

customers. All interested persons are invited to visit Stäubli in Hall 6 at Booth H28.

With its ALPHA carpet weaving machines, Stäubli is renowned worldwide for unsurpassed flexibility. Whether for weaving loop or flat carpeting, low or high pile, high-density rugs for traditional markets, or ultra-modern uni-coloured rugs with surface design effects, the ALPHA 500 series of weaving systems includes the ideal model for any carpet weaving project – while also giving mills the flexibility to handle all sorts of future applications.

Low-pile applications take various forms, from trendy used-look rugs to lightweight wall-to-wall carpeting for the transportation sector or light carpets, which require a combination of low pile and high density. Each of these requires know-how and weaving technology suited to specific needs. The broad range of ALPHA carpet weaving systems includes perfectly adapted solutions for each of these applications as well as uncounted others. The key components, such as the cutting device guided by a belt to ensure perfectly plane carpet surfaces, or a special device for forming perfectly aligned 2mm mini-loops, or the ultra-flexible and precise shed formation machines, all incorporate Stäubli know-how, which the company offers to weavers aiming to create an attractive and competitive carpet range and remain ideally poised to swiftly respond to future market demands.

ShanghaiTex 2017 focuses on smart textile solutions

Focusing on smart textile solutions, ShanghaiTex 2017, the 18th international exhibition of textile machinery, organized a series of technical seminars, product displays and design competitions. Consolidating the traditional textile manufacturing industry with the innovative technology, the ongoing fair is also a platform to grasp new business opportunities.

Experts from various countries discussed the latest smart solutions for the textile industry on the first day of the fair. Another show highlight was the 'Smart Factory & C2M Experience Zone' where visitors experienced the fast 3D body scanning technology, it only a few seconds to measure their body sizes for producing a perfect fitting business shirt. Notes Luk, a visiting lecturer from the Hong Kong Polytechnic

University, shared his views on the sports bra-ology. He gave constructive advices on comfort, support, shoulder strap design and function, indicating the broad prospects of the lingerie market. Focus group discussions were also held on sports bra.

At the fair, over 1,200 exhibitors from 26 countries and regions have kept on display world-class textile machinery and the latest technologies. One of the exhibitors, Xin Gang Textile Machinery, has showcased its innovative R&D product – double needle bed wrap knitting machine, which is 2-3 times faster and more efficient than other congeneric machinery. As the digital printing competence centre of the Bobst Group – Mouvent made its first public appearance at ShanghaiTex 2017, showcasing groundbreaking digital textile printing solutions. Mouvent is dedicated to exploring, creating and delivering the future of digital printing.

As many as 21 young international designers from various backgrounds including textile, fashion, electronics and engineering participated in the Wearable Technology X Textile Design Competition. The competition was organised in association with the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Shanghai University of Engineering Science, Zhejiang Sci-tech University and wearable technology company, Antelope.

VDMA new chair talks to T.EVO

FRANKFURT - With over one million employees and a share of around 10 per cent of overall regional expenditure on R&D, mechanical engineering is an underpinning element of the German economy. As 2017 comes to an end, the sector remains one of the country's largest industrial business drivers, despite the ongoing unpredictable economic and political environment, which has intensified since September's general election in Germany failed to produce an overall majority. However, while chancellor Angela Merkel faces uncertainty in her bid to form a government, Regina Brückner, the new chairperson of the VDMA (the German Textile Machinery Association), has the cemented backing of her peers, as she bids to steer the organization towards further growth in 2018. Growth, which is predicted to be driven by exports, despite unknown factors such as the consequences of the Brexit negotiations and lack of clarity on US economic policies. Tony Whitfield finds out what this could mean for Europe's textile machinery manufacturers.

Mutoh to show digital textile printers at Heimtextil 2018

Mutoh Belgium, a subsidiary of Mutoh Holdings Co. Ltd., Japan, and leader in professional sign cutting plotters and piezo printers for commercial inkjet printing and direct-to-garment applications, will show digital textile printers at Heimtextil 2018, an expo for home and contract textiles, to be held from January 9 to 12, 2018, in Germany.

