

Workers' training project

A timely initiative

WE welcome the government initiative to formally launch a \$1.7 billion project, Skills for Employment and Investment

Programme, to train 2.6 lakh workers and mid-level managers in different sectors over the next five years. It will address a major challenge for the economy as the industries are seriously suffering from shortage of skilled workers.

In Bangladesh, every year more than two million enter the job market but the majority of them do not have any skills. Our migrant workers have to opt for low paid menial jobs in foreign lands due to lack of skills. Again, in the absence of capable trainers, foreigners take away \$4 billion from the country in salaries and allowances every year. Against this background the government programme, which will train low and mid-level employees on enhancing managerial capacity, technology, sewing operations and computer literacy, will definitely enhance productivity of the industries. Furthermore, 70 percent trainees will be employed in various sectors after completion of their training which will create job opportunities for a large number of unemployed people.

The government initiative will be supported by ADB along with other development partners. Different business organisations such as BGMEA, BKMEA, BASIS will join the training programmes. This is a good example of public-private cooperation. The government should further expand the programme and include other low skill based industries.