

Star

BUSINESS

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Intl' textile markets rushing on for eco-friendly fabrics

AFP, Paris

As consumers wake up to global warming and globalisation, ethical issues are gaining ground and spinning more and more hard cash in the competitive world of international textiles.

Organic cottons along with fabrics spun from bamboo, soybean protein fibre, seaweed and ramie -- an ages old fibre crop used in mummy cloths in ancient Egypt -- took centre-stage at a major textile trade fair held in Paris this week, Texworld.

And textile ground-breaker Tencel, one of the world's leading companies highlighting health and environmental concerns, said business was on the up and up.

"Demand for organic cotton is gaining momentum," said Ram Srinivasan, general manager marketing for Indian firm KG Denim Limited.

One of 830 exhibitors at the trade fair, more than half of them from Asia, his firm began producing organic cotton back in 2000 but was forced to give up due to lack of demand before three years ago re-launching a now successful 100-percent green fibre-to-fashion line -- from spinning the yarn to producing the garments.

"It was too early at the time," he said. "Now people have realised that organic is natural and environment-friendly."

"It's up to 30 percent more expensive but there's a growing niche market for the upper-middle classes."

Based in both Mauritius and Madagascar, Groupe Socota too said sales were burgeoning in fabrics respecting the principles of fair trade that give marginalised producers a bigger share of profits.

"It's very big because of the ethical advantages," said sales executive Sarah Bower. "Organic hasn't taken off as well yet, but with global warming it soon will."

Socota uses clean cotton grown in Cameroon which is then spun in Madagascar, woven in Madagascar and Mauritius, and turned into garments in Madagascar.

Its top customer currently is Britain's Marks and Spencers, which has launched a men's shirt range in fair-trade cotton that enables buyers to check the history of the garment on www.historicfutures.com, a consumer tracking system for clothes that uses a code sewn into the garment during manufacture.

Like many textile firms offering certified organic cotton, Hong Kong's Bros Holding Limited buys its cotton from Turkey, currently the world's leading producer with the United States, followed by India, Peru and Uganda.

But as buyers worldwide increasingly look to eco-friendly fabrics, the ground-breakers in the field are having to look beyond purely environmental concerns to market their goods.

Austrian firm Lenzing, which produces the new-age Tencel fibre made of wood pulp that revolutionised textiles in the 1990s, claimed at the fair that the fibre was perfect for people with sensitive skin.

"We have learnt that this fibre is very good for people who have skin problems," Dieter Eichinger, the firm's global marketing director, told AFP.

The company, he said, was conducting tests in different countries to show its role in helping people afflicted by neurodermatitis, psoriasis and skin irritations in general.

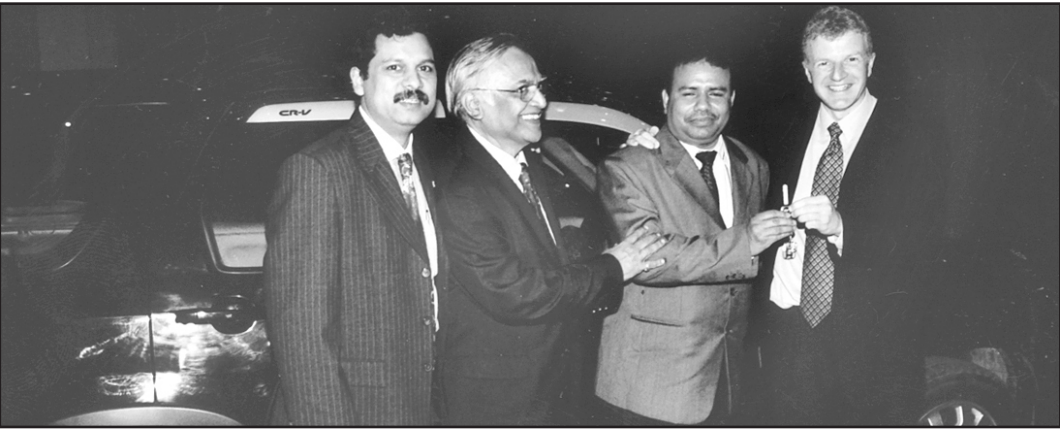


PHOTO: GULF AIR
Richard Anthony Pickering Hirsch, regional general manager of Gulf Air of Indian sub-continent, hands over the key of a car to Abdul Hai Milon, owner of Win International, at an award distribution ceremony organised by Gulf Air Dhaka office in the city recently. 12 travel agents of Dhaka received other awards from the airline.

India, Nepal to renew trade treaty

PTI, Kathmandu

India and Nepal have agreed to renew for another five years a bilateral trade pact that facilitates business between the two countries.

The Indo-Nepal Trade Treaty was due to expire on March 5.

The decision to extend the treaty was taken at a two-day high-level meeting between commerce ministry officials of the two countries.



PHOTO: BEF

Dr Rajen Mehrotra, a New Delhi-based ILO specialist on employers activities, addresses a workshop on 'Negotiating Management Charter- Innovative Agreements to Improve Competitiveness' organised by Bangladesh Employers' Federation (BEF) in collaboration with International Labour Organisation in Dhaka on Saturday.



