

LISS

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# Delay could be costly for firm

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**A LISS firm is facing "financial catastrophe" as a £20,000 shipment from India could be destroyed due to rule changes.**

David Harvey claims the rigid approach of the Animal and Plant Health Authority (APHA) has dented his confidence in the UK.

His Et Games business designs and imports wooden games from Asha Handicrafts, an Indian fair trade firm which supplies handicraft items.

But their most recent import, a shipping container packed with £20,000 of wooden games, was seized by customs because of an alleged delay in filling out a one-page import form.

"We filled out the form to apply for an import permit as soon as we could, straight after the Indian authorities provided the export permit,"

said Mr Harvey, managing director of the Station Road firm.

"However, the UK authority says this wasn't early enough, and therefore the goods have been seized and will probably be destroyed, costing us more than £24,000."

Mr Harvey claims his firm has been caught out by a change of rules regarding the classification of Sheesham wood, a fast-growing Indian hardwood used in Et Games' products. While not endangered, the species recently became controlled under

**'The goods have been seized and will probably be destroyed'**

the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species, with APHA guide-

lines being updated to reflect this.

"Nobody is saying our goods are illegal or coming from unsustainable sources, but our business faces financial catastrophe as a result," added Mr Harvey, who has



David Harvey, Managing Director of Et Games, has asked Damian Hinds MP for help.

asked Damian Hinds MP to refer the matter to the Parliamentary Ombudsman.

"It feels very unjust: our lawyers have advised that we did in fact apply early

enough, and in any case APHA has discretion to issue retrospective permits."

CONTRIBUTED PICTURE