

'Pay in parts' for Armani Jeans

High-end brand experiments with EMIs via credit cards to push market share

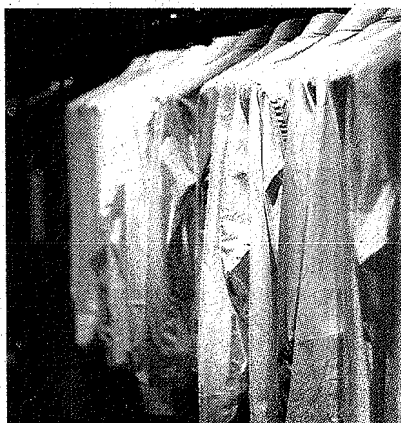
NAMRATA ACHARYA & ISHITA AYAN DUTT
Kolkata, 11 March

Buy back, cash back and equated monthly instalments (EMIs) worked wonders for iPhones in India. Now, premium apparel brand Armani Jeans, from the house of Giorgio Armani, is trying for a repeat of sorts by offering customers the option to pay in instalments or what it calls 'pay in parts'.

It has tied up with a clutch of banks in India to provide the facility to customers who can pay in three or six parts with credit cards. The scheme, targeted at the youth, is also a strategy to carve out a market presence in the premium apparel segment.

The offer is valid across all Armani Jeans products — denims, shirts, bags. Shirts at the Armani Jeans store in this city are between ₹10,500 and ₹24,000; denims are available for ₹11,000 to ₹21,000. Bags are between ₹10,500 and ₹18,000.

Under the 'pay in parts' scheme, credit card users of ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank, Standard Chartered, Axis and Citibank, among others, can buy an Armani Jeans product and pay in instalments at zero interest. The Italian fashion house's other brands, Giorgio Armani and Emporio Armani, also have stores in India but the scheme has been launched only for



Under the 'pay in parts' scheme, credit card users of ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank, Standard Chartered, Axis and Citibank, among others, can buy an Armani Jeans' products and pay in instalments at zero interest

PHOTO: REUTERS

Armani Jeans.

Whether it would be extended to the higher-end brands is not clear. The duration of the scheme is also not clear. So far, Armani Jeans has steered clear of promoting the scheme widely and is probably testing the waters. Customers making their way to the store are informed about the new scheme.

"The concept of EMI has led to a big push for retailers in segments like mobile phones and consumer durables, particularly anything aspirational. I think introducing the concept of EMI in high-end apparel should work well," says Kumar Rajagopalan, chief executive at Retailers' Association of India.

For instance, iPhone sales in India had surged by 400 per cent after the launch of cash back and EMI schemes a couple of years earlier. This scheme from Armani Jeans is India-specific.

According to a recent report from Wazir Advisors, the Indian apparel industry is valued at ₹300,000 crore, with the share of the organised sector at 35 per cent.

Projected to grow at a compounded annual rate of nearly 14 per cent, the market size is likely to be ₹576,000 crore by 2018-19. The luxury segment accounts for a small pie, at about three per cent.

"Buying high-end clothes in EMI is not a trend in India, although most credit card companies offer customers the option of converting transactions to EMIs," said Harminder Sahni, managing director, Wazir Advisors.

The size of the Indian luxury fashion market was close to ₹3,150 crore, according to Wazir. By 2018-19, it is expected to grow to ₹9,700 crore, accounting for a five per cent share in the overall apparel market.

जालंधरा

24 मार्च से जयपुर में छाएगा बॉलीवुड संगीत, खादी फैशन शो और एडवेंचर स्पोर्ट्स का जादू

हफ्ते भर चलेगा राजस्थान स्थापना दिवस समारोह

जयपुर (व्यूर)। राजस्थान का स्थापना दिवस समारोह इस बार फिर से सात दिन तक जोर-शोर से मनाया जाएगा। सात दिन तक राजधानी जयपुर में बॉलीवुड गायक अरीजित सिंह से लेकर कथक गुरु बिरजू महाराज सहित कई बड़े कलाकार समारोह में प्रस्तुति देंगे। साथ ही खादी फैशन शो और एडवेंचर स्पोर्ट्स सहित कई कार्यक्रम भी स्थापना दिवस समारोह में चार चांद लगाएंगे।

