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Regulator for skill dev activities likely soon

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The government has taken a move to create a regulatory authority that would oversee skill development activities in the country in a coordinated manner.

The authority will coordinate and harmonise skill development efforts of the government and the private sector.

Proposed National Skill Development Authority (NSDA)

- To ensure recognised skill standards
- To provide training both at home & abroad
- To come into being sometime in 2018
- Requires a law to be passed in parliament

The National Skill Development Authority (NSDA), as it is styled, will ensure skill development standards through effective regulation of vocational education and training courses in the country.

The NSDA will provide training on skills that are in demand both at home and thus help increase the volume remittance income of the country.

Currently, India, Pakistan and other South Asian countries have such specialised organisations tasked with promoting skills.

An organisation named Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB) under the Ministry of Education is now partly doing similar functions but it is not authorised to prepare curriculum for training courses, supervise and monitor different training programmes.

The Skills for Employment Investment Programme (SEIP), a project under the Ministry of Finance, has taken the move for establishing the NSDA. It has appointed a South African consultant Alastir for preparing details on its organogram and functions.

Officials involved in the programme told the FE that they are expecting such an organisation to come into being sometime in 2018 as it will require a law to be passed by the parliament.

Abdur Rouf Talukder, executive project director at the SEIP, told the FE that Bangladesh has no such organisation although almost all developing countries have the same for long for skill development.

"The new organisation is expected to help promote skills in the country to a newer height."

Khairul Islam, deputy executive director at the SEIP, said the authority will evaluate existing skill development schemes with a view to assessing their efficacy and suggest corrective action to make them more effective.

He also said it will also create and maintain a national data base on skill development including development of a dynamic labour market information system.

He said currently 23 ministries are providing skill development training through their attached directorates.

But he said there is no regulatory organisation to monitor such training.

The government had allocated Tk 1.74 billion in the outgoing fiscal year for imparting skills development training programmes under the 23 ministries/divisions.

People at the SEIP said Bangladesh has a huge skills gap at different levels. But at mid and high levels, the gaps are acute.

They said due to skill shortages at both technical and managerial level, about 200,000 foreign nationals are working particularly in the readymade garment sector to contribute to manufacturing, production and marketing.

They said annual take-home salaries and allowances of foreign workers stand at nearly US\$5.0 billion.

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