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NEWS CLIPPINGS –19-04-2018

CAI to set up farmers' training institute in Mumbai	Business Standard http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/cai-to-set-up-farmers-training-institute-in-mumbai-118041200932_1.html

The Cotton Association of India (CAI) plans to set up a full-fledged training institute for farmers in Mumbai, at a time when the country's cotton sector is experiencing a difficult phase, an official said here on Thursday.

CAI President A.S. Ganatra said that its board has cleared the proposal to establish an All India Training Centre for Farmers at its Cotton Green premises in south Mumbai.

"We are conscious of the challenges ahead in realising this dream. But, with the support of all the stakeholders, we can achieve it. It would go a long way in realising Prime Minister Narendra Modi's dream of doubling farmers' incomes by 2022," Ganatra said at the inaugural session of "Cotton India 2018" national conference earlier.

At present, cotton is grown in 10 states in the country over 122 lakh hectares, under varying agro-climatic conditions, with relatively small land holdings. Nearly 60 per cent of the total area under cotton is rain-fed making is susceptible to the vagaries of nature.

"Despite all odds, the sector has notched an envious growth and carved a niche for itself in the world cotton market. Today, India is the world leader with a crop of 360 lakh bales of 170 kg cotton each, from nearly one-third of the global acreage," Ganatra said. Besides, India is the second-largest consumer of cotton, ranking next only to China, with the annual domestic consumption likely to touch 330 lakh bales during the current year.

This is further bolstered by several new textile mills coming up in Gujarat and other states adding around 3.50 million new spindles this year, he added. India is not only the second-largest exporter of cotton in the world after the USA but also has a vibrant import market. He said that there exists a huge untapped potential in this sector and if exploited to its optimum, Indian can become a "cotton superpower" in the world.

"We have taken giant strides in terms of productivity, but its still below the global average. Against the world average productivity mark of 779 kg per hectare, India still manages around 500 kgs per hectare," Ganatra pointed out.

If the country can achieve the world per hectare average productivity mark, the Indian cotton output would witness a quantum jump, he opined. Referring to other issues bogging down the sector, he said excess moisture due to pouring water on the cotton bales, poor quality of package of the bales, lack of uniformity in bale weight and different trading norms across the country, absence of contract sanctity and lack of training facilities need urgent attention.

Cancellation of Monsanto's patent over Bt cotton by Delhi HC: Ensuring agricultural security	Financial Express https://www.financialexpress.com/opinion/cancellation-of-monsantos-patent-over-bt-cotton-by-delhi-hc-ensuring-agricultural-security/1137743/

On April 11, 2018, a division bench of the Delhi High Court pronounced a judgment overturning the decision of a single-judge bench regarding the interpretation of Section 3(j) of the Indian Patents Act, 1970, holding that transgenic plants, seeds and varieties cannot be patented. This is a path breaking judgment, the full import of which is yet to be assessed. The case arose over a dispute between several seed companies and Monsanto regarding Bt cotton trait fee payments. This genetically modified seed was introduced in India in 2002 amidst a raging controversy. Many "activists" were alarmed at the government's decision to permit GM crops in India, and there were widespread agitations. Perhaps, because of that past history, Bt cotton continues to be the only genetically modified crop permitted in India, and has captured about 95% of the crop area under cotton. However, the increase in productivity has not been commensurate. The average yield was 472 kg per hectare in 2005-06 (when only about 15% of the cotton crop was covered by Bt cotton.) The yield rose marginally to 484 kg per hectare in 2015-16.

Initially, the crux of the dispute between Monsanto and the seed companies was the quantum of royalties or trait value to be paid by the latter. In 2010, some state governments fixed the maximum retail prices of cotton seeds, which included the trait values as a component. The governments did this so as to ensure that seeds were available to the farmers at reasonable prices. However, Monsanto put pressure on the seed companies to pay the trait values as determined by them on the ground that they had a patent on Bt cotton seeds. The seed companies had no alternative but to pay under protest. In June 2015, the Nagpur Bench of the Bombay High Court upheld the right and, therefore, the action of the government of Maharashtra in fixing the maximum retail price of seeds, including the trait value. Subsequently, in July 2015, the seed companies wrote to Monsanto that they cannot pay a higher trait value. Interestingly, it was not only the seed companies of Andhra Pradesh, but almost all others, along with the National Seeds Association of India, that backed this action.