राजस्थान का स्थापना दिवस 30 मार्च को आयोजित किया जाता है और इसके आयोजन को लेकर भी कांग्रेस व भाजपा की सरकारों में अलग-अलग रुख देखने को मिलता है। कांग्रेस सरकारों के समय स्थापना दिवस कार्यक्रम को औपचारिकता

कांग्रेस सरकार में एक ही दिन होता था समारोह

के रूप में आयोजित किया जाता रहा है। भाजपा के पिछले कार्यकाल से पहले रही सरकारों के दौरान इस अहम मौके पर ज्यादा बड़े कार्यक्रम नहीं हुए। भाजपा ने पिछले कार्यकाल में स्थापना दिवस को जोर-शोर से मनाना शुरू किया।

इस कार्यकाल में स्थापना दिवस पर जयपुर में विधानसभा के बाहर जनपथ पर राज्य की सांस्कृतिक झांकी दिखाने वाली परेड आयोजित की जाती थी। इस कार्यक्रम में एक बार पूर्व राष्ट्रपति एपीजे अब्दुल कलाम भी शामिल हुए। इसके अलावा

तीन-चार दिन तक रोज बड़े कलाकारों के कार्यक्रम आयोजित होते थे। फिर सत्ता बदली और आयोजन पुराने ढर्रे पर लौट आया और एक दिन का सामान्य कार्यक्रम होने लगा। अब भाजपा सत्ता में लौटी है, तो एक बार फिर इस आयोजन को बड़े पैमाने पर कराने की तैयारी की जा रही है। पिछले दिनों जयपुर लिटरेचर फेस्टिवल के उद्घाटन समारोह में मुख्यमंत्री वसुंधरा राजे ने कहा था कि वे राजस्थान दिवस के कार्यक्रमों को एक कॉर्निवाल के रूप में आयोजित करना चाहती हैं, ताकि न सिर्फ प्रदेश के लोग, बल्कि पर्यटकों के बीच भी यह आकर्षण का केंद्र बन सके। इसी को देखते हुए इस बार इस मौके के लिए कई कार्यक्रम तय किए गए हैं।

बिरजू महाराज और अरीजित भी आएंगे

स्थापना दिवस के कार्यक्रम 24 मार्च से शुरू होंगे। इनमें अरीजित सिंह, कव्वाली गायक वडाली ब्रदर्स, पॉप सिंगर हार्द कौर, रघु दीक्षित और चुगे खां जैसे कलाकारों के कार्यक्रम होंगे। इनके अलावा एक दिन कथक गुरु बिरजू महाराज की प्रस्तुति होगी। कुछ बड़े नाटकों का भी मंचन किया जाएगा। इसी दौरान 29 मार्च को बांग्लादेशी फैशन डिजाइनर बीबी रसेल का फैशन शो होगा। इसमें वे खादी और कोटा डोरिया के परिधान पहनकर रैंप पर कैटवॉक करेंगी। इसके अलावा एडवेंचर स्पोर्ट्स फेस्टिवल, गोल्फ टूर्नामेंट, पुलिस टैटू शो और सीमा सुरक्षा बल का टैटू शो जैसे आयोजन भी होंगे। मुख्य आयोजन 30 मार्च को होगा और इसकी रूपरेखा अभी तय की जा रही है।



Raymond gains on bargain hunting

Raymond rose 2.63 per cent to Rs 519.50 on BSE on bargain hunting after the stock fell 6.09 per cent in the preceding four trading sessions to Rs 506.20 on March 10. The BSE Sensex was up 10.89 points, or 0.04 per cent, to 28,720.76. On BSE, 1.74 lakh shares were traded in the counter, compared with an average volume of 57,512 shares in the past one quarter.

