

Business

Bangladesh, ILO launch pilot employment injury scheme



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The ILO in collaboration with the labour and employment ministry officially launched the pilot of an Employment Injury Scheme Project on Wednesday. Photo: Collected

Workers in the export-oriented readymade garment sector are set to get enhanced social security through income protection following the launch of a new International Labour Organisation (ILO) initiative in collaboration with the Netherlands and Germany.

Today, the ILO in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE) officially launched the pilot of an Employment Injury Scheme Project.

Salman F Rahman, an adviser of the prime minister, inaugurated the scheme in presence of Labour Secretary Md Ehsan-E- Elahi and ILO Country Director Tuomo Poutiainen and higher officials from the German, Norway and Netherlands embassies, according to a press release of the ILO.

Keeping in mind that workers in the garment industry play a remarkable role in the country's growing GDP, it is important to consider their rights and security on priority. This facility will be expanded to other economic sectors upon the success of the EIS Pilot, said the ILO in the press release.

Since 2013, the ILO and the GIZ of Germany have been working together with the government of Bangladesh and industry partners for ensuring workers' social and financial security. As a continuation of the process, after having several tripartite consultations, Bangladesh has decided to introduce a periodic payment scheme for occupational injuries, disabilities and deaths in the RMG industry.

At the event, Poutiainen said: "The launch of the Employment Injury Protection scheme for RMG workers in Bangladesh is an important and historic step in strengthening accident protection in the country."

"The ILO is happy to support this effort and work with the government, employers and workers to create a modern and contemporary compensation system for workers and their families that protect their incomes and living when they need it the most. Such a system also promotes sustainable business practices and provides the right kind of signals to investors."

Salman F Rahman said, "Social Security is high on the agenda of Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina."

Ehsan-E-Elahi said, "It is a historical day for as we launched the first-ever social insurance scheme, as envisioned in the National Social Security Strategy. We have the privilege to ensure that the pilot is designed in line with the international labour standards, taking the national settings into consideration."

In the press release, Faruque Hassan, president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, said the pilot scheme will contribute to the social well-being of workers and employers and above all improvement of the country's social security system.

"As we are committed to ensuring the safety, dignity and well-being of our workers, we look forward to collaborating in initiatives that benefit our industry and workers."

Shamim Ara, president of the National Coordination Committee for Workers' Education, stated that through this pilot, workers have taken a step forward to getting freedom from accidental nightmares.

"This step will ensure workers' safety and prevent their helplessness due to workplace accidents."

Bas Blaauw, first secretary of the Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands in Bangladesh, said the pilot scheme has the potential to be a win-win situation, as social protection and sector competitiveness go hand in hand.

Johannes Schneider, head of development cooperation from the German embassy, said the EIS Pilot can rightly be considered the peak of this reform process.

"With the addition of the pilot, we now have, for the first time, an employment injury scheme that meets international standards in terms of compensation and that effectively protects workers and their families from falling into poverty as a result of workplace accidents and occupational diseases."

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