. These measures have materially improved India's competitiveness in global textile markets.

However, to sustain and accelerate this momentum—particularly in the face of increasingly aggressive global peers—policy focus must now shift towards raw material security and competitiveness. This requires creating a level playing field for Indian raw material manufacturers, who currently compete with global fibre and raw material producers supplying into India under differing regulatory, cost and sustainability regimes.

A critical enabler in this context is the implementation of internationally recognised sustainability standards, such as Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification for dissolving wood pulp, a key raw material for man-made cellulosic fibres. Mandating or incentivising such standards will ensure that both domestically manufactured products and imported raw materials adhere to uniform benchmarks of environmental responsibility, traceability and sustainable sourcing. This approach will prevent regulatory arbitrage, reinforce responsible sourcing and strengthen domestic industry competitiveness.

These measures are fully aligned with India's national leadership priorities, global sustainability commitments and the country's aspiration to emerge as a trusted global hub for responsible sourcing, sustainable manufacturing and high-value textile production.

In parallel, long-term competitiveness of the Indian textile and fibre sector will depend on systemic enablers, including:

- Infrastructure readiness, particularly in logistics, utilities and waste management;
- Human capital development, spanning technical skills, process innovation and advanced manufacturing capabilities; and
- A robust circular economy framework, supporting fibre-to-fibre recycling, resource efficiency and low-impact production models.

Collectively, these policy interventions will reinforce India's position not only as a cost-competitive producer, but as a globally credible, sustainability-led textile manufacturing powerhouse.

India's ongoing free-trade agreement negotiations with EU and other countries are closely watched by the industry. How could these FTAs reshape market access and long-term growth opportunities for Grasim and the broader textile ecosystem? Sustainability regulations and compliance standards are tightening globally. How do evolving environmental and carbon-related policies influence investment and expansion decisions in fibre manufacturing?

Uniform taxation of raw materials and rationalisation of duties and levies across the manufacturing value chain are foundational to restoring India's global competitiveness in man-made fibres. Today, the persistence of an inverted duty structure materially disadvantages domestic production. In the case of man-made cellulosic fibres (MMCF), finished fibre is taxed at 5%, while key input raw materials attract 18% GST, rendering India-made fibre structurally uncompetitive against imported alternatives—both in the domestic market and in export-oriented supply chains. Correcting this distortion is essential to establish a step towards ensuring a level playing field with global producers supplying into India.

Beyond tax rationalisation, India must strategically leverage its Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) to build a resilient, export-led, and MMCF-driven textile ecosystem. Domestic industry interest are critital and to ensure level playing field. This requires a coordinated policy and industry approach across the following dimensions:

Level playing field with FTA competitors: Countries such as Bangladesh benefit from preferential market access and lower cost structures, enabling strong downstream export competitiveness. Addressing these asymmetries will directly strengthen India's apparel and textile exports, creating a more stable and sustained demand pull for MMCF products from Indian value chain partners.

Shift from opportunistic to programmatic sourcing: FTA-driven demand certainty can facilitate a transition towards long-term, programmatic sourcing models. This will enable more predictable downstream demand, higher capacity utilisation, improved pricing discipline and stronger justification for investments in capacity expansion and differentiated or specialty fibres.

Value chain upgrading and deeper partnerships: Competitiveness will increasingly be defined by value chain integration rather than standalone cost advantages. Upgrading across spinning, fabric, garmenting and brand interfaces will enable co-development of products, closer partnerships with global customers and fibre-level differentiation aligned to specific end-use and performance requirements.

FTAs as demand-certainty mechanisms, not just trade enablers: FTAs should be viewed not merely as tariff-reduction instruments, but as strategic demand-certainty mechanisms. When aligned with domestic policy reforms, they provide the visibility required for long-term investments, technology upgrades and sustainable growth across the MMF-led textile value chain.

Infrastructure and logistics costs continue to impact export competitiveness. Do you see tangible improvements on the ground, and what policy actions would meaningfully strengthen India's textile supply chain?

There is visible progress in improving infrastructure and logistics through new ports and hinterland connectivity, multimodal logistics integration and development of textile cluster infrastructure through PM MITRA parks helping to develop the backbone infrastructure.

However, the benefits are unevenly distributed and yet fully translated into end-to-end cost competitiveness for textile exports. Logistics cost remains at 13%-14% of GDP, much higher than global benchmark (8%-9%). High fragmentations between fibre, yarn, fabric and

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Scalability Is A Critical Determinant Of Cost Competitiveness In Fibres: Manmohan Singh

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garment clusters lead to multiple handling points and working capital lock-up. Inconsistent pricing of resources across states impact end product cost.

India is clearly moving in the right direction on infrastructure and logistics, to unlock the next level of textile competitiveness. The policy must now shift from asset creation to system optimization – connecting clusters, lowering freight cost and improving reliability and I am confident that, if executed well, these measures will structurally position India as speed-competitive, scale-efficient and compliance-ready textile sourcing destination.

> Inter-fibre coexistence is structural to the textile industry and will continue. No single fibre can meet the full spectrum of end-consumer performance expectations.

Looking at the next 12–18 months, what key risks and opportunities do you foresee for the man-made fibre segment amid global uncertainty?

The key risks are prolonged demand softness in core export markets, price and margin pressures from excess capacity and synthetic fibre, input cost raw material volatility, prolonged regularity and trade policy uncertainty, which will result in earnings volatility and cautious capital deployment.

Key opportunities are demand stabilization and replenish-led recovery, shift towards usage of more man-made cellulosic base fibre, premiumization through specialty and sustainable fibre, India's strategic positioning in global textile supply chain, cost and carbon competitive differentiator.

Finally, what policy and market reforms would you like to see implemented to ensure India emerges as a global leader in sustainable man-made fibres over the next decade?

Feedstock (raw material) certainly is foundational for scale, cost competitiveness and investor confidence in man-made fibre capacity for which it is critical that we focus on building 10-15 years national MMF road map covering viscose, specialty cellulosic fibre like Lyocell, Modal, and recycled man-made cellulosic fibre from textile waste.

Policy stability on raw materials (souring pulp from sustainable managed forest) and incentivized domestic production of critical inputs are critical to ensure India emerges as a global leader. ❑

Anuj Bhagwati, Director, A.T.E. Group

A.T.E.'S Businesses Help Reduce, Reuse And Recycle Material, Energy And Water: Anuj Bhagwati

Social impact through business is the common thread binding our diverse business areas, says **Anuj Bhagwati.**

A.T.E. Group has evolved from a textile engineering company into a multi-business sustainability-driven enterprise. What core philosophy has guided this transformation over the decades?

The core philosophy that has always guided A.T.E. since its inception more than 85 years ago has been of driving social impact through business. In the early years, we focused on selling German machines in India to compete with the British as that aligned with India's freedom movement. In later years, A.T.E. grew this business and tried to build the country's manufacturing base through its own efforts as well as through technical collaborations to create jobs and help industrialise India. My father and uncle steered A.T.E. into areas that they thought were important to the country's development – textile engineering, printing and packaging equipment, electronics, pumps, etc. In the last few years, we have come to realise that the most important challenge that we face today not only in India but in the world is the challenge of our environmental footprint. That is why A.T.E. has stepped into the business of sustainability. So, you can see that social impact through business is the common thread binding our diverse business areas.

Sustainability is deeply ingrained into A.T.E.'s identity, encompassing energy-efficient machinery, sustainable cooling solutions, and effective wastewater management. How do you articulate A.T.E.'s vision of a sustainable industrial ecosystem for India?

Our vision for a sustainable industrial ecosystem in India is best expressed by our tagline: "Partnering People and the Planet." Industry – and consumers too – need to balance the planet's needs with human needs and desires. Otherwise, life will not be sustainable. I also believe that the well-used dictum "reduce – reuse – recycle" applies to industry and people and also captures extremely succinctly the path we need to take.

Technologies like intelligent wastewater treatment, low-energy dyeing, and real-time monitoring systems are becoming essential for factories. Which sustainability technologies do you believe will have the biggest impact on Indian industry over the next five years?

I believe that the biggest impact on India's industry over the next five years from sustainability-driven technologies will be the more widespread adoption of recycled material, the production and use of green energy, the recycling of water and the use of the Internet of Things (IoT) to optimise asset use and reduce our environmental footprint, whether it is for energy, water, land or material.

A.T.E. has been vocal about reducing the environmental footprint of textiles. How are you helping mills transition toward circularity, resource-efficiency and water-positive operations?

A.T.E. has many businesses that help reduce, reuse and recycle material, energy and water. We support textile mills in their transition toward circularity, resource-efficiency and water-positive operations through solutions offered by our group companies and principals. Our solutions from the Textile Engineering group for textile processes are always energy efficient and water efficient; TeraSpin provides energy-efficient spinning components; HMX delivers sustainable cooling technologies; A.T.E. HUBER Envirotech specialises in advanced wastewater treatment and reuse systems; and EcoAxis offers digital platforms for real-time resource monitoring and optimisation. We have solutions for recycling and waste reduction as well, whether it's from the textile engineering group with our recycling solutions for material or whether it's for recycling heat and reducing production waste from AxisValence. This helps our clients reduce their material intensity. Our digital and automation solutions also help mills address skilled labour shortages by streamlining operations and making resource

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A.T.E.'S Businesses Help Reduce, Reuse ...

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management more efficient. By integrating these solutions, we enable mills to reduce, reuse and recycle materials, energy and water—helping them move toward sustainable, circular models of operation and a lower environmental footprint.

I believe that the biggest impact on India's industry over the next five years from sustainability-driven technologies will be the more widespread adoption of recycled material, the production and use of green energy, the recycling of water and the use of the Internet of Things (IoT)

Many of your solutions focus on helping manufacturers reduce energy, water and emissions. How receptive is Indian industry today to investing in clean-tech and green manufacturing? Are you seeing a fundamental shift in mindset?

I'm not seeing a big shift in mindset in Indian industry when taken as a whole, though there are of course several firms that are different. In the large part right now I'm perceiving incremental changes that are driven mostly by cost savings that new technologies bring, by government regulations and social or customer pressure.

Given that textiles remain A.T.E.'s founding and flagship domain, how do you see the textile machinery landscape evolving in India? Which of the segments—spinning, processing, finishing, weaving, digital printing, technical textiles—are driving the next wave of investments?

If we look at the global textile market and analyse its material use and technology base, we can see that India has much lower penetration of synthetics, knitting, technical textiles and nonwovens than the rest of the world. I think it's logical to assume that growth in these sectors will be higher in India than in other sectors because Indian consumers and their needs are not so different from international consumers and global needs. Digital printing growth will remain strong.

A.T.E. has always championed engineering excellence backed by deep R&D and partnerships. Are there new collaborations, technologies or product categories in the pipeline that you believe will redefine the company's next chapter?

Our R&D efforts and those of our principals are continuously throwing up new products. At TeraSpin, we believe that we have crafted the most energy-efficient ring spinning spindle and that we will show that our drafting systems will allow us to spin yarn with higher recycled content than current products. Our cooling brand HMX is working on the next generation of evaporative cooling technologies. We have already found widespread application across many steps in the textile manufacturing process. Our AxisValence unit has many interesting use cases for static control in the textile chain, and we also have some new vision system products. Our water treatment company, A.T.E. HUBER Envirotech is pushing the use and efficacy of bio-reactors and membrane processes.

India is pushing strongly toward becoming a global manufacturing hub. What strategic gaps in infrastructure, technology or skill development do you believe must be addressed for industry-wide sustainable growth?

I don't think we need to do anything very special. It's a hard job to do it, but I think if we have the basics taken care of, with social, physical and institutional infrastructure in place, Indian entrepreneurship can really accelerate our people's human and economic development. By social infrastructure, I mean housing, education, healthcare, urban planning, environmental stewardship and such; by physical infrastructure, I mean sanitation, water, roads, airports, ports and public transport, etc; and by institutional infrastructure, I mean that we have enough capacity in the legislature, government, law and order and defence, legal system and regulators.

Finally, looking ahead to the next decade, what is your long-term vision for A.T.E. Group? How do you see the company shaping the future of sustainable industrial solutions in India and globally?

I think we are in the right businesses. We have spent the last many years building up technology platforms – in textile engineering as an industry knowledge and sourcing resource, and with our developments in spinning, wastewater treatment, heat exchange, cooling, static control and vision systems. In the next decade, we aspire to grow manifold in India of course but also across the world. ❏

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UK Unveils First National Plan To Tackle Risks Posed By 'Forever Chemicals'

The UK government has launched its first national plan to address the risks associated with per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), commonly known as "forever chemicals," in a move aimed at strengthening environmental protection and public health. Announced on February 3, 2026, by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra), the PFAS Plan establishes a coordinated framework involving government agencies, regulators and industry to better understand the sources, spread and long-term impacts of these persistent substances.