Since different state governments were fixing different retail prices and trait values, the Centre decided that in the best interest of all stakeholders, it would be advisable to have a uniform price and trait value for the entire country. In pursuance thereof, it issued orders in December 2015, fixing uniform prices for the entire country, with effect from April 1, 2016. Predictably, Monsanto challenged this diktat. It was during the course of meeting this challenge that the fundamental question arose as to whether Monsanto had a valid patent in conformity with the Indian Patents Act, 1970. The main issue before the division bench of the Delhi High Court was whether Section 3 (j) of the Indian Patents Act, 1970, excludes from patentability plants and animals in whole or any part thereof, other than microorganisms but including seeds, varieties and species and essentially biological processes for production or propagation of plants and animals.

The division bench has ruled that Monsanto does not have a valid patent and, therefore, at best, it can seek compensation under the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers Rights Act, 2001. The judgment has been criticised on various grounds; one of them being that the patent had been granted by the Patent Office of the government. This is a tangential argument. Many patents granted by the Patent Office in the past have been challenged, some successfully. All actions of the government bodies are open to scrutiny and challenge at any point in time. The entire issue has grave implications for security of agriculture in the country as nearly half the population is financially dependent on it. The Parliament was conscious of the dangers of monopoly in the supply of agricultural inputs, including seeds. That is why it excluded from patentability “a method of agriculture or horticulture” under section 3(h) and “plants and animals in whole or any part thereof… including seeds…” under section 3(j).

Having excluded seeds, etc, from the ambit of patents to give due protection and encouragement to research, the Centre enacted a sui generis law, viz, the Protection of Plant Varieties & Farmers Rights Act 2001, to protect the intellectual property rights of breeders of plant varieties. In terms of acreage, India is ranked fourth after the US, Brazil and Argentina in adopting GM crops, but while the top three grow more than one GM crop, we have only cotton. Brinjal was cleared for introduction by the Genetic Engineering Approvals Committee in 2010, but it has been put on an indefinite hold.

It has been argued by some that this judgment of the Delhi High Court will discourage research and development in agriculture. On the contrary, others anticipate that with the clarity flowing out of the judgment, research will get a shot in the arm. Only time will tell which way research in agriculture will be impacted. But, it is abundantly clear that in a country where farming is largely of the subsistence variety, the state governments and the Centre will not let monopolists dictate prices of essential inputs.

Plan on cotton seed prices to come next week	**Economic Times** https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/plan-on-cotton-seed-prices-to-come-next-week/articleshow/63824136.cms

India’s farm ministry will announce its course of action on cotton seed prices by next week after the Delhi High Court judgement that said Monsanto Technologies’ patents on Bt cotton seed variety Bollgard II were not valid.

Officials in the agriculture ministry said they want to assess implications of the order on cotton seed prices for which the ministry is the regulatory agency. Meanwhile, the agriculture secretary said normal monsoon forecast by the weather office was a shot in the arm for the sector and good for the agriculture economy. He added that they expected growth in productivity due to availability of water and agriculture growth to be better than that in the previous years.

“By next week, the course of action the government needs to take…we will see. After reading the judgment, if there are any directions to the government… we will abide by that,” said Shobhana K Pattanayak, secretary, department of agriculture, cooperation & farmers’ welfare.

Indian Textile Global Summit to be organized by GCCI in May	**KNN India** http://knnindia.co.in/news/newsdetails/sectors/indian-textile-global-summit-to-be-organized-by-gcci-in-may

The Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and industry in association with Maskati Cloth Market Mahajan (MCMM) is going to organize Farm to Fashion: Indian Textile Global Summit 2018 from May 4-6, 2018.

With this summit, entire value chain of textiles will get a common platform to develop a vision for the industry for 2030. All the participants of this event will get an opportunity to build a web of network with exhibitors, delegates, government officials and various representatives of the textile industries from various parts of the country.

The event will also shed light on various issues related to women empowerment, youth employment, challenges faced by cotton farmers and positioning of Indian textile industry as the pioneer in environment-friendly industry practices.

