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Ransacking of BGMEA office was outburst of frustration

 Owners of 'marginalised' units say
By Rafiq Hasan

The ransacking of BGMEA office on Sunday was the outburst of frustration of a section of small garments factory owners as BGMEA leadership failed to solve their long-standing problems, some owners said.

They said small factory owners feel 'marginalised' by BGMEA, which do not try to solve their problems but favour big companies, an allegation denied by BGMEA president Anisur Rahman Simha.

If the problems are not solved immediately, many factories will face closure soon, they told this correspondent during a visit to the BGMEA office yesterday.

"We have become desperate

as we have been pushed to the wall. If necessary, we will take to streets very soon," said K H Rabbani Managing Director of Rabbani Garments and a BGMEA member.

Another BGMEA member, Mahbub Minhaj Managing Director of Chandrima Garments admitted that he was the key person behind Sunday's incident. "I had no alternative since my factory is not in operation for more than one year. Nobody gave any attention to my problems."

Minhaj said he went to BGMEA office at noon on Sunday to discuss his problems with BGMEA leaders. "But finding nobody, I became frustrated

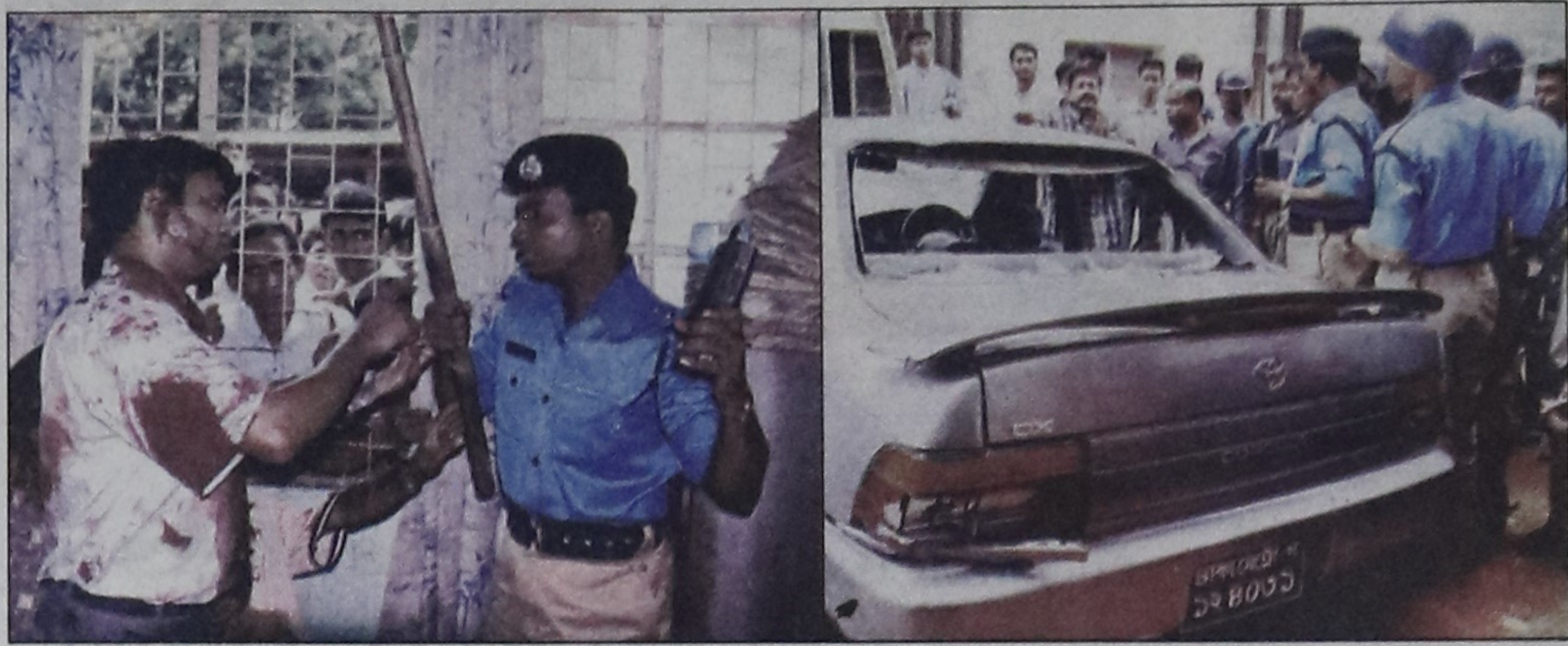
and damaged office furniture". He alleged that he got a free quota this year but that was cancelled along with quotas of another 130 factory owners following a recommendation by BGMEA.

