

TECOYA TREND

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Grasim reports highest ever VSF sales in Q4 T&C should strive for partnership in equity and distribution in overseas mkts: TxC

By Our Special Correspondent

MUMBAI, MAY 20—

Grasim Industries Limited today reported highest ever sales volumes in a quarter – up by 31%. The production of VSF during the 4th quarter 2009-10 was to the tune of 85,714 tonnes as against 65,409 tonnes during the last quarter of 2008-2009.

The total VSF sales during FY2010 have recorded a growth of 29% when it amounted to 308,431 tonnes as against production of 238,463 tonnes achieved during FY 2009.

During the period under review, the total production of VSF by Grasim was up by 30% - from 232,745 tonnes in FY 2009 to 302,092 tonnes in FY 2010, supported by additional volumes from the new capacity installed at Kharach towards the end of FY08.

Meanwhile Company reiterated that it plans to set up a 80,000 TPA VSF plant at Vilayat (Gujarat) at an estimated outlay of Rs.1,000 crore. The project is likely to be commissioned in FY13. The capacity of the overseas joint venture at China will double from 35,000 TPA to 70,000 TPA by the end of Q1FY11.

The demand outlook, Grasim said, is expected to be stable in the short to medium term. However, high VSF prices may lead to substitution with the other competing fibres, thereby impacting volumes and margins. The upward trend in the prices of input costs, mainly pulp, with limited opportunity to pass on the same to customers, may lead to a fall in the operating margin.

MUMBAI, MAY 20—

Indian textile and clothing industry needs to do more to forge partnerships – in equity, technology and distribution in overseas markets. The newer nuances of global apparel trade demand joint control of brand positioning, distribution and quality assurance systems. Garments need to assume the role of driving the textile value chain by creating a demand pull for the up stream segments, observed Mr. Anil B. Joshi, Textile Commissioner, here today.

Addressing the 'North South Textile Summit' organized by Confederation of Indian Textile Industry (CITI), Mr. Joshi informed that Indian textiles and apparel market is currently valued

at nearly US \$ 50 billion and was growing at 14%.

Most of the top global apparel retailers have their scouring network in India, he said and added that approximately 60% of Indian exports of textiles and over 70% of clothing are to USA and EU 27 markets.

In the context of the current global economic situation, there was an urgent need to explore new markets, while maintaining and increasing Indian share in the core markets through product innovation and diversification, Mr. Joshi stressed.

He said that the intensification of international competition has led to a consolidation process in the

global textile and clothing sector. Due to low labor costs and raw material advantage, several countries from Asia, Africa and Latin America have become leading suppliers of textile products to major developed markets.

Strong trade linkages have led to significant changes in the structure of the industry of these countries and there is scope for further improvement in this direction. Low labor costs and supply of raw materials alone are not enough to remain competitive in the emerging situation. The international textile trade was still a buyers market and factors like quality, delivery, compliance, standards, sustainably etc play a vital role, Mr. Joshi

Textile Commissioner said that countries that develop capabilities to integrate themselves in networks can be expected to perform better in the global market, by leveraging relatively lower wages and modern production technologies, wherever they are available.

Outsourcing, Mr. Joshi said, has been a strategy for many retail firms, and many low-cost producing countries have become hosts for production plants. The geographical proximity to mother markets is viewed as an important factor due to 'the time factor' in the outsourced operations. But production efficiencies do matter, as the growing exports of China to the US demonstrate.

Cotton exports ban should continue: TEA

COIMBATORE, MAY 20—

Tirupur Exporters Association (TEA) on Thursday urged Union Textile Minister Mr Dayanidhi Maran to maintain status quo on the cotton export ban, since lifting it would prove disastrous to the textile industry.

In a letter to Mr Maran, a copy of which was released to the press, TEA president Mr A Shaktivel claimed that cotton exporters have been trying hard to get the ban lifted, creating panic among the textile industry, from spinning to garment sectors.