This global textile summit will have 17 technical sessions by global speakers and 150 exhibitors from India will exhibit best of Indian Fabrics.

Apart from that, other attraction points of the event are café corners, fashion show and industrial visit.

Experts and scholars will offer information and unveil insights about latest research, trends, innovations, best practices along with the solutions to the challenges at hand.

As the title suggest, Farm to Fashion, this summit will showcase exclusive ranges of clothing lines with an iconic fashion show by few of country's distinguished fashion designers, apparitional stylists and leading fabric companies of the world.

The farm to fashion global summit is an initiative taken by Gujarat government to fill the production and-manufacturing gap.

Being a highest cotton growing state, Gujarat falls behind in manufacturing and thus in this direction Gujarat government is following PM Modi 5F formula - farm to fibre, fibre to factory, factory to fashion, fashion to foreign," said Mr. Shailesh Patwari, President, GCCI.

He added that the summit will deliberate upon the opportunity and challenges in various areas such as cotton, ginning, spinning, weaving, processing, garmenting, technical textiles, environment management, and skill development in detail.

Govt advances deadline for GST seller returns for April, May, June	**Business Standard** http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/govt-advances-deadline-for-gst-seller-returns-for-april-may-june-118041900016_1.html

The government has advanced the deadlines for filing of seller forms under the goods and services tax, GSTR-1, for April, May and June, in comparison to those given for previous months.

GSTR-1 for the month of April will have to be filed by May 31. Earlier, 40 days were given for filing these, which would have made June 10 the deadline. Returns for May have to be filed by June 10 and for June by July 10. So, only 10 days after the month ends, against the earlier 40 days.

Abhishek Jain, indirect tax partner at consultants EY India, said businesses take four of five days to close the accounts after the month ends. Leaving them five or six days to file the return.

However, the government has not changed the deadline for filing GSTR-3B. These are to still be filed by the 20th of the following month. The idea is to allow reconciliation between the two forms, GSTR-3B and GSTR-1. According to the original plan, the GST Council had decided to give only 10 days to file GSTR-1, after which GSTR-2, the return for buyers, had to be finalised and filed within the next five days. These were to be then used for filing GSTR-3 forms, to claim credits.

However, the outcry over complicated returns prompted the Council to redo this. GSTR-1 was retained; GSTR-2 and GSTR-3 forms were suspended. In place of GSTR-3 came GSTR-3B, meant for the initial months but continuing.

Also, the government gave 40 days for an assessee to file GSTR-1 after the month in question ended. Since GSTR-2 has been suspended, such reconciliation will enable companies to liase with their vendors to rectify any incorrect recording at their end, Jain said.

However, the issue is why the deadlines have been changed when the group of ministers on the subject, headed by Bihar's deputy chief minister, Sushil Modi, is trying to bring in single returns.

India-UK free trade agreement to boost economic ties: UKIBC	**Money Control** https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/business/economy/india-uk-free-trade-agreement-to-boost-economic-ties-ukibc-2551607.html

The UK India Business Council (UKIBC) said the joint trade review being undertaken by both the sides is an important initiative, which will secure quicker wins. A free trade agreement (FTA) between India and the UK will help boost two-way commerce and investments between the countries, a UKIBC's report said. The UK India Business Council (UKIBC) said the joint trade review being undertaken by both the sides is an important initiative, which will secure quicker wins. "An India-UK free trade agreement would, no doubt, boost trade by lowering tariffs and aligning standards. This, however, will not happen quickly," the council said in its report - The UK and India: The Bilateral Trade Relationship. In a FTA, two trading partners cut or eliminate duties on most number of goods traded between them besides liberalise norms to promote services trade and boost investments.

Besides, the report suggested for a tighter alignment of the bilateral economic architecture, including the UK-India CEO Forum and Joint Economic and Trade Committee. It also called for a focused outreach campaigns in both the countries, informing trade associations about the opportunities in each other markets and ways to access them.

It recommended that like the UK's Department for International Trade's Export Opportunities programme, which identifies opportunities in India for UK exporters, Indian government should also consider introducing a similar programme. Further, it stated that huge potential exists for businesses of both the countries to increase trade and investments.

