

# Bonjour UP! French artist seeks MoU to boost craft

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LUCKNOW: Weaving a new silk route across the world, noted fashion and textile artist Isabelle Moulin fell in love with the intricate stitches that bring to life the simple yet mesmerising chikankari paisley to life on various fabrics including silk.

She was also amazed by the deftness of the zari-zardozi embroidery that gives a sparkle to special occasions.

In India these days as part of the Silk Trip project, Moulin is working to build a collaboration with major silk hubs across the globe. The project has covered nine countries.

Isabella had also discussed the possibility of a memorandum of understanding between the French government and Uttar Pradesh to promote handloom and handicrafts from the state in France.

Having visited places like Murshidabad in West Bengal and Mysore in Karnataka, she reached Lucknow on Tuesday where she participated in the ongoing Handlooms of India week organised by UP Institute of Design and Research (UPIDR).

She also interacted with students and spoke about how the canvas of life was made from fabrics and textiles and the kind of impact climatic change is making on the life of weavers.

She headed to Sitapur to meet with 'dari' makers and see the process and subsequently gauge its potential on the global front. Thereafter, she spent time with weavers from Varanasi. On Friday, she interacted with chikankari manufacturers and zari-zardozi artisans in Old City.

Chairperson of UPIDR Kshipra Shukla accompanied her on all field visits.

In her statement, Moulin said: "I am overwhelmed with the variety of handloom and handicrafts Uttar Pradesh boasts of. Also, the ODOP initiative is absolutely brilliant as it is empowering local artisans, especially women, and giving them an opportunity to be independent. Khadi also has immense potential globally.

Moulin also met with authorities at MSME and khadi and village industries including minister Rakesh Sachan and additional chief secretary Navneet Sehgal.

An official release said that Moulin had hailed ODOP as a gamechanger to empower artisans.

About her visit, Sehgal said: "Isabelle is a known name in the textile designing world and we can leverage her expertise to promote local weaves. Our teams have discussed a strategy to take this association forward both on promoting textiles and fashion education."

He also spoke of the UP government's schemes for welfare of weavers.

"The government encourages weavers and students willing to study weaving-related subjects," Sehgal said, adding that the government was working to formulate a new policy for handloom, power loom, silk, textiles and garments.

"The policy is expected to create massive employment opportunities for the youth not only in the district headquarters but in their own villages," he said.