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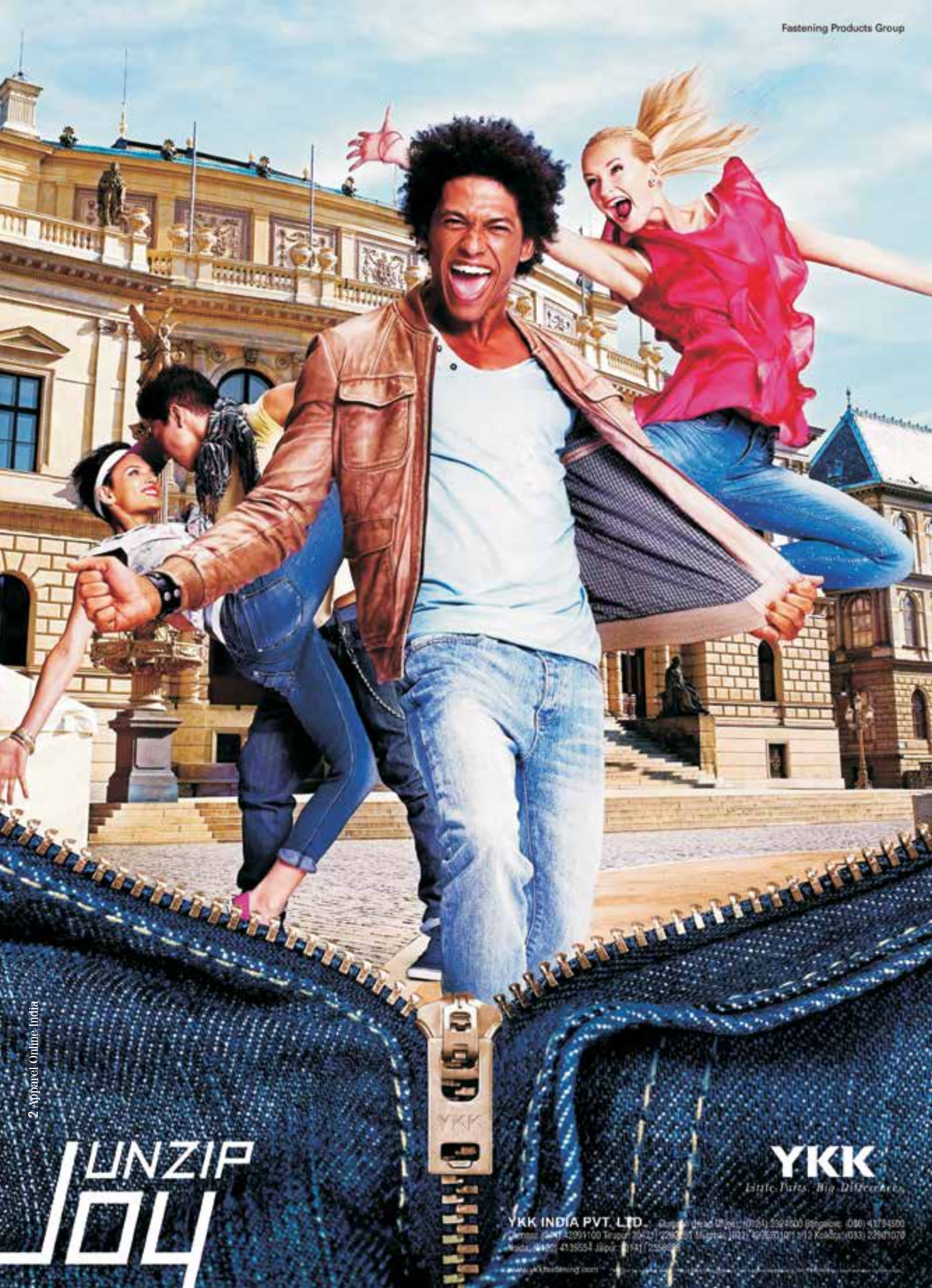
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FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF'S DESK...

APPAREL INDUSTRY NEEDS TO BE THE FOCUS OF INVESTMENT AT BUSINESS CONCLAVES

Over the past few years there have been a number of 'business conclaves' by State Governments to invite investment in the state, the most recent being the 'Happening Haryana' event. I agree that such initiatives are a must for the progress of the state and the nation at large. But, my reservation is that the focus of such events is to lure big-ticket industries like Automobile, IT, Steel, Pharmaceuticals and the likes with heavy investment, capable of fetching the Government more tax revenues, while it is the textiles industry, and particularly the garmenting sector, which will bring in the jobs.

In one of my earlier editorials when the Akhilesh Government had called for a business conclave in Uttar Pradesh, I had written... "Such conclaves may bring in more money, but not the employment at the grass root level where the most are uneducated and unemployed. An industrial investment of Rs. 50,000 crore (US \$ 7,500 million) may create 5,000 jobs, but an investment of such a magnitude in the garment manufacturing sector would create 7.05 million jobs..., since a capital investment of every Rs. 1 crore in the garment manufacturing industry creates around 141 jobs, out of which 120 can be uneducated and put on line with 30 days training." I stand by my statement...

Though Gurgaon and Faridabad are strong centres for the garment industry, and Panipat and Sonipat are known for home furnishing, the scope to move beyond these established hubs is huge. The failure of Manesar as an alternate to Gurgaon exporters looking to expand is perhaps the biggest example of why Government's intervention is required to support new upcoming hubs... Much more is required than allocated areas!

Whatever the official reason for the recent agitations in Haryana may be, it cannot be denied that the prime cause of the unrest is growing unemployment amongst the youth, as agriculture income is now not enough to take care of the entire family. When employment generation is a national agenda of the many Government initiatives, skilling India is a priority for the ruling party..., then why keep ignoring such opportunities...?

As per official record, Haryana has existing garment exports, which are in excess of Rs. 20,000 crore (US \$ 3000 million) per annum, employing about 3,50,000 workers; this could be multiplied manifolds if the Government is proactive and wilful in implementing some much needed reforms. The first is of course related to wage rates...

It is common knowledge that the industry in Bangalore is drastically reducing due to manpower shortage, and the companies are running buses as far as 80 km into the interiors and pouching to get the workers, not really a practical and workable solution for most! Yet, smaller centres in the interiors like Bellary, which already has a thriving denim industry, are not being developed and big exporters are not looking at investing in the area, despite abundance of labour, because the wages they pay in Bangalore are also the same in this small city where cost of living is substantially lower!

Would it not be prudent for the Government to set a 'differential wage rate' based on practical parameters that would be beneficial to both the industry and the workers of the region? By allowing the required adjustment in the wages for smaller centres and emerging hubs, bigger companies would willingly make investments nearer to their original roots, but far enough to be cost-effective (if they can shift to Bangladesh for this reason why not in India). This would generate greater employment in the region, uplift the condition of the city with business activities and the labour can happily live with their families while earning and saving on the expenses of moving to bigger cities.

Another move that could really make a difference is to treat big units employing huge number of workers as SEZs with the same privileges. This would not only encourage the companies to expand and generate more employment opportunities, but would also help in getting the units operational with immediate effect as the ecosphere for the business is already in place. I have been advocating this for a long time... The Government has to initiate some study to work out its feasibility. The real agenda for SEZs need to be defined; if it is generating employment opportunities and increasing exports, then what is wrong in giving the status to individual companies serving the purpose...?

State Governments looking at investments have to balance between huge revenue generation and immense job opportunities for people with and without education. The Bangladesh model is a good model to follow for overall growth; and if a portion of the population of 25,353,081 people, as stated in the 2011 census, in a state like Haryana can be harnessed fruitfully, the end result would be tremendous!



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MIND TREE

TOPIC OF DEBATE

With Haryana being in the news for all the wrong reasons, primarily after the 'Jat agitation', do you think that the proposed summit 'Happening Haryana' – to encourage investments in the State, will attract apparel manufacturers? What all needs to be done by the State Government to send a positive signal to the industry?

Kuldeep Singh, MD, In Time Garments, Faridabad ■ I was there at 'Happening Haryana' and it was quite a good event which will definitely have a positive impact in the long run. Bottom line of the event was strong, and such events should take place annually or at least biennially. The Government needs to ensure that these MoUs/announcements get executed at the ground level. But I would like to add that Haryana Government should ease the licence process/NOCs, etc., be it fire or pollution or from any such other department. In this regard self-attestation is the best way and these permissions should be for 5 years. Still there are some unethical practices at the administration level, which need to be addressed.

Simran, MD, Swift Corporation Limited, Manesar ■ Being a medium-level business owner I don't see any impact of the event on my business *per se*. Whereas the issue of what needs to be done by the State Government, is concerned, I would like to add that Manesar is much more costly compared to any other manufacturing hub, especially in the Delhi-NCR region. Labour cost is very high; this needs to be looked into. Similarly, I don't see any subsidy in terms of infrastructure or electricity; secondly, after 5 PM, working here doesn't seem completely safe. We can grow much more if we have facilities like those in many international manufacturing destinations.

Pranab Mahajan, Director, Mahajan Overseas (Maspar), Panipat ■ It is too early to say anything as we should give some more time to the Govt. It seems to be on the right track and has already improved on few systems..., more things are now online. As far as the agitation is concerned, such things can happen anytime and anywhere, but Haryana will grow definitely as manufacturing is on mass level in the state. I personally feel that states like Gujarat are on the priority for new investments. No matter whatever MoUs have been signed at 'Happening Haryana', its execution in future will be interesting to see. So as of now I can say it is a wait-and-watch situation.

Praveen Gupta, Director, Virender Textiles, Gurgaon ■ Haryana Govt. should focus on infrastructure, especially in the NCR; for example if someone is going from Delhi to Gurgaon or Manesar, then traffic is a very major issue. Similarly, in some areas roads need to be repaired on regular basis; why can't we have more flyovers wherever required. Such things matter when talking about fresh investment, especially from outside. I have not seen all of Haryana but these things need strong focus in

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NCR. On the other hand, such agitations should not take place as it create a lot of disturbance and break confidence of those looking to expand.

Vijay Mathur, Additional Secretary General, AEPC, Gurgaon ■ Holding of 'Happening Haryana' has in fact come at the right moment. The state has existing garment exports, which are in excess of Rs. 20,000 crore per annum, therefore, garment export industry is well poised to take new steps to expand. The State Government has already adopted/proposed some good policies. We have given a presentation before P K Das, IAS, Additional Chief Secretary to the Government of Haryana regarding the apparel industry. Provision of flatted factory was suggested to the State Government where land right and building right shall be with State Government, and it can charge nominal rent of Rs. 3/sq. ft. per month. Government can give time-frame of two years to factories to operate.

Rakesh Jain, CEO, Tex India, Panipat ■ Be it 'Happening Haryana' or recent agitation, it will leave some impact in the long run, but the Govt. is on the right track and infrastructure in

Haryana is improving. I would urge that there are some issues in Panipat related to dyeing, which need to be solved on priority basis.

Pankaj Kapoor, Former President, Haryana Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Panipat ■ It is good that the State Govt. is taking confidence-building measures, like holding meetings with industrialist by local administration. But I strongly feel that insurance companies should pay complete claims to those small or big businessmen who have lost their properties during the agitation. I got to know that insurance companies are raising questions, like the units do not have 'riot cover' or so; it's time to support the industry... Secondly, Government still has some policies which prove that it is not entirely industry-friendly, like there was a case of sales tax in 2003 related to hundreds of firms. The High Court here gave decision in favour of industry, but now the concerned department is moving to the Supreme Court. Adding to the same, we are constantly receiving bills with lot of discrepancies; Government officers want to take the issue to legal procedure rather than arbitration panels, and even if they do, these panels are not having justified approach.

MIND TREE

QUESTION

Many State Governments are coming forward with 'standalone' textile policies which they claim will not only support the existing industry, but also encourage more investment in the sector. Do you think such policies are really supportive...? Have you seen any benefits accruing from the textile policy in your state..., if yes, please share the areas, and if not, where are the hurdles?

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Even as the mass market plunges in Russia due to economic downturn; luxury brands in the country are still seeing strong sales as rich Russians are investing more actively in absolute luxury goods such as bags and

Luxury

SALES SURGE IN RUSSIA DESPITE ECONOMIC WOES

RICH RUSSIANS LEADING THE WAY IN LUXURY SPENDING

watches. Though the currency devaluation is eating into the margins of many retailers, but still luxury brands are seeing a surge in sales looking to either expand or open more stores as its ever loyal customers – the rich Russians, are leading the way and spending more.

As Russia witnesses economic slowdown with no signs of recovery in sight for 2016 as well, an opportunity has been provided to boost Russian manufacturing. Further, with wages decreasing by roughly 10 per cent over the last year, middle-class Russians have moved from mid-segment retailers to favour budget clothing. According to National Polls, about half of Russians can barely afford purchases beyond food and other basics. Despite all this, with limited or no domestic alternatives to luxury brands such as Prada, D&G, Chanel, etc. for the rich customer, the market is left with no choice but to continue importing such products despite the value of rubble increasing, leading to retailers absorbing these cost that is hitting their margins.

Compared to the mid-market competitors, the luxury brands have not only weathered the storm as the economic crisis hasn't affected the daily consumption patterns of the wealthy Russians who are heavily investing on luxury bags and watches, but they have also consolidated their market share at 10 per cent. The key indicator for this sharp polarization between the rich and the ever growing population of the poor, as the Government data reveals, is that 4 million people fell below the

poverty line in the first 9 months of last year. However, according to the Fashion Consulting Group (FCG), the luxury clothing sector is expected to shrink by 20-25 per cent this year to £ 1.7 billion, down from £ 2.1 billion last year, because of the continuous pressure on the economy.

Nonetheless, luxury brands are doing well as they have rich Russians constantly feeding into their latest collections. Though the quantities of purchase might be lower than before, but these specific consumers are not deviating from their luxury brand of choice. Such is the case that the leading luxury brands such as LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton SA, Kering SA, Chanel SA and Prada SpA are doing well in this market. This has been possible due to their strong branding, investment on heavy marketing and promotions and widespread distribution, thus being well positioned to attract new consumers, while also feeding into their old consumer base as well. In watches, Rolex SA and the Swatch Group Ltd. witnessed the strongest growth benefiting from a surge in demand for luxury timepieces.

Owing to this trend, a few brands believe that growth will continue and are opening new stores to tap the new

wealthy consumers. Amongst them are Bulgari and Jimmy Choo, who have opened a new departmental store across Red Square, whereas Hermes has doubled its selling space. Various luxury brands are providing testaments to this change as Prada revealed that its Russian sales last year have 'registered significant growth', while for Rolls Royce, 'Russia was the strongest market in mainland Europe'. The spending habit of Russia's elite spreads beyond the country's borders. According to the tax-refund company Global Blue, though the Russian spending abroad dropped dramatically last year with a 41 per cent year-on-year fall in September, but still Russians constitute the third largest group of tax-free shoppers, mainly because rich Russians continue to buy. Giving further impetus to this has been the plunge in ruble that has created bargains for

the shoppers as prices don't necessarily keep up with the currency's decline as fashion retailers claim that they are keeping prices down to retain consumers. This has provided scope for many to keep constant their purchase of such products despite the economic downturn. Also tapping into the competitive pricing of Moscow are the Chinese tourists whose numbers have surged in the past two years, helping in boosting luxury sales in Russia, as exchange rates are comparatively lower than what they get in China. Yet, according to Euromonitor's latest report on the Russian market, the luxury goods market is predicted to record value stagnation (at constant 2015 prices) and volume decline over the coming years. This will lead to the consumers' approach to purchases becoming more pragmatic rather than spontaneous or impulsive. Also, rising unit

prices resulting from possible currency devaluation may lead to lower spending on luxury goods by the Russian consumers. This will require the luxury brands to focus on re-strategizing, while keeping their loyal customers closer and in the process tapping the new ones. "Most luxury operators are expected to be more conservative in new outlet expansions due to the concerns regarding economic slowdown and higher rental costs," reveals the Euromonitor report. With concerns regarding the economic downturn eating into the sales of luxury brands, many luxury brands are leaving no stone unturned in catching a share of the Russian expenditure. But what needs to be seen is whether the luxury brands are capable to tap this consumer segment which is flamboyant in its demands and also travels a lot!

