

● **PUSH FOR ONE DISTRICT ONE PRODUCT SCHEME**

# India seeks duty-free access for goods under trade pacts

FE BUREAU

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**COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY** minister Piyush Goyal on Monday said India is trying to get duty-free access for a broad range of products, which are identified under the One District One Product (ODOP) initiative, under trade agreements.

He also called for the integration of the ODOP initiative with the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) platform. This will help expand the ODOP frontiers by “bringing buyers and sellers together on a democratic platform”.

Delivering a speech after launching the ODOP Gift Catalog and ODOP Storefront on the government e-marketplace (GeM) here, the minister said these products — including gold jewellery, handicrafts, handlooms and toys — present huge opportunities for exporters.

Through the ODOP initiative, the government intends to convert each district into an export hub by identifying at least one product of that district that has huge export potential.

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**PIYUSH GOYAL,**  
COMMERCE AND  
INDUSTRY MINISTER

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agreements (FTAs) where we are looking at duty-free access for all these products. So we can create international acceptance of these products,” Goyal said.

India is either negotiating or planning to start talks for a flurry of high-stake FTAs with

key economies, such as the EU, the UK, Canada, Israel, members of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) and Australia. While New Delhi has clinched an interim deal with Canberra, talks for a full-fledged FTA could start soon. Together, these

economies (excluding the UAE, a part of the GCC, with which an FTA is already signed) contributed as much as \$108 billion, or 26%, to India's merchandise exports in FY22.

Goyal has suggested a five-point approach for the ODOP's success. This includes developing one-stop gifting destinations with high-quality suppliers; involving students of institutions like the National Institute of Design to boost design; and imparting extensive training to artisans.

“Let us look at creating art and crafts villages at the G20 destinations across India. This can become the seed which will help artisans for years and help tourism, and will give visibility to ODOP,” Goyal said. In addition to the ONDC, programmes like Startup India and Make in India would further support the ODOP initiative.

To make it a success, the commerce ministry is also addressing bottlenecks over shipping out of these products, supporting local entities to scale up manufacturing for exports, and identifying potential customers overseas.