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Press Release

15th AGM of LFMEAB held

The 15th Annual General Meeting for July 2017-June 2018, of Leathergoods And Footwear Manufacturers & Exporters Association of Bangladesh (LFMEAB) was held on Saturday, 11th August 2018 at the Westin hotel, Dhaka. President Mr. Md. Saiful Islam presided over the meeting while Sr. Vice-President, Mr. Abdul Momen Bhuiyan, Vice-President, Mr. Nasir Khan, Vice-President, Mr. Md. Nazmul Hassan Sohail, Director, Mr. M. Anisur Razzaque, Director, Mr. Ziaur Rahman, and Syed Nasim Manzur, Advisor of LFMEAB were present among other at the AGM. President delivered the inaugural speech of the AGM and presented the Annual Report 2017-2018. President highlighted state of economy home and abroad, national and global outlook of the industry, strategic opportunities, major initiatives taken in 2017-2018, summary of the financial position, and finally commented on future correctives that are needed for advancement of the sector.

For the last 5 years, from FY' 2013-14 up to FY' 2016-17 the sector retained an approximate positive average annual growth rate (AAGR) of 11%. However, in FY'2017-18 there was a down fall of 10.7%. In this critical context, President stated that despite having market access in EU, Canada, Southern Hemisphere and Fareast Bangladesh leather sector including the products is losing its competitive edge due to environmental non-compliant of Savar Tannery Estate. In this regard, President highlighted the compliance and beyond compliance initiative of LFMEAB. Under beyond compliance initiative, Tuberculosis (TB) screening tests programs covered 33144 workers among 67 member factories, and eye sight acuity test for 10,113 workers of 14 member factories, and awareness building programs on health, hygiene covered for 9414 female workers of 6 factories, LFMEAB has handed over 1 lac BDT cash (per person) to 22 vulnerable women returnees from Middle East, and many more to comes.

President also underlined the current global leather, leathergoods, & footwear total export market size, which is 244 billion (USD) that presents Bangladesh huge growth opportunities. Citing the Fashion Industry Benchmarking Study 2017 report President marked Bangladesh as the most competitive in terms of price. "'Made in Bangladesh' enjoys a prominent price advantage over many other Asian suppliers. Chinese high export share in the sector in Europe is on the wane and Japan seeks to boost and diversify its sourcing strategy under 'China Plus One Strategy', that seek to diversify sourcing and reduce its over reliance on China. Here is an opportunity for Bangladeshi leather goods manufacturers and exporters to fill in the vacuum and enhance and expand exports to global supply chain. He mentioned competitive labour is surely to its advantage but this

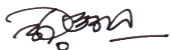
alone is not enough for the purpose; and therefore, it is high time looked at development of skills and know-how, and improving market access etc. Indicating this dynamics, President called upon to work collectively to take over strategic trade opportunities and strengthen Bangladesh's positioning in global supply chain map by increasing productivity, quality and efficiency. However, strategically, product development facility and collective brand marketing will be a critical factor to enhance Bangladesh's competitiveness, he stated.

Mr. Saiful Islam thanked honorable Prime Minister for policy drive to orient economy towards export diversification and declaring 'Leather, Leather goods & Footwear' as the Product of the year -2017. President also informed that LFMEAB is going to organize 2nd edition of BLLISS 2018 (Bangladesh Leatherfootwear & Leathergoods International Sourcing Show) to be held from 22 – 24 November, 2018 at International Convention City, Bashundhara in Dhaka. The entire show will be inaugurated by H.E. Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister, People's Republic of Bangladesh at a special Inauguration Event on Thursday, November 22nd, 2018 at Bangabandhu International Conference Center in Dhaka. He remarked that the declaration created a synergy for moving up the sector furthering ahead.

To realize the full potential of the industry, President underlined some critical areas that are required to be addressed in more structured ways: improving ease of doing business so that Bangladesh can upgrade in Doing Business 2019 index, addressing logistical hassles and infrastructure bottlenecks such as port congestions. In this regard, President called upon related bodies to take long-term and sustain policy support to achieve 5 billion USD export by 2021. Otherwise it would not be possible to reach the target where environmental compliance and custom officials are the critical hurdles.

Later on, the Audit Report July 2017-June 2018 of the Association was approved unanimously at the AGM. He also welcomed new 19 members in the Association.

With Thanks & Regards,



Kazi Roushan Ara
Executive Director