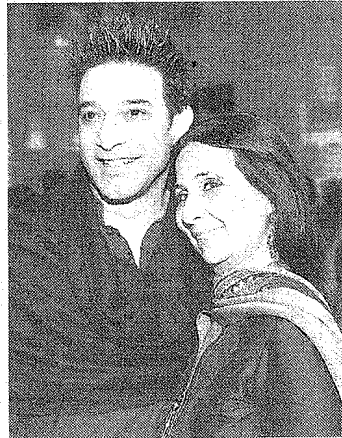
Mail Today, Delhi

Thursday 12th March 2015, Page: 21

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An ode to Indian textiles in the Capital

RAMESH SHARMA



Priya Chatwal (left); designers Suneet Varma and Anju Modi attended the 6th anniversary of Harper's Bazaar India.

By Radhika Bhalla

CELEBRATING six successful years in the country this month, *Harper's Bazaar India* magazine hosted a gala anniversary party at The Claridges recently.

The world's oldest fashion magazine with 27 international editions paid ode to Indian textile in the grand March issue with the launch of 'Bazaar Inspires', an annual project that aims to promote one desi handloom every month.

This month's pick was the handspun fabric synonymous with freedom — khadi, for which a shoot with ensembles by 64 designers have been included.

Other highlights of this month's edition include a feature on close friends and confidantes Karan Johar and Kareena Kapoor Khan, who don the cover, as well as a shoot with Lisa Haydon and Sushant Singh Rajput in Hyderabad.

New project to launched promote desi handlooms

Speaking on the occasion, editor of *Harper's Bazaar India*, Nishat Fatima stated, "For this special-themed 'Love' issue, *Harper's Bazaar* has chosen to show it's love for India with an amazing new project Bazaar Inspires, which has brought together the fashion

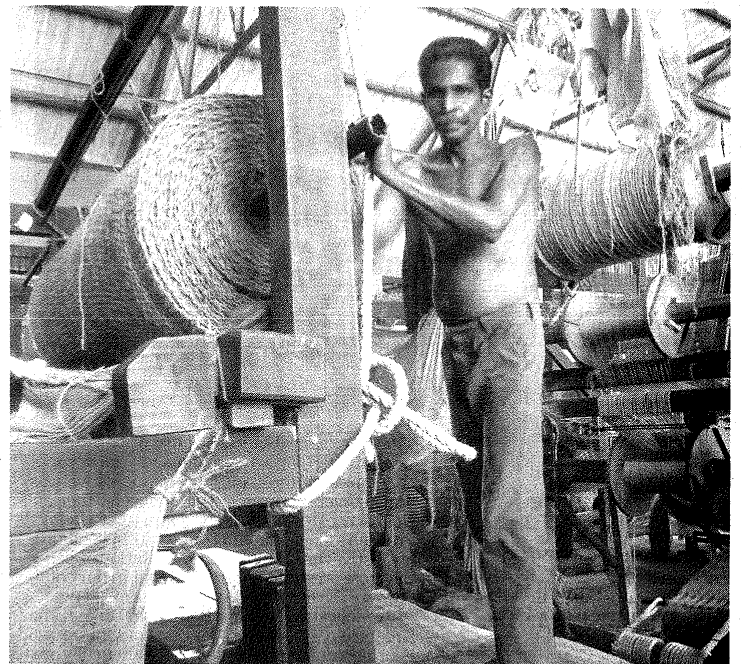
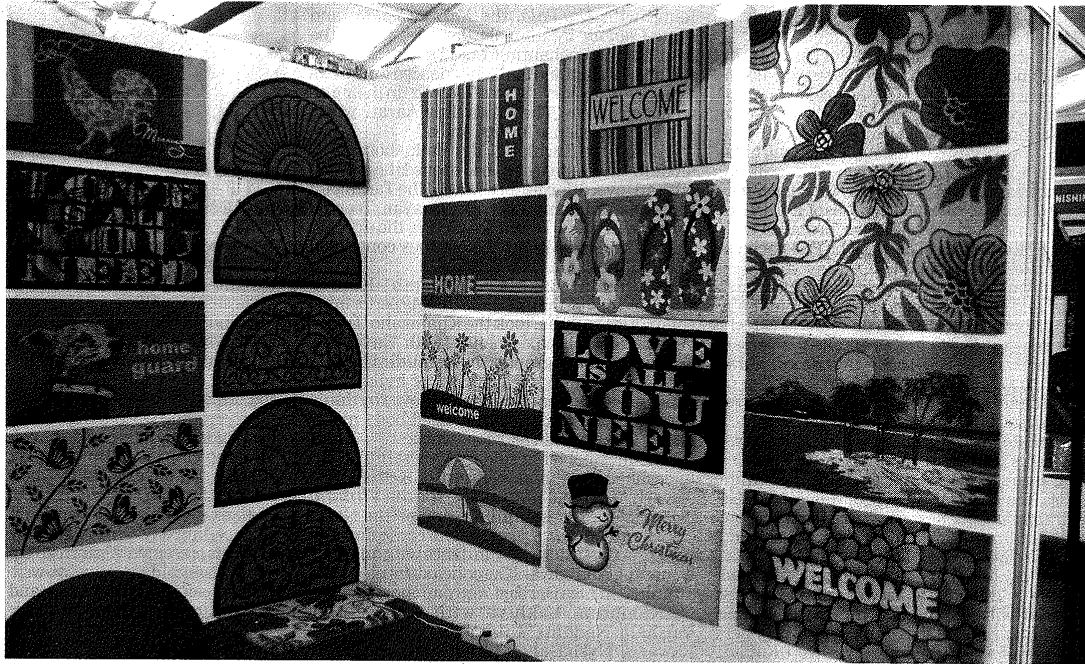
industry for khadi. 64 designers from across India have given khadi a contemporary image. The shoot appears in the magazine and the exhibition will be launched at FDCI's Amazon India Fashion Week."

