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A Quarterly Publication on Plywood / Wood & Bamboo Based Panel Products

October - December 2020



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Made Together Apart: 'Connected' unveiled at the Design Museum

Material-driven project pushes the boundaries of what is possible with American hardwoods and explores how designers and craftspeople adapted their working practices during lockdown.

Nine imaginative and original tables and seating designs, created by nine leading international designers and beautifully made in one of Europe's top craft workshops, have been unveiled as part an installation entitled 'Connected', at the Design Museum in London. The resulting pieces, on display at the Design Museum, which re-opened to the public, celebrate the act of physically coming back together - reconnecting - after lockdown. The designers involved include: Ini Archibong (Switzerland), Maria Bruun (Denmark), Jaime Hayon (Spain), Heatherwick Studio (UK), Sebastian Herkner (Germany), Maria Jeglinska- Adamczewska (Poland), Sabine Marcelis (Netherlands), Studiopepe (Italy) and Studio Swine (UK / Japan).

The onset of COVID-19 significantly changed the way people live, interact and work. As a result, creatives and makers had to adjust their processes using new technologies to work together at a distance and often operate from new, improvised, home offices. For this project, the American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC), Benchmark Furniture and the Design Museum challenged the designers to create a table and seating for their personal use, to suit their new ways of living and working from home. The designers had a choice of three American hardwoods to work with - red oak, maple or cherry. They were also invited to record their creative journeys to demonstrate how they approached the brief and developed their designs at a time of limited physical contact.

"This extraordinary exhibition showcases the results of a unique experiment that sets out to push the boundaries of what is possible with these timbers and to explore how designers and craftspeople adapted their working practices during lockdown," said Roderick Wiles, AHEC Regional Director. "The project demanded that both the designers and craftspeople at Benchmark work innovatively, by relying solely on digital communication and video conferencing, to bring the designers' visions to life. This approach required a new level of trust in the makers, since the designers had no physical contact with their pieces whilst they were being made at Benchmark's Berkshire workshop during the summer."

According to AHEC, this material-driven project is all about three underused hardwoods - red oak, maple and cherry - which combined, account for more than 40 percent of all standing hardwoods in the American forests. All three are beautiful woods and the aim was to allow the designers to discover their aesthetic and performance potential. The emphasis was also on the environmental merits of making more use of what nature is growing. The resulting responses to the brief are incredibly diverse and personal, with a bold array of natural and stained finishes that bring these sustainable timbers to life in a new way. Each of the designs have challenged the makers with their

complexity and attention to detail.

"I am blown away by how each designer was given the same brief and we ended up with nine completely different - and incredible - creative interpretations. The performance of these three hardwoods has been exceptional, and craftspeople at Benchmark have risen to the challenges presented by some complex designs and the results are extraordinary," said David Venables, AHEC's European Director. "This is a genuine evolution in how we work: the craftspeople have worked tirelessly with the designers over video conferencing to ensure the exact details are met. And it proves that lockdown doesn't get in the way of creativity and creation."

"Commissioning nine designers to make furniture from wood doesn't sound like a particularly original brief. But these are not ordinary times. We are all being over-exposed to our homes and having to adapt to new patterns of working. The pandemic has forced each designer to approach their home-working set-up with a completely fresh perspective - what do they really need? The Connected project has been a rare opportunity for them to design for themselves, but the key challenge has been that they have had to rely entirely on digital communication. It couldn't be more relevant, and we are delighted with the results," added Justin McGuirk, Chief Curator at the Design Museum.

Each designer was paired with a craftsman at Benchmark's workshop in Berkshire, with whom they developed their pieces. Benchmark collated all the production data for each design to enable AHEC to model its environmental life cycle impact (LCA). The designers also recorded the design process and product development throughout the summer, producing a series of video diaries, which are on the project website (www.connectedbydesign.online) and social media, using the project hashtag (#connectedbydesign). These diaries also feed into a documentary-style film that will narrate their individual journeys.

"As we near the end of the making it has been fascinating to see how creating at distance has worked," said Sean Sutcliffe, Co-founder of Benchmark Furniture. "The progression of trust by the designers in our team has been notable and rewarding. As we've gone from design and development through to production we have remained in close contact by phone, video link and photos - each designer has learned to put their faith in the look, touch and judgement of our craftsmen. There have been challenges around the communication of color in the woods as screen settings all vary, and texture is really hard to convey digitally, but the hardest thing to explain has been the sense of physical presence of a piece...the scale and weight as we feel it when we stand with it."

Ini Archibong's Kadamba Gate is driven by a strong narrative



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that guides the material choice as well as the piece's construction. Both the table and bench function as outdoor pieces. The table has a metal base plate and frame that supports the tabletop. The sculptural underframe is made from irregular-shaped extrusions in multiple heights, inspired by the Giant's Causeway in Northern Ireland. This underframe is constructed from a mix of materials - American red oak, cherry and thermally-modified American red oak. The table's top is laminated and machined, with a colorful gloss epoxy finish, and intricate removable brass detailing, which doubles as drainage for its outdoor environment. Ini's bench uses a similar construction as the table, with a metal frame cased within sculptural timber extrusions. The top has a subtle camber for drainage, and a removable vegetable tanned leather seat pad with stitched perimeter, made by leather specialists Bill Amberg Studio.



Maria's collection, Nordic Pioneer, offers a masterclass in Nordic design. With a purity to both the seating and to her gate-leg table, they are intentionally pared back, to let the materials and construction do the talking. Made entirely in American maple, a key design detail is the elegant wooden hinge that runs the length of the tabletop, to lift and drop the leaf. Components for this hinge are turned and drilled to within a fraction of a millimeter, to ensure a smoothness of movement. Turned rounded feet intersect with the square profile of the table leg, and subtle tracks for the gate legs are integrated on the underside of the leaf. Maria's seat references the functional and linear lines of the table, while stackable stools with rounded seat pads, machined from solid maple act to celebrate the choice of timber.

The Mesamachine is a complex and ambitious multi-element build, providing a single space to work, play, eat and spend time with his family. Like a swiss army knife, functional elements can be opened and extended to serve a multitude of functions. The main table frame is made up like a hollow torsion



box, with tensioning ribs running along its length. The various storage solutions and extending shelves work on timber runners and involve an exacting degree of precision in their manufacture. Two stools and a bench follow a similar design language, with smiley faces cut out to add a playful element. The timber choice is American cherry with a clear oil.



Heatherwick Studio's Stem celebrates the power of biophilia by incorporating planting into curved CNC-machined American maple legs, clamped to a glass tabletop. After spending three months at the same desk using video conferencing to communicate, the studio craved nature and began to see the space around them as a mini television studio - what is behind you and around you is now being seen by the world. Initial inspiration evolved from the craft of wooden spoon carving. The same principle is applied to a shelving unit, with carved timber uprights and glass shelves. The seat will be upholstered in Gotland shearling, with a carved base that references the other elements.



With an organic and modular form, Sebastian wanted to create a landscape where the various elements of his day meet. The name Stammtisch translates as the 'regulars table'

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- a space for friends and family to gather every week. Using a thoughtfully selected choice of materials, the table is made from red oak, bleached, with a white matt natural oil finish. The large tray is made from American maple, ammonia fumed with a clear matt natural oil finish. His stools and small tray are made from scorched red oak. The timber for the tabletop and other components is spindle-moulded to achieve the characteristic shape that is key to Sebastian's design. Components were carefully jointed and glued up, with the design playing with contrasting grain directions from the tabletop and the movable trays, which can run along the length of the top within skived tracks.

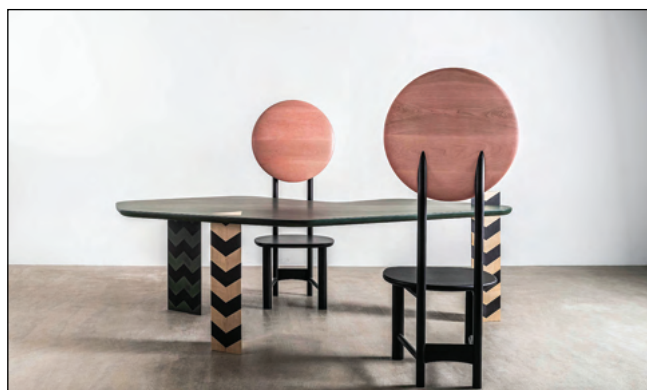


Maria's Arco seat and table draw inspiration from sculptural forms and the architecture of Benedictine abbeys. With a focus on a prominent curve, the table uses prime American cherry with planks carefully grain matched and machined. The table's angled legs are an unusual quarter-moon shape and create tension through the top by use of inset metal plates. The chair has been designed to be sculptural, and to mimic the curves of the body. While appearing structurally simple, the construction choices (such as frame matching) showcase the degree of manufacturing proficiency. The side panels of the chair are coopered - a technique drawn from barrel-making, and the piece will act to celebrate the beauty of the hardwood.



Sabine Marcelis' Candy Cubicle transforms from 'working mode' into 'hiding mode' with an element of surprise on the inside - inspired by the suitcase scene in Pulp Fiction. The outer surfaces use veneered American maple with a white oil finish. The interior has compartments for books and a computer, constructed from the same maple veneer - but coated in a yellow high-gloss translucent lacquer - hand polished to a fine finish. This offers a bright pop of color when the cubicle is open, with the fine maple grain visible through the lacquer. The unit is on

matching yellow casters, allowing the piece to be easily closed when the working day is over. Sabine's seat, a circular stool, is made from stacked and turned solid maple, with matching casters.



Studiopepe's Pink Moon plays with the idea of cycles of renewal and new beginnings, inspired by the Pink moon in spring. Its construction involved contrasting inlay details on the table's legs and a contemporary seat inspired by a Charles Rennie Mackintosh frame. American maple was chosen for this piece. Timber was first selected and then CNC cut for the leg inlays. These pieces were then stained and oiled, a process that dyed the timber through. The tabletop was planked and then cut on CNC to the desired nature-inspired form. Legs were mitred together, and then the contrast inlay fitted flush. The chair's unusual backrest comprises a large maple 'moon', CNC machined in two halves, drilled to accept the back legs and then stained. When the two halves are brought together, a seamless joint will be created, with the Pink Moon suspended by the Mackintosh-inspired frame.



