

Fashion Access – The International Trade Fair for Head-to-Toe Fashion

Hong Kong, March 31-April 2, 2014

A Report by Mr. A. Fayaz Ahmad, Assistant Director-CLE

APLF celebrates 30 years of service to the Leather Industry - Fashion Access 30th anniversary comes to a successful close and nets more quality buyers

It all started back in 1984 with the Hong Kong International Leather Fair. Then organizers, Hong Kong Trade Fairs Group had the vision to see that in the long term, the leather industry would effectively relocate to Asia, with China becoming the world's main manufacturing base for footwear and leather goods. In 1995, the fair became known as the Asia Pacific Leather Fair (APLF), then was consequently renamed the Materials, Manufacturing & Technology (MM&T) fair in 2004, now under APLF Limited. A natural offshoot was a bigger finished leather goods and fashion fair, Fashion Access, which was renamed in 2004. Conscious of its linking role in the industry and the responsibility this brings with it, the APLF has always regarded its credibility in the eyes of the sector as being key to its standing and image. According to the Fair organizer, APLF is the only leather fair in the world whose visitor numbers and results are examined by a world renowned firm of auditors after each show.

Hong Kong which has been known for decades as a key trading hub in Asia represents an important market for leather & leather products. India's export to Hong Kong increased from US \$ 280.96 million in 2007-08 to US \$ 440.54 million in 2012-13 growing at a compounded annual growth rate of 9.41%. In keeping with its identity as a global trading center, Hong Kong is home to the offices of many international brands & buying offices of large companies, retail chains and stores. Besides Hong Kong is the gateway to mainland China which although the number one global producer of leather products including footwear has been increasing its import of leather products and footwear. China's import of leather products and footwear increased from US \$ 992.65

million in 2007 to US \$ 2545.81 million in 2012. India's export of leather products including footwear to China has also been growing, rising from US \$ 3.69 million in 2007 to US \$ 25.28 million in 2012. As such, APLF at Hong Kong is ideal business platform for meeting the trade buyers and stakeholders of the leather sector.

APLF is famous for the role it played in catalyzing the changes that took place in the worldwide leather industry at the end of the 20th century. It was not just the first significant leather fair in Asia, the APLF swept through the industry by opening the door to the massive developments about to kick off in China and expand all through Asia. Since that time APLF has continued to evolve and innovate. The year of 30th edition looks like being just as momentous as the first. Now new geographic changes are mixed with new priorities in terms of societal responsibilities. The search is on for the balance between low cost manufacture and the environmental cost of distance; and social costs are now a factor in all those decisions. At the same time, the industry is facing the highest raw material prices it has ever known along with the strongest challenge from alternate materials.

Ever since its launch as the Hong Kong Leather Fair in June 1984, APLF (Fashion Access and MM&T) have held their place as the leading raw materials, leather, leather goods and fashion accessory events taking place in Asia, serving the entire global market. The 2014 edition is the fair's 30th anniversary and it is still the meeting place for the global leather industry and a must-exhibit event for the world's leading tanners and chemical suppliers, leather products manufacturers. Held in Asia's commercial hub of Hong Kong with its free-port status, rule of law, and freedom of movement of capital, APLF's location is an ideal platform from where to initiate, continue and conclude business.

In March 2014, APLF celebrated its 30th year with a full programme of



activities that played on the theme, "Leather...Past, Present and Future: 30 years of innovation". APLF brought together international players and buyers of leather and fashion industry.

The Fashion Access 30th Anniversary drew more buyers at its 30th anniversary edition held from 31 March to 2nd April at the Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre. The Fashion Access fair focused on Fall-Winter 2014/2015 collections and 482 exhibitors from 25 countries and regions showcased their latest products to buyers from across the globe. This year's fair hosted 104 first time exhibitors from Bangladesh, China, Chile, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Korea, Lebanon, Madagascar, Netherlands, the Philippines, Taiwan and USA.

