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RUPEE APPRECIATION

India's textile exports dip 36pc in Q1

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

The appreciation of value of Indian currency has brought down the country's textile exports to about five billion dollars in the first quarter of the current financial year (2007-8), Textile Minister Shankersinh Vaghela has said.

This is 36 percent shorter than the expectation of exports of 7.5 billion dollars, he said.

He, however, said confidently that the export target of 2 billion dollars set for the current fiscal would be met as bulk of the order came in the last two quarters of the fiscal.

Vaghela, who was speaking at the launch of Textile Summit 2007 here on Tuesday, said the government's package of incentives for exporters announced earlier this month would help textile exporters to overcome the problems posed by the strengthening Rupee which has appreciated by over 11 percent since August 2006.

He said the Textile Ministry would push for increasing duty drawback rates and making the foreign currency account interest-bearing as a relief to exporters.

The minister said the government is also taking measures to ensure that latest technology comes to the Indian textile sector.

Meanwhile, a study by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) says the Indian textile sector has been witnessing a slowdown in growth rate in the last two-three months.

As compared to a growth rate of 14 percent in May 2006, the sector grew by a mere 6.9 percent in May this year, it points out.

Similarly, textile products (including apparels) grew by just 7.13 percent and 9.9 percent in April and May this year, compared to 12.5 percent and 18 percent in April and May last year, the study estimated.

The study suggests a four-point package, including adequate availability of fibre at competitive prices, attracting Foreign Direct Investment and tapping emerging areas like technical textiles to boost the textile sector further.

Thai-Bangla chamber's new chief



K Habib Sattar

K Habib Sattar has recently been elected the president of Bangladesh Thai Chamber of Commerce & Industry, says a press release.

The result of the election was announced at the 3rd annual general meeting (AGM) of the trade body held in Dhaka on Monday.

Other executives of the chamber are: Vice Presidents Alamgir Z Rahman and Santi Pongchaisopon, Director (Administration) Salahuddin Abdullah and Director (Finance) Imtiaz Farooq.

Ensure duty-free market access for Dhaka to achieve MDGs

Finance adviser urges developed nations

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Finance and Planning Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam yesterday urged the developed nations to ensure duty and quota free market access to the least developed countries (LDCs), including Bangladesh, to achieve the millennium development goals (MDGs) set by the United Nations (UN).

"I do hope international community will wake up to fulfill this share of responsibilities," the adviser said at the launching ceremony of a report on Bangladesh Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2006 at a city hotel.

Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) and United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) organised the launching of the report.

The finance adviser also called upon the international community

to enhance quantum of official development assistance to Bangladesh.

"Bangladesh needs continuous external support to achieve the MDGs by 2015," he said, however, adding that Bangladesh should ensure sustainable achievement of MDGs so that its commitment to the global partners is honoured.

Chaired by Jafar Ahmed Chowdhury, secretary of the Planning Division, the function was also addressed by Louis-Georges Arsenault, Unicef representative in Bangladesh, AYM Ekrumul Hoque, director general, BBS, and Md Shamsul Alam, project director, (MSCV) of BBS.

MICS is an international household survey designed by the Unicef to assist countries to plug data gaps for monitoring human development in general and the situation of chil-

dren and women in particular.

MICS 2006 is the ninth round of the survey in Bangladesh. The first round was conducted in 1993. This is the only household survey in Bangladesh that provides disaggregated data up to the district level.

The finance adviser said in order to achieve other national goals beyond MDGs, it is important to identify remedial measures. Therefore, MICS data will help to resolve any kind of disparity, he added.

Arsenault said the MICS data is internationally comparable, which can be used as evidence for future policy support of the country.

He said it is very important to monitor the achievement of MDGs and MICS data will help develop the sector whereas Bangladesh is still lagging behind achieving MDGs.

BCSIR-PKSF MoU to work for poverty alleviation

Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) and Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR) has agreed to cooperate each other in the field of poverty alleviation and economic development of the country through utilisation of the products and technology innovated by BCSIR.

The two sides inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU) at the BCSIR office in Dhaka yesterday to this end, says a press release.

As per the MoU, the PKSF will be able to disseminate technologies and products of BCSIR to the beneficiaries/entrepreneurs of its partner organisations (POs), which will help introduce more poor-friendly multi-dimensional innovative income generating activities.

The BCSIR will also provide required training and technical supports to the entrepreneurs in this regard.

Dr MA Hakim, general manager (Administration) of PKSF, and Professor Dr Choudhury Mahmud Hasan, chairman of BCSIR, signed the agreement on behalf of their respective organisations.

Seminar on Shell industrial lubricants held

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Ranks Petroleum Ltd, distributor of world-renowned Shell Lubricants in Bangladesh, yesterday organised a seminar on the technical aspects of industrial lubricants.

The seminar laid emphasis on the improved reliability and durability of their products, especially four-stroke and spark-ignition engines that save energy and reduce maintenance costs.

Ranks Petroleum Ltd Director & COO Rumeel Hossain chaired the seminar where Shell Technical Manager (Middle East) Anwer Chishti and Regional Manager (South Asia) Amardeep Gill took part.

They focused on commercial and technical aspects of Shell range of industrial lubricants with emphasis on gas engine oils.

