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Mar 08, 2017

USD 66.64 | EUR 70.37 | GBP 81.31 | JPY 0.59

Cotton Market		
Spot Price (Ex. Gin), 28.50-29 mm		
Rs./Bale	Rs./Candy	USD Cent/lb
20509	42900	82.07
Domestic Futures Price (Ex. Gin), March		
Rs./Bale	Rs./Candy	USD Cent/lb
21570	45119	86.32
International Futures Price		
NY ICE USD Cents/lb (March 2017)		77.28
ZCE Cotton: Yuan/MT (May 2017)		16,765
ZCE Cotton: USD Cents/lb		88.23
Cotlook A Index - Physical		88.10
Cotton & currency guide:		
<p>The ICE Cotton futures witnessed profit booking at higher levels. Benchmark May contract closed at 78.03 compared to Monday close of 79.11 a decline of 1.36%. Price tested the high of 79.36 and witnessed profit booking as funds were said to be booking profit. Selling across the global agro commodities added to the bearish tone. Higher dollar Index led correction across the commodities.</p> <p>Though the trend broadly continues to be bullish as there is no major fundamental change. The china market was interesting, China State Reserve sold 30,031 tonnes of cotton which was the entire quantity reserved for the auction on March 7. The average price declined nearly 1 percent at 15,332 yuan/tonne compared to previous day.</p>		

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Cotton observed a steady to firm trend to average between Rs 40,750-46,500/candy across major markets on Tuesday tracking futures market. Trade activity was lean as leading purchasers were not interested to purchase at such higher level pricing.

The 80 cents/lb was a strong technical resistance and traders used it to book profits. Price surged 39% in past 12 months amid projection for third straight global deficit spurring declining inventories. In week ended Feb. 23, U.S. export sales of upland cotton rose for third straight time to highest since Jan. 22, 2015, with increases by Vietnam, Bangladesh, China,

Turkey and Indonesia, USDA data showed.

**Compiled By Kotak Commodities Research Desk , contact us :
research@kotakcommodities.com, Source: Reuters, MCX, Market source**

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

China lowers GDP growth target to 6.5% for 2017

Anticipating further slowdown of its economic growth, China has lowered its GDP growth target for 2017 to 6.5 per cent. China's GDP growth has come down from 6.9 per cent in 2015 to 6.7 per cent last year, the lowest in more than 25 years. For 2017, fiscal deficit volume has been set at 2.38 trillion yuan (\$345 billion), up 200 billion yuan year-on-year.

Announcing the 6.5 per cent GDP growth target, premier Li Keqiang said, China will "pursue better results in actual economic work".

It is important for China to maintain steady growth to ensure employment and improve people's lives, Keqiang said in a report to opening ceremony of the annual session of the top legislature, the National People's Congress.

The projected 6.5 per cent GDP growth target is in line with both economic principles and realities, the report said.

The growth target will help stabilise market expectations and facilitate the country's structural adjustments. It will also contribute to achieving the goal of finishing the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects, the report added.

"An important reason for stressing the need to maintain steady growth is to ensure employment and improve people's lives," the report said.

The 2017 target for urban job creation has been increased by one million to over 11 million, which underlines the importance the Chinese government attaches to employment.

Source: fibre2fashion.com– Mar 07, 2017

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USA: Textile and Apparel Imports Rise as Shipments from Bangladesh, Indonesia Soar

The Department of Commerce's Office of Textiles and Apparel reports that monthly imports of cotton, wool, manmade fiber, silk blend, and non-cotton vegetable fiber textile and apparel products totaled 5.48 billion square meter equivalents in January, up 13.7 percent from December and 8.4 percent from January 2016.

Textile imports totaled 3.06 billion SME, up 8.1 percent from December and 6.7 percent from the previous year, while apparel imports of 2.42 billion SME were up 17.8 percent from December and 10.7 percent from a year earlier.

Country	Jan. imports (SME)	Monthly change (%)	Year-on-year change (%)
China	2.73 billion	+16.7	+11.0
Vietnam	422.3 million	+19.4	+16.8
India	414.1 million	+11.1	+10.9
Pakistan	223.5 million	+3.9	+7.6
Bangladesh	211.6 million	+30.8	+6.3
Mexico	186.9 million	+6.1	+10.0
Indonesia	156.9 million	+28.4	+3.6
South Korea	127.6 million	+9.6	+7.6
Cambodia	88.2 million		+14.6
Taiwan	80.9 million		+9.6

For the year ending in January 2017 imports were 63.3 billion SME, down 0.8 percent from a year earlier, as textile imports fell 0.8 percent to 36.2 billion SME and apparel imports lost 0.7 percent to 27.2 billion SME.

With respect to specific sources, imports of textile and apparel products (except cotton and silk blend textiles) saw the following changes in January.

Source: strtrade.com– Mar 08, 2017

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H&M factory in Myanmar damaged in violent labour dispute

Workers demanding better conditions and benefits have destroyed the production line of a Chinese-owned factory making clothes for Swedish fashion retailer Hennes & Mauritz, in one of the most violent labour disputes in Myanmar in years.

The month-old dispute, which also saw managers attacked, highlights the need for Aung San Suu Kyi's government to enact social and labour reforms, analysts say, while at the same time reassuring investors looking to tap the opening of one of the world's fastest growing economies after decades of isolation.

Production at Hangzhou Hundred-Tex Garment (Myanmar) Company, which was one of H&M's 40 suppliers in Myanmar, has been halted since Feb. 9, workers and managers in the Chinese company said.

"H&M group is deeply concerned about the recent conflict and our business relationship with this factory is on hold at the moment," the Swedish-based company said in a statement. It declined to elaborate on the impact on its global supply chain.

"We are monitoring the situation closely and are in close dialogue with concerned parties. We strongly distance ourselves from all kind of violence."

Labour activists say the protest in the commercial hub Yangon - in which equipment, buildings and vehicles were damaged - shows the lack of protection for workers in the labour-intensive textile industry.

