

Footwear Exchange



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

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the
footprint

monthly newsletter by Footwear Exchange



EDITOR'S NOTE

Footprint September Edition: Connecting Growth and Opportunity.

Dear Readers,

September brings a fresh perspective on growth, opportunity, and innovation in Bangladesh's leather and footwear sector. In this edition, Footprint brings together stories that highlight both the evolving dynamics of the industry and the avenues for engagement and excellence.

We begin with a roundup of key sector developments, including the latest export data, which reflects continued growth and signals the potential for deeper integration into global markets. Alongside this, we report on Bangladesh's participation in a new world trade fair, an initiative that opens doors for manufacturers and exporters to showcase products internationally and strengthen trade relationships.

This issue also captures important news, insights, and highlights from across the industry—trends that shape decision-making, innovations that drive competitiveness, and initiatives that underscore the sector's commitment to sustainability and quality. From policy updates to market movements, our coverage aims to provide a comprehensive picture for stakeholders at all levels.

By combining these updates with practical insights and industry reflections, this edition of Footprint seeks to inform, inspire, and connect readers with the broader journey of Bangladesh's leather and footwear sector. It is an opportunity to appreciate the progress made while looking ahead to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

Let's continue to share knowledge, celebrate achievements, and embrace the possibilities for growth together.

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Trade has, so far, proved ineffective in solving the major problems faced by most nations. However, the answer to the injustices of the existing trade regime is not no trade, but fair trade.

The existing regime forbids poor nations from following the path taken by the rich. With the exceptions of Switzerland, Belgium and the Netherlands, all the nations that have become independently wealthy did so with the help of a mechanism economists call 'infant industry protection': defending new sectors from foreign competition until they are big enough to compete on equal terms. The textile industry in Britain, for example, on which the Industrial Revolution was built in the nineteenth century, was nurtured and promoted by means of tariffs (or trade taxes) and the outright prohibition of competing goods. Between 1864 and 1913, the US was the most heavily protected nation on earth. Only when these countries had established technological and commercial superiority did they suddenly discover the virtues of unimpeded competition.

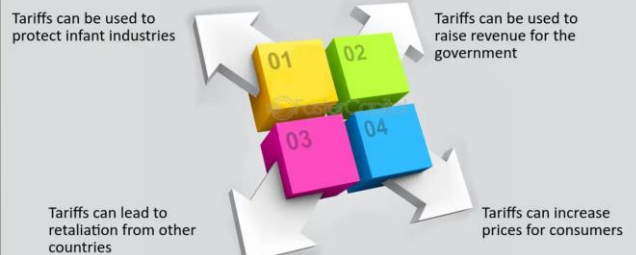
For nations to develop in direct competition with countries with established industries is like learning to swim in a fast-flowing river: you are likely to be swept away and drowned long before you acquire the necessary expertise. Your competitors have experience, legal rights and established marketing networks on their side; your infant industries have none of these. It is all but impossible, in other words, for poor nations to extract money from the rich unless they can safeguard some key parts of their economies.

Clearly, nations that are currently poor should be permitted to defend certain industries from foreign competition with the help of tariff barriers and subsidies. Rich nations, on the other hand, should be permitted neither to subsidize their industries nor to impose tariffs on imports. Nations should be forced gradually to lift their protections as they develop. So, the first function of what we might call the Fair-Trade Organization (FTO) would be to lay down the rules governing the protections and privileges permitted at different stages of development.



A fair-trade system should, or so we should hope, slowly push the world towards genuine free trade, which is likely to be the most equitable means of governing nations' relationships with each other. This system could provide a potent means by which the world could begin to move towards the economic equality that is an essential precondition for political equality. It would not, however, directly address some of the other critical problems that the people of poor nations confront - such as inadequate working conditions, environmental devastation and the inordinate power of the multinational corporations. Many campaigners in the rich world have suggested that the best way to raise standards is to discriminate, through tariffs or other measures, against imports from countries where workers or the environment are mistreated. This approach has also been advocated by trades unions seeking to protect members' jobs from foreigners. Unsurprisingly, it is deeply resented by the very people it is supposed to help: the workers of the poor world.

Tariffs as a Tool for Economic Development



Source: Adapted from the book "The Age of Consent: A Manifesto for a New World Order" by George Monbiot's, The Ecologist, Newspapers and Internet.



Trump's new tariffs—such as 25% duties on autos, semiconductors, and steel, along with a 50% levy on leather, garments, and marine exports from South Asia—mirror the protectionist “infant industry” approach discussed in the FTO concept. But while the FTO envisions fair safeguards for poorer nations, Trump's policy is driven by nationalism, aiming to protect U.S. manufacturing. These measures will hit global industries hard, especially automobiles, technology, and leather-footwear products, reshaping trade flows in ways that highlight the tension between protectionism and fair trade.

