

Strategy 'jugaad', lab grown diamonds and SME listing – ET Make in India SME summit in Surat unlocks future growth for MSMEs

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Unlocking Growth: Empowering MSMEs Through Market Access and Financial Opportunities



The fireside chat was on empowering MSMEs through market access and financial opportunities with Radha Kirthivasan, Head, Listing and SME, BSE and Faruk Patel, Chairman and MD, KP Group.

Surat's potential as a hub offering a plethora of avenues in the diamond industry, **textiles and sustainability** were among the highlights at the **ET Make in India** SME Regional Summit in the city. New opportunities that can help unlock growth for MSMEs in the future came up for discussion at the event with a host of industry stakeholders.

The summits are a series of on-ground events held across India to bring together local MSMEs, policymakers, enablers, and industry veterans. These summits aim to unravel opportunities, tackle challenges and foster knowledge-sharing and networking to propel the next phase of growth for Indian MSMEs.

The event started with a keynote address by Manish Shah, General Manager (Ease of Doing Business EoDB), INDEXTb who spoke about how Gujarat is committed to empowering SMEs by fostering innovation, enhancing skill development, and leveraging global trends. "Gujarat has led the way in simplifying compliances, making it easier for businesses to operate in the state," he stated.

Shah also spoke about SMEs being the pillar of the economy, contributing to innovation and jobs. "Today, Gujarat has over 20 lakh SMEs, employing many people. Surat is notable for its diverse SME base."



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His address was followed by an engaging fireside chat with Radha Kirthivasan, Head, Listing and SME, BSE and Faruk Patel, Chairman and MD, KP Group on empowering MSMEs through market access and financial opportunities. Kirthivasan explained how listing on the SME platform has proven to be a game changer for MSMEs, transforming market perception, enhancing credibility, and unlocking significant business growth. "With access to capital, stronger investor confidence and operational discipline, SMEs can scale their valuation and impact, as seen in Surat's thriving SME ecosystem," she said.

Affirming her views, Faruk Patel, Chairman and MD, KP Group said that the journey to listing is about more than just regulatory compliance. "It's about proving your worth to investors, unlocking new avenues of capital, and creating value that transforms your business. Listing gives a company its own 'currency' in the market, empowering it to scale while building trust and credibility among stakeholders," he said.

Next up was an insightful panel discussion which delved into "Capturing new opportunities, spreading risk: How businesses in Surat can diversify." The discussion saw industry representatives table their thoughts on how the city can branch out into different avenues to scale up. Vijay Mangukiya, Regional Chairman, The Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) said that the diamond industry has been seeing a lot of challenges in the backdrop of lower demand from their major market, USA, as well as the Russia-Ukraine war repercussions. He stated that the entry of **lab grown diamonds** (LGDs) helped the industry to diversify at this time. "Thanks to LGDs, our people got livelihood opportunities and we could give good value addition. Such phases will keep coming and people in the industry will keep surviving. This business requires patience – innovation is the only answer to diversification," he said.



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Adding to his views on new opportunities, Vineet Mittal, Director, Navitas Solar stated that the renewable market in Surat has seen great CAGR. "This is because of the inherent nature and ecosystem we have here, including the manufacturing ecosystem in terms of getting larger volume production. Outside of China, Surat is the biggest hub as a manufacturing hub for solar manufacturing. Similar expertise we have in textiles and diamonds as well," he said.

Chirag Patel, Co-founder, Stratefix Consulting, also agreed that the ecosystem of Surat is growing fantastically well. Patel spoke about how MSMEs have **'strategy jugaad'** within their operations, which helps them to adopt a lot of strategies to remain sustainable in front of big giants. "While finding good talent among MSMEs is a constraint, this sector loves to hire people from scratch and develop them. For instance, one of our HR consulting services is to Sheetal Diamond Jewellery, where we developed an ecosystem to hire even those who are not from a jewellery manufacturing background. Now, after four years, four of the ladies have moved up from below the poverty line to being floor managers in that unit. So, if corporates have power, MSMEs have patience; if corporates have well-defined processes, MSMEs have strategies called jugaad," he said as the audience cheered in response.

This was followed by a perspective from Ankur Patel, Managing Director, Orange Technolab in the panel on the crucial role of technology for the MSME sector. "The basic challenge for MSMEs is tech adoption. For them, adapting to tech is very important. It does not tantamount to investing in crores. One can start with using a basic Google form to capture data," he stated.

The final session of the evening was a presentation by Rohan Navik, Director, **Zeal Aqua**, who highlighted Surat's thriving aquaculture farming industry. "With 50,000 acres of allocated wasteland for shrimp farming, aquaculture not only drives economic growth but also creates substantial employment for rural communities. With greater government support, this industry can further enhance India's export value and solidify its position in global markets," he said.

This concluded the SME summit in Surat, serving as a key platform that deliberated on a range of opportunities for small businesses to keep the momentum up and running in the times to come.