

Ershad reiterates innocence in written statement

Defence fails to produce witnesses

By Staff Correspondent

The Defence Counsel of deposed President Ershad Tuesday failed to produce the defence witnesses in the wealth amassing case and delayed the submission of Ershad's written statement under Section 342 by three hours.

Chief Defence Counsel Advocate Sirajul Haque submitted in the Court that the submission of the written statement was delayed due to unavoidable circumstances and an unforeseen incident. However, he sought to fix another date for hearing of the defence witnesses.

Judge Mohammad Ali Khan assembled the Court at around a quarter past one in the afternoon when the Defence Counsel told him that the person who went to type the statement had not turned up till then.

Judge Mohammad Ali Khan said that if the statement was not ready the defence could produce its witnesses. As no witness was present the Defence Counsel sought to fix another date for hearing of the defence witnesses.

At this stage Attorney General Aminul Haque quoting a relevant law told the Court that it was not necessary that Ershad's statement be read out as that could only be submitted in writing in the Court.

Attorney General Aminul Haque said that the prosecution was closed on September 24 and since then the defence was unnecessarily wasting time in making a statement under Section 342.

After hearing the Attorney General, Judge Mohammad Ali Khan fixed October 5 as the date for beginning the arguments in the case.

Defence Counsel Sirajul Haque then humbly submitted in the Court that the defence be allowed to produce at least a few witnesses and to fix a date for examining them.

Attorney General Aminul Haque however agreed with the defence saying that it could be given a day's time to examine the defence witnesses.

Judge Mohammad Ali Khan said that Tuesday was the due day for submission of the statement under Section 342 and the production of defence witnesses. He said that as per law defence witnesses were not necessary.

However he fixed October 5 for production of defence witnesses.

According to the Evidence Act the defence should also provide the addresses of the witnesses so that the Court can issue summons to them. But in this case the Defence Councils have not yet provided the addresses of the witnesses.

However Judge Mohammad Ali Khan asked the defence lawyers to obtain summons for the defence witnesses from the Court immediately.

Earlier on September 29, the defence named 10 Jatiya Party leaders including six Jatiya Party MPs as defence witnesses. They included Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, Shah Moazzem Hossain and former minister Tajul Islam.

Meanwhile after the next hearing date was fixed, Ershad's written statement was brought to the Court by Defence Lawyer Yousef Hussain Humayun.

The Judge allowed Ershad to read out the five-page statement.

As a part of the statement was not relevant to the case, Judge Mohammad Ali Khan issued a stricture that all the irrelevant remarks would not be entered in the proceedings.

Ershad in his written statement reiterated his innocence as he did on September 29.

