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Celanese to increase North American emulsions price

02 Jan 2007

US chemicals company, Celanese Corporation, is to increase the price of all PVAc, VAE and acrylic-based emulsions sold in North America by up to 10%. The increase applies to all applications including adhesives, paints and coatings, textiles, nonwovens and paper. Effective for shipments on or after January 15, the new pricing will reflect product technology and specific delivery requirements.

EU recommends withdrawing trade privileges from Belarus

02 Jan 2007

European Member States have adopted a European Commission recommendation that the European Union withdraw trade preferences from Belarus over serious and systematic violations of core labour rights.

Belarus now has six further months to address labour rights issues or its preferential market access under the EU's Generalised System of Preferences will be removed. About 12.3% of Belarus' imports to the European Union entered the EU market with preferential rates in 2005.

EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson said: “The incentives for basic labour standards in EU trade policy have to be real. Where countries systematically flout core labour standards, we need to be prepared to act. This decision is a test case of our collective commitment to the promotion of workers rights as an integral part of our trade policy.”

In 2003 the Commission decided to initiate an investigation into the situation in Belarus concerning freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining. The investigation found that there were serious and systematic violations of such core labour rights in that country. In 2004 an ILO Commission of Inquiry found that Belarus was in breach of a number of ILO conventions to which it is a signatory, chiefly related to freedom of association and collective bargaining for workers. At the current time, Belarus has not made the requisite commitments to remedy this problem.

The regulation withdrawing trade preferences will enter into force six months after its adoption, unless the situation in Belarus changes significantly before then.

Turtle Fur to use SmartSilver anti-odour technology in its winter wear

02 Jan 2007

Nanoscale material solutions company NanoHorizons Inc., has announced that winter apparel brand Turtle Fur is to use its SmartSilver anti-odour technology in its new winter collections. SmartSilver will initially be used for a variety of hats, neck gators and some balaclavas, to be released to retailers in 2007.

SmartSilver is said to be permanent, effective and simple to use in manufacturing, and deliver the antimicrobial properties of silver without the high cost or manufacturing complications previously associated with silver-based products.

REACH regulation offers challenges and opportunities for China

02 Jan 2007

According to a statement made by China’s General Administration of Quality Supervision; Inspection and Quarantine of China (AQSIQ), the EU REACH (Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals) regulations, that will come into force as of June 1, will offer both challenges and opportunities for Chinese export companies.

Speaking at a press conference, Wang Xin, director of the AQSIQ Department of Supervision on Inspection said that REACH will have a huge influence on China's industries and could cause a barrier for exports of Chinese chemical products. It will also increase the cost of importing chemicals from the EU and will affect China's export competitiveness. He added that, according to estimates, REACH will add €10 billion to the cost of China's annual exports to the EU.

However, Mr Wang also highlighted the benefits of the new regulations commenting that they will lead to an in-depth examination of China's chemical industry and promote the development of new products and will bring China’s chemical industry in line with international standards, improve production techniques, reduce environmental pollution.

REACH will unify the management on chemical products and chemical substance in such downstream products as leather, textiles, and mechanical and electronic products in the European market. The regulation requires companies that manufacture or import more than one

tonne of a chemical substance per year to register their products and submit a safe substitute and research plan for products deemed as hazardous.

Bayer MaterialScience names new chairman

02 Jan 2007

Patrick Thomas has been named chairman of the board of management of Bayer MaterialScience AG as of January 1. He succeeds Dr Hagen Noerenberg, who ended his active employment with the Bayer Group as planned at the end of 2006.

Mr Thomas was born in the UK and began his career with British chemicals company Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI). Until 1989 he held a number of positions with ICI Pharmaceuticals and Agrochemicals in the UK In 1989 he then transferred to Belgium to join ICI Polyurethanes, undertaking various management assignments until 1993 when he was named regional director for Europe, Africa & the Middle East. Four years later he was appointed global CEO.

In 1999, Mr Thomas joined US chemicals company Huntsman Corporation as president of the Polyurethanes, Performance and Advanced Materials Divisions, also based in Belgium. In 2003 he was named Corporate Executive vice president of Huntsman MatlinPatterson. He joined Bayer MaterialScience on August 15, 2006.