Creation of such alarming situation was totally uncalled for, he said, adding that if ban was lifted, it would be disastrous for the whole textile industry.

It was not out of place to mention that all spinning mills would come to a stand-still. Eventually, all downstream sectors, especially the garment sector, would be badly affected. Moreover, the garment export sector will not be in a position to sustain itself in the global market, he said.

Considering the consequences, TEA urged Mr Maran to use his good offices to stop the proposed move to lift the ban and ensure that sufficient quantity of cotton stock was available in the domestic market.

Fibertect absorbent can aid Gulf oil disaster clean-up

By Our Staff Reporter

MUMBAI, MAY 20—

Fibertect - a three-layer flexible, inert, nonwoven, non-particulate decontamination system that has been proven to be successful in absorbing and adsorbing chemical warfare agents, may now prove useful in recovery efforts in the British Petroleum (BP) Deepwater Horizon disaster and other oil spills of similar size and severity.

Fibertect was developed by Texas Tech University's The Institute of Environmental and Human Health (TIEHH) Associate Professor Seshadri Ramkumar and is manufactured by Hobbs Bonded Fibers for First Line Technology.

The three layers of material consist of a top and bottom fabric with a center layer of fibrous activated carbon that is needle punched into a composite fabric.

The top and bottom layers provide structural coherence, improving mechanical strength and abrasion resistance while the center layer holds volatile compounds, like oil.

Ramkumar said according to documented research published by many scientists, raw cotton can absorb up to 20 times its weight. But when chemically modified the material can hold more than two to three times that amount. And unlike synthetic materials like polypropylene that are currently used in many oil containment booms, Fibertect made from raw cotton and carbon is biodegradable.

According to BP, the U.S. Coast Guard and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the spill

Continued on Page 4



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GREY CLOTH

Grey Mulls			
Count	Reed x pick	Width	Rs./Metre
100x120	80x72	49"	-----
100x100	78x68	49" Com	-----
90x100	76x66	48"	-----
70x90	64x56	48.5" Comb	-----
80x100	68x64	49" Comb	-----
80x100	68x64	49" Semi Com	-----
60x80	58x48	47"	-----
60x80	58x50	47"	-----
60x80	56x44	47.5"	-----
44x60	62x62	47"	-----

Grey Cambric

COUNT	REEDXPICE	WIDTH	RS./METRE
60x60	88x80	39" Ichal	18-00 to 19-00
60x60	92x88	49" Comb Dyed	22-00 to 24-00
60x60	92x04	49" export	23-00 to 25-00
40x60	72x72	38"	15-00 to 16-00
2x1	72x72	40"	23-50 to 25-50
2x2	72x72	40"	31-00 to 36-00
55x55	80x80	39"	17-00 to 18-00
55x55	72x72	39"	15-50 to 16-50
Chiffon	80/1400		21-00 to 22-00

Powerloom Grey

COUNT	VAREITY	WIDTH IN CMS.	PR. HAND
100x120	Mill Comb 80x72	119	-----
100x100	Mill Comb 76x66	119	-----
40x60	HD Comb 62x52	117	-----
Century Cotton	9.000 Kgs.	47"	-----
	10.000 Kgs.	37/38"	-----
	11.000 Kgs.		-----
	12.000 Kgs.		-----
	12.500 kgs.		-----
	11.500 Kgs.		-----
	8.800 Kgs.	37/38"	-----
	9.400 Kgs.		-----
Raymond 40 PV	9.700 Kgs.		-----
80/72x 40PV	8.800 Kgs		-----
80/72x40PC	9.000 Kgs		-----
Raymond	11.000 Kgs.	47"	-----
	11.500 Kgs.	45"	-----
	9.400 kgs		-----
Mink Micro	7.800 Kgs.		-----
80/108/80/108	6800 Kgs.		-----
	9.000 Kgs.		-----