The soiree was attended by the who's who of the fashion fraternity, including J.J Valaya, Suneet Varma, Rajesh and Payal Pratap, Ashish Soni, Gaurav Gupta, Anju Modi, David Abraham and Rakesh Thakore, Gauri Karan, Shivan and Narresh and Anupama Dayal among others.

The fashion sophisticates of the Capital came together to raise a toast with Sanjay Thapar, CEO, Lifestyle Magazines, India Today Group, and Nishat Fatima.

इंटीरियर डिजाइनरों का मेला अगले माह

नई दिल्ली। टेक्सटाइल व इंटीरियर डिजाइनिंग के क्षेत्र में युवाओं की बढ़ती मांग को देखते हुए अगले महीने प्रगति मैदान में 'होम टेक्सटाइल्स व एम्बियन्टे इंडिया' का आयोजन किया जाएगा। गिल्ड ऑफ डिजाइन और आर्टिस्ट व मैसै फैकफर्ट ट्रेड इंडिया की ओर से आयोजित इस समारोह में देशभर के नामचीन फैशन डिजाइनर शिरकत करेंगे। इंटीरियर डिजाइनिंग के इस फेयर में भारत समेत दुनियाभर के डिजाइनर भी शिरकत करेंगे। इस बात की जानकारी आईएलए द्वारा दी गई। फेयर में उत्कृष्ट डिजाइनरों को 'इंटीरियर लाइफ टाइम अवार्ड' भी प्रदान किया जाएगा।



Besides tourism, God's own country, Kerala has another flourishing industry, which weaves dreams with its harsh texture and soothing feel ~ coir. Coir produced in Kerala is distinct and unmatched ~ thanks to the weather and softness of the coconut husks here, be it the deep golden hue, the beautiful sheen, the fine texture or quality. Coir fibre extraction is an art by itself, developed, perfected and mastered through generations. Crisscrossed by numerous backwater and rivulets, and a coast lining the Arabian Sea, Alleppey or Allepuzha, boasts of the finest and high quality coir. Coir production is a way of life in this "Venice of the East". The stretch of Beach Road that leads up to the railway station is dotted into numerous state government-funded coir factories.

Hosted for the fifth time, Coir Kerala, an international event of coir and natural fibre products at Alleppey, was a show to remember. Sellers from across the country got a chance to interact with domestic, international and corporate buyers and seemed to have successfully pumped into the industry a promise of a brighter future.