PFAS are widely used in manufacturing and certain low-carbon technologies, but growing scientific evidence indicates that their persistence in the environment can pose serious risks to ecosystems and human health, with effects lasting for decades or even centuries. Although the UK maintains high drinking water standards and PFAS levels in England and Wales are currently within permitted limits, the government plans to consult later this year on introducing a statutory limit for PFAS in public water supplies. The proposed measure would strengthen regulatory oversight and provide a clearer enforcement framework if thresholds are exceeded.

Environment Minister Emma Hardy said the persistence of PFAS presents a long-term challenge that requires decisive, coordinated action. She emphasized that the government will work with regulators, industry and communities to reduce harmful impacts while supporting a transition to safer alternatives.

A key element of the plan is expanded environmental monitoring. For the first time, authorities will assess PFAS contamination in England's estuaries and coastal waters through enhanced testing of sediments and marine invertebrates. The initiative aims to build a stronger scientific evidence base for future regulation. ❏

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Sunidhi Spinning & LMW: Engineering A New Era In MMF Yarn Innovation

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Among the emerging names in Surat's dynamic textile landscape, Sunidhi Spinning LLP stands out as a remarkable example of rapid establishment and technological foresight. Founded in 2022 near Navsari, the company ventured into spinning with a clear vision — to create a modern, high-performance mill capable of producing 100% polyester and synthetic blended yarns of global quality standards.

With LMW as its trusted technology partner, Sunidhi Spinning transformed this vision into reality through a seamless greenfield implementation. LMW's state-of-the-art machinery, automation solutions, and process integration expertise enabled the company to achieve stable production, consistent quality, and operational efficiency in a remarkably short span.

By focusing on polyester & its blends, fancy and slub yarns, and other value-added products, Sunidhi has not only diversified Surat's traditional yarn offerings but also strengthened the region's man-made fiber value chain. The mill's swift success highlights the crucial role of LMW's innovation-driven solutions in empowering greenfield spinning projects to compete and excel in India's evolving spinning sector.

(L to R) Badal Bharatia, Managing Director and Mehul Patel, Managing Director of Sunidhi Spinning LLP

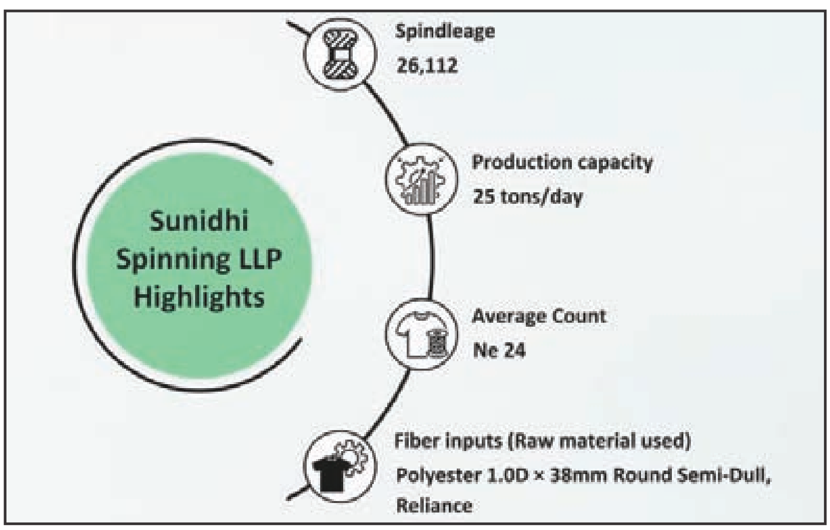
Surat has been a textile hub for decades and is one of India's leading fabric manufacturing centers. We entered spinning in 2012 with Shri Muniveer Spinning Mills, starting with a 20,000-spindle A-Z LMW setup. With our latest 26,000-spindle expansion, A-Z LMW setup we are using Compact and SIRO Compact systems and producing yarns using man-made fibers (MMF), which are emerging as an innovative and effective alternative to conventional filaments. LMW has been our trusted partner since day one, and our association since 2012 has been consistently strong and supportive.

Mr. Badal Bharatia & Mr. Mehul Patel, Managing Directors, Sunidhi Spinning LLP

The LMW Advantage: Technology That Drives Excellence

Equipped with the latest generation of LMW spinning machinery, Sunidhi Spinning operates on a foundation of innovation and precision. The mill's advanced setup ensures efficient production, superior yarn quality, and operational stability, allowing it to produce polyester yarns with strength, uniformity, and finish that rival the finest cotton-based yarns — a milestone achievement for Surat's spinning industry.

The seamless integration of LMW's machinery from Blowroom to Ring spinning has enabled Sunidhi to maintain high productivity with minimal waste, while ensuring consistent yarn quality across production runs. Industry observers have cited the adoption of LMW's latest technology as one of the company's key differentiators, helping it achieve benchmark efficiencies even as a new entrant.



With its diverse yarn portfolio ranging from compact and slub yarns to blended varieties, Sunidhi caters to both fast forward fashion and performance-driven applications, serving domestic and global markets alike. By venturing into advanced polyester and blended yarns with LMW's technological support, Sunidhi Spinning has not only strengthened its own competitiveness but also reinforced Surat's reputation as a global hub for man-made fiber fabrics.

Benchmarks in Innovative Yarn manufacturing with LMW's Smart Spinning Machinery

Sunidhi Spinning has rapidly distinguished itself in the Surat textile ecosystem through its strong focus on innovation in fancy and value-added synthetic yarns. Leveraging LMW's advanced spinning technology, the mill has developed a versatile portfolio that includes slub yarns, multi-count and multi-twist effects, mélange-inspired tonal blends, and specialty polyester combinations designed for both fashion and functional applications. Sunidhi's R&D-driven approach allows it to engineer yarns with unique textures, controlled irregularities, and differentiated aesthetic profiles, catering to the evolving needs of apparel, home textiles, and contemporary fabric designers. By pushing the boundaries of synthetic fibre processing and consistently developing trend-aligned fancy yarns, Sunidhi has positioned itself as a pioneer of innovation delivering products that offer higher value, creative flexibility, and strong demand in both domestic and international markets.

The yarns produced deliver outstanding strength and durability, meeting quality standards for diverse applications. With high single yarn strength values, the output re-

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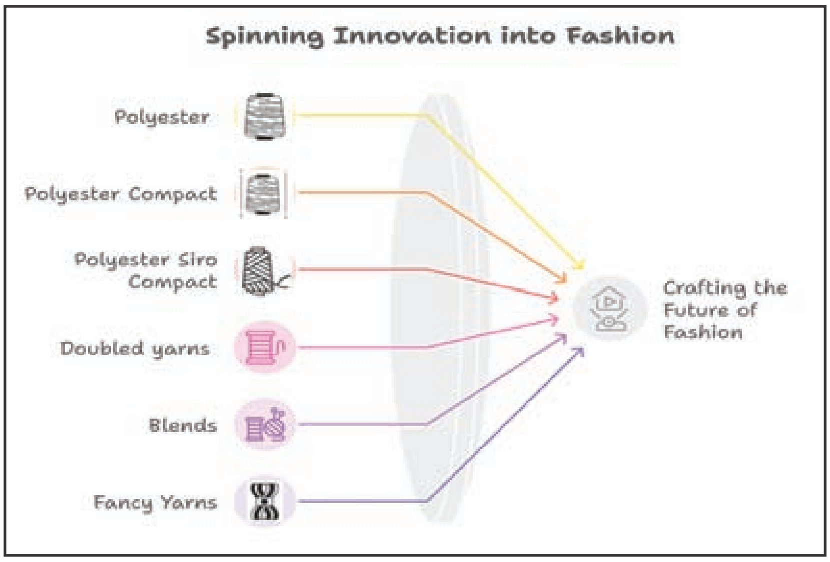
Sunidhi Spinning & LMW: Engineering A New Era In MMF Yarn Innovation

Department	Model	Plant Configuration
Blowroom	LA23	1
Card	LC361	24
Draw Frame (Breaker)	LDB3	7
Draw Frame (Finisher)	LDF3 S	8
Speed Frame	LF4280/A	6
Ring Frame	LRJ 9	16



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flects optimal fiber alignment, efficient drafting, and superior spinning technology from LMW, resulting in yarns that combine strength, consistency, and performance excellence.

The Road Ahead: Scaling with Smart Automation

Building on its strong foundation, Sunidhi Spinning LLP now looks to the future with a vision to scale both capacity and capability through LMW's Smart Automation and Digitalization solutions. The company aims to further enhance mill efficiency, transparency, and sustainability by adopting next-generation systems such as LMW's Spin Connect — enabling real-time monitoring, data-driven decision-making, and predictive maintenance across operations.

With its proven model of quality and operational excellence, Sunidhi is poised to expand its presence in the polyester and blended yarn segment, catering to the growing global demand for value-added, performance-based yarns. Its continued collaboration with LMW stands as a testament to how technology partnership, innovation, and trust can empower new-generation entrepreneurs to create modern, competitive, and sustainable spinning enterprises.

As Sunidhi's journey unfolds, it reflects a larger transformation taking place across India's textile industry, where LMW's integrated technology ecosystem continues to shape the mills of tomorrow. ❑

Sustainable Textile Practices: Measuring And Reducing The Carbon Footprint Of Textile Industry

(A Paper by **Dr. Muralidhara K. S.**, Jt. Director, and **Samuel J.**, Quality Assurance Officer, Textiles Committee, Mumbai)

Dr. Muralidhara K. S.

Samuel J.

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The textile and garment industry occupies a central place in India's economic and industrial landscape. It provides employment to millions, drives exports and supports regional development across large and small clusters. Yet alongside its economic significance, the industry is increasingly confronted by the realities of climate change and environmental sustainability. Rising global temperatures, stricter environmental regulations and growing consumer awareness have placed the textile sector under intense scrutiny, compelling manufacturers to understand and reduce their carbon footprint in a systematic and measurable way.

Globally, the textile industry is estimated to account for nearly 10 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions, a figure that highlights the scale of its environmental impact. Emissions occur at virtually every stage of the textile value chain. Fibre production requires energy, water and chemicals, spinning and weaving demand electricity, wet processing operations such as bleaching, dyeing and finishing rely heavily on thermal energy, and transportation adds further emissions as raw materials and finished goods move across supply chains. Among these processes, wet processing stands out as one of the most energy-intensive stages, with emissions ranging from roughly three to nine kilogrammes of carbon dioxide equivalent for every kilogramme of fabric processed, depending on the technology and energy sources used.

In India, the challenge of reducing emissions is closely tied to the structure of the industry itself. A large proportion of textile manufacturing is carried out by micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), many of which operate with older machinery and conventional energy sources. These enterprises often function in highly competitive, cost-sensitive environments where investments in modernization can be difficult. At the same time, MSMEs represent one of the greatest opportunities for meaningful emission reduction. Even modest efficiency improvements, when replicated across thousands of units, can lead to significant cumulative gains in energy savings and carbon reduction.

Understanding the carbon footprint of textiles requires looking beyond individual processes to the entire lifecycle of a garment. The concept of embodied energy captures the total energy used in producing a textile product, from raw material extraction to final assembly and distribution. The carbon footprint of a single cotton T-shirt, for example, has been estimated at approximately 3.1 kilogrammes of carbon dioxide equivalent, with emissions distributed across fibre production, yarn manufacturing, fabric production, dyeing and finishing and garment assembly.

Such estimates illustrate how emissions accumulate gradually across multiple stages, reinforcing the need for a holistic approach to sustainability.

Different fibres also vary significantly in their environmental impact. Natural fibres such as silk and wool can have relatively high carbon footprints due to energy-intensive production processes, while synthetic fibres such as polyester and nylon require significant energy during polymerization and extrusion. Cotton, although widely used and comparatively moderate in terms of carbon emissions per kilogramme, has other environmental implications, particularly in water consumption and pesticide use. These variations highlight the importance of material selection, not only from a cost or performance perspective but also from a sustainability standpoint.

India's broader emissions profile further contextualizes the textile sector's sustainability challenge. While the country's per capita emissions remain lower than those of many developed economies, overall emissions continue to grow alongside economic expansion, urbanization and rising energy demand. India has committed, under its Nationally Determined Contributions, to reducing the emissions intensity of its GDP and increasing the share of non-fossil fuel energy sources. Achieving these goals will require significant participation from energy-intensive sectors such as textiles, where improvements in efficiency and fuel substitution can yield measurable benefits.