GREYARTSILK SHIRTING

Table (NC)		Net Cash
2/60 Cotton x 76 Polyester	88x80	-----
20/80 Bosky (Nylon) 4,200	46"	-----
P.V. Satin 80/150	47"	12 Kgs.-----
TEXO BOSKY		
76x76	7.200 47"	-----
	7.000 47"	-----
	6.800 47"	-----
	6.600 47"	-----
	6.200 47"	-----
76x76	6.200 Roto	-----
	6.400 Roto	-----
	6.800 Roto 36"	-----
Roto	5.700 Plain	-----
76x76	5.400	-----
84x150 47" Rinkle	7.50 kgs	-----
150x150	Tex plain 51" 8500	-----
150x150	Tex Dobby 46" 12,000	-----
84x150 37" Dobby	7.5 kgs.	-----
60x60s 47"	74x74	-----
Normal	72x72	-----
	72x68	-----
	76x76	-----
	68x68	-----
	84x76	-----
	84x76	-----
	11.5 kgs	-----
	11.50 kg	-----
50s P.C. 47"	Print	-----
50s P.V.xTex 47"	Dyed	-----
2/40x2/40 36"		-----
2/40x2/20s 48x52	46"	-----
D. China 46"	46"	-----
D. China 46"	48"	-----
50Br. x 60 Devi Silk	48"	-----
45x45PV 84/76	48"	-----
45X45 PV 80/76	38"	-----
40X40 Cotton Cord	38"	-----
45x45 84/76	48"	-----
50x50 P.C. 84/76 Dyeing	38"	-----
40x40 Cotton Saten	38"	-----
45x40 Cotton Saten	38"	-----

SAREE CLOTH

60s	86x76	47"	-----
Swiss Cotton	2/60	37"	9,400 kgs.-----
Swiss Cotton	2/60	37"	9,800 kgs.-----
Swiss Cotton	32s	37"	9,800 kgs.-----
32s P.V.	Swiss Cotton 37"		8,800 kgs.-----
Swiss Cotton	38" GK.		7,800 kg.-----
42s P.C.	Swiss Cotton 47"		8,100 kg.-----
Gadhwal Border Patti			-----
Acrylic Patta			-----
Radhika Cheks			-----

VISCOSE COTTON

120 x 100	80x72	-----
120 x 100	76x72	-----
120 x 80	68x64	-----
Viscose Cotton	80x72	-----
Rayon	2/4020	56x56
Staple	30x30	64/64

Gas generated power to cost more: Shinde

NEW DELHI, MAY 20 (PTI)

Selling price of power generated by gas-based plants will go up by up to Rs 1.20 per unit on account of the hike in the price of natural gas, government said today.

However, how much of it would translate into consumer tariff would depend on state regulatory authorities.

"The increase in administered gas price will certainly increase the electricity rates because the cascading effect is bound to come on such things," Shinde said on the sidelines of a FICCI event here.

He said the cost of generation would go up by 90 paise to Rs 1.20 per unit (Kwh) for gas-based power plants in the country and added the consumer prices are also sure to go up, but the exact quantum would be worked out.

The gas-based power plants account for only about 10 per cent of the total generation capacity.

"This is true that all our units are not run on gas.

All those running on gas would be affected by the increase," he said.

Power producers are paid on the basis of fixed cost and

variable cost and the increase in the price of natural gas would accordingly have to be taken into account by the Central or state regulatory authorities.

Yesterday, the Union Cabinet decided to more than double the natural gas prices to USD 4.20 per unit (mmBtu).

The cost of gas sold to power firms would increase from Rs 3,200 per thousand cubic metres to Rs 6,818 per thousand cubic metres. After adding royalty, the new price for user industries would be Rs 7,500 per thousand cubic metres.

State-run ONGC and OIL produce 54.32 million cubic metres of gas per day, or about 40 per cent of the total gas produced in the country, from fields given to them on a nomination basis. This gas is sold at government controlled rates, with about 50 mmscmd allocated to power and fertilizer units and city gas projects at USD 1.79 per mmBtu and the remainder to other industries at USD 4.75 per mmBtu.

