

Footwear Exchange



A platform of people worldwide who make the footwear, leather and allied industry work.

connect@footwearexchange.com



the
footprint

monthly newsletter by Footwear Exchange



EDITOR'S NOTE

Footprint November Edition: From November Rain to Industry Gain-Driving Leather & Footwear Forward

Dear Readers,

As November rains gently refresh the earth, this edition of Footprint showers fresh ideas, insights, and inspiration on the leather and footwear industry. Just as rain nourishes growth, we explore how automation and AI are transforming quality management—bringing precision, efficiency, and new opportunities to every corner of our sector.

This month, we also announce the upcoming celebration the Leather Industry Changemakers Awards, honoring those who, like steady, quietly but powerfully impact the industry. Their innovations and leadership ripple through the leather and allied sectors, reminding us that meaningful change often starts with a single bold step.

Alongside recognition and innovation, we bring you the latest sector news, trends, and perspectives from Leather and Footwear Hive Issue 7, along with the newest export data to keep you in tune with market movements. Whether you are a seasoned professional or an emerging entrepreneur, this edition offers knowledge, inspiration, and foresight to help you grow—just like the November rain nurtures the fields.

Dive in, stay curious, and let this edition of Footprint water your ideas, spark discussions, and open new avenues in the dynamic world of leather and footwear.

The more we exchange, the more we gain.

INSIDE

Page 2-3

Automation & AI: Celebrating World Quality Day

Page 4

Latest Export Data: 2025-26(July-October)

Page 5

Leather Industry Changemaker Awards 2025

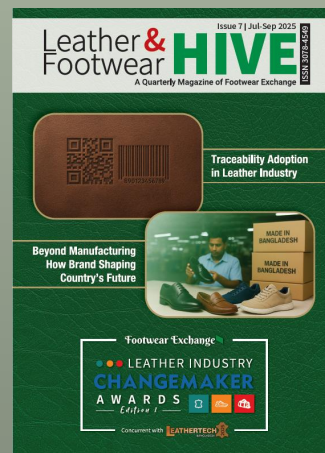


Page 6

Key news and Highlights of Leather and Footwear Sector

Page 7

The Leather and Footwear Hive Q3 2025 Edition is Published.



Every year, the second Thursday of November is celebrated globally as World Quality Day—a moment dedicated to highlighting the importance of quality in products, services, and organizational culture. Quality has always been the backbone of the global footwear industry. Today, as manufacturers navigate intense competition, shorter lead times, and rising consumer expectations, the definition of “quality” is expanding beyond durability and comfort. It now includes precision, traceability, consistency, sustainability, and zero-defect manufacturing. This shift is largely powered by a new generation of automation, advanced machinery, AI-driven analytics, and smart robotics that are transforming how footwear is produced.

How Automation Enhances Quality

Automation is not just about speed; it directly improves product quality in several ways:

Precision Cutting:

Computer-controlled cutting machines ensure consistent pattern placement, reducing human error and minimizing leather waste.

Uniform Stitching and Bonding:

Robotic sewing and automated adhesive systems guarantee even tension, neat stitching lines, and strong bonding—critical factors in footwear durability.

Consistent Fit and Comfort:

AI-driven lasting machines simulate pressure distribution and shape accuracy, ensuring standardized fit across production batches.

Reduced Defect Rates:

Automated material inspection systems detect flaws, color variations, and thickness deviations before production starts.



AI: The New Quality Manager

Artificial Intelligence is emerging as a powerful tool for predictive quality management. Factories now use:

- **AI vision systems** to detect micro-defects in stitching, sole attachment, or logo placement.
- **Predictive maintenance algorithms** that prevent machine breakdowns, avoiding quality drops during peak production.
- **AI-based pattern optimization** to reduce material waste while keeping patterns consistent.
- **Smart dashboards** that analyze real-time data from machines to prevent repeat defects.

AI doesn't replace human expertise—it **strengthens it** by allowing teams to make faster, data-driven decisions.

Automation & Digitalization in Bangladesh's Footwear Industry

In Bangladesh, footwear factories are adopting real, practical automation solutions that directly replace manual steps:

Automatic Leather Cutting Machines (CNC / CAM Cutters): Brands like *Atom*, *Zünd*, and *Fortuna* are now used for uniform cutting, nesting optimization, and reducing leather rejection.

Auto-Stitching Machines: *Computerized zigzag, programmable pattern-stitch (Juki / Brother)* machines ensure identical stitching lines on every pair, especially for sports and casual uppers.

Auto-Lasting Machines: *Toe-lasting, side-lasting, and heel-lasting machines (Desma, Qifeng, Orisol)* help achieve consistent shape, eliminating variation that occurs with manual lasting.

Automated Cementing / Spray Adhesive Systems: These machines apply glue in controlled thickness, solving issues like weak bonding or overflow.

Source: Oshima, Intech Vietnam, ScienceDirect, Hilaris Publisher

Conveyor-Based Cooling & Setting Lines: Replace manual air-drying, giving stable bonding and finishing.

