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TEXTILES EASTERN EUROPE

Levi Strauss plans to shut down plant in Hungary

LEVI Strauss Europe, Middle East and North Africa (SEMENA) is to start consultations with unions on the possible closure of the Kiskunfélegyháza plant 150 km south of Budapest. If the company does close this unit, around 250 employees will lose their jobs, along with casual labour.

The current global crisis has not left the global jeans giant unaffected, and the company has experienced a marked drop in demand for its clothing and other consumer products. This has forced the company to reduce capacities in its manufacturing plants at the beginning of 2009. "In order to remain competitive we need to enhance production flexibility and adjust it to fluctuating sales," the company would say.

Cavus Moore, head of production at Levi Strauss Europe, said the company would examine "every possible option" during talks with unions, but added that the response "will be necessary to maintain the company's competitiveness in the long term".

The date for the possible closure of the plant could be determined during the consultations, but the management has proposed to gradually scale back production with final closure by the end of the year.

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Varteks to close facility

CROATIAN textile producer company Varteks is to close its plant in Novi Marof in Varaždin county because of a sharp reduction in the number of orders. The company did not receive any new orders in 2008, stated chief executive officer Zoran Konec.

He said the company will transfer the plant's 135 employees to other jobs in the group. Varteks will offer them the same or similar jobs but those who refused transfers would receive severance pay.

Konec said a problem arose after the company stopped producing Levi's last year and received no new orders either from domestic or foreign clients. The company also has a problem with its main supplier as it reduced production by 30%. The plant's 50 employees may have to be transferred to other jobs.

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Retail trade

The Central Bureau of Statistics reports that retail trade in Croatia in 2008 was 3.3% higher than in 2007. Retail clothing trade was 7.0% higher year-on-year. In comparison, overall retail trade in Croatia in 2008 was 6.0% higher than in 2007.

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Monthly news of the textile and clothing industries in the emerging markets of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union

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Textiles Eastern Europe is a subscription-based monthly newsletter that provides hard-to-find commercial news, information and business opportunities of the textile and clothing industries in the emerging markets of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Read by top management and decision-makers in the global textile and clothing industry with an interest in capitalising on and investing in the economic regeneration of this rapidly developing region.

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TEXTILES SOUTHEAST ASIA

ASEAN to double Japanese exports at China's expense

JAPAN wants clothing and textile imports from China to drop to around 50% from the current 70% level, which could help improve the profitability of many South East Asian clothing factories, said Shigeo Takagi, director of Japan's International Textile and Clothing Trade Club at the Ministry of Economy.

According to M&E Finagon, chief executive officer of UK-based consultancy group Clibsource, Japan imports practically all its clothing of which 50% come from China. East 7% of the clothing imports come from South East Asia or Bangladesh — the countries with which Japan has, or is negotiating, agreements to import clothing duty-free. Moving a third of Japan's imports to those countries could mean a 400% increase in their exports to Japan — and in some cases, that could double their total sales.

Just as important for Asian factories is the timetable many need to bring their operations up to the standard needed by Japanese buyers. "Cambodians have found the Japanese want to see as many improvements as they can on production lines as European or American buyers," said Takagi. "That adds to the need for improving operations before they will not see Asian factories from the problems of falling European or American orders this year."

Exports to Egypt likely to fall

INDONESIAN exports of textiles and clothing to Egypt are likely to decline following the imposition of a 2.5% import duty from 15 January next, said insurance and freight (IFF) Commercial Business, general director of International Trade at the Indonesian Ministry of Industry and Trade.

General Business explained that the temporary safeguard has been imposed on all importing countries, not only on Indonesia.

However, Indonesia says it will fight to be exempt from the import duty by providing evidence. Based on data from the National Statistics Bureau (BPS), exports of cotton and blended yarns from Indonesia to Egypt were 3,796.4 tonnes in 2005, 2,702.5 tonnes in 2006 and 2,073.8 tonnes in 2007.

Exports of woven cotton and blended fabric

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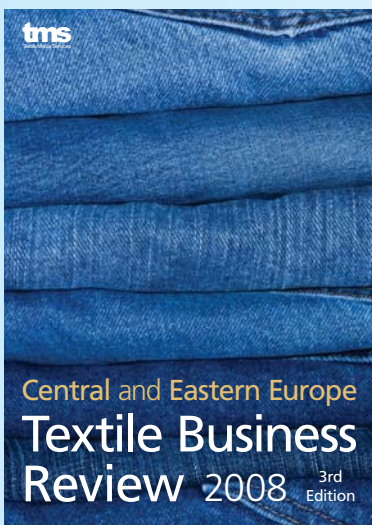
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40 tier 1 and tier 2 profiles

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Report: GBP £395



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