The dispute started with a strike in late January following the sacking of a local labour union leader, according to workers and managers. Workers demanded a better performance review system and healthcare coverage.

It turned violent on Feb. 9, prompting the factory's closure. Video footage seen by Reuters shows dozens of female workers surrounding and beating a Chinese manager who was struggling to escape. One company manager and a local labour department official confirmed the authenticity of the footage.

In late February hundreds of workers stormed the factory and damaged facilities including textile machinery, computers and surveillance cameras. "The tension between workers and management was getting bigger day-by-day," said the company's former union leader That Paing Oo, who was fired in January for taking leave without approval.

He had led a labour protest late last year that successfully pushed Hangzhou Hundred-Tex Garment to compensate employees who did not receive overtime pay, several workers said. The company confirmed that it had paid a delayed overtime payment of 70 million kyat (\$51,736) to almost all of its 570 workers based on a settlement reached with the workers in December.

The Chinese embassy in Myanmar described the incident as an "attack" and has filed a "serious request" to Myanmar government to hold those involved accountable.

No one was arrested in the late February violence, police said. Workers' representatives are still negotiating with management over conditions once the factory is able to re-open.

The Chinese company makes garments such as skirts and shirts exclusively for H&M, its assistant manager San Htwe told Reuters. He said the damage would cost around \$75,000, and the company was planning to demand compensation from Myanmar's Labour Department.

The conflict is troublesome for H&M, which is widely seen as being at the forefront among large apparel companies in promoting workers' rights and fair wages.

H&M has called on governments in sourcing countries such as Cambodia and Bangladesh to ensure fair pay for workers. It has said it cannot unilaterally require individual suppliers raise wages as it generally shares them with other brands, although according to the owner that is not the case with the factory in this dispute.

H&M, which sources the bulk of its clothes in Asian low-cost countries such as Bangladesh, Cambodia and Myanmar, generally ranks high in sustainability indexes such as the Corporate Knights magazine's Global 100 index, where in 2016 it ranked 20th, lagging only Adidas in its sector.

CATCHING UP

Myanmar's fast-growing textile industry, which employs more than 300,000 workers, has become attractive to global apparel brands such as H&M and U.S. retailer Gap Inc following the easing of economic sanctions by the United States and the European Union.

A minimum monthly wage of around \$63, based on a six-day work week, gives Myanmar a competitive advantage over neighbouring garment producing hubs such as Vietnam and Cambodia, where the monthly minimum wage ranges from \$90 to \$145, according to the International Labor Organization.

But labour activists and industry analysts say Suu Kyi's government, in office for almost a year, has to do more to ensure safety for workers as well as investment stability for employers in a country where strikes and protests are not uncommon.

"Industrial relations are still only a few years old in the Myanmar garment industry, and effective cooperative structures are still being developed," said Jacob Clere, who works on a European Union-funded project to improve Myanmar's garment industry.

The Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, which was involved in mediation between workers and employers of Hangzhou Hundred-Tex Garment, said it was looking to amend laws to improve the legal framework for disputes.

Maung Maung Lay, vice president of Myanmar's Chamber of Commerce, said investors needed to be patient.

"Being a latecomer, there's a leap forward for Myanmar to catch up in terms of international labour laws," he said. "Rome wasn't built in a day."
(\$1 = 1,353.0000 kyat)

Source: dnaindia.com– Mar 07, 2017

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IFC supports modernisation of Uzbek cotton industry

IFC, a member of the World Bank Group, is launching a new programme in Uzbekistan in order to help cotton farmers improve their production efficiency, safeguard the environment, and improve labour practices. This programme is part of an effort by IFC to accelerate Uzbekistan's economic growth by modernising one of the country's most important industries.

The programme will help farmers to improve the quality and productivity of cotton production through the implementation of responsible cotton production principles. IFC will begin by introducing sustainable production practices and a continuous improvement system at 12 farms in the Fergana and Jizzakh regions as a pilot project. After the trial run, the programme will be expanded to 3,000 farms before ultimately being rolled out nationwide.

“Cotton from Uzbekistan has been recognised in international markets for its good quality,” said Moazzam Mekan, IFC regional manager for Central Asia. “By introducing sustainable cotton production principles, IFC will help to address concerns over the risk of forced labour, supporting investments in the sector and allowing producers to access valuable export markets. This will help to modernise the agriculture sector, create jobs and strengthen economic growth across the country.”

To roll out the project, IFC will partner with the holding company Uzpakhtasanoatexport, the ministry of agriculture, the Association of Farmers, the Federation of Trade Unions, and the International Labor Organization, and IFC's investee client, Indorama Kokand Textile. The project will be implemented with financial support provided by Hungarian EXIM Bank, IFC's long-term donor partner.

Uzbekistan became a member of IFC in 1993. Since 1996, IFC has invested \$144.7 million in Uzbekistan, including \$12.9 million in mobilised funds, to support 28 private sector projects in the financial, agribusiness, and food processing sectors.

Source: fibre2fashion.com- Mar 06, 2017

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Pakistan: Textile, clothing exports decline

The fall in exports was mainly driven by value-added products.

Last year, the government announced a textile policy that gave a 4pc rebate on the exports of readymade garments on a 10pc incremental increase over the preceding year. The rebate was 2pc and 1pc on the incremental increase in the exports of home textiles and fabric, respectively. No support was announced on raw material or yarn exports.

Under this policy, the government paid Rs2.5bn to exporters in the last fiscal year. Jan 15, 2017 onwards, the government not only increased the rebate to 7pc for readymade garments, but also allowed cash support of 4pc on yarn and grey cloth under the Rs180bn package announced by the prime minister.

Product-wise details show that the exports of readymade garments fell 3.60pc while those of knitwear dropped 3.44pc in January. Exports of bedwear went up 2.17pc, but those of towels fell 1.36pc.

