Business Week
16th January 05 - 22nd January 06

Sialkot's sports goods to be exhibited in the USA

16 January 2006

The Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI), in collaboration with India's Export Promotion Bureau, will hold a 'Sialkot-made' sports goods exhibition in Florida, USA, on January 23-25.

SCCI senior vice-president Faisal Mehmood Khan told reporters that all of the necessary arrangements had been finalised and hoped that the exhibition would help to promote Sialkot-produced sports goods in the United States and EU markets, adding that exporters from Sialkot had the potential to explore and capture these markets by exporting high quality and diverse goods.

Pakistan's sports goods (footballs, gloves and other items) exports rose to $19.71 million in November 2005 from $18.14 million in October, a rise of 8.64% month-on-month.

Vaughn Outdoor launches CZiP zip-off gloves

16 January 2006

Vaughn Outdoor, a new Utah-based company, has launched its new easy to remove, zip-off CZiP gloves and mittens on the market. The CZiP design features a zipper at the top of the hand portion (just below the knuckles) of a glove or mitten and allows the wearer to remove the material covering the hand and fingers without completely removing the glove or mitten. With their hands free, the wearer can perform other functions, while still having the open portion secured around the wrist.

The gloves and mittens, which were awarded the Riri Sportswear Accessories Award at the ispo BrandNew competition, will be formally launched at the SnowSports Industries America (SIA) Winter Show in Las Vegas on January 23.

Abrameq re-elects president

16 January 2006

Raul Ludwig, director of Master Equipamentos Industriais Ltda, has been re-elected president of the Brazilian Association of Manufacturers of Machinery and Equipment for the Leather and Shoe Industry (ABRAMEQ) for a third consecutive term and will stay in office until December 2007. Délcio Schmidt, Heitor Schreiber and Davilson Nogueira have been appointed vice-presidents.

AdvanSA to unveil new Coolmax developments at ispo

16 January 2006

AdvanSA will unveil several new developments of its Coolmax microfibre at ispo at the end of January. With Coolmax micro, the company has developed a process to combine Coolmax micro polyester with elastane to give excellent stretch and colour fastness. This new development is said to complete the range of yarn counts existing for Coolmax.

Another new innovation is Coolmax Selective functionality, which is said to combine hydrophobic and hydrophilic properties together. A process of fibre surface modification has been developed so that the outside of the fabric has water and oil repellency, whilst inside it has the moisture management of Coolmax, offering comfort and well being.

Skills programme launched for textile workers in Portugal

16 January 2006

Microsoft Corp and The Technological Centre for the Textile and Clothing Industries of Portugal (CITEVE) has launched a new Technology, Innovation and Initiative programme (TII), a new project to provide workers in Portugal's textile industry with new skills and qualifications to enhance their long-term employability prospects.

The TII project is a three-year initiative to train at least 3,000 workers from Portugal's textile sector, which is being significantly affected by increasing global competition, with an estimated 20,000 already unemployed in the sector. The training courses will equip the participants with new skills needed in the local economy; and CITEVE, together with the Instituto do Emprego e Formacao Profissional (The Institute for Employment and Professional Training of the Ministry of Work and Social Solidarity), will also work with local companies and unions to help the trainees find new jobs or start new businesses.

Helder Rosendo, CITEVE's general manager, said, "The European textiles industries are experiencing a paradigm shift due to the undisputable competitiveness of Asian countries in the sector, forcing Portuguese companies to make stronger bets on research and development, design, logistics and distribution. In this scenario, IT and

human resources skills and training are of great importance. The paradigm shift creates an unchangeable reality of decreasing employment, and the impact is especially acute for the least qualified workers."

DSM Dyneema files lawsuit against Chinese company

16 January 2006

Developer and manufacturer of Dyneema fibre DSM has filed a patent-infringement lawsuit against Hangzhou Pivot International Co. Ltd., of Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, China, before the Court of Paris, France.

Prior to the filing, DSM Dyneema obtained authorisation to seize merchandise, including fibre, rope and finished articles, exhibited by Hangzhou Pivot at the Milipol 2005 exhibition in Paris.

The lawsuit asks the court to establish and confirm its findings that this merchandise infringes on DSM Dyneema patents, and to forbid the sale or offering of these polyethylene-based, high-performance fibres by Hangzhou Pivot. DSM Dyneema is also seeking recall of the infringing products sold, as well as damages and other corrective measures.

