

Ban on Chinese fireworks fails to boost local cracker sales: Assocham survey

OUR BUREAU

Ahmedabad, October 28

Ban on import and sale of Chinese fireworks has failed to boost domestic firecracker sales as traders have registered an overall 20 per cent decline in indigenous-manufactured firecrackers' demand leading to a loss of nearly 30,000 jobs in recent past, Assocham said on Friday.

An Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (Assocham) survey across major cities reported poor business owing to anti-cracker campaigns run by schools, resident welfare associations (RWAs) and others.

10-city survey

Assocham interacted with firecracker wholesalers, retailers and traders in 10 cities - Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Bhopal, Chennai, Dehradun, Delhi, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Lucknow



Hundred firecracker manufacturing units in Sivakasi have shut shop owing to intense campaigns and sales of China-made crackers over the years. RASHOK

and Mumbai - to gauge the enthusiasm and demand for firecrackers together with the impact of ban on Chinese crackers across India.

"It is not just Chinese firecrackers but multiple factors such as growing environmental awareness, rising cost of living, growing reluctance among the

people to spend money on crackers, traffic congestions during the festive period and others have dented this business over the years," said the majority of 250 firecracker traders in these cities where Assocham representatives conducted the survey in the last 25 days.

Most of the traders reported a sharp decline of about 20 per cent year-on-year from past five years and have also almost halved the amount of crackers they used to get in view of poor sales.

"Banning Chinese firecrackers was a welcome move aimed at strengthening the domestic industry. However, growing criticism of bursting firecrackers and all the negative publicity together with rising air and noise pollution have stunted the growth of firecracker industry across India," said DS Rawat, Secretary-General of As-

socham. About a hundred firecracker manufacturing units in Sivakasi in Tamil Nadu have shut shop owing to intense campaigns and sales of China-made crackers over the years. It is estimated that about 30,000 people have lost their livelihood, he said.

He said there are about 800 licensed firecracker making units in Sivakasi where this industry accounted for a market of about ₹2,500 crore. This has been facing heat from Chinese products whose import has grown in leaps and bounds in the past few years. Rise in cost of raw materials and overall inflation have also discouraged people from buying firecrackers over the last few years.

Anti-fireworks drive crashes Diwali sales

■ Import ban on Chinese fireworks had little impact

Lucknow, Oct. 28: Ban on import and sale of Chinese crackers has had negligible effect on Indian fireworks as traders across major cities report poor business owing to anti-cracker campaign run by schools, resident welfare associations and others, ASSOCHAM said on Friday.

It is not just Chinese crackers, but multiple factors like growing environmental awareness, rising cost of living, growing tendency to save hard-earned money, paucity of time and traffic congestions have dented the business over the years. This is what a majority of the traders surveyed said.

There is a sharp sales decline of about 20 per cent year-on-year from the past five years, which have also almost halved.

"Banning Chinese firecrackers was a welcome move which was aimed at strengthening the domestic industry. However, growing criticism of bursting crackers and the negative publicity along with rising pollution have eventually faded the growth of firecracker industry," said D.S. Rawat, ASSOCHAM secretary general, while releasing the findings.

"About hundreds of units in Sivakasi have shut their shop owing to intense campaigns and growing sales of China-made crackers over the years."

Costlier raw materials and inflation have also held back people from buying crackers, a trend for the past few years now, noted the survey.

However, many traders nurse hope that last-minute purchase could save the day for them.

The industry body interacted with wholesalers, retailers and traders spread across 10 cities of Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Bhopal, Jaipur, Chennai, Mumbai, Lucknow, Delhi, Hyderabad and Dehradun to gauge enthusiasm and demand for crackers together with the ban impact across India.

Meanwhile, The Madras High Court has dismissed a public interest litigation which sought specified places for sale of crackers citing alleged violation of norms and said authorities were naturally duty bound to implement the rules under the Explosives Act.

GROWING AWARENESS

■ **COSTLIER** raw materials and inflation have also held back people from buying crackers

■ **SALES** have seen a decline of about 20 per cent year-on-year for the past five years

■ **MANY** traders hope that last-minute purchase could save the day

■ **THE** domestic industry welcomed the move to ban the import of Chinese crackers but recent criticism of bursting crackers along with rising pollution has faded the growth of firecracker industry

Pollutant-loaded air continued to hang heavy in Delhi ahead of Diwali, prompting authorities to call for the festivities sans fireworks



