**C**[**HECKING TAX EVASION, UNAUTHORISED EMPLOYMENT : NBR seeks foreign workers’ info from employers**](http://newagebd.net/171370/checking-tax-evasion-unauthorised-employment-nbr-seeks-foreign-workers-info-from-employers/)

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Field offices of the National Board of Revenue has started to send letters to the employers seeking information about foreign nationals working in their companies to check tax evasion and unauthorised employment of foreigners, officials said.
They said that field offices under income tax zone-11, which deals with tax payment of foreign nationals, were asking the employers to send the information including number of foreign workers, their names, salary and years of employment at their companies.
Taxmen from the zone have also been visiting the offices of different business houses including manufacturing, readymade garment, textiles, buying houses, IT firms and construction sites to collect information about the foreign workers, an official of the field office told New Age on Thursday.
He said that they were also collecting data from the Board of Investment and other sources to prepare a database on foreign workers.
‘The initiatives have been taken to bring all foreign nationals under income tax net and prevent employment of unauthorised foreign nationals in the country,’ he said.
Taxmen will check the information to find out whether the foreigners were paying income tax or had permission to work in the country, he added.
‘We will ensure tax collection from them if they do not pay the tax and take legal action against the employers if they employ them without permission from the Board of Investment and other agencies,’ another official involved with the process said.
Though there is no official data, taxmen estimate that there are several lakhs illegal foreigners, mainly from neighbouring India, Pakistan, China and Sri Lanka, and many from African and Western countries in the country.
They are working in the readymade garment industry, buying houses, liaison offices of multinational companies, IT, different joint-venture companies and other manufacturing industries in the country.
Most of the illegal foreign workers and even many legal foreigners evaded income tax with the help of their employers either by not being registered with the income tax offices or by showing less income in their income tax returns.
According to the BoI, on an average around 12,000 foreign nationals receive work permits from the board every year. A few thousand more foreigners also work in the country with permission from Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority and a few hundred with permission from the NGO Affairs Bureau.
In this context, the NBR has recently instructed the field offices to conduct a survey to identify tax evading foreigners and their employers.
It also asked to conduct drives against them to ensure income tax collection and compliance of the provision of the Income Tax Ordinance-1984.
Earlier in August this year, the revenue board had also asked the country’s employers not to employ unauthorised foreign nationals, cautioning them about penalty and other action for such employment.
The government in the budget for the current fiscal year 2015-16 restricted employment of foreigners without work permit and introduced heavy penalty and imprisonment for employers for violation of the law.
According to the provision of the law, the taxmen can impose penalty on companies and the owners as much as 50 per cent of their total payable income tax, or Tk 5 lakh, and scrap all other tax benefits as fine for recruiting unauthorised foreign nationals.