Dyneema is a superstrong polyethylene fibre that offers maximum strength combined with minimum weight. It is up to 15 times stronger than quality steel and up to 40% stronger than aramid fibres, both on weight per weight basis. It also floats on water and is durable and resistant to moisture, UV light and chemicals.

EU moves closer to duties on Chinese shoes

17 January 2006

The European Union (EU) moved closer to imposing anti-dumping duties on shoe imports from China on January 13 when member countries denied market economy status to Chinese footwear manufacturers.

Member states met with the commission this morning and there was overwhelming support for the proposal of the commission not to grant market economy status to 13 Chinese companies," European Commission spokesman Peter Power said.

Granting market economy status to the companies in the investigation would have meant the commission believed it had a clear idea of their actual costs in making shoes. Without it, comparable costs in another country, in this case Brazil, are used to assess if exports have been dumped.

Trade lawyers said costs were higher than in China, making it more likely Chinese exports will be deemed to be on sale at below domestic prices and liable for anti-dumping duties.

Mr Power emphasised that the determination of market economy status is only one element in any assessment of dumping" and several other stages of the investigation lay ahead."

A Chinese official in Brussels criticised the decision, stating: It is really shocking that not one of the Chinese companies was given market economy status." A delegation from Beijing was in Brussels in an attempt to dissuade the European Commission from applying anti-dumping duties.

The EU executive must decide by early April whether to impose provisional antidumping duties and then by October whether to levy them definitively for a five-year period.

PFI certifies social standards

17 January 2006

With immediate effect, German testing institute for shoes and leather products PFI will start certifying the social standards of shoe factories around the world.

Facing globalisation many companies have moved their production to foreign countries, mainly to third world countries, or are now placing orders with OEM manufactures in these countries. The reason for this behaviour is the comparable low wage level, however, the working conditions suffered by many workers are often ignored in these countries and child labour, forced labour and extensive working days are common.

In the past many employers followed an internal code of conduct, demonstrating their accountability towards their workers and these companies are now able to obtain an independent certification of their production conditions. A big advantage of the certification by PFI is the fact that an independent third party conducts the audit, adding objectivity to the certifying process.

The PFI label Certified Production" provides employers with the opportunity to protect and strengthen products and brand image.

European companies should have a platform to communicate their performed accountability towards their workers. The PFI label offers this platform and I think the response on it will be very positive," Gerhard Schäuble, the auditor in charge declared.

Important aspects for certification are the ostracism of child and forced labour and any kind of discrimination such as race religion and gender. In a detailed questionnaire, companies have to state how they treat their employees and what procedure they implemented to prevent inhuman conditions. This declaration will be checked by interviews with workers.

Couromoda opens in São Paulo

17 January 2006

Couromoda, International Shoes, Sportsgoods and Leathergoods Fair presenting autumn/winter shoe collections of Brazilian factories began on January 16 in São Paulo, with over 3,000 brands on show - representing 90% of the shoe industry.

Last year, the footwear sector generated export revenues of $1.88 billion but, however, the volume of shipments fell to 189 million pairs against 212 million in 2004.

Brazil is currently the third largest shoe producer in the world and the fourth largest exporter. There are 1,600 companies involved in the sector, ranging from large to small companies. The country is also the fifth largest shoe consumer in the world.

China's foreign trade exceeds $1.4 trillion in 2005

17 January 2006

China’s General Administration of Customs has released foreign trade statistics for 2005, indicating that foreign trade amounted to $1.42212 trillion in 2005, up 23.2% compared with that of the previous year. Exports reached $762 billion and imports $660.12 billion, up by 28.4% and 17.6% respectively.

According to the statistics, in December 2005, total imports and exports reached $139.81 billion, hitting a historical high in imports and exports in a single month and recording a 20% increase year-on-year. Exports were $75.41 billion and imports $64.4 billion, up by 18.2% and 22.2% respectively.

Bilateral trade between China and its top six trading partners exceeded $100 billion with the EU and USA breaking the $200 billion mark.

In 2005, the EU remained China’s main trading partner and bilateral trade amounted to $217.31 billion, up 22.6%. The USA was the second largest trading partner with $211.63 billion of bilateral trade, up 24.8%. Japan was the third largest with $184.45 billion, a rise of 9.9%.