The Humble Administrator's Chair and Table by Studio Swine is a throne-style seat and table inspired by traditional Chinese gardens and the archetype of the Ming Chair. After spending lockdown in Tokyo, the pair were left craving nature and wanted to celebrate timber in its purest form. American cherry was chosen for its warmth and caramel tones for the solid seat and back leg, with curved steam bent American red oak front legs, arms and backrest. The steam bend for the arms was ambitious and complex to fabricate, in that it bends across two axes - requiring a team of six craftspeople and a specially constructed jig to create its unusual form. Their table uses a smooth clean piece of American cherry, with the straight leg profile visible through the top as end grain. An inset laptop shelf will act as a tensioning brace for the table. □

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Offices of the future: why timber is the material of choice

By Stora Enso

The recent global pandemic has not only influenced our daily lives; it is ultimately also affecting our business world coming back to offices. But will we come back? And if so, what do offices need? This global crisis has brought a fresh awareness on how important health and nature are for each individual and thus radically change buildings towards a more sustainable future.

As investors and developers look to construction materials with lower embodied carbon for the well-being of the tenants as well as the communities around, wooden buildings are on the rise. The use of massive engineered wood products, coupled with digital design tools and manufacturing, has enabled a new kind of building that offers advantages including improved health and well-being, expanded architectural opportunities and, perhaps most importantly, a building that is constructed sustainably and can even be recycled at the end of its life.

“Using wood in construction responds to the ambitious environmental goals, since wood can help reach net zero carbon dioxide emissions from construction. By using wood, the carbondioxide emissions during construction can be cut by up to half compared to conventional construction. The emissions are offset by the carbon stored in the building’s wooden components,” said Erkki Valikangas, Business Development Manager Asia & Australia at Stora Enso. Wooden construction offers various carbon emission saving opportunities, such as requiring less site

transportations as more elements can be brought with one truck.



Timber towers in Moholt, Trondheim, Norway

Looking Back, Growing Forward

Perhaps it's unfair to call this “new”. The world's oldest wooden building, the Horyuji temple in Japan, is still standing some 1,300 years after it was built. But although concrete



Construction of Wood City in Helsinki, Finland.



Wood City's residential in Helsinki, Finland.

buildings have dominated our post-industrial landscapes, their environmental impacts are now clearer, presenting an opportunity for innovative wooden construction as an alternative. Furthermore, unlike so many materials in the construction industry, trees are renewable.

In recent years, more and more notable wooden buildings have been constructed around the world, from the Moholt 50/50 student accommodation in Trondheim, Norway, to International House, a commercial office building in Sydney, Australia, and the Wood City project in Helsinki, Finland, which includes apartment and office blocks as well as a hotel.

Swedish-Finnish company Stora Enso is currently working with dozens of projects around the world, many of which are helping regenerate urban areas, and the growth in massive engineered wood production has been very noticeable for the renewable materials company. Last summer, Stora Enso reached the milestone of manufacturing more than one million cubic metres of cross-laminated timber (CLT) for the first time since their mills began production in 2008.

Engineering A Solution

Engineered timber can be thought of as combining the environmental performance of a natural, renewable resource with the performance characteristics of manmade materials. It is, in many ways, the best of both worlds.

From an environmental perspective, engineered timber is a renewable resource. So long as it is harvested strictly from sustainably managed forests, it is possible to plant more trees than are used. Crucially, the trees remove carbon from the atmosphere as they grow and store it away, locking the carbon in the timber for the lifetime of the material. This means that, as long as an engineered timber building stands, the material is in effect carbon negative.

But can engineered timber structures provide comparable performance to traditional construction methods? Emphatically yes – provided they are designed correctly. One of the most prominent engineered timber materials, CLT, is fully capable of supporting highrise structures such as apartment complexes or office buildings.

What's more, CLT is prefabricated and supports the growing need for more off site construction to speed up developments. The lighter weight nature of CLT means fewer site deliveries, reducing costs and the impact on the local community – thereby aiding planning applications. It also means that more units can be built on sites where weight is an issue, such as those above tunnels or with poor ground quality, and it creates opportunities to create more value from existing buildings through vertical extensions. This can help increase returns on the project, deliver more homes and in some cases make the difference between commercial viability and unfeasibility. Furthermore, there is growing evidence to suggest that wooden buildings contribute health and well-being benefits to their occupants. Studies show that spaces with wooden surfaces help to reduce occupants' stress levels, aggression and blood pressure, and improve their ability to concentrate. A recent Australian study showed that employees in work environments with exposed wood feel more connected to nature, have more positive associations with their workplace, take less leave, have higher levels of concentration, well-being, happiness and personal productivity (Pollinate 2018). As a result, productivity has been shown to increase by 8% and rates of well-being by 13%.

"The wooden offices of the future are combining the solutions to many of our problems today, from the digital procurement model to the inherent carbon storage, today's timber technology allows us to foster our human desire to connect with nature – something we are increasingly separated from. Pair this with timber's ability to address ambitious environmental targets for more efficient, sustainable construction – the argument for timber offices begins to resonate around the globe," concluded Erkki Valikangas.

Reference

1. Pollinate 2018, Workplaces: Wellness + Wood =Productivity, viewed 1 October 2020, <https://makeitwood.org/documents/doc-1624-pollinatehealth-report-february-2018.pdf>.

Source: Panels and Furniture Asia Nov/Dec 2020. □

AHEC unveils three COVID-proof outdoor benches at Dubai Design Week 2020

'Please Sit Here' challenged three prominent Emirati designers to develop versatile public seating solutions in thermally-modified American hardwoods

The American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC), the leading international trade association for the American hardwood industry, has unveiled three COVID-proof outdoor benches at Dubai Design Week 2020. The design collaboration – Please Sit Here – challenged three prominent Emirati designers to develop versatile public seating solutions in thermally-modified American hardwoods.



According to AHEC, social distancing – a captivating oxymoron coined to reference the space we need to leave between each other – has begun to dominate the way we live and the decisions we make. While incredibly important in the fight against the spread of the virus, it also curbs our freedom of choice and forces us to behave in an unnatural way. People are social by nature and regulations that inhibit normal social behavior do not come naturally.

In response to this, three prominent Emirati designers – Aljoud Lootah, Khalid Shafar, Hamad Khoory and their teams – were invited by AHEC to each design and develop a hardwood bench for outdoor use in a public space. The bench needed to be designed in such a way that people who sit on it are forced to separate by the current social distancing minimum of 2 meters.



This would negate the need for warning signs and allow for people to sit in a relaxed way without having to think about whether they are too close to the next person. However, the design of the bench would also allow for conversion to accommodate more people, closer together, as and when the

time comes for social distancing regulations to be relaxed. This will ensure that the benches retain a legacy as functional public seating in the future.

Please Sit Here draws inspiration from the AHEC's many high-profile and ambitious collaborations to date, in the UAE and also in Europe, Australia and South Africa. These projects have included multiple design teams, imaginative briefs, innovative designs and the very best of wood craftsmanship, to celebrate the beauty, performance and sustainability of American hardwoods.

The three designers were offered a choice of two American hardwood species – hard maple and red oak. Together, these species account for nearly 25 percent of the eastern hardwood forests of the USA, one of the largest and most sustainable hardwood resources in the world. Because the benches are for outdoor use, the maple and red oak offered was thermally-modified, involving high heat in a vacuum, carried out after normal kiln drying.



Thermally-modified timber (TMT) is ideal for exterior application, as it has both increased durability and dimensional stability. Specified widely across India, thermally-modified American hardwoods are suitable for applications such as cladding, decking and shading structures, as well as in outdoor furniture and their environmental impact is extremely low. They have much to offer as a natural and low- environmental impact alternative to many other wood and non-wood products.

Jalees by Aljoud Lootah in thermally-modified American red oak has been designed to recognize the primitive characteristics of outdoor benches found around the UAE and in every Emirati home. Jalees in Arabic translates to being seated securely in place and also means companion. According to Lootah, this seating design pays tribute to its minimal structure and attributes. The essential vertical and horizontal red oak members have inspired the minimalist design of this outdoor bench creating an appealing modern interpretation.

“Taking into consideration the post-COVID social distancing requirements, this bench creates a flexible seating system for all users. Contrasting the horizontal octagonal

thermally-modified American red oak members are circular seats with metal inserts that slide along the length of the bench to create social distancing when needed between strangers and to bring family together at the same time. Additional seats could be added or removed from the bench according to the requirements of the user,” said Aljoud Lootah.

Contrasting the natural hardwood is a playful pop of color – yellow – that is minimally added on the interior of the bench both for visual aesthetic and structural purposes, along with three metal arches to stop the seats from moving further along the bench. Smaller sliding and removable tables are also placed between the two seats to provide the users with a space to place their cups of coffee, phones or small personal belongings.

Pop Up by Khalid Shafar in thermally-modified American hard maple with thermally modified American red oak detailing has been inspired by the ‘80s. Neon linear lights, adboards, the energy in the era’s synth wave music, catchy pop colors in the fashion industry and the retro cyber-techno theme all served to inspire the design of the Pop Up smart outdoor bench to portray the ‘80s energy and to convey the optimism and strength that we need to overcome the current COVID-19 pandemic with the hope for a brighter and stronger future.

“From the launch of the first space shuttle and the release of the first IBM computers to the fall of the Berlin wall and the end of the Cold War, the ‘80s offered hope to humanity to once again achieve the impossible and for people to chase their wildest dreams. The energy and passion expressed in their supercharged aesthetics still reflect the 1980s in the current decade,” said Khalid Shafar.

Wahda Bench by Hamad Khoory in thermally-modified

American hard maple has been inspired by the traditional majlis with its inherent values of humility, equality and community. According to Khoory, the Wahda bench is an exploration of connection and separation.

“Employing thermally-modified hard maple in cuboid modular units of seat, tree, planter and sanitization, the modules engage with a linear comb-like thermally-modified maple base, a plug-and-play approach of slipping into and out of the comb, with many possible configurations. The bench is thus an expression of community and disunity, with the separated seat modules slipping out of the main bench, and then slipping back when the social distancing measures of the COVID-19 pandemic are no longer required, creating the final bench form,” added Khoory. Using material volume data collected by the UAE-based manufacturers – Urban Studio and Alfa Interiors & Furniture – and based on AHEC’s Life Cycle Assessment tool, it has calculated that all the maple and red oak used to make the three benches would be replaced in the US hardwood forest through natural regeneration in just 5.8 seconds. At the same time, for the duration of their existence, the three benches will keep approximately 1 metric ton of CO₂ equivalent out of the atmosphere.

