

PW Pranab tells court Armed Forces' chiefs did not control Radio on Aug 15

Chiefs of the Three Services neither controlled the radio station nor gave any order to the radio staff on any programme related matter on or after August 15 of 1975, according to a radio engineer, reports UNB.

Denying a suggestion of a defence counsel, Pranab Chandra Roy, the 38th prosecution witness in the Bangabandhu Murder Case, said the armed forces' chiefs and their officers did not control the radio station on August 15.

The radio staff also did not work as per the wish and demand of the armed forces chiefs or their subordinates, he added.

Being cross-examined by defence lawyers, he said he saw through glass Khandaker Mushtaque talking with the chiefs of the armed forces in a studio.

But, he said, he could not say whether Mushtaque, calling the chiefs of the armed forces, congratulated Army Chief Shafulah, saying his troops had done an excellent job.

The PW-38 said he did not hear if the following conversation took place on August 15.

Mushtaque: Congratulation Shafulah: Your troops have

done an excellent job. Now do the rest.

Shafulah: What rest?

Mushtaque: You should know it better.

Shafulah: In that case leave it to me.

The witnesses said he did not hear the conversation as the microphones in the studio were off at that time.

An engineer of Bangladesh Betar, Pranab said, the 7 o'clock news on August 15 morning was not based on any written text.

It was an 'extemporaneous' broadcast by the order of Major Dalim and the news bulletin was of five minutes' duration instead of usual 10 minutes, he said.

In reply to a question from a defence counsel, the witness said he did not have the scope to check the identity of the person who identified himself as Major Dalim as 'we were at gun-point'.

He said showing arms Major Dalim and his people enquired about the 'thin-charge'.

Pranab said the radio transmission on August 15 continued at the order of Major Dalim, not as per schedule.

The PW-38 said the scheduled radio programmes were not broadcast on August 15 and he did not have the scope to inform his higher authority about it.

He said he transmitted the programmes at gun-point and Major Dalim made the radio announcement on promulgation of Martial Law in the country.

On August 15, he said, first announcements made by Major Dalim were live, but later the announcement was taped and broadcast.

He said he saw Taheruddin Thakur writing the text of Mushtaque's speech which was broadcast by radio.

Being asked Pranab told the court that he would be able to identify accused Lt Col (ret'd) Sultan Shariyar Rashid Khan as he saw him for a long time. Shariyar was in charge of the radio station from August 15 to November 2, 1975, he said.

The police personnel and Rakkhi Bahini on duty at the radio station surrendered to the army on August 15 morning immediately laying their arms and holding their hands up.

Risaldar Mansur will make his deposition as the 39th prosecution witness in the Bangabandhu Murder Case when court resumes at 9:30 am today.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina called on President Shahabuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban yesterday. —PID photo

PM replies to question in JS on meeting venues Opposition can suggest some other places except streets

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said yesterday that the government would definitely accept Opposition proposals for some more places in the capital, other than streets, to hold public rallies.

"We hope the opposition BNP will give up its stubbornness and accept our decision (on holding public rallies at the seven selected venues) for the sake of public interest since the party also felt the need while in power... They can suggest some other places excepting streets. We'll definitely accept those", the PM said while replying to questions in the Jatiya Sangsad.

The PM was replying to a question by Mirza Azam of the Awami League (AL) and supplementary questions by other lawmakers during the question-answer session. First 30 minutes of the question-hour are reserved for the PM on Tuesdays.

She recalled that the BNP, while in power, had taken a move to select some venues for public rallies and that her party had participated in the initiative. "I don't understand why they've taken to the streets all of a sudden after we've decided on the matter which they failed to resolve", Sheikh Hasina also said.

"We must take necessary steps to implement the government decision of not allowing rallies on the city streets," she said without mentioning recent police actions on BNP rallies on streets, defying a ban.

The Prime Minister also offered the opposition parties to hold public meetings at the Ramna Batamul with permission from the relevant authorities, without harming the greenery there.