"ONGC and OIL have been making substantial losses in their gas business. The (current) low prices of gas have discouraged national oil companies from making investment (in raising

dwindling output). Therefore, it became essential to increase the price of gas," Sundareshan said.

On top of the USD 4.2 per mmBtu APM gas price tag, state gas transportation and marketing firm GAIL India would be allowed to charge Rs 200 per thousand cubic metres, or 11.2 cents per mmBtu, as a marketing margin. There would also be taxes, pipeline transportation charges and other levies.

The new price will be for the period up to March 31, 2014, the time till when Reliance Industries has been allowed to charge USD 4.2 per mmBtu for gas from its KG-D6 fields.

The government controls rates of gas produced by ONGC and OIL from fields given to them on a nomination basis (called APM gas). The APM gas price were last revised in 2005 to Rs 3,200 per thousand cubic metres (USD 1.79 per mmBtu).

ONGC, in 2008-09, lost Rs 4,745 crore in revenues on selling 17.71 billion cubic metres of gas at the government fixed rate.

The Petroleum Ministry had previously wanted to raise the gas price in stages to USD 4.2 per mmBtu. It wanted rates paid to ONGC and OIL to be

immediately hiked to Rs 4,142 per thousand cubic metres (USD 2.32 per mmBtu). The consumer price at this rate would have been 10 per cent higher at USD 2.55 per mmBtu. Thereafter, the rates were to be hiked to USD 4.2 per mmBtu in three more installments.

However, on the insistence of the Finance Ministry, the oil ministry withdrew the proposal and moved a fresh one seeking to raise the price of the gas under APM to Rs 7,500 per thousand cubic metres, or USD 4.2 per mmBtu, sources said.

The Finance Ministry wanted the hike to happen in one stage and not in stages, sources said. About 39 per cent of the nation's 140 million standard cubic metres a day of gas output is sold at administered rates. A hike in these rates is an attempt to reduce distortions in a market with more than a dozen prices.

The government has set USD 4.2 per mmBtu as the sale price of gas from Reliance Industries' eastern offshore KG-D6 fields, while the gas from BG Group-operated Panna/Mukta Tapti fields is sold at USD 5.73 per mmBtu.

Sources said 54.32 mmscmd gas produced by ONGC and OIL is sold at APM rates.

Govt plans to launch NELP-IX by Sept-Nov this year

MUMBAI, MAY 20 (PTI)

The Government is planning to launch the ninth round of the New Exploration Licensing Policy (Nelp-IX) by September-November this year to auction up to 45 oil and gas blocks, a top official from Directorate General of Hydrocarbons (DGH), said.

"We have initiated the process last month for NELP-IX.

We believe in another 4-6 months we will be able to launch it," DGH Advisor (Production), R K Sinha, told PTI here today.

Oil extends gains; NY crude above \$70

SINGAPORE, MAY 20 (AFP)

Oil prices rose towards USD 71 a barrel in Asian trade today but sentiment remained weak as investors eyed the debt crisis in Europe, analysts said.

New York's main contract, light sweet crude for delivery in June, gained USD 1.09 to 70.96 a barrel. The contract will expire later today.

Brent North Sea crude for July delivery was up 37 cents to USD 74.06.

"The June contract has been moved around because of the pre-expiry positioning and that was affected by a number of factors," said David Moore, a Sydney-based commodity

strategist with the Commonwealth Bank of Australia.

"It's certainly premature to say that the (price) increases represent a turning point for oil at this point. The market remains very volatile and the outlook for oil prices in the very near term is still pretty uncertain," he told AFP.

Prices moved higher in US trade Wednesday after briefly dropping to their lowest level in more than seven months when it hit USD 67.90 as the euro fell against the dollar on worries over the eurozone debt crisis.

A stronger greenback

makes dollar-priced crude more expensive for buyers using weaker currencies, denting demand, which leads to lower oil prices.