"What is the use of keeping such a well decorated office if they can not solve our problems?"

Some other BGMEA members echoed the same sentiment. They said BGMEA leadership is not giving attention to their problems as they remain busy with their own business.

They also alleged that around fifty per cent of the

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Arrogance unlimited: A blood-soaked BCL activist, one of the four who were severely beaten during a clash with employees at Shikha Bhaban in the city yesterday, asks a charging policeman not to beat him anymore, and (right) the broken car that they rode into the Bhaban.

— Star photos

Shimul discloses names of 7 'godfathers'

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, June 26: Arrested leader of the outlawed PBCP Mahmud Hasan Shimul has named seven persons as his 'godfathers' who sheltered him during his 'underground life'.

They are SP of Khulna Ataul Gani Badsha, his close relative Ward Commissioner Asaduzzaman Litu, a BNP leader, a businessman and three Awami League and Jubo League leaders, said police sources quoting Shimul's confessional statement to a three-member special team.

The special team submitted its report to IGP Nurul Huda on Thursday and it contains names of these 'godfathers' and 'custodians' of Shimul's firearms, the sources said.

The SP is also one of the beneficiaries of notorious criminal Ershad Shikdar's misdeeds, as disclosed by a high level probe body formed by the government last year.

Badsha was the OC of Khulna thana in 1974.

The seven 'godfathers' of Shimul know what he has disclosed to police and none of them is absconding, a police official said seeking anonymity.

Security inspector commits suicide in Chittagong

From Our Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, June 26: One Security Inspector of Makkular Rahman Jute Mills at Sitakunda was found hanging from a ceiling fan at the officers' mess of the mill here yesterday.

Security inspector Khalilur Rahman, 40, reportedly committed suicide using electric wire yesterday evening.

Meanwhile, the workers of the mill held a rally on the mill premises today demanding probe into the incident, police said.

CEPZ unrest Some workers of towel factories start hunger strike in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, June 26: Some agitating workers of the three towel factories of US company Qualitex Group at the CEPZ began a 'fast unto death' in front of Chittagong Press Club from 10 am today demanding reinstatement of 15 workers and reopening of the mills.

Their hunger strike continued till writing of this report at 8 tonight.

Several hundred agitating workers of those factories also brought out a procession at 5 pm that paraded the city roads. The procession terminated near the local Press Club.

Earlier, the workers observed sit-in in front of the factories. The agitation began June 11 after 15 workers of the three towel factories were sacked, CEPZ sources said.

CEPZ officials held a meeting with the leaders of agitating workers yesterday to resolve the crisis, but it ended inconclusively, official sources said.

As a result the workers did not return to duties and production in those 3 factories remained suspended.

Cargo handling resumes at Ctg port

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, June 26: Cargo handling resumed at Chittagong port at 9 am today after about 37 hours due to a wildcat strike by dock workers, port sources said.

The dock workers of Chittagong port went on strike from 8 pm on Saturday centring a dispute with the stevedores over a demand for 'tips or extra money,' the sources added.

During the strike, the dock workers refused to take 'gang booking' and consequently all port activities came to a halt. The workers were supposed to resume their duties from 8 pm yesterday as per the decision at a meeting of their leaders, stevedores and port officials.

But due to a clash between two groups of labourers at the time of gang booking at 8 pm yesterday, booking was stopped. Some agitating workers ransacked the booking office, port and police sources said.

However, the dock workers took the gang-booking from 8 am today and started cargo handling activities at 9 am.

The city has become unfit for living

No security of life & property, say Opposition leaders

By Staff Correspondent

Opposition leaders have said the capital has now become unfit for living due to continued increase of terrorist activities, loadshedding, environmental pollution, crises of water and gas and 'fascist' activities of the government.

Addressing a press conference yesterday, Convenor of Dhaka city Unit of All Party Action Council (APAC) Sadek Hossain Khoka MP said this historic city has turned into a 'city of terrorism' and there is 'not even the minimum' security of life and property of city dwellers due to misrule of the Awami League government.