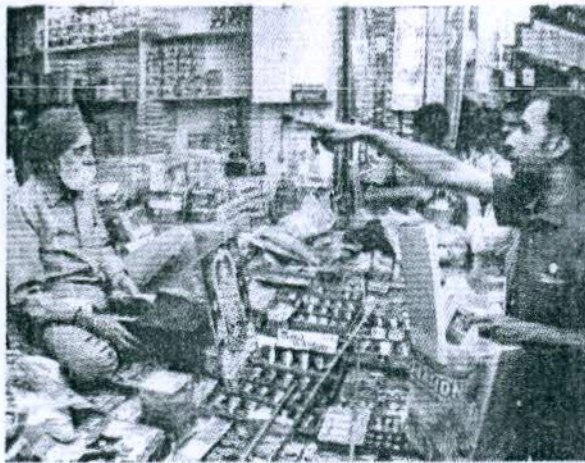
Green activism badly burns pre-Diwali cracker sales

For past five years sales have been declining 20% year-on-year, finds biz chamber study

LUCKNOW: Ban on import and sale of Chinese crackers has had little or no effect on domestically-made ones as traders across major cities report poor business owing to anti-cracker campaign run by schools, resident welfare associations and others, ASSOCHAM said on Friday.

It is not just Chinese crackers, but multiple factors like growing environmental awareness, rising cost of living, growing tendency to save hard-earned money, paucity of time and traffic congestions have dented the business over the years. This is what a majority of the 250 traders surveyed said. There is a sharp sales decline of about 20 per cent year-on-year from the past five years, which have also almost halved.

"Banning Chinese fire-crackers was a welcome move which was aimed at strengthening the domestic industry. However, growing criticism of bursting crackers and the negative publicity along with rising pollution have eventually faded the growth of fire-cracker industry," said D S Rawat, ASSOCHAM Secretary General, while releasing the findings. "About hundreds of units in Sivakasi have shut their shop owing to intense campaigns and growing sales of China-made crackers over



the years." Costlier raw materials and inflation have also held back people from buying crackers, a trend for the past few years now, noted the survey. However, many traders nurse hope that last-minute purchase could save the day for them.

The industry body interacted with wholesalers, retailers and traders spread across 10 cities of Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Bhopal, Chennai, Dehradun, Delhi, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Lucknow and Mumbai to gauge enthusiasm and demand for crackers together with the ban impact across India. Meanwhile, pollutant-loaded air continued to hang heavy in the national capital ahead of Diwali, prompting

authorities to call for the festivities sans fireworks, which they said emit cancer-causing smoke. Nearly all the monitoring stations active in the city said the PM 2.5 and PM 10 (ultra fine pollutants) were several times above the safe limit of 60 and 100 micro grams per cubic metre, keeping the city air in "very poor" category.

For the second consecutive day, pollutants (PM 10) in Anand Vihar shot up nine times above the safe limit when checked in real-time around 12 PM as per the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC). Central Pollution Control Board's (CPCB) Punjabi Bagh, RK Puram stations had the Air Quality Index (AQI) in the severe category, which affects

healthy people and seriously impacts those with existing diseases. System of Air Quality and weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR), Pune said in its Diwali forecast that if the current weather conditions prevailed, share of PM 2.5 would increase by up to 20 per cent. According to SAFAR analysis, wind, which is already stagnant, is likely to turn easterly during the Diwali period. This coupled with falling temperature is likely to worsen the pollution level in the city.

"This scenario is likely to hold the locally generated fire-crackers emissions within the NCT, slowing down dispersion, resulting in increased levels of PM 2.5 and PM 10 pollution unlike 2015 when winds swept away the larger share," a report prepared by a team of SAFAR led by Gufran Beig said.

The highest levels of PM 10 and PM 2.5 are expected between 11 PM and 3 AM on the night of October 30 and 31. Air quality will be at its worst on October 31 and start to improve from November 1, the agency said. Centre for Science and Environment's (CSE) Anumita Roychowdhury said the carcinogenic element in the smoke emitted by firecrackers may cause diseases ranging from cancer to imbalance of hormones.

Sale of firecrackers drops 20%: Assocham

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, OCTOBER 28

A SURVEY conducted by the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (Assocham) has found that there was a 20 per cent decline in demand for firecrackers in the current Diwali season.

The survey found that "it was not only the ban on Chinese firecrackers, but several factors like growing environmental awareness, rising cost of living, growing tendency amid people to save their hard earned money rather than spoiling them on burning crackers and paucity of time affected the firecracker business this festive season".

The survey was conducted in 10 cities — Ahmedabad, Bangaluru, Bhopal, Chennai, Dehradun, Delhi, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Lucknow and Mumbai — to gauge enthusiasm and demand for firecrackers together with impact of ban on Chinese firecrackers across India in the last 25 days.

Most traders said they had seen a sharp decline of around 20 per cent year-on-year in the past five years and also almost halved the amount of crackers they used to get in the wake of poor sales.

Assocham secretary-general D S Rawat said the negative publicity against firecrackers causing environmental pollution affected the growth of firecracker industry across the country.

