

Universal appeal

Gemstone specialist Vikar Ahmed, based in Idar-Oberstein, also underscored the market's relentless appetite for Paraiba tourmalines, thanks to the gems' calming yet mesmerising neon turquoise hue.

Ahmed's eponymous company is seeing strong sales, in particular, of ring-sized stones weighing between 2 carats and 5 carats. Also moving fast are bigger gems of 7 carats to 8 carats for pendants as well as melee stones ranging from 1mm to 2mm in diameter for tennis bracelets with diamonds.

Customers are partial to colour more than clarity so they are more accepting of inclusions, revealed the gemstone expert. Some buyers however take into account both colour and clarity and are willing to invest heavily in such stones.

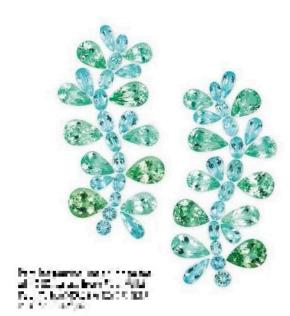
The company's main clients are high-end brands from Europe, especially Switzerland, France and Germany. Over the past two years, the industry has seen a steady increase in demand for Paraiba tourmalines in China, but the pandemic has since disrupted supply of coloured gemstones to Asia, according to Ahmed.







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A cushion-shaped 41.01-carat Paraiba tourmaline in top neon-blue colour from Vikar Ahmed Vikar Ahmed的41.01克拉枕形霓虹彩蓝色帕拉伊巴碧玺

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Ahmed echoed this sentiment, adding that prices could rise even further next year. He said Paraiba tourmalines in lighter neon blue hues of 1 carat to 3 carats currently sell for US\$1,200 to US\$3,000 per carat while 5-carat to 8-carat gems attract US\$5,000 to US\$12,000 a carat.

Faced with uncertainties arising from the pandemic, buyers may be more willing to invest in large stones but these would have to be rare and ultra-special, he continued. With the coronavirus outbreak disrupting travel and face-to-face business interactions, the need for digital strategies also comes to the fore.

"People are ready to buy these stones right now. This also raises the importance of keeping in contact with our clients despite the lockdown through online initiatives such as email and social media marketing," noted Ahmed.