APAC organised the press conference at Jatya Press Club as part of its street protest programmes to mobilise public opinion and build resistance against 'deterioration of law and order and misdeeds' of the government.

Khoka said one crore people of the city are now seriously concerned that murder, toll extortion, dacoity, stealing, kidnapping and forcible occupation of property have now become everyday affair and they are 'hostage' in the hands of terrorists.

"Sons, family members,

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Bangladesh in Test club

From page 1

Test status to Bangladesh would be officially announced later at a press conference of the ICC at 1600 GMT (10pm, BST) on Monday in London.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh began a five-day state celebration yesterday marking the singular achievement of Bangladesh in the 123-year history of Test cricket.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will attend the main celebration on Wednesday at Paltan Maidan at 4:30 pm.

Earlier, in 1977, Bangladesh got associate membership of the ICC after an MCC team, visiting Bangladesh first since the country's independence in 1971, recommended inclusion of the South Asian nation in to world cricket.

Bangladesh cricket got a momentum when it emerged as the 1997 ICC Trophy champions and qualified for the 1999

World Cup in England. The same year, Bangladesh were granted the one-day status along with ICC Trophy runners-up Kenya.

Its previous attempt for full membership of ICC fell flat thanks to denial by Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and England although India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and West Indies had supported the bid.

Jubilant Bangladeshi expatriates, who gathered in front of the Lord's carrying national flags and placards, burst into cheers when BCB President Saber Chowdhury came out of the meeting and disclosed the ICC decision to grant full membership.

"This is the victory of the nation under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina... We are delighted and honoured to have the Test status," said the BCB boss.

Mori's coalition back to power

TOKYO, June 26: The knives came out in Japan today after Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori's ruling alliance scraped back into power with a vastly-reduced parliamentary majority, reports AFP.

Mori's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) lost its own majority in the 480-seat lower house and was left clinging to power only with the help of its two coalition allies.

The main opposition Democratic Party of Japan made big inroads at the expense of the LDP, which has ruled Japan with only one 10-month break since its formation in 1955.

"It is in effect a loss for the LDP," said a withering editorial in the Asahi Shimbun.

"LDP gets wake-up call," blared the Mainichi Shimbun.

But the stocky 62-year-old prime minister, whose verbal gaffes became a critical issue in Sunday's vote, was safe in his job for now, top party officials said.

"I think it is only natural that I have all the responsibility," Mori told a news conference.

But the prime minister said he would meet with leaders of his two alliance partners later in the day before deciding when to recall parliament, expected to be on July 4, and selecting a new Cabinet.

Mori said he wanted to retain Finance Minister Kiichi Miyazawa and Foreign Minister Yohei Kono to help out with a July 21-23 Group of Eight summit in the southern island of Okinawa.

PDB threatens to cut off power supply to 7 jute mills in Khulna

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, June 26: The Power Development Board (PDB) has threatened to cut off power supply to seven state-owned jute mills in Khulna from this evening unless they pay Tk 60 crore in outstanding bills soon.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC), which owns the mills, sought two months' time for the payment.

Sources said more than 20,000 workers will be out of jobs if the power connection to the mills is cut off.

None of the seven state-owned jute mills bothered to pay any amount of outstanding bills despite frequent reminders said a PDB source, adding June 24 was the deadline for payment.

The PDB alleges that the jute mills are unwilling to pay the electricity bills although they do not mind buying raw materials, spare parts and fuel in cash. Besides, they all are misusing electricity, said a high PDB official.

Khairul Alam, zonal manager of BJMC, said, "We are not in a position even to pay wages of workers. So, how can we manage money to pay the electricity bills? All these state-owned jute mills are about to be bankrupt."

"I've nothing to do if the PDB cuts off the electricity connection," he said.

The BJMC has officially informed the PDB several times of its inability to pay any amount of outstanding electricity bills due to severe financial crisis. It, however, assured of paying the bills if condition improves, he said.

Meanwhile, hundreds of workers of the seven jute mills demonstrated in front of their respective union offices against the PDB's threat to disconnect the electricity lines. They also threatened counter-action against the PDB.

The PDB has not cut off the connection to the jute mills until 6:30 p.m. today.

Hand of Bangladeshi severed in S Arabia

DUBAI, June 26: Saudi Arabia today severed the right hand of a Bangladeshi and a Yemeni convicted of pickpocketing, the official Saudi Press Agency reported, says Reuters.

