

Enhance skills to plug gaps at managerial level

Experts say at FBCCI webinar

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Training institutes and master trainers are highly required to build managerial skills in the country's workforce and plug the gap in managerial positions at local manufacturing and service industries, according to experts.

Structural changes in domestic education are now the main challenge for providing skilled workers needed for all industries, said FBCCI President Jashim Uddin

They were addressing a virtual policy dialogue on "Skills and Managers", organised by the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) to formulate specific recommendations for creating skilled workers for investment, domestic market development, and export diversification.

"Work needs to be done to close the sector-wise gap. This will add value to the country and abroad in all fields as productivity will increase," said FBCCI President Jashim Uddin.

As a result of the massive digitisation process taking place across Bangladesh, new and innovative economic activities are being conducted.

However, structural changes in domestic education are now the main challenge for providing the necessary skilled workers, he added.

Besides, the country's workforce must now acquire technical skills in the face of the fourth industrial revolution.

Uddin went on to say that it is very important to create skilled managers as well as skilled workers in line with modern technology.

"For this we require need-based specialisation. Special sector training centres can be run on a priority basis by joint ventures between the government and private sector," he said, adding that there was no substitute for proper training to make the country's overall economic activities more dynamic.

The FBCCI president also emphasised on bringing quality trainers from abroad for need-specific training.

Public-private partnerships are crucial in achieving the government goals, including Bangladesh's graduation from a least developed country in 2026.

"There is a need in the country to provide training for management positions at information technology based industries, trade and offices and to expand it to the marginal level on a massive scale," Uddin said.

Helal Uddin, director general of the Directorate of Technical Education (DTE), said the manufacturing and service sectors require about 10 lakh entrants to the workforce each year.

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Hybrid watermelon varieties buoy farmers' hopes



The profitable crop has seen a gradual increase in farming across the Sylhet division and growers are pleased with the bumper yields this year, agriculture officials said.

PHOTO: MINTU DESHWARA

MINTU DESHWARA

Watermelons of all shapes and sizes are currently available in the market but other than satisfying a customer's craving for the refreshing fruit, its cultivation provides a spectacular view.

However, one farm in particular is drawing in large crowds this year as people are flocking to see the three hybrid varieties -- Madhumala, Black Baby, and Yellow Lan Fei -- being grown.

As the name suggests, the Black Baby variety has a dark outer shell while Lan Fei watermelons are yellow on the inside and Madhumala are green.

Abdul Matin has achieved unimaginable success by cultivating these three varieties on two bighas of land at his farm in Patrakhola of Kamalganj upazila in Sylhet's Moulvibazar district.

With a total production cost of Tk 40,000, Matin has sold about Tk 1.20 lakh worth of watermelons

and hopes to earn another Tk 1.5 to Tk 2 lakh from his remaining stock.

With help from the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) and Lal Teer Seed, Matin's initiative has become a success story that other farmers in the region are now trying to emulate, according to the

Lon Fei seeds provide yields that are about three times higher than their traditional counterparts while each fruit weighs about three to four kilograms, making it a more profitable watermelon variety.

So, Matin plans to cultivate Lon Fei watermelons extensively from

of different colours being grown in the same field.

If given proper care, each Lon Fei watermelon can grow up to five or six kilograms in weight, according to Tapash Chakraborty, divisional manager of Lal Teer Seed.

Besides, it takes just 75 to 80 days for this variety to ripen and can be grown year-round, he said.

The farmer went on to say that it takes just two grammes of seeds to cultivate 30 to 35 tonnes of Lon Fei watermelons on about 3 bighas of land.

Kazi Lutful Bari, deputy director of the DAE office in Moulvibazar, said the three varieties have been planted at the Patrakhola Watermelon Exhibition and now, initiatives will be taken to spread their cultivation to other upazilas in the district.

"The profitable crop has seen a gradual increase in farming across the division and growers are pleased with the bumper yields this year," he added.

DISTRICTS IN FOCUS

DAE office in Moulvibazar.

As such, the DAE is considering whether to encourage cultivation of these high yielding watermelon seeds in other upazilas in the district.

"Other than their striking appearance, these varieties smell and taste as sweet as honey," Main said.

Besides, they also fetch good prices in the market, he added.

next season.

Sobhan Mia, a fellow farmer who visited the farm, said this variety was as beautiful to look at as it was delicious to eat.

"Considering the widespread success of this farm, many others now desire to cultivate these watermelons in the future," he added.

Another farmer Sajjad Hosain said it was nice to see watermelons

GLOBAL BUSINESS

Millions of Americans at risk of losing homes

AFP, Washington

Millions of Americans could find themselves homeless starting Sunday when a nationwide ban on evictions expires, even as billions in government funds meant to help them go untapped.

The wave of evictions would come as the fast-spreading Delta variant has taken hold in the country and rental housing is in high demand in the hot real estate market. US President Joe Biden on Thursday urged Congress to extend the 11-month-old eviction moratorium, after a recent Supreme Court ruling meant the White House could not extend the measure through September as intended.

Democratic leaders in Congress were pushing for an extension, but it was unclear if they had the votes, even among moderates in their own party, to prevent the ban from expiring.

Efforts stalled on Friday in the House after a move to pass the extension was unsuccessful, with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi saying in a statement, that "not a single Republican would support this measure."

"The day before, she had said called the extension "a moral imperative." She also called on governors and local officials "to take whatever steps are necessary to distribute the rental assistance that Congress already allocated."

Unlike other pandemic-related aid that was distributed from



A man walks along a street in a neighborhood of single family homes in Los Angeles, California on July 30, 2021, a day before a nationwide ban on evictions due to the coronavirus pandemic since 2020 is set to expire.

