

Bangladesh Leather Footwear and Leather Goods International Sourcing Show-2018 Inaugural Ceremony

Speech by

HE Sheikh Hasina

Honorable Prime Minister

Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh

Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC), Dhaka.

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Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

The chair,
Dear colleagues,
Diplomats,
Distinguished Guests,
Business Leaders and Entrepreneurs,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamualaikum and a very good morning.

I welcome you all at the inaugural ceremony of Bangladesh Leather Footwear and Leather Goods International Sourcing Show-2018.

I pay deep homage to the greatest Bangalee of all times, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. I recall with gratitude the four national leaders, 3-million martyrs and 200 thousand women, who sacrificed their modesty for the cause of independence. I pay respect to the freedom fighters. I also recall with gratitude all the martyrs who lost their lives in 15th August 1975.

We have achieved our Independence with the charismatic leadership of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. He graduated Bangladesh as a least-developed-country within 3 and a half years. During his period GDP rate was increased to more than 7 percent.

We have developed our country in all aspects during the last 10 years. Bangladesh is now one of the fast growing economies. We have graduated into a developing country. Bangladesh is known as a role model in the world. We have been performing 90 percent of our development works with our own resources. Remote areas of our country are also developed. Our growth rate increased to 7.86 percent with a sustained growth rate over 6% over the last ten years. Poverty rate reduced to 21.8 percent. Per capita income increased to USD 1751. More than 50 million people have graduated into middle income level. Energy production capacity increased to 20,430 MW. About 92 percent people are enjoying electricity.

The volume of GDP increased by 2.5 times and reached at USD 274 billion from the USD 100 billion in 2009. During the same period our foreign exchange reserve increased by 4 folds and reached at USD 33 billion.

Export earnings has increased to USD 41 billion due to the improvements in the areas of domestic and external investment sectors. We are now implementing 7th Five Year Plan to earn 60 billion USD by 2021. In addition, we are preparing our 8th Five Year Plan in line with the Perspective Plan 2041.

In a recent publication UK based multinational professional services network Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PwC) announced us as a strong emerging economy. By it's forecast Bangladesh will be the 28th largest economy of the world by 2030 and 23rd by 2050.

We have been establishing 100 Special Economic Zones and of them some are already made functional.

Modern communication infrastructure like roads, bridges and high speed train has also been built to facilitate trade and investment. Digital Bangladesh is now in reality. We are

building rapid pass 'metro-rail' in Dhaka. We have successfully launched 'Bangabandhu Satellite-1', which will contribute to the faster exchange of data and information.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our government has already commenced the works to establish numerous river ports and terminals to facilitate business and ease doing businesses. We are now more connected to the regional communication infrastructures which provide us to be the hub for trade among the south and south-east Asian countries. Ministry of Commerce is engaged in formulating the strategies to continue the market access to the major export markets. We have already started to work for bilateral and multilateral trade agreements.

Our priority is to promote export based economic development which will be contributing to further strengthen our position in the global trade among the developing countries. We have given immense importance to the export diversification and employment generation in the 6th and 7th Five Year Plans. We have to consider the probable impact of industrial automation and robotics and draw our strategy to that end. We should generate more employment along with the modernization of our industries.

Business Leaders and Entrepreneurs,

Leather and leather goods industry scores the second largest position in our export earnings and this is directly linked to our Agro-economics. We have taken a lot of initiatives to promote the industry. To transfer all the tanneries from Hazaribagh and different places to Savar; we have established environment friendly leather industrial zone in Savar beside the river Dhaleshary with an area of 200 acres. In the area, all structural development has completed and 115 tanneries have started their production. Establishment of industries in the area will create about 100 thousands employment opportunities.

The base we have made during the last decade with the help of hard working laborers, innovative entrepreneurs and appropriate policies support will take us further heights. We will do everything thoroughly to exploit this immense prosperity. We will remove all limitations and create equal opportunities for all priority export products. I reassure you all on behalf of our government to do everything for the sake of this industry.

We have a target to reach export earnings of USD60 billion within 2021. To achieve this target export market expansion and diversification is very important. We are aware of this and taking effective measures to promote this industry.

I also request to distinguish foreign buyers and investors to invest more in Bangladesh especially in this leather footwear and leather goods.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have taken various steps and initiatives to enhance export competitiveness. Ministry of Commerce is implementing a development project titled "Export Competitiveness for Jobs" with focus on major four export items and of them leather, leather footwear and leather products are eminent.

We have undertaken numerous steps to remove obstacles in export. For this our export capacity will be increased. The image of our trade will be increased by increasing quality of the product and implementing compliance protocol not only in factory level but also from the environmental aspects.

LFMEAB has already set examples in the area of social responsibility and thus ensured the factory safety and laborers welfare and health security. I hope entrepreneurs will continue their activities in this aspects.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I hereby firmly declare, the bond facility for all raw materials of export oriented products. NBR will actively consider to reduce the duties of raw materials of export oriented products to the minimum level. We will also examine to provide the bond and other port facilities to all other sectors which now exists only for RMG.

Financial incentives for leather goods and footwear will be continued for next 5 years.

I request you all to take an investment plan in large scale with insured and trust. Our government will provide all the facilities for the investors.

I declare the 'Bangladesh Leather Footwear and Leather Goods International Sourcing Show-2018' open.

Thank you all.

Khoda Hafez.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.

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