In primary commodities, exports of cotton yarn witnessed a year-on-year increase of 4.37pc while those of cotton cloth fell 3.10pc, cotton carded 100pc and yarn other than cotton yarn 35.15pc.

Exports of made-up articles, excluding towels, witnessed negative growth of 13.36pc while those of tents, canvas and tarpaulin grew 39.37pc.

Exports of raw cotton also recorded a year-on-year decline of 49.77pc. Art, silk and synthetic textile exports declined 14.11pc.

One reason for the fall in exports of value-added textile products is that Pakistan's preferential access to the European Union under the GSP-Plus scheme did not boost the country's exports owing to a slump in demand in the 28-nation bloc.

In the seven months to January, the value of exported textile and clothing products fell 1.54pc year-on-year to \$7.224bn. One of the reasons cited for the textile package was the need for countering the rising cost of production. The package will be effective from January 2017 to June 2018. Overall export proceeds in July-Jan fell 3.21pc to \$11.685bn.

In April 2016, the Ministry of Commerce announced a Strategic Trade Policy Framework, which has yet to be implemented

Source: nassajiemrouz.com – Mar 07, 2017

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US trade deficit widens to near five-year high in January

America's foreign trade shortfall with the rest of the world widened in January to a near five-year high, as the country sourced more cell phones and textiles from overseas.

The total trade deficit in goods and services increased from -\$44.3bn in December to -\$48.5bn at the start of 2017, according to the *Department of Commerce*.

Imports of goods rose from \$192.6bn in December to \$197.6bn for January, while total imports increased by \$5.3bn to \$240.6bn.

Purchases of foreign-made cell phones jumped by \$1.0bn and those of textiles by \$300.0m.

In parallel, the surplus on the services balance slipped from \$21.4bn to \$21.2bn.

On a bilateral basis, the deficit on goods trade with the European Union decreased from -\$12.2bn in December to -\$11.5bn for January, whereas those with Canada and China widened. In the case of the EU, a drop in civilian aircraft exports was more than offset by \$2.4bn fewer imports of passenger cars and fertilisers and pesticides.

The US exported \$1.6bn less to China in January, primarily less soybeans and civilian aircraft, engines, and parts, even as Americans upped the ante on their purchases of Chinese apparel and footwear by \$2.0bn.

Americans also bought more goods from their northern neighbour during the month, to the tune of an extra \$1.0bn, mainly in the form of crude oil, passenger cars, and fuel oil, sending the goods deficit higher from -\$2.1bn to -\$3.6bn.

"The sharp widening in the trade deficit in January to its highest level in almost five years suggests that net trade will once again be a drag on first quarter GDP growth, which we expect to be close to 2% annualised.

"[...] That said, the recent improvement in the surveys suggests that exports should have expanded at a stronger pace in both February and March, so any drag is likely to be far smaller than in the fourth quarter.

Furthermore, with the headwind from the dollar's prior appreciation having eased and global growth picking up quite sharply, the outlook for exports is better now than it has been in some time," said Andrew Hunter, US economist at *Capital Economics*.

Source: digitallook.com– Mar 07, 2017

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Italian textile machinery to hog limelight at Techtexsil

The Association of Italian Textile Machinery Manufacturers (ACIMIT), a private body promoting Italian textile machinery, has announced that Italian machinery is set to steal to show with around 70 Italian machinery manufacturers taking part in Techtexsil Frankfurt, the world's largest industry event for technical textiles, from May 9 to 12, 2017, in Germany.

In recent years, the technical and innovative textiles industry has seen a great deal of development in many markets, and especially in Europe, where over 30 per cent of revenue in the textile industry derives from the production of textiles for technical and innovative applications.

Demand for such products has consequently also driven a demand for ad hoc machinery specifically designed for this sector. The offering promoted by Italy's textile machinery industry is thus expanding to the new demands of customers operating in this specific sector. ACIMIT estimates that more than 100 of its member companies are now working in this sector.

A testament to the dynamism that characterises the Italian textile machinery industry in the technical textiles sector comes from the sheer number of Italian manufacturers who will be exhibiting in Frankfurt.

Around 25 companies will be exhibiting in the exhibition area organised by the Italian Trade Agency and ACIMIT in hall 3.0, booth B08-B10.

The ACIMIT member companies participating in the expo are 4M Plants, Beschi, Bianco, Bombi, Bonino, Canalair, Caru, Cogne, Cubotex, Dell'orco & Villani, Etv, Fadis, Mesdan, Monti-Mac, Nosedo, Pmt Ribbons, Ratti, Rollmac, Sariel, Saspe, Sicam, Textape, Toscana Spazzole, Unitech, and Zappa.

Source: fibre2fashion.com– Mar 07, 2017

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China's First Wastewater Plant Using Radiation Opens

China inaugurated its first facility that uses electron beams to treat industrial wastewater yesterday, ushering in a new era for radiation technology in the world's leading textile producer.

Textile dyeing accounts for a fifth of all industrial wastewater pollution generated worldwide. While several industrial countries have used radiation to treat some of the effluent from textile dyeing plants, with the relocation of much of the industry to developing countries in Asia in recent years, a lot of the wastewater goes untreated.

“Despite advances in conventional wastewater treatment technology in recent years, radiation remains the only technology that can treat the most stubborn colorants in wastewater,” said Sunil Sabharwal, Radiation Processing Specialist at the IAEA. “The problem is that the technology exists in developed countries, while most of the need now is in the developing world.”

To bridge the knowledge gap, the IAEA ran a coordinated research project on the technology, including its transfer to several countries, mostly in Asia. Chinese researchers, for instance, have benefitted from the advice of experts from Hungary, Korea and Poland in the adoption of the technology and the construction of the plant, said Jianlong Wang, Deputy Director of the Nuclear and Energy Technology Institute at Tsinghua University in Beijing and the principal researcher behind the project.