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A SALUTE TO THE WOMEN IN INDIAN APPAREL INDUSTRY

Industry celebrates International Women's Day with fervour



On International Women's Day, half of the world population deserves a salute, and in particular those who are working in the Indian apparel industry which is full of challenges, competitive pressures, stress, opportunities and continuously changing demands. How important is this particular day for them, what is on their wish list, especially for women in the industry, and many more such interesting topics were touched upon by *Team Apparel Online* on the occasion. Though change is happening..., but much more is required to empower women from the boardroom to the shop floor.

The industry was very upfront in celebrating Women's Day and some companies shared their activities enthusiastically. **Orient Craft, Gurgaon** organized a self-defence session, which was attended by over 100 women employees. The company also held a 'Best Dressed' competition for female associates, wherein it recognized 50 females as 'Best Dressed' in the entire factory and they were felicitated with attractive gifts. The unit took middle-level female staff for *Jai Gangajal*, a women-centric movie, to make them feel special and valued. "At Orient Craft, women – their skill development, their health and education etc. – have always

been a major focus as we believe that women are the backbone of our industry," said **Archana Tomar Mann (Manager – CSR & Compliance)**. Women empowerment is foremost priority for the company.

In Bangalore, all women workers of **Golden Seams Industries** were requested to wear green, pink and blue coloured *salvar kameez* and *sarees*. Wishes were conveyed to all women employees while entering inside the factory from the management by giving rose flowers and chocolates. The attempt was to make them feel 'special'. **Axstores Far East Limited, Delhi**, a Swedish company sourcing garments from India, planned a cultural



Women staff of Orient Craft, Gurgaon at the self-defence learning session held on Women's Day

event, felicitating women team members for their role played in the company. Similarly, many other export houses and buying houses organized small events to facilitate and recognize their women staff. On the other hand some buying offices, especially in North India, witnessed 'rush' of work as they opened after two days; Sunday being an off-day and Monday being a holiday in lieu of *Shivratri* festival, so there was no time to celebrate Women's Day.

In fact, many women expressed that they do not want special treatment on a designated day. "It is a day to be celebrated every day, there is no pressure to do anything

differently on that particular day," said **Asmita Dwivedi Paliwal, Director, Abhiasmi International (Paliwal Group), Panipat.**

Kamal Kapur, a veteran in the industry, with extensive experience in export as well as buying side, and **MD of Achievers Consulting (HR Services)**, and a Visiting Faculty at NIFT, Amity and other institutes said, "I, and many others like me, did not want any special treatment... We just worked towards being recognized as special. I think I have been truly fortunate that the six organisations I have worked with did not employ men or women. They hired 'people'."

Aastha Kapoor, Creative Director, Affordable Exports, Delhi says, "My only wish from the men working in the industry is, "Please let your wives work if they wish to. Our industry will take care of them in every possible manner."

Ayesha Katrak of ColorLines Clothing India, Bangalore adds, "I feel that there should be more women in the factory leadership roles that are traditionally held by men, such as Batch Supervisors, IE's Cutting In-charges, etc."

One of the Country Managers of a well-known Gurgaon-based buying house said on condition of anonymity, "It is generally perceived that women in the apparel exports industry are not treated with 'respect'. It will be great if this perception gets changed on the ground level, so that people in general look at us with respect throughout the year." Most of the women were of the opinion that they as a community networked and supported each other. It is true both at a family level as well as at work place. On the mass level, industry strongly feels that Government should allow night shifts for women in line with the Tamil Nadu High Court ruling of not discriminating women in employment.

SOLUTION TO DE-STRESS

Shopping, vacationing, watching movies or reading a book were the most common retort given by women from the industry regarding their stress busters, but few answers were quite interesting. **Geeta Lakra, Director, Superfine Knitters, Ludhiana** believes in

Ministry of Textiles (MoT), Government of India, is a perfect example of 'women empowerment' as right at the top, MoT has Secretary Rashmi Verma and Additional Secretary Pushpa Subrahmanyam. Out of the four Joint Secretaries, three are women – Sunaina Tomar, Anu Garg and Geeta Narayan. Similarly, there are Babni Lal, Economic Advisor and Jaya Dubey, Director.

Forty-two empowered women from MAS manufacturing facilities across Sri Lanka, India and Bangladesh, were awarded out of its 72,000-strong workforce, their achievements being evaluated by a panel of eminent personalities, representing areas that include personal development, career guidance and entrepreneurship. MAS' hallmark women's empowerment programme – Women Go Beyond (WGB) – rewarded its exceptional women associates with the Abhimani Empowered Women of the Year Awards Ceremony 2015.



Unisource Treend India, Tirupur held a massive celebration in its unit



Karnataka State Police and Amnesty International India hosted 'Ready to Report Forum' on this special day. In discussion with senior police officer of the state, Yamuna, an associate of the Nayandhalli Garments Workers Union, insisted that the police and communities need to work together and one has to look beyond the law. A skit 'Harassment at a garment factory' was also performed in a public bus by Samvada Kandeelu Girls Forum.

Masoma Alizada, a 26-year-old entrepreneur, has become the first woman in Bamyan province (Afghanistan) to establish her own garment factory. This apparel factory employs eight women and one man as full-time employees, and 30 women working as part-time embroiderers from their homes. Her factory now receives orders from Kabul and Balkh provinces, and recent contracts in her home province are adding further to its success.

spirituality, and considers it as the best stress-buster. "Many women in my factory share their problems, like family issues with me, as they believe in me. I advise them as best as I can, and motivate them to work and tackle such situations on the stride. This is a kind of stress-buster for my team, and I believe in spiritual practices that make me strong," she says.

Bela Katrak, MD, ColorLines Clothing India, Bangalore has an interesting take on stress. She says, "Stress is good when the situation offers opportunity to a person to gain something. It acts as motivation for peak performances. Stress is negative when a person faces social, physical, organizational

and emotional problems. Stress usually gets busted through work satisfaction. Once, the results come out good, the effort was all worth it." Asmita is of the opinion that nothing is a better stress-buster than spending time with family. "Unfortunately, we pack so much into our schedules and constantly fight to make this quality time," she says.

WOMEN AT THE 'TOP' STILL A MISSING LINK

As per AEPC, almost 90 per cent of the workers in the merchandising department of the Indian apparel export houses are women and 80 per cent of the total employees

at ATDC are women. But on the other side, the *Apparel Online Annual Top 100 Indian Garment Exporters' Survey (published in July 2015)* found that only 6 companies (Orient Fashion Exports, ColorLines Clothing India, Meenu Creation, Mantra Exports, Dimple Creations and New Delhi Export House) have women at their helm. On the same track AEPC, EPCH, and other similar bodies like CMAI, Mumbai; TEA, Tirupur; Knitwear Club, Ludhiana; GEAR, Jaipur rarely have any women at the top level or as Executive Members. **Vijay Mathur, Additional Secretary General, AEPC** claims, "There is no specific reason for it." He informed that out of the 165 employees at AEPC, 31 are women. "Time has come for women in the garment industry to come forward and participate in policy-making platforms of AEPC as well," he added.

Rahul Mehta, President, CMAI says, "We have Sharmila Nadkarni (Founder of Desi Belle brand) with us. Similarly, our regional committee in Pune includes Meenal Joshi. We always welcome woman entrepreneurs, who can represent the industry in a better way. I personally feel that our industry lacks woman entrepreneurs."



Women's Day was celebrated at Golden Seams Industries by giving rose flowers and chocolates to its women workers

In his honest style, **Ajit Lakra**, MD of **Superfine Knitters**; and Head, Textile Federation of Industry and Commercial Organisation; and President of Ludhiana Knitters Association said, “I admit that women are totally missing in all major associations, and even in the industry’s top rung. I believe the society’s male-dominated nature is to blame for this. Involvement of women needs to become a culture in the industry. I strongly believe that their calibre, ability to work hard and sense of responsibility will have a good impact on the industry. Women are instinctively gifted with a strong sense of fashion understanding.” It is time the Indian associations learn a lesson from Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), where at one point of time, there were 14 women in its committee.

COMPANIES WITH ‘STRONG’ WOMEN WORKFORCE

Golden Seams Industries, Bangalore and **Unisource Treend India, Tirupur** have 85 to 90 per cent female operators working in their factories. Companies like **KPR Mill Limited, Sree Santhosh Garments, Aditya Birla Nuvo** too have almost a similar proportion of women workforce in their companies. All these firms are located in south India. **Raymond** has created several women entrepreneurs through its Tailoring Skill Development initiative. The company is training young women in five of their tailoring training centres. In Visakhapatnam district, **Brandix India Apparel City** has set up India’s biggest apparel park. With an annual turnover of around Rs. 1,400 crore (US \$ 210 million), and with 14 units functioning on the 1000-acre park, out of its 18,000 workforce, 14,000 are women.

Sustainability important in Home Textiles, stresses Oeko-Tex

The International Oeko-Tex Association, in partnership with Home & Textiles Today, has been spreading the word about the rapidly growing importance of sustainability in the home textiles market. According to its recent press release, textile sustainability encompasses many factors including responsible chemical and natural resource use and respect for workers and communities. “Textile sustainability also includes safe and environmentally effective production practices, and products that are free from harmful levels of dangerous substances,” Oeko-Tex revealed.

Currently having a comprehensive portfolio of testing and certification programmes that help home textiles companies to attain all those standards, Oeko-Tex presented a panel discussion titled, ‘The Growing Importance of



Sustainability in the Home Textiles Market’ at Heimtextil 2016 in Frankfurt. During the upcoming New York Home Textiles Market Week, Oeko-Tex will present an event with H&TT regarding the importance of testing and certification for protecting home textiles product quality and sustainability. Titled ‘Be Sure to Know What Goes into Your Product’, Oeko-Tex will share how science-based testing and certification can help defend and build brand equity in a risky global market place.

C&A bags AlvaInside certification for second time

Recently the European retailer C&A has bagged the highly respected AlvaInside certification for the second time. The certification for C&A men’s, children’s wear and Clockhouse ranges, follows the brand’s fit accreditation for its C&A ladies and adult denim ranges awarded in Spring 2015. “What C&A has achieved with its ladies and adult denim ranges, and now men’s, children’s wear and Clockhouse offerings, in such a short space of time, is outstanding. C&A is a great retailer with great retail instinct, but perhaps more importantly, great personal engagement with their customers. It has recognized that aligning product development processes, implementing the best practice at every level, and executing accurate, consistent fit, is the way to increase customer satisfaction,” reveals Ed Gribbin, President, Alvanon.

Developed by Alvanon’s global apparel consultants, AlvaInside is awarded to client companies that demonstrate consistency in the execution and implementation of fit across the apparel



development process. Alvanon advised, supported and audited C&A’s product development and strategic fit practices for their ladies, adult denim, men’s, children’s wear and Clockhouse divisions over a 10-month period. During this period, the retailer revised its processes and tools in line with current best practices. “We are very pleased to have been awarded the AlvaInside fit certification for the second time. At C&A, we have tackled head-on the challenge of delivering consistent fit across our key fashion, ladies, adult denim, men’s, children’s wear and Clockhouse ranges,” informs Helen Walczak, Head of Strategic Design Projects at C&A.

BUDGET 2016: AN ANALYSIS

NOT MUCH FOR THE TEXTILE & GARMENT

SECTOR; DOMESTIC BRAND OWNERS

PARTICULARLY UNHAPPY

Year after year the industry eagerly waits for some directional changes in the Union Budget, but this year again the textile and garment sector was not a priority for the Government; besides the customary dole-outs, there was nothing exciting for the industry. The thrust for the Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, who presented his third Union Budget, was on 'nine pillars', which included the farmers and rural population welfare, healthcare, skilling & employment, financial sector reforms & discipline and importantly improving ease of doing business. Another significant thrust area of the Budget was to increase spending on infrastructure sector. The Government is aiming at stimulating growth through public spending and stabilize growth rate in the back drop of grim global economic scenario. The Minister reiterated that the economy will grow at 7.6% in the current fiscal.

The Budget allocation for the textile industry in the current proposal is US \$ 515 million (Rs. 3,350 crore), including US \$ 215 million (Rs. 1,400 crore) for the amended TUF and US \$ 46 million (Rs. 300 crore) for the development of Mega Clusters, and US \$ 31 million (Rs. 200 crore) for rural development. Welcoming the 'nine pillars' of the Budget, **Tirupur Exporters' Association President, Dr. A. Sakthivel** said that the focus of infrastructure and initiatives for "Ease of Doing Business" will go a long way in improving the economy as well as reducing the transaction cost. He also expressed his happiness on more funds allocation for skill development, which he felt would support the industry that was facing serious labour shortage. However, it cannot be denied that there was very little to cheer about for the industry.

Excise Duty on branded garments in retail up

Disappointed with what the Union Budget 2016-17 offered to the textile industry, there was sharp criticism from a section of the industry unhappy with the proposed 2% excise duty on branded readymade garments and made-up articles of textiles having retail sale price of Rs. 1,000 or more. The provision is likely to affect retailers in a big way, according to **Rahul Mehta, President, Clothing Manufacturers'**

Association of India (CMAI). "It is disastrous for the textile industry. At a time when the Government is talking about implementation of the goods and services tax (GST), what is the need to bring in new levy, especially when the textiles industry is passing through a rough phase?" he asked.

However, this duty will be applicable only for those manufacturers, who do not claim Input Tax Credit (ITC), popularly known as Cenvat or Central Value Added Tax, paid on various raw materials. Meanwhile, manufacturers who do claim ITC will need to pay 12.5% excise duty. Until now, excise duty has been "nil" for manufacturers who do not claim ITC and 6-12.5% for those who do. The Budget has also proposed that 60% of retail sale price or the tariff value be made eligible for excise or countervailing duty (CVD) on readymade garments and made-up textile articles. Previously, the tariff value for calculating excise or CVD was fixed at 30% of retail sale price. The Budget has also raised excise duty on polyester staple fibre (PSF) and polyester filament yarn (PFY) to 12.5% for manufacturers, who claim ITC, which was earlier pegged at 6%.

Custom Duty provisions favourable to exporters

Basic Custom Duty has been reduced to 2.5% for textile raw materials used in technical textiles. The goods included under this facility are nylon

66 filament yarn, polyester anti-static filament yarn, aramid flame-retardant fibre, para-aramid fibre, nylon staple fibre, nylon anti-static staple fibre, modacrylic fibre and flame-retardant viscose rayon yarn. This measure will help bring down the input cost for several technical textiles manufacturers in the country. Also, basic Customs Duty on import of below specified fabrics reduced to zero provided these articles are imported to manufacture garments for export, the string attached to this facility that the total value of goods imported shall not exceed 1% of the FOB value of textile garments exported during the preceding financial year. The products included to this facility are cotton and elastane printed fabrics, cotton and metallic yarn dyed blended fabrics, cotton and spandex and metallic blended fabrics, cotton and silk lining fabric, 100% linen chambray woven/dyed fabric, 100% ramie dyed/blended printed yarn dyed fabric, nylon and spandex lining fabrics, 100% polyester velvet dyed fabric, cotton/nylon/embroidery crochet lace lining fabric from the chapters 50, 52, 54, 55 or any other chapter.

