

Firms to conduct engineering analysis of RMG factories

Criteria for carrying out DEA sought

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The government is expected to select a number of engineering firms to conduct detailed engineering analysis (DEA) of ready-made garment factories that have already been and are to be assessed under the National Tripartite Plan of Action, officials said.

In this connection, the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) will seek applications from the interested firms through advertisement next week, they added.

"The first meeting of the taskforce held last week decided to nominate some engineering firms that have expertise to carry out DEA," Syed Ahmed Inspector General of DIFE told the FE.

Earlier, the National Tripartite Committee under the Labour Ministry on December 23 last, formed two taskforces to oversee the post-inspection activities, including hiring of consultancy firms to conduct DEA, approve corrective action plan (CAP) and monitor its implementation of ongoing garment factory assessment under the government and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) joint initiative.

Mr Ahmed, also head of both the taskforces, said an engineering firm must have at least three years of relevant experience and also is to be enlisted with the RAJUK.

The company also must have two struc-

tural engineers with experience of 15 years, he said adding that none having below five years of experience would be considered.

After scrutinising documents, the names of the selected consulting firms will be announced, he said.

"The list will also be sent to the two apparel apex bodies-BGMEA and BKMEA," he added.

An official review panel, headed by the DIFE inspector general, was formed in 2013 to decide on shutdown of any garment factory, if found risky or non-compliant during inspection by any of the three initiatives - Accord, Alliance and government-ILO joint programme.

The panel got recommendation of reviewing some 41 buildings that accommodated 84 garment factories from the three parties during their assessment last year.

Finding risky, the panel announced immediate shutdown of 32 factories, while 21 units were partially closed, and 49 were asked to conduct DEA, DIFE sources said.

Out of 49 factories, only five had conducted DEA while 30 units are conducting it now. The rest 14 are yet to take any step despite frequent reminders.

The factories were asked to start DEA immediately (within six weeks) after visit of the review panel, they added.

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Professor Mehedi Ahmed Ansari of the BUET said DEA was recommended when owners or manufacturers of garments in a building failed to provide its drawing and design documents.

It is time-consuming to know a building's present situation, all the testing, including soil test, depth of building foundation, scanning of rod and columns and core test etc.

There are some more factories with amber marking that are yet to take any move to conduct DEA as recom-

mended by the BUET, he said.

The BUET has asked about 100 factories for conducting DEA out of its 500 assessed units.

However, Md Shahidullah Azim, vice president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) opposed the government's move to select engineering firms. He suggested that there must be some criteria for carrying out DEA for the sake of transparency without mentioning any names of engineering firms.

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