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Tofail urges labour bodies to press buyers to raise RMG prices

FE Report

Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed on Saturday urged labour organisations in ready-made garments (RMG) industry to insist on increasing product prices while talking to foreign buyers.

He said export income from the RMG sector has recently been reduced mainly due to devaluation of foreign currencies. This should be recovered by raising product prices, he suggested.

The Minister made the remarks at a job fair held to recruit for RMG sector skilled workers trained under 'Skills for Employment Investment Programme (SEIP)' organised by the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) at International Convention City Bashundhara (ICCB) in the city.

The fair was also addressed by State Minister for Labour and Employment Md Mujibul Haque Chunnu, Finance Ministry Senior Secretary Hedayetullah Al Mamun, BGMEA President Siddiquir Rahman and BGMEA Senior Vice-President Faruque Hassan.

The Commerce Minister said, "The labour organisations of the RMG sector should tell the buyers to raise product prices which would help increase labour wages in the sector."

He said the government will provide all necessary assistance to the highest foreign exchange-earning sector of the country to fetch US\$ 50 billion by 2021.

Stating that there is no reason for RMG entrepreneurs to be afraid of trade unions, Mr Mujibul Haque Chunu said, "I don't understand why the apparel makers request me not to allow trade unions in their factories."

Agreeing with the Commerce Minister, he also suggested the labour organisations to address the issue of increasing product prices with the buyers as increased product prices would ensure hike in labour wages.

Speaking at the programme, the BGMEA President said billions of taka have been stolen from the country's banks which is adjusted through providing loans to the businesses at 12 to 15 per cent interest.

He said, "We are taking the responsibility of the stolen money by giving 12 to 15 per cent interest rates on our loan money. The people who stole the money should face justice to reduce pressure on us."

About 40 companies are participating in the job fair where a large number will be recruited from nearly 1,000 trained individuals.

The BGMEA has undertaken a plan to train 43,800 workers under the SEIP project within 2018.

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