



## London Olympics give boost to ATA carnet, a passport for goods

By Deepak Arora

NEW DELHI, July 28: ATA carnet – the passport to carry goods abroad without hassles got a big boost during the Olympics with many TV broadcasters and others making use of it to carry their equipment to London to cover the same and to display their goods. The companies using it included TV 18, Independent News Service, TV Today, Amrit Bazar Patrika news and Zoom Communications. Other companies which used it in past were NDTV for IIF Awards, Essel Communications for Srilanka cricket series and Hazoorimal Jewellers for Oscar awards 2012.

In the contemporary free and open global economic set-up the importance of exhibitions, fairs and business development tours cannot be overstated. The only problem an exporter faces is how to carry the exhibits and samples without much difficulty? This is where the ATA Carnet, an international business promotion tool, can play a vital role.

FICCI, as the apex chamber, is the Sole National Issuing and Guaranteeing Association (NIGA) for ATA Carnets in India.

ATA Carnet, a unique service offered by FICCI will take care of exporters needs in the country.

It can benefit Business travelers/sales executives, Fair Exhibitors, Film and TV crew, Artists, Engineers, Educationalists, Entertainers, Sports teams etc during their overseas trips. Over the last few years, FICCI has tried to make the Carnet system simpler and easier and the procedure has been made uncomplicated for the benefit of the industry.

ATA Carnet is the simplest method of exporting goods on a temporary basis. Carnets are like passports for goods replacing normal Customs documentation enabling fast trouble free importation into member countries without having to pay duty/tax.

The key benefit is that it can be used for multiple trips throughout the period of its validity and covers over 71 countries. It allows a reduction of delays and a standardization of procedures that are vital in today's economic world.

One of the biggest benefits of Carnets, that people really appreciate, is that it eliminates the need to spend time to complete all the different paperwork for Customs clearance in India and overseas. It also saves money, as there's no need to put down a 'bond' each time when

enter a foreign country. Upon presentation, the Carnet permits the exhibit and equipment to clear customs without the payment or deposit of import duties and taxes. Payment is not necessary because the Carnet guarantees to foreign customs that the goods will be re-exported timely. A good way of thinking an ATA Carnet is to call it "a passport for goods".

Without a Carnet, duty is refunded if merchandise leaves the overseas country, but it may take up to six months and the refund comes in the currency of the country. Sometimes there are possibilities that refund never comes at all.

FICCI, which administers the ATA Carnet system in India, informs the Indian exporting fraternity that Carnets can be used for all sorts of special purposes. For example, Carnets can be used by Journalists and Sports teams for London Olympics to have stress free entry into UK. Carnets have also been used by various media companies for shipping goods to Singapore for the recent IIFA awards.

FICCI as a National Guarantor has been making vigorous efforts to spread this service throughout the country.

To meet this target, several awareness workshops/training programs are being conducted by FICCI every year. In the recent past, such workshops/ training programs were conducted in Srinagar, Chennai, Mumbai and Surat for the benefit of local exporters.

Despite all efforts done by FICCI, the utilization of Carnets is yet to see its full potential. In India, only 453 Carnets were issued in the year 2011 as compared to over 25000 Carnets issued by Germany and more than 4000 Carnets in the other European Countries.

FICCI's effort is to increase the number of Carnet users in tune with other countries in the world.

Big exporters understand the scheme and adopt it as needed. But if we look at the millions of small exporters in India, they are still not aware of this service. FICCI's key focus is to get them started using ATA Carnet Service.

During this year, FICCI is planning to partner with all sectoral associations, regional chambers for promoting the use of ATA Carnet in the untapped sectors and regions in the country.