- **ERP-Based Digital Production Monitoring:** Factories like Apex, Bay, and Fortuna use digital dashboards for WIP tracking, hourly output, and rejection monitoring.
- **Barcode / RFID-Based Material Tracking:** Reduces missing components and enables fast QC verification.
- **AI Camera Inspection:** Some export factories have started using AI-assisted cameras in toe-lasting and final checking lines to identify open seams or alignment defects.

Here's a clear overview of how automation is used in the global footwear manufacturing process, step by step, showing where machines, robotics, and AI are applied:

1. Design & Pattern Development

- **CAD/CAM Software:** Footwear patterns, grading, and upper designs are created digitally.
- **3D Foot Scanning & Simulation:** Virtual prototyping ensures accurate fit and reduces physical samples.
- **AI Design Tools:** Suggest optimal patterns, materials, and colorways based on trends and prior data.

2. Material Preparation & Cutting

- **Automatic Leather & Synthetic Cutters (CNC):** Precise cutting of uppers, soles, and insoles.
- **Laser Cutting / Plotting:** For precision cutting, intricate designs, perforations, or logo placement.
- **Automated Nesting Software:** Maximizes material usage, reducing waste.

3. Stitching & Assembly

- **Programmable Stitching Machines:** Robotic or computer-controlled stitching ensures consistent seam quality.
- **Edge-Folding / Skiving Machines:** Ensure uniform thickness and folded edges.
- **Automated Lasting Machines:** Toe, side, heel lasting performed by robots for exact shaping.
- **Robotic Sole Pressing & Cementing:** Applies glue and presses soles with controlled pressure and timing

4. Finishing & Quality Control

- **AI Vision Systems & Cameras:** Detect defects in stitching, alignment, or bonding.
- **IR or Heat Activation Tunnels:** Ensure adhesives cure evenly.
- **Automated Buffing, Polishing, & Surface Treatment Machines:** Achieve consistent finish across batches.
- **Waterproofing / Durability Testing Machines:** Simulate real-life wear conditions automatically.

5. Packaging & Logistics

- **Automated Counting & Boxing Lines:** Reduce manual errors in quantity or size.
- **RFID / Barcode Tracking:** Tracks every pair from assembly to shipment.
- **Automated Palletizing Robots:** Load boxes efficiently for transport.

6. Data Management & Traceability

- **ERP Systems & Production Dashboards:** Track material usage, machine performance, defect rates, and labor productivity.
- **Predictive Maintenance Systems:** Prevent downtime and maintain consistent production quality.
- **Digital Quality Logs:** Allow real-time insights and compliance with international buyer standards.

On this World Quality Day, it is clear that quality in footwear is no longer solely dependent on manual skill. Today, it is the result of integrated technology, data-driven decision-making, and smart manufacturing systems. Automation, AI, digital design, and robotics are transforming how factories in Bangladesh and around the world produce footwear—ensuring consistency, reducing defects, optimizing cost, and enhancing worker safety.



Source: Oshima, Intech Vietnam, ScienceDirect, Hilaris Publisher

Leather & Leather Products Lead Export Growth in October

Bangladesh's leather and footwear exports continued their recovery in October FY25–26, posting a 9.7% year-on-year growth, reaching US\$591.5 million compared to US\$539.4 million last year, according to data from the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB).

While overall performance remains positive, category-level trends show shifting momentum:

- Leather (HS 41): Up 7.3% YTD, despite a 10% monthly decline, reflecting seasonal adjustments and overall industry challenges.

- Leather Products (HS 42): Continued its strong run — +17.4% YoY and +26.1% YTD, driven by growing demand for finished and value-added goods.

- Leather Footwear (HS 6403): Rebounded with +15.9% YoY, maintaining +4.9% YTD growth — a signal of renewed stability in global orders.

- Other Footwear (HS 64): Up 11.8% YoY and 6.5% YTD, supported by flexible sourcing and diversified export baskets.



Overall, the leather and leather products segments remain the key growth engines, while footwear performance shows early signs of stabilization after months of fluctuation. Bangladesh's export base continues to diversify — strengthening its position as a resilient and evolving global sourcing hub.

Source:
Export Promotion Bureau, Bangladesh
Export performance for Leather & Footwear 2025-26 July-Oct (provisional)

Footwear Exchange and ASK Trade & Exhibitions Pvt. Ltd. are proud to present the Leather Industry Changemaker Awards 2025, Bangladesh's first awards platform dedicated to recognizing excellence, innovation, sustainability, and leadership in the leather, footwear, and allied industries. This pioneering initiative aims to celebrate the unsung heroes driving transformation across the sector. The Awards Night will bring together industry professionals, entrepreneurs, policymakers, and stakeholders for an evening of recognition, inspiration, and dialogue, marking a significant milestone in Bangladesh's leather and footwear journey.

Award Categories:

- Changemaker in Process Efficiency
- Changemaker in Sustainability Practice
- Support Service Changemaker
- Emerging Changemaker
- Lifetime Excellence

Organizations and individuals are invited to submit nominations, which will be evaluated by a panel of academics, industry associations, stakeholders, and INTERTEK, Bangladesh's development partner. Submissions are assessed based on **impact, scalability, market relevance, and creativity**. Nominations can be submitted at www.changemakerbd.com.