Coconut to doormat

While buying coir products, we not only ensure support to an indigenous industry but help maintain a tradition of almost a century and also promote the means of sustainable development. Coir is, in fact, a recycled product that is left after we have used the coconut in cooking. Chit-chatting with the stall owners of Godwell Engineering Products at Coir Kerala revealed that the machines that convert husks into coir cost somewhere between a few lakh to crores of rupees. However, it requires a lot of space for the complete set up.

The process of converting the coconuts into coir is a cottage industry. It just requires the machine to be monitored and right from putting in the coconut husks and getting the end product of coir is an automated process. However, an official at the stall of Kerala State Cooperative couldn't reply satisfactorily why government help is needed to buy the German coir machines rather than developing our own products.

Hands that weave

Apart from folders, mattress and bags, an array of coir products would tempt an avid shopper. A visit to the factory of Kerala State Coir Corporation Ltd was a thrilling and educational experience both about the workers and the production business. When we reached the factory, it was already noon and workers were beginning to halt work and begin lunch. With just the fan making absurd noises in the vast expanse of the workshop hall, the workers asked us to wait till 1.30 pm, when they resumed their work. Unpacking an Aluminium tiffin box, Murugan, a worker, born and brought up in Alleppey, started mixing sambar with rice. Who knew there could be so much of a story hidden in a lunch box. Having joined this state government service, like other workers in the coir mill, Murugan spends eight hours here daily, with a 90 minute break, including a power nap. Thanks to Communist



GOD'S OWN FIBRE

HARSH TO FEEL, SOOTHING TO THE EYES ~ JUST LIKE LIFE COIR COMBINES COARSENESS WITH SOFTNESS. THE RECENTLY CONCLUDED COIR FESTIVAL IN KERALA GAVE A GLIMPSE OF THE POTENTIAL OF THIS VERY INDIAN FIBRE. BUT THEN, WHY DOES A CENTURY-OLD INDUSTRY STILL NEED SO MUCH EFFORT TO STAY IN THE MARKET



culture, the workers aren't treated like white collared employees but have fixed working hours. If that's a hindrance in meeting global requisites as buyers press for unlimited demands, Murugan refuses to agree. He believes, come whatever may, the rights of the people must be obeyed.

An employer of a private coir factory informed how too much awareness of human rights among the workers was a reason why they could not meet the buyers' demand.

Murugan's family of four comprises his two sons, both studying in high school, and wife, who looks after the family. Though working with a state government company, his wages are adequate. The employees also get

ESI benefit of healthcare. Working mostly on mattresses and rugs, workers like Murugan turn indifferent when one asks them if their sons will follow their footsteps. On insisting, he would reveal that this job doesn't have much growth and its boredom and poverty are reasons why they are not enamoured of it. The three fans slowly whirring in the hall is not enough to prevent the sweat dripping down Murugan's forehead as he said, "It's OK as long they pay us for the service."

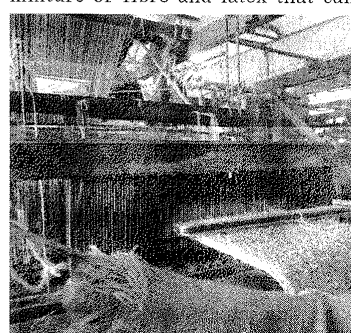
Coir's labour lost?

Talking to the core members of the Coir Board, it emerged that many labourers were from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, the two states known for

meeting the nation's labour demand. And once they employed these workers, their expenses go up, though the production boosts up as well. The local workers and their next generation prefer white collar jobs than working in a farm.

Kitchen garden solution

For dwellers of high-rise apartments, the kitchen garden will no longer be a patch of greenery outside the house, but literally a garden inside the kitchen. Sofine Decors, a company based in the industrial estate in Cherthala, has this time introduced garden pots that can be installed in the kitchen. Users can grow small to medium herbs including coriander, mint, green chillies and leafy vegetables in pots made of a mixture of fibre and latex that can



retain moisture for up to five days at a time.

"There need be no fear of leakage of water from these and they are 100 per cent natural, eco-friendly products," said Atish Mathew, the chairman of Sofine. Another big advantage of these pots is that they can be custom moulded into small or large containers according to the nature of the plants and the space available in homes.

