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Continuous growth stressed for apparel sector

By Yohan Perera

The importance of continuous growth in the apparel sector in the wake of the quota-free era was stressed at the Annual General Meeting of the Sri Lanka Apparel Exporters Association (SLAEA) held on Tuesday.

SLAEA Chairman Ranjan Casie Chetty addressing the AGM said that the export turnover of the apparel sector in the first half of 2003 has increased by 18% over the corresponding period of the previous year. While stating that this is a precursor to a much improved year, he said that the sector should build upon this growth to ensure that the targeted turnover of Rs 4.5 billion in 2007 is achieved. He also briefed the AGM about the formation of the Joint Apparel Association Forum (JAAF) to formulate and implement strategies necessary to succeed in the quota-free era.

Minister of Enterprise Development, Industrial Policy and Investment Promotion G.L. Peiris who was the chief guest whilst lauding the performance of the apparel sector said the apparel industry has no reasons to fear January 1 2005 when the quota system lapses as high standards are being maintained by the local industrialists while ma-



Chief guest Minister G.L. Peiris addresses the AGM of the Sri Lanka Apparel Exporters Association (SLAEA) held on Tuesday. Others from left SLAEA Chairman Ranjan Casie Chetty, Secretary to G.L. Peiris' Ministry Ranjith Fernando and SLAEA Vice Chairman Gihan Nanayakkara. Pic by Kumara Dayawansa Nanneththi.

The government has decided to give more quotas to those industrialists who give more employment. Accordingly 25000 dozens of quota will be issued to any apparel factory owner who give 1000 jobs. This way 7500 jobs will be given in the apparel sector out of which 2000 will be for graduates, said Minister G.L. Peiris.

for markets such as European Union has appreciated the Sri Lankan industry to give preferential treatment. He also called the apparel exporters to go for niche markets stating that it is another effective way to survive in the quota free era from 2005.

Referring to the government's effort to create employment the minister pointed out that long lasting durable reforms have been introduced in many sectors. In this context

he said that government has decided to give more quotas to those industrialists who give more employment. Accordingly 25000 dozens of quota will be issued to any apparel factory owner who give 1000 jobs. This way 7500 jobs will be given in the apparel sector out of which 2000 will be for graduates. He also said that the 19 months have brought have been resulted in 310% increase of foreign investment. It was pointed out by him that it is the responsi-

bility of the society to bring about lasting peace.

Secretary to Ministry to Enterprise Development Industrial policy and Investment Promotion Ranjith Fernando said that Sri Lankan apparel sector is trying to move towards a new stage where they are concentrating on productivity, innovation and competition. He said that apparel industrialists are ambassadors of a new vision and what is need is a change in the mind set.