With sales of €10.7 billion in 2005, Bayer MaterialScience is one of the world's largest polymer manufacturers. Its main fields of activity are the production of high-tech polymer materials for products used in the footwear, sports and leisure, electrical/electronics, and construction sectors.

The company has production facilities at 40 sites around the world and a workforce of approximately 18,800.

OR Winter Market attracts record number of exhibitors

02 Jan 2007

Outdoor industry trade event Outdoor Retailer (OR) will host in excess of 775 exhibiting companies at the upcoming 2007 Winter Market tradeshow—a record for the show that will take place on January 27-30 in Salt Lake City, USA.

In addition to many new exhibitors, 149 returning exhibitors have also reserved expanded booths, offering more space and product offerings to visitors.

"We are looking forward to our first Winter Market in the expanded Salt Palace," said Peter Devin, group show director for Outdoor Retailer. "The overwhelming interest in the outdoor market is inspiring, and we are thrilled to welcome more and more participants to the show. Our goal is to provide the outdoor business community with an efficient and compelling marketplace where participants can pinpoint top trends, further business strategies and network with leading industry influencers."

With the influx of new exhibitors and a 76% exhibitor return rate, Winter Market attendees can expect to see the very latest winter sports innovations from alpine mountaineering gear and backcountry snowboards to technical and lifestyle apparel. Top trends will include an increase in environmentally-conscious products across all segments, as well as an increase in the number of apparel exhibitors entering the outdoor market.

Vibram hits the slopes

03 Jan 2007

Several outdoor companies have introduced Vibram soles in their latest footwear models to be used on cold, muddy, icy and snow-covered terrain.

The VibramPlanet sole is said to be effective on slopes with its VibramFastShafts tread which covers most of the outsole. The thermoset EVA wedge also provides good shock absorption, particularly for the heel.

Italy-based performance mountaineering boots company Kayland has introduced this particular sole in its FireWoman shoe, inspired by Italian fire fighter boots. The shoe features a zip in place of traditional laces and is made entirely of leather. It is also suitable for after-ski activities thanks to its technical characteristics.

Meanwhile, Rossignol has added the VibramRoccia sole to its W Hannibal LTH model. The sole is said to be long-lasting and offers good grip on cold terrain.

Under Armour partners UK teams

03 Jan 2007

US-based branded apparel, footwear and accessories Under Armour, Inc., has become the official base layer apparel supplier of English premiership team Reading Football Club and English rugby union champions Sale Sharks.

The company is also developing a strong brand presence in cricket in the UK and Ireland. Earlier this year, it signed an agreement with the English Cricket Board to become an official supplier of performance apparel to the England Test squad.

832 exhibitors confirmed at SIMM

03 Jan 2007

832 companies have already confirmed their participation at the 57th Madrid International Fashion Fair (SIMM) to be held on February 16-18.

Exhibitors will present men's and women's fashion, fur and accessory collections for autumn/winter 2007/08. The Artistic Association of Spanish National Fashion Designers (ADÑ) will be among the exhibitors, whose membership includes renowned Spanish designers such as Antonio Alvarado, Ion Fiz, Locking Shocking, Carlos Díez, Juanjo Oliva, Rocabert, Carmen March and La Casita de Wendy.

SIMM will also host the Iberpiel Peletería Fair, which will feature companies such as Benetfurs, Araujo Piel, Corty Bennett, J&M, José Gómez Benet and Makari.

Huntsman completes sale of European commodities business

03 Jan 2007

US-based chemical company Huntsman Corporation has completed the sale of its UK-based European commodity chemicals business to Saudi Basic Industries Corporation (SABIC), involving a total divestment value of $810 million.

According to the company, "Through positive operating cash flows, funds raised in our IPO, and the proceeds from this transaction and the previously completed sale of our US Butadiene and MTBE business, the company has generated funds sufficient to reduce our net debt by $2.6 billion over the past two years. We now derive over 80% of our sales from our differentiated chemical products, which are significantly less cyclical, less energy dependent, and higher margin businesses than commodity chemicals."

The company also plans to sell its North American Polymers and Base Chemicals businesses as it has decided to focus on differentiated businesses—such as the Textile Effects business acquired from Ciba earlier this year—in order to provide the company with a higher-margin portfolio of products and a stronger balance sheet going forward.

Huntsman's Teesside-based Pigments division and the Wilton-based aniline and nitrobenzene operations of its Polyurethanes division were not included in the transaction.