AFP

Washington, such as stimulus checks, it was states, counties and cities that were responsible for building programs from the ground up to dole out assistance earmarked for renters. The Treasury Department said that as of June, only \$3 billion in aid had reached households out of the \$25 billion sent to states and localities in early February, less than three weeks after Biden took office.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) ordered the eviction moratorium in September

2020, as the world's largest economy lost over 20 million jobs amid the pandemic shutdowns.

The CDC feared increasing homelessness would boost coronavirus infections. Although more than half of those lost jobs were recovered as businesses were able to reopen, many families still have not caught up on missed rent payments.

The Census Bureau's latest Household Pulse survey through the first week of July showed that of 51 million renters surveyed, 7.4

million were behind on their rent and nearly half of those said they were at risk of being evicted in the next two months.

Through the end of June, only about 450,000 households had received aid through the Emergency Rental Assistance program, and some states and localities have yet to pay out any funds, according to Treasury data.

The Treasury launched a campaign this week to spread the word about the program and help authorities get their systems

up and running, modeling those in Virginia and Houston, which have been successful in helping struggling families.

Immediately after taking over, the Biden administration had eased paperwork and eligibility requirements for the program, but the Treasury says management remains in the hands of state and local officials. The White House also shifted responsibility to states. Biden said "there can be no excuse for any state or locality not accelerating funds to landlords and tenants that have been hurt during this pandemic."

"Every state and local government must get these funds out to ensure we prevent every eviction we can," he said in a statement Friday. And while the White House cannot act, there is nothing preventing state and local authorities from instituting their own protections, Biden added.

Pelosi called the delays an unjust "bureaucratic situation." California Democrat Maxine Waters, chair of the House Financial Services Committee, introduced the bill to extend the prohibition of evictions.

"I'm pulling out all the stops right now," she tweeted Friday. But some Democrats oppose the move, and a congressional source confirmed to AFP that several were planning to leave town rather than participate in a vote, making it hard for the party to use their slim majority to push through a bill.

REUTERS, Paris

Airbus production plans expose strategy rift with engine makers

A rift between Airbus and engine makers over plans for higher jet output blotted strong aerospace earnings this week, with worries over the supply chain's industrial capacity masking a deeper tug of war over contrasting business strategies.

With travel demand snapping back in key US and Chinese markets, Airbus wants to almost double jet production in a few years as it capitalises on a bulging order book for new jets and the recent woes of embattled US rival Boeing.

In May, it issued a mix of firm targets and scenarios that could lift narrowbody output to 75 jets a month by 2025 from 40 now, and 60 before the Covid pandemic.

That has rattled engine makers and others who fear the world's largest planemaker will upset their own recovery by flooding markets with new jets too quickly, forcing existing ones straight into retirement rather than their repair shops.

"The engine makers look at the production plans and see them displacing older airplanes that are still profitable for them," said Teal Group analyst Richard Aboulafia.

The standoff could accelerate efforts by engine makers to adapt their service-dependent business models by charging more upfront for their engines, Aboulafia said.

Doing so is potentially risky since planemakers also eye a bigger slice of their suppliers' service revenues.

Public differences over production can unsettle the whole supply chain, reducing the appetite for risk, suppliers say. Few quibble with a smooth return towards pre-crisis levels for in-demand narrowbody jets, through Boeing remains more cautious as it emerges from a separate crisis over its 737 MAX.

"They (planemakers) can feel the momentum coming back," the head of the world's largest engine maker GE Aviation, John Slattery, told a Eurocontrol podcast, while pledging to support a return to pre-crisis levels by early 2023 for narrowbodies.

But industry sources say GE's French engine partner Safran was speaking for many suppliers when it questioned plans to take output swiftly beyond that to uncharted levels.

"I have to say we are not sure that the market has the appetite for such rates and that rates well above 60 can be sustainable," Safran CEO Olivier Andrieu told analysts on Wednesday, echoing previous warnings against over-production. Also speaking to analysts at mid-year results, Greg Hayes, CEO of Pratt & Whitney parent Raytheon Technologies, expressed surprise at "pretty aggressive" Airbus output plans.



An Airbus A320neo aircraft in Colomiers near Toulouse, France.

REUTERS/FILE

China securities watchdog seeks closer cooperation with US

REUTERS, Beijing

China's securities regulator said on Sunday it will seek closer cooperation with its US counterpart and will support overseas listings, after US regulators tightened disclosure for Chinese companies and voiced concern about Beijing's regulatory actions.

The China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC) said in a statement that it had taken note of the US Securities and Exchange Commission's (SEC) new requirements for disclosure regarding

Chinese companies' listings and that the two sides should "uphold the spirit of mutual respect" and "strengthen communications on regulating China-related stocks."

The CSRC has always been open to companies choosing where to go public and "China's basic national policy of advancing reform and opening up is unswerving, and the financial opening to the outside world will continue," it said on its website.

The SEC said on Friday it would require Chinese companies to disclose

"uncertainty about future actions by the government of China that could significantly affect the operating company's financial performance," before allowing them to raise capital through US stock markets.

Chinese issuers must also disclose if they were denied permission from Chinese authorities to list on US exchanges and the risks that such approval could be denied or rescinded, the SEC added.

China has been tightening its regulatory grip on overseas share issuance

after it launched a cybersecurity probe of ride-hailing giant Didi Global Inc last month, just days after its listing in New York.

China's cabinet said on July 6 that it would strengthen supervision of all Chinese firms listed offshore.

Following suit, China's cyberspace regulator said that any company with data for more than 1 million users must report for a cybersecurity review before seeking overseas listings. China's central bank has also said that non-bank payment firms must report plans for overseas listings.