Reacting to the announcement, **AEPC Chairman Ashok G Rajani** stated, "Addition of 1% FOB value of exports in Custom Duty-free for specified fabrics would enable garment exporters to undertake production of those garments, where they were

not competitive. In the year 2016-17, fabrics, worth around US \$ 154 million (Rs. 1,000 crore) (1% of Rs 1 lakh crore), would be eligible for imports, and Custom Duty of US \$ 17 million (Rs. 110 crore) would be saved by garment exporters. This will open up avenues for new product development. It would provide additional exports of Rs. 2,500 crore in a complete year.”

He further said, “Continuation of duty-free import of trimmings and embellishments to the extent of 5% of FOB would facilitate additional garment export of US \$ 769 million (Rs. 5,000 crore) in the full year (2016-17).” The benefit of Notification No. 41/2012 is now effective from 1/7/2012. Here the Government has changed the post-manufacturing drawback rate from 0.18% to 0.21%.

This is subject to the passing of Finance Bill. The effect of this would be an additional 0.03% drawback on service tax on garment exports on FOB value of exports.

The total additional exports – US \$ 1154 million (Rs. 7,500 crore) in the full year 2016-17 is envisaged by the incentives announced in this Budget, he added.

While the apparel sector welcomed the reduction of the basic Customs Duty on specified fibres and yarn, **R K Dalmia, Chairman, Texprocil** said that duty-free imports of certain specified fabrics against the export of readymade garments should have been extended to the made-ups sector as well, as both garments and made-ups fall under the category of “cut & sew” products.

Skill Development, a priority

Skill upgradation, which is another major requirement

of the industry, has also been addressed by the Government, with the proposal of allocating US \$ 262 million (Rs. 1,700 crore) for the setting up of 1,500 multi-skill development centres. Since its launch, the National Skill Development Mission has imparted training to 76 lakh youth, who found employment in various sectors, including textiles and clothing.

Overall Reactions...

Dhanpal Tare, Chairman of Indian Powerloom Federation is of the opinion, “There is hardly anything for the common textile industry in this Budget. I am surprised that the minister forgot the textile industry, which is the second largest employer in India. The industry was expecting something from the

Budget as we were aiming for programmes such as ‘Make In India’.

The export is declining for the last 11 months. We are worried. Under such circumstances, we were expecting

incentives from the Government to boost export.”

The Indian Texpreneurs’ Federation has welcomed the Budget, which continues on the path of structural reforms. “The Budget addresses three areas – rural, agriculture, and infrastructure, all of which are important. The various rural schemes of the Government will boost rural demand and will be good for the textile industry. We had asked for a reduction in excise duty on MMF that has not happened. Skills India is an excellent scheme for the textile industry and I am happy to see it has been strengthened. Recapitalisation of banking sector is another welcome move. The only hitch for the industry looks to be the inclusion of RMG under the excise net,” said **Prabhu Damodaran, Secretary General, ITF**.

“Addition of 1% FOB value of exports in Custom Duty-free for specified fabrics would enable garment exporters to undertake production of those garments, where they were not competitive.”



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“For the past 40 years I haven’t seen such a conducive environment for the Indian apparel industry for growth”

Sudhir Dhingra, CMD, Orient Craft Limited

Increasingly, as the industry becomes unsure about the market conditions and is looking at another uncertain year of business, there is one man who thinks completely otherwise, firmly confident that the industry is at the threshold of major growth.

In conversation with *Apparel Online*, Sudhir Dhingra, Chairman and Managing Director, Orient Craft Limited, shares his observations about the Indian industry that is noticeably moving, showing upwards growth due to industry-friendly Government policies and evolving market conditions.

With restricted consumer spending on garments, shoppers’ continuously demanding customized products, and price pressure, besides increased production cost, the uncertainty for the apparel industry and its supply chain is adding up. In fact, the year is shaping up to be another challenging year, as the strengthening of the US dollar and the volatility in commodities cost is giving jitters to many in the Indian apparel industry. But on the contrary Dhingra opines, “Indian industry should be rejoicing that the dollar is going to hit 70 this year, and whatever inefficiency the Indian industry has, the dollar is helping them to fill the gap. People keep on crying, but I do not believe in that. The fact is that the industry for the past few months is actually becoming vibrant like the rainy season.”

Dhingra does however admit that though the opportunities are huge for the industry, challenges still persist.

“Price points are still very tight and the expectations of the customer in terms of service and quality are very high, but why shouldn't it be...? Why should you expect them to buy poor quality products in comparison to products that they can get from Sri Lanka, China, etc.? I firmly advocate that there has never been a better time for the industry and this is not because of the scenarios which are still very fearful, but it is because of the change at the top, as all the things that one wanted to talk to about the Government was never heard before, but now they are willing to listen,” avers Dhingra.

Many have been speaking loudly for reforms in the industry as the Government is now listening, but the bigger picture is not restricted to reforms, rather it is about the industry becoming more and more quality-conscious to compete with other players. “People have been chasing for duty-drawback, I think it is important but small compared to the larger picture. Bigger picture is that we have a huge challenge in the face of Bangladesh, Cambodia, Vietnam, etc. that are producing higher quantities and also enjoy certain advantages that enables them to be better players in the market,” claims Dhingra.

As the Government is taking notice of the apparel industry, there is a dire need to also look at core issues like jobs, which has been the bone of contention for many Governments, the recent being the Jat stir in Haryana. “Today every State and Central Government has become acutely aware that if they fail to provide jobs particularly for the class of people that we employ, uneducated, unskilled women in particular, they will not be able to survive. What is happening in the North East, where Marxist have become popular because they give Rs. 1,000 every month and a gun, it is all about engaging young people in the right way,” argues Dhingra. History shows that many countries have established garmenting as a trade that has been used to create mass employment and aid development, including the now developed nations like the US and UK. The same route is today being taken by countries like Bangladesh, wherein their economy is heavily dependent on garmenting industry for growth.

With the coming of the Modi Government, industry is looking towards a positive outlook of growth as the Government is also involving the industry, taking their opinions while introducing new policies; Dhingra has even not hesitated to take a forceful and vocal stand at all forums. “I championed strongly for Free Trade Agreements (FTA) during the ‘Make in India’ conference in Mumbai recently to ensure that we have a level playing field. There is internal expectation that within current year the FTA with Europe would be signed and the many ‘merchants of doom’ would have to eat a humble pie. The day it is signed, they would run out of capacity! A business which is currently US \$ 8-9 billion will grow 100% year-on-year for the next three years. There has never been a better time because at least today we are in the minds of the policy makers! Once FTA is signed, then see the magic,” asserts Dhingra.

With signing of the FTA with Europe, many are hopeful of large chunks of business which is currently being held by countries such as Bangladesh, coming to India. “The moment the agreement is signed I will add 25% capacity within six months,” adds Dhingra, predicting that 2017 will be a year of boom. Once the FTA is in place, he feels that the Government needs to look at bilateral agreements with the US and Canada, as the world wants to do business with us today and our biggest markets are still the western markets of the US and Europe. “Everybody’s talking that we don’t have good processing facilities, which is right; also that the duties on manmade fibres is high, which is also right but I believe these are all health pills and unfortunately we have cancer. How are we going to fight 29% duty disadvantage when the customer is chasing 50 or 25 cents? But now the awareness is coming, it will further accelerate,” states Dhingra confidently. Further to the FT Agreement, Dhingra has also proposed for tax reforms that could not only support expansion but also generate jobs. In lieu of an industry player providing 500 jobs, Dhingra suggests a tax holiday for a year and if it is 5,000 jobs then the same should be for 10 years. “People will happily expand...; the same could be linked to NREGA, so that the taxpayer money

is also saved. Now the Government is in an uncomfortable position as they know what is happening in the North (agitations) can happen anywhere else. At the end of the day the Government has restricted jobs, they have to create opportunities. I think good times are around the corner, it requires more aggressive lobbying from the industry so that we are the ones who can suggest to them how to do it and what will be the benefits,” opines Dhingra.

Many are not aware that the Haryana Government has already provided a vision in the industrial policy claiming that for every ‘Haryanvi’ that is employed, the Government will compensate Rs. 3,000 to the employer. To lure in many of these untouched labour belts, Orient Craft had set up a centre in Rohtak which saw positive response, one such being many women coming in for the training and then moving to Gurgaon to take up jobs in the factory. It its initiatives such as these that will embark for a better India not just in terms of the industry growth but also in terms of the country’s economic growth with the bigger objective of women empowerment being realized. “More and more State Governments are coming up with specific policies for the garment industry and the very fact that they are luring the industry, highlights the new mindset. It is now for the industry to move out of its comfort zone and explore new options. Only those industry players will survive who change with time,” reasons Dhingra.

Meanwhile, Orient Craft on its part is also looking towards growth. The Green Factory in Rajasthan is running to capacity and is earning profits for the company with dedicated labour force. This factory caters to 30% garments and 50% furnishings while the rest is for lace making, embroidery and also catering to a large wash plant. “We are going for further expansion next year. Our denim plant is also doing very well and we are booked to capacity. We have added sweater manufacturing to our factory in Manesar,” reveals Dhingra. Looking towards 25% expansion as and when the FT Agreement will come into place, Orient Craft is sure for a positive 2016, and more importantly Dhingra is happy with the way the industry is moving!

KENNIGTON INDUSTRIES SPECIALIZING IN MAN-MADE YARNS

CHINA SLOWDOWN IN TEXTILES PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDIAN INDUSTRY

Mumbai-based Kennigton Industries that started with trading 15 years ago, has not just maintained its strong hold in import of man-made yarns but has also further expanded its specialities to all kinds of grey yarns. Speaking to AO, Rajeev Tulshyan, Chairman of the company talks about the market conditions, growing demand for man-made yarns and his future plans for the company.

Riding strong on imported yarns, Kennigton Industries has complete control of the products that it supplies with strategic tie-ups in China of 3,00,000 spindles for polyester and recycled polyester. The company also has access to 1,00,000 spindles for viscose in Indonesia. With pan-India presence, Kennigton has warehouses in Bhiwandi for Mumbai and northern markets, and in Kerala for Erode and other textile hubs in the south. Of late, the company has witnessed a surge in the demand for recycled polyester. “We are selling 100 containers of recycled yarn per month and many companies in the US are making it necessary to use recycled yarn, which is pushing up the requirement consistently,” informs Rajeev. Apart from sustainable yarns, the company also caters 100 per cent polyester spun yarn, virgin polyester spun yarn, slub yarn in polyester, cotton & polyester blended yarn and polyester viscose yarn to name a few varieties.

With 80 per cent business for basic yarn and 20 per cent for high-value-added yarns, the company is hopeful about the market conditions improving and the demand getting stronger. “Market has improved after December and the demand has also gone up with prices for basic crude coming down to an average of US \$ 32-35 per barrel. Already we are close to bottom and I feel that maximum it will come down to US \$ 25 per barrel, which will comparatively be a negligible loss against it coming down from

US \$ 100 to US \$ 35. Even at US \$ 25 the price will not sustain. Yarn which was stagnant at Rs. 160 a kg a year ago has dropped to Rs. 120 a kg, and in March the price of texturized polyester yarn, the benchmark yarn variety, has fallen further from Rs. 120 a kg to Rs. 105 a kg, so people’s confidence on man-made yarn is also increasing. Our stock bearing power has also increased,” explains Rajeev. Further he adds, “This would benefit not just the end customer, but also the whole supply chain.”

Supporting the positivity in the Indian market is China, which is pulling out of the spinning business, creating hope amongst Indian industry that the orders will come to them. “Though currently, there is a glut situation in India but since the viability of China is getting lower, we see a future in India as we have already a strong marketing setup in the country,” informs Rajeev. Though China has been pulling out of the spinning business, it is too early to predict the impact as it remains to be seen how much of their capacity will actually be reduced when the Government is so supportive of them. “All their machineries, factories are loan-free. Their industry is flourishing so they have to maintain that. But growth, which is happening in India is not happening in China for sure,” reasons Rajeev. Nonetheless, currency devaluation in China is creating an atmosphere of uncertainty, and February 2016 itself witnessed this twice creating ambiguity amongst the Indian players as well.



Rajeev Tulshyan, Chairman, Kennigton Industries

In the meanwhile, the market demand continues to keep constant between all kinds of yarns, i.e. basic and high-value added including, polyester, viscose, man-made fibre, etc. While drawing comparison between cotton and viscose, the companies believe in its viability against cotton. "Viscose is a natural fibre, which is environmental friendly. People don't use much of this because it has a 12 per cent duty making it expensive, while cotton, which is grown in the country, is directly available. But viscose is actually a much better product than cotton," believes Rajeev. He questions the perception that viscose is for the poor..., "Who said it a poor man's substitute for cotton, rather it's a rich man's substitute," avers Rajeev. He points out that man-made yarn is much more in use internationally, than cotton.

In fact, globally 60 per cent of the fabrics used in garments are polyester while the rest 40 per cent is cotton. "Internationally the trend of readymade garments came much earlier than when it came in India. A majority of Indians are still buying fabrics and getting clothes stitched. But now the trend of readymade garments is fast spreading across India, even in the villages, so the demand for polyester will definitely increase," argues Rajeev. Currently, the company is concentrating on polyester and polyester blends for both weaving

and knitting, manufacturing at a set of dedicated factories in China and Indonesia. "We have fixed the parameters of quality within the factory and while they look after the production, we look after the marketing part," asserts Rajeev. The company is currently importing at an average 125 containers per month and around 1,500 containers per year. For product development, the company relies on the team in China, while having a technical line-up in India who coordinates with them. "We study the market and look at what's trending. R&D is very important. China is doing well in R&D that is why they are able to grow. Also, they are very quick in replicating. If you try to replicate Chinese yarns or products, then at least 10-15 tonnes of yarn will go in wastage and it will take a while to cover the cost, but China on the other hand gets that done perfectly, in one go," exclaims Rajeev.

Depending heavily on the business model of importing yarn and selling it in India, Kennigton is now contemplating the advantage of a spinning setup in Maharashtra and Gujarat and also expanding its importing activities into countries such as Bangladesh to maximize market opportunities. In 2015, Kennigton did a business of Rs. 450 crore and with the company building the foundation for future growth; the hope is to take the leap nearer to Rs. 500 crore in the running year.



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NEW ANTI-UV, ELECTROMAGNETIC TEXTILE DEVELOPED

Poland's Textile Research Institute (TRI) has developed new textiles enabled with anti-UV and anti-electromagnetic capacities. Protective clothing developed with the use of these textiles will be supplied to law enforcement officers, healthcare workers, farmers and other professionals; they will also be used in the manufacturing of curtains and other products.

Following research and development activities, the TRI is currently pursuing projects which aim to introduce its products to both the domestic and foreign markets, according to the institute's management. In addition to protective textiles, which are enabled with anti-UV and can be used to manufacture a wide range of special clothing for various professions, other innovative solutions developed by the TRI include protective textile screens fitted with anti-electromagnetic capabilities. These products can be used to protect healthcare professionals and patients from the adverse effects of medical devices. In addition to this, the screens are enabled to block the electromagnetic field emitted by electrical energy lines and radio communication equipment.