The market was later boosted by a positive growth forecast from the Federal Reserve Wednesday and a report which showed a drop in some US energy stockpiles, signalling greater demand in the largest energy consuming nation.

However, Moore said for the near term, investors would continue to focus on the "developments in Europe and what they mean for the international economic outlook", rather than the market's demand and supply balance.

Sensex up by 111 pts

MUMBAI, MAY 20—

Led by oil and gas major ONGC, the benchmark Sensex on BSE bounced back to close higher by 111 points, a day after it got a severe drubbing.

The 30-share index of the Bombay Stock Exchange gained 111.19 points, or 0.68 per cent, to end at 16,519.68 points.

Interestingly, the Indian market was the only gainer among major bourses in the Asia today.

The barometer had taken a hit of 467 points yesterday on debt concerns in euro zone.

The National Stock Exchange's wide-based 50-share Nifty index settled at 4,947.60 points, up 0.57 per cent.

Discarding a rise in food prices and bearish Asian stocks, the Sensex continued to trade in positive zone after a firm opening. With European bourses also rising in their opening, the index surged over 209 points by mid-session.

"Markets pulled back as

investors took opportunity to buy shares at relatively lower price. Though still markets are on weaker side but a small bounce back cannot be ruled out in a few coming sessions," SMC Capital vice-president Rajesh Jain said.

End of the uncertainty over 3G spectrum auction, that left the government with a Rs 67,710 crore revenue also helped improve the market sentiment. Analysts said the government earning nearly double the money it projected in the Budget augurs well for the health of the economy.

Imports surging by a never-seen-before USD 8 billion in April also helped. Sentiment got a fillip after the Indian Met Department said the tropical cyclone 'Laila' will not impact the monsoon pattern, which is forecast to be normal.

Public sector-major ONGC rallied 8.72 per cent to emerge as the best performer among Sensex stocks. Brokers attributed the rise government doubling prices of

natural gas to USD 4.20 per mmBtu. PSU stock IOC gained 4 per cent and Gail India 2 per cent. Energy giant RIL advanced by 0.16 per cent

On sectoral front, PSU and Oil & Gas led the gain, while a good buying was seen in pharma and banking stocks. However, realty, auto and consumer good sectors ended in red.

ICICI Bank, which was battered in the past 2-3 sessions on worries of valuation of a deal with BoR, recovered and ended with a net gain of 1.01 per cent. State Bank of India climbed 2.19 per cent and HDFC by 1.53 per cent.

Among the 30-components of the Sensex, 18 ended with gain where rest 12 finished in negative zone. Sterlite Industries rose 2.35 per cent and Cipla by 1.68 per cent.

Among the losers, Jaiprakash Associates dropped 3.28 per cent and was followed by DLF by 2.81 per cent and

Grasim by 2.45 per cent. Grasim will be replaced by Jindal Steel & Power in the Sensex, the BSE said yesterday. The replacement will be effective from May 26.

On the global front, all major Asian markets closed in red. Europe was negative by the mid-session.

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Prices firm

By Cotton Man

MUMBAI, MAY 20--

The cotton prices remained firm today with good demand from the user industry.

The cotton arrival were as follows: North -0 bales; Gujarat - 3500 Bales, Maharashtra - 3000; Madhya Pradesh 3000, Karnataka 3000 AP - 1200; TN - 0 bales . The total arrivals were 13700 bales today.

The northern varieties are quoted in maund while other varieties are in candy. The kapas and seed prices are quoted in quintal.