Winners of the 15th ispo BrandNew Awards announced

03 Jan 2007

The seven winners and 31 finalists of the 15th ispo BrandNew awards have been chosen following a 44% increase in applicants compared with the previous year. The winners and finalists will present their innovations at ispo winter 07, which will take place in Munich, Germany, in February.

Italian company Jochum & Nesler was awarded the AdvanSA Overall Winner with its new 'Speedrider', a combination of a paraglider and a parachute, designed for high speeds.

The DuPont Hardware Winter Award went to US company Guru for its 'Trampboard', developed specifically for learning new snowboard tricks and jumps.

Graditech from Austria won the Nilit Hardware Summer category. Its 'Streetstepper' is a designed as a means of transport, fun gear and fitness trainer all combined into one.

The Airboard Hardware Accessories Award went to Australia's Headzone for its multi-functional training helmet with built-in CB radio system. The waterproof communication system now makes immediate error correction and effective structuring of training sessions possible.

The winner of the Freudenberg Accessoires Award was the Blatand Company from Germany. Its 'Body Network' is an alternative to private fitness trainers, especially in terms of price. The fitness computer data can be uploaded to a mobile phone via Bluetooth. Users can obtain personal analyses and exercise plans starting from €5 per month.

The YKK Sportswear Award went to Westcomb for its 'I Rebel Hoody', an electronically-enabled jacket.

The Creora Style Award was won by the founders of Berlin designer label bombdesign, for its creative bag collection.

To satisfy the criteria of the BrandNew Awards, the brand or company could not be older than four years, and could not have exhibited previously at ispo.

New coconut absorbent introduced

04 Jan 2007

Isol8, an industrial absorbent material made from biodegradable coconut, has been introduced at textile, industrial, chemical and engineering sites across Yorkshire, UK, through a new distribution agreement with Northern Insulation and Pipeline Stockists (NIPS) of

Harrogate.

According to its producers, the light, compact, environmentally-friendly material is eight times more efficient than anything else on the market, and is capable of rapidly soaking up any kind of liquid, including chemicals and dyes, in a fraction of the time taken by traditionally-used clay granules.

According to NIPS director, Jeremy Bent, it is easier to use, to dispose of and to store. He added that although the product is more expensive than clay granules, its rapid and efficient absorbency makes it four times more cost-efficient than other products.

Isol8 is produced by Dainton, based in Ripon, UK. Founded in 1998, the company specialises in producing totally organic, environmentally-friendly, biodegradable absorbents. Isol8 is the company's core product within its range and is made wholly from renewable organic resources, and is produced without any chemical treatments.

Changes at Première Vision

04 Jan 2007

Première Vision has introduced a number of new services, designed to improve the event for visitors.

All professionals will now have access to the salon from the first day of the show, to be held in Paris on February 20-23.There will also be three new visitor categories for clearer identification: CreativeVision badges for visitors will denote established and emerging designers; GuestVision will indicate visitors from organisations such as federations and chambers of commerce; and CollegeVision badges will identify design and textile school students.

The Paris event will also see the launch of Club Première Vision, which will bring together a small number of international clothing designers, manufacturers and distributors, and those who place orders or are active buyers, and are regular visitors to the Première Vision Salons. The club will act as a forum for exchanging ideas and will provide personalised services to members.

Golf star Christina Kim to endorse LIJA

04 Jan 2007

Two-time winner on the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) Tour has signed an agreement with Canada-based golf and sportswear company, Lija, under which Ms Kim will wear the company's clothing during all on-course activities.

Ms Kim, aged 22, became the youngest player in LPGA Tour history to top $1 million in career earnings following wins at the 2004 Longs Drugs Challenge and the 2005 Mitchell Company Tournament of Champions.

Maglificio Ripa unveils 'The Only One' fabric

04 Jan 2007

Italian circular knit fabric producer for swimwear, underwear, outerwear, fashion and sportswear Maglificio Ripa recently added a new fabric to its Light range.

Light Lucida 'The Only One' is a 75% PA 25% Lycra jersey weighing 160g/m² for swimwear and intimate apparel. Produced on 44 gauge looms, as are the other fabrics in the range, it is said to offer lightness, all-round stretch and good cover. It is fast drying and colour fast, with enhanced brightness and fluidity.

