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PRESS RELEASE

China and India: Two Textile Powerhouses

What the differing market dynamics mean for members of the Swiss Textile Machinery Association

Zurich, Switzerland, 29 October 2026 – China and India are among the world's most important textile manufacturing markets and have been key destinations for Swiss textile machinery for decades. However, their industrial structures, raw material bases and market dynamics differ considerably. These differences create distinct requirements and opportunities for Swiss suppliers of machinery, components and services. With ITMA Asia + CITME in Shanghai and India ITME in Greater Noida, two major Asian textile machinery exhibitions will take place towards the end of 2026.

China and India have extensive textile manufacturing capacities, large domestic markets and significant positions in international textile trade. Both countries are important markets for the Swiss textile machinery industry. Many Swiss companies have established a strong local presence through production facilities, sales and service organisations, reflecting their long-term commitment to these markets.

"China and India are both key markets for our industry, but their industrial environments differ notably," explains Cornelia Buchwalder, Secretary General of Swiss Textile Machinery. "The structure of textile production, the availability of raw materials and the importance of domestic demand all influence their investment priorities. Understanding these differences is essential for our member companies to offer technologies that meet the specific requirements of each market."

China: Technological advancement and strong competition

China is by far the world's largest textile manufacturing country, with an extensive and highly integrated value chain covering virtually every stage of textile production. It is also the world's leading exporter of textiles and apparel, while its substantial domestic market generates significant additional demand. Its position in man-made fibres is particularly strong, with chemical fibre production reaching approximately 87 million tonnes in 2025. At the same time, China remains a major cotton producer and processor.

Exports continue to play a central role in the Chinese textile industry. Chinese textile machinery manufacturers have also made considerable technological progress, creating an increasingly competitive environment for international suppliers.

For Swiss companies, opportunities lie particularly in advanced production technologies, automation, digital connectivity, precise process control and resource efficiency. As manufacturers seek to improve productivity and maintain consistent quality, specialised solutions continue to play an important role.

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India: Traditional strengths and expanding opportunities

India's textile industry has traditionally been closely linked to cotton. The country is one of the world's largest cotton producers and has extensive spinning, weaving and garment manufacturing capacities. At the same time, man-made fibres, technical textiles and more advanced production and finishing processes are gaining importance.

India's growing domestic market is a significant driver of development. Rising incomes and a young population support textile consumption, while government initiatives aim to strengthen manufacturing capacities, modernise production and increase textile exports.

These developments create demand for machinery and technologies across the textile value chain. Modernisation of existing facilities, investments in additional production capacities, reliable quality control and more efficient use of energy and water are among the priorities.

The Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement between the EFTA states and India, which entered into force in October 2025, provides further support by improving the framework conditions for Swiss industrial suppliers.

Swiss technology responding to different needs

Swiss Textile Machinery member companies offer machinery, components and services covering the entire textile value chain, from fibre preparation and spinning to weaving, knitting, embroidery, finishing and quality control. They have contributed to the development of both textile industries over many decades. Beyond supplying technology, they have established local operations, provided technical expertise and supported training and knowledge transfer.

"Our industry has built long-standing relationships with textile manufacturers in both countries," says Buchwalder. "Today, innovation is increasingly driven by close cooperation with customers and a detailed understanding of their production processes. Swiss companies combine engineering expertise with specialised textile knowledge, enabling them to develop solutions that improve efficiency, reliability and product quality."

Two major exhibitions highlighting market importance

The significance of both markets is reflected in the international exhibition calendar. ITMA Asia + CITME will take place in Shanghai from 20 to 24 November 2026, followed shortly afterwards by India ITME in Greater Noida from 4 to 9 December. Around 20 Swiss Textile Machinery member companies will be exhibiting at each event.

Despite geopolitical uncertainties, trade barriers and cautious investment decisions, the long-term outlook remains constructive. China and India will continue to shape the development of the global textile industry, each with its own priorities and challenges.

The upcoming exhibitions will provide an opportunity for Swiss textile machinery manufacturers to assess investment priorities, strengthen customer relationships and gain further insights into developments in both markets.

((Picture))

Containers with flags.jpg



((Caption))

none

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About Swissmem and the Swiss Textile Machinery Association
Swissmem is the leading association for both SMEs and major corporations in the Swiss technology industry. Swissmem enhances the competitiveness of its 1500 or so member companies both at home and abroad by providing needs-based services. These services include professional advice on employment, commercial, contract and environmental law, energy efficiency and technology transfer. Swissmem operates a number of strong networks, including 25 industry sectors. The Swiss Textile Machinery Association is the oldest division, founded in 1940. It represents the interests of the Swiss textile machinery manufacturers. Swissmem and the Swiss Textile Machinery Association are headquartered in Zurich.