Accurate measurement of emissions is a critical first step toward reduction. Internationally recognized frameworks such as the Greenhouse Gas Protocol, ISO standards and Life Cycle Assessment methodologies provide structured approaches for calculating carbon footprints. In practice, factory-level assessments typically adopt a cradle-to-gate perspective, capturing emissions from raw material procurement to product dispatch. Detailed data on electricity consumption, fuel usage, water consumption, raw materials, chemical inputs and logistics are combined with standardized emission factors to estimate total emissions.

Increasingly, digital traceability tools are enabling manufacturers to monitor emissions across supply chains with greater precision, enhancing transparency and supporting compliance with evolving regulatory requirements.

Regulation and market expectations are also reshaping the industry's approach to sustainability. Major export markets are introducing stricter rules on recycling, supply chain transparency and environmental declarations. Such measures are not merely regulatory hurdles, they are signals of a structural shift in the global textile trade. Buyers and brands are placing greater emphasis on verified sustainability credentials and suppliers who fail to adapt risk losing competitiveness in international markets.

Despite these pressures, a wide range of practical solutions is already available to reduce emissions in textile production. Energy efficiency improvements, such as replacing outdated motors, improving insulation

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Sustainable Textile...

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and optimizing compressed air systems, can deliver immediate reductions in electricity consumption. The adoption of renewable energy sources, including rooftop solar installations and biomass-based steam generation, offers further potential to reduce dependence on fossil fuels. In many cases, a combination of efficiency measures and renewable energy integration has been shown to cut facility emissions substantially, demonstrating that sustainability and cost savings can go hand-in-hand.

Equally important are innovations in materials and product design. The use of recycled fibres, certified sustainable cotton and low-impact dyes can significantly lower the embodied carbon of textile products. At the same time, designing garments for durability, repairability and recyclability contributes to the broader transition toward a circular textile economy. Such approaches not only reduce environmental impact but also align with emerging consumer preferences for longer-lasting and responsibly produced products.

Water and chemical management also play a vital role in reducing emissions and environmental damage. Technologies such as water recycling systems, effluent treatment plants and closed-loop dyeing processes are helping manufacturers reduce both resource consumption and pollution. Waste reduction strategies, including lean manufacturing and improved inventory management, further contribute to lowering the overall carbon footprint while enhancing operational efficiency.

For many companies, carbon offsetting represents a complementary strategy once direct emission reductions have been maximized. Investments in afforestation, renewable energy projects and community-based sustainability initiatives can help balance residual emissions, provided they are implemented according to recognized standards that ensure credibility and long-term impact. At the same time, digital platforms for carbon tracking and reporting are making it easier for manufacturers to document their progress and communicate sustainability performance to buyers and stakeholders.

The role of MSMEs in this transformation cannot be overstated. These enterprises form the backbone of the textile industry but often lack access to technical expertise, financing and structured sustainability programmes. Targeted training, knowledge-sharing initiatives and supportive policy measures can help bridge this gap, enabling smaller units to adopt modern technologies and internationally recognized sustainability standards. Capacity building is particularly important, as awareness and technical knowledge often determine whether efficiency improvements are successfully implemented.

Ultimately, the transition toward low-carbon textile production is not merely an environmental imperative, it is also an economic opportunity. Companies that invest in energy efficiency, renewable energy and sustainable materials often benefit from lower operating costs, improved market access and stronger relationships with environmentally conscious buyers. In a global marketplace increasingly shaped by sustainability criteria, such advantages can be decisive.

The path to decarbonizing the textile value chain will require sustained collaboration among manufacturers, policymakers, researchers and consumers. Technological innovation, supportive regulation and industry-wide commitment will all play essential roles. While the challenge is complex, the direction is clear: the future of textiles lies in balancing productivity with responsibility, growth with sustainability and innovation with environmental stewardship.

As the industry moves forward, the goal of carbon-neutral textiles is gradually shifting from aspiration to possibility. With the right combination of measurement, investment and collective action, the textile sector can not only reduce its environmental footprint but also set a powerful example of how traditional industries can adapt to the demands of a low-carbon future. ❑

(Curated for publication by Textile Insights)

Industry Confidence And Continuity Define Heimtextil 2026

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With 3,000 exhibitors and buyers from 148 nations, the fair emerged as a trusted platform navigating AI, design evolution and shifting global supply chains.

Heimtextil 2026 concluded with a strong restatement of its position as the world's leading platform for home and contract textiles, drawing 3,000 exhibitors from 66 countries and welcoming over 48,000 buyers from 148 nations. Despite a volatile global economic and geopolitical backdrop, the fair demonstrated stability, confidence and growing international relevance for the textile and interior design industry.

The world's largest home textiles fair maintained exhibitor strength while becoming even more international in scope, with exhibitor internationality reaching 96 per cent and visitor internationality standing at 86 per cent. The share of top-level decision-makers rose to 78 per cent, underlining Heimtextil's importance as a strategic sourcing and networking platform. Senior executives from global retailers and hospitality groups such as Harrods, IKEA, Marriott Hotels, Sainsbury's and XXXLutz were among the attendees.

Heimtextil 2026 unfolded against a backdrop of economic uncertainty, geopolitical tensions, shifting sourcing patterns and rapid digital transformation. The fair provided orientation and strategic clarity through best-practice examples, expert-led knowledge formats and future-focused product showcases spanning textile and non-textile interior solutions, including bedding, upholstery, carpets, wallpaper and innovative décor materials.

"In a dynamic market environment marked by volatile tariff policies and geopolitical uncertainties, the need for transparency and reliable partners is increasing. Especially now, a dependable platform such as Heimtextil is indispensable," said Detlef Braun, Member of the Executive Board of Messe Frankfurt.

A redesigned hall layout across 17 levels enhanced market clarity and commercial matchmaking by grouping related segments closer together.

Textile and non-textile interior design were positioned in Halls 3.0, 3.1 and 4.1, while Bed, Bath & Living occupied Halls 5.0, 5.1, 6.0 and 6.1, adjacent to Smart Bedding in Hall 4.0. The Smart Bedding segment featured the new Sleep & Meet hub, serving as a central meeting point for the mattress and sleep industry, including leading brands and the German Mattress Industry Association.

The Carpets & Rugs segment expanded significantly, spanning Halls 11.0, 12.0, 12.1 and 3.0, showcasing both machine-made and handwoven carpets, exclusive one-off pieces and, for the first time, non-textile floor coverings, signaling a strategic broadening of Heimtextil's product portfolio.

Design, AI and sustainability emerged as defining themes of the fair. Renowned designer and architect Patricia Urquiola drew strong attention with her immersive installation 'Among-all', which explored the intersection of textiles, AI, materials and spatial experimentation. The installation incorporated regenerated nylon, textile waste and bio-based materials, positioning textiles as intelligent interfaces connecting people, materials and machines. Urquiola also participated in discussions on how AI and new materials are reshaping future living and hospitality spaces.

Heimtextil Trends 26/27, presented in Hall 6.1 under the theme 'Craft is a verb', illustrated how artificial intelligence and traditional craftsmanship can complement each other through forward-looking materials, techniques and creative technologies. Knowledge and networking formats were distributed across the fairgrounds, including the Texpertise Stage in Hall 6.0 and dedicated Talk Spots for architects, designers and hospitality professionals.

AI featured prominently across the exhibition under the initiative 'Texpertise Focus AI', demonstrating its growing role as a practical business enabler in design workflows, data management and customer engagement. "Artificial intelligence is already part of economic reality, both as a creative partner in design and as an efficient tool for workflows and personalisation," said Olaf Schmidt, Vice President - Textiles & Textile Technologies.

Interior design, contract textiles and hospitality solutions emerged as strong growth drivers, supported by the expanded Interior Architecture Hospitality programme. Heimtextil also announced a new partnership with Hospitality Interiors Europe (HINT) from 2027, further strengthening Frankfurt's role as a central hub for hospitality sourcing and design.

Heimtextil 2026 closed with a tangible sense of confidence across the industry, reinforcing its role as a stable, future-oriented global marketplace supporting the textile sector's transition toward digitalisation, sustainability and new business models. ❑

Murugan Thenkondar, President – Marketing and Global Head – Business Development, Birla Cellulose

Birla Cellulose Strengthens Home Textiles Focus With Sustainable Fibre Innovation

By **Henry Dsouza**

Birla Cellulose, the fibre arm of Aditya Birla Group., is intensifying its focus on the home textiles segment through a strategic push centered on sustainable fibres, expanded Lyocell capacity and deeper integration across the value chain, as global buyers increasingly prioritise traceability and environmental responsibility.

Speaking at Heimtextil 2026, Murugan Thenkondar, President – Marketing and Global Head – Business Development, outlined the company's sharpened emphasis on Eco-Soft Bamboo, Lyocell, Dope-Dyed fibres and next-generation performance fibres, reflecting growing demand from home textile retailers in the U.S. and Europe.

"We are presenting a large portfolio of products with strong relevance for home textile applications," he said. He highlighted Bamboo Eco-Soft for its attributes and moisture management, alongside a robust dope-dyed fibre platform capable of delivering over 70 colour shades each month. "We have built a highly organised supply chain dedicated to home textiles, supporting leading manufacturers across bed and bath linen, furnishings and flooring," he added.

At the exhibition, Birla Cellulose showcased innovations in man-made cellulosic fibres engineered with enhanced performance attributes, underlining its shift toward higher-value, performance-driven solutions for home textiles.

The company is simultaneously scaling up manufacturing investments in India, with plans for a new Lyocell facility in South India. "The plant is expected to be operational within the next two years," Murugan noted. "Lyocell will occupy a much larger role in home textiles, and with additional capacity we will be able to offer micro, coarse and shortcut variants, as well as filler-grade fibres."

In recent years, Birla Cellulose has completed the transition of its portfolio from commodity cellulosics to more sustainable, branded fibres under the Livaeco brand. This transformation is supported by FSC-certified raw material sourcing, advanced chemical management systems and blockchain-enabled traceability through GreenTrack and Textile Genesis. These digital platforms enable brands to trace fibre origin and processing, aligning closely with regulatory and compliance requirements in Europe and the United States.

Recycled fibres form another key pillar of the company's strategy. This includes mechanically recycled fibres produced by blending cotton waste with Lyocell, as well as chemically recycled fibres developed through partnerships with global technology leaders such as Circulose and Saxcell. Commercial production of mechanically recycled fibres has already been commissioned at Birla Cellulose's Nagda facility in India.

Murugan expects the home textiles segment to sustain its growth trajectory. While cotton continues to dominate the category, structural constraints in cotton production combined with rising per-capita consumption are creating a global cellulose gap. "Lyocell is emerging as the most effective complementary fibre for products such as bed sheets, pillows, quilts and carpets," he said.

The global apparel and home textiles market is currently expanding at an annual rate of 6-7%, underpinning long-term fibre demand. At the same time, India's domestic home textile market, still largely unorganised and heavily reliant on cotton is expected to become a significant growth engine over the next three to five years.

Addressing concerns around U.S. tariffs on Indian home textile exports, Murugan characterised the situation as interim. "These are expected to be sorted in a due course of time. There will be a resolution, followed by pent-up demand once the situation eases," he remarked.

Europe, UK and Rest of World continue to offer strong strategic potential, while the U.S. remains a critical market for premium bed and bath products and catering to volumes.

At Heimtextil, Birla Cellulose reported consistent buyer engagement from Europe, UK, North America, Australia and GCC and South East Asia. Nevertheless, global trade uncertainty driven by tariffs, geopolitical conflicts and supply chain disruptions, featured prominently in industry discussions. "Despite multiple global challenges in recent years, demand has not collapsed," Murugan observed. "These disruptions will pass, and when they do, growth will accelerate."

As sustainability expectations intensify and brands increasingly seek high-performance, nature-based alternatives to cotton, Birla Cellulose's strategy positions the company strongly to capitalise on emerging opportunities across both export-driven and domestic home textile markets. ❑

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Smita Joshi, Vice President – Home Textiles & Exports, Sutlej Textiles and Industries Ltd.