"UK exporters will see growth across sectors, but particularly in food and drink, healthcare, machine tools, and technology-focused areas like smart cities, cyber security and digital services," the report said. It added that Indian exporters could explore areas like pharmaceutical, apparel, footwear, vehicles and electronic equipment. On investment side, the report said that industry 4.0 provide opportunities for the UK and India to enhance collaboration.

Will take up GST refund issue with Finance Ministry: Suresh Prabhu	Indian Express http://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2018/apr/19/will-take-up-gst-refund-issue-with-finance-ministry-suresh-prabhu-1803352.html

Commerce and Industry Minister Suresh Prabhu, in a ministerial meeting on Wednesday, promised to address the problems faced by exporters and to take up the Goods and Service Tax (GST) refund issue with the Finance Ministry.

"I have asked exporters to give me details of the pending refunds. GST refund is a major issue for exports. I will take it up with the Finance Ministry," Prabhu said.

Exporters have claimed that over 60 per cent of their refunds are caught in red tape. The delay in GST refund has blocked their working capital, they complained.

The government has sanctioned GST refunds to exporters to the tune of `17,616 crore till March 2018, of which `9,604 crore is on account of the Integrated GST refund and another `5,510 crore towards refund on input credit by the Centre.

"We need a concrete plan to work on that," Prabhu said, adding that he would call a ministerial meeting to discuss issues pertaining to outbound shipments.

Apart from refunds, exporters also raised issues related to increasing logistics costs and inadequate infrastructure at ports.

In order to address the issues, Prabhu has sought a detailed action plan from exporters from all sectors in an interaction with them here.

India's exports dipped after a gap of four months in March, but finished FY 2017-18 with a rise of 9.78 per cent to $302.84 billion.

The trade deficit remained a matter of concern and labour-intensive sectors such as gems and jewellery, RMG of all textiles, jute manufacturing including floor covering and carpets, and agri products were in the negative territory.

FIEO, the apex body of Indian export promotion organisations, said that these sectors, dominated by MSMEs, are still facing liquidity problems as banks and lending agencies are tightening norms.

Full GST Implementation Must To Avoid Tax Revenue Underperformance: IMF	NDTV.Com https://www.ndtv.com/business/full-gst-implementation-must-to-avoid-tax-revenue-underperformance-international-monetary-fund-imf-1839495

Fiscal consolidation was paused in 2017/18 as the economy recovered from disruptions related to notes ban, GST, IMF says. India, which has recovered from disruptions caused by demonetisation and the rollout of the GST, must fully implement the new nationwide indirect tax to avoid tax revenue underperformance resulting in cuts to capital expenditures, the IMF said today.

In its Fiscal Monitor report titled 'Capitalising on Good times', the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said that relatively buoyant revenues supported by base-broadening efforts and lower capital expenditures were offset by higher spending (including higher compensation to states for the rollout of the GST) and lower profit transfers from the Reserve Bank of India due to costs incurred during the demonetisation.

In India, fiscal consolidation was paused in fiscal year 2017/18 at the federal level as the economy recovered from disruptions related to demonetisation and the rollout of the GST, it said.

"In India, a return to a gradual path of growth-friendly fiscal consolidation is desirable to create fiscal space, but full and smooth implementation of the new goods and services tax is necessary to avoid tax revenue underperformance resulting in cuts to capital expenditures," the IMF said.

According to the IMF, overall fiscal deficits in emerging markets and middle-income economies fell marginally in 2017 for the first time after four years of steady increase, explained mainly by fiscal adjustment among commodity exporters.

On average, the overall deficit declined from 4.8 per cent of GDP in 2016 to 4.4 per cent of GDP in 2017, with diverging fiscal developments across countries. Commodity exporters have continued to push through reform to adjust to "lower for longer" oil prices.

The headline fiscal balances improved in most commodity exporters, supported by a pickup in commodity prices and by expenditure cuts (Gulf Cooperation Council members, Mexico, and Russia).

In contrast, the fiscal position was relaxed in major non commodity exporters, including to provide stimulus to the economy (China, India, Thailand), the IMF said.

The average trend among emerging market and middle-income economies is largely driven by rising fiscal deficits in China, which are higher when off-budget spending is also taken into account. In contrast, fiscal consolidation in Brazil continued in 2017, it added.