The new plant in Jinhua city, 300 kilometers south of Shanghai, will treat 1500 cubic meters of wastewater per day, around a sixth of the plant's output. "If everything goes smoothly, we will be able to roll out the technology to the rest of the plant and eventually to other plants across the country," Wang said.

Before opting for radiation technology using electron beams, Chinese researchers had run an extensive set of feasibility experiments using the effluent from the plant, comparing electron beam technology with other methods. "Electron beam technology was the clear winner as both the more ecological and more effective option," Wang said.

Other countries with significant textile manufacturing industries, such as India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, are also considering introducing the technology with the assistance of the IAEA, Sabharwal said. India is already using gamma irradiation to treat municipal sewage sludge, he added.

Compounds too long for bacteria

Bacteria are the workhorses of wastewater treatment: they digest and break down pollutants.

Wastewater from textile dyeing, however, contains molecules that cannot be treated with bacteria.

To colour textiles, compounds with large, long and complex chains are used. Wastewater from the industry can contain more than 70 complex chemicals that do not easily degrade.

By irradiating the effluent using electron beams, scientists can break these complex chemicals into smaller molecules, which, in turn, can be treated and removed using normal biological processes.

Irradiation is done using short-lived reactive radicals than can interact with a wide range of pollutants and break them down.

Chinese researchers are also considering the use of electron beam technology to treat residues from pharmaceutical plants that produce antibiotics.

These residues are currently handled as hazardous waste because they contain antibiotics and antibiotic resistance genes that cannot be destroyed using conventional technologies, such as composting or oxidation.

Research has revealed that electron beam technology can effectively decompose the residual antibiotics and antibiotic resistance genes, Wang explained. The establishment of a demonstration plant at an industrial scale is planned for later this year, he added.

Source: iaea.org– Mar 07, 2017

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Reduce dependence on apparel exports: Sri Lankan PM

Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said the country cannot depend on exports of garments alone and now need needs to diversify into export of other products, as Sri Lanka cannot compete with other countries like Bangladesh, where wages are lower. He added that the time was ripe to move in to production of electronic items or robotic machines.

"He quoted a Harvard study, instituted by the Sri Lankan government, which also informed that the country should stop relying on exports of clothing alone," Sri Lankan media reports informed.

Source: fibre2fashion.com– Mar 08, 2017

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US apparel industry grows 3%, reaches \$218.7 bn in 2016

Apparel sales across women, men and children grew by 3 per cent in the US in 2016, to reach \$218.7 billion, according to a recent report. Changing consumer needs and an evolving retail marketplace were the drivers behind the apparel industry's overall sales performance last year.

The industry had positive overall performance with growth in most categories.

The apparel industry of the US has struggled to exceed 3 per cent sales growth since 2013, as significant gains in select consumer and retail segments were offset by declines in others, says a report by The NPD Group, a leading global information company.

The growth of online shopping, which was underscored during and immediately following the holiday season, was one of the most highlighted retail shifts of 2016. In 2011 online represented only 11 per cent of total US men's, women's, and children's apparel sales, but in 2016 that number rose to 19 per cent.

Pure-play e-commerce sites have been an important piece of online's growth, outpacing the overall channel performance. Online's continued growth has come at the expense of in-store sales, affecting the more traditional apparel department, national chain and specialty channels. The growth that occurred in the online, off-price, and mass channels came from a consumer focus on convenience, value, and price, said The NPD Group in a press release.

"The apparel industry is being pushed and pulled in different directions by consumers who are demanding something different, and looking to less traditional buying channels to find it," said Marshal Cohen, chief industry analyst, The NPD Group, Inc.

The apparel consumer's desire for comfort and style combined has sustained the growth of the athleisure movement for the last few years.

Athleisure, which is heavily driven by millennials but appeals to all age groups, continued to be a top growing apparel segment through 2016 with an 11 per cent increase that made it a \$45.9 billion market.

The emphasis on casual comfort attempted to take deeper roots in the women's intimates space last year, with increased emphasis on athletic-inspired products and newer bralette styles, but results fluctuated and ended in a slight uptick in year-over-year results.

Despite the strength of active, sales of tailored clothing increased 5 per cent.

Dresses retained their rank as one of the top performing categories in overall sales and growth with 5 per cent growth to reach \$15.6 billion.

Last year was also a positive one for jeans, another critical category for apparel, which finally rebounded in 2016 to align with the industry's 3 per cent growth rate, reaching \$15.3 billion in sales.

"Consumers may be driving the recent trends in apparel, but retail needs to respond and take ownership of the business back in order to capture the greater growth opportunities that exist," added Cohen.

Source: fibre2fashion.com– Mar 08, 2017

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Colombo Fashion Week to expand Sri Lanka fashion industry

The 14th Colombo Fashion Week (CFW) aims to promote Sri Lanka's capital city as a centre for progressive fashion and take the country's fashion industry to the next level.

The fashion extravaganza will take place from March 13-18 and will include Emerging Designers Showcase, Knowledge Workshops, Ethical Fashion Day, Project 7 and much more.

The Emerging Designers Showcase will be a platform for aspiring designers who have been chosen by a panel of judges. The designers have been mentored by the CFW team to produce their CFW Summer '18 collections. The Ethical Fashion Day resonates with the organiser's vision for sustainable, conscious and good fashion.

Project 7 is a specialised programme that features a series of workshops for participants to influence their creativity and ideation process with a new perspective.

CFW Frame encompassing fashion and art will also be a part of the upcoming fashion week to merge fashion with various art forms and movies.

The Fashion + Food segment of CFW aims to make the show a celebration of style and taste.

"Designer development has been the foundation of CFW since its inception, from an industry perspective, as it is instrumental in building the next generation of designers. This I believe, is the key ingredient of a healthy fashion and design industry.

While planning the year ahead, we carefully look at all aspects of the fashion design industry, to plan intervention for its betterment. This will always be our focus," said Ajai Vir Singh, founder of CFW.