Giving an account of the money found in the Sena

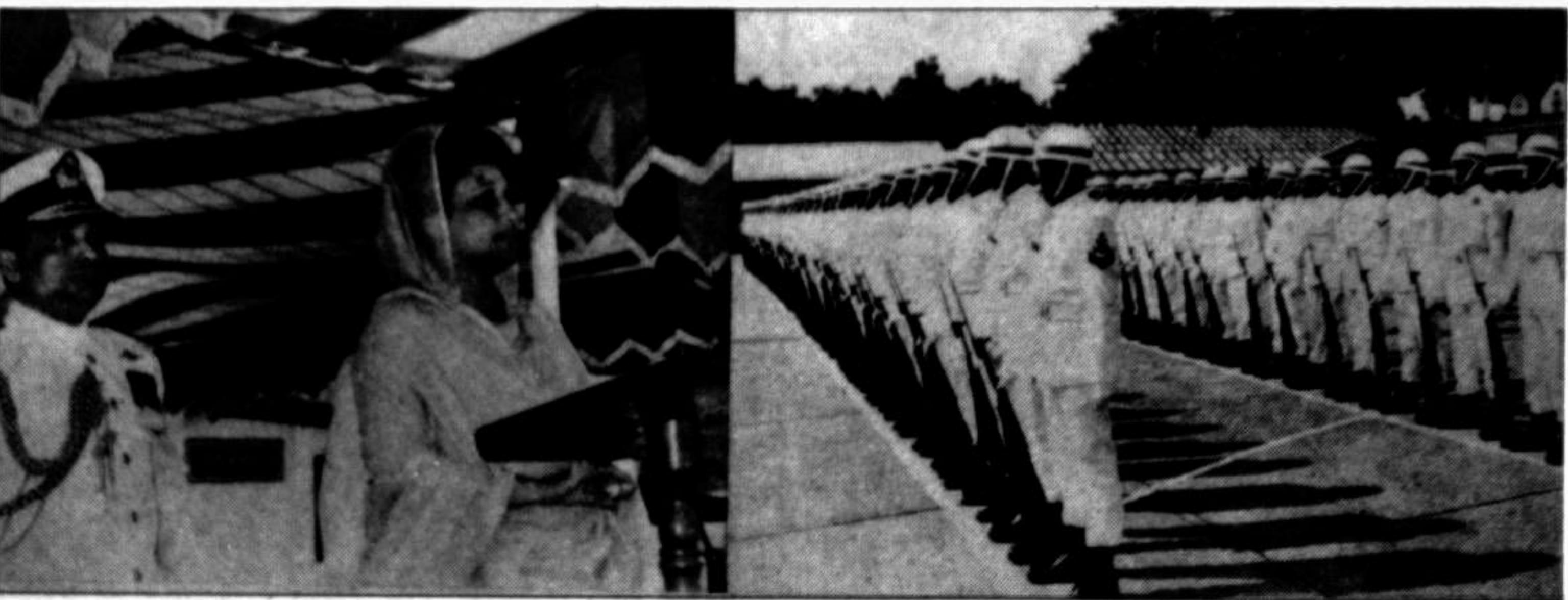
Coup quelled

Shootout at Dhaka College : BCL leader hurt

LOME, Oct 1: Togo's military president Gnassingbe Eyadema quelled an army bid to oust a civilian transitional government today, ordering soldiers who seized state radio back to barracks. "I, general Gnassingbe Eyadema, President of the Republic and supreme chief of the armed forces, order all soldiers who took up arms this morning to lay them down immediately and return to barracks," Eyadema said in a radio statement. The soldiers, proclaiming their loyalty to Eyadema, earlier broadcast a message saying they had dissolved the high council of the republic a civilian transitional government formed at a pro-democracy conference reports Reuter.

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Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing the officers and crew of Bangladesh Navy at the BNS Haji Mohsin Base at Dhaka Cantonment on Tuesday. Naval Chief Rear Admiral Mohaiminul Islam was present on the occasion. —PID photo

BNP assesses reaction

From Page 1 Col. 6
Barrister Jamruddin Sircar

Ordinance in consultation with the Deputy Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali

and got it signed by the Acting President through the Prime Minister herself.

In the meeting the Education Minister was snubbed by the Information Minister for a non-political decision against his own party members.

Meanwhile a group of the BNP MPs unhappy about the Ordinance met to pressure the BNP high command to withdraw the Ordinance which they termed a 'black law' and against the fundamental rights of the representatives of the people.

Lt Gen (Retd) Shawkat Ali, Col (Retd) Akbar and many other MPs unhappy over their exclusion from the cabinet but still stood for the BNP candidate on president election also expressed their utmost dissatisfaction over the promulgation of the Ordinance.

Meanwhile the constitutional experts of the BNP gave a suggestion to the party high command that the Ordinance should be withdrawn immediately otherwise it would accelerate nothing but the erosion in the popularity of the BNP.

Meanwhile, Jamaat-e-Islami, an ally of the BNP, was utterly frustrated over ruling party's behaviour regarding the presidential election.

Jamaat sources told The Daily Star that the Majlis-i-Shura met last night to decide the party's role in the presidential election.

Acting Ameer Abbas Ali Khan regretted that the BNP did not contact the Jamaat-e-Islami since the crisis over the presidential election. He, however, admitted that the ruling party took the Jamaat into confidence before the nomination of Abdur Rahman Biswas.

He said that the deposition of 48 prosecution witnesses showed that the government had failed to prove corruption charges against him.

