

## Highlights of media coverage of Bangladesh Leatherfootwear & Leathergoods International Sourcing Show (BLLISS) 2017

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Page 8

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## LFMEAB to hold int'l sourcing show yearly

FE Report

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

### BLLISS-2017 draws huge response

Leathergoods & Footwear Manufacturers & Exporters of Bangladesh (LFMEAB).

The exhibition on the second largest export sector of the country was jointly organised by Ministry of Commerce and LFMEAB at International Convention Centre Bashundhara (ICCB) in the capital on November 16-18.

The mega event, with the theme 'Think Ahead, Think Bangladesh', was inaugurated by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

Continued to page 7 Col. 1

## LFMEAB to hold int'l sourcing show yearly

Continued from page 8 col. 8

through video-conference from her official residence Gonobhaban on November 16.

More than 30 exhibitors displayed a wide range of their innovative products in separate stalls in BLLISS-2017.

Local brands, buyers, designers, fashion experts, industry leaders, sourcing agents, retail chain distributors and investors received comprehensive ideas regarding upgraded capacity of the local manufacturers and exporters through the exhibition.

Breakout sessions like entry strategy in USA market, lean management, and sustainability in leather sector supply chain by global experts in respective areas brought much-needed global industry information and insights to the local industry people.

Policymakers and government officials have also received first-hand experience on the internal capacity of the country's leather industry by participating in the event.

The industry insiders said BLLISS-2017 also highlighted that LFMEAB in association with the government regulatory body concerned has taken exten-

sive compliance initiatives to make Bangladesh compliant in supply chain.

Global magazines and online portals like International Leather Maker, Leatherage, World Footwear Magazine and ModaPelle, portraying the leather sector, have highlighted BLLISS-2017 positively, which bolstered Bangladesh brand image abroad.

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 1-3 at the same venue.

Apex Footwear Ltd Chairman Syed Manzur Elahi, 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) Tusar Saha said their company has taken part in the sourcing show to explore future markets.

He said usually Bangladeshi 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 campaign of such initiative globally will attract the foreign buyers to come Bangladesh, he added.

Vulva Footwear Industries general

manager Md Abul 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 70 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.

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## 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 Saiful Islam, president of Leathergoods and Footwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association of Bangladesh (LFMEAB), shared the information after successfully organising Bangladesh Leather Footwear and Leathergoods International Sourcing Show (BLLISS) 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 LFMEAB. Buyers, brands and business leaders from more than 20 countries, including China, India, Vietnam and Thailand, took part in the show.

BLLISS 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 LFMEAB said in a statement yesterday.

BLLISS 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 BLLISS Networking Dinner at the event.

Under the factory visit segment of BLLISS 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 as emerging country in global footwear export market, Wong said.

"BLLISS event was organised for the first time and it did show the professionalism in all aspects," said Rachid Maliki, general manager for supply chain and procurements 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 BLLISS 2017.

"BLLISS will help us to explore new avenues for business and overall growth of the leather industry," said M Rafeeqe Ahmed, former chairman of the Council for Leather India.





## 2 more leather estates in Rajshahi, Ctg: PM



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

## UNB, Dhaka

**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.

News Link: <http://www.thedailystar.net/business/vision-2021-bangladesh-prime-minister-sheikh-hasina-says-2-more-leather-estates-in-rajshahi-chittagong-1492105>