The company will demonstrate its capabilities in digital direct-to-textile as well as dye sublimation printing for short run on-demand production of interior decoration, furniture fabrics & upholstery, curtains, wall decoration, soft signage, etc.

Mutoh will be showcasing the ValueJet 1948WX, a four heads 75" (1910 mm) wide industrial high speed sublimation printer delivering top speeds up to 194 m²/h and the ValueJet 1938TX, a 75" (1910 mm) wide direct textile printer with dual staggered heads, offering high quality production speeds up to 40 m²/h.

The VJ-1948WX printer is ideally suited for businesses looking for a high volume production printer for roll-to-roll digital transfer prints. Application possibilities are high quality personalised home textile decoration and deco fabrics, fast fashion, soft signage, sports gear, textile banners, and many more.

Epson set to participate in Heimtextil 2018

Epson, a leader in inkjet printers and digital textile printing systems and technology, is set to partake in Heimtextil 2018, the international tradefair for home and contract textiles, to be held from January 9 to 12, 2018, in Messe Frankfurt, Germany.

The company will show the Monna Lisa Evo Tre, the innovative printer in the DTF inkjet series that revolutionized the digital textile printing market by offering a tool that could shift from the sampling phase to reliable industrial production.

The printer is the ultimate Total Solution for the industrial textile market.

Epson will also show the SureColor SC-F9300 64-inch sublimation printer for low-priced, easy printing. This machine is extremely flexible and ideal for producing small

volumes of quality fabrics and sublimating specific designs on rigid substrates such as spill-proof panels, table tops, cups, cutlery, vases and coasters.

The SureColor SC-F2000 will also be displayed. It is used for direct fabric printing and can create customised towels, aprons, cushions and bags in just a few minutes.

Karl Mayer opens new workshop in Vietnam

Karl Mayer, Germany's leading textile machinery firm, have had officially opened the new workshop in Vietnam on November 13, 2017, after nine months of sufficient preparation. Karl Mayer, a market leader in textile machinery building, offers perfect solutions for warp knitting, technical textiles and warp preparation for weaving.

Karl Mayer is devoting to expand the Southeast Asian market, so that more and more Vietnamese manufacturers purchase Karl Mayer warp knitting machines. In order to meet the current market demand, Karl Mayer will provide more product-related learning courses to help customers getting familiar with the theory and operation of Karl Mayer machine.

Trainees of Karl Mayer workshop Vietnam will be attending a one week WKB training course, including machines theory, study of warp knitted fabric constructions, textile calculations, and practical works on training machines. In addition, Karl Mayer workshop Vietnam will offer additional course of machine maintenance introduction and article change.

The workshop will give information on topics like introduction on stitch formation warp knitting, tricot machine structure and technical features, function and explanation of the knitting element movements and their synchronization with help of chain links, and explanation of the KAMCOS in details and hands on practice of each participant.

Stäubli At Domotex 2018 — Flexible And Always Close To The Customer

The world of floor coverings is showing its latest innovations, designs, and technologies at Domotex, this year with a new hall layout. Stäubli, along with its brand Schönherr carpet systems, has a new booth location, one that is still close to its



World Textile News

Half of UK textile units saw higher turnover in 2017

Despite economic uncertainty and issues related to skilled manpower availability, 2017 has been a great year for British fashion and textile manufacturers, half of whom saw an increase in turnover. On an average, textile production was up by 25 per cent and many are now running double shifts to keep up with the demand.

As more British companies look to source locally and restore their production back to the United Kingdom, 58 per cent of manufacturers received more interest from customers.

The increase in production and turnover is being helped in part by the exchange rate working in UK manufacturers favor. "As the pound loses its value our turnover has increased by 30 per cent," one manufacturer reported.