“It is a delight to see the different approaches that all three designers took with this topical brief. Aljoud, Hamad and Khalid clearly enjoyed this challenge and their designs are innovative, playful, practical and beautiful. The attention to detail on the benches is high and the craftsmanship excellent, which serves to highlight the beauty of the thermally modified American maple and red oak used,” concluded Roderick Wiles, AHEC Regional Director. □

India will be back on pre-covid levels in Jan- Mar 2021



Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs; Minister of State for Commerce & Industry; and Hon'ble Minister of Civil Aviation, Government of India.

Considering the impact on livelihood, the Government decided to open up the economy in a calibrated manner and as a result now India is on a recovery path. On the back of recent recovery in economic indicators and country's strong economic fundamentals, there has been a notable improvement has been

seen in economic and business indicators in the recent months such as IHS Market manufacturing PMI, GST collections, among others. As the fundamentals are strong, India will be back on pre-COVID levels in January – March 2021.

The challenge posed by the impact of COVID-19 also presents an opportunity. The agenda of the government is to improve and implement the economic reforms. Urban programmes, which were conceptualized back in 2014 are nearing completion and it is again the time to begin discussions moving forward. He said that as India will have around 600 million people living in the urban spaces by 2030, therefore, there is a need to build a new India in green and sustainable manner.

There has also been a silent growth in number of people travelling by air in last couple of years. In this regard, the Government is working on building new airports and arranging for new aircrafts to support this growth.

The pandemic has given an opportunity to make assessment of the vulnerable sectors of the economy and taking steps for their rejuvenation. Government is ready to work with the industry to fulfil the gaps in manufacturing sector, whether it relates to physical gap or the policy gap. □



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Mr. Jaydeep Chitlangia

November 25, 2020

Latest Representation Submitted to Hon'ble Minister of Environment, Forest & Climate Change by Shri Sajjan Bhajanka President FIPPI to recognize farm produced Wood as Farming Produce.

TO,

**SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR
HON'BLE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST & CLIMATE CHANGE
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, INDIRA PARYAVARAN BHAWAN,
JOR BAGH NEW DELHI- 110 003.**

SUBJECT: IDENTIFY & RECOGNISE FARM PRODUCED WOOD AS FARMING PRODUCE UNDER THE FARMERS (ENDOWMENT AND PROTECTION) AGREEMENT ON PRICE ASSURANCE AND FARM SERVICES ORDINANCE, 2020.

Reference: Kindly refer Forest Policy Division letter F.NO7-2/2020-FP dated 11 Sept. 2020.

Respected Sir,

In continuation of our earlier letter dated 12/09/2020 we would further like to submit the following:-

1. There has been many government schemes dealing with treeplanting / social forestry for last 3-4 decades in the country. Tree outside Forests / agroforestry spearheaded by private people (farmers) in growing plantations of Poplar, Eucalyptus, Acacia, Silver Oak, Casuarina, Rubber Wood, Subabul etc., has played an important role in catering to more than 90% domestic timber demand.
2. Such wood grown on farmers' lands requires a certificate that the sourcing of such wood, is not from any forest origin. Such certifications are very costly and it has not been viable to handle the procedures involved especially for small farmers. This situation is becoming a problem to both farmers as well as the plywood and panel industries – in order to explore global competitiveness of Indian plywood and panel products resulting in import of such products to the extent of 30% of total demand in the country.
3. The plywood and panel industry has purely shifted to farm produced wood as raw material after the implementation of National Forest Policy 1988 in the light of judgements of Hon'ble Supreme Court and is entirely independent of forests and forest based raw materials.
4. However, there is an absence of a dedicated and focused act and rules thereunder, and lack of an institutional mechanism for coordination and convergence among the schemes / ministries to pursue tree farming/ agroforestry in as thematic manner. Resultantly such wood produced by farmers are governed by The Indian Forest Act, 1927 and rules made under the provisions of such acts in the country.
5. In this regard, I on behalf of FIPPI again request you to consider the fact that how a tree grown by a farmer in his agricultural land can be considered as forest produce under Forest Acts? Our country needs to immediately resolve this ambiguity regarding raw material of wood based Industries in order to bring permanent clarity on the matter. With the promulgation of National Agroforestry 2014 and launch of Submission on Agroforestry, it was expected that this ambiguity is resolved for the benefit of farmers and plywood and particle industries.
6. Representations were made by various industries associations including FIPPI to include Wood obtained from agricultural lands as farmers produce or farm produce under recently enacted agricultural acts, **The Farmers (Endowment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020 and the Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act 2020.** However, it did not find mention in them.

7. It is therefore necessary to enact a suitable act to provide for the creation of an ecosystem where farmers growing trees in their private lands, traders and industries not only enjoy the freedom from any restrictive regime but promotes efficient, transparent and barrier free interstate and intra state trade and commerce of wood grown on private lands.
8. It should also provide and facilitate framework for electronic certificate of origin and ownership and chain of custody to legalise such wood in a unique Indian way **Vocal for Local** distinct and independent from forest timber.
9. The act should also provide for national framework on contract farming agreements with Wood based industries (plywood and panel, paper and pulp, pencil making, woodcrafts, sawmillers, wholesale depots, or large retailers) and farmers for farm services and sale future produce at a mutually agreed remunerative price framework in a fair and transparent manner.
10. Act should also provide for unhindered establishment and promotion of such Wood based enterprises based on market dynamics unlike the present situation where they are being treated as forest-based industries by all Honourable courts such as NGT, High Courts and Supreme Court.

This sector will be playing an important role as the primary income source of farm produced wood (Poplar, Eucalyptus, Rubber (cash crop residue), Silver oak, Melia Dubia, Kadam etc.) supporting the government scheme of **Doubling Farmers' Income**. Farm produced wood is the only source of timber for the sector.

After the announcement of Pradhan Manthri Awas Yojna & Self Reliance Vision (**Athm Nirbhar** Bharath Mission) by Hon'ble PM Shri Narendra Modi Ji, the demand for wood products are increasing rapidly with positive interest shown by investors in this sector. The period during 2016-2019 has seen an Export-Import gap of 31,655 Crores in the wood-based industries sector, which is a big drain on our foreign currency resources. We believe this gap can be immediately arrested together, with timely action.

Federation of Indian Plywood & Panel Industry request for your kind and prompt action in this regards.

With profound regards,

Yours sincerely,

Sajjan Bhajanka

(Sajjan Bhajanka)

President

Federation of Indian Plywood & Panel Industry

New Delhi.

BCA, the new technology that revolutionizes wood coatings

BCA (Block Chain Addition) is a revolutionary technology in wood coatings, able to combine the best features of Polyurethanic, Acrylic and Precatalyzed and Postcatalyzed varnishes, offering functional potential that was inconceivable until today. A breakthrough innovation comparable only to the introduction of water-based coatings in the 80s.

Its name comes from the process allowing coating film formation. BCA is characterized by functional performances beyond all expectations in terms of resistance to abrasion, to yellowing caused by light, to staining left by liquids. It ensures very quick drying times, a long pot life and an extreme ease of use, combined with excellent aesthetics. Further, the BCA product line does not contain isocyanates, aromatic compounds or formaldehyde.

BCA has its roots in the study of a wood coating that could



combine the excellent functional and aesthetic performance of polyurethanes, but are isocyanate-free. Results went far beyond the initial expectations, so much that the combination of the characteristics of the new product formulated did not allow to fall to any of the known finish technologies. □

Commercial Malaysian Timbers - Dark Red Meranti



With more than 55 per cent of its land area under natural forest, Malaysia is home to over 2,650 tree species, many of which are of commercial importance. Malaysia's location in the tropics means that its trees have 365 growing days in a year. This allows the trees ample time to grow and develop without seasonal interruptions.

Apart from its intrinsic beauty, wood is highly versatile, has good insulation properties and is strong yet easy to use. Malaysia has a myriad selection of timbers from which to choose, and they have been utilised in various structural and interior applications, most notably for luxury resorts and private dream homes. The multitude of colours and grains available represents an artist's palette, enabling an endless expression of creativity for architects and interior designers.

Years of intensive R&D have resulted in the introduction of renowned Malaysian timbers such as Balau for decking, Merbau and Kempas for flooring, and Dark Red Meranti for doors and windows. In addition, composite products such as LVL, plywood and MDF have also been produced and exported by Malaysian manufacturers. Malaysia's commitment to R&D ensures a continuous line of innovative, cost-efficient and environmentally friendly products. In 2009, MTC commissioned UK-based Timber Research and Development Association (TRADA) to conduct a study to determine the durability of Bintangor, Dark Red Meranti, Gerutu, Light Red Meranti, Merpauh and Rubberwood under temperate conditions. The durability test was based on EN 350: Part 1: 1994 (Guide to the principles of testing and classification based on the natural durability of wood).

Dark Red Meranti

The Standard Malaysian Name for the dark red and lightweight timber of the genus *Shorea* (Dipterocarpaceae). Vernacular names used include meranti (Peninsular Malaysia and Sarawak) with various epithets, seraya (Sabah) with various epithets, nemesu (Peninsular Malaysia), nemusu (Peninsular Malaysia), seraya (Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah), obar suluk (Sabah) and also various local names too numerous to list here. Major species producing this timber include *S. acuminata* (partly), *S. argentifolia*, *S. curtisii*, *S. ovata*, *S. monticola*, *S. pauciflora*, *S. platyclados* and *S. slootenii*. The sapwood is pink with a grey tinge and is not clearly defined from the heartwood, which is medium red to deep red to deep red-brown.



USES

- Door & Window Frames
- Joinery
- Furniture
- Plywood
- Interior Fittings
- Panelling
- Partitioning
- Mouldings
- Fancy Doors
- Boat Construction
- Veneer

USES

The timber is suitable for all forms of heavy construction, marine construction, ship and boat building (keels, keelsons and framework), piling, beams, columns (heavy duty), bridges, wharves, cooling tower (structural member), railway sleepers, vehicle bodies (framework and floor boards), boat building, plywood, joinery, cabinet making, mallets, fender supports, door and window frames, staircase (carriage, newel and stringer), pallets (heavy and permanent type), tool handles (impact), telegraphic and power transmission posts and cross arms, posts, joists, rafters, flooring (heavy traffic), decking and heavy duty furniture. □

**FEDERATION OF INDIAN PLYWOOD
AND PANEL INDUSTRY**

**WISHES ALL MEMBERS,
ADVERTISERS, READERS AND
SUBSCRIBERS;**

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2021

**A YEAR FILLED WITH HAPPINESS,
SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS &
PROSPERITY**

Amulya Mica Imperial Premium Laminate Catalogue is launched by Mr. Harbhajan Singh



Amulya Mica organized a virtual event on 20-Sep-2020 in association with Surface Reporter & Ply- Reporter for launching its new collection Imperial Premium Laminate (IPL) Catalogue. The event was inaugurated by Mr Rakesh Agarwal, Ms Shailja Agarwal, Mr Tarun Agarwal & Mr Surendra Tharad by lighting lamp & Ganesh Vandana from their head office Gandhidham.