According to the report, in emerging market and developing economies, fiscal policy is appropriately focused on consolidation, especially in those countries that are still adjusting to lower commodity prices. However, the speed of adjustment could be fine-tuned and, in some cases, it can be more ambitious, it said. "Several countries could step up the speed of their fiscal adjustment," the IMF said, adding that given the strength of the recovery, Brazil should quicken the pace of consolidation and front-load the fiscal effort.

World Trade Centre at Nagpur to become reality soon	**The Hitavada** http://thehitavada.com/Encyc/2018/4/18/World-Trade-Centre-at-Nagpur-to-become-reality-soon.aspx

Staff Reporter,

Recognising the future potential of Nagpur as a vibrant city with possibility to emerge as logistics and defence manufacturing hub, the iconic brand World Trade Centre (WTC) has decided to start a Centre at Nagpur very soon. This will be third WTC in Maharashtra after Mumbai and Pune and will be a game changer for Nagpur's commercial skyline.

A special team of World Trade Centres Association (WTCA) carried out preliminary survey of Orange city and zeroed on the location as well. Sharing this happy development with select group of mediapersons, WTCA India Director Zubin Jall said that they would like to locate WTC near inter-change of Metro routes near Sitabuldi. Infact, world over WTC has preferred such locations in Central Business District (CBD) and in case of Nagpur CBD has been proposed at Sitabuldi.

WTCA team also interacted with key policy makers including senior officers of Nagpur Metro Rail to know about project. According to Jall, WTCA is in a final stage of identifying a licencee and exact location and hoped that after place, person is identified, the WTC will become a reality within next 36 to 42 months. But unlike other commercial buildings, WTC itself becomes a prestigious address for businesses, because of its iconic brand value recognised globally. WTCA had built the WTC in New York and also at Mumbai. Recent WTC launch at New Delhi was a run-away success, Jall stated while playing down the current sluggish mood of realty market.

According to Jall, WTCs all over the world are interconnected and hold regular seminars, which are attended by Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of big companies. WTCA provide special services to tenants and also has an exclusive WTC Club and annual events and meets are revenue churners, he said. About over-supply of retail space the WTCA top boss claimed that realty sector had witnessed many ups and downs and very soon market would bounce back.

Responding to apprehension about slowdown in the realty market due to decisions like demonetisation, introduction of Goods and Services Tax (GST) and Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA), Jall welcomed these steps and described them as “Right step in the interest of consumer. In the long run these decisions will help the real estate sector.”

About massive commercial complexes proposed by NMRCL along metro route including one proposed at Morris College ground, Jall claimed that WTC never competes with other developers and has never faced any problem to sell the space.

Jall also ruled out bidding for this project of Nagpur Metro and stated that WTC never bids for any project and construct properties as per their own design and specifications. About the size and scale of proposed WTC at Nagpur, Jall said “We have not decided the size of the centre and it will be decided by our licencee depending upon the market conditions.”

Justifying the decision to go for WTC at Tier-II city like Nagpur, WTCA India chief said, big cities like Mumbai, Delhi and Pune are already saturated and there is hardly any scope for future growth. Next centres of growth are Tier-II cities like Nagpur and WTC can be a game-changer, he predicted. Presently WTCs are functional at five places in India and have selected licencees in 25 more cities-part of Smart City project.

Khadi goes global: South Africa to showcase in textile event	**Business Line** https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/national/khadi-goes-global-south-africa-to-showcase-in-textile-event/article23586078.ece

Noted fashion designer Gavin Rajah to choreograph a 20-minute textile event, aimed at projecting Khadi in a modern and trendy style, at Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg on April 30, during the concluding session of the two-day India-South Africa Business Summit, as a 'The Tribute to the Mahatma and Madiba (Nelson Mandela)'.

The program is being held in memory of 125 years of the Pietermaritzburg incident where Gandhi was thrown out of a train by White supremacists, along with Mandela's birth centenary. The Summit will be also be attended by Union Minister for Commerce, Industries and Civil Aviation Suresh Prabhu.

The event seeks to showcase New India in South Africa, with the intent to double two-way bilateral trade and investment within a five-year period. Saxena said on Wednesday that the KVIC had dispatched more than double the length of the desired fabric.