Source: fibre2fashion.com– Mar 07, 2017

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Australia: Cotton prices poised for steady growth, as output falls short

Cotton prices are poised to hold long-term well above lows which lasted from late 2014 into 2016, with demand growth to outpace production increases despite "favourable returns" for growers, Abares said.

The official Australian commodities bureau stuck by a forecast of cotton prices, as measured by the Cotlook A index of physical values, averaging 78.0 cents a pound this season, on an August-to-July basis.

That is 1 cent higher than an upgraded estimate last week from the International Cotton Advisory Committee, although implies a fall ahead for the Cotlook A, which currently stand at 87.10 cents a pound.

Abares foresaw prices averaging 80.4 cents a pound in 2017-18, rising to 88.0 cents a pound for 2021-22.

'Favourable returns'

The forecasts factored in expectations of continued falls in world inventories, from a high of 24.3m tonnes reached two years ago, falling to 16.0m tonnes in 2021-22.

World cotton production is expected to rise by 1.8m tonnes to 24.7m tonnes next season, and to keep rising, at a rate of some 2% a year – supported by the appeal to farmers of the crop from its buoyant prices.

Abares forecast a "gradual increase in world cotton plantings in response to expected favourable returns to cotton production, compared with alternative crops".

The bureau forecast prices of corn, for instance, a major competitor in spring sowings programmes in many countries, showing slower growth, of less than 10%, over the next five years.

'GM saturation'

Improvements in cotton yields, by contrast, "will be constrained over this period because of the almost complete uptake of the current generation of genetically modified varieties".

However, India, the top cotton-producing country, will prove an exception, thanks to government-backed drives to support the likes of irrigation, pest control and mechanisation.

"Currently India has the lowest average lint yield among the major producing countries.

"Government training in the use of farm machinery in India will drive productivity gains through the reduction in labour-intensive operations such as hand-picking cotton."

'Expanding rapidly'

Meanwhile, global cotton consumption will, after a 7% jump next season, rise by 2.4% a year, spurred by "an expected rise in demand for clothing and textiles in Europe, the US, Japan and Australia".

This increasing demand is seen fuelling increased mill activity in particular in countries such as Bangladesh, Brazil, India, Indonesia and Turkey, outside the OECD group of nations.

"The textile and garment industries in these countries are expanding rapidly," Abares said, while flagging the prospect of "constrained" consumption in China, where a growing reliance on imported fibre will constrain industry competitiveness.

"China is facing strong competition in the international textile market from neighbouring, low-cost Asian countries such as India, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Indonesia and Cambodia."

Australian prospects

For Australia itself, Abares forecast sowings – which doubled to 557,400 hectares this season, thanks to good water availability – increasing further in 2017-18 to 570,000 hectares, driving production to 1.12m tonnes, the second biggest crop on record.

"Assuming average seasonal run-off between March and November, the level of water in irrigation dams should enable another large Australian cotton planting in 2017–18," the bureau said, seeing the ample water availability boosting yields too.

Exports - supported by the improved production, and "strong world demand for high quality Australian cotton" - were seen rising by 44% to 774,000 tonnes this season, and to 1.06m tonnes in 2017-18.

Source: agrimoney.com– Mar 07, 2017

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NATIONAL NEWS

Meeting set to review postal imports

The Finance Ministry will convene an inter-ministerial meeting next week to review a surge in postal imports of consumer goods through e-commerce as well as related security issues following seizures of high-altitude drones, bullion and fake currency in such parcels.

The meeting comes in the wake of the concern expressed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi over public grievances received by the PMO on issues relating to the import of goods through the postal network and courier services.

Boosting security

Ahead of the meeting, the Central Board of Excise & Customs (CBEC) has already begun the process of a “holistic review” of norms covering imports and exports through post to address these concerns and help in taking remedial actions, government sources, who did not wish to be identified, told *The Hindu*.

The measures include a move to tighten security by upgrading x-ray machines for non-intrusive scanning of mail parcels, they said. These steps will have an impact on the procedures for clearance of goods imported through post, they said.

The meeting will also aim to address inadequacies in data capture as the availability of comprehensive figures on imports by post and courier, facilitated by the e-commerce route, is currently lacking, the sources said. While some data is being captured by manual mode, it is not as reliable as information compiled through the CBEC’s electronic data interchange system.

A recent PayPal-Ipsos report showed that shoppers from India spent about ₹58,370 crore in 2016 while shopping online from international websites (mainly sites of U.S., Chinese and British firms).

Still, given the irritants that include prolonged delivery time, high customs duties and transactions in foreign currencies, websites offering products that were not available in India, and those promising free delivery and transactions in local currency saw better sales.

To ensure the implementation of more corrective legal, procedural and infrastructural measures, the CBEC – which will make a detailed presentation at the meeting on the issues relating to laws, procedures and infrastructure surrounding postal imports – has sought suggestions from other ministries/departments including the Directorate General of Foreign Trade in the Commerce & Industry ministry as well as the Department of Posts in the Communications ministry.

The Centre has also sought comments from stakeholders including e-commerce and courier firms. Several measures covering imports and exports via post have already been proposed in the Finance Bill 2017, including amendments in the Customs Act, 1962, to include Foreign Post Office and International Courier Terminal in the definition of a Customs Station, as well as to define Foreign Post Office and International Courier Terminal.

The proposed amendments to the Customs Act also seek to empower the CBEC to notify Foreign Post Offices and International Courier Terminals as well as to make regulations to provide for the form and manner in which an entry may be made in respect of goods imported or to be exported by post.

Besides, the Finance Bill 2017 proposes amendments in the Customs Tariff Act, 1975, to cover goods imported through courier service as well as personal imports by courier, sea, or land.

The developments assume significance in the context of promotion of exports and imports via the e-commerce route. As part of a mid-term review of the Foreign Trade Policy 2015–20, the Commerce ministry will meet stakeholders to address exporters’ concerns about certain “restrictions”.

