

Thailand is accelerating skilled labor development in response to the growing demand for a qualified workforce in the ASEAN Community.

Prime Minister General Prayut Chan-o-cha explained that the Ministry of Labor, the Ministry of Industry, and the Ministry of Education are working together on information about labor. He stressed the need to collect this information from entrepreneurs, as well.

The Prime Minister said that Thailand still has insufficient skilled workers, researchers, and managers, not only in the industrial sector but also in the service and tourism sectors. A great number of technicians are also in great need in the transport sector. He cited a shortage of technicians in aircraft maintenance as an example.

In this regard, he said, Thailand must produce more skilled workers to ease shortages in the country, which is likely to see more investments. As for efforts to cope with shortages of unskilled workers, he said, international cooperation should be enhanced to recruit them. However, the use of migrant workers must be well managed in order to prevent human trafficking. He pointed out that migrant workers must be provided with good care and protection. The Government is serious about combating trafficking in persons. Officials involved in trafficking syndicates will be severely punished.

In order to increase Thailand's labor productivity, the Prime Minister said that the Government has been providing assistance for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), so that they would be ready for the ASEAN Community. For instance, multi-skill training will be provided for them to increase their competitiveness and reduce losses in production and production costs. The pilot project on multi-skill development will be carried out for 260 workplaces in 20 groups of businesses, such as those involved with food and beverage, textiles and fashion, furniture and wood products, and gems and jewelry.

The Prime Minister said that personnel in various sectors, such as those in industrial, medical, education, and civil service sectors, must be prepared in both quantity and quality. They must work efficiently and internationally and must have more knowledge and better understanding about ASEAN and the ASEAN Community. Moreover, they must be able to use modern information technology and be equipped with communication skills in English and other languages.

The Prime Minister said that the language skills must involve speaking, listening, reading, and writing in the first stage and that these skills would be developed further in the next stage. As for English, he wanted the teaching and learning of English to be divided into four steps: Basic English, English for Business, English for Government Officials, and English for Tourism Services.