He said that the case was filed against him just to malign his personal reputation.

Many of the prosecution witnesses who deposed in the Court were not experienced in determining the prices of different articles found in the Sena Bhavan and the Bangabhaban.

Ershad, in the last part of his statement also gave the background of his assumption to power in 1982. He said that Justice Sattar handed over power to him when he failed to control the corruption of the then administration and the law and order situation.

He said that he assumed power at the request of the then President to take responsibility of the broken economy of the country.

He also gave a vivid description of the achievements of his government during the last nine years. He also sought the blessings of the countrymen so that he could overcome all odds.

At this point the demonstrators scattered all around the Foreign Office. A group of BCL activists set a United Nations microbus (Jas-63-2439) on fire on the street behind the Foreign Office at around 1.45 pm.

The BCL activists also set a minibus on fire in front of the TSC and damaged several vehicles on their way to the DU campus. Later, they also damaged some vehicles in the Piassey and Nirkhet areas.

Gathered at the AL central office at the Bangabandhu Avenue at around 11 am where a meeting was held.

A procession was brought out following the meeting which reached near the Foreign Office at around 11.45 am. A large contingent of riot police was already present there.

Another meeting was held on the street beside the Foreign Office which was addressed by opposition Chief Whip Mohammad Nasim, city AL leaders MA Aziz, Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury, Akhtarul Alam, Advocate Qamrul Islam and others.

AL leaders Advocate Shohara Khatun, Advocate Najma Rahman and Nasima Montu were also present.

Speakers at the meeting condemned the government's failure to provide adequate security for Hasina and the inaction to prosecute the gunman who allegedly shot at the AL chief recently.

AL leaders also criticised the government for not taking

A mid-level leader of the Jamaat told this correspondent that the party high command was under pressure to maintain a distance from both the ruling party and the opposition Awami League.

A Jamaat sources indicated that if the BNP takes Jamaat into confidence over the presidential election the Majlis-i-Shura meeting may decide in favour of Abdur Rahman Biswas, the BNP candidate.

A BNP source told The Daily Star that the ruling party high command would discuss the latest situation with the Jamaat.

Jatiya Party leader Moudud Ahmed did not categorically say whether his party would vote for B H Chowdhury.

He said that the Jatiya Party would decide only a day before the election depending on the latest situation.

Meanwhile a group of the BNP MPs unhappy about the Ordinance met to pressure the BNP high command to withdraw the Ordinance which they termed a 'black law' and against the fundamental rights of the representatives of the people.

It was reported that the BNP candidate on president election also expressed their utmost dissatisfaction over the promulgation of the Ordinance.

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AL leaders also criticised the government for not taking

any security measures for the Opposition leader even after the reported plot to assassinate her was unearthed.

They demanded immediate trial of the self-confessed killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

After the situation calmed down following the clash, a group of city AL leaders were allowed to submit a memorandum at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at about 2 pm.

The memorandum demanded adequate security measures for Hasina both at home and abroad. The memorandum also demanded that the self-confessed killers employed in the countries abroad be dismissed, brought back home and their passports impounded, including those of Faruk and Rashid of the Freedom Party, so that they cannot leave the country before the passage of the Indemnity (Repeal) Bill.

Later the BCL also submitted a similar memorandum at the Foreign Office.

Our DU Correspondent adds : The BCL (S-A) activists while returning from the 'Shikha Bhawan' area pelted stones on several vehicles on the way and later set fire on a minibus in the CPB-backed Chhatra Union workers.

The driver of the minibus tried to drive off in that condition and was again caught by the students in front of the TSC. It was again set on fire and gutted completely.

Police present near the TSC obstructed the activists causing a series of chases and counter-chases.

Police fired several teargas shells and the students pelted stones in reply.

At this moment, according to witnesses, Golam Faruk Obhi and his associates came to the scene. Several shots were fired and some crackers were blasted during that time.

The chase and counter-chase, however, continued for about an hour.

BCL activists brought out several processions on the campus throughout the day and chanted slogans protesting police action on its procession.

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