

# Let's give a new meaning to 'Made in Bangladesh'



RMG NOTES

MOSTAFIZ UDDIN

"MADE in Bangladesh" is a brand which now resonates around the world, thanks to the size and global reach of our RMG industry. But

what does it mean to end consumers? How does it resonate with the people who wear the clothing that garment workers toil to produce in our factories?

Having had the good fortune to travel a great deal these past two decades, I can say that our country's branding can offer mixed messages. For many Western consumers, it is associated with cheap clothing and a business model which sees Europe, the US and other Western countries outsource low-cost industries to the Global South. "Made in Bangladesh" has also developed some unsavoury connotations since the Rana Plaza collapse. The image of garment workers being crammed into unsafe factories—which no longer holds true for Bangladesh and needs to be stated—is one which has been hard to erase from a marketing and PR standpoint.

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"Made in Bangladesh," then, offers mixed messages around the world. It does not have the standing of, say, "Made in Germany" or even "Made in England," but, it is a brand on the world stage—for good or bad.

How can we improve it, then? Telling people about the provenance and authenticity of the products they

purchase is becoming an increasingly powerful marketing tool in a crowded global market. With so many products fighting for audience and market share, and so much social media noise, gaining cut through and creating a memorable impression with one's audience is a huge challenge.

I believe there are opportunities for the RMG industry of Bangladesh here. There is a growing interest in where and how products are made among consumers, and it is up to us, as the world's second largest producer of clothing, to respond to these new market dynamics.

Technology can play a key role here. In the textile and fashion space, we are increasingly seeing technology being used to track and trace textile fibres and garments from one part of the world to another, with blockchain also being used along the way. These generally see a unique "marker" being applied to textile fibres so that it then becomes possible to identify them along supply chains. Technological solutions like this are increasingly being demanded by our buyers in order to satisfy the requirements around supply chain transparency. This kind of technology is certainly the next big thing in our industry, and it is important that we, as suppliers, understand it and realise how it can be utilised.

Taking one recent example from another country: a traceable textile specialist has just announced a partnership with an industrial park developer in Africa to supply fully traceable cotton from Benin. This new pilot programme will enable spinner-to-garment traceability on products,



Ensuring transparency all throughout the supply chain can help boost the image of the brand that is 'Made in Bangladesh.'

PHOTO: COLLECTED

offering huge potential to grow and develop Africa's cotton sector.

How we can make this kind of technology work in Bangladesh is something I believe our business and trade leaders need to look into now. I know that, just recently, the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) made announcements around an increased focus on recycled products. As I have written previously, fashion is already asking supply chains how they can help boost recycled products in their collections, and a number of buyers are working with Bangladesh in this area. Suppliers in Bangladesh need to be looking at how they can forge links with textile recyclers.

But perhaps we can combine the two? One of the challenges for garments containing recycled materials is that it is not always possible to be 100 percent sure whether the materials in the garment are what is claimed. It could be recycled content, but there have been stories in the news lately that virgin fibres are being used in their place. This is one area where traceability solutions could come to the fore, and there is no reason why Bangladesh should not help lead the way. Could Bangladeshi apparel makers team up with recycling partners and traceable tech companies to provide fully traceable garments, where it is possible to provide, via a barcode on the end product, the precise content

of the clothing? This is the futuristic direction our industry is heading to. Bringing this kind of added value to end clothing products gives a whole new meaning to the term "Made in Bangladesh." It is a brilliant way to help us on our rebranding journey, shifting away from a country which simply produces staple clothing items to one which creates clothing that is made using recycled fibres, is fully traceable and can demonstrate the kind of authentic sustainability values that brands and their end consumers are looking for these days.

At present, there are all manners of recycling projects globally seeking business partners. Likewise, in the traceable fibres space, there are small but a growing band of companies offering end-to-end traceability solutions. Our suppliers and, at a broader, more strategic level, our industry leaders and even the government authorities need to be making connections with these companies to see where synergies can be developed. Our buyers also need to be in on these conversations.

Our industry is changing—and at a faster rate than one could imagine. If we don't embrace these new technologies, we will be left behind. So, let's get behind them and use them to our advantage, as a way to add value to what we do and freshen up the "Made in Bangladesh" brand, giving it extra dimension and meaning in our increasingly interconnected global market.

Mostafiz Uddin is the managing director of Denim Expert Limited, and the founder and CEO of Bangladesh Apparel Exchange (BAE) and Bangladesh Denim Expo.

