

# Cotton balling crisis

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And India, with an almost similar population of slightly over one billion, consumes 19.5 million bales.

However, the difference between these two countries is that India is a cotton exporter as it has an exportable surplus of around 7-8 million bales.

On the other hand, China buys around 30 percent of the total 38-39 million bales of global exportable cotton.

This situation has led to two implications for the cotton market. First, China as a strategy for securing its supply tends to overstock. And when this textile giant overstocks, it sends a distress signal across the cotton world.

This is exactly what China did this time also. It went on a buying binge and swooped on the Indian market. India suddenly came up to the realisation that it had exported more than its ability. It then hurried to impose a ban on cotton export. But by that time around 12.5 million bales had been registered

for export, of which 9.5 million bales had already been exported, 85 percent of this to China. There is now evidence that China has stockpiled cotton in its free zone and also in Malaysia.

Under this situation, Bangladesh, trying to be another textile giant, is precariously positioned, as it has to import its total cotton need of 3.5 to 4 million bales. With about 4 million workers engaged in the textile industry any supply shock leaves the sector tottering.

This calls for careful policy measures. For example, India adopted an intelligently crafted policy to support both its farmers and textile industry. When India banned cotton export, the commodity's price came down from as high as Rs 4,500 a quintal to Rs 2,500. This helped the Indian textile industry. At the same time, the government helped the farmers through agriculture price support.

Over the last three years, India has emerged as the major source of cotton for

Bangladesh, mainly because its cotton quality has improved, and the transport cost from India is cheaper than from any other foreign source.

Although the US has a huge surplus of over 10 million bales, freight charge and lead time for procurement are both higher with America. Moreover, Bangladeshi importers need to get their letters of credit confirmed by an international bank which costs 3-4 percent extra. With India this does not apply.

In future, Bangladesh's reliance on Indian cotton will increase if it wants to be a major player in textiles. So it is now felt that Bangladesh, using its good relationship with India, could negotiate with the neighbour so that India would guarantee a shipment of 3.5 to 4 million bales to Bangladesh.

And unless a supply chain is ensured, the unsettling scene in Bangladesh's textiles will continue.

# DoE sues 3 KEPZ officials

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the district.

They are KEPZ adviser Brig Gen (ret'd) Hasan Nasir, General Manager Col (ret'd) Mohammad Shahjan and Manager Abul Kalam Azad. The DoE in the case also accused 10 unnamed others of KEPZ.

The case was filed with Karnaphuli Police Station under the environment preservation act, 1995 (amendment-2010) for illegally cutting hills, filling water bodies, felling trees, and violating the provisions of the environment clearance KEPZ had got from the DoE for developing industrial plots in that area, says a press release issued yesterday.

Earlier in the day, a DoE team led by Director Munir

Chowdhury seized 10 bulldozers from KEPZ.

The DoE in the press release said KEPZ had been given approval for "dressing" hills, but it had been levelling the hills.

The KEPZ authorities, however, said they had approval and clearance for developing industrial plots in the project area and that the hill cutting was done in line with the environment clearance given to them in 2009 and renewed every year.

The environment clearance was given on the basis of a detailed environment impact assessment by the Centre for Environmental and Geographical Information Service of the government.

KEPZ officials earlier

said the clearance was issued in Bangla, allowing the company to remove hills or cut hills as per the land development plan in the environment impact assessment.

They had also argued that the 2009 clearance used the Bangla word "mochon" that means "removal" but now the DoE was translating the word into English as "dressing".

Yesterday's press release issued in Bangla also used the English word "dressing".

Adviser of KEPZ Hasan Nasir described the filing of the case as unfortunate and said, "We will face it in the court. We hope to get justice."

# No fixed tariff

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meeting chaired by Finance Minister AMA Muhith.

Bangladesh officials, however, said the tariff could be Tk 5 per unit at the end-user level, including transmission charge and transmission loss.

The Power Division said Article 10 of the PPA has described the method for determining tariff. As power will be imported from India in December this year, no specific tariff can be finalised in the PPA at the moment. Tariff will be fixed when India starts supplying electricity.

The Power Division also said, if the government pays the power bill quickly, Bangladesh will be entitled to a rebate.

An indicative price of power, however, has been

mentioned in the PPA. India will supply 250 megawatt power from its 13 coal-based power plants, and average price of the electricity last year was Rs 2.40 per kilowatt hour.

Early this month, Power Secretary Abul Kalam Azad said at a press conference India would supply electricity at Tk 4 per KWhour.

But Power Development Board (PDB) Chairman ASM Alamgir Kabir told the same press conference that Indian electricity price may be around Tk 5 at end-user level with the inclusion of transmission cost.

In August last year, the Power Division sent a draft proposal to the cabinet committee on signing of the PPA, but till date the committee did not give any decision in this regard.