It quoted Interior Ministry statements as saying the two men had been caught stealing at the Grand Mosque in Makkah, the site of the Kaaba. The sentences were carried out in Makkah.

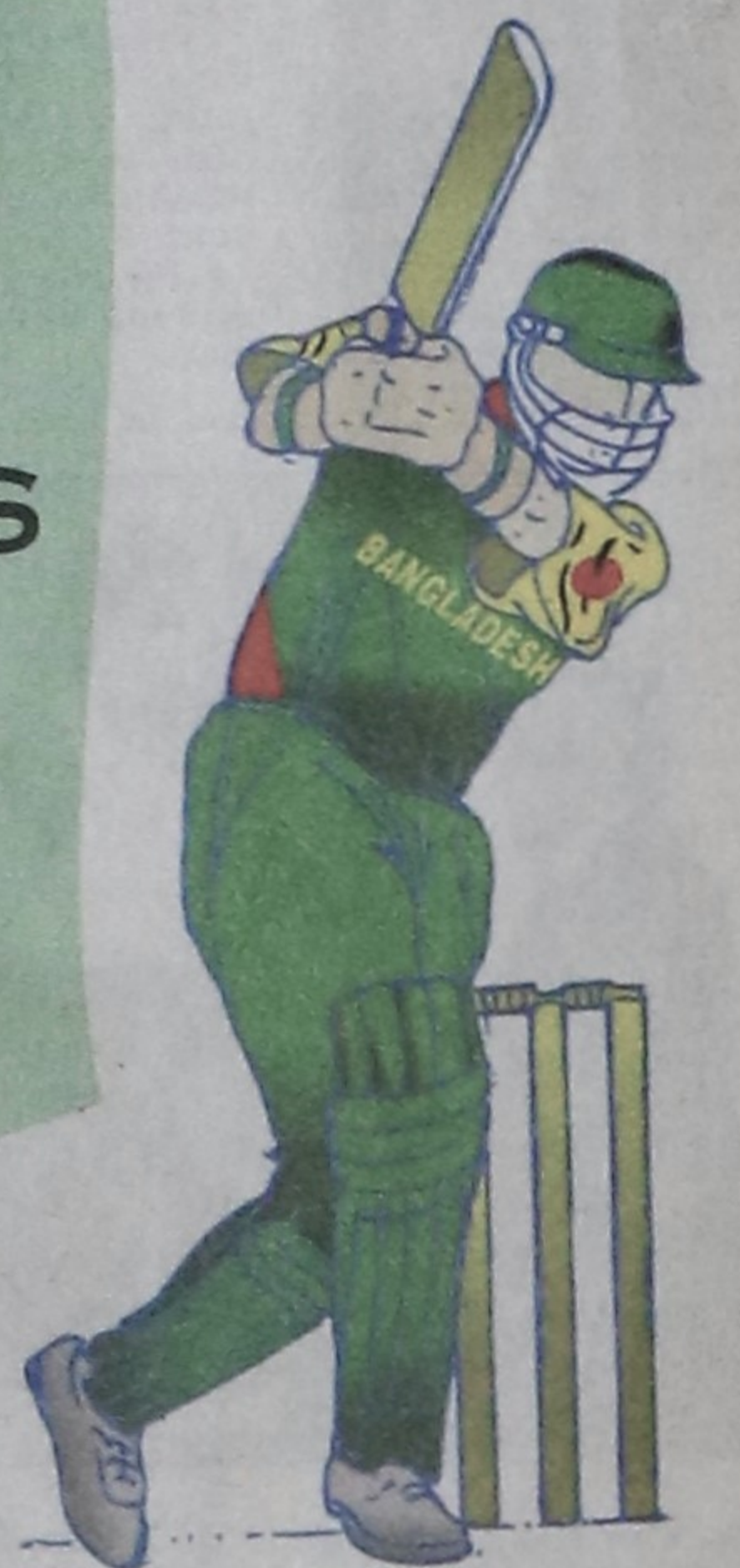
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Prayer Timings

June 27		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4:15	4:45
Zohr	1:00	1:20
Asr	5:00	5:15
Maghrib	6:50	6:55
Esha	8:15	8:45

Source: Islamic Foundation

Bhopi/Leo Burnett/ANZ/161/2000

We're storming into Lords! Hold on to your umbrellas!!!

MORE TEST CRICKET MORE PEPSI

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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