Design First, Sustainably Always: Sutlej's Competitive Edge At Heimtextil

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By **Henry Dsouza**

The global home textiles market is undergoing a structural reset. Post-pandemic consumer sentiment, sustainability norms, geopolitical disruptions, ESG compliance pressure and price volatility have collectively shifted the basis of competition from scale to capability from merely producing textiles to delivering responsible, design-led outcomes. It is against this backdrop that Sutlej Textiles and Industries Ltd made a pointed statement at Heimtextil 2026 in Frankfurt, that the future belongs to integrated, sustainable, traceable and design-intelligent suppliers.

For Sutlej, the show was less about showcasing new collections and more about communicating maturity. The messaging was crisp; design differentiation, digital transparency, circularity and global resilience. These pillars gave international buyers, many of whom were navigating the maze of European due-diligence legislation and rising sustainability expectations, a clear sense of trust and direction.

Speaking during the fair, Smita Joshi, Vice President – Home Textiles & Exports at Sutlej, explained that the company's evolution over the past few years has been driven in equal measure by market realities and internal conviction. One of the most discussed elements at the booth this year was the Digital Product Passport (DPP), developed to quantify a product's environmental footprint across parameters such as water usage, energy consumption, waste generation and carbon intensity.

"We have made a very special mark with the digital product passport wherein we are trying to measure the impact of every product on the ecosystem," Joshi said. "Transparency is not just a regulatory subject anymore, it is commercial."

The DPP move aligns seamlessly with upcoming European regulations around traceability and circularity. It also offers private labels, furniture retailers and converters an audit-ready solution at a time when compliance is becoming a precondition for future business in Europe and the UK.

But the digital layer is only one part of Sutlej's sustainability stack. The company operates a zero-liquid-discharge facility for its home furnishing division, recycles roughly 90% of its water, utilizes solar power to offset conventional energy usage, keeps landfill waste below 0.45% and has invested in a closed-loop ecosystem through its Sutlej Green fibre plant. PET bottles are converted into fibres, which are spun into yarns and ultimately transformed into finished textiles, a circular narrative that resonates strongly with European and British buyers who increasingly evaluate not just the product but the path it took to exist.

"We are very conscious about usage of renewable energy, minimizing carbon footprint, recycling fibres and ensuring we are not damaging the ecosystem," Joshi explained. "This is where industry needs to move, not just for compliance, but for relevance."

While sustainability commanded attention, it was design that won hearts. Sutlej's booth displayed sustainable natural fibre fabrics, 100% cotton bedding, inherent FR and blackout solutions, recycled polyester products and a wide range of embroideries, dobbies, prints, plains and textures suitable for upholstery, drapery and bedding. The standout, however, was the multi-colour jacquard upholstery collection, referred to internally as the company's hero product due to its commercial success across multiple geographies.

"It has worked for us in all the markets," Joshi observed. "People think we are a design-first company, and that comes from our in-house archives as well as the 100-year-old American Silk archive that we own."

This archival advantage is quietly powerful. In an era where heritage storytelling drives premium brand positioning, having deep design archives is not merely a marketing flourish, it is a competitive barrier. European and American upholstery programmes increasingly seek distinctive pattern languages and artisanal aesthetics that can't be mass-replicated. Sutlej's spun yarns, which imbue fabrics with a hand-woven character, have become a differentiator especially valued in markets where upholstery has outperformed tariff-sensitive direct-to-retail bedding.

That market dynamic led to another counter-intuitive insight—while global uncertainties and tariff regimes were expected to depress shipments, Sutlej recorded its strongest growth in the most tariff-affected regions. "We have grown the most in the United States followed by the UK, funny in a way because we are in the middle of tariff discussions and yet we managed to clock that growth," Joshi said. The company credits its performance to operating at the more premium end of the market, where buyers weigh design,

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Trident Group Expands European Focus With New Collections At Heimtextil 2026

Trident Group, one of India's leading integrated home textile manufacturers, strengthened its European presence showcasing its latest collections at Heimtextil 2026, the world's largest trade fair for home and contract textiles, held in Messe Frankfurt, Germany from January 13–16, 2026. The participation supports the company's intent to grow in Europe amid improving trade prospects, supported by proposed Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) between India, the UK and the European Union.

At the fair, Trident presented its TG collection, themed 'Visible Invisible', which blends contemporary design with sustainability and innovation. The display underlined how everyday home textiles are shaped by responsible sourcing, thoughtful design and advanced manufacturing, aligned with the evolving expectations of European consumers. Sustainability and the role of AI in home textiles were prominent themes at this edition of Heimtextil.

Speaking on the company's European roadmap, Abhishek Gupta, CEO – Strategy & Marketing, Trident Group, said, "Europe is a strategic market for our home textiles business. With favourable trade developments on the horizon, we are investing in local leadership and showcasing collections that reflect European preferences for sustainability, quality and design. The global home textiles market is estimated at US$ 136–140 billion, with steady growth expected over the coming years. Against this backdrop, Trident is positioning itself to deepen partnerships with European retailers and scale its business responsibly."

As part of this strategy, the company has strengthened its on-ground presence by appointing dedicated Directors for Germany and France, ensuring closer customer engagement, faster response times and stronger regional relationships across key European markets.

Trident's Heimtextil showcase draws inspiration from Indian aesthetics and modern global trends, translating emotions such as comfort, joy and strength into towel and bed linen collections. The TG range features responsibly sourced cotton, performance-driven finishes and contemporary colour palettes. The collections generated encouraging interest from buyers across Germany, France, the UK and other European markets during the fair. >> CLICK HERE TO READ ONLINE ❑

Design First, Sustainably Always: Sutlej's Competitive Edge At Heimtextil

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durability, service and ESG compliance as heavily as the price.

The U.S. market did see pressure in finished direct-to-retail goods, but converter and furniture business remained resilient. In the U.K., Sutlej is logging nearly 50% growth driven by upholstery and sustainability credentials. Meanwhile, India continues to expand through both B2B channels and the company's consumer brand Nesterra.

Backward integration also supported this performance. With capabilities spanning recycled fibre manufacturing, spinning, weaving and finishing, the company can forecast with greater accuracy, control quality across lots and offer spun yarn aesthetics few competitors can replicate at scale. These upstream strengths are becoming increasingly valuable to international brands seeking supply chain stability at a time when disruptions have rewritten procurement playbooks.

Trend intelligence forms the final layer of Sutlej's competitiveness. The 20-member design team participates in major global design weeks, furniture fairs and décor events while leveraging trend forecasting and retail scanning to maintain both aesthetic fluency and technical relevance. Yet, as Joshi emphasized, sustainability within Sutlej is treated as a cultural subject rather than a compliance checkbox, "We are not limiting sustainability only to fabrics. We are looking at it from employees to what we are using, what we are eating. It has to be meaningful, not just for cameras."

Sutlej reported strong visitor engagement across all the days, drawing buyers from the U.S., U.K., Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Spain, Russia, Japan, Canada, Australia and India. With direct PO placements at fairs now rare, the goal was to secure commitments, initiate sampling rounds and enter testing cycles. On those metrics, Sutlej closed positively with strong leads and new accounts.

Heimtextil 2026 offered a glimpse of the sector's next competitive frontier. The advantages now lie not in lowest cost, but in highest clarity of design intent, ESG transparency, circularity, compliance readiness and supply chain execution. Sutlej's presence showcased how Indian home furnishing companies are repositioning themselves for this new era, exporting not just textiles but a philosophy anchored in responsibility and global design literacy.

In a year where the industry seeks stability, Sutlej's model suggests that resilience will accrue to those who can answer global questions, not merely global orders. >> CLICK HERE TO READ ONLINE ❑

Shanthi Srinivasan, Managing Director, Premier Fine Linens

Home Textile Shake-Up: Premier Fine Linens Expands Beyond USA

By **Henry Dsouza**

Premier Fine Linens, a long-standing leader in premium bedding and hospitality textiles, used Heimtextil 2026 as a platform to showcase its latest blends, advanced finishing technologies and sustainability initiatives. In an exclusive interaction with Textile Insights, Managing Director Shanthi Srinivasan spoke about the company's evolving roadmap and the shifts reshaping the global home textile landscape.

Speaking about product highlights, Srinivasan said the company continues to reinforce its core bedding portfolio. "Our main product category is bedding, which is mostly sheet sets, and we are also making comforters, quilts and table linen. We do a lot of top-of-the-bed products," she explained. This year, the focus is on 100% cotton alongside a wide range of new blends. "We are doing linen and cotton blends, pure linen, Tencel linen, bamboo cotton and many other blends," she added. The company also introduced new top-of-bed offerings in seersucker, mattresses, and muslin, all of which were presented at the show.

Commenting on trade activity at Heimtextil, Srinivasan noted a mixed response from global buyers. "USA customers were much fewer than last year, probably because of the tariffs and because they are not seeing any relief," she observed. In contrast, visitor interest from Europe was significantly stronger. "We had a lot of visitors from the UK and Europe. Right now, from the UK, we see a lot of potential and there is genuine interest in the India–UK FTA. They really want to work with us."

On technological differentiation, Srinivasan emphasized that quality, rather than positioning, defines Premier's approach. "Basically, our products are quality products—that's what we always believe in, and that's what Premier always believes in," she said. The company's focus spans weaving, fibre and finishing technologies, backed by strong in-house R&D. "Our R&D and product development is very strong, and we keep bringing out new products every few months," she added.

Sustainability, according to Srinivasan, is deeply embedded in the company's operations. She pointed out that Premier adopted green initiatives long before sustainability became an industry buzzword. "We invested in 140 windmills almost 20 years ago, long before the word sustainability became fashionable," she said. Currently, around 70% of the company's energy comes from wind power, a figure expected to rise to 85%, alongside the addition of solar energy. "We recycle 99% of the water and do heat recovery as well. We look at how we affect the planet in everything that we do," she noted, adding that packaging, waste management and recycling remain key focus areas.

Discussing global trends and market disruptions, Srinivasan said India will continue to hold its strength in premium bedding categories. "India is very strong in-home textiles, particularly in the 300 thread count and above, so that's not going to change," she said. At the same time, she acknowledged that tariff uncertainty in the US and geopolitical risks have reshaped export dynamics. With the US historically accounting for nearly 65% of Premier's turnover, diversification has become a strategic priority. "Nothing can replace the US in terms of volumes, but we are also exploring other countries. Agility is the new word, and agility is here to stay."

On the growing influence of AI in textile design and operations, Srinivasan advocated a balanced approach. While multiple AI platforms are emerging across visuals, advertising and product design, she stressed the importance of human judgment. "You can't ask AI to do everything," she said. At Premier, AI is being integrated mainly into planning, operations and design development.

Looking ahead, Srinivasan outlined an ambitious growth plan for the next five years. "We are rapidly expanding our domestic presence in India," she said, citing growth across retail, e-commerce and hospitality segments. On the export front, the company is exploring new geographies and customer profiles. Investment momentum remains strong—a quilting and comforter unit set up last year will soon be doubled, digital printing capacity is being added in Perundurai this year, sewing and processing capacities are being expanded, and new loom investments are planned. "Overall, we are scaling up. Even though last year was not great, we see a good future," she concluded. ❑

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R. Lalitha, Commissioner of Textiles, Government of Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu Makes A Strong Debut At Heimtextil 2026 With Focus On Home Textiles

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By **Henry Dsouza**

Tamil Nadu made a strong institutional debut at Heimtextil 2026 as the Department of Textiles, Government of Tamil Nadu, established a dedicated pavilion for the first time, signaling its intent to position the state as a major global player in home textiles and technical textiles. Sharing her perspective on the initiative, R. Lalitha, Commissioner of Textiles, Government of Tamil Nadu spoke to Textile Insights exclusively about the strategic objectives, market feedback, sustainability efforts and future roadmap for the state's textile ecosystem.

Reflecting on the significance of Tamil Nadu's participation, Lalitha noted that the initiative itself marked a milestone. "For the first time forming Tamil Nadu pavilion in Heimtextil," she said, adding that traditionally only the Tamil Nadu Handlooms Weavers' Co-operative Society Ltd (Co-optex) took part. "This time, the Textiles Department, Handlooms Department and Women Development Corporation have exclusively come here by customizing their products into home textiles, just to focus on the home textiles segment. The participation itself is a very big experience for us."

According to her, the exposure was valuable not just for visibility but for learning. "The participation has helped us not only understand where we stand, but also where the world is moving towards. That has helped us understand which direction we should be taking in the coming days, especially the handlooms and textile segment," she observed.

Tamil Nadu has long been considered one of India's strongest home textile clusters, with Karur, Erode and surrounding regions contributing significantly to global exports. Lalitha highlighted that around 90 companies from the state were exhibiting independently across the venue, supported by the state-led pavilion comprising 10 curated stalls. "This platform has given us a good opportunity to diversify our markets from the existing ones, especially in the current geopolitical situation," she noted, pointing to growing interest from EU markets amid expectations around free trade agreements.