FOHMA's Hosiery Cost Index for January was 130.09

The apex body for hosiery industry in India – Federation of Hosiery Manufacturers' Association of India (FOHMA) – recently launched the FOHMA Hosiery Cost Index (HOSEX), which on January 1, 2016 was 130.09, as against 131.39 on September 1, 2015 (the Base Year being January 1, 2010 = 100). The main reason for the marginal fall in the Cost Index is the drop in cotton yarn prices in the past 4 months. Other parameters have stayed almost stable. The index highlights the average movement in costing for a representative basket of hosiery goods over a period of time. For example, if the cost was Rs. 100 in January 2010 and the index is 132 today, it means over the period the cost for the industry has gone up by 32 per cent. While specific products

may have gone up more or less depending on its specifications, the INDEX just gives a broad idea for the industry as a whole. Its relevance is more in giving an idea of the direction of movement of costing rather than absolute movement.

This Index conceptualized and created by FOHMA Vice-President (Central) Sanjay K Jain, who is also MD of well-known Indian textile and clothing company TT Ltd. said, "FOHMA hopes that with proper support from industry players and all aligned people around us, it will be possible to establish a universally accepted index, which will be a guiding tool for both buyers and sellers. This is the first cost index for any textile industry segment in the country. This will enable

companies to benchmark their pricing to a systematic cost plus scenario and ensure the same is accepted by the market," he said. Sanjay also added that the industry is slowly graduating from a fragmented market scenario to a more organized one, where more and more buyers are emerging in the shape of organized retailers, institutional players and e-commerce giants. They have much more bargaining power and can squeeze companies/brands in an inflationary situation. Over the past four decades, FOHMA has been constantly endeavouring to come out with new initiatives to assist the industry in becoming world class and organized to benchmark itself against the best in the world.

Textile industry under discussion at two-day conference in Bangalore

Textile Association of India's Karnataka unit conducted a two-day International Textile Conference at Nimhans Convention Centre, Bangalore. The Textile Commissioner of the state, Dr. R. Raju, inaugurated the conference and shared textile industries' development activities in Karnataka. He said Karnataka is putting more emphasis on development of industry both in Bangalore as well as outside Bangalore areas. As per the State Government, a lot of opportunities are being offered for the growth of industry like: good roads, availability of water, electricity and infrastructure even in rural areas is made available. Government has even contributed 2,500 acres of land through industrial development boards, besides making available electrical infrastructure of up to



The TAI team at the Amith Garment Services stall

2,500 MW. He informed that total investments of Rs. 10,000 crore (US \$ 1500 million) are expected during Global Investor Meet 2016 at Bangalore.

Speaking at the occasion, Arvind Singh, President of Textile Association of India reiterated that the financial problems of the developed countries have adversely affected the textile industries in India. He also added that besides commodity textiles like clothing, etc., other new areas are also presenting

opportunities to users of textiles like non-woven textiles, defence areas, medical textiles, geo textiles, etc. He said everyone in the textile industry should make use of the opportunity. Prem Mallik, President of CITI spoke on requirement of developing basic infrastructures for the growth of industry at the conference which was attended by many industry-informed persons. The two-day conference also had an exhibition-cum-tradeshaw in the same premises.

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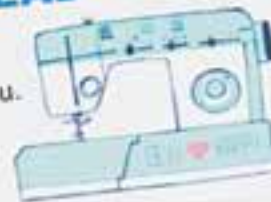
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JC International



Suprint Textiles



Ramdev Handicrafts

Review: IHGF

HOME FURNISHING EXPORTERS HAPPY WITH FOOTFALL

Over the last few years it has been noticed that **most of the sourcing fairs across the world are losing their charm, especially for Indian exporters.** But the recently concluded Indian Handicraft & Gift Fair (IHGF) at Greater Noida was an exception as **largely the participants (mostly in home textiles/soft goods segment) were happy with the buyer footfall.** Some of them, in discussion with the buyers, claim to have received positive market feedback which is a **big boost to middle-level home furnishing exporters who have seen some slow times in the past.** As per the claims of the organizers of the event, Export Promotion Council for Handicraft (EPCH), major international brands too visited the fair and showed interest in many products.

The recently concluded IHGF witnessed participation from several home furnishing exporters from Jaipur and most of them were present with their traditional strength. However, there were a few offering different products, or products that earlier they were not doing. Like Arvind Exim, which participated at the fair after a gap of almost a decade, had displayed upholstery fabric which it has recently introduced. "It was due to this new product offering that we decided to participate at the event after a long gap. Visitors liked our products, and we are happy with the response and quality of buyers. I met a good number of wholesalers from USA and Germany," informed **Baldev Rathi, Director, Arvind Exim.** The company offers a wide range of home textiles products and is proudly incorporating Jaipur culture (Hawa Mahal, local villages) in its collection. Currently, having a turnover of US \$ 4.61 million (Rs. 30 crore), Rathi is expecting 15 per cent growth in 2016.

Ramdev Handicrafts, another firm from Jaipur too highlighted the traditional hand block and hand embroidery *kantha* work of the region. The booth showcased quilts, blankets, table linen, bed sheets and throws. **Harish Rathi** of the firm feels that though

machine-made products are increasingly getting market space, handmade traditional things will always remain in demand. He was happy to meet few good visitors from domestic market like Bombay Store, Westside, Fab India, etc. "For us a buyer is a buyer, whether he is from the international market or Indian market, getting business is the key," said Harish.

Tejinder Sodhi, CMD, Suprint Textiles, also from Jaipur is a regular participant at this fair and he also confirmed that this time the response was better than the previous editions, yet as a veteran he was honest in admitting that the industry was stagnating. "No doubt, overall buyers are now less at such events compared to many years ago but consumers are still there worldwide and even growing, but sales are not picking up. Why, because we the exporters' fraternity is unable to offer anything new in product development that they would like to buy; secondly, we are not competing on price. Why don't Indian exporters have quality control or automation system? We have to move forward and offer something more than value for money," averred Sodhi. Suprint Textiles is working for top national and international brands and is into garmenting as well.

During the fair, a panel discussion on retail and e-commerce titled 'Partners in Progress – Kal, Aaj aur Kal 2014-2016-2018', was held in which well known retailers and e-commerce leaders like Kumar Rajagopalan, CEO, Retailers Association of India; Navin Mistry, Head, e-Bay; Vivek R Category Head – Flipkart India; Wenketesh, Category Head – Amazon;

The company is doing an annual turnover of US \$ 12.30 million (Rs. 80 crore) and has a vertically integrated setup.

No doubt, most of the time companies at sourcing fairs come up with just little changes in their products, but only a few companies have something really different to showcase.

JC International, Noida is one such company that had focused on different types of washes in its products. "We have used acid wash, stone wash and enzyme wash to give the products a

dominated by hand embroidery with green, grey and blue colours. **Jameel Naqash**, representing the third generation of this family business informed, "I have immense respect for my products, which can be used for a long time and not for just a few months or few seasons. The feel, colours and look of our products will remain the same for years. We are quite quick in sample making and can prepare any sample required by the buyer within two days. This is possible as we have complete hold on our products in terms



Baldev Rathi, Director, Arvind Exim



Tejinder Sodhi, CMD, Suprint Textiles



Vinod Mishra, GM, JC International



Jameel Naqash, Kashmir Valley Arts

Vikram Chitnis of Home Stop; Kashyap Vadapalli CMO & Business Head, Peppery.com; Sitaram Kumar VP – Home Centre India; Sonali Bhandari – Senior Executive Westside; Ashish Jhalani, Founder E-tailing India; and Karan Jethwani, Coordinator – Domestic Retail Promotions at Export Promotion Council For Handicrafts were present.

new look as we have edge of specialization in washes with our own washing unit, which helps us to keep exploring different and new kinds of washes. Buyers too noticed and appreciated the feel which is created by wash effects. We have used handloom and jute in some of our products," said **Vinod Mishra, GM** of the company. He also added that apart from regular buyers, some new buyers too visited the booth during the fair. Mainly catering to the European market, the company is also planning to start bag manufacturing as it feels that accessories are another avenue for growth.

Focusing mainly on cushions and bedding, **Kashmir Valley Arts, Srinagar** was very confident about its new collection,

of new developments and we are passionate about offering newness. We believe that buyers should have an urge to work with us, rather than we following the buyers for orders."

With most participants happy, the organizers too expressed satisfaction. "The show has become a one-stop sourcing destination for major international brands like Bloomingdales, Macys, K-Mart, Walmart, Pier 1, M&S, Woolworth, Karstadt, Peek and Cloppenburg, Carrefour, Hobby Lobby to name a few. Overall there were overseas volume buyers from more than 110 countries and over 4,700 trade visitors including International buyers, buying agents and domestic volume retailers registered at the event," shared **Rakesh Kumar, ED – EPCH.**

HFTW 2016 BEGINS THIS APRIL

Bringing the machinery & technology suppliers, buyers, consultants and home and floor furnishing Producers under one roof, Tech Communiqué Multi Media (TCMM), in association with MSBC (MSB Consulting), is set to organize the 2016 edition of Home Fashion Technology Week (HFTW). It will be a week-long event to be held in India from 4th to 8th April in the three hubs of home furnishing industry – *4th April: New Delhi, 6th April: Mumbai and 8th April: Karur.*

Manjeet Singh Bakshi, CEO, MSBC informed *Apparel Online*, "In India, there are many events for technology for garments and general textiles, but none of them focus on the new technology available in the global market for home and floor furnishings. HFTW 2016 will provide, for the first time ever, a platform that brings together the world's most influential textile machinery manufacturers and Indian home and floor furnishing producers alongside niche buyers to get familiar with the best technology available from around the world. This will certainly help manufacturers produce home and floor furnishing products in each and every region of North India, West India and South India with better in-line efficiency and 'Make in India' tag." Some of the confirmed participants for the event include names like Magetron, Italy; Espritech, Switzerland; Handsaeme, Belgium; Dohle, Germany; and Mennan Makina, Turkey, to mention a few.



New York & London Runways

A/W '16 Trends

After an endless marathon of shows and presentations at New York and London Fashion Week, we are looking back at the common threads connecting these collections. While there were some recurring elements from the spring 2016 shows, the popular off-the-shoulder silhouette for instance, others felt more unique to this season, like the extra-long sleeves. Shiny fabrics were seen on the runways, especially lurex and velvet; coats were more dramatic and the silhouettes were creatively layered. Black was the rage at London, whereas pink was the chosen colour at New York.

Read on for the 7 most popular trends at the two fashion capitals...

Velvet Touch

Velvet is still a popular fabric on the runways of several designers as some turned to panelling and others displayed head-to-toe looks. The luxe fabric was seen on dresses and suiting, even on tracksuits in various colours – light and dark. This time around, the fabric got colourful, worked in the season's



Ralph Lauren



Prabal Gurung



Monse



Marc Jacobs

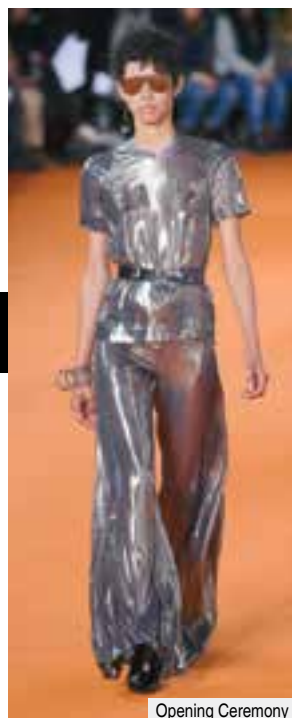
wine tones or shimmering in pale pinks, rich golds and dazzling teal. Phillip Lim gave velvet a refreshing spin by combining the fabric with a printed silk material, whereas Monse and M. Martin experimented with shades ranging from blush pink to olive green. Marc Jacobs went for a full gothic look, using a deep purple velvet, Prabal Gurung went with a bottle green shade for his patterned '50s dress and Ralph Lauren chose a slinky slip dress in deep red, displaying the fabric in a lighter, free flowing form, than usual.



Burberry



Felder Felder



Opening Ceremony



Tory Burch

High on Lurex

Head-to-toe lurex was witnessed at Opening Ceremony with a silver suit and a metallic rose pink skirt suit at Tory Burch. Sparkle was done with a subtler touch this season, though the results were just as eye-catching.

Metallic, sparkle, and even sequins are no longer reserved for eveningwear. London's designers were all about introducing a little shimmer to our daytime wardrobes. At New York, a midnight blue pleated lurex pencil skirt at 3.1 Phillip Lim stood out, the marsala toned midi-length sweater dress at Suno and the many sparkling turtlenecks layered under plunge neck dresses, pinafores and suits. London was all about the pretty shimmering dresses at Burberry with panelling on the fringes to the disco trousers at Felder Felder.

Colossal Coats

The classic winter coat gets a big overhaul for Autumn/Winter 2016, where the idea is – the bigger you go, the better. The comforter coat was quite famous on the runways of several designers, varying in colours and length. Marques' Almeida and Alexander McQueen models sported duvet-



Alexander McQueen



Felder Felder



Preen



Rodarte

inspired quilted evening coats in peach, while Christopher Kane's models carried off coats with fuzzy fur trims for their oversize toppers. Rodarte and Felder Felder amped up their coats by mixing various shades of red, white and black on their long-haired fur coat at the former's show and attaching fur only at the bottom half of a satin coat at the latter in sky blue. Preen went old school with an oversized teddy coat in blush pink, styled with a shimmering sequin dress underneath.

Pinafore Dressing

This summer, simply wearing a dress is a passé; it's all about layering it. Designers introduced creative layers, changing the dress into a jumper this season. The outcome is a sophisticated and contemporary version of a tunic dress. Tibi put together a black satin dress on a blue velvet high-neck top, Oscar



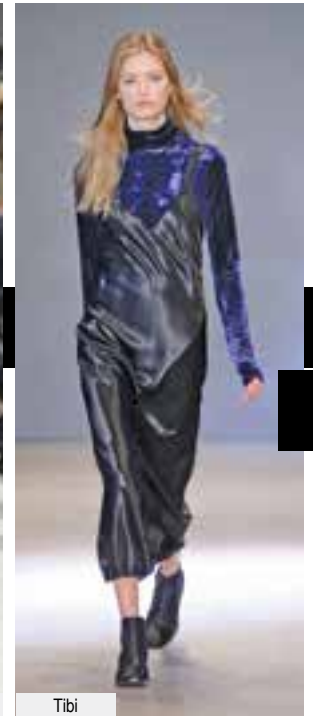
Novis



Oscar de la Renta



Proenza Schouler



Tibi

de la Renta used a printed grey and black tunic dress on a black top, Novis went with a white high-neck top and a grey tunic dress that boasted of a full knee-length skirt and thick straps. Milly presented a more risqué option of a short baby doll dress in grey on top of a visible shirtdress and Proenza Schouler also went for a high-neck top but their's came with cut-outs and a textured dress with a deep neck.



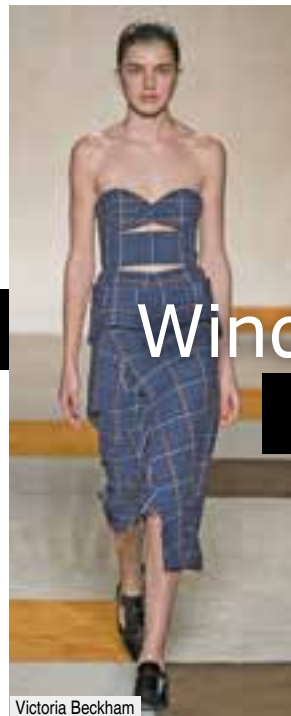
Jason Wu



Lela Rose



Rag & Bone



Victoria Beckham

Windowpane Checks

tunic dress and Victoria Beckham concocted a sensual strapless version of a similar kind with cut-outs. Lela Rose opted for a Rose Quartz and white checked overcoat for a subtle rendition of the trend and Edun showcased a windowpane checked sweater with a matching stole on it.

