

Mixed reactions over industrial police

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The introduction of industrial police has evoked mixed reaction among businesspeople.

Pointing to the job of such police, a specialised unit of the law enforcement agency that began its journey Sunday, different trade body leaders and owners of industrial units suggested higher training for industrial police, as they will be doing counseling, rather than normal policing to maintain law and order.

The country's four industrial zones, especially the apparel industrial areas will come under the purview of the new police force.

In its reaction on Monday, the

apex trade body welcomed industrial police.

Describing the launch of the new force as fulfillment of a long-time demand from businessmen, AK Azad, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, said, "Sometimes it was difficult to control labour unrests by the normal police, because they often arrive any spot of occurrence lately."

Anis Ud Dowla, president of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said it is not possible to control any lawlessness employing police force. "We need to solve any unrest by labour leaders through mutual understandings."

Citing examples of other

countries, the metropolitan chamber chief said generally the industrial police members intervene at an extreme stage of any chaotic situation. Anis Ud Dowla said identifying the outsiders who provoke any unrest in the industrial sector is also possible by the normal policing system, it does not need any specialised police force.

"Such police force would not be effective," he categorically said.

Mushrefa Mishu, president of Garment Sramik Oikya Forum, a workers platform, said industrial police is not a solution to unrest.

Workers demonstrate when factory owners do not meet their demands, Mishu said, adding that introduction of the industrial police will only control legal

movement of the workers.

A tripartite understanding among workers, owners and the government can solve any problem, not the industrial police, she said.

David Hasanat, chairman and managing director of Viyellatex Group, said there is no relationship between unrest and police.

"We must find out the root causes of unrest in the garment sector," he said. The newly formed industrial police must need a lot of training and resources, Hasanat said.

Abdus Salam Murshedy, president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, hailed the introduction of such specialised police force and

described it as a time-befitting one to control labour unrest.

"It was our long demand. Sometimes we face the unrest also for 'jhoot' (waste clothes) trading. The industrial police will help also in controlling 'jhoot' business," he said.

Anwar-ul-Alam Chowdhury Parvez, managing director of Evince Group and former BGMEA president, said the industrial police will be helpful to protect the sector, but they need special credit.

"The job of the industrial police would be counseling, rather than normal policing. They must give advance information and they must grow trust through their activities," he said.

"They will identify problems

and try to improve the working environment in the industrial sector," Parvez said.

Salim Osman, president of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association, said many incidents of labour unrest could not be controlled because of the dearth of police.

"So, I think industrial police would be helpful for controlling any labour unrest," he said.

Initially, 1,580 personnel deputed from the police department will make up the new force.

They will later be joined by 1,410 more cops to patrol Dhaka, Gazipur, Narayanganj and Chittagong industrial hubs.

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Unilever brings water purifier

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Unilever has introduced in Bangladesh its water purifier Pureit recently, said a statement.

This new product directly purifies tap water and provides safe water, which does not require to be boiled.

Pureit Classic does not need continuous supply of tap water and incurs low maintenance costs. "It is made with the best quality plastic and has a maximum capacity of 18 litres," the company said.

Pureit has a four-step purification system and follows the strict guidelines of USA Environmental Protection Agency on water safety.

Bangladesh next shipbuilding hub

Says Dutch business delegation

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh has the potential of becoming a shipbuilding hub as foreign investors are coming with investments in the sector, said the chief of a Dutch delegation yesterday.

The country has already proved that it can produce ocean-going vessels with cheap labour, said Fred Oldenhuizing.

As a result, foreign companies are coming either to set up joint ventures or place purchase orders with local shipbuilders, he said.

"We want to build more ships here," Oldenhuizing told reporters after a business meeting at the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI).

Bangladesh, however, needs to solve its traffic problems and ensure an adequate supply of gas and power to the industrial sector to harness the potential for shipbuilding, he said.

DCCI organised the meeting for the visiting Dutch Maritime Trade Mission to discuss the prospects and problems of investing in the shipbuilding industry.

Oldenhuizing, also the president of Bangladesh-Dutch Chamber of Commerce (BDCC), said Dutch entrepreneurs were encouraged to invest in shipbuilding, as Bangladesh has already exported quite a few ocean-going vessels to Germany and Denmark, two major economies in Europe.

Jacob Gnodde, a member of the delegation, said his company Hollander Scholtens is in the process of purchasing a piece of land in Gazaria, an area on the Meghna river in Munshiganj, to set up a ship assembling company, Delta Stream Shipbuilding Ltd.

The initial cost of the project is estimated to be around Tk 150 crore, which might be increased. "We have a target

to assemble ships for the local market as well," he said. He hopes the project will start soon.

Tofazzel Hossain Miah, a director of the Board of Investment (BoI), said Bangladesh enjoys a comparative advantage of cheap labour while its workers are laborious.

The government also offers the foreign investors incentives, which should encourage them to come forward.

"The foreign investors can repatriate full or partial profits and there is no restriction in investment except certain specified areas," he said.

Chairing the meeting, Abul Kasem Khan, DCCI president, said bilateral trade between Bangladesh and the Netherlands is not significant. According to statistics from Export Promotion Bureau, Bangladesh exported goods worth \$1 billion to the Netherlands against imports of \$128.40 million in fiscal 2009-10.



Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Abul Kasem Khan speaks at a meeting with the visiting Dutch Maritime Trade Mission at the chamber's auditorium in the city yesterday. Dutch Chamber of Commerce President Fred Oldenhuizing, extreme right, is also seen.



KM Mujibul Hoque, chief executive officer of Inficom and director of ACCOM, shakes hands with former Malaysian prime minister Mahathir Mohamad after attending a seminar on 'The goal of vision 2020 achievable' at Berjaya Time Square Convention Centre in Malaysia recently.