The committee meeting yesterday also approved a proposal for purchasing surplus electricity from two private power producers. As proposed, the government will purchase 216 MW power from Beximco Power Co Ltd, which is 40 percent of the company's total production.

Price of electricity from Beximco Power will be Tk 4.97 per KW hour, while Chittagong Power Company will provide 15 MWelectricity at Tk 4.51 per KW/hour.

Both the power plants are coal-based. The price of power from the two companies is higher than the price at which the government is purchasing power from other coal-based plants.

# Sand traders

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case against the students, and his associate Hamid confessed to the killing before a Dhaka court yesterday. It could not be known if they said anything about the motive.

Senior Judicial Magistrate Tayebul Hasan recorded the statements of the two in the afternoon.

The Criminal Investigation Department arrested Malek and Hamid, both sand traders, from the capital's Mirpur on March 19. At the end of their three-day remand, the two were also placed on another four-day remand on Saturday.

Abdullah Al Mahmud, special superintendent of Dhaka CID, told The Daily Star that Malek and Hamid made the confessions under Section 164 of the Criminal Procedure Code on the first day of the second-phase remand.

According to sources, Malek and Hamid admitted that they along with 20-25 others beat the students to

death and injured another. They also named many of those who took part in the killing.

The gang members first killed two students in Baradeshi village, around a quarter kilometre off Keblarchar. Then they beat five others on the eastern side of the Aminbazar truck terminal, leaving four of them dead and another injured, sources quoted the two as saying.

Malek and Hamid claimed the six were drunk then.

They dragged the six bodies and injured Al-Amin to Keblarchar as per advice of the policemen, who went there before the villagers.

Malek also mentioned that he filed the false robbery case as Savar Police Station officer-in-charge Mahbubur Rahman had forced him to do so.

so far as I recall, none of us went to Keblarchar. We came under attack near the Aminbazar sand depots."

After the killing of the students, Malek filed a robbery case while Savar police filed a murder case against 500 to 600 unnamed people of Baradeshi village.

After the incident, a one-member judicial probe body in its report determined that the students were innocent and some Savar policemen were "involved in the killing".

Following the report, eight policemen were suspended over their alleged involvement in the killing and negligence of duty.

The six students are: Tipu Sultan of Tejgaon College, Towhidur Rahman Palash, Kamruzzaman Kanto and Ibrahim Khalil of Mirpur Bangla College, Shams Rahim Shamam of Maple Leaf International School and Sitaf Jabi Munif of Bangladesh University of Business and Technology.



Angry workers at Ishwardi EPZ yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

# Violent clash in Ishwardi EPZ

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Limited, a foreign-owned company, began demonstrations for a pay hike around 9:00am.

Pabna Police Superintendent Jahangir Hossain said police fired rubber bullets and charged batons to disperse the workers who had confined some foreigners to the factory.

"Unruly workers confined the foreigners, all of whom are executives of the factory, and started vandalism. They also attacked the law enforcers, leaving 15 policemen injured," he said.

"We've picked up 75 workers from the spot."

Of the injured, over 50 were admitted to Ishwardi Upazila Health Complex and Pakshi Railway Hospital and the rest to other health centres in the district.

Sheikh Mehedi Hasan, local correspondent of Bangla daily Manab Zamin, was wounded in police baton charge as he went to cover the incident. He was treated at the railway hospital.

The agitators claimed the law enforcers swooped on them without any provocation. Many of them were hurt as police lobbed teargas canisters, fired bullets and charged batons, said Shamim, Gautam and

Rubel.

They have long been demanding Tk 150 knitting charge for every sweater but the factory pays only Tk 100, they said.

Around noon, rumours of a worker's death fuelled the violence. People from nearby villages came in and damaged structures at the EPZ by hurling brick chips. They smashed up vehicles in and around the area.

Normality, however, returned around 3:00pm.

The clashes led to a suspension of production at five RMG factories in the EPZ.

Contacted, General Manager of Ishwardi EPZ

Md Mahmudul Hassan said there must have been an evil plot behind yesterday's event.

"Some workers have planned the unrest at Ishwardi EPZ to stop foreign investment in efforts to take revenge on the factory that sacked a few of their colleagues for breaking discipline," he said.

"The EPZ authority will form an inquiry committee to investigate the incident" he added.

The GM also said the EPZ authority discussed with the workers the wage hike but he did not know why they had gone berserk.

# Sudan's Bashir to attend Arab summit in Baghdad

AFP, Baghdad

Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, wanted by the International Criminal Court for war crimes, will attend this week's Arab summit in Baghdad, Iraqi President Jalal Talabani's office said.

"President al-Bashir told President Talabani that he will head his country's delegation to attend the next Arab summit in Baghdad this week," the presidency's website said after a phone call between the two leaders.