In opening speech, MD Mr Rakesh Agarwal had thanked to all friends, associates, colleagues, architects, interior Designers and their families specially Mr Harbhajan Singh, Ar. Premnath & Ar. Karan Grover who were present in the events which he considered History in making. Due to pandemic, the event was organized virtually. On Imperial Laminate Catalogue, Mr Agarwal informed that this collection is amalgamation of Amulya Mica premium products like Synchronized Laminate, Seven Wonder & Exotic Veneer. Amulya Mica's premium product 1.25 mm ranges are loved by Architects & Interior Designers along with all channel partners. But different folders of each ranges browsing is a difficult task. So after discussing with expert architects & interior designers & after so many R & D done by sales team and management, we were able to bring this Imperial Premium Laminate Catalogue where one can choose favourable design, colour & texture.

Mr Harbhajan Singh, popularly known as Bhajji Pajji, a renowned Indian Cricketer launched the Imperial Premium Laminate Veneer Catalogue. He is fascinated by Amulya Mica collection. According to him, Imperial Premium laminate Collection is the most Innovative & finest 1.25 mm range of Amulya Mica. Every Veneer Laminate is inspired by Natural Veneer and is an almost exact replacement of that veneer class. Further he stated that he is renovating his house in Jalandhar, and

he is going to use this collection design in his house, particularly Rustic Cherry design. Ms Shailja Agarwal, Marketing Director stated that Rustic Cherry is Limited Edition Design and Amulya Mica will produce only 3000 sheets and then will stop production of this design to make it as special & exclusive as our Bhajji Pajji.

After launching Imperial Collection catalogue by Mr. Harbhajan Singh, every Distributor of Amulya Mica Pan India had launched it from their outlet. It was an eye catching event. Ms Shailja had narrated some features / USP of Imperial Collection like Edge Bending feature which Natural Veneer does not have, QR feature for each design in catalogue, UV coating, Warranty extended from Seven year to 10 years & Anti-Bacterial features etc. During the event, a video differentiating Imperial Laminate from Natural veneer had shown. Quiz contest was arranged and three winners got Rs. 10000/- each Amazon gift voucher. Ar. Premath had presented futuristic building concept tackling situation of Covid-19, how it will be now mandatory that each offices & house premises should have a healthy space with proper ventilation. He quotes: "BRING SUN LIGHT INTO HOUSE & CORONA OUT."

Further there was a question & answer session by Shri S.K. Tharad, Sr. GM Marketing where some prominent distributor of Amulya Mica like Mr. Amit Poddar, Bangalore, Mr. Tapas Gupta Jalandhar, Mr. Ankur Maheshwari Delhi, Mr. Gopal Agarwal Kolkata, Mr. Deepak Patel Raipur & Mr. Sanjay Jain Jaipur participated. This session was also attended by Ms Madhu Choudhary of Surface Reporter & Mr Rajiv Parashar of Ply Reporter.

The event was attended by more than 18000 people across Pan India. The event got a magnificent response. Speaking on this occasion MD Mr. Rakesh Agarwal said, "We are overwhelmed by the response that our Imperial Premium Laminate Collection launch got from the Industry and the End Customers. We feel very proud that Ar. Premnath & Ar. Karan Grover also graced the occasion. Both the names are an institution in themselves, highly respected by the architect fraternity and both are amongst the top ten architect of India".

To know more about Imperial Premium Laminate Collection, Please visit our website www.amulyamica.com. □



CalPlant Launches Green MDF Made from Local Agro-Waste

As the first commercial-scale producer of rice straw-based, formaldehyde-free composite panels, the company will source raw material from within a 25-mile radius.



An upcycled medium-density fiberboard (MDF) product will soon make its commercial debut—and without the formaldehyde-based resins that give MDF its bad name and smell. In November, the first run of rice straw-based MDF panels will roll off the press at the \$315 million CalPlant I manufacturing facility in Willows, Calif. that is now in the final stages of construction, according to the company's press release. The product's commercial name and brand will be revealed closer to its release, CalPlant vice president of sales, marketing, and sustainability Elizabeth Whalen tells ARCHITECT.

Rice straw is an agricultural waste product with no known subsequent value, not even as feedstock due to its lack of nutrients. Following the annual harvest of rice, disposing the leftover stalks in the field has been a longstanding environmental problem in California, the second largest rice-producing state after Arkansas. Until the 1990s, farmers would burn the byproduct until the state banned the practice due to its impact on air quality. Now, rice farmers typically flood their fields after harvest to accelerate the decomposition process, a process that not only consumes a large volume of water, but also releases methane into the air.

CalPlant's facility, a project in the planning and permitting stages for two decades, is strategically located in the Sacramento

Valley at the crux of its supply chain: Its primary raw material—rice straw—will come entirely from farms within a 15- to 25-mile radius, though Whalen expects the average distance to be even closer. “No one else can say that,” she says.

In the past two years, CalPlant has collected 100,000 tons of rice straw per year, which represents 20% of the agro-waste available in the Sacramento Valley. Whalen expects the plant to use about 300,000 tons per year, which will require the company to expand from its current staff size of about 30 to 115 full-time workers once the plant is in operation, and 450 part-time workers during the annual straw-collection period. “We’re also building in a community that will benefit from having good-paying, benefits-providing jobs,” Whalen says, adding that the county has also started fielding inquiries from other companies interested in relocating to the region and in building housing stock.

In fact, it was local rice farmer Jim Boyd who first approached Jerry Uhland, now CalPlant's president, in the late 1990s with an idea for a productive use of the straw. It would take until 2017 for Boyd and Uhland along with CalPlant head of manufacturing Les Younie and CFO Chris Motley to secure the financing needed to realize their dream. (The Great Recession provided one notable setback.) In the interim, the team refined its understanding of the material's potential in laboratories worldwide and created a product that Whalen says looks like and performs as well as, if not better than, wood fiber-based MDF.

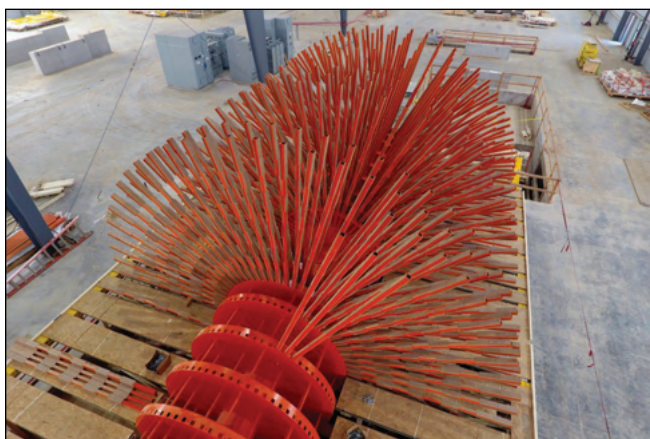
Boyd died in 2009 without seeing the team's efforts fully realized, but Whalen says that Boyd's daughter Suzy remains actively involved in CalPlant. In fact, the new facility is built on the Boyd family's land, as part of their contribution to the project.



When completed, the new facility will roll out master MDF panels, up to 10 feet wide by 18 feet long, from a 10-foot-wide by 115-foot-long continuous press designed and installed by Siempelkamp, a global plant engineering, manufacturing, and installation company headquartered in Germany. At design capacity, CalPlant will produce 140 million square feet of MDF



panels, assuming a 3/4-inch basis, each year, equating to 30% of California's annual MDF demand or 36 to 41 truckloads of output per day. In actuality, the products leaving the plant floor will vary in thickness from 2 millimeters to 30 millimeters, and be used in everything from thin crossbands in the ply sandwich of composite panels, laminate flooring, and doors; to carved molding and trim; and to millwork to be painted or finished with a veneer.



Though the rice straw-fiber panels will be intended for interior use, Whalen expects they will have better moisture resistance than conventional MDF because of rice's innately waxy nature as an aquatic plant. In lieu of urea formaldehyde, which ensures the panels' compliance with federal TSCA (Toxic Substances Control Act) Title VI regulations, the rice straw-fiber is held together with pMDI (polymeric methylenediphenyl-diisocyanate), an adhesive resin system common in the composite panel industry that is accepted in the green building industry. However, Whalen hopes to ultimately find a more naturally derived adhesive, such as the soy-based solution used in Columbia Forest Products' (CFP's) PureBond panels, that can perform consistently with rice straw. (Whalen helped launch the PureBond brand in her previous role as director of corporate sustainability at CFP, a Greensboro, N.C.-headquartered manufacturer of hardwood plywood and veneer products.)

CFP is a project investor and will act as CalPlant's exclusive sales agent, serving as a primary source of sales and distribution for the rice straw-based panels, which Whalen says will be cost competitive to comparable MDF products.

Currently, several formaldehyde-free MDF products are made from rapidly renewable resources other than wood, including wheatboard made from wheat stalks. But Whalen

believes CalPlant has an upper hand with rice straw because it has no other known use and is "consistently plentiful and homogeneous," she says. "It will be the same MDF year in and year out because the fiber source is reliable and dependable."

For the record, Whalen has nothing against conventional wood-based MDF. But "everyone knows the wood basket continues to shrink as far as what we can pull wood fiber from," she notes. "Wood has a very important purpose in design and building, but if we can grind up something else and turn it into a composite panel, why wouldn't we?"

Though the first run of rice straw-fiber MDF panels is expected in late fall, Whalen says the product will be readily available on the commercial market in the first quarter of 2020. "Our intention all along is ... to expand," Whalen says. "The first plant is always the hardest to built. Once we prove we can do what we say we're going to do, our hope is to open rice-straw based MDF plants at other places," with a focus in the U.S. "There's huge potential for what we're doing here," she continues. "[T]he idea that we could make a commonplace building product out of an alternative material ... could change this industry on a global level." □

Nagpur: PWD allows bamboo as mainstream construction material



Bamboo will soon become mainstream construction material on the lines of concrete, thanks to public works department (PWD), which has included 12 new items in the state schedule rates (SSR) 2020-21. SSR is a manual and guide on the use of material in PWD projects.