PHOTO: TRANSCOM ELECTRONICS

A resident of Gulshan in Dhaka receives a 'fifty percent discount offer' on a Philips product while she was shopping at Gulshan-2 showroom of Transcom Electronics Ltd recently.

CURRENCY

Following is Sunday's (February 25, 2007) forex trading statement by **Standard Chartered Bank**.

Major currency exchange rates			Exchange rate of some currencies	
	BC Sell	TT Buy		
US dollar	69.40	68.05		
Euro	93.05	88.11		
Pound	137.75	131.94		
Australian dollar	56.14	52.87	Indian rupee	44.08 1.56
Japanese yen	0.58	0.56	Pak rupee	60.65 1.13
Swiss franc	56.75	54.66	Lankan rupee	108.75 0.63
Swedish kroner	9.81	9.07	Thai baht	33.55 2.05
Canadian dollar	60.40	58.11	Malaysian ringgit	3.49 19.67
Hong Kong dollar	8.90	8.70		
Singapore dollar	45.82	44.23		
UAE dirham	19.04	18.38		
Saudi riyal	18.65	18.00	1 M	68.15 69.50
Danish kroner	12.82	11.51	2 M	68.27 69.61
Kuwaiti dinar	236.64	233.75	3 M	68.41 69.79
* All currencies are quoted against BDT			6 M	68.60 70.38
* Rates may vary based on nature of transaction			* The forward rates are indicative only and fixed dated	

SHIPPING

Chittagong Port

Berthing position and performance of vessels as on 25/02/2007

Berth No.	Name of vessels	Cargo	L. Port call	Local agent	Dtof arrival	Leaving	Import Disch
J/1	Tian Ling	C. Clink	Sing	MBL	18/2	26/2	2445
J/2	Banglar Maya	Gl(S. Ash)	P. Band	BSC	21/2	1/3	--
J/3	Lilac Ace	Vehi	Col	Everett	24/2	25/2	--
J/4	Banga Bonik	Cont	Col	Bandhi	21/2	--	--
J/5	Asrar-A-Mostafa	Gl(S. Ash)	Okha	Cia	18/2	28/2	475
J/6	Xpress Resolve	Cont	P. Kel	Seacon	21/2	--	--
J/7	Fu Wen Shan	Gl(Steel)	Para	Cosco	22/2	27/2	--
J/9	Long An	Gl(St. Bil)	Viza	Kaptai	21/2	26/2	--
J/10	Oel Freedom	Cont	Ptp	PSSL	22/2	1/3	--
J/11	Kota Ratna	Cont	Sing	Pil(Bd)	17/2	25/2	--
J/12	Pac Palawan	Cont	Sing	CEL	18/2	25/2	--
J/13	Coastal Express	Cont	Kol	BSC	20/2	25/2	--
CCT/1	Sinar Merak	Cont	P. Kel	PSSL	18/2	25/2	--

Vessels due at outer anchorage

Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L. Port call	Local agent	Type of cargo	Loading ports
Brave Royal	25/2	Thai	BRSL	C. Clink	--
Maria	27/2	Viza	Royal	Potash (Fert)	--
Phoenix	26/2	Col	PSSL	Cont	Sing
Rio Lawrence	25/2	Ptp	QCSL	Cont	Ptp
Banga Bijoy	28/2	--	Bandhi	Cont	CBO
Yong Yue-8	28/2	Hald	Seacon	Cont	Sing
Hoang Son	3/3	Yang	PML	GI	--
Mare Hibernum	26/2	P. Kel	Seacon	Cont	Sing
Kissama	26/2	P. Kel	Vega	Cont	Sing
Zhe Hai-315	26/2	Sing	PML	Cont	Sing
Phu Tan	28/2	Sin	PSSL	Cont	Sing
Gao Cheng	27/2	Sing	PML	Cont	Sing

Tanker due

Al Badiyah	27/2	Kuwa	MSTPL	HSD/JP-1
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Vessels at Kutubdia

Name of vessels	Cargo	Last Port call	Local agent	Date of arrival
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Outside Port Limit

Sea Drill-6	Pro. Equip	--	IBSA	8/1
Gulf Dri-9	Pro. Equip	--	IBSA	3/1
Pacific Champion	--	--	IBSA	R/A(25/2)
Pacific Steel	P. Equip	--	IBSA	R/A(14/2)
Wirra Keris	--	--	IBSA	R/A(21/2)

Vessels at outer anchorage

Vessels ready

Yongxing	Cont	Col	PSSL	18/2
Josco View	Cont	Sing	RSL	21/2
Oel Excellence	Cont	P. Kel	PSSL	21/2
Precious River	Cont	Sing	Vega	22/2
Pacific Express	Cont	Sing	Pil(Bd)	22/2
Vinashin Mariner	Cont	Sing	PSSL	23/2
Cape Bonavista	Cont	P. Kel	Bdship	23/2

The above are the shipping position and performance of vessels at Chittagong port as per berthing sheet of CPA supplied by **Family, Dhaka**.

STOCK