Source: thehindu.com- Mar 07, 2017

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Global Organic Textile Standard releases new version 5.0

Version 5.0 of the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) has been released. It has stricter criteria for regenerated fibres. A category 'Combined Products' has also been added. GOTS is the worldwide recognised standard for the processing of textiles made with 95 per cent ('organic') or at least 70 per cent ('made with organic') certified organic fibres.

GOTS' core provisions such as the minimum content of certified organic fibres and the general bans on the use of toxic and harmful chemicals, conventional cotton, virgin polyester, GMOs, substances derived from GMOs and nanotechnology have been maintained.

The criteria for the 'additional fibre material' are now stricter regarding the environmentally improved and certified regenerated cellulosic fibres: The use of Viscose and Modal is now restricted to 10% (25% for sportswear and socks). Lyocell may still be used up to 30% because of its more sustainable manufacturing processes.

For the first time GOTS will allow 'Combined Products' such as prams with textile fabrics, bassinets, car seats or furniture with textile fabric upholstery to have certified and labelled fabric components.

Regarding the GOTS social criteria, an explicit section on Ethical Business Behaviour including a corruption ban was added, based on the UN Global Compact Principles.

The mandatory GOTS Social Compliance Management System for the first time includes guidance on the use of tools such as SAI Social Fingerprint to help companies measure and improve their social performance.

"Revision of GOTS always walks a fine line between strict and verifiable criteria and the needs of the market. For example, version 5.0 includes the tightening of composition requirements with respect to regenerated cellulosic fibres.

On the other hand, the new possibility of combined products with fabric components certified to GOTS helps include a range of products that could not carry the GOTS label in the past. This helps to increase our contribution

to sustainable development," says Rahul Bhajekar, GOTS director Standards Development and Quality Assurance.

GOTS 5.0 is the result of a year-long revision process with multi stakeholder input which is repeated every three years. All relevant stakeholders who operate internationally with expertise in the fields of organic production, textile colourants and chemicals, social criteria and industry, NGOs and consumer interests were invited to participate.

Invited organisations included Greenpeace, Clean Clothes Campaign, Fair Labour Association, FairWear Foundation, IFOAM, ILO, Transparency International, Social Accountability International (SAI) and Textile Exchange.

Source: fibre2fashion.com– Mar 07, 2017

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Punjab plans to save cotton crop from whitefly attack

The agricultural department of Punjab in India will remove whitefly-infested weeds across the cotton belt in order to boost the production of cotton in the state.

The department will work with district administrations to implement the plan. It will also schedule technical training sessions and awareness camps in time for purchasing and sowing cotton seeds.

Deputy commissioner of Bathinda Ghanshyam Thori said in a meeting with senior officials of concerned departments that the infested weeds will be removed by March 31 under the guidance of the agricultural department.

Thori also said that the departments removing weeds will submit weekly reports to the chief agriculture office of Bathinda.

The agricultural department of the state has already written to the deputy commissioners in its cotton sowing districts and has asked them to meet with different departments to eradicate infested weeds.

The department expects over 4 lakh hectares of area to come under cotton cultivation this year, which is 56.25 per cent more as compared to 2016. Close to 2.56 lakh hectares of area was under cotton cultivation in the last season and it was recorded as the lowest acreage for the crop since 1955.

About 60 per cent of the total crop sown over 4.5 lakh hectares of land in 2015 was affected due to pest attack.

The cotton yields this season was 8-8.5 quintals as compared to 2.5 quintal in 2015 and the price of cotton also touched Rs 6,000 per quintal.

Source: fibre2fashion.com- Mar 07, 2017

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Garment expo a big draw in Vijayawada

Style and Weaves, a three-day exhibition-cum-sale of handloom and designer garments was inaugurated at Seshasai Kalyana Mandapam in the city on Tuesday.

The exhibition with 65 stalls brought under one roof myriad flavours of the latest trends in the garments. Hyderabad-based organisation 'My Identity' organised the exhibition on the eve of International Women's Day.

The expo, which is on till March 9, has brought together the best of works of fashion designers and artisans showcasing garments and lifestyle accessories. The exhibition has on display, designer saris, dress material, jewellery and lifestyle accessories.

Designers from Kolkata, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Delhi and Hyderabad have descended to showcase their handicrafts, gold jewellery, imitation jewellery, hand bags and other fancy items.

"We have timed the exhibition with the festival season to enable buyers pick the best stuff available in both traditional and modern segments," said event manager Manjulatha.

She said the objective of the expo is to promote designers, women entrepreneurs, and artisans.

She said the local crowd have a sound knowledge of the latest trends and the expo was here to cater to their fashion garments' needs.

The best part of the exhibition is that it offers the best of both worlds, traditional and contemporary.

Source: newindianexpress.com- Mar 08, 2017

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MCX cotton may test a key resistance point

Cotton prices are on a strong footing. The cotton futures contract traded on the Multi Commodity Exchange has surged 13.3 per cent so far this year and currently trades at around ₹21,560 per bale (of 170 kg).

Strong demand from domestic millers as well as export demand has aided this rise.

The rally in cotton prices is anticipated to sustain as demand for the commodity is expected to remain high.

Prior to the recent rally, the MCX cotton futures contract was on a strong downtrend and has been so since July 2016, when it tumbled about 24 per cent from a high of ₹23,990 per bale. The contract halted at a low of ₹18,250 in November.

After a brief consolidation for about a month, the contract reversed higher, signalling the end of the downtrend.

Trend reversal

The strong break and a rise above ₹20,500 confirms the trend reversal in the contract.

The current uptrend is intact. But there is a key resistance coming up at around ₹21,800 — the 61.8 Fibonacci retracement level. A test of this resistance is likely in the near term.

Whether the contract breaks above this hurdle or not will decide the next leg of movement.