Exports of garments rose 19.9% to reach $73.88 billion; yarn, woven fabrics and products rose 22.9% to $41.13 billion, and footwear exports increased 25.3% to $19.05 billion.

Chinese textile producers cut jobs

17 January 2006

According to a press release from the Chinese Ministry of Commerce, many textile producers in south China's Guangdong have been forced to cut jobs due to a lack of export orders in the year 2006.

This is said to be the result of export restrictions that came into force on January 1 limiting some categories of textile, and garment products were placed with new export to the European Union countries and America - markets which accounted for 34% of China's total textile exports in 2005.

The lack of export orders forced many textile producers, especially small and medium-sized companies to cut jobs ahead of China's important holiday of Spring Festival, which will fall on January 29.

According to the release, one garment factory in Foshan City, Guangdong, said that his company has let 300 workers go, about 30% of the workforce.

There are some 6,200 textile companies in Foshan. However, only 76 of them have won textile export quotas for this year.
The Sino-US textile agreement which took effect on January 1 imposes quotas on 21 types of clothing and textiles from China by 2008. Ten types of Chinese textile and apparel products exported to the European Union have also been put under quota restrictions.

Cotton Incorporated selects Rieter spinning technology

17 January 2006

US-based cotton research and marketing company Cotton Incorporated and Swiss supplier of integrated textile equipment Rieter, celebrated the two companies’ 25-year relationship at the inauguration of Rieter’s new complete spinning production line in the Research Laboratory of Cotton Incorporated in Cary NC on January 10.

Cotton Incorporated and Rieter have been collaborating on research efforts regarding fibre selection and process optimisation to produce high quality, 100% cotton and cotton-rich yarns since 1979. Over the last three years, Fibre Processing Research, a division of Textile Research and Implementation, has completed an intensive modernisation of its laboratory. One of the highlights of the modernisation was the addition of Rieter’s K 44 Com4 compact spinning system and its R 40 rotor spinning machine.

The collaborative initiative allows joint trials in which Rieter's technological components are tested to fit with Cotton Incorporated’s needs in spinning cotton fibres. The trials will give Cotton Incorporated an opportunity to elaborate on the running behaviour of US cotton on high speed spinning machines resulting in an advanced running performance on Rieter machinery.

Omniflex installs film inspection system

17 January 2006

Omniflex, Inc., a US company involved in the extrusion

of super-thin TPU and other hard-to-extrude specialty TPE films, has announced the installation and startup of a new 100% inspection system for its Transport and Vacuflex thin-film production lines. The new film inspection system is capable of detecting and documenting pin holes, voids, gels, wrinkles, streaks and dark or light contaminants as small as 0.5mm. It will be used to scan all flat-die extruded gloss, natural, matte and coloured Transport and Vacuflex films, included those cast on translucent polyethylene and polyester carriers.

Omniflex's new inspection system provides defect detection, identification and photo-quality imaging and is capable of printing a high-resolution grayscale image of each defect. The machine operator has 100% real-time inspection status and control plus complete roll-by-roll documentation of any potential defect and its location.

This proprietary 100% inspection system will ensure that customers receive consistent high quality waterproof-breathable barrier films, without increasing product cost. Additionally, electronic and hard-copy documentation of the visual inspection log for each finished roll of film can accompany the final product to the customer.

BASF to invest €148 million in Brazil

18 January 2006

After a difficult 2005 in Brazil, the local subsidiary of German chemical group BASF believes that there will be a recovery in the market in 2006. According to Rolf-Dieter Acker, president of BASF for Latin American, the company plans to invest approximately €148.5 million in Brazil - 90% of the €165 million allocated to the whole region for the period 2006-2010.

"The Brazilian unit is among the six or seven of the largest companies in the group worldwide," he said.

Most of the funds will be used to upgrade production of agricultural chemicals and acrylic dispersions. "The company will be able to increase production of any product, depending on demand," he added.

In 2005 BASF completed a €3.3 million improvement project that will hopefully raise production of acrylic dispersions at the Guaratinguetá factory from 70,000 tons to 90,000 tons per annum. Production of these products may be increased further in the next two to three years depending on demand. Acrylic dispersions are used in the manufacture of products such as leather and textiles. According to BASF the market for these products is currently growing at a rate of 4% to 5% per annum in Brazil.

Timberland launches new footwear fit system

18 January 2006

The Timberland Company has introduced new footwear technology that the company believes could have a significant impact on the men's footwear market.

