



“Pakistan is one of the most strategically important markets for Itema Group”

Mr. FRANCO BRAMBILLA, Executive Director of Itema Middle East DMCC.

Please tell us about the new Itema office in Dubai. What is the scope of this regional hub and what regions are covered by Itema Dubai?

Itema decided to open an affiliate company based in Dubai in order to act as a commercial hub coordinating all Itema activities in the Middle East, the African continent and further afield including also Pakistan. The reason for this is the fact that Dubai is seen by business elite of the area as a neutral meeting point, bringing proximity across such a vast region. From Itema's standpoint, starting already in 2014 we launched the regional hub strategy with creating strategic points across the world from which we conduct our sales and after-sales activities, including the Asia Hubs out of Shanghai and Hong Kong, the Americas Hubs out of USA and Brazil, and the Middles East Hub out of Dubai.

We want to be close to our customers, no matter where in the world their mills are located, and this hub diversification strategy fits right and is already providing good results.

What are some of the innovations by Itema that you would like to share with our readers?

Itema is tirelessly working on bringing forward new innovations, on changing the realm of possibilities in weaving and on imagining the future. With our twin R&D departments, one of which is the ItemaLab, a special laboratory for breakthrough developments, based in the Scientific-Technologic Park Kilometro Rosso near Bergamo in Italy, which houses the R&D labs of other companies from Brembo, the brakes company that supplies Formula 1 cars, Porsche Academy, Italcementi, and University of

Bergamo to name just a few of the labs with which our pool of engineers and researchers collaborate in exchanging ideas on a daily basis and from where we are starting to get exciting results. You will remember that ItemaLab is the unit we launched with the mandate to invent “The Loom of the Future – for the Future of the Loom.” A very ambitious mandate, indeed, and this is because in Itema we think big, bold ideas. Some of the advancements from ItemaLab are so exciting that we cannot contain ourselves to wait and want to bring them onto the market, because we consider the advantages for the customer extremely beneficial.

The case in point is the latest device, the iSAVER™, which made its worldwide debut on the Istanbul stage at ITM 2018. Here we are talking about a smart device engineered and designed by ItemaLab

which completely eliminates the left-side weft waste.

Anyone working in, managing and/or owning a weaving operation should be giddy with excitement at this development as it means not only eliminating waste, but also cutting costs, reducing payback times for investments in new machinery and even benefitting the environment. A multiple-advantage development that is only the tip of the innovation iceberg for Mills, as the iSAVER™ at the moment is available for Denim Mills, to start with. We are talking about game-changing innovation.

Do you have any good news from Pakistan that you would like to share with us?

Pakistan is one of the most strategically important markets for IteMa and for the global textile industry, and a country with a strong potential for continued growth. IteMa is strongly committed to investing in the Pakistan market, providing highly innovative and technological products perfect to satisfy the growing potential and the requirements of the advanced weaving mills of the country. In order to further demonstrate this commitment, in October 2017 in collaboration with Noon International as sales and after-sales service representative, the Italian-headquartered company launched its first IteMaCampus in Pakistan - a brand-new training center opened in Lahore – equipped with the latest generation rapier R9500p and airjet A9500p.

One of IteMa's targets for the near-term future is to be increasingly closer to Mills in Pakistan, supporting customers with a complete offering of weaving machines, service and training. We strongly believe that we can provide customers in the country with the right technology, tailor-made solutions and top

performances, as well as real-time on-the-ground training – an overall win-win package which will undoubtedly further bolster Pakistani weavers' renowned creativity and responsiveness to the ever-changing fast-paced demands of today's textile market requirements and success worldwide.

In the past year or so, with the increased presence and efforts out of the Dubai Hub and thanks to the dedicated on-the-ground presence and commitment of Noon International team out of Lahore, Karachi and Faisalabad, IteMa has concluded important orders in some of the most prominent textile corporations of Pakistan, including Denim specialists – **Azgard9**, which already installed IteMa's rapier R9500denim weaving machines and **Artistic Fabrics**, which ordered recently a total of 40 sets of IteMa's rapier R9500denim – for maximum versatility, quality and hand-feel of their denim fabric creations, highly regarded in the indigo world.

Another high-profile contract is with the vertically integrated **Gul Ahmed** for a significant lot of IteMa's best-selling rapier weaving machines model R9500 for bed sheeting and apparel.

Of course, IteMa is present on the Pakistan market (also through the predecessor brands Sulzer, Somet and Vamatex) since some 40 years ago with thousands and thousands of active assets – weaving machines with projectile, rapier and airjet weft insertion systems weaving the broadest range of textiles from terry to denim to bed sheeting and apparel, to name just a few.

Our intention is to augment this physical presence in Pakistani weaving mills with the newest and most advanced weaving machinery range and to support the entire Pakistan textile industry from small, family-run operations all the way to the most sophisticated, vertically

integrated conglomerates. This is our mission and this is what we will do in a systematic, gradual and sustainable way.

How has the new IteMa Campus been received by the weaving sector of Pakistan?

The physical presence of IteMa in Pakistan has been very well received. We strongly believe that, no matter how easy to use and intuitive the latest-generation weaving equipment from IteMa, training remains a key element when it comes to getting the most out of your looms. This is why IteMa strongly encourages customers to continue take full advantage of this facility and schedule dedicated training courses for key weaving personnel at our new, fully-functional and ergonomic IteMaCampus facilities.

What in your opinion is needed for Pakistani textile industry to survive and succeed in the highly competitive global market?

Pakistan's textile industry needs strong support from Government to create and maintain the right conditions necessary for companies to operate in, thrive and bolster their production. With more than 60% of Pakistan's textile output going to export, it is essential for Pakistan textile operators to be able to rely on infrastructure in terms of uninterrupted energy supply to ensure ease of conducting business and to contribute towards making Pakistan's exports competitive in the international market. Furthermore, we support the call of the associations for an export-led government policy and availability of energy at regionally competitive prices, as minimum essentials for textile units to survive and flourish.

What are your expectations from your participation in ITMA ASIA exhibition?

We like to be close to customers, to hear first-hand how their businesses are evolving, what changing requirements they face from their customers and from brands etc, hence, every opportunity is welcome. ITMA ASIA has become an unmissable appointment and we were pleased to welcome our customers at stand located at Hall 3, Stand C25♦



Mr. Munir Alam COO
Azgard 9 at IteMa stand.