A total of 11,823 visitors attended the fair including 8,697 international buyers from 83 countries. The visitor profile includes agents, buying offices, department stores, distributors, importers, private labels, representatives of fashion brands, retailers & boutique buyers and wholesalers. Buyers from China increased significantly by 7.78% this year in comparison to last year, and many of them are buyers from established European and US retail brands with operations in China. As China continues to transit to a consumption-led economy, it is expected that the number of Chinese buyers at Fashion Access will continue to rise. The positive outcome of the 2014 fair reinforced Fashion Access's position as the must-attend exhibition for head-to-toe fashion.

According to the fair organizer, the Hosted Buyer Programme continued its momentum from last year and created numerous quality business opportunities for both buyers and exhibitors. The programme is designed to facilitate meetings between buy-

ers with high purchasing power and potential suppliers. 23 hosted buyers from 11 countries including Lotte Department Store from Korea and Franck Et Fils from France participated at this year's Hosted Buyers Programme and over 90 fruitful business matches were arranged.

APLF event is going strong and continues to consolidate itself as the world's leading and most influential international leather, materials, components and finished fashion goods event. As a business platform, the APLF has been through the economically good and bad times – the 2009 global financial crisis. Nonetheless, it has continued to maintain its historic high standards of professionalism and organization in the face of the changing role of leather from a commodity to a practical high fashion products and automotive applications characterized by the environmental and sustainability standards demanded by manufacturers and consumers alike.

At Fashion Access, there is always a wide range of bags of every conceivable design plus a wide range of other fashion products including branded fashion collection, fashion accessories, footwear, garments, small leather goods, sustainable products and travelware. There were wide variety of footwear styles including men's & women's fashion shoes from various countries and regions, including Japan, Italy and Spain. Fashion Avenue, within Fashion Access, brought together some of the most stylish, up and coming young brands and their talented designers in an exciting exhibition of bags, footwear, fashion accessories, garments and more. Buyers come from as far afield as South America to source affordable products to stock their businesses from cities such as Santiago and Buenos Aires, for example.

The percentage of the exhibiting companies by products sector is given below:

Sl.No.	Product Sector	Percentage of Exhibiting companies
1	Bags	58%
2	Fashion Accessories and Small Leather Goods	6%
3	Foot wear	16%
4	Garments	15%
5	Travelware	5%
	Grand Total	100%

The Fashion Show



In the 'Fashion Trends' area, Fall-Winter 2014/2015 'must haves' head-to-toe fashions from shoes, bags and all fashion products, featuring the best picks from exhibitors collections. Entitled Fashion Cosmos, the four main themes are Urban Galaxy (an urban, functional, elegant style), Planet Earth (a casual, chic, nostalgic style), Mysterious star (a glamorous showy style), and Romantic Comet (a rock-sensual style).

A Press Conference was held on 31st March 2014 which was participated by Directors of APLF Limited - Mr. Michael Duck, Mr. Paul Batigne

and Ms. Perrine Ardouin. The leading journalists from the globe attended the press conference, alongwith a few Indian Journalists. Since Brazil is the Focus Country for MM&T for the 30th anniversary, Mr. Jose Fernando Bello, Executive President of Cenre for the Brazilian Tanning Industry (CICB) made a presentation on the Brazilian Leather industry. Mr. Don Oshman of www.hidenet.com made presentation on the global situation of the prices of raw materials. Mr. Mike Redwood made speech on the Leather Naturally campaign. The CLE participated in the Press Conference by a team comprising of Mr. Mothilal Sethi, Convener, Leather Garments Panel, Mrs. Sunanda Santappa, Assistant Director-CLE and Mr. A. Fayaz Ahmad, Assistant Director-CLE.

Dress Up - Daily Fashion Presentations organized at Fashion Access

Models highlighted exhibitor's products at Dress Up. A lively fashion performance was held throughout the 3 days of the Fashion Access Fair.