PUNJAB		AKOLA	
J-34 (SG) Apr. 2010	3105-3165	BB SPL MOD	-----
J-34 (RG) Apr. 2010	3145-3185	H-4 SUP MOD	-----
HARYANA		AUGRANGABAD	
J-34 (SG) Apr. 2010	3110-3145	BB PRM MOD	29500
J-34 (RG) Apr. 2010	3140-3160	BB SPL MOD	29100
RAJASTHAN (SGNR LINE)		H-4 SUP CONV	
J-34 (SG) Apr. 2010	2930-2980	RAJKOT	
J-34 (RG) Apr. 2010	2960-3000	S-6 SUP	29600
RAJASTHAN (HGHLINE)		AHMEDABAD	
J-34 (SG) Apr. 2010	3020-3050	S-6 SUP	29500
J-34 (RG) Apr. 2010	3050-3080	GUNIUR	
HARYANA		BB PRM MOD	
Desi (SG) Apr. 2010	-----	BB PRM CONV	29200
Desi (RG) Apr. 2010	-----	WARANGAL	
RAJASTHAN (SGNR LINE)		BB PRM MOD	
Desi (SG) Apr. 2010	2420-2440	BB PRM CONV	29200
Desi (RG) Apr. 2010	2380-2400	ADILABAD	
RAJASTHAN (HGHLINE)		BB PRM MOD	
Desi (SG) Apr. 2010	-----	BB PRM CONV	29000
Desi (RG) Apr. 2010	-----	RAYGADA	
OTHER STATES		BB PRM MOD	
Guj S-6	28000-28500	HUBLI	
Sau S-6	28500-29000	BB PRM MOD	29500
Guj V-797 New	20500-20600	CAI RATES	
Maha Kapa	2800	Bengal Desi RG	22100
Maha MECH-1		Bengal Desi SG	22400
Bunny 20mm	27800	V-797	20300
Maha h-4 27 mm	26400	Jayadhar	22500
Maha Kapas	3000	Y-1	24700
Maha Seeds	1075-1100	J-34 (SG)	27200
MP MECH-1	26800-26900	NHH-44	-----
AP Bunny		LRA-5166	26700
Brahma 32 mm	29500	H-4/MECH-1	27800
AP Bunny		Shankar-6	28900
Brahma 31 mm	27500-28000	Bunny/Brahma	29000
AP Kapas 32 mm	3200	MCU-5	-----
AP seeds	1130-1150	DCH-32	42500
Kar Bunny		ICC	-----
29/30mm	29000-29500	SICA RATES	
Kar DCH-32		(Per Candy)	
35mm	42000	Bengal Desi	N.Q.
Kar Kapas (Bunny)	3100-3200	V-797	20000
Kar Seeds	1100	Jaydhar Karn.	21300
TN MCU-5 Kapas	3100	J-34	28500
TN DCH-32	40,000	MECH (MP)	27500
		Sankar-6	28500
		MCU-5	29500
		DCH-32Karna	41000
CCI RATES		NEW YORK	
2009-2010		COTTON	
BHATINDA		as on 18-05-2010	
J-34 DR SPL	30100	July 10	82.20 +48
J-34 DR SUP	29900	Oct 10	77.77 +56
J-34 SG SPL	29700	Dec 10	77.91 +49
J-34 SG SUP	-----	Mar 11	79.11 +48
SIRSA		May 11	78.99 +42
J-34 DR SPL	29700	July 11	78.99 +39
J-34 SG SPL	29500	Oct. 11	77.51 +72
SRIGANANAR		Dec. 11	75.95 +72
J-34 SG SPL	29300	Mar. 12	76.20 +72
J-34 SG SUP	29100	May 12	76.45 +72
BHILWARA			
H-4 SUP	-----		

Latest technology for cotton apparel shuns perspiration & precipitation

Historically, "light" and "airy" were not often used by outdoor enthusiasts to describe their cotton apparel. But thanks to advanced technologies, the fabric is charting new territory in the activewear category.

Though cotton has been the go-to fabric in most apparel categories for the last 40 years, it was typically deemed a "foe" by hikers and serious runners, due to its strong absorbency and weight. These days, that is no longer an issue since tech features—like TransDRY, Storm Cotton and Storm Denim—put cotton on equal ground with synthetic fibers.