Any inability to break above the ₹21,800 mark may trigger a corrective fall. A pullback from this resistance point can drag the MCX-cotton futures contract lower to ₹21,000 or ₹20,800.

On the other hand, if the cotton futures contract manages to breach ₹21,800 decisively then the uptrend can extend to ₹22,500 or even ₹22,700 thereafter.

Since the MCX-Cotton futures contract has been on a continuous rally over the last couple of months, the uptrend could be ripening for a corrective fall.

This leaves the possibility high of the contract reversing lower from ₹21,800 in the coming weeks.

Source: thehindubusinessline.com- Mar 08, 2017

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Bollywood is a huge boost for Indian textiles and crafts: Ritu Kumar

Today (March 8) is International Women's Day. And, when it comes to women achievers in the country, one name that stands out is that of designer Ritu Kumar. Kumar, who began her career in 1969, feels that the fashion industry has opened up a huge opportunity for women in the crafts sector in India.

She says the sector has opened up not only for high end fashion designers, but also for women in other fields such as embroidery, printing and weaving. "Their knowledge of textiles is exceptionally detailed and something that is passed down from generations.

Women in urban areas are excellent multitaskers, managing home and work with equal flair. The trick is to prioritise. Today, Indian fashion caters to their [women's] many roles and is focused on versatility," she says.

Fashion v/s Indian textiles

From being an artistry student to one of the most respected designers in the country, Kumar says she learnt about textiles through her journey. She says, “I learnt textiles through the craft route. Back in the day, everybody wore saris. Fashion was about saris.

It was about the excellence in aesthetics and crafts. Fashion was more of a directory of that [aesthetics and crafts]. Also, fashion by definition means you have to change very fast. And, Indian textiles and crafts should not be changing that fast.”

Kumar believes that Indian fashion is evolving, which doesn't have to do much with Paris (France) or America, except for influences in style. “Intrinsically, my work has been very much about textiles of this country.

The journey has been enriching. I don't think if I was in any other country, I would have got the opportunity or experience as I have had in India,” she says.

On Bollywood

Kumar says films play an important role in taking Indian textiles forward. “All these films that [have the actresses] come with lehengas and over the top dresses or theatrical presentations, are a huge boost for the crafts. They are very effective and are getting the message out there,” says Kumar.

Source: hindustantimes.com- Mar 08, 2017

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FDCI associates with Jharkhand as partner state at upcoming AIFW 2017

The upcoming season of the Amazon India Fashion Week Autumn Winter 2017, the four-day event will be held from 15 March. President, Fashion Design Council of India, Sunil Sethi stated that associating with Jharkhand as their partner state for the Amazon India Fashion Week Autumn Winter 2017 is in continuation of their commitment to preserve crafts.

Jharkhand's hidden wonders will be unveiled by designers, who will translate its story through the magnificent swirls of fabric.

Jharkhand Silk Textile & Handicrafts Development corporation, Ltd. will be setting an example by creating new opportunities and making it profitable for weavers by giving them a definitive source of employment while making the best use of available resources.

The highlight of the show will be designer interpretations of the fabric de rigueur - Tussar. The show has been curated by Shaina NC, who will also be presenting her collection for the first time at AIFW.

Other designers include, Pinnacle Shruti Sancheti, Rina Dhaka and Dabiri by Divya and Ambika, the release said.

The event will also witness B2B (business to business) meetings and would be covered through a social media campaigning, The event will run from March 15 to 18 at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, Lodhi Road, Delhi

Source: yarnsandfibers.com- Mar 07, 2017

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How a 'failed' student turned a sick textile unit around

Ruhi Pradhan, an entrepreneur, cites better capacity utilisation and teamwork as factors for success

As a teenager, Mumbai-based Ruhi Pradhan was utterly confused as to what she intended to do in her life. When she failed in the 12th standard, she plunged into 'great depression'. But her parents supported her in this hour of personal crisis. In particular, her banker father encouraged her to overcome this grief. This worked miracles: she passed out of school and topped her college for graduation.

Then, without informing anyone, not even her parents, she cleared the tests to enter the Ahmedabad-based Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII). While still a student at EDII, she acquired a sick textile unit at Vapi, South Gujarat, turned it around, and attracted attention of others facing similar problems in the industrial district. Now, another sick unit in Vapi and one plastic-maker in Daman also want her to turn them around.

Her unit's products are now being supplied to biggies like Big Bazaar and ONGC. "Since the time I joined EDII, the spirit of entrepreneurship just keeps getting bigger and bigger. The 'greed' of achievement keeps on increasing. The environment motivates me a lot, day in and day out, and entrepreneurship keeps building within me," says the 24-year-old student-entrepreneur, who divides her time between Ahmedabad, Vapi and Mumbai on a weekly basis. Excerpts from the interview:

What difference did EDII make in your life?

I became more focussed and started taking things very seriously. On the very first day at EDII, I was taught that entrepreneurs are the ones who first identify a problem and then set out to provide the best solution.

That was how I began to look for a problem I could solve and came across the sick ready-made garment unit, Podoval Garments, 20 km from Vapi. It was being run by a Malayali businessman for about 10 years.

It had good infrastructure — 15 sewing machines and 10 skilled workers, plus 35 on contract work — but had fallen sick due to many reasons, particularly financial.

What were the problems being faced by it and how did you sort them out?

When I acquired 60 per cent stake in it for ₹3 lakh by signing a partnership deal in August 2016, it was making only 100 garment units per day against the installed capacity of 400. It had only a few local orders for garment supply. It was in default of a ₹5 lakh bank loan plus the owner had to pay ₹14 lakh to others.

In order to get over these bottlenecks, I reached out to other units and got work outsourced to my unit from other garmenting and textile units in the same area to maximise use of our infrastructure. We began to manufacture units for exports as well. I am regularly paying in monthly instalments all the balance dues and hope to break-even in some 18 months.