In addition to celebrating excellence, the awards provide **sponsorship and brand engagement opportunities**, from Title Sponsorship to Gold and Specific Sponsorship tiers. Sponsors gain unmatched visibility and connect directly with senior professionals and industry leaders. Goody Bag Partners can distribute branded merchandise, samples, or vouchers to approximately 300 distinguished guests during the Gala Presentation Dinner.

For complete information on participation, sponsorship, and nominations, visit www.changemakerbd.com

We warmly invite all members, partners, and friends of Footwear Exchange to join us at the Leather Industry Changemaker Awards 2025 and be part of this landmark celebration. Let us come together to honor the unsung heroes of Bangladesh's leather, footwear, and allied industries, recognize their dedication, innovation, and leadership, and inspire the next generation of changemakers driving sustainable growth in the sector. Your participation will make this celebration truly memorable



In Collaboration with
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Concurrently with
LEATHER EXCHANGE
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**FIRST TIME IN LEATHER & FOOTWEAR
INDUSTRY OF BANGLADESH**



HALL 5, ICCB, DHAKA
5 DECEMBER 2025
6:00 - 9:00 PM

Nomination Open

Visit
www.changemakerbd.com



Bata Bangladesh has appointed Faria Yasmin as its new Managing Director, becoming the first Bangladeshi and first female to lead the company's operations in the country. With over 23 years of experience at ACI PLC, Reckitt Benckiser, Marico, and Nestlé, Faria brings expertise in brand marketing, business operations, and portfolio management. Her appointment reflects Bata's commitment to leadership diversity and brand transformation in Bangladesh's footwear market.



According to a report published in Dhaka Post, Bata Shoe Company Bd Limited has posted higher direct profit per Taka sold compared to Apex Footwear Limited — yet recorded a net loss. In Q1 of the 2025-26 financial year (July–September), Bata's direct profit reached Tk 38.44 per Tk 100 of sales, which is Tk 11.30 higher than Apex's Tk 27.14. However, higher operating costs and non-core losses led to a net loss of Tk 14.44 crore.



In the 4th match of the Inter-department Football Tournament at the University of Dhaka, ILET defeated GEB 2–0 on Wednesday, November 5th at the Central Field. Sponsored by the university sports club and Leather Engineers and Technologists Society Bangladesh, the match showcased strong team spirit and competitive play, keeping the crowd engaged until the final whistle.



According to a report published in Amar Desh, Savar Leather Industrial Park will move from BSCIC to BEZA to improve the CETP and boost leather exports. A BIDA committee will guide the transition. Major General (Retd) Nazrul Islam, BEZA member, said the shift aims to enhance management and efficiency, accelerating growth in the leather sector. The change is expected to help tanneries increase production and meet environmental compliance more effectively.



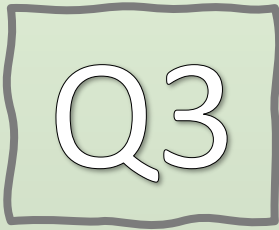
Leather Engineers and Technologists' Society Bangladesh has arranged the "LET'S' B Corporate Football Tournament-2025" at the ILET, University of Dhaka playground from 14th November to 16th December. Corporate teams from the leather and allied sectors will compete, promoting sportsmanship and professional engagement.



LFMEAB has requested detailed reports from member factories regarding any damages caused by the recent fire incident at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport's cargo village on October 18, 2025. Affected factories are asked to complete the provided online form to document losses and submit it for further review and necessary action.



COMING SOON



LEATHER & FOOTWEAR HIVE Q3

A Quarterly magazine of **Footwear Exchange**

The Leather and Footwear Hive Q3 2025 Edition is Published.

Every edition of Leather & Footwear HIVE is a journey through ideas, people, and transformations shaping Bangladesh's leather and footwear industry — and our 7th Edition is no exception.

This issue dives into the future of sourcing, sustainability, leadership, and innovation — exploring how our industry is not just adapting to global change, but driving it.

From circular economy breakthroughs to brand localization strategies, from manufacturing leadership lessons to new investment insights, this edition captures the pulse of progress that defines our sector today.

Stay tuned — the 7th Edition of Leather & Footwear HIVE is on its way, bringing stories that inspire, inform, and ignite transformation



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A Quarterly Magazine of Footwear Exchange

Traceability Adoption in Leather Industry

Beyond Manufacturing How Brand Shaping Country's Future

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LEATHER INDUSTRY CHANGEMAKER AWARDS Edition 1

Concurrent with LEATHERTECH BANGLADESH 2025

Grow your business by advertising

If you feel that you need to promote your business not only to **many people** but **many right people of Bangladesh leather and footwear and allied industry**, then it's time for you to advertise your business in our publications.

We ensure that all our publication (digital or printed) and activities **reach maximum number of professionals** who are either related or working with Bangladesh leather, footwear and allied industry.

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