During her interactions with exhibitors, Laliztha witnessed keen buyer interest around functional and technical textile applications. She shared that international visitors were enquiring about technical textiles, functional fabrics and diversification possibilities, especially for export markets.

A standout attraction was the handloom segment, which showcased an inventive push into value-added home textiles. "The handlooms department converted GI tagged silk items into home textile products," she explained. Traditionally associated with saris and dhotis, the unique silk fabrics were transformed into cushion covers, pillowcases, laptop sleeves and bags garnering strong attention due to their authenticity and niche appeal. "GI tagged silk is not something an industry can make; it is based on the weaver and handloom is a niche segment. They had a lot of walk-ins," Lalitha said.

Women Development Corporation's stall also drew interest through indigenous and tribal craft expressions such as Toda embroidery from the Nilgiris and hand-embroidered products made by self-help groups. Beyond buyer engagement, Lalitha noted the educational significance for exhibitors: "The biggest achievement is making them aware of the global market. They can go back home and brainstorm on how they can diversify into various segments."

On how the state plans to support this diversification, Lalitha outlined multiple interventions spanning technology, market access and policy incentives. "We facilitate participation in such fairs by forming the Tamil Nadu pavilion. We also have a handloom support programme and Women Development Corporation has its own marketing schemes," she said.

The state is also running schemes for technology upgradation and technical textile adoption. "From the Department of Textiles, we have a lot of schemes for technology upgradation for technical textiles, incorporating latest machines and machineries," she noted. Such participation, she added, helps exhibitors discover new directions while the government already subsidizes and supports their upgradation efforts.

Tamil Nadu is also emerging as a hub for circular economy initiatives in the textile value chain. Lalitha confirmed the state's efforts in PET bottle recycling, which had drawn lots of interest during the show. "We have a lot of companies in Tamil Nadu who focus on PET bottle to fibre conversion." she said. The fibres are used in garments and woven products, including souvenirs distributed by the state delegation. "It

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TEXPROCIL Showcases Premium Indian Cotton At Heimtextil 2026

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At Heimtextil 2026, TEXPROCIL actively promoted Bharat Tex 2026 at the 'Kasturi Cotton Bharat' pavilion engaging global buyers and shaping the future of textile sourcing. The Ministry of Textiles delegation, including Akhilesh Kumar, Dy. Director General and Purnesh Gururani, Director (Fibre), joined Dr. Siddhartha Rajagopal, Executive Director, TEXPROCIL and Rajesh Satam, Joint Director, in interacting with international buyers and encouraging registrations for India's premier textile event.

Through a dedicated Hosted Buyer Programme at Bharat Tex 2026, visitors explored Kasturi Cotton, connected directly with trusted Indian suppliers and discovered smarter, more reliable sourcing opportunities.

From Frankfurt to New Delhi, TEXPROCIL's pavilion showcased India's premium, traceable cotton, inviting buyers worldwide to begin their journey toward sustainable and high-quality textile sourcing. ❑

Rieter Strengthens Partnerships With Burteks Tekstil At Heimtextil 2026

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The Rieter sales team had two insightful days at Heimtextil 2026, engaging in meaningful discussions that reinforced partnerships and explored new opportunities in the textile industry.

Alongside Burteks Tekstil, a key customer from Türkiye, the team reviewed the current spinning market environment and their robust Rieter portfolio, addressing challenges and identifying growth opportunities in an evolving sector.

Rieter also held discussions with the Turkmenistan Textile Ministry delegation, focusing on modernization initiatives, market dynamics, and future development strategies. ❑

Tamil Nadu Makes A Strong Debut At Heimtextil 2026 With Focus On Home Textiles

Continued from Page 33

reflects our commitment towards circularity and recyclability."

Lalitha further highlighted innovations in textile waste management. "We also have a few companies which are doing textile waste to paper conversion. Textiles to textile conversion is also happening, pre-consumer and post-consumer waste is being converted back into yarn," she said, distinguishing between recycling and upcycling, both of which are active in the ecosystem.

Government support in this segment spans policy and infrastructure. "More than companies, the government itself is trying to encourage source segregation," she said, adding that segregated PET bottles are either used for road laying or supplied to recycling units as mandated by policy. The state is also helping connect recycling units with relevant agencies and encouraging more players to enter the space to reduce landfill impact.

In a strategic move to strengthen technical textiles in Tamil Nadu, the government has signed an MoU with Messe Frankfurt. Lalitha confirmed that "alternate year they will be conducting the Techtextil event in Coimbatore," in continuation to the Mumbai edition every second year. "We are bringing Techtextil to home in order to showcase to our industry the possibilities, trends and interesting areas in technical textiles," she said. The first Coimbatore edition is expected in November this year.

This year marked the government's first Heimtextil participation. Lalitha described her impressions succinctly, "First is the sheer scale of it. Other events you see only one or two halls. This is with around 12 halls of home textiles with big entities showcasing their recent products. The sheer magnitude was something that really amazed me."

For Tamil Nadu, the experience appears to be a starting point rather than a culmination, one that signals both confidence and intent to engage deeper with global markets, sustainability, technology and circularity. ❑

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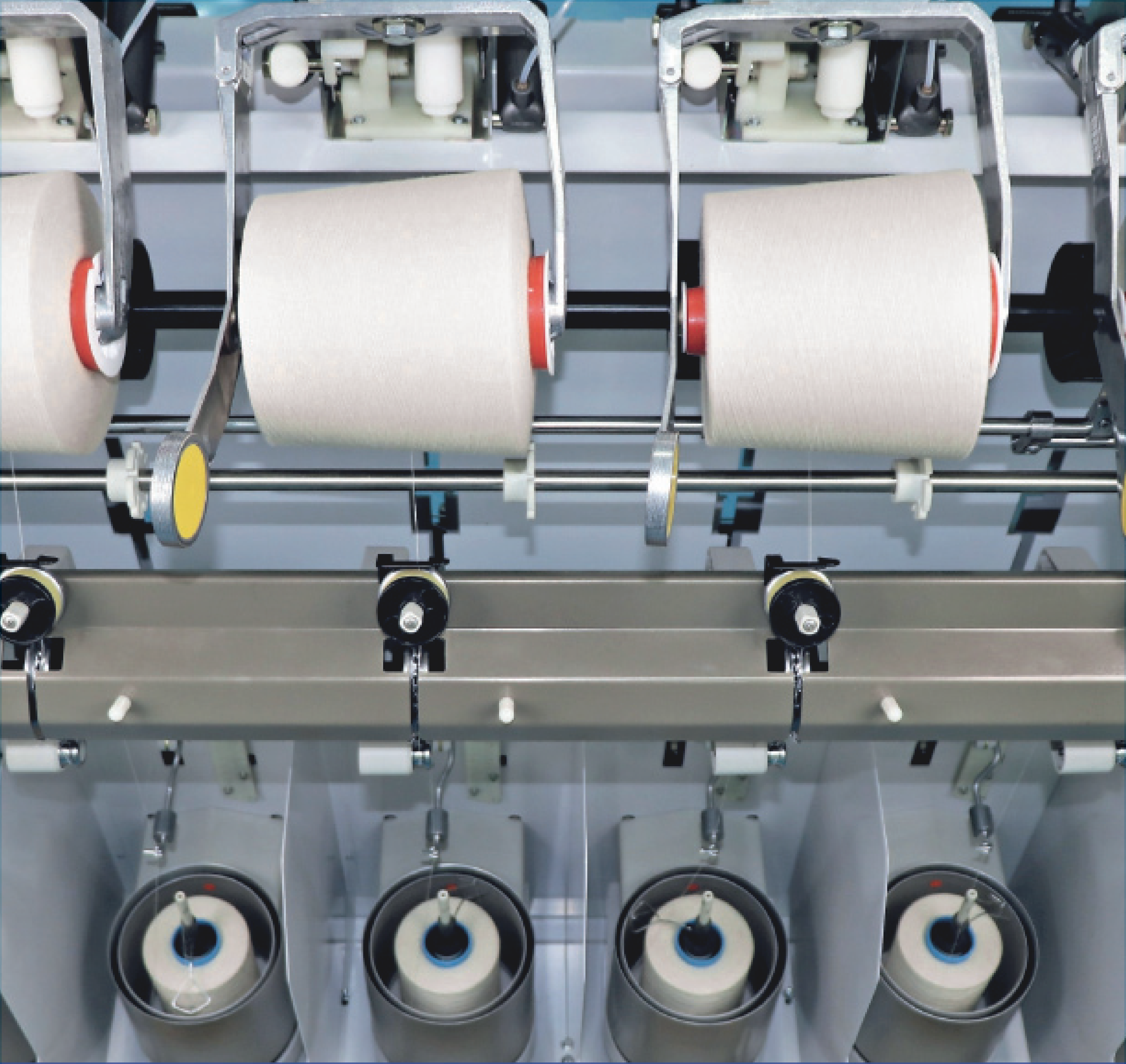

(L-R) **Bhawnish Suri**, Founder & Managing Director and **Divya Suri**, Founder & Joint Managing Director of DBS Lifestyle Studio

DBS Lifestyle Studio: A Global Design Mindset Rooted In India

By **Henry Dsouza**

DBS Lifestyle Studio, co-founded by husband-wife duo Bhawnish Suri, Founder & Managing Director and Divya Suri, Founder & Joint Managing Director, has steadily built a reputation as a global design studio delivering original textile and fashion design concepts to international brands and retailers. Speaking exclusively with Textile Insights, Divya Suri shed light on the company's journey, business model, design capabilities and the market response at Heimtextil Frankfurt 2026.

Sharing the story behind DBS Lifestyle Studio, Divya explained that the journey began after she and her husband returned to India from the United States, where they lived and worked for nearly seven years. "We came back with exposure and at that point we felt design was the need," she said. The founders started with print and textile design, which is still the company's core strength today, before diversifying into fashion design, sampling and finally full product delivery. "Over the past 20 years, it's grown organically. We never marketed ourselves, it has always been word of mouth," she added, reflecting on the firm's evolution.

Today, DBS Lifestyle Studio operates across multiple continents, selling original prints, jacquards, embroideries and woven designs to global clients. At Heimtextil Frankfurt, the company represented the design arm of its business, showcasing newly developed pattern work and colour stories to buyers from multiple geographies. "All our designs are originally created prints, jacquards, woven designs. We have customers from the US, Europe, China and Japan, brands and retailers buy directly from us," Divya stated.

> People are always looking for new and fresh ideas, but you can't pinpoint a particular trend. Everyone wants to play safe, brands want to buy more into their existing look rather than experiment.
>
> **Divya Suri, Founder & Jt MD**

Reflecting on the business climate at Heimtextil 2026, Divya admitted that the team arrived with cautious expectations. "We were a bit skeptical because of the geopolitical scenarios everywhere," she said, referencing travel concerns and trade uncertainty. However, the actual outcome was far more encouraging. "Quite frankly, the response has been overwhelming," she stated. DBS saw footfall and inquiries from the US, Europe, China and the Middle East. "In spite of geopolitical unrest and tariffs, the business inquiries were fabulous. That was very surprising," she added.

Divya believes this resilience is partly driven by diversification strategies across the global supply chain. "People have learned to adapt. Nobody wants to depend on one country for sourcing or one area for design," she observed. According to her, Heimtextil remains an unmatched platform because "this is the place where you come looking for designs, retailers and brands already know this. It becomes like the beginning of the annual year for everyone to exchange ideas and see what's new."

This timing also influences buyer behaviour. "Customers come to us before the show to see the best and then they come towards the end once their clients have gone, to purchase more based on what has been responded to," Divya explained.

When asked about colour or material trends shaping the current season, Divya stated that there is no single dominant direction in home textiles right now. "People are always looking for new and fresh ideas, but you can't pinpoint a particular trend. Everyone wants to play safe, brands want to buy more into their existing look rather than experiment," she said.

Despite trade headwinds from tariffs and logistics, Divya described the global home textile market as stable and opportunity-driven. "The market's been very promising. Of course, tariffs may affect where clients buy from, but overall the business is moving," she said, noting that DBS continues to serve customers across continents.