The audience witnessed the metamorphosis of a fashionista, as models dressed up in stylish garments and accessories to prepare for a glamorous photo shoot. The products from the exhibitors of CLE India Pavilion were taken for display in the Fashion presentations.

Best of APLF Award

Best of APLF Awards is an initiative to cultivate and nurture talent and creativity in leather and fashion-related industries. The project recognizes design excellence, originality, innovation and outstanding workmanship of products exhibited at both APLF-organized events, MM&T and Fashion Access.

Launched in 2004, Best of APLF Awards has proved immensely popular with APLF participants, one reason being that the recognition helps boost a company or brand's profile on a global scale. The hugely popular Best of APLF Awards continues to look out for excellence in design, quality and innovation at the Fair. Nominees, winner and past winners will easily be recognized by special icons near the fascia of their stands.

In this edition, Best of APLF Awards are doubly exciting as the competition spans both MM&T and Fashion Access. There were two illustrious judges deliberating on a whole lot more innovative and beautiful products.

Fashion Access Board of Judges –

- Ms. Shiela Cooke, Freelance Design Consultant, Hong Kong
- Ms. Jayne Esteve-Cure, Fashion Marketing Consultant / Founder, Jayne Fashion Agency, France
- Mr. Bruno Domeau, Leather Craftsman / partner, Domeau & Peres, France
- Ms. Carole Gauthrot, Designer, Founder, De Toutes les Matieres, France
- Mr. Olivier Guillemain, Designer, Creative Director, APLF, France
- Mr. Mauricio Medeiros, Designer, Brazil
- Ms. Judy Tchou, Tends Department Manager, Wing on Department Stores, Hong Kong



Shri Md. Sadiq, Senior Principal Scientist, CLRI co-ordinating collection of samples for Fashion Show



Ms. Suneita Das, AEPO, CLE co-ordinating collection of samples for Fashion Show

MM&T Board of Judges

- Mr. Bill Amberg, Designer / Founder, Bill Amberg Studio, England
- Mr. Olivier Guillemain, Designer, Creative Director, APLF, France
- Ms. Laur Meyrieux, Creative Consultant, Designer, Laur Meyrieux Studio Ltd, Hong Kong
- Ms. Amanda Michel, Leather Consultant, Director, Leatherwise Limited, England
- Mr. Md Sadiq, Senior Principal Scientist, CLRI, Chennai

- Mr. Michal Spacek, International Footwear Technology Consultant, Czech Republic
- Mr. Olivier Vedrine, Architect, Designer, France

As APLF marked 30 years of service to the global leather industry, BOAA join in the celebration with a star studded jury which up the ante for design-driven search for the best products and collections on show in both the fairs. The Award presentation function was held on April 1, 2014. Shri R. Ramesh Kumar, Executive Director-CLE attended the event along with Mr.

Puran Dawar, President, AFMEC, and Shri Mothilal Sethi, Convener, Leather Garments Panel. The officials of CLE were also attended the event on the invitation of the Fair Organizer.

Design a Bag (DAB) competition 2014

This is the 7th edition of the competition. Fashion Access launched the annual Design a Bag competition in 2006 to help designers elevate their exposure in the competitive world of fashion through a far reaching on-line concept. The competition gives young talents a fabulous opportunity to express their creativity and ability to conceptualize their inspiration into commercially viable products. Category winners make a prototype that they bring to the Hong Kong during the fair for the overall winner to be chosen by DAB judges. The Awards presentation of Fashion Access pio-

neering online design competition was held on 31st March 2014. The competition was open to all designers and design students from around the world. The 2014 edition has received over 243 entries from international designer candidates. DAB Judging Criteria were unique and exciting designs, innovative materials conceived in a functional and marketable way and strong fashion design reflecting the industry's needs. The 2014 DAB judging criteria was 50% originality of design, 20% fashion trends awareness and 30% wearability and marketability. Shri R. Ramesh Kumar, IAS, Executive Director-CLE, and Shri Puran Dawar, President, AFMEC have presented award to the winners of the DAB award.