Till now, bamboo was seen as a cosmetic material and was used for furniture and small canopy or sheds only, but now we have included new items which will promote use of bamboo even in construction of buildings and complexes. Not only PWD, but other departments will be able to promote it in construction activities," said Ulhas Debadwar, principal secretary, PWD.

"These items were included in the SSR taking a cue from Bamboo Research Training Centre (BRTC) in Chichpalli in Chandrapur. Entire BRTC is made out of bamboo. For the first time, RCC columns and beams of bamboo were put to use as non-scheduled items. We documented them and now have put in the SSR," Debadwar told TOI. □

New partnership to boost bamboo and rattan's contribution to sustainable development

FAO and the International Bamboo and Rattan Organization will scale up efforts to reap benefits for rural poor, climate action and biodiversity



Virtual signing ceremony. From top left, FAO Director-General QU Dongyu; INBAR representatives, Jiang Zehui INBAR Co-Chair; FAO Deputy Director-General Maria Helena Semedo; Mette Loyche Wilkie, Director, Forestry Division; FAO Chief Economist Maximo Torero Cullen; FAO Deputy Director-General Beth Bechdol; FAO Deputy Director-General Laurent Thomas; Godfrey Magwenzie, Directeur de Cabinet, FAO.

A new five-year partnership signed today between the International Bamboo and Rattan Organization (INBAR) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations that aims to scale up the benefits and opportunities that these fast growing tropical plants provide, including reducing rural poverty, increasing carbon sequestration, promoting biodiversity and land restoration, and the greening of the construction industry worldwide.

“Through our (FAO and INBAR’s) strengthened cooperation we will support Members improve food security and nutrition, transform agri-food systems, create employment and generate income while protecting biodiversity and ecosystems, also through the rational land use of hills and mountains, while addressing climate change and reducing soil erosion,” said FAO Director-General QU Dongyu. “We will help countries use bamboo and rattan in an effective manner that contributes to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals,” he added.

The FAO-INBAR strategic alliance is particularly important and meaningful as “Africa and South Asia are the two regions that face the most serious problem of food security, while on the other hand they have some of the most abundant bamboo and rattan resources in the world,” said Professor JIANG Zehui, Co-Chair of INBAR’s Board of Trustees. INBAR will “spare

no effort” to promote ways to “create a better world for all” in partnership with FAO, she added.

The Memorandum of Understanding signed by FAO and INBAR was designed in a highly participatory manner, illustrating both organization’s commitment and providing promising support for sustainable development, said INBAR Director-General Ali Mchumo. The partnership will allow efforts to “reap more benefits” for the world’s most vulnerable people, he said.

The new partnership has come together quickly amid the urgency of the COVID-19 pandemic. A task force comprising some 30 experts from FAO and INBAR has already held its first meeting to operationalize a work plan through 2022, including joint proposals for resource mobilization, coordinated implementation of projects, development of knowledge products and the exchange of data and information.

With over 194 member states and working in over 130 countries worldwide, FAO is the specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger. FAO has a long history of fostering sustainable agricultural development and the sustainable use of biodiversity for food and agriculture. FAO is also supporting countries to both mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change through a wide range of research-

based and practical programmes and projects, as an integral part of the 2030 agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

INBAR, an intergovernmental organization with 47 members set up in 1997, has played an active role in helping countries pursue the sustainable use of rattan and bamboo with an eye to a range of Sustainable Development Goals, including ending poverty, providing affordable energy and housing for all, addressing climate change, making efficient use of natural resources and protecting terrestrial ecosystems. It has been a strong advocate of South-South Cooperation, INBAR has headquarters in China, the world's largest bamboo producer, with regional offices in Cameroon, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Ghana and India.

Bamboo and rattan's role in combating poverty, biodiversity loss and climate change

Bamboo and rattan grow locally to some of the world's poorest communities in the tropics and subtropics and their special characteristics fit well into green development plans, able to provide a fast-renewing alternative to timber fuel as well as cutting-edge building materials to replace emissions-intensive materials such as steel, plastics and concrete. New uses are projected to include wind turbine blades and bullet-train fuselages.

Bamboo, technically a grass whose root systems can help bind soils to fight desertification, can grow up to a meter in a

day, offering powerful carbon sequestration opportunities both while alive and while converted into products for human use. Moreover, it can grow on marginal soils so no need not compete with productive croplands.

Rattan, a member of the palm family, grows like a rope and is widely used to make woven items, furniture, baskets, and birdcages, and is being trialed as the basis for bone replacement material. Like bamboo, it grows quickly and grows back after harvesting, creating a fast-acting source of sustainable income.

Combined, the two plants support a \$60 billion global industry, according to INBAR, which estimates that exports amounted to \$1.7 billion in 2017. There are 1,642 known bamboo species and about 600 species of rattan. Beyond their own biodiversity, the plants play a key role in ecosystems, and many of the world's most iconic and endangered species - such as the giant panda, mountain gorilla and greater bamboo lemur, as well as a sizable share of bird species in the Amazon- depend on them for survival, highlighting their range of relevance in terms of conserving the world's biodiversity.

Bamboo's multifunctional nature is showcased in the 1,000-year-old farming system in Damyang, Korea, which this year won recognition as a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System, where bamboo stands impede soil erosion, moderate temperatures for villages and the tea and mushrooms they grow. □

CenturyPly says it has created virus-free television news channel studio



Century Ply says it has developed a form of nanotechnology, grained on the surface of plywoods and laminates, which terminates the virus that meets it. Thus was born Virokill — India's first anti-viral Laminate and Ply, which kills 99.99% virus. Keshav Bhajanka, Executive Director, Century Plyboards, said, "The multi-media campaign Raho Befikar was to reach out to all the three key stakeholders — trade, influencers (architects/interior designers) and the end consumers. We were delighted when Lodestar UM suggested that the cutting-edge technological innovation Virokill could be enhanced through innovative but apt contextualisation to drive home the product efficacy."

Broadcast journalists have been the front line workers, bringing home news and analysis from across the country and the world. However, they are the ones, who are exposed to the

threats of this deadly virus. Century Ply through Virokill could make workplaces safer. The company joined hands with CNBC TV18, a business news channel, and developed India's first virus-free news studio with Century Ply's Virokill.

"This is a media first," said Anindya Ray, Senior Vice-President, Lodestar UM.

"When we approached CNBCTV18 with this proposal, the contextualisation manifested into this path-breaking yet simple idea. CNBCTV18 readily came on board, and the rest is history.

"We started using a virus-free news studio to develop content that allowed us to share the idea with the global audiences. Both long and short-format content was created, to tell the story and efficacy of Virokill."

Long-format shows looked at the challenges of urban India in fighting the pandemic from infrastructure, real estate, home-building perspective, and brought together town planners, interior designers along with Century Ply senior representative to think, ideate and discuss newer and safer ways of urbanisation.

On the heels of successfully converting the CNBCTV18 news studio virus-free, they have forged partnerships with India's other media brands like Republic Network, Times Network as well as also Radio Mirchi, Red FM, Radio One, Big FM and several others.

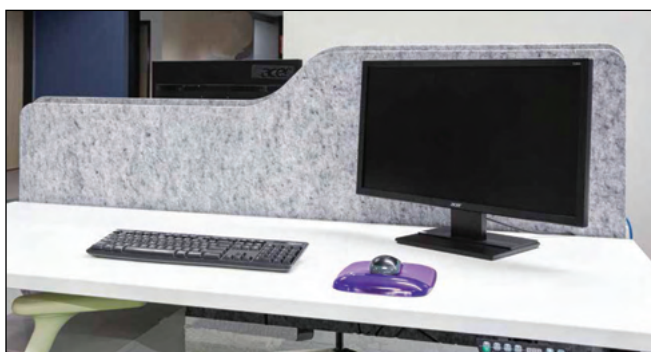
Across media partners, both long and short-format snackable content was developed, through news wheels, interstitials, stings, etc., to ensure maximum audience reach. □

Materials for the “New Office”



There's no question that the pandemic has changed the workplace. Work-from-home life is starting to become the new normal for some employees, and others across the globe are slowly starting to return to their offices, but that doesn't mean it will be the same as when they left. As social distance laws continue to be enforced, employers will have no choice but to provide a safe and healthy work environment for their employees. Manufacturers are taking advantage of this by designing products that cater to social distancing and constant sanitation, in addition to studying evolving design trends. Products like privacy screens, face shields, and antimicrobial laminates and surfaces are making their way into offices everywhere to ensure employee safety.

"We're seeing a huge uptick in 3DL & 2DL Thermo-foil lamination for walls and surfaces and not just in hospitals now," said Scott Flom, Genesis Marketing Manager. "Before the pandemic, this product was primarily popular in clinics and hospitals, but because these laminates are easy to be cleaned and very durable against chemicals, they are perfect for modern office desks and surfaces as people begin to return to work. It's also easy to implement new designs. Those are a few reasons, in



my opinion, why we're seeing an uptick in that material."

"Holistic wellbeing and hygiene are two design factors that will be making a huge influence," said David Gerson, Chief Brand Officer for Inscape, who highlighted one trend that will continue to take shape, curved edges. "Everything is curved now. A curved radius edge not only looks pleasing but it's also very easy to clean. We're going to see more people demanding biomorphic shapes that feel natural," he said. Gerson went on to explain that whether people are working from home or returning to the office, employees want a sense of tranquility, now more than ever. "It's the idea of taking nature with you. Like going for a walk in the park. People want a workspace that makes them feel at peace and for most, that's being one with nature, in a realistic way of course. They want big windows and woodgrain textures. Things like this truly make a difference for both physical and mental health."

But it's not enough to have surfaces that are easy to clean and stand up to the toughest of chemicals. According to Joe Arcadi, VP of sales and marketing for Genesis, lightweight materials are just as important.

"We're in an unpredictable time right now and it's important to be flexible. This means having lightweight materials—desks that can move around and that are easily collapsible. If you have to move to another part of the office, it shouldn't be a difficult task. We're offering products that are 30% lighter and we're seeing a great response from that. Having desks nailed to the floor is a thing of the past."



"The ability to easily transform workspaces is a new office trend. It's about being able to adapt when you're in a situation that's constantly changing," he added. "In addition, you want your office to be safe and easy to come back to when your employees return." For those who have returned to the office, Arcadi emphasized that people are focusing on reflective noise. "More people are asking about acoustic performance."