Together with Light Nature and Light Sea, the fabric completes the company's range for swimwear, underwear and fashion.

For technical underwear, fitness, performance swimwear and sport, there is the Light Power Sport range as well as the recently launched Lighy Dryskin+ and Techno Swim.

Engro launches apparel made of corn

04 Jan 2007

Indianapolis-based Engro, LLC, has unveiled a new apparel line made entirely of corn, at the Promotional Products Association International trade show (January 2-6) in Las Vegas. The apparel uses Ingeo fibre that was developed by Cargill and Dow Chemical, and claims to be the world's first and only greenhouse-neutral polymer, achieving a 68% reduction in fossil fuel use compared with traditional plastics.

The product is obtained by extracting sugar from the corn kernel. The sugar is then fermented and transformed into a high performance polymer and the Ingeo fibre is extracted. The remaining proteins, oils and fibres of the corn kernel can be used for livestock feed.

The fibre can be used in a variety of clothing, and in consumer goods including comforters, pillows, sleeping bags, packaging and carpeting.

Asia set to generate growth in workwear sector

04 Jan 2007

According to the latest issue of Performance Apparel Markets from Research and Markets, most of the future growth in clothing at work will come from the take up of

workwear, and eventually career wear, in Asia.
In a special focus on clothing at work, the publication notes that growth sectors in the mature markets of Western Europe and the USA include protective wear, driven predominantly by legislation, and career wear, driven by image. In contrast, the workwear market is fairly stagnant or in decline, in line with the demise of heavy industry in these regions, with the developing world offering the greatest opportunities for growth.

India's textile apparel exports rise 31%

04 Jan 2007

India's textile apparel exports increased 31% in the fiscal year 2005-06 compared with the previous year, to reach $8.63 billion, with its share of the global textile market and apparel market now standing at 4% and 2.8% respectively.

The textile industry plays a key role in the country's economy. It currently contributes about 14% to industrial production, 4% to GDP and 17% to export earnings, and is the second largest provider of employment after agriculture, providing direct employment to some 35 million people.

Total production of cloth in all sectors—mills, powerlooms, handlooms, hosiery and khadi, wool and silk—has shown an upward trend in recent years and is expected to reach 49,542 million square metres during 2006-07.

In the cotton/man-made fibre textiles sector, 2005-06 saw production reach 1,656 million square metres, with an expectation of 1,900 million square metres in 2006-07; cotton production reached a record high of 243 lakh bales, and is expected to remain the same during 2006-07, despite a reduction in the area under cultivation; the powerloom industry contributed 62% of the total cloth produced in the country (30,254 million square metres).

Nike Swift jerseys make college hockey debut

04 Jan 2007

The Nike Swift hockey jersey has made its college ice hockey debut as several US National Collegiate Athletic Association teams began wearing it for the first time. According to Nike, the jersey reduces overall uniform weight by nearly 400g and adds increased mobility and comfort.

Nike and Nike Bauer Hockey developed the jerseys for nine men's teams to wear for college hockey tournaments during the holiday season. Cornell University, Denver University, University of Maine, Miami University, University of Michigan, Michigan State University, University of New Hampshire, University of North Dakota and Ohio State University all wore the jerseys when the teams took to the ice. In addition, the University of New Hampshire and Cornell University women's teams were also provided Swift jerseys and will wear them later in the season.

Podium Venture Group considers acquisition of Erino

04 Jan 2007

Podium Venture Group Inc., an apparel, media and publishing holding company in the lifestyle sports industry, has entered into discussions to acquire 100% of Erino Clothing Company, a surf-lifestyle clothing company. Podium plans to release the new 2007 Erino line once the acquisition is completed.

Waiting period for proposed sale of Eddie Bauer expires

05 Jan 2007

Washington-based casual sportswear and outdoor accessories retailer Eddie Bauer Holdings, Inc. has announced that, with respect to its proposed sale to Eddie B Holding Corp.—owned by affiliates of Sun Capital Partners, Inc. and Golden Gate Capital—the waiting period required under the Hart- Scott-Rodino Antitrust Improvements Act of 1976 has expired without a request for additional information from the US Federal Trade Commission.

The company has entered into a definitive agreement for the sale of Eddie Bauer to Eddie B Holding Corp. for $9.25 per share in cash. The transaction is expected to close in the first quarter of 2007, subject to the satisfaction of previously disclosed closing conditions.

