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RMG factories come under digital mapping system to ensure transparency

Readymade garment (RMG) factories, for the first of its kind, have been brought under a digital mapping system mainly to ensure transparency through credible data. Under the move, a total of 961 export-oriented garment factories, located in Dhaka district, have been mapped.

Factory names, GPS location, postal address, number of workers, products, export countries, brands and buyers, memberships, affiliations, and certifications could be seen in clicking the website www.mappedinbangladesh.org.

Of them, 855 units are the members of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and 144 are the members of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA), according to the map webpage.

There are some units that have registered with both the trade bodies.

About 774,422 workers have been employed in the listed factories where 60.8 percent are female and 39.2 percent are male workers.

Tipu Munshi, pressed for the need for including information on buyers who so far increased prices of apparels and how much after the latest wage hike and those who expressed interests in doing so. He also stressed the need for fair prices from buyers.

However, out of the 961 factories, 13 are not members of any of the trade bodies-BGMEA and BKMEA.

Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi launched the digital map containing information on export-oriented RMG factories on Saturday (9 February) at the BGMEA headquarters in the city.

Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) President Shafiul Islam Mohiuddin, BGMEA President Md Siddiqur Rahman, BKMEA Vice President Mansoor Ahmed, Department of Inspections for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) Inspector General Shamsuzzaman Bhuiyan, among others, were present at the launching ceremony.

One can see which inspection authority has assessed fire, electrical and structural integrity in which units.

Out of the 961 factories, some 448 factories have been assessed by Accord and 169 by Alliance, according to the map information.

A total of 579 units are affiliated with Business Social Compliance Initiative, 356 with SEDEX, 175 with OEKO-TEX, 126 with WRAP and 109 with ISO inspection organizations, it shows.

The digital mapping project was initiated in 2017 led by Brac University with lead funding from the [C&A Foundation](#) and support from [Brac USA](#), the BGMEA, BKMEA, and DIFE also are the strategic partners of the project.

The map incorporating factories from across the country is expected to be completed in 2021.

Speaking at the launching event, the minister termed the mapping time-befitting and important both for buyers and apparel makers.

Tipu Munshi, however, pressed for the need for including information on buyers who so far increased prices of apparels and how much after the latest wage hike and those who expressed interests in doing so. He also stressed the need for fair prices from buyers.

Pressing for fair prices of locally made apparel, FBCCI President Mohiuddin called for ensuring transparency in the whole supply chain.

BGMEA President Md Siddiqur Rahman criticized media reports on workers terminations saying any smallest incident of local RMG factories got huge attention from all corners.

There are many good practices that are not published, he alleged.

Though apparel makers invested a huge amount of money for workplace safety, prices of apparels were not increasing in line with the cost of production, he noted.

He expressed fear that many workers might be jobless due to the failure to implement the latest wage structure by the garment factories.

Information of only export-oriented garment factories in the map should be incorporated, he said adding they couldn't take the responsibility of those not affiliated with the trade bodies.