If our purpose is to regulate international trade, then it surely makes sense to address the behavior, not of nation states, but of the multinational corporations operating between them. So, a second function of the FTO could be to set the standards to which those corporations must conform. A corporation would not be permitted to trade between nations unless it could demonstrate that, at every stage of manufacture and distribution, its own operations and those of its suppliers met the necessary standards. If, for example, a food-processing corporation based in Europe wished to import cocoa from an African country, it would need to demonstrate that the plantation owners it bought from were not using banned pesticides, expanding into protected forests or failing to conform to whatever other standards the FTO set.

The company's performance would be assessed, at its own expense, by monitors accredited to the organization. One other precondition of justice is that producers and consumers should carry their own costs, rather than dumping them on other people.

The monitors deployed by the FTO could determine whether or not companies are paying a fair price for the resources they use. Companies would, among other costs, have to buy enough of a nation's carbon quota to cover the fossil fuel they consume. One of the many beneficial impacts of such full-cost accounting would be that everything that could be processed in the country of origin would be. (the world).


No multinational company would export logs, coffee beans or cotton, as it requires far more (costly) energy to transport these bulky resources from one place to another than would be involved in exporting the finished products - furniture, instant coffee and T-shirts (all currently manufactured on the other side of those nations which are currently locked into the export of raw materials would become the most favored locations for manufacturing.


Under this scheme, export growth comes to measure something quite different. At present it represents a mixture of gains and losses, which are misleadingly compounded into a single figure. The loss of natural resources is 'added' to the genuine addition of value provided by the application of labour. The FTO system would effectively separate these measures. The extraction and export of natural resources would in most cases be accounted as a loss. The application of human labour would be measured as a gain. Nations would be able to see immediately whether they were being enriched or impoverished through trade. To introduce these measures in the face of the resistance of the world's most powerful governments and companies would require severe and unusual methods. But the goal of universal fair trade would permit the global economic levelling without which there can be no justice.


Source: Adapted from the book "The Age of Consent: A Manifesto for a New World Order" by George Monbiot's, The Ecologist, Newspapers and Internet


Footwear Sub-Segment Declines in August, Dragging Overall Leather & Footwear Sector!

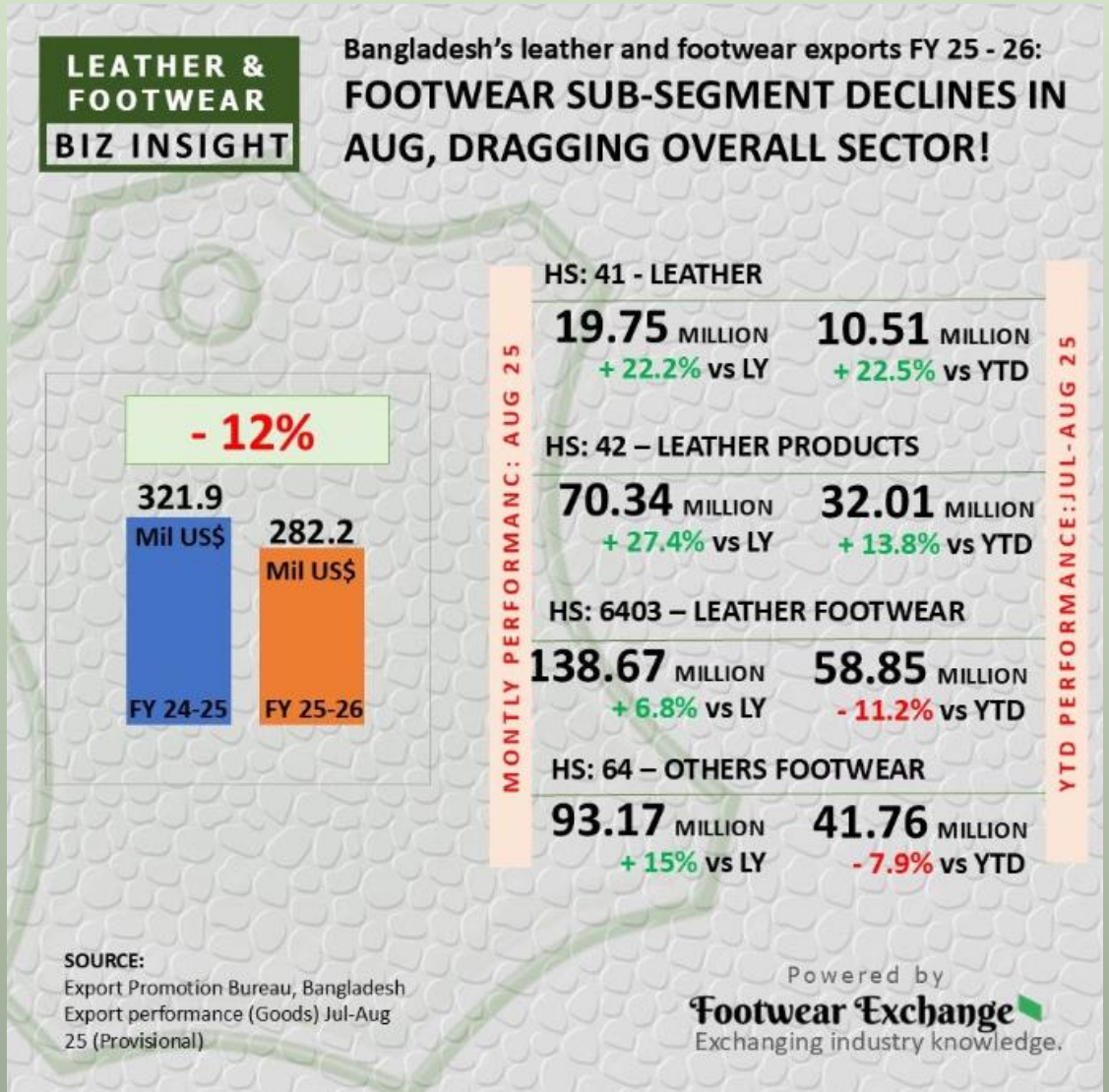
Bangladesh’s leather and footwear exports for FY 25–26 (Jul–Aug) show a mixed picture. While leather and leather products performed strongly, the footwear sub-segment slipped in August, pulling down overall sectoral growth.

