
Govt continues to invest in social sectors, says Muhith

Skills to be provided to manpower

FE Report

Finance minister AMA Muhith said on Tuesday the present government has continued to invest in social sectors like education, health and skills development. This helped the country move forward during the global financial crisis.

He also said there will be no poverty in the country by 2018 except for 10 to 14 per cent of population. The policy of the present government is to have confidence on people, trying to do good for them, improve their skills and quality which automatically will result in change in their quality of life, he said adding that this policy will be continued in the years to come.

The minister was speaking as the chief guest at the launching of training activity under Skills for Employment Investment Programme (SEIP) at the MAWTS Institute of Technology at the city's Mirpur area.

The Finance Division organised the programme in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

Swiss Ambassador to Bangladesh Christian Martin Fotsch and ADB acting

country director Oleg Tonkonjenkov were present as special guests with Finance Division senior secretary Mahbub Ahmed in the chair.

The finance minister said when the present government assumed power, there was a serious global financial crisis and the government mainly depended on good quality of the country's labour force and resilience of the economy.

"Whenever there is a financial crisis, the axe falls on social sectors. We were advised by experts to cut down on health and education and emphasise on production and agriculture in order to survive," said Mr Muhith, adding: We did not follow the advice and there was no cut in allocations on human development in six budgets. It had usual growth like the other sectors.

"We have kept on emphasising on social development programmes. The country's development policy is devoted to improving skills of its people as there lies the strength," he said.

The strength of manpower is only reflected properly when skills are given to them. These multiply their productivity adding to

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the strength of the economy and leading to reduction of poverty.

Emphasising on basic education, Mr Muhith said it enables them to use their potential, improve skills and their intelligence starts working.

The SEIP project is expected to support public and private training providers to meet industrial skill requirements, finance skills training of 0.26 million trainees with 0.182 million job placement, execute a vocational trainer development programme and implement a skill assessment, certification and quality assurance system.

Nine industrial associations and 32 public training institutes under three ministries have been primarily selected to conduct training programmes on six trades, namely, readymade garment and textile, construction, information and

communication technology, light engineering/manufacturing, leather and footwear and shipbuilding.

Swiss Ambassador Christian Marin Fotsch said his government contributes US\$ 10 million to the SEIP complementing the funding by the ADB to address the multitude of challenges in reforming vocational skills development in Bangladesh.

Switzerland considers five issues while supporting SEIP programme. These are social inclusion, quality of training, decent work, sector coordination and donor harmonisation.

The ambassador also noted that more coordination was required to increase efficiency and effectiveness of the programme. For that, the SEIP will establish a Skills Development Authority and a National Human Resource Development Fund.

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