

Cheer among jewellery exporters, as Govt. of Maharashtra allows limited diamond and jewellery operations during lockdown

- Ministry of Commerce and Customs department worked relentlessly for gearing-up G & J exports amidst COVID-19 lockdown
- Gem and jewellery industry to export \$1bn worth pending exports

Mumbai, Monday, 11th May: Thousands of gems and jewellery exporters in Mumbai took a breath of relief, as the government of Maharashtra today in a landmark decision, allowed designated export units of diamond and jewellery to begin their operations in Mumbai. However, considering the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the government has allowed limited workforce in these jewellery export units and also transport of the employees will be the responsibility of the employer during the lockdown period.

This will be a significant move for the gems and jewellery export operations to commence in Mumbai as the city houses Bharat Diamond Bourse and SEEPZ, two of India's largest jewellery export designated zones. Also, it is believed that Bharat Diamond Bourse have received export interest applications from the members worth \$550Mn from 1673 consignment parcels and SEEPZ is expected to export \$10Mn worth of diamond exports from 50 units.

On the other hand, Surat Diamond Bourse and Jaipur resumed work after a gap of almost 5-6 weeks. These centres are operational by adhering to the Covid-19 safety guidelines set up by Govt. The Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council, along with other trade bodies have been pursuing the State and Central Government to make all the major gem and jewellery centres operational across India to clear the backlog of orders from the pre-lockdown period.

Mr. Pramod Kumar Agrawal, Chairman, GJEPC said, "It's a great step by the Maharashtra Govt. This will help us to commence the exports of gem and jewellery from Mumbai and clear the pending orders. I would like to express my gratitude to Hon'ble Chief Minister, Uddhav Thackeray and CMO officials for this landmark decision. I also thank Shri Piyush Goyal, Honble Union Minister of Commerce & Industry, Department of revenue and Department of Customs for their continued support. Bharat Diamond Bourse and SEEPZ in Mumbai are major centres which has a huge backlog of orders and the industry is happy that these centres will be operational in the next few days. We would make sure that all factories and units are operational following strict guidelines of

maintaining social distancing and ensuring frequent sanitisation of factory premises, equipment, and workers.”

Mr. Colin Shah, Vice Chairman, GJEPC said, “It has been a collective effort from all the stakeholders that has helped us start gem & jewellery exports. As always there has been a tremendous support from the Ministry of Commerce & Industry. The Customs department has remained open during the ongoing lockdown and officials have bravely come forward to ensure exports to take place. Both the Ministry of Commerce and Customs department worked relentlessly for the gems and jewellery exports and we as an industry thank them for their constant support. As a result, cancellation of orders got minimised from Mumbai SEEPZ, Surat Diamond Bourse and Jaipur.”

Jaipur is another important centre for gem and jewellery wherein on an average daily 7-8 shipments are taking place from ACC, Jaipur (DTA). Till date 40 units in SEZ, Sitapura and 25 units in gems & jewellery zone of EPIP, Sitapura has commenced their production. DTA has cleared 185 shipments of value Rs. 22,87,79,565/- and from SEZ, 42 shipments of value Rs. 8,81,05,254/- were cleared till May 9th.

“Exports of gold, silver and imitation jewellery has started. Exports of studded jewellery will also begin soon,” added Agrawal.

Exporters are using the parcel services of logistic companies to send consignments as it is cheaper than booking directly on cargo flights following an increase in air freight rates. The parcel sizes are also smaller compared with usual times, as the output of factories has come down as the factories have not started in full strength.

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At Surat SEZ, operations of G&J units commenced post 27th April, 2020 with First export of G&J commodity taking place on 5th May. 8 units started their operations in Special Notified Zone, Sachin, Surat and 2 export shipments worth Rs. 109.12 Lakh was cleared in first week of May, 2020. ACC, Ahmedabad has cleared 10 shipments in the month of April, 2020 worth Rs. 18.8 lakhs.

Surat Hira Bourse is facilitating exporters in clearance of shipments and exports to Hong Kong has been possible from Mumbai airport with direct flight/cargo connection. 5 units in Gem & Jewellery park, Ichhapore, Surat have started operations with minimum strength of the staff.

From Delhi Port, 1 consignment export of gold jewellery commenced on Tuesday and few silver jewellery exports are in pipeline. Noida SEZ is operational.

Few units of Gems and Jewellery exports in Chennai have started functioning and exports to resume in this week.

GJEPC and the trade fraternity is thankful to the support extended by MOC & I, Department of Commerce and State Governments across the centres. Customs at each Centre of Mumbai, Surat, Jaipur and Delhi have been providing continued assistance and backing the trade in clearing parcels both at Import and Export. It is expected that the Indian gem and jewellery industry will be gaining back its momentum slowly by strictly adhering to the Covid-19 safety guidelines set up by Govt.