Moving on from the plaid trend, this season, designers pulled out all the stops with windowpane checks that were clean, graphical and bold without being fussy. Fall 2016s windowpane checks were worked into sporty pieces, outerwear, accessories and dresses. A majority of the collections opted for darker shades like black and ink blue for the base and introduced colour through the checks. Rag & Bone went with oversized checks and played with the print's positioning in layered looks, Jason Wu worked the pattern on his



Alexander Wang



Marc Jacobs



Narciso Rodriguez



Rodarte

Black Magic

characteristic of the trend. The other designers kept it comparatively simpler with Narciso Rodriguez using a loose oversized knit on top of a black leather skirt with a side slit, Rodarte opting for a leather trench coat on detailed fishnet stockings and The Row picking a sleek textured coat in black.

The '90s influence seeped into collections, this fall, with New York designers going for a gothic look and London designers opting for all-black looks. The collections included countless looks celebrating noir-laden glamour and a penchant for punk. Marc Jacobs' entire collection revolved around the theme and it reflected on the oversized fur coats that boasted on plumage detailing and styling of the models. Alexander Wang also used layering for his looks with short leather dresses, jackets and choker necklaces, which are

Fall Patchwork

Patchwork was a popular trend, this fall, with all the fur coats that stood out in the crowd including the same technique. Calvin Klein was one of the few designers who kept it neat and easy by colour coding their fur patches for each panel of the coat. Marc Jacobs used different types of fur on his coats that made them



Calvin Klein



Marc Jacobs



Oscar de la Renta



Proenza Schouler

look larger-than-life and layered; Coach used different shades of fur on the coat from top to bottom at random. Proenza Schouler's coats were different from the rest since the fur patches were stitched in to give the coats a sleeker look; and it was only they who threw in a cow print fur into the mix too. Oscar de la Renta presented a fascinating piece too by mixing stitched in mink fur in burnt maroon and patches of black fox fur amalgamated in several places.

Velvet Velour!

— This '90s 'rock star' makes a groundbreaking comeback in 2016...



Velvet is an unfriendly and unforgiving fabric as it demands a lot from the wearer and the maker. Yet, it can pack a sartorial punch if worn to perfection. Velvet reigned the '90s with all its glory, and today many designers have again made velvet their muse for Fall/Winter 2016 collections. From London Fashion Week to the glittering runways of Milan and Paris, velvet enthralled audiences across the world. Embroidered, treated, printed and patched, Velvet was all over the runways and is being seen as a major fashion trend. Adapting the trend in the collections, exporters in India, have distinctive approach towards this fabric. Some think of it as an influential trend, whereas some feel it to be just a fad...

Having made appearances at Alexander Wang, Valentino, Lanvin, and Christopher Kane, velvet is one noticeable fabric that has taken over the autumn '16 aesthetics, and it's taking over the inventory at majority of favourite retail stores too. Already big with leading retailers like Zara, J.Crew, Net-A-Porter, Topshop and Pixie Market, velvet is increasingly seeping into even smaller stores. The most raging styles in velvet range from cut-outs, embossed detailing and embellishments to burnout patterns, incorporated in cocktail dresses, blazers and pants with very little detailing to let the imperial fabric stand out on its own. At the ongoing fall 2016 runways, designers gave a distinct velvet touch to their collections which just could not be missed. From casual pants to eveningwear glamour, the fabric makes a strong comeback for the upcoming season. **Avinash Wanvari, MD, Khushi Tex**, discussing about velvet avers, "Velvet has continued to be a major hit in the home furnishing segment, but had taken a backseat as far as apparels are concerned. But since the last two fall seasons, it seems to be '90s all over again."

Velvet is hardly a new trend, but this season, designers gave the rich fabric a nice little update on the runways. At Monse, Oscar de la Renta alums Laura Kim and Fernando Garcia sent down a beautifully draped pink velvet dress, while M. Martin designers Jennifer Noyes and Alex Gilbert gave their velvet a metallic sheen via an olive green jumpsuit. But for those who prefer classic black, Adam Selman, Derek Lam and LaQuan Smith sent down the catwalk appealing versions of the black velvet dress for fall 2016. **Arvinder Singh Sawhney, Director, Sawhney Brothers**, explaining about velvet's comeback said, "Velvet has been given a fresh new identity as different textures are explored to create gripping surfaces. Destined as a plush fabric, this year, it was rendered a more delicate and ornamental state of being by employing various innovative insertions – shearing, adding appliqué, laser cutting, lacing, needle punch destruction and checkerboard weaves."

SEASON'S FAVOURITES INCLUDE DEEP DARK COLOUR TONES LIKE ROYAL BLUE, BURGUNDY, BLACK AND GREEN ON PANTS, JACKETS, SKIRTS, DRESSY SILHOUETTES AND EVEN SHOES FOR A PLEASANT CHANGE

Inspiring creativity, in his fall 2016 collection, Jason Wu moved his women in a more streetwear direction with loose and youthful shapes. Wu used velvet on slinky separates for gamine chic. Ralph Lauren took on the trend with impressive gowns in colourful hues. Emilio de la Morena's historically significant dresses that flaunted lingering tassels and magical stripes lifted the Victorian era from the pages of history books and onto the contemporary stage. Other designers who managed to pack velvet in and out with their designs were Christopher Kane, Antonio Marras (floral and stripes) and Givenchy (velvet and lace-panelled). Lanvin's one-sleeved dress trimmed in velvet proved to be a winner as did Chloe's strapless dress festered with many-a-half-moon.

Season's favourites include deep dark colour tones like royal blue, burgundy, black and green on pants, jackets, skirts, dressy silhouettes and even shoes for a pleasant change. Marc Jacobs' collection was all about eclectic style—calling back looks from previous seasons as well as looking to the future, finished with slouchy velvet dress serving gothic vibes. Even Giorgio Armani's collection concluded with a smattering of starry evening looks, black velvet sprinkled with crystals and laser-cut into floral lace, that will make it to a red carpet in the very near future. Trussardi also hopped on the velvet bandwagon designing a simple suit paired with knee-high riding boots. **Sukesh Kumar Vij, MD, Asian Apparels**, explaining about his experimentation with velvet says, "Wide trousers, flowing dresses, and capes are some of the examples which prove the fact that this time crushed velvet doesn't just belong to the tracksuit category."

As it is all about the luxury and indulgence with rich velvets taking the lead, the collections reflect opulence. The lush textile was printed, embroidered, slashed, ripped, patched and panelled to make its way towards the high-fashion segment. Balmain showcased sheer gowns garnished all over with sparsely placed patches of velvets complete with tinkling beads. Tanya Tailor chose the shades of purple and covered the



Jil Sander



Monse



Ralph Lauren

entire silhouette's surface with soft flower bunch patterns. **Gagan Singh, Partner, United threads** agrees that velvet is growing and being used much more than it was in previous seasons. "Velvet panels as trims are the most popular value-added with my overseas clients today," he says.

In an interesting adaption, velvet appearing to be prints from afar was attached in multiple textural dimensions through layers of denim as the 3-dimensional nature of the surface lent an unrivalled richness and opulence to the clothes, in deep and raw blues and blacks, mid-casts and pale baby shades. Innovative designs also included the fuzzy fabric being attached through flocking or as a patch appliqué for an interesting interplay of textures. Dolce & Gabbana used velvet appliqué, spread over a coat in an intricate floral pattern, whereas Derek Lam flock printed the textured motif onto a skirt. A rather colourful approach was taken by Valentino with velvet being sewn in florals to depict his fairy tale theme while, Alexander McQueen used the fabric as a leaf motif with intricate fur detailing. A reinvention of the fabric on others can be experimented, with as a print imitation or simply as surface ornamentation.

THE MOST RAGING STYLES IN VELVET RANGE FROM CUT-OUTS, EMBOSSED DETAILING AND EMBELLISHMENTS TO BURNOUT PATTERNS, INCORPORATED IN COCKTAIL DRESSES, BLAZERS AND PANTS WITH VERY LITTLE DETAILING TO LET THE IMPERIAL FABRIC STAND OUT ON ITS OWN.

FASHION FILE



TRACK STAR

Sporty chic enjoyed its over-extended stay for 3 years and now athleisure seems to be replacing the trend slowly yet completely. But menswear designers went a completely different route by offering sport suits that resemble the '80s athletic wear trend. The palette swung between blues, reds and greens – all in primary shades – Kenzo sent out models dressed in tracksuits with graphic prints on the jacket, Wales Bonner used surface ornamentation and his jacket flaunted of a turtle-neck, Christopher Shannon used dual button down detailing on his jackets and trackpants. Gucci mixed a bit of '70s interiors to his version with an inception print, whereas Burberry's differential factor was brought in with a fully sequined red jacket worn with denims.

VALENTINO REPORTS US \$ 1 BILLION EARNINGS

The luxury brand seems to have beaten their own financial forecast by drawing in revenues of over US \$ 1 billion in 2015, up a massive 48 per cent from 2014. Citing accessories and the increasing interest in the menswear category as the major contributors for this huge jump, CEO Stefano Sassi added that “currencies helped and we also added 30 boutiques last year”. He also heaped praise on creative directors Maria Grazia Chiuri and Pierpaolo Piccioli for their contribution to the ‘exceptional year’ that saw the brand reach its target two years early. Following the announcement, Sassi also addressed the IPO rumours that have been swirling since last December. “There will be no IPO before 2017,” reiterated Sassi, confirming, “No date had ever been forecast.”

BADGLEY MISCHKA DESIGNERS RECLAIM BRAND NAME

Former owners Iconix Brand Group bought the brand for US \$ 16 million in cash over a decade ago, but the original owners Mark Badgley and James Mischka have finally bought back the rights of their label that they started 27 years ago. The deal is a joint venture with footwear licensee Titan Industries Inc. and apparel licensee MJCLK LLC. “We have had a productive 11 years working with the Iconix team to build Badgley Mischka from its red-carpet origins to a full lifestyle luxury brand,” Badgley said. While his co-founder and partner added, “It’s really been our quest to own the brand again and control all the nuances that go into a business today. We missed a lot of those things and in making certain decisions.” The brand has expanded – with a return to jewellery and fragrance, and the addition of more retail stores.

ASOS LAUNCHES AFFORDABLE BRIDAL COLLECTION

The online fashion store Asos has created an inexpensive bridal collection which has been launched on their website recently. Its design director Vanessa Spence said, there is something for everyone. “Our designers have trawled vintage archives to find a bridal outfit for every customer type and considered the different types of weddings,” she explained. The bridal collection not only offers traditional dresses, but also more alternative pieces like the caped jumpsuit and separates which are perfect for the modern bride. The price points too are incredibly affordable. Talk of price points naturally leads to questions about quality but, as Spence insists, no corners have been cut in creating the collection from which a total look won’t exceed the £ 400 mark.

COLOUR STORY A/W 2016-17 BY FASHION FORWARD TRENDS



PANTONE 16-1349 TPX

PANTONE 18-4330 TPX

PANTONE 19-3536 TPX

PANTONE 16-4535 TPX

PANTONE 15-5421 TPX

AMAZON GOES LIVE WITH FIRST DAILY SHOW STYLE CODE LIVE!

Amazon is set to debut a daily show dedicated to fashion and beauty, called Style Code Live. This 30-minute programme will give a new twist to the e-commerce site's marketing strategy. The show, which is expected to shake the online retail market, will be live-streamed with the help of Amazon's video streaming technology. The show's hosts, Lyndsey Rodrigues (MTV's 'Total Request Live'), Rachel Smith (ABC News correspondent for 'Good Morning America'), and Frankie Grande (CBS's 'Big Brother 16'), along with a rotating lineup of guests, will offer viewers tips on beauty and fashion. Not only will the show give updates on beauty and fashion, it will also see a carousel of products beneath the live video player, updating dynamically, to lead viewers to products on Amazon as they're discussed during each episode. As a special feature, viewers will be able to chat with the hosts during the show.



FASHION MONTH ENDS WITH LOUIS VUITTON & MIU MIU COLLECTION

As the fashion month comes to an end, Louis Vuitton's strong-statement looks and Miu Miu's pretty-freezing looks bid adieu. While Nicolas' silver set got everyone talking, French luxury label Louis Vuitton wrapped up the Paris Fashion Week with its sporty, edgy looks for the next Winter. The show also offered plenty of leather for outerwear, trousers and dresses. Miuccia Prada's Fall Miu Miu show displayed the designer's mastery of the unorthodox mix in assemblages that felt like a departure for Miu Miu. The women pulled off masculine silhouettes in the elegant collection, in gentleman's jean jackets and elegant utility pockets, cut short, which obviously stood out in an incredibly denim saturated market. Prada also pulled a new, sexy, curvy representation in the resplendent forms of Adriana Lima and Lara Stone.



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PLAYFUL EMBELLISHMENTS

SPICE UP COLLECTIONS FOR FALL



Embellishments are apparently playful for fall 2016. The cutest and most naive forms that one can imagine are being seen on the collections of the most serious designers. The ongoing fall 2016 runways saw designers experimenting with playful embellishments, ranging from the kitschy to the elegant. Driven by innovation to adorn a piece of textile product with style and designer look, varied forms that we normally visualize in kids collections were seen showing prevalence in the product development segment as value-add essentials. Ruling the fashion shows and retail space already, these playful value-add accessories are predicted to continue surprising the world by their innovative design concepts and applications in the upcoming seasons as well...



Alexander Lewis



Anyah



Emillaw

Taking the youthful approach to fashion, it was no surprise that for fall, designers played with light-hearted embellishments, from fruit-motif badges to pretty floral appliqués. Embellishments served as the focal point, with silhouettes and colour-ways revolving around it. Marc Jacobs, for example, gave extra pizzazz via stars, ladybugs, safety pins and more. Whereas, Rochas added a crystal eye design on its ladylike satin silhouette, which provided just the right amount of visual interest without going over-the-top. Both Fendi and O Jour by Giorgia Caovilla used floral treatments on their designs. While Fendi's oversized flowers gave its collection a mod spin, Caovilla's shrunken flowers were a more modern take on the classic embellishment. Alexander Lewis collaborated with the artist Flavie Audi, who makes sculptures of metal and glass, to create an interesting play of light within her work. Inspired from the properties of light, its wavelike form, the way it refracts through prisms, its reflection glimmers and splits across the surface of things, Lewis had a good season. Crystal honchos Swarovski were behind the mirror forms creating the playful surface.

Designers developed cloud-like prints and patterned jacquards, galactic-looking prints that magnified reflective reactions. There were also crystal-dappled sheer silks, frequently found layered with other, more plainspoken materials such as shirting pinstripe, that recalled the reaction prints' starry night sky effect. Blue was the key colour in these playful embellishments. House of Holland's head-fry colourful cactus-print shirtdresses, nerd-chic pulled-high sports socks, queasy abstract jacquards and you-really-shouldn't-mix-those colour combinations including lime green and orange added to the maximalist overdose.

Bringing back the times of playful patching over torn places, designers used embroidered, printed and material-

form patches on sheers and heavyweight materials. Back in our single-digit prime, not only did we wear cartoon- and ruffle-adorned anything, we also had our mother's closet to sneak into, where we'd casually slip into her way-too-big kitten heels. But after looking at some of this season's whimsical trends one can't help but get reminded of their youth. From art-project-inspired embellishments to sparkles – on everything – these playful, nostalgia-inducing pieces are not taking themselves too seriously. And what better time to rev up the fun and proactively ward off seasonal blues than now...?

