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Fashion renaissance could save garment industry

DATE: 2008/08/22

High above a typical loading dock used by the city's northern traders and manufacturers, where gloved and shirtless workers unload truckloads of imported Thai rice, hundreds of the city's youth are working to revitalise a floundering industry.

This summer some 400 students with a flair for fashion are spending their days learning how to cut, sew and style at the House of Apparel Technology.

The booming economy is spearheading a renewed interest in image and fashion in Macau's youth and opening up jobs selling high-end clothing and advertising design, said apparel technology department manager, Victoria Kuan, yesterday at the opening ceremony of the Teenage Fashion Design Competition.

The annual event will see twenty high school students aged from 16 to 20 show judges both their clothing design and manufacturing skills.

An emphasis on creation rather than construction may just breathe life into the local rag trade that is suffering from increasing costs.

The value of garments exported from the sar has fallen by more than 23 percent since 2004 as companies relocate production to factories in the mainland and other developing countries. Local factories have traditionally manufactured clothing for overseas designers which allows the customer to easily switch to a lower cost supplier.

One approach local managers are considering to stay afloat is developing their own designs and labels to add value to the items they produce.

"We are facing a tough situation with the price of labour in macau and high competition from overseas manufacturers," said fung shun kin, who owns a 300 person factory near the red market which produces clothing for brands such as quiksilver.

"Everybody is thinking to survive we will have to develop our own label."

However, in addition to the immense marketing effort required to sell a new clothing label in the mainland or elsewhere, the manufacturers require talent to come up with unique garments and concepts to sell.

That's where the house of apparel technology comes in.

Twelve years ago when Ms Kuan first joined the education institution, which is part of the non profit Macau Productivity and Technology Transfer Centre set up by the government and a number of companies, it focused on providing training for manufacturing garments rather than designing them.

It now schools hundreds of want-to-be fashionistas in all aspects of creating an image.

Courses are run for high school students and adults wishing to join the industry teaching skills such as fabric selection, manufacturing tool use, design, cutting and sewing of a range of fashion products such as garments, bags, hair bands and doll's clothing.

Yearly approximately 600 students go through the school and 400 students are currently following summer courses.

The new interest in locally designed fashion has seen a small group of designers develop, nourished by the gaming industry and the events the city has hosted in recent years.

Ms Kuan estimates there are now at least 20 self employed designers and creative companies working in the city.

"With the development of the economy they have the courage to move into areas such as corporate development and image," said Ms Kuan.

"Also the sports games that were held two and three years ago also employed a group of local designers that were involved in making uniforms and costumes."

The growing local design industry has also encouraged schools to offer students a course at the apparel house.

A program developed with the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau has seen 80 high school students graduate from the institution in the last three years. A number have moved into jobs such as assistant fashion designers and graphic designers.

The 20 contestants taking part in the four day sewing and design competition that began yesterday have varied experience. For the second time Elizabeth Mak will compete for the prize of a place in the bi-annual WorldSkills International, also known as the Skill Olympics.

The 17-year-old Santa Rosa de Lima student has a dream to open her own fashion boutique and enjoys the "beauty" of creating fashion.

The four day competition requires the all female entrants to first create the same classic white dress to provided measurements and then make their own additions to turn it into a "party" creation.

Source: macaudailytimesnews

China post-Olympics rebound hopes wane

DATE: 2008/08/22

By Bohan Loh and Dolly Wu



SINGAPORE (ICIS news)--An expected post- Olympics recovery in China's petrochemical markets may be slow in coming due to continued sluggish downstream demand and a US-led global economic slowdown, market sources said on Friday.

There was an overall consensus that the market will pick up post-Olympics, but restrictions placed for the games have curbed downstream demand more than earlier expected," a Shanghai based trader said in Mandarin.

High inventory levels, aggressive price cuts have scared off everyone into a wait-and-see stance, he added, referring to Sinopec's recent spate of price cuts to induce buying interest and reduce mounting inventory.

Chinese authorities introduced a series of bans and restrictions on chemical transportation, production and buy-sell activities from the beginning of June lasting through to 30 September to ensure a clean environment during the Olympic Games which it was hosting for the first time. Import and export activities crawled to a standstill at the ports of host and co-host cities while a severe electrical shortage in Beijing, Qingdao and Shanghai forced petrochemical firms to intermittently shut or cut operating rates at their plants, reversing sentiment in the traditionally active third quarter.

Other market watchers said a US-led economic slowdown and rising energy costs added to weakening overseas demand for China's products, including plastics and textiles which are made from petrochemicals.