Catering to the 60% of men who are unable to get an optimal fit through traditional footwear - and the 35% of men who have a half-size or greater difference between their left and right feet - the new patent-pending Timberland PreciseFit system takes a new approach to fit, by going beyond length and width. To address forefoot volume, the system uses an innovative footbed insert system to deliver a better fit every time.

Extensive research involving 4,000 subjects by Timberland's Invention Factory revealed that the greatest dimensional differences exist in the girth of the forefoot, making it the primary driver of proper fit. Traditional fit paradigms focus on length and width rather than girth, forcing consumers to either cram their feet into shoes that are too tight, or trade up to longer shoes that leave a looser fit with gaps. This alleviates one fit issue while creating another.

The PreciseFit system addresses this challenge head-on, allowing consumers to customise their fit through a simple yet revolutionary system of forefoot inserts. Each pair of shoes comes with a set of inserts of varying thicknesses that lock on to a removable footbed, creating optimal volume in each shoe and allowing for differences between left and right feet. The thicker insert minimises volume in the shoe, while the thinner insert adds volume.

Reebok inaugurates new Montreal HQ and innovation centre

18 January 2006

Reebok has officially inaugurated its new Montreal head office and Innovation Centre. Located in the borough of Saint-Laurent, the newly constructed Reebok headquarters occupies 350,000 square feet and is the new home to both Reebok Canada and Reebok's global hockey division, employing 376 full time people.

Reebok's global hockey division, known as The Hockey Company, houses a state-of-the-art Hockey Research and innovation centre, and the facility consolidates all of the global hockey equipment and apparel activities carried out under the Reebok, CCM, JOFA and KOHO brands.

The new Montreal Headquarters also houses Reebok Canada, a subsidiary of Reebok International Ltd. Reebok Canada is responsible for the marketing and distribution of all Reebok athletic footwear and athletic apparel products throughout Canada. According to the company, the re-location has resulted in creating more than 220 new full time jobs. Reebok branded footwear and apparel will begin shipping from the new distribution centre in late January.

Rising demand for SATRA's laboratory facilities

18 January 2006

According to UK-based research and technology centre SATRA, test demands on its main footwear and leather goods facilities are increasing every year and 15% more tests were undertaken for members during 2005 than in the previous year.

2005 saw a significant increase in the submission of all types of general footwear and components, safety footwear and leather goods at SATRA's laboratories, which bucks the trend towards commissioning testing near the point of manufacture.

Austin Simmons, executive director responsible for the daily running of the SATRA's main footwear testing areas, attributes this success to our global reputation and acknowledged skills and experience.

Another key factor has been the continued investment in new equipment, test machines and facilities. SATRA has a large selection of specialist test equipment at its footwear test laboratory and more than £100,000 was spent on new test equipment in 2005 alone.

Dubarry marine footwear exhibted at Toronto Boat Show

18 January 2006

Visitors to the Toronto Boat Show have been able to see the well-known marine footwear collection from Dubarry of Ireland for the first time in Canada through its newly appointed distributor, Ludlow of London.

The footwear on show includes Dubarry's flagship boots, the all-leather Ultima and the Shamrock. Made from specially treated water-resistant leathers with Gore-Tex lining, they are designed to wick perspiration and moisture away from the foot.

Dubarry's injection moulding application of its soles ensures long lasting durability with proven non-slip security from its rubber outsole design. This unique outsole features on all of Dubarry's footwear range from offshore boots through to the Active/Casual range.

Fall in NZ farmer confidence causes concern

18 January 2006

New Zealand's National Party Agriculture spokesman David Carter says the country should be concerned at the results of the latest survey of farmer confidence.

The Rabobank/AC Nielsen Rural Confidence Survey showed that farmers in all sectors - sheep, beef, dairy and cropping - are becoming pessimistic about the economy over the next 12 months. 59% of farmers expect lower incomes this year and 77% expect input costs to increase, which would put the squeeze on farm profitability.

"The Government has taken farmers for granted for years and has continued to place significant costs and legislation onto the farming sector," said Mr Carter.

"Commodity prices are declining and costs are increasing, which is making profitability increasingly difficult to obtain.

"Farmers are facing tough times, particularly sheep farmers, with wool prices scraping the bottom of the barrel and a lamb schedule that is declining week after week."