Thirty per cent of UK textile manufacturers are exporting more than they were in 2016, yet still a third of those surveyed said that they weren't yet exporting. Ageing workforce is a concern, with nearly half of the manufacturers worried about the age of their staff. Two thirds have an average workforce age of over 40 at their factories, but many are taking on young people through apprenticeships. But attracting young people to the industry is proving tough.

manufacturer Trützschler GmbH and the Toyota Industry Corporation, Japan, the companies have announced Truetzschler will take over the complete responsibility for the day-to-day running of the TC012 combing machine, which was first exhibited at ITMA Asia in Shanghai five years ago.

Planet Textiles 2018 to be held in Vancouver

The 9th annual Planet Textiles 2018 summit, a sustainable textile summit, is set to be held in Vancouver, Canada on May 22, 2018. The major aim of the event is to share new environmental innovations and business models, and to show how new technologies and financial innovations can increase the collaboration and transparency in the industry. For the first time, Planet Textiles 2018 will host '#PlanetTextilesPod' as well as a '#TeninTen session'. In '#PlanetTextilesPod' interviews with key personals from textile industry will be filmed while in the '#TeninTen session' selected key innovators will pitch their technology or service to the delegates within 10 minutes.

Moreover, sessions will be conducted on financial models and mechanisms, real-world examples and original case studies of textile companies that have already managed to scale up sustainability, how they have successfully applied new investment to grow and what true investment costs actually look like.

The event is scheduled one day prior to the Sustainable Apparel Coalition (SAC) meeting at the same venue, making it easy for members to move between the two events.

Truetzschler and Toyota agree switch for TC012 combing machines

After five years of cooperation between textile machinery

and second exhibition of Iran's industrial products and export capabilities with a focus on Khorasan Razavi Province's products were held in Kazan, the capital of Tatarstan, from Dec. 20 to 24.

Iranian companies active in a host of fields, including apparel and textile, home appliances, construction material and halal products, will be exhibiting their latest products and services. Iran exported around \$3 million worth of products to Tatarstan and imported some \$10 million in return during the last Iranian year (March 2016-17).

The Republic of Tatarstan is a federal subject of Russia located in the Volga Federal District.

HBL asks Iranian embassy to close accounts

Habib Bank Limited (HBL) has reportedly asked Islamabad-based Iranian Embassy to close its accounts due to sanctions on Iran. This was disclosed by Ambassador of Iran in Islamabad, Mehdi Hoonerdost at a meeting with Minister for Commerce and Textile Pervaiz Malik. The HBL wrote the accounts closure letter to the Iranian Embassy after the USA regulator imposed million of dollars fine on it. Bilateral trade between the two countries has increased in 2016-17 compared to previous year of 2015-16.

"Recently, Habib Bank Limited, through a letter to the Embassy of Iran in Islamabad, has asked to close their accounts in HBL due to the US sanctions on Iran. The embassy has conveyed to the HBL that accounts of Diplomatic Missions are exempted and are not affected by any sanctions," the sources quoted the ambassador as saying.

The ambassador was of the view that despite sanctions, Iran's trade with China, Russia, Turkey and other developed countries has grown significantly; however, Pakistani banks are reluctant to carry out transactions with their counterparts in Iran.

The minister for commerce and textile assured the ambassador that he would raise the issue of closure of accounts of Embassy of Iran in HBL with Ministry of Finance/State Bank of Pakistan.

Mehdi Hoonerdost said that both the countries have direct land and air connectivity with two flights per week from Karachi and Lahore. Relevant Iranian authorities are working to start operations on Islamabad-Tehran sector. However, non-availability of banking channel is the most important obstacles hampering expansion of bilateral trade due to which exporters and importers use third country's land for export and import purposes.

Iran, Turkey, Qatar Sign Deal to Ease Doha Blockade

Turkey, Iran and Qatar signed a transportation pact for boosting trade among the three countries.