They want materials that are sound absorbent. That's why PET (polyethylene terephthalate) has been embraced by so many," Arcadi explained. "It's lightweight, sleek and has tremendous sound barrier capabilities. You can also add decorative surfaces to PET and the material can be molded to shape." Genesis' PET privacy screens have grown to be increasingly popular over the last few months as social distancing has become a major priority. "Some businesses have the luxury of spreading out employees to assure they're six feet apart. Others have to invest in products like these to protect their employees' health. Management teams need to be flexible right now. If an employee isn't comfortable, they need to ask themselves: what do I need to do make sure I am comfortable?"

The pandemic has caused manufacturers to rethink their offerings, as they start seeing a high demand for products that cater to sanitation and social distancing. Cooper Industries caught on to this demand by offering several different products that ensure privacy. “Both our marketing strategies and product offerings have shifted,” said Rachel Brumenschenkel marketing strategist for Cooper Industries.

“Since the pandemic, we have been focusing on creating safety products such as acrylic shields, table dividers, freestanding floor partitions, face shields, etc. for a variety of environments. We’ve been promoting these products to new markets and have created an online store as the demand for safety products continues to rise,” she added. Cooper’s cubicle wall extenders are designed to be easily placed between cubicles and other workspaces. The extenders are made of clear acrylic and measure 23.50” tall. The acrylic inserts into black feet that attach to the cubicle wall. The feet fit standard 3” cubicle walls and no drilling or tools are required for installation.

The product is perfect for offices that have more than ten people returning to work, and is great for employees dealing with customers face-to-face. Cefla is another company noticing a demand in products that cater to social distancing. Only this time, specific for fabricators. The company’s Ubiquo Teleservice Kits provide a relevant benefit: preventing non-essential individuals, such as technicians not employed by the fabricator, from having to enter their facility. In most cases, finishing line challenges can be resolved from afar, faster, and with less financial impact. The company also offers customers access to video tours of their facilities online, giving them a one-stop virtual experience.

When it comes to antimicrobial benefits, hardware manufacturers are developing products that have protective features. “Avoiding germs and creating a safe living environment have become increasingly important these days, especially when it comes to points of frequent contact like door handles,” said Laurie Doherty, creative director, Nostalgic Warehouse. “There are natural antimicrobial qualities of brass doorknobs and hardware. An unlacquered solid brass doorknob actually has a chemical reaction that helps reduce germ build-up: a virus can survive just minutes on a copper or brass surface,” she said.

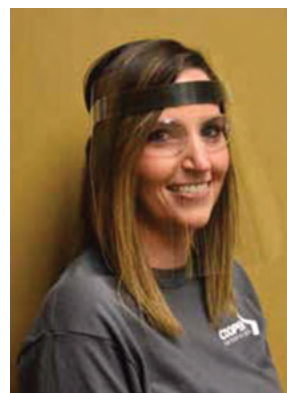
Other companies are focusing on the chemical side of things. Omnova released a report after the EPA published a list of disinfectants that meet its criteria for use against COVID-19. The company tested disinfectants like Asepticare, OxyCide, Wex-Cide and 17 others that are approved for use against the virus on its surf(x) 3D Laminates. Since Omnova prides itself on having laminates that are specifically designed for the healthcare industry, it makes sense that they would go through with the testing, as it’s been said that 3DL will be much more common in not just healthcare facilities, but offices and other workplaces.

The transition back to regular workplaces can be a challenge for those who have spent the last few months working from home, noted Lauren Stredler, account executive for Assa Abloy. “Over the last few months, many workers have adapted to the work from home lifestyle and when they return to the office, there will be many employees expecting to return to a similar environment,” she said. “Many designers and architects are keeping this in mind and exploring new ways to bring the warmth of home into offices to create a more comfortable and

collaborative workspace. Industry experts are referring to this new trend as ‘resimercial’—the combination of home and work environments.”

Stredler went on to explain that as more companies implement return to the workplace plans, safety will be top of mind. Part of this process will include repeated and thorough cleaning and sanitizing protocols.

“The challenge is, many traditional commercial doors are not designed to withstand such rigorous cleaning cycles. That’s why we’re offering smooth grain doors. They provide a unique opening solution that combines the strength and durability of steel doors with the beautiful and comforting feel of wood, fit for commercial office space, schools and healthcare facilities.” Designed to withstand rigorous cleaning cycles, the doors give architects and designers freedom not typically offered for commercial spaces to create a warmer environment.



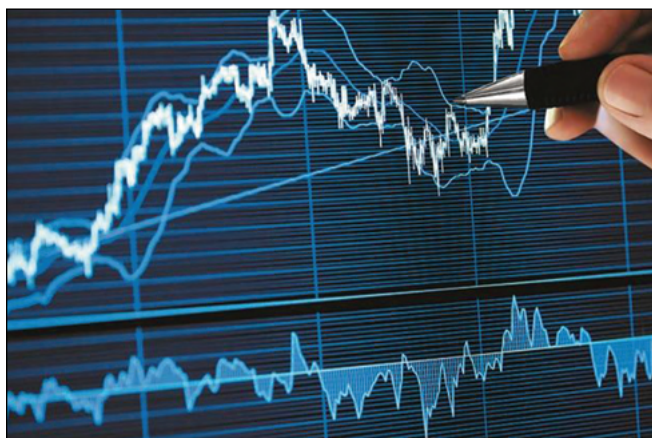
In addition to these evolving trends in the workplace like walls covered with antimicrobial paint and rounded corners to minimize bacterial deposits, there are also other elements that we can expect to see when returning to the workplace. This typically depends on the overall size of the operation and how many employees will be in the facility. “Obviously the smaller the team, the easier it is,” said European developer Liviu Tudor. “It’s going to be different for each organization. With countries around the world slowly easing the lockdown and promoting going back to work, the question remains on how buildings need to operate and manage crowds—and what the future of the office is.” “With larger companies, we could start to see more extreme measures being taken, like building entrances providing temperature scanning equipment and digital display units that will be placed in receptions to show immunity-boosting indicators such as daily improvement of indoor air quality. We’re already seeing businesses require customers to have their temperatures taken before entering, and we can expect that with larger operations in our industry.”

There’s no question that the normal paradigm is challenged for sure. Management teams are constantly finding new ways to help their organizations adapt to this new normal. “It’s about designing with your ears and not just your eyes,” said Gerson. “When employees come back, they’re going to want to know that they’re protected. Things are changing. The way we work, travel, consume food. How you can change your space to adapt to these new realities is going to be critical.”

Source: Surface & Panel. □

Rushil Decor hits 52-week high; zooms 64% in 3 days on heavy volumes

The stock hit a 52-week high of Rs 147, up 18% on the BSE in the intra-day trade today, and surpassed its previous high of Rs 139 touched in November 2019.



Shares of Rushil Décor were on a roll and hit a 52-week high of Rs 147, up 18 per cent on the BSE in the intra-day trade on the back of heavy volumes. Stock of the forest products firm has zoomed 64 per cent in the past three trading days in an otherwise volatile sessions. The stock has surpassed its previous high of Rs 139.2 touched on November 26, 2019.

The trading volumes on the counter jumped nearly six-fold as nearly one million shares had changed hands on the NSE and BSE. In comparison, the S&P BSE Sensex was up 0.26 per cent at 43,942 points.

Rushil Décor has two main business segments, i.e. MDF (medium density fibre board) and laminates. In FY2019-20, MDF contributed 49.78 per cent of the company's revenue and laminates contributed 48.68 per cent of revenue. During the year, new capacities were added in Thin and Thick MDF Industry which ultimately resulted in aggressive price cuts. The price cut was largely driven by incremental capacities coming on ground mainly in North and South India.

The company, in its 2019-20 annual report, said that new MDF Board production plant would become operational in the South India (Andhra Pradesh) with additional capacity of 800 CBM per day. "This is expected to substitute imports in a big way due to logistical savings and a depreciating INR. It is also expected to take position of plywood because there is very big gap between utilisation of plywood and MDF board," it said.

Meanwhile, the board of directors of the Company, in its meeting held on October 15, 2020 has approved allotment of 4.98 million partly paid-up rights equity shares of face value of Rs 10 each at price of Rs 50 per rights equity share (including premium of Rs 40 per Rights Equity Share). The allotment shares on a rights basis was in the ratio of 1 rights equity share for every 3 equity shares held by the eligible equity shareholders on the Record Date. 25 per cent of the issue price viz. Rs 12.5 per rights equity share will be payable on application. □

Wood seasoning unit boon for farmers

A wood seasoning and preservation unit has been set up at the Forest College and Research Institute (FCRI) in Mettupalayam for the benefit of tree farmers. The unit removes moisture from wood in a controlled condition, so that it can fend off fungus and insects, and extend life.

FCRI dean K T Parthiban said most trees, when cut, contain 30% to 40% moisture. "Ideally, we need to reduce the moisture content to 8% to 12%, where it reaches below fibre saturation point, so that there is no swelling or shrinkage. Many untreated wooden doors will expand during the rainy season and shrink during the winter," he said. "Moisture also makes them prone to attacked of termites, insects and fungus."

The unit consists of a solar powered kiln, an electrical kiln and a treatment plant. "Wood is placed inside the kiln, and we circulate air with a higher temperature inside it. When the air passes through the kiln, it removes moisture from wood. This process is done repeatedly with the temperature gradually increased. Once the moisture level is reduced, the wood is treated by applying a copper based chemical composition. This treatment prevents termite and fungal attacks," Parthiban said.

The process is critical for all types of woods, which are



used for timber, except teak. "This includes mahogany, subabul, vaagai, soft woods like Melia dubia used for furniture carving and rubber wood.," said the dean.

While the institute plans to offer the facility to tree farmers for a fee, the main idea is to conduct demonstrations, so that youngsters can look at it as a business venture. "We aim to create one such unit in every district. It costs Rs 16 to Rs 20 lakh to set up one. An entrepreneur can charge Rs 90 to Rs 140 to treat 1cft of wood. They can expect a profit of Rs 30 to Rs 40," Parthiban said. □

Suresh Prabhu launches **India Bamboo Forum** to promote sector's growth

Suresh Prabhu has launched an independent forum with an aim to boost the bamboo sector by promoting entrepreneurship, research, and trade of high quality bamboo products in a sustainable manner.



Former Union Minister Suresh Prabhu has launched an independent forum with an aim to give boost to the bamboo sector by promoting entrepreneurship, research, and trade of high quality bamboo products in a sustainable manner.

The India Bamboo Forum-- conceived and conceptualised by Prabhu -- will undertake the work by bringing together a voluntary group of 55 committed leaders in the bamboo sector.