As DBS Lifestyle Studio moves forward, its founders remain committed to original design, organic growth and global engagement, values that have shaped the company since inception and continue to define its presence at international platforms such as Heimtextil. ❑

(L-R) **Abhijit Karle**, **Sunil Chodankar**, **Nikhil Nagar**, Directors of Memoir Home Innovations

Memoir's Filler-Free Memory Foam: Catching Attention Of European Buyers

By **Henry Dsouza**

Memoir Home Innovations, a fast-growing Indian manufacturer of memory foam and fibre pillows, is expanding its international ambitions after building a strong and well-established presence across India's organized retail landscape. The company made its debut at Heimtextil 2026, using the global platform to introduce overseas buyers to its export-ready portfolio of pillows, duvets, protectors, and down-alternative bedding solutions, backed by robust manufacturing and quality credentials.

Commenting on the company's market positioning, Director Abhijit Karle said, "We are one of the largest manufacturers of memory foam and fibre pillows in India, and the next natural step for us is to build a strong and sustainable export base in Europe and the UK."

Memoir currently produces between 1.5 lakh and 2 lakh memory foam pillows per month, along with approximately 3 lakh fibre pillows per month, supported by chemical-engineered formulations and German process technology. The company has built scale through long-standing private-label and white-label partnerships, supplying leading Indian retail brands such as Home Centre, Reliance Retail, Westside, Raymond and Trident. This extensive domestic retail exposure has strengthened Memoir's ability to deliver consistent quality, large volumes and customised product specifications for different retail formats.

Karle noted that the company's installed capacity provides significant headroom for growth. "Our current utilization is around 75% and with limited incremental investment in machinery and manpower, we can scale to 2.5–3 lakh memory foam pillows and nearly 5 lakh fibre pillows per month within a short timeframe," he explained.

India's memory foam ecosystem has evolved significantly over the past decade, moving from import dependence to indigenous capability. Memoir attributes its competitive edge to deep chemistry expertise, formulation control and in-house process discipline. "Today, everything we sell is made in India," Karle said. "This gives us complete control over performance, consistency and compliance which is critical when working with large retail and export customers."

A key differentiator for Memoir is its 100% filler-free memory foam, a point the company highlights transparently to buyers. "We clearly declare that our foam is filler-free, which is not something many manufacturers openly communicate." Karle noted. "Filler-free foam delivers better resilience, longer life and consistent comfort, allowing us to confidently offer a five-year warranty on our products."

In addition to core memory foam lines, Memoir has invested in FR-compliant, sustainable and specialty products to meet evolving international requirements. The company uses recycled fibres, greige cotton and down-alternative fills, and works closely with fibre partners such as TENCEL™ and ADVANSA. "In India, we are among the largest users of ADVANSA fibres, and currently the number one consumer." Karle added.

While Memoir continues to evaluate opportunities across multiple global markets, its immediate export focus has shifted toward regions that align strongly with its strengths in compliance, sustainability and durability. "Markets like the UK, EU and parts of the Middle East appreciate long-term value, certified materials and product longevity." Karle said. "As volumes scale, our cost structures become highly competitive, while quality remains uncompromised."

Heimtextil 2026 served as a strategic validation of Memoir's export readiness. The company reported high-quality buyer interactions from the UK, Germany, Spain, Austria and Hungary, along with interest from Indian exporters sourcing for international projects. "We may not have had casual footfall, but the visitors who came to our booth were serious industry stakeholders." Karle said.

Buyer interest was strongest in memory foam pillows, followed by FR-rated products for the UK market, TENCEL™ duvets and pillow protectors, and down-alternative bedding solutions. "We generated several strong leads at the exhibition, and we are confident these conversations will translate into long-term partnerships." he added.

With a solid domestic retail foundation, proven private-label execution capability, export-aligned production standards and chemistry-led innovation, Memoir expects FY 2026–27 to be a key growth phase driven by OEM partnerships, private-label programs and institutional sourcing.

"Our philosophy remains simple." Karle concluded. "Quality comes first. When the material, process and intent are right, scale and value follow naturally." ❑

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(L-R) **Kriti Sharma** and **Prince Kunal Gaurav**, founders of Kriti & Kunal

Kriti & Kunal Bring Indian Craft To Global Stage With Heimtextil Debut

By **Henry Dsouza**

Indian design duo Kriti Sharma and Prince Kunal Gaurav are taking their homegrown textile studio global, debuting at Heimtextil 2026 with a showcase rooted in Indian crafts but tuned to international design sensibilities. The founders of Kriti & Kunal, both textile design graduates from NIFT Delhi, launched their studio nearly nine years ago as a fully bootstrapped business that combines hand-painted art, textile craftsmanship and contemporary product design. Their entry into Heimtextil this year marks their first participation at a major international trade fair.

The studio originated from college collaborations, classroom projects, design project for Indian Railways and World of wearable art that became their first commercial sale. The proceeds were reinvested and the founders have maintained a self-funded model since. "We've just been making exciting designs," Sharma said, emphasizing their shared passion for travel and craft discovery. Road trips across India have shaped much of their visual storytelling, drawing from artisanal and tribal art forms, textiles and traditional hand paintings. The duo's mandate is clear, preserve Indian craft narratives but make them relevant for global product categories through modern palettes, formats and applications.

At Heimtextil 2026, the studio focused on showcasing India's natural landscapes, florals and craft traditions through adjusted colorways and contemporary formats from chintz-inspired prints to fauna patterns and hand-embroidery-inspired artworks. The designs were mapped across multiple end-use categories, including wallpapers, bedding, tableware, lamps and other home décor segments. Alongside ready artworks, the studio emphasized on custom design services, offering moodboard-based adaptations for buyers across geographies. "Clients really appreciate the flexibility," Sharma noted, adding that both original hand-painted work and digital adaptations form part of their portfolio.

Their first day at the show delivered immediate traction, three sales across buyers from the UK, USA and India. Visitor traffic on all days included buyers and agents from the UK, Korea, India and Australia, highlighting the fair's reach. It was also an opportunity for the studio to observe how global studios operate, given the relatively limited visibility of Indian design studios abroad.

The founders credit their design relevance to a combination of global trend tracking, social media awareness, international market studies and travel-based research. The studio works with a team of in-house designers and over 100 artists across India, allowing them to integrate hand craftsmanship into scalable product directions. Sharma highlighted concerns over the declining sustainability of purely hand-made art as a livelihood, with many artists unable to sustain themselves through gallery-oriented commissions alone. The studio attempts to address this gap by converting hand-painted art into commercially viable surface designs for diverse categories from bedding to lamps, creating new revenue pathways for artisans.

On technology, Sharma acknowledged the rising influence of AI in design, positioning it as a tool rather than a threat. AI, she said, serves as a fast visualization bridge, allowing design teams to quickly communicate concepts before artists build refined hand-painted versions. "It's a collaboration, technology provides ease, but handcraft provides finesse," she noted.

With Heimtextil giving the brand its first major global platform, the founders see the fair as both a visibility milestone and a market intelligence tool. For Indian design studios, Sharma believes events like Heimtextil can accelerate recognition, collaboration and integration into global supply chains, especially in a landscape often dominated by European creative studios. From a bootstrap beginning to global design conversations, Kriti & Kunal is betting on a blend of tradition, trend intelligence and artisan partnerships to scale its presence in the international design economy. ❑

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TAI Mumbai's Textiles 2030 Conference Focuses On The Future Of Textiles

The Indian textile and apparel industry stands at a defining moment, shaped as much by geopolitics and regulatory pressures as by technology and shifting consumer expectations. These themes formed the core of the International Conference titled 'Textiles 2030 – Navigating Geopolitics, Technology Innovations and Global Expectations,' organized by the Textile Association (India), Mumbai unit, at The Lalit, Mumbai. The event drew a strong response, bringing together more than 300 delegates from across the textile value chain, including manufacturers, exporters, technologists, policymakers and academicians.

Opening the conference, V. C. Gupte, Chairman of the Textile Association (India), Mumbai unit, emphasized that the global textile sector is entering a period of profound transition. Rapid technological change, evolving sustainability norms and shifting trade dynamics are redefining the competitive landscape. He pointed to recently concluded free trade agreements, including the India–EU pact, as potential catalysts for export growth, while urging the industry to move toward higher value-added products and to strengthen awareness of increasingly stringent ESG regulations.

Rajiv Ranjan, President of the Mumbai unit, reinforced this perspective in his presidential address, noting that factors such as geopolitical alignment, sustainability compliance and digital capability are now as critical as cost competitiveness. While domestic demand remains resilient, he observed that exporters continue to face pressures from global economic uncertainty and rising compliance requirements. The path forward, he stressed, lies in combining efficiency with innovation, branding and sustainability. Textiles 2030, he remarked, should be viewed not merely as a timeline but as a mindset, one that embraces automation, artificial intelligence, circularity and closer collaboration between industry, academia and government.

The conference keynote by Prashant Agarwal, Co-Founder and Joint Managing Director of Wazir Advisors, offered a broad strategic lens on the decade ahead. He highlighted how geopolitical shifts, regulatory frameworks and changing consumer expectations are reshaping global supply chains. India, he noted, is well-positioned to play a larger role in the international textile value chain, provided enterprises align their long-term strategies with sustainability-driven market requirements and emerging opportunities.

Addressing the gathering as Chief Guest, Roop Rashi, CEO of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission, highlighted the need for the textile sector to align with global expectations while strengthening India's position in international markets. She commended the conference for providing a platform that fostered dialogue, knowledge sharing and forward-looking strategy.

The conference also celebrated industry achievements through its awards ceremony. The Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Amrishbhai Patel in recognition of his long-standing contributions to industry and education, while the Industrial Excellence Award was jointly conferred on Edward Menezes, Executive Chairman and Sunil Chari, Managing Director, Rossari Biotech Ltd., for their significant role in advancing innovation and growth in the textile chemicals sector.

Technical sessions highlighted the industry's accelerating shift toward innovation and responsible manufacturing. Birla Cellulose presented advances in next-generation fibres, while Rossari Biotech discussed green surfactants and biosurfactants derived from renewable sources, reflecting rising demand for low-toxicity, biodegradable processing solutions.

Recycling and circularity emerged as key themes, with Oerlikon Textile India and Perfect Engineering outlining technologies for PET and textile waste recovery and Tata Power Renewable Energy emphasizing the growing importance of renewable energy integration in textile operations.

Speakers also examined the expanding scope of ESG and regulatory compliance, particularly in Europe, stressing the need for traceability, credible sustainability data and preparedness for frameworks such as the Digital Product Passport. Industry case studies reinforced that well-structured ESG strategies can strengthen resilience and long-term growth.

A notable highlight was the all-women panel discussion on 'Women Leadership Driving a Change in the Textile & Apparel Sector', moderated by Neha Gupta, which explored leadership journeys, workplace inclusion and the rising role of women in shaping innovation and sustainability across the industry. As discussions concluded, a clear message emerged: the road to 2030 will demand agility, collaboration and a willingness to rethink traditional business models. The textile industry faces significant challenges from regulatory complexity to shifting trade patterns, but it also has unprecedented opportunities to innovate, expand and lead. ❑

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The Comber Noil Goldmine: Are You Throwing Away Your Profits In The Trash?

Pravin Salokhe, Production Manager, Alok Industries Limited

The Spinning Veteran's Perspective

In most mills, the comber is treated as a "set and forget" machine. But as any experienced Textile Engineer knows, the comber is actually the "Heart of Quality." If your noil percentage is too low, your yarn quality fails. If it is too high, your yarn realization collapses.

1. The "Step-Gauge" Secret

Most technicians set the Top Comb and the Nipper based on the machine manual. However, the manual does not know the Short Fibre Index (SFI) of your current cotton lot.

The Veteran's Rule: If your SFI increases by 2%, your index setting must be advanced by at least 0.5 mm to maintain the same yarn U\%.

The Audit: Check your "Noil Spectrogram." If you see a chimney at the fibre length frequency, your detaching roller timing is slightly off.

2. The "Fractionating Efficiency" Formula

To truly optimize, you must calculate your Extraction Efficiency.

E = N / S *100

E where E = Efficiency, n = Noil %, and S = Short Fibre % in Lap.

Expert Tip: If E is above 75%, you are likely removing long, "good" fibres. This is a direct loss of profit.

3. 3-Point Checklist for the Floor Supervisor

Brush Condition: Are the brushes "flicking" the waste, or are they embedded? Worn brushes cause "Noil Strips" to jump back into the sliver.

Lap Preparation: If your Sliver Lap or Unilap has poor "selvedge," your comber will pull out long fibres at the edges, increasing noil unnecessarily.