Govt extends help

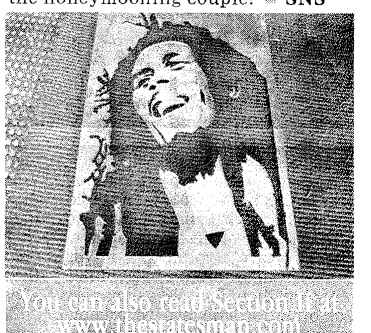
The state government has announced an overhaul of its husk procurement scheme to meet a long-standing demand from the coir industry to address shortage of raw materials. Minister for Revenue and Coir Adoor Prakash has said the new scheme will equip workers in the sector to create a vast procurement network through various incentives and utilise as much of the 600 crore (?? PIECES, KG or TONNES??) of coconut husk that the state produces annually. Under the scheme, individuals who bring raw husk for processing at accredited fibre-making units will be given incentive at the rate of 25 paise for every green husk and 15 paise for dry husk. Coir cooperatives, who procure the husk directly or through agents will be provided transport costs of Rs 250 for every 5,000 husks and Rs 50 for every additional 1,000 husks. Workers in cooperatives that use defibering machines will receive, in addition to their wages, incentives at the rate of Rs 160 for every 400 green husks they procure and Rs 20 for every additional 50 husks. For dry husk the rate will be Rs 150 for every 600 dry husks and Rs 25 for every additional 100 husks. The government will also subsidise coir fibre at Rs 3 per kg of green husk and Rs 2 per kg of dry husk.

A working capital of up to Rs 2 lakh will be given to coir cooperatives as a revolving fund to procure husk. Cooperatives that use large machines will get up to Rs 50,000 and mini-defibering units will receive up to Rs 10,000 per machine as repair and maintenance reimbursements annually.

Who will bell the cat?

A doormat that costs Rs 800 in Delhi has a factory production cost of Rs 100. What struck one is the commission charged by the middle man. No matter how willing the Kerala government is to promote coir products, something is playing spoilsport. Most of the sellers seemed more keen to export the products rather than serving the domestic market, no matter how much profit they could earn. But then there were artists, who specialized in coir canvas and coir doormats with quirkier line ever.

Whether it is human indifference, lack of knowledge about coir or government's failure in reaching out to people, one could not ascertain. But whatever the cause, this is an area that needs focused attention. While Kochi Airport proudly showcases a major tourist spot of the state, there is no souvenir shop there that could promote the state's coir industry. God's own country being the romantic destination, an Alladin on a coir carpet could have added some extra magic to the chemistry of the honeymooning couple! ■ SNS



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CUSTOM-FIT CLOTHING NOW ONLINE

Etailers are Tailor Making their Niche

Move threatens to wean away customers from offline stores that have remained the choice for many because of their customisation service



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Hyderabad: Online apparel stores are now offering nip and tuck service to prospective buyers, making it a compelling proposition for even those who have kept away for fear of having to visit the corner alteration shop for a better fit.

While young e-tailers hope to create a niche market with their differentiated service, marketplaces such as Jabong and Fashionara are hoping to attract the discerning buyer. The move threatens to wean away customers from brick and mortar clothing stores that have remained the choice for many because of their made-to-order and customisation service.

"We serve a niche that is unmet, serving women between 23 to 45 years of age who are looking for formal western wear that is functional and fashionable. Unlike a typical marketplace, we carried out a survey of what women look for and studied the Indian body type to design the sizes accordingly," said Nidhi Agarwal, founder and chief executive officer of Kaaryah.com, which offers 18 different sizes for the Indian woman. The

Gurgaon-based startup, founded by the erstwhile director of strategy at Honeywell, was a result of her quest for well-fitting western wear in India.

"The corner stores can probably reduce an inch or alter something, but they do not have the expertise to tailor women's trousers, for example," Nidhi said, adding that an order is put together by a network of stitching units incubated with the company.

Marquee men's apparel brands such as Madura Fashion and Lifestyle and Arvind Ltd made the switch earlier by introducing custom clothing lines online last year with MYFIT on trendin.com and Creyate, respectively. However, for women's fashion and bespoke clothing, there are no strong online brands offering the service.