In March, Ruchira Kamboj, Indian High Commissioner in Pretoria, requested Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) Chairman Vinai Kumar Saxena, to provide different Khadi fabrics, including silk and muslin, in both embroidered and printed forms reflected by Gavin Rajah, who had played an active role as UNICEF's goodwill ambassador.

Saxena said when Gandhiji reached South Africa, a war against apartheid and British rule was started. Now, Khadi is all set to bring economic freedom as the 'Ahimsa Silk' would showcase its piousness and economic feasibility in the land of Madiba, the clan name of Mandela.

As part of the Centenary Year celebrations of Gandhiji's Swadeshi Movement, the High Commission of India in Uganda unveiled the Gandhi Charkha – gifted by KVIC – at the Gandhi Heritage Site at Jinja in Uganda on October 2, 2017, which is also the International Day of Non-Violence. The 25-kg Charkha was made of high-quality teak wood and is 3.6 feet long, 1 foot 11 inch tall and 1.5 feet wide, made in Ahmedabad by a Khadi institution. It was the first testimony that a Charkha had gone to the foreign soil.

Pakistan:Cotton arrivals at ginning factories up by 7.51pc	**Nation.com.PK** https://nation.com.pk/04-Feb-2018/cotton-arrivals-at-ginning-factories-up-by-7-51pc

The arrivals of cotton at ginning factories across the country till January 31, 2018 registered 7.51 per cent increase compared to corresponding period last year, disclosed a fortnightly cotton arrival report released by Pakistan Cotton Ginners' Association (PCGA) here on Saturday.

The report revealed that over 11.432 million bales of cotton arrived at various ginneries in Pakistan as on January 31, compared to 10.634 million bales during the corresponding period of last season. The report pointed out that the cotton arrivals in Punjab increased by 4.84 per cent while in Sindh cotton arrivals increased by 12.34 per cent.

Of the total arrivals of 11.432 million bales at various ginneries in Pakistan, 11.432 million bales were pressed by ginners, of which 10.434 million bales were sold, leaving an unsold stock of 9,97,937 bales with the ginners, as on January 31st, according to the data. The textile mills in country consumed 1,02,18,322 million bales, while another 2,16,615 bales of cotton were sold to exporters.

Ginneries in Punjab recorded arrival of 71,81,153 bales against the last year arrival of 68,49,887 bales. Sindh ginneries recorded arrival of 42,51.721 bales while last year Sindh received 37,84,740 bales. Textile mills bought

1,02,18,322 bales while exporters bought 2,16,615 bales. The total bales sold out so far were calculated at 1,04,34,,937 bales.

While 9,97,937 bales are lying unsold because some ginners are waiting for higher prices of cotton in market.

The break-up shows that Multan received 2,82,342 bales, 3.97% decrease than last year, Lodhran 1,68,363 bales, 12.14% decrease, Khanewal 7,01,642 bales, an increase of 21.39%, Muzaffargarh 3,62,176 bales, an increase of 11.45%, Dera Ghazi Khan 4,36,513, an increase of 26.83%, Rajanpur 4,47,244 bales, 34.18 % increase, Layyah 2,94,084 bales, 5.86% increase, Vehari 5,78,481 bales, 52.38% increase, Sahiwal 2,71,221 bales, 27.38% more than last year, Pakpattan 39,130 bales, 6.52% decrease, Okara 15,775 bales, 17.35% down, Toba Tek Singh 1,74,882 bales, 9.22% increase, Faisalabad 36,549 bales, 0.33% less than last year, Jhang 21,232, showing a decrease of 29.83%, Mianwali 2,06,219, a decrease of 24.94%, Bhakkar 85,097, up 35.88%, Sargodha 7,293, 25.94% decrease, Rahimyar Khan 10,67,501 bales, 7.38% decrease, Bahawalpur 10,03,078, an increase of 2.89%, and Bahawalnagar 9,73,995 bales, a decrease of 17.96%.