New board members at the Cotton Board

05 Jan 2007

US Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns has announced that eight members and eight alternate members have been appointed to the Cotton Board.

The Cotton Board consists of 36 representatives of cotton producers and importers, their alternates and one consumer advisor. The members and alternates named will serve a three-year term, ending December 31, 2009.

The cotton research and promotion programme is designed to advance the position of cotton in the marketplace. It is funded by assessments on all domestically produced cotton and imports of foreign-produced cotton and cotton-containing products,

and is authorised by the Cotton Research and Promotion Act of 1966. USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service monitors the programme.

New Odlo winter collection

05 Jan 2007

Swiss functional sports underwear company with Norwegian roots Odlo has launched its new winter collection for 2007/08.

Its new 'Zoned Function' technology has been used in its 'Quantum' line. This combines close-to-the-body cut and anatomical shaping for added comfort as well as various functional materials with specific characteristics for various individual zones of the body.

The company has also launched a functional sport and lifestyle children's collection for skiing and snowboarding and other snow-based activities.

The first layer, functional underwear, offers climate regulation, moisture transport and swift redrying. The second layer provides warmth insulation and regulation, to keep the body at a comfortable temperature. The third layer offers protection against snow, cold temperatures, wind and rain and jackets and trousers have reflective piping and logos to ensure high visibility.

December sales increase at Abercrombie & Fitch

05 Jan 2007

American clothing company Abercrombie & Fitch has reported net sales of $603.6 million for the five-week period ended December 30, a 15% increase compared with sales of $525.9 million in December 2005.

Year-to-date, the company has reported a net sales increase of 18% to $3.07 billion from $2.6 billion last year.

Everlast Worldwide to participate in the ICR XChange Conference

05 Jan 2007

Sporting goods, apparel, footwear and active lifestyle company Everlast Worldwide Inc., will be presenting at the ninth annual ICR XChange conference taking place at the St. Regis Monarch Beach Resort in Dana Point, California.

Seth Horowitz, president and CEO, and Gary Dailey, chief financial officer, are scheduled to present on January 11.

43 new Gore-Tex styles and new Thermatek at Arc'teryx

05 Jan 2007

Canadian clothing specialist Arc'teryx has launched a new Gore-Tex hardshell collection as part of its winter 2007/2008 range, including 43 Pro Shell jackets.

Most of these are partly or entirely manufactured from Pro Shell laminates, which also feature Gore's new Micro Grid Backer Technology and a dense exterior fabric for stronger protection against water and abrasion.

New material ThermaTek, consisting of a permanently water-repelling hollow-fibre fleece material, laminated onto a 30-denier HT polyamide-fabric, with a DWR-Finish, is used as the basis for the company's Dually Belay Jacket, for which the laminate is used both for the exterior and the feed. The unit is especially designed for to keep climbers warm whilst hanging at belay stations or waiting in the bivy.

Record Indian export figures for 2006

05 Jan 2007

2006 saw unprecedented growth in India's merchandise exports which exceeded the landmark figure of $100 billion, totalling $103 billion, a growth rate of 24%. With a 24% growth in 2005/06 and 27% growth in 2004/05, exports are currently growing three times faster than GDP growth.

Exports between April and November 2006 totalled $80 billion, with a record growth rate of approximately 39%.

Employment generation in the export sector is seen as the highest priority and the Annual Supplement of the Foreign Trade Policy implemented in April 2006 sought to achieve the objective of employment generation by identifying special focus areas in labour intensive sectors which would generate additional employment opportunities.

Major initiatives taken in 2006 for the promotion of labour intensive exports included 'The Focus Product and Focus Market Scheme', introduced to give additional impetus for the penetration of strategic markets in labour intensive sectors such as fish and leather products, sports goods and toys, and handloom and handicraft items. The scheme allows duty credit facility at 2.5% of the FOB value of exports of specific products and notified countries.

According to a study by RIS (Research & Information Systems for Developing Countries) commissioned by Ministry of Commerce & Industry in 2006, the export sector generated incremental direct employment of 1.4 million compared with the previous year, bringing the total employment generated by the export sector to nine

billion.

It is hoped that exports will reach $150 billion by 2008-09 and that, as a result, 13.6 million new jobs will be generated.