The US is a major market for Asia's trading economies, including that of China, and an economic slowdown curbs the purchasing power of its population as wages stagnate and layoffs increase. "The current macroeconomic environment is taking its toil on the petrochemical sector," Yu Fangxing, an analyst from Dalian based Jianghai Securities said.

"Demand from multiple downstream sectors is soft due to rising energy costs, weak sales activity and this naturally has an impact on the buying sentiments for raw materials," he added. The US is a key export market for Chinese products such as **polyvinyl chloride** (PVC) and **polyethylene terephthalate** (PET) and housing woes coupled with the sub-prime crisis and economic slowdown has eroded the country's appetite for imports.

Orders for Chinese textiles and garments have been reported to have dipped almost 25% by the country's Commerce Ministry on the weakening US dollar and added pressure to slumping demand.

The current weak sentiment is expected to continue through to the Paralympics, which runs from 6-17 September. Nonetheless, some producers are optimistic of a delayed recovery at the start of the fourth quarter.

"Conditions in the furniture sector are likely to improve after the Paralympics. I would expect purchasing activity to be brisk. Moreover, it is the traditional peak for us," a **melamine** producer in southwest Sichuan province said.

Source: China Textile Network Company

Methanol traders also said they were expecting a rebound in November on as downstream **formaldehyde** demand picks up after the Paralympics and the end of the rainy season.

The rainy season usually dampens sentiment in the furniture sector, as adhesives take longer to dry in such weather.

Judith contributed to this article

To discuss issues facing the chemical industry go to ICIS connect

For more details of restrictions imposed during the Olympics, please refer to the ICIS Olympic Timeline .

Source: www.icis.com

Olympians Adopt Compression Apparel Technology and Break World Records

DATE: 2008/08/22

Compression Apparel helps Olympians break more world records than the previous two Summer Olympics combined. A start-up company called Zensah® has created seamless compression clothing, making their compression clothing a more ergonomic fit for athletes.

Beijing, China (<http://www.prweb.com/>) August 21, 2008 -- The Summer Olympics in Beijing will be remembered for many years to come as the Olympics that shattered records like as easily as throwing a glass from the Great Wall of China. Olympians broke 74 Olympic records and 36 world records, and with 4 days left in the Olympics, the toll will surely rise. More records have been broken at the Beijing Olympics than the two previous Olympics combined hosted in Sydney, and Athens respectively. Today, athletes are better prepared from their training to their diet, to the clothing they wear. The dream of competing at the Olympics is bestowed upon a chosen few. While an event at the Olympics may last a few minutes, or even a few seconds, the time, dedication, and preparation can last a generation.



One of the best kept secrets among Olympians are the benefits of compression apparel in post workout recovery. Doctors have know for years the benefits of compression, which include increased blood circulation, muscle warmth, and reduction of muscle vibration. It is no coincidence that the swimsuits used to shatter multiple world records incorporated compression technology.

Over the past few years a number of performance apparel company's have been promoting the benefits of using compression clothing technology after a workout. The science behind this claims that using compression clothing after a workout an athlete increases oxygen blood flow to the muscles that is desperately needed by fatigued muscles.

By reducing recovery time an athlete can push their limits farther. Companies such as Nike, adidas, and Under Armour have promoted cut-and-sew compression technology.

A start-up company called Zensah® (<http://www.zensah.com>) has created seamless compression clothing, making their compression clothing a more ergonomic fit. Zensah® uses proprietary technology, and claims that they are 2 years ahead of their competitors. Another difference is that Zensah® uses pinpoint compression tailoring to the physiological needs of an athlete.

Running legend, and 1972 Olympian Jeff Galloway said, "The Zensah® leg sleeve could speed up your performance and reduce recovery time. According to research and runner reports compression sleeves improve performance of the most important muscle for running -- the calf muscle. The Zensah® leg sleeve is the only calf sleeve which incorporates pin point compression to the calf area. I recommend it for use when traveling on flights to and from a marathon."

"Our compression clothing has a more ergonomic fit, has specially engineered compression zones, and is far more comfortable than any other compression clothing on the market," Ryan Oliver, Director of Marketing of Zensah, stated brashly. "We allow athletes to focus on their training, and competition not on their clothing."

Zensah® uses pinpoint compression to target different muscle groups. Helping reduce the risk of Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) commonly caused by sitting for long hours on an airplane. Olympians who wear compression clothing going to Beijing can assure that they will be ready for the games.

"There is no question that with the success of Olympic athletes it will raise the awareness of the benefits of compression clothing. We believe that Zensah® will benefit greatly since our technology is superior. Athletes always are looking for that edge, and Zensah® has that qualitative advantage," said Ryan Oliver.