Subsequently, I acquired the remaining 40 per cent stake in the unit and renamed it Ruhi Kishore Pradhan Garments. Now we are making around 350 units per day. And workers are being paid regularly. Besides, we have vastly improved human resource relationships through a number of measures to make our workers rededicate themselves to production work wholeheartedly.

How did you convince the factory workers for this turnaround?

The 'formula' I used was that of teamwork and friendship. And I convinced them with my working performance. Now, I am able to successfully run a garment factory with almost 100 per cent work efficiency. Convinced with our new work culture, a local garment unit outsourced work to us for supplying garments for exports as well as for Big Bazaar and ONGC.

Where do you go from here? Any new plans up your sleeve?

Yes. Within four months, I have employed more than 50 people, of whom, 10 are on our own staff. And I am looking to expand and employ as many women as I can. And I am also toying with the idea of launching our own brand of garments for local consumption.

Besides, I am also talking with another garment unit in Vapi and a plastic unit in Daman for undertaking a similar turnaround.

Source: thehindubusinessline.com- Mar 08, 2017

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No economy for women

In stark contrast to worldwide trends, women in India are being forced out of the workforce

According to a recent report by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), India and Pakistan have the lowest rates of women's labour force participation in Asia, in sharp contrast to Nepal, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia that have the highest, with richer nations like Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia falling in between. Moreover, even this low rate of labour force participation seems to be declining.

The National Sample Survey found that while in 1999-2000, 25.9% of all women worked, by 2011-12 this proportion had dropped to 21.9%. This is in stark contrast to worldwide trends. Of the 185 nations that are part of the ILO database, since the 1990s, 114 countries have recorded an increase in the proportion of women in the workforce, and only 41 recorded declines, with India leading the pack. So what does this tell us about India's growth story?

The importance of access

A heartening explanation could be that with rising incomes, women have the opportunity to escape harsh labour in farms and on construction sites, and focus on their families. But a more pessimistic and possibly realistic explanation might be that with declining farm sizes, rising mechanisation, and consequently dwindling labour demands in agriculture, women are being forced out of the workforce. If true, this has serious implications for future policy.

Research has shown that when women have access to more work opportunities, they gladly take them. The India Human Development Survey (IHDS), jointly organised by researchers from the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) and the University of Maryland, finds that the provision of work under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) has brought more rural women

into wage labour. Among MGNREGA workers in 2011-12, a whopping 45% were not in wage labour before the scheme was initiated.

Moreover, the provision of MGNREGA work has far greater impact on women's paid work than that of men. Increased availability of wage work also enhances women's control over household decision-making.

Since NREGA work by itself cannot be expected to provide consistent stable employment for women, it is imperative to explore other avenues. From a policy perspective, two main challenges have to be addressed for augmenting women's workforce participation rates.

First, in view of shrinking farm work, we need to create opportunities for women to move from agricultural to non-agricultural manual work. Second, we must foster a work environment that allows more women, especially urban and educated women, to take up salaried jobs.

In her research, Lei Lei, a sociologist at the University of Maryland, finds that in villages where roads were constructed between the first (2004-05) and second (2011-12) waves of IHDS, both men and women were more likely to undertake non-agricultural work but this effect was greater for women. Such work has a cascading effect as construction of concrete roads also improves transportation services such as buses, which, in turn, could facilitate movement of the rural workforce, especially women, into non-agricultural work in neighbouring villages and towns.

At the other end of the employment spectrum, however, there is a need to make it possible for educated women to continue to work even while raising families. In a context where women continue to bear the major share of household work and childcare, the prevalence of a rigid work environment in India and the dearth of family-friendly work institutions create impediments to women's access to white-collar jobs in the formal sector.

Second, long distances between the home and the workplace increase both commuting time and work burdens, leaving workers with even less time for family duties.

Another aspect of the skewed work-family equation for women in India is the demand for investing in children's education over professional achievement.

Research by Alaka Basu, a sociologist at Cornell University, and Sonalde Desai (co-author of this article) highlights the contrast between the reasons for fertility decline in the West, where it was fuelled by the desire for self-fulfilment among both men and women, and in India, where small families have emanated from the desire to promote future achievements of children by focusing on their education rather than on better employment prospects for the parents.

This has led to urban and educated Indian women dropping out of the labour pool in contradistinction to their counterparts in Japan and Korea, for example, who have instead opted out of marriage, resulting in a dip in fertility rates in the latter countries to barely 1.3 child(ren) per couple. Neither of these, however, seems an optimal outcome for society. The only way this conundrum can be addressed is by encouraging workplaces to become more responsive to family needs and to promote sharing of household responsibilities between both genders — something that Scandinavian countries have emphasised.

Sharing the burden

Few organisations are willing to consider challenges involved in generating a work-life balance. Even before the influx of global firms in India, work structures in Indian companies and even the government were highly inflexible.

Over the past two decades, these demands have grown. With rising global competition, Indian firms have chosen to follow the American model with demands for extended work hours as well as attendance on Saturdays and Sundays. This creates a time bind for both men and women where something must give.

An interesting repercussion of this work dynamic is reflected in a recent study titled ‘Millennial Careers: 2020 Vision’, by ManpowerGroup, conducted across 25 countries and encompassing 19,000 working millennials and 1,500 hiring managers.

The study found that young workers in India worked 52 hours per week as against, say, 42 hours by their counterparts in Canada.

Work-family balance requires increased participation by men in household chores and caring for children. However, workplace inflexibility makes for difficult choices, involving trade-offs between investing in careers of husbands vis-à-vis those of wives, often resulting in women taking a back seat and at times even dropping out of the workforce.

The Economic Survey 2016-17 expressed concern that the demographic dividend is already receding, reducing the opportunity for the Indian economy to catch up with its East Asian counterparts.

However, the numeric consequences of reducing obstacles to women's full economic participation far exceed the demographic advantages of having a larger pool of young workers. It is thus high time to talk of the gender dividend rather than the demographic dividend.

Source: thehindu.com- Mar 08, 2017

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