Bayer to establish polyurethane systems house in Thailand

18 January 2006

Bayer MaterialScience AG plans to set up an integrated polyurethane systems house in Thailand. It will be incorporated into Bayer MaterialScience's global BaySystems network under the name BaySystems ASEAN. The new company, located near Bangkok, will provide support to customers in ASEAN countries such as Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Malaysia, and is due to start operating at the beginning of 2007.

E47 to launch new anti-odour, antimicrobial fabrics at OR

18 January 2006

E47 Technologies will launch new anti-odour and antimicrobial performance fabrics at Outdoor Retailer Winter Market on January 28-31. The new E47 fabrics are said to offer permanent anti-odour properties and be ideally suited for performance apparel, footwear, sporting goods and industrial products such as helmets, gloves, and uniforms.

E47's anti-odour performance is derived from SmartSilver, a nanoscale-engineered additive that permanently bonds to fibres without altering their native characteristics. The result is a line of fabrics and fibres that offer permanent anti-odour properties at less than half the cost of other effective silver-based offerings.

Anti-odour fabrics have previously been either too expensive or ineffective," said JT Griffin, president and CEO, E47. E47 was developed from the beginning to be permanent, versatile and cost-effective. E47's permanent anti-odour properties set a new benchmark for products ranging from performance apparel, sports equipment and industrial fabrics..."

Sof Sole launches gender specific footcare accessories

18 January 2006

US performance footwear accessories producer Sof Sole

has launched Sof Sole energy, a line of footcare accessories created just for women. Developed with female athletes and the United States Tennis Association Women's Podiatrist Dr. David Sharnoff, the energy line is designed expressly for a woman's foot and to provide gender specific stability and support. The line includes performance and gel cushioning insoles, technical and sport-fusion socks and pre and post work-out footcare products.

Sof Sole energy insoles feature a narrower width, a deeper heel cup for added stability and a low-profile forefoot area for better fit. These benefits are said to combine to create a combination of performance enhancing benefits for women's footwear. Energy products also feature a new Aloe Vera infused fabric in the insole top cover and select socks. The aloe invisible moisture beads are continually released as the foot moves keeping skin soft and smooth.

Sof Sole energy is a brand privately held by Implus Footcare, LLC.

AMG appointed as distributor for Simple in the UK

18 January 2006

Lifestyle brand supplier AMG Group has been appointed as the exclusive distributor of casual footwear brand Simple in the UK and Eire with immediate effect.

AMG now manages the three footwear brands owned by Deckers Outdoor Corporation in the UK and Eire. In May 2005, AMG was appointed distributor of the sheepskin footwear brand, UGG Australia, since when the brand has experienced significant growth, with sales figures double that of the previous year.

Simple has also experienced significant growth across its product range with its Clog business growing by 30% in 2005 and its Sneakers business by 59%. Outside the USA, the UK has the potential to be the largest international market.

Simple was launched in the 1990s to cater for 21-35-year old consumers who were looking for an alternative to flashy athletic footwear brands. The line of casual shoes combines the comfort of athletic footwear construction with the simple, understated styling of back-to-basics" casual footwear. Since then, the brand has expanded into a full line of clogs, sneakers, and sandals; and in 2005, introduced a new Unclog and Green Toe segments to the line.

Heals launches Healink Asia

19 January 2006

UK-based, manufacturer of testing instruments for fabric and colour fastness, James H. Heal & Co Ltd, has recently launched Healink Asia.

In cooperation with Heal's Chinese partner, Introtech Limited, a brand new service centre has been established in Hong Kong. This will service customers in Australia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, South Korea, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

The purpose of the Healink Asia Centre is to provide a quicker and more affordable service to customers in the region. The centre will take care of installation and commissioning, training, maintenance and calibration.

It is staffed by local engineers, and operates under the technical supervision of Healink – Heal's Service and Calibration Division. A continuous training programme is in place and all calibration certificates are authorised and issued by Healink in the UK.

Nike launches Air Max 'foamless' running shoe

19 January 2006

Nike, Inc. has launched its Air Max 360 running shoe, which is the first shoe that allows athletes to run on 360 degrees of Nike Air cushioning.

Air Max 360 features a full-length Air-Sole unit that has no foam, just Nike Air cushioning, which is said to provide the softest, smoothest, and most durable experience created in an Air Max shoe to date.