Source: www.prweb.com

4th China International Recycled Polyester Conference to be held in Sept

DATE: 2008/08/21

In 2008 there are many events taking place in China: tightened currency policy, new labor law and new enterprise income tax law, as well as the Recycling Economic Law, which will directly impact recycling industry. How will those changes in policies influence recycling industry in the future?

While dramatic changes are taking place in macro-environment, the recycling industry also faces severe challenges of internal, including fast expanding capacity, high flake prices and soaring costs, all are calling for production cutbacks. How should enterprises cope with challenges in 2008? Will they be able to take challenges as opportunities through technology innovation? What will be the right way to achieve industry upgrading? The 4th China Int'l Recycled Polyester Fiber Market & Tech Conference will held on Sep 2-4, 2008 at Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, China and provide you a good opportunity to look over those subjects.

Technology Innovation Section:

- Setting an eye on industry trend with a long-term strategic view: the growing strength of differentiated products, speed up your business with advanced technologies, how far are value-added recycled products from us? Comments on high-profitable products nowadays and in future.
- •What will be the impact from high-tech products to the market? How much efforts are required to put high-tech products into practical applications? How is the market diversified by differences in costs and marketing strategies? Which new product do you think has the greatest potential in 2008?

Eco-energy Section:

- Development must go in compliance with environment protection. As a green industry, recycling sector should coordinate with the whole industry chain, to contribute to environment protection.

- For enterprises who could not spare much investment on technology upgrade & import due to limited scale and financial strength, how to meet environment-protection requirement with existing technology? What may be the risks and opportunities brought by eco-energy economy?

Industry Reformation Section:

- With the enhanced macroeconomic regulation, costs concerning tax, environment-protection and feedstock keep growing, while new capacities continue to mushroom. Meanwhile, the end-user market is in a subtle situation with blurred boundary between high season and low season. All above are signs that it's time for an industry reformation.
- With single product variety and single spec, it will be difficult for producers to catch up with the changing market. It is necessary to take different varieties, varied specs and differentiated products as right approaches instead of price competition. How should producers enhance the value of their products through innovation, thus sustain development with high-techs?

Concerning the hot issues mentioned above, 4th China International Recycled Polyester Conference will enable market players to have a close look into those topics by sections and with different focuses. Recycled fiber market players, including producers, traders, facility suppliers, flake suppliers and finish-oil/accessory suppliers will congregate again to give opinions and exchange ideas about current market status and market future.

Source: China Chemical Fiber Economic Information Network

Innovation: the key to the development of Nantong's home textile industry

DATE: 2008/08/20

Through July 29 to 31, Mr. Du Yuzhou, President of China National Textile and Apparel Council (CNTAC), and Mr. Yang Donghui, Vice President of CNTAC and Director of China Home Textile Association (CHTA), investigated the current status of the home textile industry in Nantong, a famous production base in Jiangsu Province, China.

When visiting Jiangsu Violet Home Textile Co., Ltd., Mr. Yang highly appreciated home textile companies in Nantong for considering R & D as the key to development. Despite the weakness over the entire textile industry this year, Nantong's home textile sector has maintained stable increase. Taking Jiangsu Violet Home Textile Co., Ltd. as an example, its sales to foreign markets and domestic market increased by respectively 30% and 20%.

Blue-white printed cloth or indigo-print fabric is a kind of traditional printed-dyed handicraft of ancient Jiangsu and Zhejiang regions. And now it is favored by Goldsun Home Textiles, Inc. "The home textile industry is innovative, vigorous, enjoying a great potential. We should adhere to the road of innovation to further improve companies' ability of creating new things, in all the aspects including fabric, technology, culture and management. This is the key to the development of home textile industry," Mr. Du Yuzhou was deeply impressed by the creative design and commented.

Source: CNTEX

Swimming world remains divided on merits of Speedo's LZR suit

DATE: 2008/08/19

BEIJING: The Speedo Fastskin LZR Racer suit has allowed the lightning-fast world of swimming to shift into another gear.

Source: China Textile Network Company

Whether or not the suits are responsible for 24 world records falling at the Games or Michael Phelps winning eight gold medals remains a topic of discussion.

"They had an impact," Bob Bowman, Phelps' coach, said yesterday. "They certainly contributed."

Alan Thompson, head coach of the powerful Australian swim team, turned his nose up to any talk the blistering pace of the meet was set because of what the swimmers were wearing.

"Negligible," snorted Thompson when asked about the effect of the suits. "Everyone has them. They made no impact."

Ryan Cochrane, who ended Canada's medal drought in the pool by finishing third in the 1,500-metre freestyle (story, S9), said the suit's advantage might be as much psychological as physical.

"You put on a suit that you know has broken so many world records, you are going to be fast," said the Victoria native.

*Source: The Canadian Press
Toronto Star*