Good business governance stressed to sustain RMG competitiveness

Speakers at a seminar in Dhaka underscored the need for implementing good business governance through sharing global information on apparel market to sustain competitiveness.

The two-day global marketing seminar, organised by YKK Bangladesh Ltd, a unit of YKK, world's largest zipper manufacturing company, concluded yesterday at a hotel in Dhaka, according to a press release.

Hiroaki Nakamura, the company's managing director, Lee Dygert, regional manager (Global Marketing) of YKK Corporation of America, Ata Ozkan, senior executive (Global Marketing) of YKK Europe Ltd, Akira Iwamura, manager of YKK Holding Asia, and Makoto Nishizaki, general manager of YKK Corporation, Japan, spoke at the seminar.

Around 250 representatives from different garment manufactures attended it, which focused on global buyers' trends and their new specifications for the competitive apparel market.

DSE index crosses all time high mark

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With the recent bullish trend in share prices, DSE General Index, benchmark index of the country's premier bourse, yesterday crossed 2400 mark closing at an all time high of 2422.54 points.

The index yesterday rose by 43.71 points, or 1.83 percent, over the previous day's closing at 2378.83 points.

Market operators said rallying of shares in bank, pharmaceutical and power companies with occasional falls in recent times helped the general index cross 2400 points.

They said half yearly financial disclosures by the listed companies encouraged investors including the institutional and foreign ones to rush in the stock market forcing it to

witness a bullish trend.

The Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) authorities introduced the general index on November 27, 2001 with a base of 817.62 points. The index, which excludes companies of 'Z' category, is calculated on the basis of price movement of individual stocks under 'A', 'B', 'G' and 'N' categories.

Previously, there was only one index that included all securities of the stock exchange. Starting with a base of 350 points, the index rose as high as 3648.75 points on November 5, 1996 when the market witnessed a 'bubble and bust'.

The DSE All Share Price Index was reintroduced on March 28, 2005 and the DSE-20 was introduced on January 1, 2001.

The total turnover on the DSE

yesterday increased to Tk 232.66 crore from Tk 187.01 crore the previous trading day.

DSE market capitalisation also rose to its all time high at Tk 54,713 crore from Tk 53,886 crore on Tuesday.

The DSE All Share Price Index rose by 30.89 points, or 1.59 percent, to close at 1962.44 points.

Of the issues traded, 117 advanced and 70 declined with 26 unchanged. A total of 123,73,015 shares changed hands on the DSE.

At the end of the day, Square Pharma topped the turnover leaders with 56,289 shares worth Tk 29.96 crore. The other turnover leaders were Brac Bank, National Credit and Commerce Bank, Southeast Bank, Square Textile, Exim Bank, City Bank, Summit Power, One Bank and Pubali Bank.

Shareholders want administrator for Delta Life Ins

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Some general shareholders of Delta Life Insurance Company Ltd yesterday urged the government to appoint an 'administrator' for the company alleging that the present executive committee is illegal.

They said the present committee in 2005 by force took over the charge the company's management nullifying the previous committee unilaterally.

However, denying the allegation, Company Secretary of Delta Life Sultan Mollah said, "A vested group is trying to tarnish our reputation."

The general shareholders also said they are not getting dividends for the last three years, as there is an embargo from the High Court on holding annual general meetings (AGMs) of the company.

"But, the director who filed a writ petition against holding of AGMs is continuously attending the extra general meetings of the company and also taking the honourarium from the company," said Khadim Hossain Chowdhury speaking at a press conference on behalf of the shareholders at the National Press Club where around 30 general shareholders were present.

He said the chief insurance controller in a letter to the commerce ministry also recommended appointment of an administrator for the company. "But, the present management also filed writ petition against the recommendation," Chowdhury said.

However, the company secretary of Delta Life said as all the issues are now sub-judicial, the management has nothing to do with holding AGMs.

City Bank's new DMD



officer (COO), says a press release.

Ameen has previously served as the COO of American Express Bank in Hong Kong and Bangladesh.

He started his banking career in 1981, the release adds.

Infosys wins outsourcing contract from Philips

AFP, Bangalore

India's second-largest software maker, Infosys Technologies, said Wednesday that it would buy the service centres of Royal Philips in three countries as part of a multi-million-dollar outsourcing contract.

Infosys will provide the Dutch electronics company with finance and accounting services and process purchase orders under the contract, which will generate business of 250 million dollars over the next seven years, said chief financial officer V. Balakrishnan.

The Bangalore-based company will pay 28 million dollars to acquire the Philips service centres in India, Poland and Thailand under the contract. The three centres have 1,400 employees.

"This will help strengthen our presence in Europe and reinforce our capability in the finance and accounting space," Balakrishnan told AFP.

Infosys and other Indian outsourcing firms are trying to strengthen their European business to reduce their dependence on a US market that provides two-thirds of their revenue.

Infosys' outsourcing business enjoyed 70 percent sales growth to 148 million dollars and an increase in client base of more than one-third in the year ended March.



PHOTO: YKK BANGLADESH

Akira Iwamura, manager of YKK Holding Asia, speaks at the concluding session of the two-day seminar organised by YKK Bangladesh Ltd at a city hotel yesterday. Hiroaki Nakamura, managing director of the company, was present among others.