A foamless midsole reduces weight and increases durability. The Air Max 360 is Nike's lightest Air Max shoe to date, weighing less than 13 ounces (12.3 oz, Men's size 9 and 10.8 oz, Women's size 8). With regards to durability, a traditional midsole with foam compresses up to 40% after 300 miles of use whereas Nike Air cushioning retains its original form after 300 miles.

The Air Max 360 also offers improved comfort as Nike has improved the Air-Sole unit to better correspond with pressure points in the foot, while engineering the shoe to provide greater flexibility in the forefoot. The Nike Air unit is surrounded by a cage to provide enhanced integrity and support and is tuned specifically for gender and shoe size for enhanced impact protection. A new seamless sock liner also helps eliminate abrasion on the foot and the midfoot webbing loops are said to provide a superior fit.

Burlington Coat Factory to be acquired by Bain Capital

19 January 2006

Burlington Coat Factory Warehouse Corporation has signed a definitive merger agreement to be acquired by affiliates of Bain Capital Partners, LLC. Under terms of the agreement, Bain Capital will acquire all of the outstanding shares of Burlington Coat Factory Warehouse Corporation for $45.50 per share in cash, for a total consideration of approximately $2.06 billion.

Burlington Coat Factory sells branded apparel across many product divisions, including coats, ladies sportswear, menswear, and footwear.

Largest range in downhill skiing to be shown at ispo

19 January 2006

Thanks to a more precise definition of target groups in the skiing industry, exhibitors will present the widest selection of alpine ski products to have ever been seen at the event during ispo winter 06 in Munich from January 26 to February 1.

In addition to all-rounder, race and power carvers, there will be skicross, luxuriant freeride skis with slalom tapering for extreme and normal freeriders, twin tips in all possible lengths and tapering, fun carvers, wellness skis, all kinds of new telemarkers with freeride, slalom and race tapering with turned-up ends for those who want them, new tour models, individually customised for recreational, racing and normal touring skiers. In addition, there are models for women including ones with designs for skilled skiers, although not in a variety in any way comparable with that of men’s skis.

As well as an increase in the number of products available, the pool of skiing product manufacturers has also increased substantially. In addition to the big names in the industry, an increasing number of small workshops independent of large manufacturers are attracting attention including Movement, Core, Ninthward, G3, Zweydingers, Prior, Pure Ski and Amplid, winner of the ispo BrandNew Award. Artistic designs, refined surfaces and accessories will take part.

US Congress awards $1.8 million for cold weather contact glove

19 January 2006

The US Congress has passed the full-year Department of Defense Appropriation Act which includes $1.8 million in funding support for the US Marine Corps Contact Glove. Developed and manufactured by Outdoor Research, the PS150 Contact Glove with Polartec Power Stretch with X-Static will allow marines to conduct precise technical work such as operating computer and electronic equipment while protecting their hands from the cold weather in combat environments.

Using a specialised testing methodology to simulate a Marine's extended strenuous wear, the Outdoor Research gloves proved to be significantly more durable, comfortable and functional than the current gloves issued by the Marine Corps.

Outdoor Research has worked directly with the US Military's Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) and the Marine Corps Systems Command (MARCORSYSCOM) for the past three years to develop a handwear system that is highly tactile yet provides strong protection in mountain and cold weather environments.

Malden Mills awarded military contracts

20 January 2006

Malden Mills Industries Inc., developers and manufacturers of Polartec performance textiles, has been awarded a military contract worth over $15 million for Polartec garments for the US Military in the 2006 Defense Spending

Bill. Included in this funding is $1.1 million to complete a third year of research and development of electronic textiles for the Army's Combat Casualty Care programme, which provides remote physiological monitoring of soldiers in combat.

In addition to electronic textiles, three other Polartec programmes will continue to receive funding in 2006. First, the Army Extended Cold Weather Clothing System (ECWCS) uses a range of Polartec fabrics to meet peacetime and deployment requirements for cold weather operations. Second, the Marine Corps Mountain Cold Weather Clothing and Equipment Program (MCWCEP) includes an integrated clothing component, which consists of a next-to-skin layer, a light and heavy weight insulating layer, a protective shell, and an outer insulating layer. And third, the Navy Air Warfare Centre's Multi-Climate Protection System (MCPS), a modular ensemble that provides total performance by layering thermal protection and shell garments.