Fairytale Sparkle

If years of building a timeless 'adult' wardrobe robbed your closet of its fun, spontaneous spirit, consider this season's obsession with sparkly pieces permission to revive it. In addition to the usual holiday party garb, glimmering styles are making their way into the regular rotation, from twinkling turtlenecks to shimmery ankle socks. But it's the styles that fully embrace the Studio-54-meets-storybook-princess vibe that have us getting on board with seeing our own reflection in our clothes, like gold pleated maxis, starburst earrings, and Miu Miu's whimsical, glitter-packed pumps. "Yes, childlike forms are getting popular with buyers. Now butterflies, rabbits and flower bunches have got lifted from the pyjamas and are garnished all over mainstream styles," says Vivek Khandelwal, Partner, Patterns India.

Florescent Fuzz

While shearling and faux fur are cold-weather standbys, we typically cuddle up to them in their neutral-hued variety. But this season, designers lit up the runways with fuzzy accents in an assortment of bright, bold shades. Pawan Kumar, Director, Pawan Exports, discussing about the neon colour pops said, "We can see that the fluorescents and neon are on their way out,

but are not completely wiped off. We are able to see neon as accents in varied shapes which are definitely unconventional." It may seem intimidating to work such a fierce texture into your wardrobe – especially in Day-Glo colours that remind us of our neon troll dolls – but if Giorgio Armani, MSGM, and Mara Hoffman can do it, the world certainly wants it. Ease into the trend with smaller accessories, like this blood-orange Coach bag and electric fluff heel to counter winter's dark palette.

Cotton-Candy Hues

Rich pastels like baby blue and pale pink send us right down the memory lane to when our most prized possession was a pair of pink ballet slippers. These dreamy colours offer an easy way to have fun with your look, especially if you pair them up with unexpected primary shades. A pale-blue wrap duster coat contrasts gorgeously with saturated red gloves, stud detailing and a pink bow purse. Ashish Jain, Director, East West Traders, corroborating with the growing cotton candy colour craziness said, "Playful frills and thread works are most favourites when done in muted pastels."

Arts & Crafts Embellishments

Nothing stirs up nostalgia like haphazardly placed jewel accents. Going back to 2013 when putting rhinestones on everything made absolute sense, this time, you can find the chromatic embellishments expertly attached on the toes of going-out heels, shoulders of duster coats, blouses, skirts and more. With strategic placements, the approach is just the right dose of fun without veering into gaudy grandma territory. "Crafty embellishments don't only mean traditional, crafty also means making forms using the craft, therefore, we are witnessing a lot of modern kid's inspired patterns being developed by batik, tie & dye etc. and are getting incorporated in modern silhouettes," said Abhay Sadh, Director, Batik India.

ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY OR PRODUCTIVITY ENHANCEMENT, NOT CIRCUMSCRIBED ONLY TO 'BIG NAMES'

How many apparel manufacturers in India have RFID (Radio-Frequency Identification)...? Only a few, and that too mostly big export houses or large domestic brands having own systematic manufacturing. But now medium-size companies are also investing in this technology. Indore-based Papcon Indore is most probably the first apparel manufacturer in Madhya Pradesh adopting the same technology. The company, manufacturing garments for many top Indian companies like Arvind, Madura etc., is geared up to invest in these monitoring systems.

Ajay Pasari, young Director of Papcon Indore talking to *Apparel Online* shared, "We are already spending Rs. 60 to 70 lakh to manage our production monitoring/data. So investing US \$ 0.30 million (Rs. 2 crore) in RFID and Bar Coding is in fact a saving for us; it will also help us to control overall systems in our company." Papcon has recently added 300 stitching machines with dry head and other attachments, taking the total count to 700 machines. The company has recently entered into the export business and started working with Splash (Dubai). Ajay personally has interest in technology and is amongst the few garment manufacturers of Indore who regularly visit technology fairs.

On the other hand, Sangli in Maharashtra is a growing hub for garmenting, where **Sandip Maulik, Proprietor, Shreyas Creations** is manufacturing 800 shirts per day on 100 stitching machines for Pantaloon, focusing on productivity enhancement with the help of IIGM. "We are 8 years old firm and continuously improving our system. With the help of attachments and some advanced models, we are targeting 2,000 pieces per day and are confident of achieving the goal," said Sandip. The company is growing at a good speed and is expecting 30 per cent growth in the next fiscal. Also manufacturing for its own brand 'Esimio', the company has invested Rs. 25 lakh in its unit in recent years.

Earlier the factory was using bundle system but now it is moving towards assembly line production. Simultaneously, it has also controlled many loopholes in overall manufacturing. "Still our region is facing lack of talented people at middle-level management which is a big hurdle. We welcome professionals who can grow with us," he concluded.



Ajay Pasari, Director, Papcon Indore



Sandip Maulik, Proprietor, Shreyas Creations

Two-decade old **Motherland Garments**, a known name in garment processing, having operations in four locations in Bangalore and Chennai, is also coming up with a new unit in Andhra Pradesh. With an investment of US \$ 1.23 million (Rs. 8 crore), this new unit which is spread over almost 10 acres is expected to be operational in the next fiscal. The company, initiated by three friends (all three post-graduates in Textile Chemistry), is also changing its strategy to get more value. **A J Pandian, MD;** and **G. Ramesh Kanna** and **SA Selvamani**, both Directors of the company informed *Apparel Online* of the same. "With new plant and changed strategy we are expecting almost double business. Our target is to double turnover by doing almost half the number of pieces we are doing today. We will

MOTHERLAND GARMENTS COMING UP WITH NEW UNIT



(L-R) A J Pandian, MD with SA Selvamani and G. Ramesh Kanna, both Directors of Motherland Garments

focus on more value, more new kinds of finishes and other specializations rather than volume to achieve our target," they shared. Currently, handling a total of 70,000 garments per day the company claims to be fully compliant and approved by Mothercare, C&A and few other buyers. Processing services are being offered to many big export houses, as well as to domestic giants like Arvind and Madura.

Motherland Garments has also improved on technical front, as earlier it was using side loading equipment but now bigger capacity front loading equipments is being used which saves water and power as well as chemicals. Its result, quality wise are even better. "We have our own R&D facility where we develop plenty of things be it any kind of product; 25 per cent of the total processing of the company is for denim," said Pandian. Commenting on market situation he shared that earlier more orders were coming from exporters but now domestic brands are placing more orders with them, however the focus is still more on working with exporters.

CHEER SAGAR RECEIVES NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY & INNOVATION AWARD

Jaipur-based garment export house Cheer Sagar has once again received the National Productivity & Innovation Award in the Textile and Garment Sector for the year 2014-15. The award, presented by Union Minister of MSME Kalraj Mishra, was received by **Arnav Poddar** and **Tanushree Poddar** on behalf of Cheer Sagar. Established in 1985, Cheer Sagar exports women's fashion wear, in both woven and knits categories, to consumers across Japan, Europe, South America and several other countries.

The company, having in-house manufacturing facility with the setup of 850 machines, has invested heavily in state-of-the-art machinery to achieve the production capacity of 2,50,000 units per month. With a turnover of US \$ 8.25 million (approx. Rs. 49.50 crore) per annum, the company is among the more progressive exporters in



The award, presented by Union Minister of MSME Kalraj Mishra, was received by Arnav Poddar and Tanushree Poddar

Jaipur. Until now, Cheer Sagar has received several awards in various categories. Going forward, it has plans for higher investments for training and development as well as purchase of machinery and equipment, as it constantly looks to remodel itself to suit the prevalent global business and fashion environment. The company is also holding a platinum

certificate of compliance from WRAP and is BSCI certified.

National Productivity & Innovation Award scheme is to identify and bring forth innovative enterprises in six MSME (Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises) sectors, viz. Electronics & Computer Hardware, Leather Products, Light Electrical, Sports Goods, Textiles & Garments, and Toy Industry.

LUDHIANA'S 'MASTER PLAN' DISRUPTS BUSINESS PLANS

As per the Master Plan of Ludhiana, introduced by State Government of Punjab, areas like Shivpuri, Haibowal, Sunder Nagar, Kundan Puri and Chander Nagar, among others have been declared 'residential'. This has irked apparel manufacturers of the city who have units in these areas. The owners are now demanding the Government to give their units 'Green Category Status' and other such facilities. In this context, **Sandeep Salwan, President, Apparel Manufacturers' Association (AMA)** said, "Though there are thousands of hosiery and garment units in areas like Kundan Puri and Shivpuri, among others, these areas have been marked as 'residential' in the Master Plan. Because of this we can't apply for a new power connection or load extension.

CMAI WANTS WITHDRAWAL OF EXCISE DUTY ON BRANDED RMG

Clothing Manufacturers Association of India (CMAI) has urged the Union Government to withdraw excise duty on branded readymade garments and continue the optional duty regime that applies currently, until GST is introduced. Addressing a seminar on 'Excise

Duty on Branded Readymade Garments', **CMAI President Rahul Mehta** said, "Once GST is introduced, the whole value chain will be covered under duty and traceability; compliance too will improve tremendously and implementation problems will also ease considerably."

He added, "We have in the past pointed out time and again that the very task of collecting this excise duty from the highly dispersed and mostly tiny units in the garment sector would be a formidable one for the Government, especially when the rest of the value chain remains exempted, and therefore traceability is a serious issue. The large number of small and tiny units in the sector will also find it impossible to follow the procedures involved. The result will be that evaders will prosper and compliant units will suffer... The revenue for the Government from this decision will be negligible, whereas problems that it would create for the industry will be huge," Mehta maintained. Introducing the Rs. 1,000 cut-off price point for applicability of excise duty, will

further complicate the already shaky situation.

CMAI had organized the seminar to address these fears among industry players and to educate them about the various aspects of the excise duty. The event also saw participation of **Shailesh Sheth, Advocate** and an Indirect Tax Practitioner, who was invited as a key note speaker. He stated, "There has been an all-round confusion and panic among the industry due to this sudden re-imposition of excise duty." He further pointed out that the tariff value for garments brought under the levy has been raised from 30 per cent to 60 per cent of RSP. While the benefit of small-scale exemption of Rs. 1.50 crore has been extended to the industry, it has been restricted to Rs 12.5 lakh for March 2016, he concluded.



Advocate Shailesh Sheth addressing the audience; (seen L to R) Pravin Gala, Prashant Shah, Rajesh Masand and Rahul Mehta

AEPC CHAIRMAN JUSTIFIES VICE-CHAIRMAN ELECTION PROCESS

Election for the post of Vice-Chairman, AEPC (Apparel Export Promotion Council), which is to be held from March 23 to 25, seems to have become a cause for dissension within the industry. Lalit Gulati (Modelama Exports, Gurgaon), and HKL Magu, Jyoti Apparels, Delhi (both Executive Committee Members) have submitted their offer to contest the election for the post. However, **Puneet Kumar, IAS, Secretary General, AEPC** has said that “in the best of my knowledge, these two candidates in fray for the post of Vice-Chairman, AEPC disqualify to contest.” In response **Ashok G Rajani, Chairman, AEPC** has justified the move.

In his letter on March 4, to Ashok G Rajani, Chairman, AEPC, Puneet Kumar has raised certain questions about the election of Vice Chairman and emergent meeting of EC, held in Mumbai on short notice. He stated that HKL Magu continued as senior Vice-Chairman (Northern Region) till December 2013, while Lalit Gulati continued as Vice-Chairman (Eastern Region) till December 2015, that is to say, that both of them have been Vice-Chairmen of the AEPC in the recent past, and have not completed the minimum mandatory period of 4 years as required under Para 2.92 (b) of the Handbook of Procedures, as contained in the Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) 2015-20, as on date of filing nomination in February 2016.

In his reply, Ashok G Rajani has pointed out that an urgent meeting may be convened at the discretion of the Chairman, with only a 72-hour’ notice. On compliance with Para 2.92 (b) of Handbook of Procedures, as contained in the Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) 2015-20 and in the process of the present election of Vice-Chairman through e-voting, he added, “I would like to bring to your notice that Item No. – C has already been taken up by the Executive Committee in its meeting held on March 8, 2016.” In his letter, he further wrote that it is clear from the Handbook that the Para under contention only provides the criteria for tenure of post of elected head, i.e. Chairman or the President and Vice-Chairman or the Vice-President and that it shall not be more than two years.

‘HAPPENING HARYANA’ ATTRACTS GOOD INVESTMENT; TEXTILE PARK IN THE OFFING

‘Happening Haryana: Global Investor Summit 2016’ held in Gurgaon, Haryana, generated much interest among the investors present from the textile and apparel sector of the country. 15 proposals in regards to textile/apparel industry with the MoUs, valuing around US \$ 63 million (Rs. 410 crore) and expected employment potential of 6,067, were presented. Moreover, **Santosh Kumar Gangwar, the Minister of State (I/C), Ministry of Textiles**, announced the establishment of a textile park in the state at a cost of US \$ 28 million (Rs. 181 crore), and informed that the Government of India will provide US \$ 6 million (Rs. 40 crore) subsidy for the park. The state already has many garment companies that employ large number of workers; *Apparel Online* has been propagating that these factories too should be given the privileges granted to apparel parks as motivation to expand and generate more employment opportunities in line with the prime purpose of setting up of apparel parks.

The Minister mentioned that the apparel sector of Haryana is growing at a rate of 25 per cent and if the sector keeps on working to its full potential then the Central Government will support it completely to be more competitive and overcome its hurdles. Gangwar suggested that the State Government must come up with new policies – to make the sector more ‘automated’; increase production of technical textiles; and bring in more power looms in the state. Besides the Textile Park, it was announced that an incubation centre would also be set up in Haryana with an investment of around US \$ 2 million (Rs. 14 crore) for the skill development of the youth.

Enthused by the commitments, IKEA inked a deal with the State Government of Haryana to open its stores and make an investment of US \$ 308 million (Rs. 2,000 crore) in the state. The IKEA investment will employ about 1,000 workers directly and engage around 3,000 more for providing services such as furniture assembly, delivery services among others. Walmart India also announced investment of US \$ 77 million (Rs. 500 crore).

Many other industry professionals were also present at the summit who not only talked about the growth of textile and apparel sector in Haryana but also highlighted the issues that the industry is facing. Elaborating on this, **Gautam Nair, Managing Director, Matrix Clothing** said, “The Haryana Government should have a separate schedule for minimum wages. It should be more facilitating and less regulatory, and be ready to invest in housing for workers.” Adding more to the point, **Nidhi Dua, Country Manager, Marks & Spencer** averred, “The Government should initiate steps to improve labour conditions and build residences for these workers. It should put emphasis on building industrial parks where large factories may be accommodated – bringing economies of scale.”

Hemant Bharatram, MD, DCM Textiles said, “The Haryana Government should keep electricity and wage costs competitive. Plus, it should discuss Government notifications with industries and seek their feedback, before implementation. **Rina Dhaka, fashion designer** was of the opinion that more design and skill institutes should be set up in the state.



**REVIEW
GTE 2016**

VISITORS FROM EXPORT AND DOMESTIC SEGMENTS LOOKING FOR 'VALUE' TECHNOLOGY

Celebrating 15 years of upraising the industry on latest technologies, Garment Technology Expo, or GTE as it is popularly known, has reconfirmed its position as a trendsetter for the Indian apparel industry especially for North India as many medium-level exporters as well as manufacturers of the domestic market made a beeline to the event to see what 'new' technology suppliers had to offer. A big boost to the event was the Pan-India visitation, be it from Delhi-NCR, remote areas of Uttaranchal, Rajasthan or from the upcoming belts around Kolkata. While the new and smaller visitors were very happy with the displays, few technology experts and regular visitors of technology fairs were disappointed at not seeing anything really different, as their expectations from the fair were much higher compared to other visitors.