Turkey's Economy Minister Nihat Zeybekci and his Qatari counterpart Ahmed bin Jassim bin Mohammed Al Thani were in the Iranian capital Tehran to sign the agreement with Iran's Minister of Industries, Mining and Trade Mohammad Shariatmadari.

Under the agreement, Iran will be the transit country between Turkey and Qatar. The deal is expected to help accelerate commodity delivery and facilitate trilateral trade, Anadolu Agency reported.

The agreement will lead to the creation of a "joint working group to facilitate the transit of goods between the three countries", and the three nations aim to tackle "obstacles to sending goods from Iran and Turkey to Qatar".

"Iran is playing an important role in the transport of goods from Turkey and Azerbaijan to Qatar," said the Qatari minister in a bilateral meeting with Shariatmadari. Turkey and Azerbaijan have been using Iran as a land route to export to Qatar, filling the gap in the market in the absence of Saudi Arabia and its allies since the Arab rift.

According to Mohammed bin Mahdi Al Ahbabi, a board member of Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the land route between Turkey and Qatar via Iran reduces the cost of goods transport by about 80% compared to air cargo.



Iran Textile News

Handmade carpet exports at \$221m

Iran exported \$221 million worth of hand-woven carpets during the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-November 21, 2017), Hamid Kargar, the head of Iran's National Carpet Center, as saying.

Some \$153 million worth of hand-woven carpets were exported during the first half of the year, showing an increase of 13 percent year on year, he added.

Exports of hand-woven carpets in the past [Iranian calendar] year stood at \$359 million, he noted.

Chabahar port phase-I opens, to boost India-Iran trade

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani inaugurated the first phase of the Chabahar port, called the Shahid Beheshti port, in the Sistan-Balochistan province on December 3, paving the way for a new strategic transit route between India, Iran and Afghanistan, bypassing Pakistan.

Easily accessible from India's western coast, the port is expected to accelerate trade between India, Afghanistan and Iran as Pakistan does not allow transit access to New Delhi for trade with the other two countries.

India will equip and operate two berths in the phase-I of the Chabahar Port with a capital investment of \$85.21 million and annual revenue expenditure of \$22.95 million on a 10-year lease, according to Indian media

reports.

Indian external affairs minister Sushma Swaraj met her Iranian counterpart Javed Zarif in Tehran a day before the inauguration and discussed the implementation of the Chabahar port project along with other issues.

Carpet Museum draws 6,500 foreign travelers in 9 month

Some 6,500 overseas tourists toured Carpet Museum of Iran over the first nine month of the current Iranian calendar year, which started on March 21.

It drew over 4,000 domestic museumgoers during the cited period as well, the museum director Parisa Beyzaei. The number of foreign visits to the museum was about 4,000 in the same period last year, she added.

Covering an area of 3,400 square meters, the museum boasts a treasure trove of some 2,000 Persian carpets that date from the Safavid era onwards. It also puts on display a rich patchwork of rare and centuries-old rugs, kilims and tableau rugs.

Back in November, the museum was inscribed on the National Heritage List. It can be found at the northwest of Laleh Park in the heart of Tehran.

Tatarstan to Host Iranian Exhibition

The first exclusive exhibition of Iran's halal products

exporting countries have in the past been largely absent in the Iranian market, due to the extremely high import taxes introduced by the Iranian government. These taxes amounted up to 200 per cent on apparel and textiles, but have been brought down to 55 per cent and 32 per cent respectively. The government wants to reduce these in the near future to 2025 per cent or even less.

K Banijamali, CEO of the Tehran-based import-export company Mobtakeran Sefaresh Kala, says that the customs in Iran work slowly and import tariffs are not only high but also complicated. Her company imports textile dyes, auxiliaries, textile fibres and chemicals. Custom tariffs for textile dyes are not that high (only 5 per cent import tax 9 per cent valued added tax 4 per cent other taxes). But for some fabric items, tariffs may amount to 55 per cent and for clothing items to 75 per cent.