Pressure Bar Settings: Ensure uniform top-roller pressure. Uneven pressure is the #1 cause of "Periodic Faults" in combed yarn. ❑

Trützschler Launches Fibre Recovery System To Cut Blow Room Cotton Waste

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Textile machinery manufacturer Trützschler has introduced an online fibre recovery system designed to reduce cotton waste generated during the blow room and carding stages of spinning. The company says the solution allows mills to recover usable fibres that are typically discarded, resulting in substantial raw material savings and improved sustainability performance.

In conventional cotton spinning, blow room waste can account for 3 to 7 per cent of raw material loss, depending on fibre preparation and cleaning parameters. For mills processing thousands of tonnes annually, this leads to significant financial loss. Trützschler's new system aims to address this gap by collecting waste directly at key points in the line, cleaning it, and feeding recovered fibres back into production.

According to company data, an average spinning mill operating a single blow room line can save up to 160 tonnes of raw cotton per year, equivalent to €288,000 in raw material savings. The calculations are based on a production rate of 1,000 kg/h, 90 per cent efficiency, annual output of 8,000 tonnes, and a cotton price of €1.80/kg.

The Trützschler Online Fibre Recovery Line can be retrofitted into existing installations and requires "only a small investment," the company said, adding that mills typically achieve a quick return due to immediate reductions in raw material consumption. The system is positioned as a complement to Trützschler's existing blow room technology, which is engineered to minimize waste during opening and cleaning.

Industry observers note that fibre recovery is gaining traction as mills face rising cotton costs and increasing sustainability scrutiny from global brands. By reducing material loss at source, spinning mills can lower input requirements and improve resource efficiency without compromising yarn quality.

Trützschler said field results show that recovered material maintains fibre integrity, allowing it to be reintegrated into standard production streams while removing unwanted impurities.

With raw material accounting for a major share of spinning costs, solutions that convert waste into usable fibre are expected to attract strong interest across major cotton-spinning regions. The company emphasized that the sustainability advantages lower waste, reduced environmental impact and better material utilization, add to the economic case for adoption. ❑

Dapeng Machinery To Showcase Weaving Solutions At SITEX 2026

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Dapeng Machinery China, a manufacturer of high-performance weaving solutions, will present its latest technologies at SITEX 2026, one of India's leading textile industry exhibitions, scheduled to take place from February 21–23 at Sarsana, Surat.

At the exhibition, the company will display its advanced waterjet and airjet weaving machines, developed to address the performance, efficiency and reliability requirements of Indian textile mills. The showcase will include two of its flagship models, the Nupai 411 CAM Waterjet Loom and the DPA 9200 Pro Airjet Loom.

According to the company, the Nupai 411 CAM Waterjet Loom is designed to deliver high-speed, reliable shedding suitable for demanding weaving applications, ensuring consistent fabric quality and operational stability. The DPA 9200 Pro Airjet Loom features a robust machine structure and is engineered for energy efficiency, offering up to 30 per cent power savings while achieving weaving speeds of up to 1100 rpm.

"We are excited to participate in SITEX 2026 and introduce our latest weaving solutions to the Indian market," the company stated. "Our team of experts, led by Tiki Liu and Karena Song, will be available to interact with visitors, understand their requirements and provide tailored technical solutions."

Visitors to the exhibition will be able to meet the Dapeng Machinery team at Stall No. 314, where live discussions and technical consultations will be conducted throughout the three-day event. ❑

Garment Printing: Sustainability With Improved Durability

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The convergence of durability, feel and sustainability has fundamentally reshaped the technical requirements for garment printing, which is defined by its washing fastness standards achieved, writes **V R Sai Ganesh.**

(V R Sai Ganesh, Chief Operating Officer-Textiles, Zydex Industries Pvt Ltd)

Globally every brand and merchandisers are now committed to achieve sustainability; specifically addressing materials consumption along with its impact on environment and biodiversity.

Bulk of the garment screen printing are done on knitted fabrics, which are subjected to intensive washing cycles, because of use by babies and kids. One of the challenges is fabric is stretchable and the RSL compliance is pushing the technology to water-based inks. Durability means retaining the look, the feel and the stretch.

The Technique

Garment screen printing is one of the most widely used and versatile technique used to print cotton, polyester and its blends. Many specialty fibres are now being incorporated like Lycra, Tencel, viscose, nylon, etc. to alter the feel and customer comforts. The industry now needs specially formulated inks which are transferred onto fabric through a fine mesh screen using a stencil that defines the design. Each colour in the artwork is applied through a separate screen, allowing for precise control over shade, opacity and texture. The technique blends in with creating specialty effects like puff, glitter and foils, making it the preferred choice for fashion brands, promotional wear, uniforms and large-volume garment production. Over the last two decades, garment printing has shifted from plastisols to water-based inks and have evolved from being a purely decorative process to becoming a highly durable garment which speaks of quality, comfort and brand reputation. The global apparel brands have significantly upgraded their expectations—not only on how a print looks when new, but on how it performs throughout the life of the garment.

Brands today expect printed garments to withstand repeated washing, crock fastness, while retaining colour brilliance, softness and stretch. At the same time, these performance expectations are expected to be met under increasingly strict sustainability and restricted chemical list compliance frameworks.

EU, China and many countries are leading strong effort to address sustainability by regulating the RSL compliance and extending the performance of the garment specifically to address durability.

Digital Product Passport: Durability is part of the information that is recommended to form a component of the digital product passport proposed by the EU. The EU Digital Product Passport (DPP) initiative is one of the key pieces of the EU Green Deal and the Circular Economy Action Plan as the world aims to meet ambitious targets for carbon neutrality by 2050.

Refashion's 2025 eco-fee rates were adjusted upward or downward based on garment life management, in which garment print durability plays an important role in visual appearance.

Textile durability standards: The European Union has published ecodesign criteria for textiles, setting standards for clothing and other fabric applications, and concluded that inferior quality will reduce the lifespan of the product and that consumers should be warned about product durability limitations.

Durable textiles (fashion and household linen) are tested for more durable, longer lasting specifications and are given testing marks. e.g Eurofins Sustainability Services provides "Durable SILVER" for 40 washes and "Durable GOLD" for 50 washes.

This convergence of durability, feel, and sustainability has fundamentally reshaped the technical requirements for garment printing, which is defined by its washing fastness standards achieved.

The Key Drivers of Sustainability

1. Changing consumer behaviour

Modern consumers wash garments more frequently and often under harsher conditions—higher mechanical action, stronger detergents and tumble drying. Athleisure and casualwear, which dominate today's apparel market, are worn and washed far more intensively than traditional fashion garments.

As a result, brands now evaluate:

- How prints behave after multiple wash cycles
- Whether fading, cracking, peeling occurs and maintain crock fastness
- Whether the print continues to feel soft and stretchable

Initial appearance, feel and stretch alone are no longer sufficient.

2. Rising expectations for comfort and aesthetics

The global shift toward comfort-driven fashion has made hand feel a decisive quality parameter. Heavy, rubbery or plasticky prints—once accepted for their opacity—are increasingly rejected by brands and consumers alike.

Current expectations include:

- Very soft, smooth handle
- Minimal film build
- Excellent stretch and recovery

As technology has evolved, the inks exhibited residual tack, which leads to increased packaging costs by using release paper and fibres from unprinted surface sticking to the printed portions, when stacked in stores. Currently the best companies have addressed the residual tack issue and eliminated the above issues.

3. Sustainability and chemical compliance pressure

Global brands are under constant pressure from regulators, NGOs and consumers to reduce environmental impact. This has translated into:

- Stricter Restricted Substances Lists (RSLs)
- Alignment with ZDHC, OEKO-TEX, and similar frameworks
- Reduced water, energy and effluent footprints
- Strong preference for water-based, PVC-free systems

Printing chemistry must now deliver performance and sustainability together, not as separate objectives.

What Brands Mean by "Durable Prints"

Although individual brand manuals differ, most global brands converge on a common technical intent when defining durable prints.

Wash durability

- Brands assess not only colour loss but also:
- Cracking or peeling of the print layer
- Change in surface appearance
- Loss of softness after laundering
- Staining of adjacent fabrics

Rubbing (crocking) resistance

Both dry and wet rubbing fastness are critical, particularly for dark shades and high-contrast prints. Poor crocking remains one of the most frequent causes of customer complaints and garment returns.

Stretch performance

For knitted fabrics, elastane blends and sportswear, brands require:

- No cracking under stretch
- No whitening at stress points
- Retention of elasticity after washing

Retention of hand feel

A print that passes laboratory

Continued on Page 46

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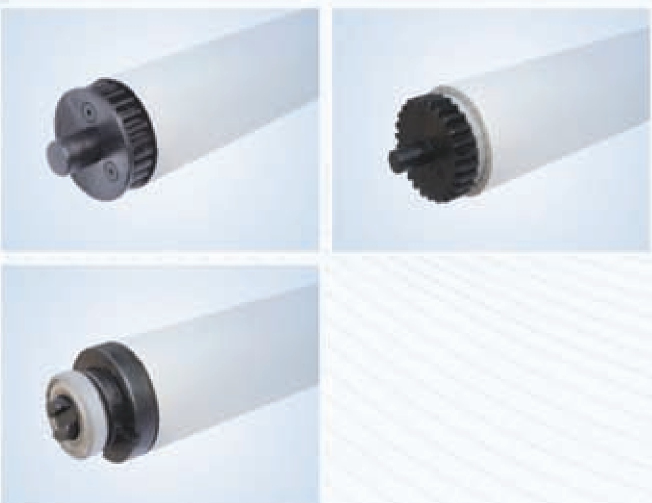

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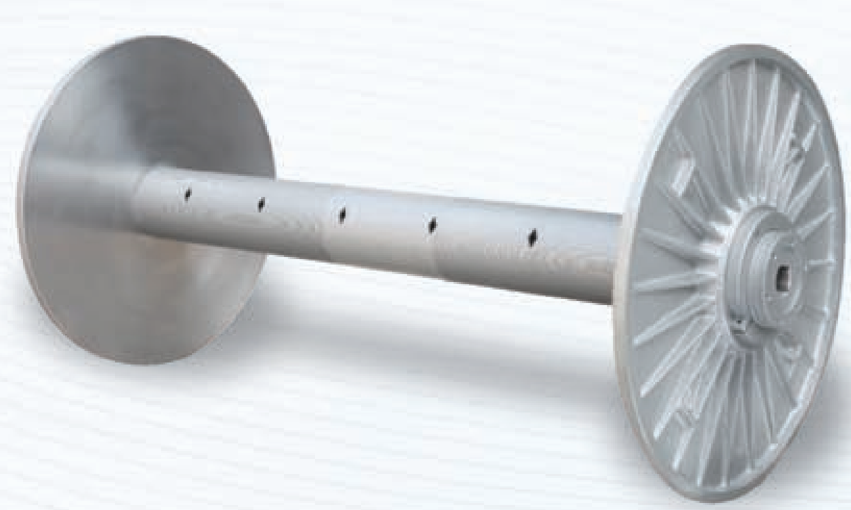

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Garment Printing: Sustainability With Improved...

Continued from Page 44

fastness tests but becomes stiff or harsh after washing is no longer acceptable. Brands now explicitly evaluate post-wash feel, not just initial softness.

Standard Washing and Testing Practices Used by Brands

To verify these requirements, brands rely on internationally recognised testing protocols as well as their own customised wash protocol. While pass criteria vary, the test methods themselves are largely standardised.

Domestic washing simulation

ISO 6330 is widely referenced to simulate domestic washing and drying conditions. It provides a controlled framework for evaluating appearance retention and performance after laundering.

Wash fastness

ISO 105-C06 and AATCC 61 are commonly used to assess colour fastness to laundering. AATCC 61, in particular, is used as an accelerated method to simulate multiple home washes.

Rubbing fastness

ISO 105-X12 or AATCC 8 are standard methods for assessing dry and wet crocking. Wet rubbing requirements are often more stringent, reflecting real-world moisture and perspiration exposure.

For garment printers, alignment with the exact method specified by the buyer is critical. Passing one test does not guarantee acceptance if a different protocol is required.

Limitations of Conventional Printing Technologies

PVC plastisol inks

Plastisol systems have historically provided good opacity and colour strength, but they present several challenges:

- Heavy, rubbery feel
- Limited breathability
- Environmental and compliance concerns
- Growing brand resistance due to PVC content

Achieving sustainability and increasing speed of production have become decisive factors for the choice of inks and auxiliaries used.

