



# Hunt for best talents

SUMAN SAHA

A shift has opened in the hiring pattern: companies now reach out to the best talents. Human resource, the bastion of any organisation, keeps a company running. Thus, most of the leading companies in the world relentlessly try to attract and appoint the best talents.

Good businesses do not compromise on recruiting skilled workers because they know any wrong-decision in hiring will ultimately hinder the organisation's performance and productivity. So, they pursue a planned recruitment and hiring process.

Bangladesh has also witnessed a positive change in worker recruitment, especially in the private sector. Organisations -- from banks to telecom companies -- mostly follow a set structured recruitment procedures as the country's economy is getting integrated into the global economy.

The recent market trend shows that financial service providers, especially the banks, are pursuing a well-structured recruitment procedure to hire over 2,000 entry level employees.

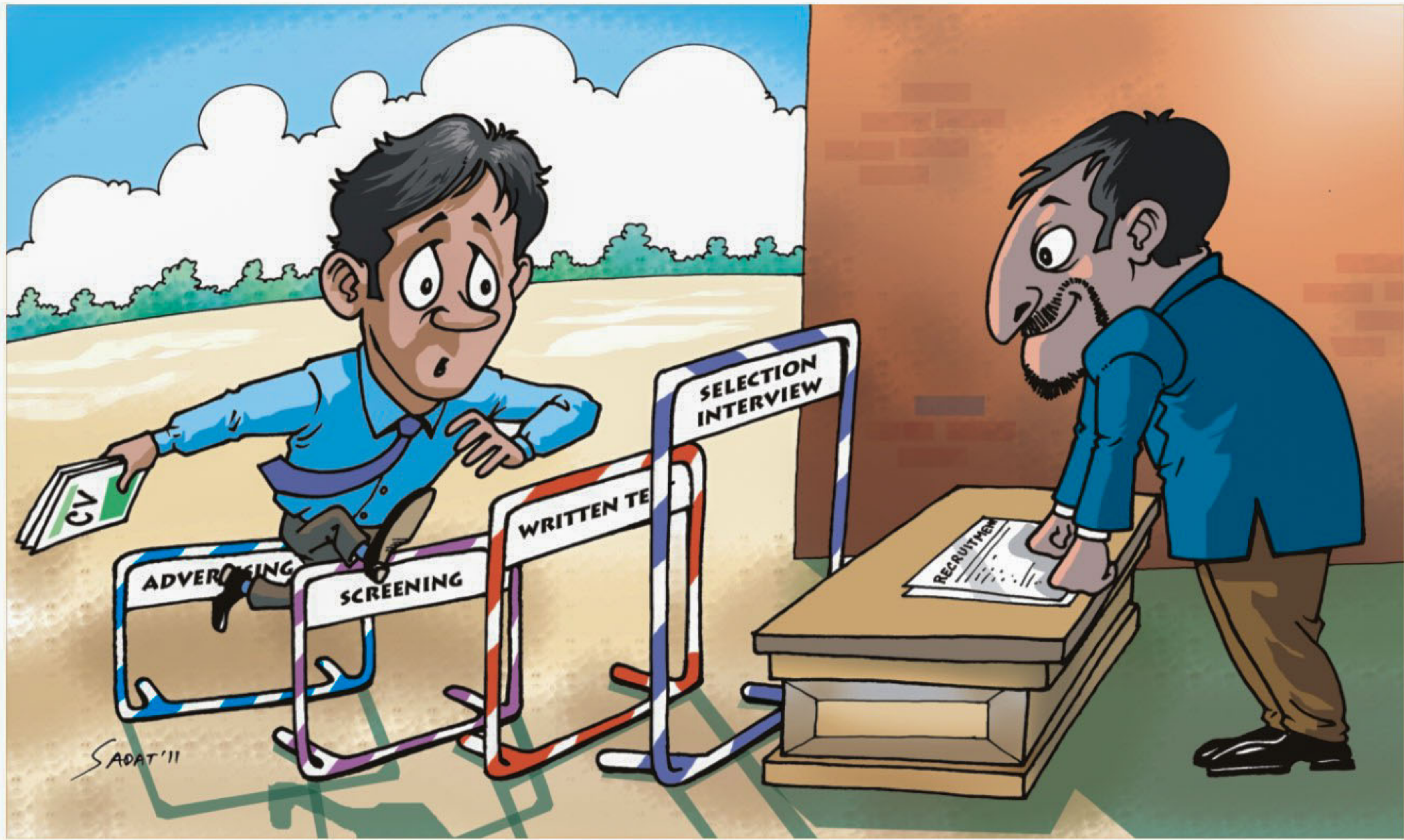
Currently, 47 banks operating in Bangladesh need to hire a large number of workers annually to spread their services and products to rural areas.

For entry level positions, the banks generally hire people from external sources. They start the recruitment process by publishing job advertisements in newspapers and on job web-portals.

They carry out screening and short-listing of the applications subsequently, based on the criteria described on the job advertisement. Later, they take written tests and interviews to evaluate the candidates' skills.

The mobile phone operators of Bangladesh also pursue highly-defined recruitment processes. They generally take a comprehensive approach to pick out the best talents.

"We take a holistic approach to the assessment process, which involves screening, competency-based and biographical interviews, and use of assessment centres and e-recruitment



tools to find out the right-fit," said Arnfinn Groven, chief people officer of Grameenphone (GP).

