

Step taken to build skilled workforce in shipbuilding

Our Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Jan 16: Skill for Employment Investment Programme (SEIP) under the Ministry of Finance will provide a fund of Tk 294.20 million for skill enhancement in the shipbuilding sector of Bangladesh.

It will be a three years programme for providing training to 10,000 workers of the industry in 10 fields in the shipbuilding sector. A contract to this effect was signed today in the port city.

Jalal Ahmed, Additional Secretary and National Project Director of SEIP of the Finance Division and Engr Sakhawat Hossain, General Secretary of the Association of Export Oriented Shipbuilding Industries of Bangladesh (AEOSIB), signed the contract.

This is for the first time that the Government of Bangladesh has come forward to involve itself with the funding and providing training to workers of the shipbuilding sector of the country and the senior government officials have termed this contract signing as a "very special event" in the public-private partnership for boosting the thrust sector - the shipbuilding industry.

Additional Secretary and Executive Project Director of SEIP Abdur Rouf Talukdar and Salauddin Kasem Khan, President of Bangladesh Employers'

Federation graced the occasion as special guests. Chief Coordinator of the AEOSIB Captain Habibur Rahman also spoke on the occasion.

SEIP is an ADB (Asian Development Bank)-funded programme for skill development in various opportune sectors of Bangladesh. For the first time the shipbuilding industry of the country is receiving fund from the SEIP through the AEOSIB.

The ship builders are very much optimistic about this three-year programme and hope it will take the skill level in the ship building industry to a greater height. With more competent workforce the efficiency and productivity in the shipbuilding industry will grow and help them in being more competent in the global market.

Detailing the training programme Abdur Rouf Talukdar said in this three-year training programme 2,000 workers will be trained in the first year followed by 5,500 and 2,500 workers in the second and third years respectively.

SEIP has determined relevant fields for the training including welding & fabrication, machinery installation, machine tools operation, piping, electrical & navigation equipment installation, HVAC installation technology, CNC operation, CAD & CAM and quality control.

The chief guest, Jalal Ahmed, said through this programme the workers in the shipbuilding sector will prove to be more productive, adding value to the national economy. He said leather and shipbuilding are the most potential sectors after the RMG (readymade garment) as they can add value higher than other sectors through import of raw materials and export of finished products after meeting the local demand. Bangladesh has a long heritage of shipbuilding, he observed.

Two million workforces are being added every year in the country but it is not possible for the government to provide them training without cooperation of the private sector, he said.

Salauddin Kasem Khan said Bangladesh has a long heritage of shipbuilding. The whole fleet of ships of the Ottoman Empire was built in Chittagong in the 15th century. He said that Bangladesh's GDP (gross domestic product) growth will follow that of India and exceed that of China after 2018.

Engr Sakhawat said the shipbuilding industry in Bangladesh faces challenges following the global economic recession. At this stage the industry needs full government support including provision of the 20 per cent cash incentive and lowering of interest rate on bank loan to single digit.

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