## The invisible struggles of constables

### STRAIGHT LINE



MUHAMMAD NURUL HUDA

HISTORICALLY speaking, repression was the dominant feature of colonial policing, at least between 1930 and the Partition

in 1947, and one cannot be certain if the attitude of the ruling establishments in the subcontinent has significantly changed insofar as the use of police powers is concerned. In such a scenario, it could perhaps be said without fear of contradiction that the hazards and hassles of policing—particularly of the constabulary—could not be a subject of public concern. In other words, espousing a policeman's cause should be unusual in our parlance. It was, therefore, quite touching and encouraging to read a report titled "Constables can't seem to catch a break" in this newspaper on November 21.

The report stated that "standing

constituting more than 65 percent of the police force in Bangladesh are showing signs of work-related stress, and experiencing its negative impact on their mental and physical health. There is a case to examine if role ambiguity, role conflicts, work overload, conflicting orders, and unusually extended hours of work—both in day and night shifts—are causing stress on a worrying level for our police personnel.

Law enforcement, including traffic management, in crowded locations entails upon the police to work in the worst of conditions and with such diligence that the glamorous exterior image of the police overshadows the challenges encountered on the job, which are often life-threatening and endanger the personnel both on duty and off duty. The society expects constables to perform varied roles with equal élan. They have to help and save citizens while using force and making arrests. This roller-coaster ride is a process difficult to appreciate functionally and comprehend emotionally.

With the rigours of working long hours, the constables are expected to accomplish mood swings from being

than before. This is because even now, for a policeman in Bangladesh, the focus is always on the job to be done.

Strenuous tasks such as policing eventually become too arduous and exacting. As such, the vulnerability of the police as an occupational group to work-related stress and burnout deserves recognition with a view to looking for solutions to the ailments. Doing so may impact the

*Law enforcement tends to impose a higher degree of stress and a multiplicity of stressful situations on the individual, than most other professions.*

operational procedures and future training, and illustrate the potential dangers of certain physical and psychological responses that may be modified through training and other interventions.

Looking into the travails of the police, one would find that police work is arduous, often dirty and unpleasant, and sometimes dangerous. Night shifts are a standard feature in their lives. They are not paid for overtime work, and on top of that, they often have to work on holidays and during festivals. While illustrating the process of dehumanisation in the departmental culture of police, it has been observed that prolonged absence of any family life and absence of nearness to children deprive the policemen of the feel of family life. Absence of reasonable time off coupled with increasing task pressures drive them to do wrong. A little bit of sadism also creeps in as they are made to sacrifice all they have and receive public condemnation as reward, as Deoki Nandan Gautam said in the book "The Indian Police." The situation is not much different in Bangladesh.

In Dhaka metropolis, traffic management, including the installation of automatic and manual signalling, should be exclusive to the DMP. It should be possible to gradually remove a large number of traffic police personnel from street duties. This, however, would demand voluntary observance of traffic laws by the commuting public, who have to realise that traffic law enforcement can be fruitful when backed by visible observance. Educating the public on the imperatives of following traffic rules should be a continuous process. The aspect of road engineering and pollution control should also receive adequate

attention in mitigating the traffic scenario.

The police organisation in Bangladesh needs to take note of the crucial problem of job stress. A comprehensive plan for the recognition, diagnosis and management of stress as well as stress control programmes for police

personnel may help resolve the problem. The subordinate officials who are the most stressed groups should be provided with counselling for better coping. Both individuals and organisations must participate in the stress resolution process.

The role of stress management training and intervention strategies

in handling police stress should be an area of study. Longitudinal studies may be suitable to investigate the impact of police work on individual lives and its impact on their physical, social and psychological well-being.

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Working long shifts is common for police constables, as is working during holidays and festivals, and often under tremendous stress.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

amid a storm of dust and sound all day, traffic constables develop a host of chronic illnesses, including difficulty to sleep." It further says that, according to a study, 84 percent of traffic police officers in Dhaka are suffering from respiratory diseases, while 64 percent have lost their hearing ability, and most of these illnesses are caused or aggravated by air or noise pollution. The Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) commissioner said that "some people honk and some spray carbon dioxide without any reason. We are also trying to reduce these problems."

Quite clearly, there is a need for the authorities concerned to ponder whether the constabulary

loving fathers and understanding spouses to a lathi-wielding defender of the law combating a riotous mob. The job makes great demands on their mental, emotional and physical capabilities—demands that are all too often so stressful that they begin to destroy the individual.

