LFMEAB to hold int'l sourcing show yearly

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The country's export-oriented leather sector entrepreneurs are eyeing to emerge as one of the top ten global exporters of footwear and leathergoods in the near future, the sector insiders have said.

As part of the strategic initiatives to achieve the target, local leathergoods manufacturers and exporters will organise 'Bangladesh Leather Footwear and Leathergoods International Sourcing Show (BLLISS)' in the country regularly.

The first-ever three-day BLLISS-2017 received positive responses from all the stakeholders. The event became a meeting platform for global buyers, brands, manufacturers and exporters, according to FE Report.

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The government has set the export target for the leather sector at US$ 5.0 billion by 2021 in the 7th Five Year Plan, as products of Bangladesh are usually good enough to attract global buyers and brands. However, in terms of the country it had to struggle. In this regard, BLLISS has been instrumental to change the mindset.

Subsequently, LFMEAB has declared BLLISS as an annual event of Bangladesh. Ministry of Commerce and LFMEAB have planned to continue this show regularly at least for the next three years. Next year BLLISS will be held on November 1-2 at the same venue.

Apex Footwear Ltd Chairman Syed Mannur Alam, in BLLISS Networking Dinner 2017, said, “We have to sell the country (Bangladesh) first, then the products.”

Under Factory Visit segment of BLLISS-2017, different brands and buyers visited local leathergoods and footwear factories. They were also introduced with practices of production and management as well as overall culture of manufacturing and export in Bangladesh.

Several local brands that participated in BLLISS-2017, told the FE during the expo that the platform has created an opportunity for them to build business relationships and share ideas about latest technologies and trends in the leather sector.

Apex Footwear Ltd deputy manager (international business) Tasir Saha said their company has taken part in the sourcing show to explore future markets.

He said usually Bangladesh companies join various international footwear and leathergoods shows abroad to entice the foreign buyers. But it will be not that far when the foreign buyers will come here to place their orders.

Organising events like BLLISS-2017 and robust campaigns of such initiative globally will attract the foreign buyers to come Bangladesh, he added.

Valan Footwear Industries general manager Md. Abdul Kalam Azad said the show has been quite positive for them in terms of marketing their products to the visiting buyers and other participants.

Bengal Leather Industries Ltd executive director Shadman Saqib Chowdhury said the exhibition was a good platform to meet interested buyers as well as leather industry-related machinery and other component suppliers.

He said response from the participants of the expo was quite good. But the organisers need to publicize more and promote the event internationally to encourage more interested buyers to come here.

Visitors from China, Cambodia, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Taiwan and Vietnam have received practical information and seen what strengths Bangladesh has to offer.

Around 76 international dignitaries, including business leaders of 16 footwear associations from the Asian countries visited BLLISS-2017, and found looming investment opportunities as well as business benefits of sourcing from Bangladesh.
Leathergoods makers to organise sourcing show every year

STAR BUSINESS DESK

The leathergoods makers and exporters association has decided to organise its recently concluded international sourcing show every year, as the event has received warm responses from the global buyers.

Md. Sirful Islam, president of Leathergoods and Footwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association of Bangladesh (LFMEA), shared the information after successfully organising Bangladesh Leather Footwear and Leathergoods International Sourcing Show (BLISS) 2017 in the capital’s International Convention City Bashundhara.

On November 16, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the three-day show jointly organised by the commerce ministry and LFMEA. Buyers, brands and business leaders from more than 20 countries, including China, India, Vietnam and Thailand, took part in the show.

BLISS 2017 has positively been highlighted in global industry magazines such as ModaPelle, International Leather Maker, Leatherage, and World Footwear Magazine, which bolstered Bangladesh brand image, the LFMEA said in a statement yesterday.

BLISS has been instrumental to change the mindset of the foreigners about Bangladesh’s leathergoods and footwear and help in attracting new buyers, Islam said in the statement.

The leathergoods exporters have to sell country first and then the product, Syed Manzur Elahi, chairman of Apex Footwear Ltd, said in BLISS Networking Dinner at the event.

Under the factory visit segment of BLISS 2017, different brands and buyers visited leathergoods and footwear factories and were introduced with practices of production and management and overall culture of manufacturing and exporting in Bangladesh.

"Some of the Bangladeshi factories are even much better than that of factories in Italy," said William Wong, president of the Federation of Hong Kong Brands.

As a potential investment relocation country, Bangladesh is being considered an emerging country in global footwear export market, Wong said.

"BLISS event was organised for the first time and it did show the professionalism in all aspects," said Rachid Majeed, general manager for supply chain and procurement at RM Williams.

"I talked to a few guests and the general feeling was very positive," Around 70 international dignitaries, including business leaders of 16 footwear associations from Asian countries, visited BLISS 2017.

"BLISS will help us to explore new avenues for business and overall growth of the leather industry," said M. Rafeque Ahmed, former chairman of the Council for Leather India.
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was speaking while inaugurating Bangladesh Leather Footwear and Leathergoods International Sourcing Show (BLLISS) 2017 at International Convention Centre, Bashundhara in Dhaka through videoconferencing from her official residence Gono Bhaban in Dhaka on November 16, 2017. Photo: PID
Expressing the hope to bag $5 billion export earnings from the leather, leather goods and footwear sector out of the total export earnings of $60 billion as per the Vision 2021, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today said two more leather industrial estates will be set up in Rajshahi and Chittagong divisions to flourish the sector.

"We've already set up an environment-friendly leather industrial estate in Savar and we've more plans. We'll set up two new leather industrial estates in Rajshahi and Chittagong divisions. We'll take necessary steps in this regard. The leather industry should not be Dhaka-centric only; rather it should be spread across the country," she said.

The Prime Minister was inaugurating the three-day Bangladesh Leather Footwear and Leathergoods International Sourcing Show (BLLISS)-2017 at the International Convention Centre Bashundhara (ICCB) in the capital through videoconferencing from her official residence Ganobhaban in the morning.

She also urged the foreign investors and buyers to invest more in Bangladesh's leather sector and source more leather products from Bangladesh.

"All the people you've come from abroad, I welcome you to Bangladesh and I hope this show will help boost our export and bring new dynamism in the sector. This event is a great opportunity to showcase the quality of our products, capacity, compliance and practice in the leather goods and footwear industry in the international buyer brands and potential investors," she said.

The Prime Minister also wished the BLLISS 2017 a grand success.

The Commerce Ministry and Leathergoods and Footwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association of Bangladesh (LFMEAB) jointly organised the event to attract more investment in the leather sector.

The theme of the show is "Think Ahead, Think Bangladesh".

Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed was present at the function at the ICAB as a special guest while eminent entrepreneur Syed Manzur Elahi and LFMEAB President M Saiful Islam also spoke.

The pre-recorded speeches of Industries Minister Amir Hossain Amu, State Minister for Foreign Affairs M Shahriar Alam and acting FBCCI President Sheikh Fazle Fahim were played at the function.

PM's Private Sector Development Adviser Salman F Rahman and Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim were present at Ganobhaban, among others, while Director General (admin) of the PMO Kabir Bin Anwar moderated the function.

Ministers, MPs, diplomats, dignitaries and the leaders of different trade bodies were also present at the ICCB.

An audio-video presentation on the past, present and the future of Bangladesh's leather sector was projected at the function.
Leaders of industrial sector, world famous brands and international buyers from 15 countries, including China, India, Vietnam and Thailand, are participating in the show.