Majid Nami, board member of Iran Textile Exporters & Manufacturers Association (ITEMA), says that according to Iranian statistics clothing imports in 2016 were as little as \$61 million. However, according to UNIDO statistics, these imports amounted to \$1 billion annually, with China and Turkey being the principal countries of origin. The ITEMA is aware that much clothing enters Iran illegally. The association has been putting pressure on the government in order to enhance border control. Several neighbouring countries lack stability and the means to ensure a strict control of the borders with Iran. There are thus many possibilities of smuggling goods into Iran.

Responding to the demands of ITEMA, the government has initiated an obligation for clothing brands to be registered. Among the Western brands which can be found in the shopping malls in Tehran and some other big Iranian cities are Zara, Bershka, Benetton, Mango, Roberto Cavalli, Gucci and Ecco shoes. It's however doubtful if the registration obligation will be of much help in creating a level playing field in Iran for Indian and other bona fide clothing exporters.

Minimal support from the government

Though the development of the textiles and apparel industry, because of its huge potential for job creation, was listed as one of the ten priority goals of the 20-year development plan Vision 2025 that was adopted in 2005, Iranian companies feel that they have been left out in the cold. Tahmineh Molana, international relations manager of the Iranian monthly textile magazine Nassaji Emrouz, thinks that the government should support the sector in its double integration effort. First, there's the need to better integrate the value chain from fibre to fashion. Second, in order to succeed in transforming the textiles and apparel industry from a resource-based to a knowledge based industry, the knowhow and R&D results of the universities should be better integrated into the management of the companies.

The ongoing brain drain

Many of the young Iranians are in search of study or job opportunities in countries like Germany, Canada and Denmark where they expect to get a better chance than in Iran to chase their dreams. As a result, Iran is deprived of the services of some of its best and brightest individuals. The reported annual exodus of more than 100,000 educated men and women in search of better and safer opportunities has placed Iran near the top of nations experiencing a brain drain.

Marjan Haddadian and her sister, who are both fluent in European languages, established the company Fartak Andishan Green Card in Tehran, which aims to facilitate and speed up connections between Iranians and universities, high schools and employers in select countries, especially in Germany and France. For the time being, Iranian metallurgic and mechanical, chemical and petrochemical, software and electronic engineers seem to be more eager to find jobs abroad than textile engineers, with their number in Iran being estimated at 10,000.

Tahmineh Molana, who is also the Iran Representative of the leading trade fair Premiere Vision, is working hard to attract Iranian visitors to the Premiere Vision events in Paris and abroad, especially in Istanbul. She regrets that currently no Iranian fabrics manufacturer would qualify for exhibiting. Their level of creativity and quality is simply not high enough. Also regrettable is that many Iranian textile companies who decide to visit Premiere Vision see it as an enjoyable privilege, and not as an occasion to bring their designers in contact with international creativity.

Iranian creativity in textile design is said to be too much inspired from traditional designs.

Low productivity resulting in high prices

With more than 100 years of immersion in the oil and gas industries, the bulk of the Iranian economy still operates at mid-twentieth-century technological standards. An average Iranian textile factory uses several times more energy, more workers, more material and more hours to produce a unit of final product than a similar entity in the internationally competitive textile countries. Even Iran's most famous textile export products, the handwoven rugs, are rapidly losing market share. Until six years ago, Iran was the world's biggest exporter of kelims and other handwoven rugs with exports exceeding \$19 million in 2011 (compared to \$17 million Indian exports). However, since 2011 the annual export of handwoven rugs from India has more than doubled while the more expensive rugs from Iran have nearly halved. In 2016, India was by far the world's largest exporter of handwoven rugs (around \$30 million), while Iran with an export of \$11 million ended up in the fourth place after India, Germany and Morocco.