"In India, it is going to be a limited offering depending on how many customers exist for a high-value addition for the product," said Sandeep Ladda, Leader (Technology) at PricewaterhouseCoopers India.

However, global customers are willing to pay a premium for customisation, often up to 25% (Bain and Company Report, 2013), as demonstrated by Chennai-based apparel brand eShakti.com, which offers custom-fit

clothing for women in the US. The venture raised ₹90 crore from IvyCap ventures and IDG Ventures last year for scaling up operations. Among the marketplaces, Fashionara introduced a pilot across Bangalore, Pune, Delhi and Hyderabad with a "fitting" doorstep service with the aim of minimising returns due to sizing issues.

"We offer many category leading services like try-at-home, alterations for trousers and a personal 'style advisor' who can help a customer pick up the right clothes for himself / herself," says Arun Sirdeshmukh, founder and chief executive officer of Fashionara.

Linking designers and boutiques to end customers, Jabong introduced its boutique platform earlier this month, with its curated collection of international and Indian brands. "The response has been phenomenal. The average number of orders has grown by 50%, as per the sales figure for March, with an average selling price (ASP) of

₹3,500. Our target audience is niche customers and we serve them through differentiated packaging and by adding fresh assortment every month," said Praveen Sinha, founder and managing director of Jabong.com.

A similar approach to facilitating omni-channel business, Fashionove.com brings popular boutiques and designers in a city online for easy discovery. "We work differently from a marketplace as we provide reviews and ratings to the boutiques and create a brand page to showcase their products. For custom-fit orders, we work on the pre-paid model to minimise cancellations," said Tanushree Khandelwal, co-founder and director of Fashionove.com. The company mainly serves boutiques in Kolkata and Mumbai, though the orders are shipped across India.

"The idea of made-to-measure implies that someone measures you for the fitting and online players will do well to offer an omni-channel strategy in this respect. A combination of service by sending over a fitter and finished product will appeal to the niche buyer online," said PricewaterhouseCoopers' Ladda.

Marquee men's apparel brands made the switch earlier by introducing custom clothing lines online last year

BOLSTERING TRADE

Saarc countries to harmonize standards

The identified sectors include food and agricultural products, and textile and leather among others

BY ASIT RANJAN MISHRA
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NEW DELHI

In an attempt to boost trade in the South Asian region, members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) are finalizing mutually acceptable standards in products in five sectors with significant trade interest for member countries. Divergence in standards is considered a major non-tariff barrier for trade not picking up in the region.

Saarc groups Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Saarc members established the South Asian Regional Standards Organisation (Sarso) on 25 August 2011. It became operational in Dhaka with effect from 3 April 2014, with the appointment

of Syed Humayun Kabir as the first director general of the specialised body. All standards finalized by Sarso will have a distinct identity and will be known as SAARC Regional Standards (SARS) with a specific number like SARS 0001.

The identified sectors for harmonization of standards include food and agricultural products, jute; textile and leather; building materials; chemicals and chemical products and electrical and electronic products. Products which sectoral technical committees are currently studying include sugat, biscuits, jute bags, cement and shampoo.

Chandan Bahl, head of international relations department in the Bureau of Indian Standards, said the idea is to identify products and try to harmonize national standards into a distinctive Saarc standard which has to be mandatorily followed by all member countries. "The work in this direction has already been started. Some products have been identified where technical committees are meeting and discussing to harmonize standards. They have to go back to the stake-

holders who will vet it with their own national standards and get it ratified by their respective countries. It has to be unanimous decision of all members," Bahl added. Bahl said on the certification side also, countries are developing a mutual recognition agreement (MRA) on quality assessment, whereby they would be able to utilize each other's certification bodies so that most of the certification takes place in the country of origin of the product without depending on the certification of the destination country.

Ram Upendra Das, a professor at the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), said this move by the SAARC members could be the first step towards creating a South Asian value chain. "With backward and forward linkages, such standard harmonization could boost standards of other products and help member countries look for markets beyond the region," he added.

India's exports to SAARC member countries rose 15.8% to \$17.5 billion in 2013-14 while import from these countries contracted 7.72% to \$2.5 billion.