

Economy

ILO launches pilot employment injury scheme



Star Business Report

Thu Jun 23, 2022 12:00 AM Last update on: Thu Jun 23, 2022 02:15 AM



Bangladesh, in association with the International Labour Organisation (ILO), Germany and the Netherlands, yesterday rolled out the pilot project of the country's first employment injury scheme for workers.

The ILO, in collaboration with the labour and employment ministry, launched the pilot of the Employment Injury Scheme (EIS) Project at the Hotel InterContinental in Dhaka, according to a press release from the United Nations agency.

As a result, workers in the export-oriented readymade garment sector will get enhanced social security through income protection.

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 embassies of Germany, Norway and the Netherlands.

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

"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."

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.

Since 2013, the ILO and German development agency GIZ have been working with Bangladesh and industry partners for ensuring workers' social and financial security. As a continuation of the process, the government has decided to introduce a periodic payment scheme for occupational injuries, disabilities and deaths in the garment industry.

Ehsan-E-Elahi called the occasion a historic day for Bangladesh since it is the first-ever social insurance scheme in the country as envisioned in the National Social Security Strategy.

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

Shamim Ara, president of the National Coordination Committee for Workers' Education, stated that through the pilot scheme, 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 Netherlands in Bangladesh, said the scheme has the potential to be a win-win situation, as social protection and sector competitiveness go hand in hand.

"The EIS pilot can rightly be considered the peak of the reform process," said Johannes Schneider, head of development cooperation at the German embassy.

"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."