"The forum will work actively with the stakeholders from institutions from within India and abroad, policy makers and industry and identify specific thematic areas that require resolution at the state and national ecosystems," Prabhu told PTI.

Prabhu added that the growth of bamboo sector will help prevent deforestation, create jobs, and help increase farmers' income. To begin with, five areas of national importance have been identified -- development of a dedicated knowledge dissemination portal, improving technical standards, skill development, providing mentorship to bamboo startups and creation of a platform for facilitating buyer-seller linkages of bamboo products, he said.

Prabhu said the forum will work together to remove the bottlenecks in the sector and ensure an assured and well-oiled supply chain.

It will ensure availability of high-quality bamboo products not only by use of latest technology and superior processes but also by promoting growth of high-quality bamboo species. The forum will also ensure availability of growing material in partnership with agricultural universities.

He also underlined the importance of integrating the industry with the global economy and linking the forum to international bamboo networks. About 2.5 billion people in the world depend economically on bamboo, and international trade in bamboo is estimated at about USD 4.5 million per year.

In India, bamboo has potential to benefit more than 4 million small farmers and 1.5 million micro entrepreneurs in the next five years, he added.

Founding members of the forum include IIT - New Delhi Professor Supratic Gupta; Director-Tripura Bamboo and Cane Development Center (TRIBAC) Selim Reza; Associate Senior Faculty- National Institute of Design - Ahmedabad Pravin Singh Solanki; Maharashtra Bamboo Promotion Foundation CEO V Giriraj; Konkan Bamboo and Cane Development Center (KONBAC) Director Sanjeev Karpe.

Karpe said although the government has taken several steps for promoting growth of the sector, more needs to be done in that direction.

He said it is an independent forum that would work on areas including standards, information dissemination, supporting small entrepreneurs and skilling people.

"Situation on the ground is not satisfactory for the sector. Worldwide people are working in this sector as it is the most sustainable raw material for manufacturing," he added. □

Furniture park on 300 acre up land

The Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA) in Uttar Pradesh will build a furniture park on 300 acre spread over Sectors 28 and 29. A total of 4,000 sq mtr of the total area will be allotted by draw of lots. So far, 15 firms have shown interest in the scheme that will be floated in January 2021. The park will also have antique furniture and together it is likely to push sales, as Jewar airport is coming up in the vicinity.

A furniture park near Jewar airport will definitely boost exports and help the manufacturing segment of Indian wood ware, which not only includes furnitures like beds, sofas, tables and cabinets, but also decorative items like statues, frames and figurines.

The scheme will be floated in January 2021 and already 15 big companies have shown interest in the project.

YEIDA has already launched schemes for toy, apparel handicrafts and an MSME park that are expected to create job opportunities for the local youths. While plots have been allocated for these parks, the allottees will have to begin manufacturing in five years from the date of their allotment.

Under the furniture park scheme, 4,000 sq mtr will be divided into plots and allotted by draw of lots. □

WFH brings new home furniture and design trends



The year 2020 has been a year full of disruptive trends that has transformed the way we live and work, in multiple ways! From shopping, socialising, learning, and working digitally to surviving indoors for months, the pandemic, and the lockdown have made us rearrange and realign our lives, our priorities, and our homes, which became an important refuge and a place of sanctity from the virus!

And among the most subtle but significant changes that are driving the new normal is the 'work from home' trend, with the previously personal space being transformed, albeit partially, into work corners that comes with invisible boundaries and strict protocols! Even as millions across the country get used to the 'work from home' trend, the need for a more comfortable and functional 'work from home' furniture is growing in demand. And the Indian furniture and design sector is busy working to cater to this need, driving a significant growth through these trends.

The Indian furniture market is estimated to be around 25 – 30 Billion USD in value, with the organized sector contributing about 15 % to the same. The pandemic infused changes ensured people started looking for furniture that could be bought online, was comfortable, and had a mix of cool and casual while also being formal. Listed here are a few COVID induced WFH trends that are shaping the Indian home design and furniture sector:

1. Need for privacy and personalised space within the house: WFH trend came with its own share of adjustments, which meant that employees needed to carve out an aesthetic and presentable corner for work and video calls, which could allow uninterrupted and peaceful WFH experience.
2. Ergonomic, comfortable, and cool design: With rise in WFH trend as need of the hour, many big corporate companies so as to keep its employees out of danger not only allowed extended WFH post unlock process but also gave them sizable allowance to buy office furniture and requirements to set up a work station at home. Employees cashed in on the opportunity to build a comfortable work corner that can support their long working hours. Comfort and style both could be combined so as to be more presentable while attending official meetings at the same time give their home a

better decor look. This in turn shot up the demand for home desks, convertible desks, and chairs by ten folds.

3. Easy to clean and disinfect regularly: Apart from comfort, easy to clean surfaces were also in high demand as due to Covid-19 disinfection was embedded in people's daily lives. People often end up eating or drinking beverages while working and that increased while being at home for more amount of time, user friendly and easy to clean and scratch free surfaces became important feature while choosing the furniture.
4. Surge in 'made in India', recycled and locally sourced items/ designs: With government promoting made in India and supporting local business amongst public, especially during the pandemic, there was a surge in the demand for home-grown brands. Imports went down substantially by approximately 3 times and usage of Indian made products have gone up by 3 times. Pandemic turned out to be blessing in disguise for made in India brands as awareness and public's support for local brands increased specially amongst younger generation.
5. Ancillary furniture: Furniture pieces that could have multiple usage saw a high demand as well, thanks to WFH. For professionals from variety of sectors who had to work from home for long hours decided to choose furniture that would not only serve the purpose of being work station but also add to other kind of usage in the home. Like office chair that could be used as rest chair or recliners during non-working hours, or a work desk that could also be a compact dinner table at the end of the day etc., thereby, giving more value for money invested in the possibly temporary requirement of working from home.

Apart from the above, the sectors like kitchen and home appliances, like Micro-wave, Bluetooth earphones, noise cancelling ear phones, dishwashers and advanced cleaning equipment etc., has also seen an increase so as to create a more comfortable work from home experience. As the world gears up for the second wave of the pandemic and possibly another lockdown, the trends mentioned above are here to stay and possibly continue to impact the furniture and home design sector for several months to come. □

Indian Wood & Allied Panels

A Quarterly Publication on Plywood / Wood & Bamboo Based Panel Products

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Amulya Mica's Anti-Bacterial Laminate (1 mm & 1.25 mm) kills 99.99 % bacteria on Surface – Tested & Certified by Bio-care & SGS Lab

Amulya Mica yearns for quality & perfection and is known for providing priceless solution to its patron. The company always follows the mantra of “Constant Up-Gradation” and Innovation. In this series, the company has introduced “ANTI BACTERIAL LAMINATES” in 1mm and 1.25mm ranges which kill 99.99 % bacteria on the surface. It is tested and certified by Switzerland based SGS Lab and Ahmedabad based Bio-care Lab.

“Anti-Bacterial” means that the treated and tested surface will inhibit the growth of bacteria and kill the bacteria when it comes in contact with the treated surface. On a laminate surface, bacteria can double in number every 20 minutes due to which staining, unpleasant odors and premature degradation occurs that affects the durability and lifespan of a laminate product. So to protect the laminate surface against the growth of bacteria, Amulya Mica introduced “Anti-Bacterial Laminate” which kills almost 99.99 % bacteria for its “Health Conscious” buyers. Amulya Mica “Anti-Bacterial” laminate is made by impregnating the décor paper with melamine resin which is treated with special Anti- Bacterial formula. Anti- Bacterial treatments have highly efficient release mechanism, without affecting the durability, integrity or aesthetics of the laminates.

Bio Care Group has tested Amulya Mica laminate to be:

A-Anti-Bacterial

B-Against Escherichia Coli (E-Coli causes Pneumonia/ Food Poisoning / urinary infection/ diarrhea etc) &

Staphylococcus aureus (Staphylococcus aureus causes skin infections, abscesses/ heart valve infection (endocarditis) etc)

C-Anti-Bacterial efficacy is up to 99.99 %.

D-Tested as per Japanese JISZ2801 test standard.

SGS Lab tested Amulya Mica Laminates to be having Anti-Bacterial “Efficacy” (R Value) of 5.30 which is highest & BEST ranking for any laminates brand in India.

Benefits of Amulya Mica Anti-Bacterial Laminate:

A-Reduces bacteria growth by up to 99.99%.

B-Improve Product hygiene.

C-Protects us from Co-morbidities.

D-Minimize cross contamination.

E-Minimize staining & bad odours.

F-Increases products Lifespan.

Amulya Mica Anti-Bacterial Laminate can be used in any application as regular laminates are used but it is ideal to use in area where there is high risk to grow bacteria in faster way like in Kitchen, Public Building, Children's School, Toilets, Fitness centre, Health sector like Hospitals, Pathological Lab & Nursing Home.

So, ask for the Amulya Mica “Anti-Bacterial” laminates which are a rare combination of beauty and brain...delicate in design yet protective in performance...□

Austin Plywood plans to invest Rs 80 crores for business Expansion in Telangana



Austin Plywood one of the leading names in the plywood industry announced the launching of anti-virus plywood. Keeping in mind the recent outbreak of pandemic across the globe, this new variant of plywood by Austin Plywood has been designed using the latest technology was launched by

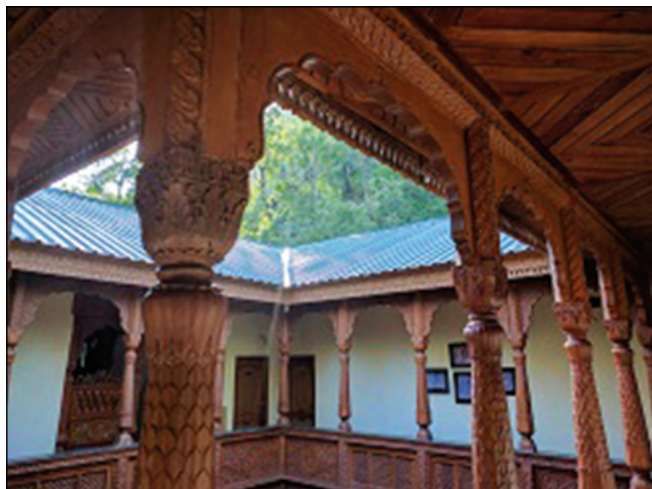
Indian film actor, Director and Producer Mr Prakash Raj, the brand ambassador of Austin's anti-virus plywood.

Made from particles that are anti-microbial, antifungal and anti-viral, this plywood can kill 99.99 per cent virus and can keep your home safe and healthy, Austin Plywood Managing Director Surendra Kumar Agarwal claimed on the occasion.