GP hires nearly 600 people from both internal and external sources a year, while it recognises its people as the driving force behind the growth and development of the organisation over the last 15 years, said Groven.

"We believe that every individual has talents and strengths suitable for particular tasks. That is why we constantly strive to place the right-fit."

Besides permanent staff, mobile phone operators hire both part-time and contractual employees in non-regular employment category.

The leading companies are putting in place well-defined recruitment systems to increase organisational productivity.

"We pursue a structured recruitment policy," said Dr Kazi Anis Ahmed, director of Gemcon Group. "Our recruiting procedures require

job applicants to face at least two to three interviews and meet three to four officials of various strata before they are finally hired."

Gemcon, which recruits around 60 workers a year, mainly does business in engineering, jute, tea, seafood, retail and exports. The group is also engaged in education through its own university.

"We basically attend the campus fairs and approach human resource agencies to recruit for entry and mid-level positions," said Ahmed. The company also uses its reference network to hire top level executives. Currently, the group employs nearly 600 executives.

KDS Group has generated over 20,000 employments, hiring more than 200 executives a year, said Salim Rahman, managing director.

Applicants are screened through written tests and interviews in line with requirement, said Rahman.

Corporate leaders, however, said most businesses in Bangladesh stick to a passive mode of recruitment. "We are relatively passive about recruitment. Our mind-set makes us wait for job-seekers to come to us, rather than going out looking for them," said Ahmed.

"I absolutely agree that a large number of companies prefer to stick to the passive mode of sourcing human capital," Rahman said.

"This kind of arrogant attitude of employers, however, is changing because an increasing number of companies are attending the campus fairs," said Ahmed.

Ahmed, however, suggests a business entity should focus on building a positive brand image among the job-seekers by showing up at the campus fairs to attract talents who should take pride to work for an outfit.

Every student in India dreams of working for a Tata concern because

they feel proud to be a member of the Tata workforce, as a result, Tata's resume banks remain always full, he said.

Similarly, Proctor and Gamble and Google receive nearly one million unsolicited resumes from the aspirant candidates from all over the world annually because they consider these companies as their dream destinations.

Rahman suggested the graduate students choose the sectors they want to join professionally, at least a year ahead of their graduation; it will help them excel in a particular field. He also said the students should be serious in selecting and undertaking their internship programmes.

He also suggests forming alliances of industries and universities as such coalitions will ensure the exposure of the students to the real world.

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# Lack of jobs is not the concern, poor skills are

The chief executive of bdjobs.com tells *The Daily Star*

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EACH nation strives to generate new jobs for its eligible-to-work population.

Employment means more purchasing power of the citizens and in essence, their well-being.

Even though Bangladesh is not able to create the required number of jobs, a large number of posts remain vacant due to a dearth of skilled manpower.

"There is no shortage of jobs," said AKM Fahim Mashroor, chief executive officer of bdjobs.com, the country's first on-line job portal. "But there is a dearth of skilled human resources to fill the vacant posts."

Currently, the company has 5,000 registered employers and is linked with more than 300 global recruiting agents. They can supply manpower to the global market, free of cost.

Around 30,000 jobseekers visit the job site a day and nearly 1.5 lakh people have been employed through the site in the last 10 years. Of the people employed, 1,500 now work abroad.



AKM Fahim Mashroor

There is a stark shortage of skills across a large variety of specialised areas. As a result, foreign multinational companies in Bangladesh have to import a significant number of workers from India and other countries, to find the skilled ones. "The number of such

companies is nearly 80," said the bdjobs chief.

"We see that many leading companies in Bangladesh fail to hire the desired number of people," said Mashroor, "because they are unable to find the right person for the right post." The recruitment process in

Bangladesh, however, has seen positive changes in recent years. Most companies have to recruit the best possible candidates because they now compete with global as well as local markets.

"A decade back, most companies recruited employees

based on references," said Mashroor, who started the job portal in 2000 from his living room. "The scenario is changing because companies are hiring based on skills rather than references."

The major sectors that contribute to employment generation in the last few years are garments and textiles, IT and telecoms, said Mashroor.

Poor communication skills and a lack of in-depth knowledge on a particular subject are the main weak points of job seekers, he added.

The bdjobs chief explains that fresh graduates suffer from a lack of in-depth knowledge on a particular subject because they acquire overall knowledge at shallow levels in their study and as a result, they cannot develop expertise on a particular field.

"We observe that a large number of people have low English language skills, especially in writing," said Mashroor. "So they face difficulties in writing something correctly."

It is also common to see in recent times that most freshers on the job not only lack an

appropriate sense of quality but they also have little passion for work.

Most entry-level employees are not serious about time management and punctuality, and they are not able to meet deadlines, said Mashroor.

He said they try to sieve out the capable candidates based on applicants' curriculum vitae (CV). "We identify a job-seekers' sense of organising and people management skills by checking their extra-curricular activities."

If a person's CV shows that he is a good sports person, it indicates he has the ability to work in a team.

Similarly, an ability to organise programmes will be stronger when the candidate has experience in arranging events like cultural programmes and study tours, said Mashroor.

He urges students to develop their people management skills, language, and ability to organise things by participating in debates, workshops and other university or college programmes.

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