Informative Seminars

There were series of seminars held on all three days of the event.

The topics dwelt deeper into the industry's trends and issues through a series of seminars lead by leading industry professionals who lend their expertise in the industry and on future trends.

Design Zone

There were design zone, in which wide range of stylish fashion items from bags, garments, fashion accessories and much more by young and innovative designers were on display.

India Pavilion organized by the CLE

The Council for Leather Exports (CLE) organized the 'India Pavilion' in the Fashion Access under the Market Access Initiative (MAI) Scheme of the Government of India. A total of 39 manufacturers of leather goods & accessories, and 11 manufacturers of leather garments participated in the Fashion Access, through CLE:

Sl.No.	Name of the Exhibitors	Sl.No.	Name of Exhibitors
1	Abexo Exports, New Delhi	26	Kamal Enterprises, New Delhi
2	Accessories by Nupur, New Delhi	27	Kapoor Industries, Mumbai
3	Ace Exports, New Delhi	28	Klodennex, Kanpur
4	Amit Impex, New Delhi	29	Leatherman Fashion Pvt Ltd, Kolkata
5	Amit Leather Wears, New Delhi	30	M&M Exports, Kolkata
6	Anjana Exports Pvt. Ltd, Kolkata	31	M F Leather Goods Mfg Co, Kanpur
7	Arawali Exports, Jaipur	32	Maple Accessories Pvt Ltd, Kolkata
8	Art Image, New Delhi	33	MRG International, Kolkata
9	Arwin Exports Pvt Ltd, Kolkata	34	Nadeem Impex, Kolkata
10	Bharat Enterprises, New Delhi	35	Nadeem Impex Pvt Ltd, Kolkata
11	Cashmere Craft, New Delhi	36	Nano Overseas, New Delhi
12	Century Overseas, New Delhi	37	New Era Group, Kanpur
13	Continental Light Leathers, New Delhi	38	Old Village Overseas, Delhi
14	Creation, Kolkata	39	Stretch Leather Studio, Chennai
15	Deva International Exim Pvt Ltd, Kolkata	40	RNR International, Kolkata
16	Discovery Leathers Pvt Ltd, New Delhi	41	Ramnath Exports Pvt Ltd, New Delhi
17	Ecoline, New Delhi	42	Ritex Industries, Kolkata
18	Exotic Fashions P Ltd, Kolkata	43	Sarna Bags & Accessories, New Delhi
19	Fashion Folio, New Delhi	44	Shri Exports, Kolkata
20	Geetanjali International, New Delhi	45	SJM Exports, New Delhi
21	Gian International, New Delhi	46	Skin N Stitch Pvt Ltd, Kolkata
22	Global Export, Kanpur	47	Smriti Apparels Pvt Ltd, New Delhi
23	Global Export Corporation, Kolkata	48	Super Tannery Ltd, Kanpur
24	Himsheel International, New Delhi	49	Usmani Tanners, Kanpur
25	Inspire Exim Pvt Ltd, New Delhi	50	XL Enterprises Ltd, Kolkata

It is a matter of pride for the CLE to be organizing this large participation of member-companies in a key international leather trade event, and present the whole range of leather sector products from India to buyers from across the world. The CLE had an information Booth in the India Pavilion. Shri A. Fayaz Ahmad, Assistant Director, CLE Head Office, Chennai, has attended the Fashion Access Fair with a view to organize the India Pavilion as a whole and to meet the fair authorities, stakeholders and attend

allied events alongside the Event.

Shri Vijayakumar C, Export Promotion Officer, HO Cell, New Delhi and Ms. Suneetha Das, Assistant EPO, Kanpur have also attended the Fair, and made all necessary arrangements for the participation of member-units in the India pavilion, and coordinated with stand constructor team vis-a-vis participant's requirement, interpreters etc. Mrs. Suneetha Das, Assistant EPO has also assisted in the collection of samples from India Pavilion for the

daily fashion presentations.