Three-day agricultural fair starts

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A three-day international agricultural fair called 'Banglalink Agro Bangladesh 2010' began in the city yesterday with a call for helping the local agro-based industry flourish.

More than a hundred organisations from 15 countries, including Bangladesh, Vietnam, India, Thailand, Korea, Taiwan, China, Germany, Singapore, Japan, the Netherlands, Egypt and the UK are displaying their wares at 150 stalls at the fair.

Industries Minister Dilip Barua inaugurated the fair as the chief guest at a ceremony held at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the capital.

The exposition was co-organised by the agriculture and fisheries and livestock

ministries, Extreme Exhibition, Event Solution Limited and I-Station Communications.

Leading telecom operator Banglalink is the title sponsor of the event.

"Through using the latest technology in agriculture, we can develop a strong agro-based industry which can also create huge employment," said the industries minister in his inaugural speech.

National Project Director of A2I Programme Md Nazrul Islam Khan said: "Better agricultural production is essential to cope with an annual increase of 25 lakh in the population."

"The event is part of Banglalink's continued commitment to serve the agriculture sector of Bangladesh," said Ahmed Abou Doma, chief executive officer of Banglalink.

WB seeks action to quell economic tensions

REUTERS, Washington

World Bank President Robert Zoellick on Monday called for policy actions to quell growing tensions over currencies and to shore up confidence in the sputtering global economic recovery.

Zoellick said slow growth in advanced economies and the threat of asset bubbles in booming emerging market countries present growing risks that global finance officials, who gather in Washington later this week, need to tackle.

The uneven pattern of world growth has raised concerns about tit-for-tat policy responses as nations seek to protect their trade competitiveness as the U.S. dollar slumps on expectations of a further easing in U.S. monetary policy.

Japan intervened in foreign exchange markets for the first time in six years on Sept. 15 to drive down the yen, as several emerging markets have done with their currencies, prompting Brazil last week to warn of a "currency war."

"I don't foresee that we're moving into an era of global currency wars but there are clearly going to be tensions," Zoellick told reporters ahead of meetings this week of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

"Money is chasing yield. It can't find those yields in developed economies and this is not only pushing up currency values in developing countries... (but) also pushing up prices in assets with the risk of bubbles in property and some commodities," he added.

Zoellick said the pace of the global recovery had eased since May and will not be rapid enough to lower unemployment rates, while the bounce-back in world trade had probably come to an end. For now, he said the World Bank did not see a return of the global recession.

"We need pro-growth policies," he said. "This challenging environment calls for further concrete policy responses."

The search for better returns has led investors to flock to fast-growing emerging markets.

The Institute of International Finance on Monday revised up its forecasts for private capital flows to emerging markets in 2010 by \$116 billion to \$825 billion, and said it expected them to rise further to \$833 billion in 2011. Last year, these flows totalled just \$581 billion.

Minister stresses paperless trade

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Commerce Minister Faruk Khan yesterday called upon developed nations to help their developing peers build their capacity to achieve paperless trade.

Khan was speaking at the inaugural session in the Asia Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum 2010 in Kuala Lumpur, the commerce ministry said in a statement.

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and Asian Development Bank (ADB) in collaboration with the Ministry of International Trade and Industry, Malaysia organised the annual forum.

The minister said facilitating trade calls for a host of activities to which governments across the world, irrespective of their levels of development, are more or less focused.

However, what most countries lack, especially in the developing world, is an effective and integrated approach at the macro level, Khan added.

The forum aims at promoting trade facilitation as an important component of a comprehensive strategy for national and regional development.

This year's forum is themed "Trade facilitation for regional connectivity: advancing paperless trade".

More than 150 participants, mainly senior officials and e-trade experts from 30 countries in the region and beyond, are participating in the event to discuss regional approach to promote and facilitate implementation of paperless trade system, where data and documents will be exchanged and approved electronically.

The minister applauds the role of UNESCAP for pursuing the issue of regional



Faruk Khan

connectivity and paperless trade.

Thus, capacity building should be the immediate objective of international agencies such as UNESCAP and ADB, he added.

Abdul Rahim bin Bakri, deputy minister for transport of Malaysia, delivered the keynote speech at the opening session. Ravi Ratnayake, director for trade and investment division of UNESCAP, and Naomi Chakwin, director for East Asia division of ADB, also spoke.

Khan chaired a high-level panel at the event that provided a regional overview of importance, progress and remaining challenges associated with streamlining trade processes for regional connectivity.



Rajan Chawla, head of sales and operations for emerging markets of Motorola, and Ahsan Ali Khan, managing director, pose with the winners of the company's consumer promotion Moto Eid Dhamaka at a programme in Dhaka recently.

Japan adopts zero interest rate policy

AFP, Tokyo

The Bank of Japan on Tuesday surprised markets by adopting a near zero rate policy and announced further easing measures to help safeguard a fragile recovery from the threats of deflation and a strong yen.

The central bank lowered its key rate to a range of between zero and 0.1 percent, from the rate of 0.1 percent set at the height of the financial crisis in December 2008. It also announced an asset purchase scheme in an expansion of earlier efforts to generate demand, boost liquidity and tackle persistent deflation, having come under recent criticism that previous responses had been too weak.

It referred to the moves as "comprehensive monetary easing." "It was a quite positive surprise," said Masumi Yamamoto, equity market analyst at Daiwa Securities Capital Market.

"This signalled the Bank of Japan bowed to pressure from the government and took all the possible measures, which may actually create a new concern that the BoJ has no cards left to play," Yamamoto said.



Sales executives of Karnaphuli Ltd are seen at the launch of the company's latest real estate project Karnaphuli Green with the slogan Shobuje Boshobash at Uttara in the city recently.