It is a reality that law enforcement tends to impose a higher degree of stress and a multiplicity of stressful situations on the individual, than most other professions. In the course of their duties, police constables encounter the dark side of human nature and, thus, with growing incidence of crime and public order situations, their mental and physical health assumes greater significance

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**অকেজো মাইক্রোবাস নিলামে বিক্রয়ের দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

আরকাইভস ও গ্রন্থাগার অধিদপ্তরের অকেজো ০১(এক)টি মাইক্রোবাস যে অবস্থায় আছে এবং রেজিস্ট্রেশন সনদ, ট্যাক্স টোকেন ও ফিটনেস সনদ যে পর্যন্ত আছে তার ভিত্তিতে ক্রয় করতে ইচ্ছুক ঠিকাদার/ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে সীলমোহরকৃত খামে নিলাম দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে:

ক্র.নং	নিলামের নাম	আরকাইভস ও গ্রন্থাগার অধিদপ্তরের অকেজো ০১টি মাইক্রোবাস নিলামে বিক্রয়।
১.	দরপত্র সিডিউল প্রাপ্তির স্থান	প্রশাসন শাখা, জাতীয় গ্রন্থাগার ভবন, আরকাইভস ও গ্রন্থাগার অধিদপ্তর, আগারগাঁও, ঢাকা-১২০৭।
২.	দরপত্র জমা দেয়ার স্থান	(ক) প্রশাসন শাখা, জাতীয় গ্রন্থাগার ভবন, আরকাইভস ও গ্রন্থাগার অধিদপ্তর, আগারগাঁও, ঢাকা-১২০৭। (খ) প্রশাসন শাখা, প্রব্রতন ভবন, প্রব্রতন অধিদপ্তর, শেরেবাংলা নগর, ঢাকা।
৩.	দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	২৬/১২/২০২১ বিকাল ৪.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
৪.	দরপত্র গ্রহণের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	২৭/১২/২০২১ দুপুর ২.০০ ঘটিকা।
৫.	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	২৭/১২/২০২১ বিকাল ৩.০০ ঘটিকা (উপস্থিত দরদাতার সম্মুখে খোলা হবে, যদি কেহ থাকে)
৬.	দরপত্র সিডিউল-এর মূল্য	৫০০/- টাকা অফেরতযোগ্য (কোড নং- ১-৩৪৩৩-০০০০-২৩৬৬) এ ট্রেজারী চালানের মাধ্যমে সরকারি কোষাগারে জমা দিয়ে ট্রেজারী চালানের মূলকপি প্রদানপূর্বক দরপত্র সিডিউল নেয়া যাবে। উল্লেখ্য, ফটোকপি সিডিউল গ্রহণযোগ্য নয়।
৭.	জামানত	জামানতের টাকা উদ্ধৃত দরের ১০% টাকা(ফেরতযোগ্য) পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট বাংলাদেশের যে কোন তফসিলি ব্যাংক হতে মহাপরিচালক, আরকাইভস ও গ্রন্থাগার অধিদপ্তর, আগারগাঁও, ঢাকা এর অনুকূলে দরপত্রের সাথে দাখিল করতে হবে।
৮.	গাড়ির রেজিস্ট্রেশন নম্বর	ঢাকা-মেট্রো-৮-৫১-৩৯৪৫
৯.	গাড়ির ধরণ	মাইক্রোবাস
১০.	পস্থুতকাল	২০০২
১১.	গাড়ি দেখার সময়	আরকাইভস ও গ্রন্থাগার অধিদপ্তরের গ্যারেজে অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে সরকারী (ছুটির দিন ব্যতীত) যেকোন দিন সকাল ১০.০০ হতে বেলা ৪.০০ টার মধ্যে পরিদর্শন করা যাবে।
১২.	দরপত্র বৈধতার মেয়াদ	১২০ দিন।
১৩.	নিলাম বিজ্ঞপ্তি	আরকাইভস ও গ্রন্থাগার অধিদপ্তরের ওয়েবসাইটে ( <a href="http://www.nanl.gov.bd">www.nanl.gov.bd</a> ) এ নিলাম বিজ্ঞপ্তি দেখা যাবে।
১৪.	কারণ দর্শনো ছাড়াই যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা কর্তৃক সংরক্ষিত।	

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