In Sindh, Hyderabad received 2,51,684 bales, 10.64% more than last year, Mirpur Khas (Thar) 2,21,367 bales, 18.20% less, Sangarh13,82,037 bales, 12.56% increase, Nawabshah 3,48,299 bales, 5.92 % increase, Naushero Feroze 3,73,675 bales, 9.92% increase, Khairpur 3,35,916, 16.49% increase, Ghotki 3,83,951, 28.29% increase, Sukkur 6,15,671, 16.31% increase, Dadu 68,636, 54.77% increase, Jamshoro 1,30,110 bales, 17.85% more, Badeen 17,335 bales, 35.86% less, and Balochistan received 1,16,700 bales, up 52.45%.

Total 189 ginning factories are operational in the country. Of them, 326 are in Punjab and 150 in Sindh. Total 9,97,937 bales are lying in unsold stock.

Russia firms taking keen interest in Pakistan	**Tribune India** https://tribune.com.pk/story/1688183/1-bilateral-relations-russia-firms-taking-keen-interest-pakistan/

Pakistan and Russia are moving towards greater economic cooperation, which will have long-term impact on the economic relations of the two countries, said Russia Acting Ambassador Vladimir Berezyuk. “We have taken initiatives to boost our trade and economic ties,” he added.

Addressing members of the Pakistan Textile Exporters Association (PTEA) on Tuesday, Berezyuk said that Pakistan and Russia are making efforts for greater bilateral economic cooperation.

Russia begins delivery of advanced assault helicopters to Pakistan

Trade and investment cooperation of the two countries has been improving but it did not match potential, he added.

Russia is already cooperating with Pakistan in the construction of north and south gas pipelines, however, this cooperation needs to be expanded to other sectors as well, he said.

‘We are not the Soviet Union but we are capable of deterrence’

Russian companies are taking an interest in making investment in Pakistan as there are brighter chances for joint ventures in sectors like construction, agriculture, energy, information technology, textiles and other sectors. Responding a question, head of visa section Vadim Zaetcov said that getting visa for business and trade has become easier than in the past years.

Egypt’s exports of readymade garments record $382M in Q1	**Egypt Today** https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/3/48136/Egypt%E2%80%99s-exports-of-readymade-garments-record-382M-in-Q1

Egypt’s exports of readymade clothes increased 16 percent in the first quarter (Q1) of 2018, recording $382 million (LE 6.75 billion), compared to $330 million during the same period of 2017, according to Sherin Hosny, executive director of the Ready Made Garments Export Council.

Exports to African Countries

Hosny added that the sector’s exports to African countries do not exceed 2 percent, but activating trade agreements, especially the African Continental Free Trade Area, will increase the export of Egyptian products to specific markets such as South Africa, stating that South Africa’s demands for readymade clothes are increasing.

She clarified that not having a specific trade agreement with South Africa, in addition to the high tariffs, are considered to be obstacles in the way of exporting to South Africa, hoping that these obstacles are solved by the African Continental Free Trade Area agreement.

Through this agreement, Egypt can import accessories used in manufacturing ready-made garments from African countries, and African countries can rely on Egypt’s textile sector, Hosny said. She added that such an agreement creates opportunities for cooperation between Egypt and African countries in the field.

2018

The export council aims at increasing readymade clothes’ exports 20 percent by the end of 2018 to record $1.8 billion, according to Hosny. She anticipated that the sector’s exports will exceed $1.8 billion in case the rate of exports continues on the same trajectory as the first quarter of the current year

Hosny said that the export support fund worked on overcoming the burdens of exporters in light of high shipping costs, adding that the fund is also targeting to have Egyptian products that can compete globally and to provide foreign currencies to the Egyptian treasury. Generally, Egypt has an export support fund that helps companies introduce Egyptian products to international markets. Hosny said that the exporters of ready-made garments have arrears to the fund reaching 18 months.

QIZ Agreement

Hosny said that the QIZ agreement has had a significant role in the rise of Egypt’s exports of readymade clothes since the fourth quarter of 2018. Egypt signed the Qualified Industrial Zone (QIZ) agreement with Israel and the United States in December 2004, allowing Egyptian products to enter American markets with no tariffs, provided that Israeli components represent 11.7 percent of these products.

In October 2017, Egypt signed a new agreement with Israel, including a modification of the QIZ deal, reducing the percentage of Israeli components in Egyptian products to 10.5 percent.