Iraq is not a signatory to the ICC's founding Rome Statute, according to a copy of the treaty posted on the UN's website.

The foreign ministry has said on its website that "the protection of President al-Bashir is guaranteed one hundred percent," adding that the same goes for all summit attendees.

The Arab summit is due to be held in Baghdad from Tuesday to Thursday.

# Youth killed

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brought the youth near an under-construction building -- Setu Bhaban -- at Rainkhola Boxnagar.

The police team halted traffic on the road for a few minutes from around 7:45pm. Locals then heard sounds of gunfire from the scene. At about 9:15pm, a police van was seen leaving the spot with the youth's body.

Dhaka Medical College Hospital sources said Shah Ali police brought the youth to the hospital at 9:55pm when he was already dead.

Shah Ali Police claimed they recovered two pistols, three magazines and four bullets from the deceased.

Police said they had information that the extortionists were going near the building for extortion. As they rushed to the spot to make arrest, the extortionists opened fire, prompting the police to retaliate.

Two police members -- assistant sub inspectors Mashiur and Moazzem -- were injured in the incident, the OC said, adding they were taking treatment at Rajarbagh Police Line Hospital.

# Their memories

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Chironon at Suhrawardy Udyan.

For many of them, it was a trip back to 1971 -- a year that saw Bangladesh win freedom, defeating the Pakistan army and their collaborators. For those who saw the war firsthand or were participants in it, it was a vindication of the truth they knew would emerge someday, with Bangladesh rising to its full glory as a free country.

And those who have come to Dhaka on behalf of an earlier generation of their family members who watched Bangladesh take birth through the tragedy of genocide and the intensity of war were clearly proud of those they had come to represent in the free capital of a free Bangladesh.

And yet everyone, in natural and spontaneous manner, cringed at revisiting the days when the horrors of genocide and other atrocities by the occupation forces were juxtaposed with the valour and sacrifice of the Bangladeshes.

They said they were happy to see an independent Bangladesh striving for prosperity by braving numerous odds. They wished the nation a very bright future.

**SIMON DRING**  
Noted British journalist Simon Dring, who was a correspondent of the Daily Telegraph during the Liberation War, is one of the witnesses of the massacre of unarmed Bangladeshes by the Pakistani forces.

"Tanks crush revolt in Pakistan," was the headline of his story published in the Telegraph and it was the first report that told the world of the brutalities of the Pakistani army.

Pakistan had claimed there was no massacre, but Simon Dring had proved it in his reports. Although the Pakistani government ordered foreigners to leave the then East Pakistan, he hid in Dhaka to document the war.

"I went to the Race Course Maidan on the historic March 7 [of 1971]. Observing the body language of lakhs of people, I realised that something dangerous would happen," Dring told journalists after visiting the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum yesterday morning.

**FREDERICK RALPH JACOB**

Lt Gen (ret'd) Jack Frederick Ralph Jacob, who served as Chief of Staff of the Indian Army's Eastern Command that routed the Pakistan Army in the then East Pakistan in 1971, said, "We fought not only as an Indian army, but were emotionally moved to be beside the people of Bangladesh."

"It is a great honour. I am honoured," he told reporters after visiting the Liberation War Museum yesterday.

The prizes will be awarded in two categories - Friends of Liberation War Honour and Bangladesh Liberation War Honour. Each award includes a medal, a crest and a citation.

President Zillur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will hand over the awards at a ceremony at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the capital tomorrow.

Of the 75 awardees, 21 are alive and will receive their awards personally. Fifty-four posthumous awards will be received by the relatives or representatives of the award winners.

**SANJIT ROY**

He is a nephew of former West Bengal chief minister and well-known politician Siddhartha Shankar Roy.

Sanjit said his uncle, then a central minister of India, came to Bangladesh in 1971 to strengthen the morale of the freedom fighters.

Siddhartha Shankar Roy, who was originally from Bikrampur, Dhaka, was in charge of relocating millions of Bangladeshi refugees from Salt Lake in Kolkata after the Liberation War.

"He [Siddhartha] would have been very happy if he were alive today. I'm really proud that you are honoring my uncle," Sanjit told The Daily Star yesterday.

**MOHARANI BIBHU KUMARI DEVI**

Bibhu Kumari of Tripura said 1971 is still fresh in her memory. During the war, she sheltered Bangalee refugees. "It would have been so nice if Maharaja could come here," she said.

**EDWARD C DIMOCK III**  
His father Edward C Dimock was a professor of Bangla at the University of Chicago and came here

during the war.

"My father asked the then US government to give aid to the Bangladeshis, and that giving weapons to the Pakistanis was not a good idea," Dimock said. He will receive the award on behalf of his late father.