Today, the leading technology providers in the industry have taken a historic turn as they are channelizing their forces to focus on automation. While Juki is aiming to cater to the Indian market with automats, TYPICAL launched for the first time its pattern sewing automats in the Indian market. Even in the cutting room, the sentiment is upbeat. Investments in the spreading room automation are becoming the norm and soon the cutting process will follow suite, expect the cutting room solution providers. The transformation, of course,

and ITC – that have already had their trust with quality through their export business. The lessons learnt are now being transferred to the domestic market business as the customer knows quality apparel and is willing to spend, understand the technology providers.

Visitors look for value

'Be Lean and Green' and catch the small but interesting development was the focus of many export houses who visited the show. **Sanjay Gulati**, MD, **Growel Impex**, Noida exploring



Sanjay Gulati (R), MD, Growel Impex with Viraf Turel, Managing Director, E.H. Turel & Co.



(L to R) Team CTA Apparels – Vishal Yadav, Technician; Laxman B. Shinde, GM – Quality; Rahul Malik, Senior VP – (Strategy & Product Development); Shashi Bhushan Jha, Quality Manager; and Satyabir Singh

comes across in the wake of rising labour costs, and the business moving out of China. The ripples of change do not just affect the shop floor though, as the focus on IT solutions is impressive. A distinguished development in point is the launch of YuniquePLM by Gerber for the Indian market.

A tangibly significant proactive approach towards adopting and understanding technology is coming from the domestic sector. The push however, as decoded by technology providers, comes from the fact that today the manufacturing for domestic market is done largely by big companies like Arvind, Madura

material handling/traceability systems at the event was of the opinion, "Further dollar depreciation and more systematic approach of Indian manufacturers should bring more orders to India in the coming days. To grab and successfully deliver these orders one should have to be lean and green."

Apart from few advance models in machines and technology there were some small but interesting development in the show that attracted visitors. "I have found a Chinese vendor who manufactures trimmer-cum-scissors suited just for this purpose and which will add value to my operations," shared

Textile Association of India (TAI), Delhi is very active in the Indian textile industry. **Vikas Bhargava, Vice Chairman** and **Rikhil Nagpal, Joint Secretary** of the association visited GTE 2016 and shared, "Textile companies are keen to invest in garmenting too, and they just need some support, motivation and proper guidance."

New firms or people who are less exposed to technology or machinery showcased at GTE, seemed excited as such large knowledge-sharing platforms are very rare in India. "This is my first ever visit to GTE and I am more than happy with the technology displayed here. I will try to come every year," said **Srinivas G., Lance Innovations, Hyderabad**, who has 40 machines at his factory.



(R-L) Sanjay Sethia, MD and Ravi Shanker, GM – Operations of Spectra Fashions at the booth of Turel Group



Pradeep Nahata, MD, Karni Exports with his son



(L to R) Anupam (Meenu Creation, Noida); Pawan Kumar, (Vamani Overseas, Faridabad); Harendra Kumar Tiwari (Production Manager, Open Hand, Delhi); Ashok Kumar (Manager – IE, Richa Global Exports); and Dhruv (Meenu Creation, Noida)

Animesh Saxena, CEO, Neetee Clothing, Gurgaon. He was also looking for upgrading the washing infrastructure at the factory.

Rahul Malik, Senior VP, (Strategy & Product Development), CTA Apparels, Noida, along with his team was busy exploring options in washing and value addition segment mainly. The company has plans to invest in digital printing and processing technology. Few exporters came to the event without any specific need or requirement and their only concern was finding 'something new' which their factories didn't have and can prove beneficial. **Pranab Mahajan, Director, Mahajan Overseas, Panipat** and a regular visitor of the fair echoed the same opinion, "As of now we don't require any specific machinery or technology but whatever we will find interesting, new and viable, we will adopt that." He also added that he did not find anything new or special which could impress him at this edition.

Few visitors exploring advanced technology were busy interacting with the technologist to understand the technology, like **Sanjay Sethia, MD** and **Ravi Shanker, GM – Operations of Spectra Fashions, Kolkata** who spent a good amount of time at the booth of Turel Group. "We have plans to adopt some very innovative technologies in future and GTE is a good platform in this regard," they said. On the other side, **Suresh Dureja, Director of Manufacturing, Roots Canada Ltd., Toronto (Canada)** was not too happy with the overall technology on display. "I was expecting a larger number of technology suppliers with specialized machines and machines for seam sealing. I have not seen any good machines for saddle stitch either. The exhibition should have more companies that offer really advance machines," he suggested. Roots Canada Ltd. is manufacturing leather jackets, bags and luggage.

GEAR (Garment Exporters Association of Rajasthan), Jaipur brought many garment exporters to GTE, **Pradeep Nahata, MD, Karni Exports** was also one of them. Sharing his experience, he said, "Though the exhibition is



Sachit Arora of Goji Berries, Ludhiana



Mayank Maheshwari, Krishna Sales

'satisfactory' as few developments in technology are worth exploring, there is nothing 'new' or 'totally different' which we can look at for the future.

Good visitation of technical teams

Groversons Apparel which is soon coming up with a new factory of 200 machines in Tronica city (Ghaziabad) is also working to adopt innovative cutting room solutions. **Jatindra Grover** and **Vineet Nagpal**, (both GM) of the company, were seen interacting with many technology suppliers at GTE. "We are ready to adopt technology that can save cost and increase productivity. Here at the fair we liked bonding process and mainly heat transfer printing solutions," they said. A group of industrial engineers, **Anupam and Dhruv of Meenu Creation, Noida; Pawan Kumar of Vamani Overseas, Faridabad; Harendra Kumar Tiwari, Production Manager, Open Hand, Delhi; and Ashok Kumar, Manager – IE, Richa Global Exports** explored various things. One of them was UBT in overlock machines. **Babul Singh, IE of Team Kiren, Noida** who was also seen at the fair with his big team shared, "Most of the machines displayed here had been already seen earlier, but one machine was interesting as it cuts the seam margins in overlock and gives a look of a flatlock,

especially in knitted garment."

Brijesh Kumar Singh Production Manager and Saurabh Srivastava, IE&PPC Manager, Blackberrys, Gurgaon informed, "We saw stitching machines which have their electric panel in-built, and monitoring system which counts the number of stitches the operator has done. It is something good." On the

other side **BP Trivedi, GM – Production and Devendar Kr.**

Upadhyay, Sr. Manager, Cantabil Retail India Ltd.,

were of the opinion that the fair was missing on packaging solutions, especially automatic folding.

Students and faculty of many institutes, like NIFT, Kasturba Institute of Technology (KIT), Delhi and GD Goenka University to name some, were seen at the GTE.

Value addition: Sublimation taking the lead

More than 50 visitors from Indore visited the show. Still dominating in kidswear segment, Indore is now moving towards sublimation printing as embroidery is on a downward trend. **Mayank Maheshwari of Krishna Sales, Indore** confirmed, "In last one year Indore has seen almost 10 installations of sublimation

and this number is going to be increased very soon, and in very good numbers." Krishna Sales has also appointed service engineers for sublimation and other allied technologies. Same is the case of Kolkata. **Sunil Agarwal of Shree Balaji Company, Kolkata**, offering more than one lakh pieces per month of ladies garments (Indo Western) informed, "There are 15 good fabricators in Kolkata doing sublimation printing and in coming years this number is going to increase. Even we are getting our sublimation done on job work." In fact, value addition is a segment which always attracts the visitors; laser cutting machines and advancement in multi-head embroidery are major attractions.

As the winter season is decreasing in India, heavy winter wear is no more a priority for manufacturers, especially those who are having specialization in these products. Therefore, they are now moving towards lighter weight products which can be used in less cold conditions. "Most of the woollen garments manufacturers have piled up stock from this season; so now focus is on lightweight winterwear. I am looking for the machines of the same which can save little cost also," shared **Sachit Arora of Goji Berries, Ludhiana**, offering 1,500 garments per day. Few domestic firms offering niche products are also adopting advance technology like **Vijay Kumar, AV Enterprises, Delhi**, offering dog sweaters/shoe & dog bed, rain coats, etc. informed, "From last three months I am looking for pattern sewer as I have some special requirements. I went to China also for this and now I got the pattern sewer which will serve my purpose completely."

The show also witnessed good mix of visitation from various textile associations, faculty of fashion/textile colleges, NGOs working in garment sector, training institutes, few medium-level retailers planning to enter in garment manufacturing, consultants, Government officials, etc.

TRADE SNIPS

SRI LANKA'S TEXTILE EXPORTS REGISTERS 12.8% DECLINE IN DECEMBER 2015

The export earnings of Sri Lanka from its textile and garment sector that contributes nearly 48% to its total export revenue declined for the third consecutive month by 12.8% in December 2015, while its overall exports fell by 18.7%, year-on-year, to US \$ 817 million. This figure is mostly a reflection of its low exports to both the EU and USA markets. Garment exports to non-traditional markets like Canada, China and UAE have, however, increased by 1.7% year-on-year, during the month.

These figures were released by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka in its recent release of External Sector Performance statistics for December 2015. The overall trade performance for the year decreased by 5.6% to US \$ 10,505 million, owing to subdued global demand and lower commodity prices. The leading markets for merchandise exports of Sri Lanka during 2015 continued to be the US, UK, India, Germany and Italy, accounting for about 51% of total exports.

BANGLADESH EXPORTS UP 13.6% IN FEBRUARY 2016: EPB

In Bangladesh, export of garments, comprising knitwear and woven items, totalled US \$ 18.13 billion in July-February, up 9.5% from a year earlier. According to the Export Promotion Bureau, Bangladesh's exports rose 13.6% in February from a year earlier to US \$ 2.85 billion, boosted by stronger sales of garments.

US Import Analysis – January 2016

Challenges aplenty for US retail in 2016... Apparel imports in first month registers good growth; volumes up 6.50%, values increase 1.64%

In its annual retail survey – US Total Retail 2016 Survey – Research & Consultancy firm PwC, has evaluated six key findings that will determine the way forward for retail in the US during the year. In a very competitive environment, the ‘race for relevance’ as the firm calls it, is getting more challenging and it is the understanding of the consumer, his attitude and engagement with the retailers that is going to keep the retailers afloat. A brief on the key findings are as below:

GLOBAL TRENDS SET A HIGH BAR FOR US MOBILE COMMERCE

Only 26% of US shoppers say their mobile phone will become their main purchasing tool in the future. One reason for the lag in US mobile purchasing is the lack of convenient mobile purchasing options, such as ‘buy’ buttons and mobile wallets, commonly used in China, which allow consumers to move seamlessly between chatting about a product and buying it, all within a mobile app.

DIGITAL NATIVES LEAD THE MOBILE COMMERCE CHARGE

Born after 1980, digital natives grew up with technology at their fingertips – which makes them more facile with all things digital. No surprise then that ‘millennials’, aged 18-34, use their mobile device as a shopping tool far more than older shoppers. Almost 40% buy products online per month, while close to 30% shop online weekly.

ENTICE ME IN, THEN KEEP ME INTERESTED SO I'LL STAY

Respondents in the survey said the top two factors that enhance their in-store shopping experience are ease of checkout (46%) and sales associates with deep product knowledge (41%). The ability to check other store or online stock quickly, and fast, simple login for in-store WiFi, are desirable but rank lower than human interaction with knowledgeable associates.

BRAND TRUST REQUIRES CONTINUAL ATTENTION

The Total Retail Survey found that brand trust is among the top three

reasons consumers shop at their favourite retailers. PwC's analysis of 6,700 brands found that over the past 15 years, brands that are considered leaders by consumers have grown in value at nearly five times the rate of the average S&P 500 company.

HOW ONLINE SHOPPERS DEFINE VALUE

When it comes to online shopping, Americans value convenience above all else; 58% of our survey respondents say convenience is the main reason they shop online, with price a distant second at 32%. US shoppers ranked innovative delivery options high on the list of their favourite retailers; from crowd sourced

last-mile delivery or free shipping and returns – to curb-side pickup, or delivery within hours of ordering a product.

SOCIAL COMMERCE: THE POWER OF COMMUNITY

Consumers have an appetite for social commerce, fusion of online social communities with seamless purchasing capability. More than two-thirds of US respondents in our survey said social media influences their online shopping behaviour – slightly lower than global shoppers – ranking reviews and feedback their foremost activity at 40%, followed by browsing promotional offerings at 37%, and checking digital ads at 26%.

TOTAL US GLOBAL APPAREL IMPORTS — JANUARY 2016

Type of Apparel	January '15		January '16		% Change	
	Qty	Value	Qty	Value	Qty	Value
Cotton	950.41	3343.73	962.98	3259.20	1.32	-2.53
Wool	8.15	162.00	8.65	156.68	6.17	-3.29
MMF	1064.13	2902.09	1177.09	3064.87	10.62	5.61
Silk & Veg	27.17	119.74	34.45	153.67	26.76	28.33
Total	2049.86	6527.57	2183.17	6634.41	6.50	1.64

Qty & value in mn MF & US \$

TOTAL APPAREL EXPORTS TO THE US BY INDIA AND ITS COMPETITORS — JANUARY 2016

Countries	January '15		January '16		% Change	
	Qty	Value	Qty	Value	Qty	Value
India	85.61	306.61	86.67	314.86	1.25	2.69
Bangladesh	152.12	447.08	175.66	497.66	15.48	11.31
China	847.51	2352.76	943.29	2415.61	11.30	2.67
Pakistan	50.42	116.92	43.15	102.35	-14.43	-12.46
Sri Lanka	42.83	179.48	38.11	161.72	-11.02	-9.90
Vietnam	240.52	795.07	281.93	926.09	17.22	16.48

Qty & value in mn MF & US \$



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Dyed Acrylic Yarns
Fancy Yarns
Hand Knitting Yarns

Canada Apparel imports: January 2016
Slow Canadian market reflected in decline of value in apparel imports

The global economy is still struggling to generate stronger growth. Much of the continuing underperformance can be attributed to China's plan to eliminate overcapacity in many of its traditional industrial and manufacturing sectors as it transits to higher-valued production and service-related output; countries like Canada, are keeping monetary policy on hold in the current slow growth and low inflation environment...

- In the first month of 2016, total apparel import by Canada fell in value terms by (-) 2.30%. Yet, India witnessed good growth of 14.62% in export to Canada in the first month of the year. In knitted segment this growth was of 14.90% and woven it was of 14.42% (in value terms).
- Sri Lanka gained in its total exports by 2.76% in value terms, while it saw 14.24% growth in woven category, in knitted segment the country registered negative growth of (-) 5.96% (in value terms).
- Vietnam is also among the major apparel export countries that saw double digit growth in exports to Canada of 10.96%. In woven category it saw 7.20% growth, while in knitted segment it was 14.71% (in value). Overall in exporting to Canada, it is on 3rd rank in woven and 4th in knitted segment.
- Bangladesh, 2nd largest exporter to Canada in woven and 3rd in knitted category, registered 7.01% growth in exports in January 2016. Though its woven export increased by 1.99%, knitted export increased substantially by 15.63%.
- Among major exporters to the Canadian market, Pakistan lost by (-) 10.60% while export from China too fell by (-) 8.91%.

Import of cotton garments down; MMF products show growth

- Carrying on from the trend seen last year, cotton-based apparel imports to the US witnessed only 1.32% growth in quantity terms, but declined (-) 2.53% in value terms in the first month of 2016. MMF-based apparel on the other hand registered 10.62% increase in quantities and 5.61% gains in value terms during the same period.

Suits/ensembles show negative growth from Bangladesh

- In suits/ensembles, export to the US by Bangladesh showed negative growth. While the decline of (-) 76.62% was noticed in quantity, the value of exports decreased (-) 63.53% in value.