With a strong presence in Southern India, especially in Telangana, Austin Plywood Director Nishant Agarwal said that we are planning to expand the business further by investing Rs 80crores in Telangana itself.

“Self Reliance or Atma Nirbhar campaign announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is indeed a great initiative which is helping the Indian brands to flourish and Our business has increased by 30 per cent during the lockdown phase, thanks to this campaign, said Nishant. Located primarily in 2 locations- Kolkata and Guwahati, Austin Plywood is also among the top 2 brands in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Telangana.□

Private sector calls for sustainable forest products to be key to **COVID-19** recovery



A sustainable forest sector lies at the heart of COVID-19 recovery plans that seek to build back better, senior executives from the forest industry said today in a statement released for FAO's Committee on Forestry.

FAO's Advisory Committee on Sustainable Forest-based Industries (ACSFI) said that the need to recover from the social and economic upheaval of COVID-19 presents a unique chance to substitute fossil fuel-based products with those from a renewable resource.

In the statement, ACSFI advised those developing strategies to build back better after the COVID-19 crisis that sustainable forest-based industries provide a range of benefits. These include forest products, sustainable livelihoods, green jobs, support

to sustainable food systems through the production of wood energy and long-term management of forest resources, as well as tangible contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Forest Goals of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests.

ACSFI also highlighted the vital importance of forest products during the pandemic, from providing personal protective equipment, biomass for heating, ethanol for sanitizer, respirator paper, and packaging for food and parcels.

"In order to continue the uninterrupted supply of these products, the forest sector has been appropriately recognized in many parts of the world as an essential service," ACSFI stated.

The statutory body called on FAO, its Members, the private sector and other stakeholders to help build a post-COVID world in which the sustainable production and use of forest products are a cornerstone of prosperous and sustainable circular economies, ensuring the livelihood of the billions of people depending on forest-based resources.

Established in 1960, the ACSFI brings together heads of forest industry and forest growers' associations and company executives from over 20 countries around the world. As the only FAO statutory body that is solely comprised of representatives of the private sector, it meets yearly to provide guidance for FAO's work on issues relevant to forest-based industries.

The Committee on Forestry (COFO) is the highest FAO Forestry statutory body. The biennial sessions of COFO bring together heads of forest services and other senior government officials to identify emerging policy and technical issues, to seek solutions and to advise FAO and others on appropriate action. □

Touch Me – Anti-Finger Print Laminate - Stylam Industries

CCOVID-19 has made everybody re-look at their choices and chose products that are more hygienic, anti-bacterial and anti-microbial. In light to this, Stylam Industries, Asia's leading laminate company, has launched an Anti-finger print laminate- Touch Me to meet the market needs.

Year 2020 has marked a turning point in all of our lives as we come to terms with living with COVID-19. It has not only affected our normal lives but the whole of our lifestyle as well, whether it's going out, eating, touching, travelling, meeting people and everything around. Not only this, the whole of home design trends has also changed with the prevailing situation.

Stylam's TouchMe Anti Finger Print Laminate brings utility & style to a whole new level. It has been designed in such a way that it keeps you safe throughout with its thermal healing capability and antimicrobial surface protection. Its matte finish and soft-to-touch feel also result in a premium look and easy maintenance. The TouchMe line's unique design also guarantees that no matter how many times a surface is touched or scratched;



no trace remains. This preserves the laminate from looking old or disintegrating, eliminates unwanted odours and stains, and reduces the frequency with which it must be cleaned.

Stylam Industries has also launched a new TVC promo 'KuchNahiDikhega' for the product Anti Fingerprint Laminate. The TVC became the "most visible" promo during IPL 2020. □

Bamboo industry to play crucial role in post-COVID economy: Jitendra Singh



The Narendra Modi government is planning to promote domestic bamboo industry which is going to play a critical role in shaping the post-COVID economy of India, Union minister Jitendra Singh. Addressing two separate webinars on 'World Bamboo Day', Singh said the Northeastern region will be one of the favourite business destinations of India post-COVID-19 and bamboo is going to be the key pillar of economic activities.

He said many business houses are looking at the Northeastern region to exploit its vast agro-farming resources and people should not miss this opportunity.

"Modi government is planning to promote domestic

bamboo industry, which is going to play a critical role in shaping the post-COVID economy of India," the Union Minister for Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) said.

Describing bamboo as a silver lining in the dark clouds of the pandemic, Singh said it will help in shaping the economy of the Northeast and the entire country in post-COVID era.

He said it will also herald a new momentum for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's clarion call of 'Aatma-nirbhar Bharat' by focussing on Vocal for Local.

The minister said the sensitivity with which the Modi government views the importance of bamboo is evident from the fact that it has amended the century-old Indian Forest Act by taking home grown bamboo out of the purview of the Act, in order to enhance livelihood opportunities through bamboo.

He also welcomed the decision of the central government to raise the import duty by 25 per cent on raw bamboo items.

Singh said this will help the domestic bamboo industries like furniture, handicrafts and 'agarbatti' (incense sticks) making in a big way and promote use of bamboo as building material.

He said time has come for National Bamboo Mission to take a big lead to make bamboo a common man's utility item and unlock the huge potential in this sector in the Northeastern region. He said the region could become the 'New Engine of New India' with bamboo as a useful fuel.

The minister also stated that viability funding from the Ministry of DoNER for start-ups have caught the imagination of youths in the Northeastern region and it is fast becoming an attractive option for the youngsters. □

IKEA to begin work on biggest outlet in Noida

Swedish flat-pack furniture giant IKEA will soon begin work at its Noida outlet, touted to be its biggest store in India. The company had signed an MoU with the Uttar Pradesh government in December 2018 for Rs 5,000-crore investment in Noida and other cities in the state. It has committed to completing the project by 2025.

State Industries Minister Satish Mahana said 47,833 square metre land had been allotted to the company, but work did not take off due to pending payments. "All issues have been cleared and the company has committed to finishing the project by 2025. I have issued directions to ensure the company gets quick possession of land," he said.

IKEA, which opened its first outlet in India in Hyderabad in 2018, has proposed to set up an integrated commercial project in Noida giving direct employment to 1,000 and indirect jobs to another 1,000. The company intends to expand to 40 cities by 2030. Officials said, IKEA initially signed an MoU with the previous government in 2015 to set up three stores in Lucknow, Agra and Noida with an investment of Rs 500 crore in each city.

However, its plans evolved over the years and a fresh MoU



was signed in 2018. Sources said, a typical IKEA store has an average size of 4,00,000 square feet. Since it is difficult to find such a large space within a city, the company is looking to change its model and develop smaller stores, either standalone or even within malls. □

Ligna 2021 moves to autumn 2021

The woodworking machinery show, Ligna 2021, is the latest to announce it's moving dates. Instead of taking place in May, Ligna 2021 will now be held in autumn, postponing its original event date to 27 September to 1 October 2021. "Due to the ongoing pandemic, increasing restrictions and the renewed lockdown, there is great uncertainty in the market. We take this very seriously," emphasizes Dr. Andreas Gruchow, Deutsche Messe Managing Board member. "The decision to postpone Ligna was a very difficult one for us but it is the only consistent measure to give all those involved in planning security the necessary lead time for preparations. The corresponding hygiene and protection concept is in place and with the staging of our event now in October, it has also been proven in practice that events in pandemic times can be held safely. At Ligna, we have to take into account that entire machine parks are designed, assembled and presented in live operation with a long lead time and at great expense. This requires trade show planning that takes many months. This can only be achieved in conjunction with a sufficient number of international decision-makers on the visitor side. To ensure that Ligna can live up to this expectation, suppliers and users alike must be given sufficient planning security for participation - and this is significantly higher for September/October than for May 2021".

As co-organizer of Ligna, the VDMA also sees the postponement of the event date as the only effective means of successfully staging this important trade show for the international wood industry in the interests of all participants. "The postponement of Ligna is absolutely necessary. It is the world's most important platform for our companies and the customers of the woodworking and processing industry," says Dr. Bernhard Dirr, Managing Director of the VDMA Woodworking Machinery Association. "The industry needs this marketplace. With LIGNA in September 2021, we want to send out a signal of new impetus and investment in the global marketplace."

"We are already looking forward to numerous innovations, particularly in the three focal themes of LIGNA.21 Woodworking Transformation, Prefab Building Processes and Green Material Processing," adds Christian Pfeiffer, Global Director Ligna & Woodworking Shows at Deutsche Messe. "In September, Ligna 21 will be held as a hybrid event for the first time, underscoring its function as a leading industry event and presenting the world's range of tools, machinery and equipment for woodworking and wood processing." □

LIGNA.21 – big brands confirm participation

Large companies in the woodworking and manufacturing sector, such as Homag, Biesse, SCM, Weinig, Festool, Felder, Kuper, Jowat, Bacci, Leitz, Burkle, Schuler, Siempelkamp, Vollmer, Weinmann have confirmed their presence at LIGNA.21. The international fair for tools, machines and systems for processing and working with wood will be held from 10 to 14 May next year in Hannover (Germany).

"The event will once again fill ten halls as well as the open-air site booked. All the big industry players are on board. It seems that after many weeks of social distancing, lockdowns, online-only events and video conferencing from home, the industry is really looking forward to meeting up face-to-face," said Christian Pfeiffer, Deutsche Messe's Global Director LIGNA & Woodworking Shows.

"Businesses in the wood industry are keen to resume normal production and sales. They want to be able to advise and inform their customers in person. So, we're doing everything we can to provide a safe and effective marketplace where the wood industry can meet, showcase new products and developments, and get business moving again." He added further

According to the organisers, it will be a key moment to reactivate the business of the sector in an environment, predictably, more favourable.

LIGNA.21

The main issues of LIGNA 2021 will be the transformation of carpentry, the processes prefabricated construction and processing of organic materials. In addition, the fair will present solutions for all aspects of primary and secondary wood production and processing. They will be grouped into various exhibition categories. In total, they are Tools and machinery for custom and mass production, Surface technology, Wood-based panel production, Sawmill technology, Wood energy, Machine components and automation technology and Machinery for forestry production, of round wood and sawmill .

Also, a variety of special events will be added to the exhibitions. For example, the LIGNA.Forum , the Timber Industry Summit for the forestry and primary wood industry, the LIGNA Training Workshops with their practical guide and tips for cabinetmakers, cabinetmakers and carpenters, and a visiting program Guided tours that address specific topics. □

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