"I'm overwhelmed by the loss of lives in 1971. But I'm also feeling joy that the Bangladeshi people created a new nation. I'm happy that you generously invited me here. I wish all Bangladeshis the best for their future."

**MRS KUNIKO USUI**

The Daily Star also spoke with the wife of the late Naoaki Usui, who was a war correspondent of Ryudo, a Japanese monthly magazine, back in 1971.

One day in 1971 her husband told her that he would come to the then war-stricken East Pakistan to cover the war, Kuniko Usui said. She could not take it at first, but she said she knew that nothing could stop him as "he wanted to be a journalist... a war journalist."

Robert Capa, the legendary Hungarian-born photo-journalist who covered five wars for over 20 years of the 20th century, was Naoaki's idol, she said. Naoaki wanted to follow the path of Robert Capa and so he came to Bangladesh as a photo-journalist.

"He [Naoaki] stayed here for two months." Returning to Japan, he had arranged for coverage of his photos in Japanese newspapers, Kuniko added.

(Shariful Islam, Hasan Jahid Tusher, Porimol Palma and Wasim Bin Habib contributed to this report)

# BNP

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opposition party and its allies at BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's Gulshan office in the capital around 11:00pm.

Acting Secretary General of the BNP Fakhru Islam Alamgir communicated the decision to journalists after the meeting.

He said the opposition would also hold demonstrations in Dhaka on March 31.

Earlier at about 9:00pm yesterday, a group of Hindu community leaders met the BNP leaders and urged them to withdraw the hartal since the Hindus have a religious festival -- Punna Snan (holy dip) -- on March 29.

# Blast kills ten in Afghanistan

AFP, Kandahar

Eight Afghan security personnel and a foreign soldier were among 10 people killed in a Taliban-style roadside bombing in the southern province of Kandahar, officials said yesterday.

Provincial government spokesman Zalmai Ayoubi said an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) soldier, six Afghan policemen, two Afghan army soldiers and a translator working for the foreign forces were killed in the bombing.

An ISAF serviceman and another Afghan policeman were injured, Ayoubi added.

In a separate attack in the southwestern province of Farah six Afghan soldiers were killed yesterday and another three wounded when their patrol was ambushed in Bala Buluk district, the Afghan defence ministry said in a statement.

# Crimson dawn

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*be and with whatever you have, to resist the army of occupation to the last. Your fight must go on until the last soldier of the Pakistan occupation army is expelled from Bangladesh. Final victory is ours.*

Moments after the message was sent off, Bangabandhu's residence at Dhanmondi came under attack by the Pakistan army. The firing around the residence was so intense and deafening that at one point Bangabandhu emerged to tell the soldiers to put an end to it.

Within minutes, the Father of the Nation was put on a jeep, taken to the under-construction National Assembly building at Sher-e-Banglanagar and made to wait there until the military could decide what to do with him. An officer got in touch with General Tikka Khan, to give him the cryptic message: "Big bird in cage. Little birds have flown." He then asked Tikka if Mujib should be brought before him. The Pakistani military commander's contemptuous response was, "I don't want to see his face." Bangabandhu was then taken to Adamjee Cantonment College, where he would be lodged for a few days before being flown to West Pakistan.

Early on the morning of March 26, as the army went on massacring Bangladeshis in Dhaka and elsewhere, senior Pakistani military officers led by Tikka Khan gathered for breakfast at Dhaka cantonment. There was a palpable sense of glee in the men, as Brigadier AR Siddiqui, chief of Pakistan's military information, was to report decades later. Tikka Khan asked Siddiqui to taste the oranges there. "They are good. They are from West Pakistan," said the general.

In the evening, President Yahya Khan addressed the nation over radio and television. He accused Sheikh Mujibur Rahman of having indulged in treason, condemned what he called the violence let loose in East Pakistan in the days preceding the crackdown and clamped a ban on the Awami League.

Once the president's speech was over, Roedad Khan, information secretary of the Pakistan government, stepped into a room in Dhaka cantonment where Tikka Khan and other senior officers had just watched Yahya Khan speak. Roedad Khan, grinning from ear to ear, told his fellow West Pakistanis, "Yaar, imaan taaza ho gya (friends, faith has been revived)".

The next day, late in the evening of March 27, a Bangalee army officer, Major Ziaur Rahman, announced on behalf of "our great national leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman" the independence of Bangladesh over Free Bengal Radio at Kalurghat, Chittagong. He appealed for international support to the cause of Bangladesh' freedom. "To dub us as secessionists is a contradiction in terms which should befool none," said Zia.

Meanwhile, the Pakistan army was going deeper into its programme of genocide throughout occupied Bangladesh. Early reports of the killings began to filter out to the western media from their correspondents, who had been expelled from Dhaka on the night of March 25 and were then in Bangkok and Calcutta.