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## Steps to groom skilled hands for high-end jobs

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The government has taken a crash course to raise a pool of skilled personnel to hold high-end jobs in domestic industries to stimulate the country's industrial growth with homegrown experts, officials said.

Bangladesh has now substantial skills shortage to run growing industrial enterprises from driving seats, which puts fundamental constraints on advances of the industrial sectors.

With no alternatives, local manufacturing plants hire hands from overseas sources to hold managerial jobs at their garment and textile plants.

The booming information technology (IT) sector, telecommunication and leather sectors are also hiring the same from foreign sources with expensive payouts.

The booming local firms now outsource skilled manpower from India, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, China and Pakistan with handsome amounts of remuneration.

Currently, more than 200,000 foreigners are working in different industries with their aggregate take-home salaries and allowances standing at nearly US\$1.0 billion a year.

In view of the basic constraint on the industrial growth, the special curricular course has been taken up under the Finance Division's (SEIP [Skills for Employment Investment Programme]) to fill the higher skills gap in the country.

Under the SEIP recipe youths will be trained in job-specific skills to deal with the industries concerned efficiently as the foreigners do.

Bangladesh wants to increase its export volume to US\$50 billion by 2021 in RMG and knitwear sector. But the players in this economic field are shorthanded for lack of mid-level-to top-level managers and supervisors.

People involved with the SEIP said training up mid-level managers is critically important to boost their managerial and communication skills with their workers and with their foreign counterparts.

This training will help gradually replace the foreign nationals and thus save huge foreign exchanges.

The SEIP authorities have identified two public universities and two private renowned varsities to train the aspirants for high-end jobs at home.

The two public varsities are the Institute of Business Administration of the University of Dhaka and the Bangladesh University of Textiles (BUTEX).

Nine-month post-graduate courses will be taught to select students for free.

The course curricula, focused on industry requirements, will be developed jointly by the entrepreneurs and the universities.

Student ratio will be 50:50, that is, 50 per cent on-job ones and 50 per cent freshers.

The planners expect at least 2,200 trained personnel to be raised within the first three years, starting from January 2017. They will be equipped to handle the mid-to high-level managerial jobs.

"We've just finished series of meetings with the entrepreneurs and the university authorities. We expect to begin the courses from January in 2017," said a top official at the SEIP scheme.



He said the total cost of conducting the courses will be borne by the SEIP, including remuneration of faculties.

The trainees will be taught both theoretical and practical know-how with three months' attachments with industries concerned.

People familiar with the move told the FE that Bangladesh's skills gap in industries has many reasons, like lack of skills of sector-specific experts, lack of training among the workers and managers, lack of adaptability with new machines and innovations. They also find Bangladesh's lack of institutional capabilities to meet such criteria, as of now, necessitating the special learning programme.

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