The going remains tough

By: Joseph de Coster

Iran is an attractive market for textile companies, garment producers and machinery manufacturers. But the red tape that ties down industry is difficult to cut through. The lethargy created by the decades of international isolation and government control would not be easy to shake off, reports Jozef De Coster from Tehran. As unbelievably charming and helpful the Iranian people are, as unbelievably bureaucratic and inefficient is the Iranian economy. Polite observers describe Iran mercifully as a country in transition to a market economy. The state controls as much as 70 per cent of the economy. This doesn't apply to the Iranian apparel industry (totally privatised) and textile industry (almost privatised). But how blessed would private owners of the textiles and apparel companies feel, and their suppliers too, if by miracle the burdensome Iranian administration suddenly would be replaced by blockchain.

Aftermath of international sanctions

It's not the task of textile magazines to criticise the political, financial or macro-economic choices of countries which produce/export/import textiles. But it makes sense to show the business partners of such countries as well the pitfalls of the business opportunities. Business people are supposed to know that Iran has a long history of international sanctions. Since 1979, the United States has led international efforts to use sanctions to influence Iran's policies. In April 2015, the 5 1 (the 5 permanent members of the UN Security Council Germany) reached a provisional agreement with Iran on a framework that, once finalised and implemented, would lift most of the sanctions in exchange for limits on Iran's nuclear programmes extending for at least ten years. As a result, UN sanctions were lifted in January 2016. However, exporters to Iran should keep in mind that unpredictability is one of the characteristics of the current American presidency.

By the way, it's no wonder that the Iranian government is cautious in its relations with the US. Declassified documents released in June 2017 shed light on the CIA's central role in the 1953 coup that brought down Prime Minister Muhammad Mossadegh. This coup fuelled a surge of nationalism which culminated in the 1979 Iranian Revolution, and poisoned US-Iran relations till today.

Continuing payment problems

In spite of the lifting of UN sanctions, the transfer of money from Iran to other countries is still a problem. Foreign exhibitors at the trade fair Irantex (Tehran, September 4, 2017) explained

how they solve it. According to Ravindra Kumar, joint director of the Indian Cotton Textiles Export Promotion Council (Texprocil), Iranian companies are not allowed to pay in US dollars; so, they pay in Indian rupees. Only two banks in India are authorised to handle these payments. Indian textiles exporters don't take any risk; they only accept to export to Iran under an LOC (letter of credit). Also, Chinese companies have problems in getting payments from customers in Iran. But they too have found a solution using financial intermediaries in Dubai who are connected with intermediaries in Hong Kong. The sales manager of Changxin Dongxin Textile Co says that Chinese exporters have a supplementary problem: We have a big image problem. In the eyes of Iranians, Chinese products are always cheap. So, even when we offer the Iranians flame-retardant, water-proof or anti-static fabrics, they want them very cheap.

Matthias Knecht, area sales manager of the German producer of flat-knitting machines Stoll, says that things are moving. He regrets, however, that the situation is not yet clear. Companies still have rules to follow for the transfer of Iranian money to Europe. Because of their interests in the US, big German banks like Deutsche Bank and Commerzbank can't afford working with Iran. Fortunately, some smaller banks can.

Mauro Badanelli, economic advisor at the Association of Italian Textile Machinery Manufacturers (Acimit), recalls that in the years before the sanctions, Italy annually exported 30-40 million textile machinery to Iran. Although Iranian customers appreciate Italian machines and are eager to invest, it's hard to restore the same level of business, partly due to money transfer issues.

Moreover, Boris Abadjieff, export marketer at the German textile machinery association VDMA, regrets that there are still pending decisions about the lifting of sanctions. He says that VDMA continued to pay full attention to Iranian customers during the period of the sanctions. An example: in April 2015, German machinery constructors organised a conference which attracted 1,100 visitors from Iran. Today, exports of German textile machines are in full swing. Some small German banks take care of the financial procedure. Abadjieff says: The German exporters accept that Iran is a somewhat more complicated market than other ones.

Import taxes and illegal imports

It's estimated that Iran's textiles and apparel market is worth \$16 billion. Only 40 per cent of this comes from domestic sources. The rest is met through imports. However, India and other textile-