Destination Africa Exhibition

Regarding the third edition of the "Destination Africa" exhibition, Hosny said that the exhibition targets more Egyptian exhibitors for the ready-made garments sector and brings 400 foreign buyers – 200 buyers of ready-made garments and 200 buyers of furniture and textiles. The exhibition spans an area of more than 3,000 square meters.

Hosny said that the export council contacted all the embassies and commercial offices in Egypt to participate in the exhibition, seeking to achieve the exhibition's goal of integrating the garment baskets in Africa, with Egypt turning into the main center for garment production on the continent.

She clarified that Destination Africa doesn't target increasing exports to Africa, but creating integration between garment and furniture manufacturers in Africa to export to the rest of the world. Destination Africa is an international, specialized, pan-African B2B sourcing event for the readymade garment, textiles and home textiles industries in Africa. The exhibition aims to have Africa as the sourcing destination in these industries. It is organized by the Egyptian Exporters Association (ExpoLink), the Readymade Garments Export Council, the Textile Export Council and the Home Textiles Export Council.

Optimistic outlook for textile and garment exports in 2018	**Nhan Dhan** http://en.nhandan.org.vn/business/economy/item/6054702-optimistic-outlook-for-textile-and-garment-exports-in-2018.html

NDO - Vietnam's target of exporting US$34-34.5 billion worth of garments and textiles for 2018 is within reach as the Vietnam Textile and Apparel Association (VITAS) said that many companies have received orders until the end of the third quarter of 2018.
According to VITAS statistics, the total export revenue of textile and garment products was estimated at US$7.62 billion in the first quarter of 2018, an increase of 13.35% over the same period last year, and equivalent to 22.4% of the year's target.

First quarter exports soared sharply

Vice President and General Secretary of VITAS Truong Van Cam said that in the first quarter, the export revenue of garment products alone posted at US$5.98 billion, up 12.49% compared to the first quarter of 2017. Besides traditional garment and textile products, goods with a high value-added such as fabrics, fiber, geotextiles, and textile and garment accessories have also grown very well. In terms of export markets, Vietnam enjoyed stronger growth in export revenue with its key export markets including the US, member countries of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), the EU, the Republic of Korea, China, and ASEAN. T-shirts, jackets, and shirts were among the top export products in the first two months of this year.

According to the General Department of Customs, Vietnam's textile and garment exports to the US were reported to be around US$3.14 billion in the first quarter of this year, up 13.2% over the corresponding period in 2017, the highest pace of growth in the last three years.

Vitas predicted that Vietnam's garment and textile export revenue to the US would reach nearly US$13.8 billion in

2018, up 11% compared to 2017.

Truong Van Cam said that many garment and textile enterprises have received orders until the end of the third quarter, which, in combination with favourable prospects for the world and domestic economy in 2018, makes the export target of US$34-34.5 billion for 2018 an achievable goal.

CPTPP to be Vietnam's second largest textile and garment export market

Vietnam's textile and garment exports to CPTPP member countries grew at an average rate of 8% per year in the 2013-2017 period, accounting for about 15% of Vietnam's total textile and garment export revenue.

Within CPTPP, Canada, Mexico, Australia, New Zealand, and Singapore often import Chinese textiles and garments. When CPTPP becomes effective, it will create advantages for Vietnamese textile and garment products to enter these markets thanks to preferential treatment under tariff reductions. For instance, Canada commits to immediately eliminate 42 tariff lines for Vietnamese textile and apparel products upon the effectiveness of the trade deal.

It is expected that Vietnam's textile and garment exports to CPTPP countries will reach US$4.8 billion in 2018, an increase of about 10.5% compared to 2017. Thus, the bloc of CPTPP countries will be the second largest export market for Vietnam after the US market, which accounts for 47% of Vietnam's total garment and textile export turnover. However, in order to enjoy tariff incentives when the CPTPP comes into effect, Vietnam's textiles and garments must meet the “yarn forward rule of origin,” which means that all items in a garment from the yarn stage to the weaving, dyeing, and sewing stages must be made in member countries of the CPTPP deal.

Regarding the level of development of textiles and garments, the technical standards of the CPTPP are not a big problem for Vietnamese enterprises. The matter is to meet the ratio of textile and garment accessories produced within CPTPP countries for the total value of the finished product.