Mr. Ajay Lal, Manager, UBM India Pvt Ltd, coordinated with the CLE team of officials in regard to India Pavilion organization.

The CLE's Information Booth had displayed the publicity and promotional materials and publications, which were distributed to the trade visitors. The Council arranged the professional services of the two interpreters for the participants of India Pavilion.

STANDS IN INDIA PAVILION





The India Pavilion had steady stream of trade visitors on all three days of the event, and participants had business meetings with the visitors. As per the feedback given by the participants, a combined total of 442 meetings were held by the 50 participants. The immediate business transacted was for US \$ 0.57 million. The participants have indicated that they expect the future business potential to be worth US \$ 4.01 million.

Visit of Dignitaries to the Fashion Access

Shri R. Ramesh Kumar, IAS, Executive Director-CLE visited the Fashion Access and discussed with Indian participants and with Fair authorities. Shri R. Ramesh Kumar, ED-CLE, attended the Design-a-Bag (DAB) Award presentation on 31st March 2014, Dress Up, Design presentation fashion shows, and APLF 30th Anniversary and Best of APLF Awards Presentation Function held on 1st April 2014.



Shri R. Ramesh Kumar, IAS, Executive Director, CLE (2nd from right) visiting CLE stands



Shri R. Ramesh Kumar, IAS, Executive Director, CLE (middle) interacting with a visitor at CLE booth



Mr. A. Fayaz Ahmad, Assistant Director-CLE with Mr. Viladimir KRUPOCHKIN, Director of Business Development, MOSSHOES, Moscow



Mr. Vijayakumar, C, Export Promotion Officer, CLE (left) with Shri Puran Dawar, President, AFMEC

Shri Prashant Agrawal, Consul General, Hong Kong and Mr. Virender Sharma, Consul (Commercial), Hong Kong, visited the Fashion Access Fair on 1st April 2014 and interacted with the participants of India Pavilion



Shri A. Fayaz Ahmad, Assistant Director-CLE, interacting with Shri Prashant Agrawal, Consul General, Hong Kong, and Mr. Virender Sharma, Consul (Commercial), Hong Kong



Mrs. Sunanda Santappa, Assistant Director-CLE, interacting with Consul General, and Consul (Commercial), Hong Kong

Shri N Shafeeq Ahmed, Vice Chairman-CLE visited the event, and met with the Indian participants. The Vice Chairman-CLE had attended the CLE meeting with APLF top management team Mr. Micheal Duck and Ms. Perrine Arduin on 1st April 2014. Shri R. Ramesh Kumar, Executive Director-CLE has attended the meeting along with officials Mrs. Sunanda Santappa, Assistant Director and Shri A. Fayaz Ahmad, Assistant Director. The Manager of UBM India P Ltd Mr. Ajay Lal was also present in the meeting.



Shri N. Shafeeq Ahmed, Vice- Chairman, CLE (middle) interacting with a participant. Shri A. Fayaz Ahmed, Asst. Director, CLE is at the left

Considering the importance of importance of APLF event as a whole, and Fashion Access in particular, the participants were very positive of the Fashion Access Fair, and product samples displayed were of high order. In view of the business potential indicated by the participants, the Council's participation in the Fashion Access Fair can be termed as positive and successful. The participation of Indian exporters has facilitated establishment of business contacts with not only customers in China and Far East, but also from several other global markets. The Fashion Access event is well established as a vital leather trade platform in Asia drawing exhibitors and visitors from across the globe. The Fashion Access fair remains the must-attend event for discerning buyers who demand a wide choice of quality finished goods – from bags to footwear and leather garments to fashion accessories. **The next edition of the Fashion Access Fair would be held during Sept 25-27, 2014, and the CLE would be participating in the event.**