

Groom deft hands for industry

It is a big surprise to learn that industrial sector in our country spends at least US dollar one billion a year towards payment of salary and allowances to foreign skilled hands employed in high-end jobs. Reports have it that currently more than two lakh foreigners are working in various industries with their gross take-home emolument dodging any tax on their income. Bangladesh is now in short supply of skilled persons to run growing industrial enterprises. Dearth of People with technical dexterity in the driving seats in the industrial sector puts fundamental constraints on the rapid progress of the industries. But no tangible efforts have so far been made to fill in the higher skills gap in the country. With no alternatives open to them, local manufacturing plants hire hands from overseas sources as makeshift arrangement which goes on for years. These foreign hands hold managerial jobs at the local garment and textile plants. The booming Information Technology (IT) sector, telecommunication and leather sectors are also hiring the foreign hands from abroad with high payouts. The local firms now have to outsource skilled manpower from India, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, China and Pakistan with high pay-package. The bottleneck our industries suffer from is the lack of local trained hands to deal with the industrial problems deftly as the foreign hands are doing now. Our country aspires to increase its volume of export to US dollar 50 billion by 2021 in RMG and knitwear sector. But this area of the economy runs short of mid-level to top-level managers and supervisors. Training up mid-level managers is indispensable for boosting their managerial and communication skill with the workers as well as foreign counterparts. According to experts, skills gap in industries in the country is widening because of lack of skills of sector-specific experts, deficiency of training among workers and managers, absence of adaptability with new machines and innovations. These hurdles effect a huge amount of out-remittances. It augurs well that the government has recently taken a crash programme to raise a pool of skilled personnel to hold high-profile jobs in domestic industries with homegrown experts to give the due fillip to the country's industrial growth. In view of the constraints on the industrial growth, the special curricular course has been taken up under Finance Division's Skill for Employment Investment Programme (SEIP) to plug the skill gap. This training programme is expected to raise at least 2,200 trained personnel in first three years starting from January, 2017. It will gradually help replace the foreign hands and thus save huge foreign exchange. We, hope this programme will not go haywire in the interests of industrial growth.

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