 Leather (HS 41): \$19.75M | +22.2% YoY

 Leather Products (HS 42): \$70.34M | +27.4% YoY

 Leather Footwear (HS 6403): \$138.67M | +6.8% YoY but -11.2% YTD

 Other Footwear (HS 64): \$93.17M | +15% YoY but -7.9% YTD



⚠️ Overall exports dipped 12% YoY (Jul–Aug) to \$282.2M, compared to \$321.9M last year.

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



Badhan, ILET Unit, Dhaka University Zone, celebrates its 25th anniversary this year, continuing its mission of voluntary blood donation and student empowerment. Since 2013, alumni have credited the organization with creating connection through blood donation. The programme was successful with presence of Mohammad Ali Bappy President LETSB, Dr. Mohammad Kamruzzaman, Director, ILET DU, Dr. Abdul Mottalib, advisers and a lot of alumnus and current volunteers of ILET, DU.



Lotto Sport Bangladesh proudly served as the official footwear sponsor of the Champion U20 Bangladesh Women's Football Team, supporting the players with high-performance footwear for training and matches. The partnership reflects Lotto Sport Italia's commitment to empowering young athletes and promoting women's football in Bangladesh



Ayesha Ananya, formerly Assistant Manager – Collection Development at Bata Bangladesh and currently Merchandising Product Specialist at Bata Malaysia, has been named the winner of the TAAGA Outstanding Young Professional Award 2024-25. The award recognizes her dedication to innovation, resilience, and excellence in her professional journey, highlighting her ability to embrace new ideas and set high performance standards.



IDEA TREE's Leathertrace Bangladesh (TCLP) project, funded by SMEP (FCDO & UNCTAD), held a workshop at The Westin Dhaka to advance traceability adoption on 31st July 2025. The event featured government officials, industry leaders, academia, and special guests including Md. Saiful Islam (BSCIC), Md. Abdur Rahim Khan (MoC), Dr. Mohammad Kamruzzaman (DU), Kazi Aminul Hasan (BTA), and S.A.M.M Mahboobuddin (BFLFEA), who discussed policy gaps and actionable recommendations for the sector.



The Bay School Scholarship Campaign has concluded successfully, awarding 20 students with a 1-year scholarship covering their educational expenses. Launched to support deserving students, the campaign received an overwhelming response and demonstrated the school's commitment to fostering education and providing opportunities for talented young learners.



Step Footwear served as the official shoe partner for Campus Futsal Champ 2025, supporting players with comfort, style, and performance on and off the court. Participants of the game event received a 10% discount, celebrating their efforts and achievements. The partnership highlights Step Footwear's commitment to empowering athletes while promoting style and performance..

7 Key Tips for Freshers Entering the Leather & Footwear Sector

Starting a career in the leather and footwear sector can be exciting yet challenging. These tips will help freshers build the right skills, connections, and mindset to succeed from the very first.



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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Or

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