Polarmax, a brand of Longworth Industries, is on board with the movement, rolling out a new line of PMX technical base layer T-shirts and undergarments with the patented TransDRY moisture management technology. This high-performance moisture management application allows 100% cotton fabrics to transfer perspiration away from the skin or across the surface of the fabric and dry faster, keeping wearers dry during varying levels of exercise intensity.

"People love cotton, and the way it feels," says Polarmax's Roger Maxey, national sales manager. "They just didn't like the way it performed. Cotton would absorb moisture, get heavy and boggy, and wasn't treated with anti-microbial in the past. We have a product that's 100% cotton, it wicks moisture, is fast drying and anti-microbial—and is very comfortable."

An impressive 82% of females say cotton and cotton blends are their favorite fiber or fabric to wear, according to the Cotton Incorporated Lifestyle Monitor survey. That figure remains steady regardless of a woman's age or salary—whether she is 13 years old or 70, or has a household income under \$25,000 or more than \$75,000.

When it comes to performance apparel, Monitor stats show cotton is again a favorite, with most women saying they prefer cotton for apparel that features moisture management (66%) and water repellence (51%).

Furthermore, "Our own Sports Apparel data tells us that more than 90% of people who said they preferred synthetic athletic apparel would be willing to try or would even prefer to have cotton athletic apparel," says David Earley, Senior Director, Supply Chain Marketing at Cotton Incorporated.

Of course, outdoor activities run the gamut, from walking the dog, to taking the kids to the park to hiking trails, and even riding a motorcycle. And all activities stand to benefit from specially-designed performance wear.

More than one-third of female Monitor respondents (36%) say they are "very/somewhat likely" to purchase denim that has

moisture wicking features, and 68% of them are willing to pay more for it, too. Additionally, 26% are "very/somewhat likely" to buy waterproof denim, with 60% of those women willing to shell out extra for the feature.

The same can be said for cotton tees with moisture management features: women are "very/ somewhat likely" to purchase both moisture wicking (45%) and fast-drying (44%) T-shirts, and pay more for the features (77% and 59%, respectively).

Price wise, the Polarmax pieces are more expensive than a regular cotton T-shirt, but comparable to synthetic technical tees. They are available in both heavy and light weights.

Eddie Bauer, a powerhouse in the outdoor apparel arena, has cotton blend pieces in its current Travex line, a collection that boasts UPF and wicking properties. The women's pieces include a cotton blend vest, parka and jacket.

"They're meant to be worn for traveling, hiking, trekking, and the like, but they're also fashionable enough to wear to the café," says a spokesperson.

Eddie Bauer also offers a "Canoe" coat, made of 100% cotton Expedition cloth, which breathes and is moisture-resistant; as well as ComfortCloth 100% cotton shirts for men with moisture wicking and wrinkle resistance.

Almost eight out of 10 women (79%) say cotton and cotton blends are the fibers best suited for today's fashions, according to the Monitor survey.

Cotton continues to be far and away the most widely used fiber in apparel, according to Earley. According to the Cotton Incorporated Retail Monitor survey, 74% of apparel contains cotton. In athletic apparel, cotton is found in 46% of products and has been making steady inroads.

"Cotton is gaining ground in the athletic apparel category, largely due to innovative technical finishes and consumers' general preferences," Earley adds.

Maxey says the Polarmax base layer apparel appeals to cold weather athletes, particularly snow boarders. "In the sports market, cotton got pushed out as a next-to-skin fabric because people would get sweaty wearing it downhill, and then would be wet and cold going back up the lift because the fabric didn't wick moisture away."

Thanks to these innovative finishes, that is no longer the case. "TransDRY cotton wicks moisture and dries two to three times faster than regular cotton," Maxey says. "And since snowboarders are so much into cotton, we took it to them first. But we'll take it into all categories before everybody else gets there."

Assocham prefers PTA To FTA with Australia, NZ, SA...

NEW DELHI, MAY 20--

An in-depth cost benefit analysis needs to be undertaken in terms of increase in net trade and improvement in employment before India proceeds ahead for signing of Free Trade Agreements with countries like Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, says a Study of India's FTA and Indian Industry brought out by The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM).