PRODUCT	MACHINE GRADES
K 2000 Plus	High performance
K 3000 Plus	For Fine lines and small motifs
K 7000	For extremely soft prints and high opacity
K3 Clear Plus	Clear
M2 Clear	Clear for hot seasons
M3 Clear	Clear for hot seasons, fine lines, very small motiffs, and 12-16 colour designs

Zydex has a technical support staff to guide printers.

Current buyer-wise requirements*	
Buyer	**Home Laundry cycles**
Primark	45
C&A	25
H&M	20
Pharlap	20
Aditya Birla Life Style	20
Gap	20
TESCO	20
Jockey	20
LANDS END	20
celio	20
Cooperative U	20
LA HALLE	20
Auchan	20
Zudio	20
(* Subject to change)	

Zydex: The Global Leader for highest durability with 100% RSL Compliance

Zydex Industries has approached garment printing from a system-engineering perspective, rather than focusing on inks alone. The objective is clear: achieve durable performance with premium feel, while reducing environmental impact.

Water-Based, RSL-Compliant Printing Solutions

Zydex has been at the forefront of replacing PVC-based plastisol inks with water-based printing systems. The company's facilities are fully integrated from research to design new grades of polymers, grind dispersions and formulate the best inks to deliver:

- Highest opacity per stroke with softest handle
- Excellent maintainable elasticity for stretchable fabrics
- Best wash and rub fastness
- Printability without chocking on manual and automatic printing machines

These systems align with modern brand expectations for comfort, aesthetics and chemical compliance.

Zydex K2 & K3 inks offered as garment printing solutions comply with leading buyers' health and safety standards, including RSL, MRSL, and applicable global regulatory requirements. Zydex Whites & Clears package enhances print durability and supports compliance with stringent home-laundering performance expectations specified by international buyers.

Zydex garment printing solutions meet the durable prints standards, sustaining up to 45 wash cycles.

The Zydex range also addresses common shop-floor issues that affect bulk consistency:

- Levelling and brilliance agents for uniform colour
- Anti-choking additives for smoother screen operation
- Wetting agents for hydrophobic fabrics
- Anti-migration auxiliaries for polyester blends

These solutions help printers deliver repeatable quality, a critical requirement for global brand supply chains.

Compliance, Collaboration and Brand Confidence

Zydex printing solutions are aligned with major international compliance frameworks and supported by:

- On-site and off-shore technical service
- Hands-on training
- Customised solutions based on fabric, design and buyer requirements

This collaborative approach reduces development time, minimises rejection risk and builds long-term confidence within brand supply chains.

The future of garment printing lies at the intersection of durability, comfort, and sustainability. Global brands no longer accept compromises between these parameters—they expect all three, validated by recognised test standards and delivered consistently at scale.

By combining polymer science, process optimisation and sustainability-driven design, Zydex K2 and K3 series demonstrates how modern printing systems can meet evolving brand expectations—delivering prints that look premium, feel soft and remain durable throughout the life of the garment. >> CLICK HERE TO READ ONLINE ❑

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Entropy and Enthalpy — My Lifelong Frenemies!

Words like entropy, enthalpy, psychrometric and adiabatic were enough to silence even the bravest soul. No one dared to ask a follow-up question. These words were my nuclear arsenal, writes **S. Murugan**

I used to throw around the words entropy and enthalpy to impress people whenever they asked me about humidification in textiles.

Honestly, I had no clue what they actually meant.

Trying to understand them since my Polytechnic days only made me more confused. The more I read, the more the formulas stared back at me like angry algebraic demons.

Whenever someone questioned why I had set the humidification in a certain way, I would simply pull out my secret weapons:

"You see, the entropy expands after adiabatic cooling, and the enthalpy remains constant. So this climate is the only possible outcome for the present outside conditions. If you want, please check the psychrometric chart."

I would say this while looking straight into their eyes, as if I were Einstein's long-lost cousin.

Naturally, they would freeze.

Words like entropy, enthalpy, psychrometric and adiabatic were enough to silence even the bravest soul.

No one dared to ask a follow-up question.

These words were my nuclear arsenal.

But deep inside, a tiny voice in my head whispered: "Why are you pretending to be a humidification guru when you barely understand the basics?"

Out of guilt, I would occasionally try to learn the real meanings. But the moment I saw the formulas, I would quietly close the book and go make tea.

Later, courtesy of energy auditors, I added more fancy words to my collection: Delta pressure, CFM per kW, inside wet-bulb vs outside wet-bulb.

These were enough to make me look intelligent in meetings and seminars.

Now that I'm retired, there is no need for such drama.

When I sit quietly and think about those days, I can't help laughing at my own theatrics.

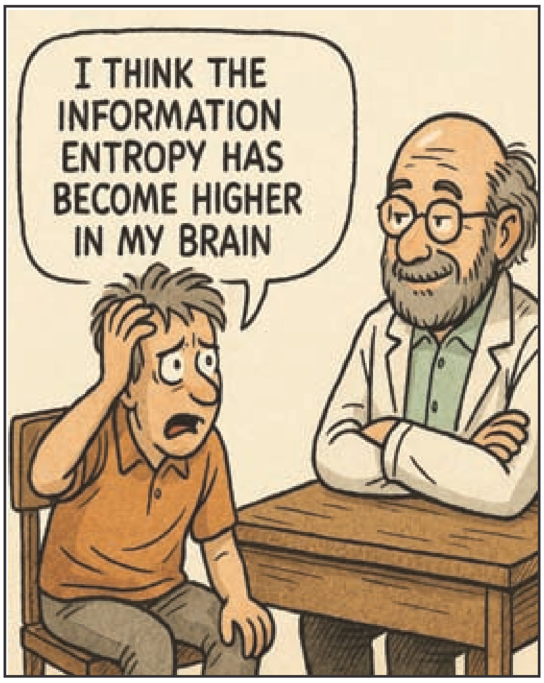
Why did I pretend to be a humidification expert when my real job was textiles?

I still don't know.

But the desire to truly understand these concepts never died.

Recently, I met an expert and asked him to explain entropy in simple terms.

He looked thrilled — as if he had been waiting his whole life for someone to ask this



question.

He began confidently: "Entropy is a thermodynamic quantity representing the unavailability of a system's thermal energy for conversion into mechanical work, often interpreted as the degree of disorder or randomness in the system."

He looked proud of his explanation.

Then he looked at my face, which was rigid with no emotion.

His pride evaporated instantly.

I hesitantly said, "Sir...what exactly is the unavailability of thermal energy?"

He sighed, regrouped and tried again. "Think of entropy as a measure of how much energy has become so spread out, so evenly mixed, that you can't use it to do any useful work. The energy is still there — but it's useless."

I still looked confused.

He tried a different angle. "Tell me, how do heat engines work?"

"By heat," I replied confidently. "The answer is already in the question!"

He nearly fainted!

"No! Heat engines work because of a temperature difference, not heat itself!"

Now I was convinced he was a bit eccentric.

Seeing my expression, he continued: "A heat engine absorbs heat from a hot source, converts part of it into work, and dumps the rest into a cold sink. It works only because the energy is concentrated. Once energy spreads out, it becomes high entropy — still present, but useless."

He paused dramatically.

Then he added: "At the beginning of the Big Bang, the universe had low entropy. As it expanded, entropy increased. Planets formed. Life emerged. Every living being is basically a machine converting low entropy into high entropy. Do you know, when entropy is fully spread out, the universe will die."

I panicked for a moment.

He laughed and said, "Don't worry. That will take trillions of years."

"Thank God! But how does this relate to textile humidification?"

He switched gears.

"Textile humidification is an open system — both matter and energy enter and leave. To understand it, you must know enthalpy too. Entropy and enthalpy are like a married couple — always together, always arguing."

He continued: "Enthalpy is the total heat content of moist air: sensible heat of dry air and water vapour, plus the latent heat of vaporisation (the energy needed to keep water as vapour). In an adiabatic process, total enthalpy stays constant — but its components rearrange. Air gives up some sensible heat. That heat evaporates water. Latent heat increases. Total enthalpy remains the same. That's why it's called constant-enthalpy humidification."

Then he moved to entropy: "When water evaporates, ordered liquid becomes disordered vapour. Molecules spread out. Mixing increases randomness. So entropy increases. Temperature drops, but entropy rises because evaporation dominates."

He concluded: "Enthalpy stays constant. Entropy increases. Temperature decreases. Humidity ratio increases. That is all about the adiabatic process happening at the air washer of your plant room"

He looked at me expectantly.

I replied: "Sir, I think the information entropy in my brain has increased. Everything is mixed up. I feel total disorder. Is this what they call brain fog?"

He laughed.

"Don't worry. Once you understand how supply air behaves inside the department, your entropy will reduce. We'll discuss that in the next session."

We both laughed and parted ways. ❑

(Murugan Santhanam is Managing Director of Texdoc Online Solution Pvt. Ltd.)

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Majority Of Indian Higher Education Institutions Still Not Industry-Ready

As employability becomes a priority across Indian higher education, outcomes remain uneven on the ground. A new TeamLease Edtech report, ₹From Degree Factories to Employability Hubs', shows that despite a growing emphasis on employability, nearly 75 per cent of Indian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are still not industry-ready, and only 16.67 per cent of institutions achieve placement rates of 76–100 per cent within six months of graduation. Structural gaps are pronounced with just 5.44 per cent reporting highly engaged alumni networks, 23.02 per cent involving industry professionals in teaching, and over 60 per cent have not explored embedding industry certifications into their programmes.

The report highlights a clear roadmap for HEIs to achieve the desired intent, i.e., employability. Curriculum relevance has emerged as the biggest structural constraint. Only 8.6 per cent of institutions report full industry alignment across programmes, while 16.9 per cent say they are partially aligned in select courses. In contrast, more than half (51.01 per cent) acknowledge they are not aligned at all, and less than one-fifth (19.1 per cent) say alignment efforts are still under implementation, leaving a majority of institutions without effective industry linkage at scale.

Commenting on the findings, Shantanu Rooj, Founder and CEO, TeamLease Edtech, shared, "What stands out in this report is the clear gap between aspiration and execution. While employability remains a central objective, a significant number of institutions are yet to fully align their curricula with industry needs, build strong employer partnerships, or integrate recognised industry certifications into their programmes. This reveals a system that is structurally underprepared to deliver the outcomes it aims to achieve. At its core, this is a system design challenge. If employability is truly the goal, curriculum co-creation with industry, mandatory internships, applied learning through live projects, and formal employer partnerships must become fundamental to how institutions function and are evaluated, not optional add-ons."

If employability is truly the goal, curriculum co-creation with industry, mandatory internships, applied learning through live projects, and formal employer partnerships must become fundamental to how institutions function and are evaluated.

Shantanu Rooj, Founder & CEO, TeamLease Edtech

The analysis further sheds light on experiential learning, which is widely seen as critical to job readiness, but still lacks structure and standardization. Internships are integrated across all programmes in just 9.4 per cent of institutions and within select programmes in 17.4 per cent institutions, taking the overall adoption to 26.8 per cent. Meanwhile, only 9.68 per cent of institutions use live industry projects, with 37.8 per cent of institutions lacking in internship integration. This indicates that a large share of students continue to graduate with limited exposure to real-world work environments, reducing opportunities to build practical, job-relevant skills before entering the employment market.

Another underutilised lever is alumni engagement. While alumni networks are often cited as a powerful bridge to industry, only 5.44 per cent of institutions report highly engaged alumni communities, and 15.09 per cent describe them as fairly engaged. For the majority, alumni relationships remain limited, minimal or absent. This weakens access to informal hiring channels, mentorship and industry referrals that typically play a significant role in early-career job placement and career navigation for graduates.

The study also points to limited industry participation in classroom teaching. Only 7.56 per cent of institutions integrate Professors of Practice across multiple programmes, while another 15.46 per cent restrict such engagement to a few departments. This leaves the majority of HEIs without sustained exposure to current industry practices, further constraining the relevance of classroom learning to workplace requirements.

Taken together, the findings suggest that while employability has moved to the centre of institutional strategy, execution remains fragmented across curriculum design, industry collaboration and experiential learning. Without structural changes in how programmes are built and delivered, the employability factor will merely become a buzzword rather than a reality.

TeamLease EdTech is India's leading learning and employability solutions company. It helps HEIs launch, run and manage their own online programmes, improve the employability of their students through their apprenticeship programmes, and helps employers build talent supply chains, along with improving employee productivity. TeamLease EdTech has exclusive partnerships with over 70 of India's largest universities and premier Institutions across 16 Indian states, and it trains seven lakh students on its platform through nine Indian languages, works with 2,200 corporates in their upskilling/skilling initiatives. ❑

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