Russell Corporation to move more production offshore

19 January 2006

Russell Corporation has announced a major restructuring designed to improve the company's long-term competitiveness.

The plans focus on three areas within the company and include a continued shift offshore of textile/apparel manufacturing operations; expansion of its newest textile facility in Honduras; the elimination of all knit textile capacity in Alexander City, Alabama; the completion of the movement of sock production offshore;

The movement of additional team uniform production offshore; the closure of a sewing operation in Mexico; the completion of operational changes to Huffy Sports' backboard business; the elimination of remaining Huffy Sports domestic production; the movement of production offshore to a current supplier; reductions of $8 million to $10 million in overhead costs; the reorganisation of sales and marketing within the Russell Athletic Group; the elimination of approximately 90 positions in corporate and division offices.

The plans will impact approximately 2,300 positions

globally, including 1,700 in the US, of which approximately 1,200 will eventually be replaced in Honduras and Mexico.

Bayer MaterialScience reorganises Coatings, Adhesives, Sealants Unit

20 January 2006

German-based Bayer MaterialScience AG has restructured the marketing organisation of its Coatings, Adhesives, Sealants (CAS) Business Unit effective January 1, 2006. Changes have been made in the Europe, Middle East, Africa and Latin America (EMEA/LA) regions aimed at further improving cooperation with customers in the industry. The changes are intended to strengthen the business development sections which are responsible for developing products and applications for and with customers.

In the Industrial Coatings section, coating raw materials for automotive, plastic and UV-curing coatings, industrial coatings in general, and can and coil coatings have been grouped together. Dr. Volker Mirgel has been succeeded as head of marketing by Mark Rübenstrunk, who is responsible for strategic and commercial policy, and Dr. Martin Vollmer, who is in charge of the business development section.

The marketing activities of the Specialties section, which incorporates the Corrosion Protection, Construction and Textile Coatings sections and a number of newly formed units, remain under the leadership of Dr. Ulrich Meier-Westhues.

In the Adhesives section, the newly defined marketing unit is headed by Ralf Gehring, while Dr. Heinz-Werner Lucas is in charge of the business development section.

Saurer reports declining demand from China

20 January 2006

Swiss manufacturer of spinning, texturising, twisting and embroidery systems, Saurer Textile, booked fewer orders in 2005. The company took orders worth €1,466 million in 2005, down 13% compared with €1,690 million in 2004.

Sales amounted to €1,573 million a fall of 1% compared with €1,593m a year earlier. According to the company, annual sales for the textile division fell 3% to €1 174 million, which was primarily attributable to reduced demand from China, mainly in the field of large projects for filament machines and synthetic staple fibres, which had already emerged in the second half of 2004. This was said to be as a result of uncertainty with regard to the trade disputes over textile imports in the first half of 2005, as well as the fact that substantial investments in previous years, had a negative effect on investments in textile machines worldwide. However, Asia still remained the dominant market in the textiles sector, accounting for 67% of sales; although only 28% of this came from China compared with 38% in 2004.

Unifi reduces losses but sales fall

20 January 2006

US producer and processor of multi-filament polyester and nylon textured yarns Unifi, Inc. reduced its losses in the second quarter ending December 25, 2005.

Net income for the current quarter, including discontinued operations, was a net loss of $3.8 million compared with a net loss of $7.7 million for the prior December quarter. Net income for the first half, including discontinued operations, was a net loss of $6.9 million compared with a net loss of $30.3 million in the first half of 2004.

Net sales from continuing operations for the December quarter fell 7.7% to $192.3 million compared with $208.4 million a year earlier. Net sales for the first half were $377.7 million, a decrease of $10.3 million year-on-year.

"While the damages caused by the hurricanes continued to affect raw materials and energy prices throughout the entire quarter, we were very pleased with our results for the quarter and the way that our operations handled the situation," said Bill Lowe, chief operating officer and chief financial officer.

Execute Sports completes acquisition of Pacific Sports Group

20 January 2006

Execute Sports, Inc. has acquired Pacific Sports Group, Inc., a holding company for several action sports brands, including Academy Snowboards, Kampus Wakeskates, Kampus Shoes, Collective Development Bindings and Collective Development Bags and Softgoods.

Based in California, Execute Sports, Inc. develops performance products including wetsuits, vests, rash guards, snowboards, wake skates, bindings, bags and apparel for the action sports industry.