It emphasizes that instead of direct FTA, India should first have a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) initially where it has some inherent trade advantages with products on sensitive list, terming a reasonable time frame so that India Inc. can gear up for competition.

In a statement, Mr. D S Rawat, Secretary General ASSOCHAM said that before India embarks on signing of FTAs with new territories and regional trading blocs, different business situations should also be taken into confidence and the cost benefit analysis be undertaken in comprehensive way in terms of increase in net trade and improvement in employment.

FTAs proposed to be signed by Indian government should lead to win-win situation for which constitution of negative lists need to be thoroughly examined with protracted and lengthy negotiations processes with stakeholders concerning domestic industry.

Mr. Rawat pointed out that certain countries already have either zero tariff rates or very low tariff rates, having a negative impact on productivity of industry in countries with relatively higher territories.

Therefore, Indian authorities should consider the possible reduction in output and employment before initiating the FTA and first try to establish a level playing field in terms of access to infrastructure, market determine exchange rates and fuel cost. The fuel cost both petrol and diesel have been a bugbear for Indian manufacturing sector in stifling its growth rate. The price of crude oil in the international market no doubt has gone up but so has the import duty and local taxes which contribute to almost 50% of its price in India which put India into great disadvantage as cost of fuel in countries like Australia, New Zealand, South Africa etc. is much cheaper.

The ASSOCHAM has recommended that a preferential trade agreement may be proceeded with initially where India has some inherent trade advantage with products on the Sensitive lists having a reasonable time frame so that the Indian industry can gear up for the competition.

Secondly, Brand India should also be marketed as a provider of business solutions. Quality, reliability and dependability should be the strategy and buzz word in different international markets.

Fibertect absorbent can aid oil disaster clean-up

Continued from Page 1 Col 2

is leaking about 5,000 barrels a day, but some researchers are claiming the disaster could prove even more dramatic.

It began April 20 after an explosion and fire aboard the semi-submersible drilling rig in the Gulf off the coast of Louisiana. Some of BP's first attempts at clean-up were not successful and as the British oil giant struggles to collect oil from the leak, First Line has submitted information on the Fibertect technology as an alternate response technology.

In addition, several other oil companies are working to take precautionary measures in light of recent events and some are researching the benefits of keeping a cache of Fibertect on board rigs in order to start immediate clean-up in case of future spills.

"Fibertect has already proven to be effective in the bulk decontamination of chemical warfare agents and toxic industrial chemicals, but our

proposal here is to use it to aid in the clean-up efforts in the Gulf," said First Line Technology President Amit Kapoor. "Fibertect allows for a green, environmentally safe, biodegradable technology that is perfect for the expanding effort to protect and decontaminate coastal lands and wildlife. We welcome the opportunity to work with the government, BP, or other oil companies in a joint effort to defend and preserve our planet."

While Ramkumar has not done any testing on the coast yet, he and his team are proposing to use discounted low micronaire raw cotton that attracts oil to develop oil-absorbent pads that could be used to soak up oil in the Gulf of Mexico. Fibertect is currently used primarily by the military, first responders and receivers, hospitals, hazmat teams and fire fighters during decontamination, but the professor said it can absorb oil and hold volatile gases, making the material an obvious choice for cleaning up crude oil.

Food inflation inches up to 16.49%

NEW DELHI, MAY 20 (PTI)

Food inflation went up by a notch to 16.49 per cent for the week ended May 8 and analysts expect prices to remain stuck around this level until the advent of a normal monsoon.

Annual food inflation in the previous reporting week was 16.44 per cent.

Analysts said that food inflation would come down

drastically only in the later half of the fiscal when the impact of a normal monsoon becomes visible on crops. Fuel prices remained flat over the week, but analysts said the Cabinet's decision to hike natural gas prices would jack up rates of gas-based fuels.

The government yesterday more than doubled the prices of natural gas to USD 4.20 per mmBtu.

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