

Australia to return 14 artworks of disputed provenance to India

The National Gallery of Australia is to return 14 works of art to India that are suspected of having been stolen, looted or exported illegally.

The religious and cultural artefacts include sculptures, photos and a scroll and are worth around \$2.2m (£1.57m).

Gallery director Nick Mitzevich said their return would close a very difficult chapter of our history.

All but one of the works are connected to Subhash Kapoor, a former New York art dealer and alleged trafficker.

Kapoor, who is awaiting trial in India, denies all charges. Since the disputed pieces date back to the 13th Century, when the Chola dynasty produced a series of paintings of Hindu deities in Tamil Nadu.

The Canberra gallery has already returned several other works it suspected to be Kapoor's, including a bronze statue of the Hindu god Shiva (1 height for \$1m (£1.4m) in 2008).

Mr Mitzevich told the AFP news agency that the works would be returned to the Indian government within months.

India's High Commissioner to Australia welcomed what he called an "extraordinary act of goodwill and gesture of friendship".

Group portrait of a Gujarat family group, circa 1900, oil on canvas, 100x150cm, 1900, image courtesy of a Gujarat family group, circa 1900, oil on canvas, 100x150cm, 1900, image courtesy of a Gujarat

family that was purchased in 2009.

The National Gallery said it had introduced a new framework for assessing provenance that considers both the legal and ethical aspects of a work of art's history.

"On the history of mobility, it is considered likely that the items were stolen, illegally ex-

ported, or in contravention of the law of a foreign country, or unethically acquired," the National Gallery will take steps to (re-)move and repatriate.

In 2012, Subhash Kapoor was the subject of a renewed US federal investigation request from the Manhattan District Attorney, ME.



Value of Nepal's exports swells due to stronger dollar

The value of Nepal's exports in the last fiscal year registered a sharp 27.77 percent increase over 2019-20, mainly due to a stronger dollar and higher prices paid by a production shortfall in neighboring India.

Shipments of listed or high-value products reached Rs3.16 billion in the last fiscal year 2020-21, ended mid-July, up from Rs27.63 billion in 2019-20, according to the annual statistics of the Trade and Export Promotion Centre.

Exports of products listed in the Nepal Trade Integration Strategy, the large categories, pashm, tea, ginger, textile, grain, cereals, medicinal herbs and footwear, increased during the last fiscal year.

The share of these listed products in Nepal's total exports in the last fiscal year stood at 35 percent. Nepal exported goods worth Rs4.53 billion in the last fiscal year while imports amounted to Rs4.51 billion, resulting in a staggering trade deficit of Rs4.19 billion.

Sharda Bikram Rana, former executive director of the centre, said the export capacity of listed products increased slightly. The key reason for listed products performing well this year includes Covid-19 pandemic in the neighbouring US dollar against the Nepali rupee.

R. Karancho and R. Marudhi discussed the impact of the pandemic on the export of listed products in the draft multilateral documents that are planned to be adopted within the framework of the meeting.

Also, a constructive exchange of views took place on the organization of a number of important events planned within the framework of the Consultative Meeting of the Heads of State of Central Asia.



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Textile shipments were a rise of 18.4 percent to Rs3.29 billion in the last fiscal year from Rs2.87 billion in 2019-20.

Shipments of yarn increased by 17.7 percent to Rs2.52 billion in the last fiscal year from Rs2.25 billion in the previous fiscal year.

Yarns were mostly exported to India and Turkey.

Current shipments grew to 174 percent to Rs2.24 billion in the last fiscal year from Rs1.45 billion in the previous fiscal year.

Most of Nepal's current exports went to the US, Germany, the UK, India, France, China, Belgium, Austria, Canada and Switzerland.

Shipments of medicinal herbs increased by 8.3 percent to Rs1.69 billion from Rs1.56 billion. Ginger exports rose by 2.9 percent to Rs1.01 billion.

The net port of footwear was Rs785 million in the last fiscal year from Rs796 million in the previous fiscal year.

According to Rana, it will take time for Nepal's exports to bounce back to the world as still fighting emerging coronavirus and promoting vaccination drives against Covid.

The export of Nepal's high-value goods is still normal and favourable policy matching the changing global trade context is required, he said.

It has been three years since the government decided to introduce an 'export house' policy to promote small and medium entrepreneurs to promote local products. But nothing has moved ahead," Rana said.

The centre submitted guidelines for the formation of policy three years ago to the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies for final approval.

Under this policy, the centre will build the capacity of micro, small and medium entrepreneurs, and offer a 3 percent cash incentive to encourage the production of exportable goods. Rana said.

Nepal exports more of tea to India, Germany, Russia, Japan and the Czech Republic.

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Uzbekistan produces first batch of Sputnik V vaccine

TASHKENT: The first batch of the Russian Sputnik V vaccine has been produced at Jambek laboratories in the city of Chirchik in Uzbekistan's Tashkent Region.

The production of the vaccine is being carried out by the Jambek Laboratories and the Jambek Laboratories and the Jambek Laboratories.

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