India sees growth in exports of ladies skirts in first month

- In the first month of 2016, import of ladies skirts by the US witnessed a big fall of (-) 17.05 % in quantity and (-) 14.59 % in value. Yet, playing to its strength India registered positive growth in value as well as in quantity terms. While there was growth of 7.52% in regards to quantity, the values increased 2.42% during the period.

Undergarments growth category for India

- Even as the import of undergarments, considered a very basic category, saw a downfall in the total imports by the US in the first month of the year with values declining (-) 4.66% and volumes falling (-) 3.37%, India's export of undergarments to the US noticed increase in quantity of 9.22% and value increase of 7.39%.

Ladies dresses from India show growth in values not volumes

- In first month of 2016, while the US witnessed 5.65% growth in value and 13.33% gains in quantity in the import of ladies dresses, India registered increase of 12.44% in terms of value, but saw decline in volumes by (-) 2.34%. Interpreted, it implies that more high-value dresses were exported in small quantities.

Bangladesh registers double digit growth in exports to the US

- Bangladesh has noticed double digit growth in exports to US at the starting of the year of 15.48% increase in quantities and 11.31% in value, Meanwhile, Indian apparel export to the US increased only 1.25% in quantities and 2.69% in value during the same month.

ITEM-WISE PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN TOTAL APPAREL IMPORTS BY US FROM INDIA AND BANGLADESH: JANUARY 2016 AS AGAINST JANUARY 2015

APPAREL TYPE	Total Imports by USA		Exports to USA							
			India				Bangladesh			
	Qty % Change	Value % Change	Qty Actual	Value Actual	Qty % Change	Value % Change	Qty Actual	Value Actual	Qty % Change	Value % Change
Babies Wear	-12.47	-14.57	671003	19.62	20.18	-6.01	1053198	16.58	-5.12	2.17
Foundation Garments	11.66	5.70	131139	8.41	21.93	5.83	325931	6.62	19.34	6.31
Jackets & Blazers	3.15	-1.53	30081	5.27	-17.80	-11.74	137733	18.86	4.26	0.22
Ladies Blouses	10.31	5.37	667357	50.07	-8.31	-4.18	223865	13.91	33.61	33.08
Ladies Dresses	13.33	5.65	376769	34.27	-2.34	12.44	147800	6.28	82.17	76.37
Ladies Skirts	-17.05	-14.59	81185	6.10	7.52	2.42	105505	4.22	-16.30	-7.62
Legwear	-3.20	-3.31	110914	0.90	-31.52	4.43	14738	0.446	-	-
Men's Shirts	5.49	2.32	277903	22.53	31.89	10.53	1261270	72.52	5.90	4.71
Nightwear	8.93	9.53	213051	7.84	-17.09	-4.90	150051	4.23	26.85	21.45
Suits / Ensembles	20.12	0.88	66802	7.09	25.15	-16.23	6042	0.74	-76.62	-63.53
Sweaters	-7.52	-13.91	1525	0.15	-63.50	-59.29	33286	2.10	79.51	79.38
Trousers	9.48	4.90	-	32.93	-	-0.44	4535560	251.65	21.06	15.46
T-Shirts	5.85	0.53	2015005	81.834	2.38	-75.13	1733973	47.03	8.87	12.14
Undergarments	-3.37	-4.66	1480525	25.94	9.22	7.39	2150303	21.93	-8.50	-13.53

Value in mn US \$ and Qty in dozens Legwear in dozen pairs Babies Wear in Kg

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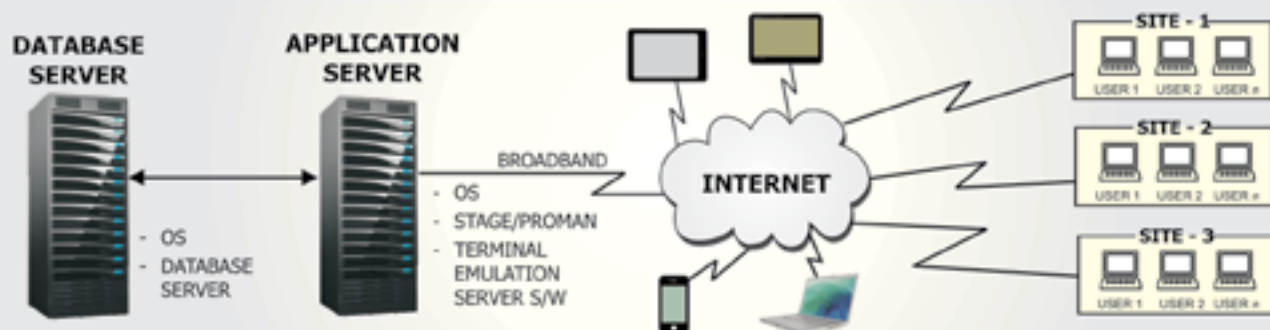
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Accessory players 'hold their own' among the technology providers at GTE

MANY INTERESTING INNOVATIONS ON DISPLAY IN ACCESSORIES

Amongst the milieu of technology, a small but significant segment at the GTE 2016 was the accessories booths which had many interesting products on display from threads to narrow fabrics to buttons to zippers to embellishments and even shopfloor furniture. *Apparel Online* presents some of the companies that displayed products at the event...



Bharat Jain (L) with Dilip Jain of Gautam Sales Corporation



Prashant and Pawan Jain of RTC Zippers



Yash H. Kotak of BK Industry



Amandeep Anand and Govind J. S. Anand flanked by other team members of Anand Furnishers

“No factory can start without us” – Anand Furnishers

Sitting among the machines and other technologies was Anand Furnishers, manufacturers of interior furniture for all factory needs. Working on a customized approach, the team visits the factory once the building is in place, studies the layout and discusses with the owners about their requirements. Based on their input and budget defined, Anand Furnishers then creates the storage equipment, production tables, finishing tables and other accessories that are in compliance to what international buyers are looking for. “It is important for factories to be compliant and also save on space; we are a one-stop solution for all the needs,” says **Gobind JS Anand** of the company. He further adds, “No one can get a factory up and running without us.” The team shares that today not only exporters, but domestic manufacturers are also



Chetan Khatri (L) from Indrmann Narrow Fab

looking to have compliant and neatly arranged production set-ups, which has increased their penetration in the market. “Though we are servicing many industries, the apparel industry is our main focus,” concludes Gobind.

RTC Zippers introduces special range for jackets

“We work with a very selected customer base, as quality is more important than quantity,” says **Pawan Jain, Head – Zipper Division** at RTC Zippers. The company has its production facility in Okhla with capacity of 1 million

zippers per month. Not relying on local resources, most of the basic raw material is imported. The recent offering from the company on display at the GTE was the No. 8 coil zipper for jackets and track suits. “The available range was either too heavy or too light, the new coil is just right for those looking at a strong, but less heavy zipper,” averred Jain. Currently the company has under its trail theft-proof zippers for the luggage industry that cannot be opened with a pen or sharp object. “The big international companies have these zippers, but not the Indian manufacturers,” shares Jain. The market for zippers have increased of late, as now domestic manufacturers are also going for quality zippers as they are fed up with the quality they are currently being offered. With focus on quality, the company is very confident that they are very competitive, besides so many domestic brands have shown interest in their products. Claiming reliability trust and confidence, as the USP of the brand, Jain pointed out that deliveries depend on orders. “We don’t keep stock, and manufacture on demand. The MOQ is at least of 100 zippers,” says Jain. Compliant to European and American norms, the company is insisting that domestic manufacturers also follow the same norms.

Rainbow narrow fabrics new entrant in the export market

Though the parent company in Surat has been in the business of manufacturing narrow fabrics for the last 30 years, it is only recently that the brand Alliance has been introduced exclusively for the export market. Helmed by the next generation of the company, young **Ashish Jain**, supported by veterans of the industry, **Harish Sharma** and **Brij Kishore** have strategically created a new identity to serve the international market with two factories in Delhi, one for woven elastics and the other for knitted (crochet) tapes. The focus is to target the buying offices for nominations, and in the last six months the company has seen some good responses. “We are offering products already available in the market by established brands, but at much lower cost and this has worked in our favour,” says Ashish, who is very upbeat that with the expertise gained from the parent company and support from a team already attuned to norms and

standards in the international market, the growth of the company is certain.

JV Plastic Industries India comes up with unbreakable and textured hanger

JV Plastic Industries India, Delhi, a known name in all kinds of plastic garment accessories, has developed texture hangers with different kinds of flat hooks (till now round hooks were more prevalent) in different or multiple colour combinations. This new development gives a different look and feel to the hangers. The company has also come up with unbreakable hangers with high level of flexibility. “We have mixed three different materials to make the hanger unbreakable; similarly, one can find many colours in a single hanger,” said **Kapil Lalwani, Director (Finance & Marketing)** of the company, and who also added that it offers all these characteristics in any size, shape or colour of hangers.

Apart from that the company has also increased its range of plastic tags and now most of the top brands of Indian ethnic wear are using its plastic tags. Similarly, it has started use of wax thread in plastic seals. All these improvements enhance the quality as well as look which attracts the product development teams from production houses.

Balaji Sequins offering multi-colour 3D PVC-free sequins

Making 20,000 roles daily Balaji Sequins, Delhi recently introduced multi-colour 3D sequins which are being highly appreciated by fashion designers. In addition, these sequins are free from PVC, cadmium, AZO, phthalate, lead and are REACH compliant. **Mayank** and **Shayank Goel** of the firm informed, “Nowadays most of the exporters, even small level exporters, are concerned about PVC-free sequins, as it is accepted in all tests, be it related to chemical or washings. Due to steep cost of high-fashion garments, manufacturers prefer Oeko-Tex certified sequins and we offer highest colour range and variety of PVC-free sequins. Our sequins can withstand up to 180°C temperature without changing colour and shape.” Balaji Sequins is authorized distributor of Uflex Ltd. for North India.

The firm is also focusing on product development which is proving very



Shayank Goel, Balaji Sequins



Kapil Lalwani, JV Plastic Industries India



Deepak Singh, Genius Textiles International

fruitful. “We are continuously adding shades and designs to attract creative people of the apparel industry. Even industry asks for individual colours and designs which we serve happily. Whereas little extra cost of these sequins is concerned, most of the exporters are paying that little extra happily as their buyers are giving it and they know it’s worth it. Some domestic companies are also using these sequins in home furnishing products and they are placing good orders to us,” informs the duo. The company participated for the first time at GTE and is very enthusiastic about its future growth. “We are very happy with the response and quite satisfied with the visitors we got here. We will achieve at least 30 per cent growth in coming year,” they concluded.

BK Industry now focusing on north Indian markets

Mumbai-based BK Industry (BK Lace & Co.) offering a wide range of accessories for intimate wears, as well as other garments is now focusing on North India. Though it is associated with branded lingerie manufacturers of this region from almost two decades, now it is approaching buying houses as well as exporters. **Yash H. Kotak** of the company informed, “From last two years we are getting many repeat orders, so we plan to expand our reach. North India is comparatively new market for us, and in 2016 we target to make strong reach here. For this, Delhi to start with, was a good option as we participated at the GTE. We have started discussions

and provided samples to some buying houses and exporters, and who in turn have appreciated the products in terms of quality as well as the designs and costing.

Having strong reach in west and south India, the company is sure to catch the north Indian markets as well. “We believe in providing complete range to our clients; so they should have a comfort level working with us. Though we can cater small orders, it is good that North India offers quantity, and to deliver any huge order on committed time is our strength,” he said. Recently the company has developed pattern of bra cups which beats Chinese products in price, quality and style.

Gautam Sales Corporation came with increased range of tapes

More than two decades old Gautam Sales Corporation of Bangalore offers large variety of tapes and ribbons and is now focusing more on north Indian markets. Currently, it has capacity of more than 10,000 metres of tapes per day in multiple ranges of more than 150 colours in multiple sizes. “We have recently increased the range of tapes and as it is made of fine yarns, it gives good finish to any garment. Apparel manufacturers also liked it. Initially in this market, we will directly coordinate with the clients and later we will plan for local office too. North India has more volume so it is a competitive market, otherwise we have not observed any major difference in the overall markets,” said **Bharat Jain**, Owner of the company who is already working with few nominated buyers. The firm is

able to offer products in cotton, velvet, jacquard, polyester, etc.

The company offers environment-friendly polyester ribbons having strength of colour fastness to water, to rubbing and to perspiration on class 3 to 4 evaluation and test standards like ISO 105-C06:2010 and more. Expecting 15 per cent growth, the company has also focused on shoe laces which are being used in sportswear and hooded jackets also.

Genius Textiles International exploring button segment

Known for woven and non woven microdot interlining, Genius Textiles International (GTI), Delhi Imports all items from China and systematically manages lead time issues as it keeps ready stock. “We have reasonable ready stock of 40 items so in those items timely delivery is not an issue at all. As we are working mostly with exporters and whatever standards are required is fulfilled by all our products,” said **Deepak Singh**, Proprietor of the company. Since the company has a good team which regularly visits China, it claims that it has the competence to source and supply from there also. The ISO 9001:2008 certified company has just started exploring opportunities in metal button segment as it was getting enquiries for buttons. “In buttons, initial response is good and we will try to expand it,” he said. The company also fulfils Norwegian Accreditation MSYS 013.

Designs are the strength of Indrman Narrow Fab

Doing business from last five years and having good infrastructure which offers *jhalar laces*, single and double face satin ribbons, grosgrain ribbon, polyester, twill, herringbone, jacquard and woven elastic tapes, etc., Indrman Narrow Fab is continuously offering new designs. Currently having more than 1,500 designs, **Chetan Khatri** of the firm shared, “We have all kinds of clients like exporters, domestic brands, traders as well as wholesalers and that too all over the country. We are indirectly exporting our products to gulf countries. So we get lots of feedback from our vast client base which we use in our product development. We keep adding new colours, style as well as sizes in our products.” The company has a production capacity of more than 3 lakh metres per day.

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DESPITE CHALLENGES NORMAL BUSINESS FOR FRANCIS WACZIARG GROUP

It has been a very difficult time for buying agencies and many of them have even downsized their business. While those working with the US market are still relatively better placed though volumes have shrunk, the agencies working with Europe are facing great difficulty in nailing the buyers down for orders. Even the big buying offices are facing problems, and going by the market reports all is not well at Li & Fung. Yet, between struggling European markets and challenges within India, few upfront Indian buying agencies are managing their normal business and expecting routine growth.

Among the buying offices that are known for their product development skills and the ability to offer unique products, Francis Wacziarg Group, Noida – having offices in Dhaka, Mumbai, Bangalore and Tirupur and catering mainly to European

markets – is also one such company. Though the buying agency admits that the growth in business in 2015 was very marginal, the major reason being the slow recovery of economy in Europe – the agency’s biggest trading partner, however they are upbeat for the future.

“We are doing normal business and maintaining the same at a sustainable level as many European companies are undergoing internal revamp. Simultaneously, within India we are facing issues like sales tax, besides brunt of other Government policies. In these circumstances, if we achieve 10 per cent growth in the coming fiscal, it is okay though we are working and targeting 20 per cent,” says **Anshu Chopra, Director** of the company. She also added that the company will be exploring new markets but still it is too early to say about which



The buying office works on mood boards to create fashion products for international market

specific markets will be explored. “We are stable and trying to hold our old clients as well despite difficult times,” she said.

Completing 4 decades in another two years, Wacziarg Group sources a good variety of products in knits as well as woven. The company was badly shaken by the demise of its iconic founder Francis Wacziarg, a few years ago, but now the team has picked up the

threads and the buying office is back on the growth path. “Our founder was a dynamic person with great love for the culture and traditional crafts of this country, we have tried to preserve the trend and many of our collections speak the Indian handwriting. We are ready for every challenge and hopeful of continuing to bring business into the country for many more years,” concludes Anshu.

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