About BNP's complaint to the President that the seven designated venues were not suitable for public meetings, the

PM calls on

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(CHOGM) late last month.

She informed the president about the opening of new headquarters of Cairn Energy, a British oil and gas exploration company which struck a huge gas reserve in the Bay of Bengal, at Edinburgh.

The Bangladesh Prime Minister and her British counterpart Tony Blair jointly inaugurated the Cairn headquarters.

Sheikh Hasina also apprised the president of the present political situation of the country.

President

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ber 4, it was said that the President's attention had been drawn to recent newspaper reports on the status of these projects.

The letter said that the President visited the project sites on October 29 and had expressed his hopes that these projects would be immediately implemented.

"The President wishes that these projects would be implemented promptly," the letter said.

It maintained that the implementation of Barapukuria Coal Mining Project began from 1994 at a cost of 227.52 million US dollars. About 83 per cent of the coal produced by the coal mine would be used as basic input for a 300 mw thermal power unit there. The power unit is an "inseparable" part of the coal mine project, the letter noted.

Development of the mine is already at an advanced stage and partial production of coal would be started from 1999.

"Side-by-side" with the progress of the construction of the mine, it is necessary to begin the construction of the power plant," the President's letter said.

In the Tk 687 crore Madhyapara Hard Rock Mining Project, the developers have already spent Tk 245 crore and completed 30.68 per cent of the work. The quality of hard rocks extracted as a by-product of sinking the mining shaft appears to be very good. The local demand for hard rock could be met by supplying these rocks.

"Due to delay in ensuring power supply in the area and various other reasons, the progress of the mining project has remained behind schedule. It is necessary to speed up the work. That is why timely disbursement of fund is necessary," the letter pointed out.

Administrative Tribunals (Amend) Bill '97 passed

Parliament last night passed the Administrative Tribunals (Amendment) Bill, 1997, reports UNB.

The Bill, which proposed further amendments to the Administrative Tribunals Act, 1980, was piloted by Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Abdul Matin Khasru.

The House passed the Bill in amended form by voice vote.

Ratio of sex workers

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child prostitution as an integral part of the overall child labour situation of the country against the backdrop of poverty, urbanisation, sex-culture and tradition.

Among the boy prostitutes, only about 18 per cent revealed their sexual preference towards homosexuality although more than 80 per cent of them considered the profession as an economic compulsion.

However, about 40 per cent of girl prostitutes blamed fate for their present state while only nine per cent boys did so. In most cases, the study says, the girls came to the city with the promise of jobs with their relatives or neighbours, but they were sold to pimps.

The study also found that more than 20 per cent of the street child prostitutes died before or just after reaching their adulthood; 22 per cent became physically invalid and ended up as beggars; 2.74 per cent could manage to change their profession in meaningful ways while

BNP activists opened fire, say police

At least three people including a police walk were killed when the BNP activists opened fire at the on-duty police at Kazi Dewri in Chittagong town yesterday afternoon, a police press release said last night, reports BSS.

"Without any investigation, police said, the BNP activists fired at the police in a preplanned manner just after the public meeting at Chittagong Outer Stadium organised by BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami and some other political parties.

Police faced the situation with utmost patience in the face of all types of instigation and attack by the BNP activists, the press release added.

Model Nat'l Law on Refugees

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to the country of origin shall be respected" reads another provision of the Model Law.

"A major advantage is that national legislation will enable governments to distinguish between refugees, being persons fleeing conflict and persecution and lacking national protection, and others who do not fall within the refugee definition," said a press release issued immediately after the concluding session of the conference yesterday afternoon.

The conference over, some of the experts who participated in it, briefed newsmen. Dr Kamal Hossain, Chairman of Bangladesh Association for UNHCR told newsmen that the Model Law would be taken back to their respective countries by the participants from India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and host Bangladesh for wider dissemination and discussion so that governments of those countries could enact laws in the process. No country in South Asia has yet ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention.

Earlier speaking on the first day of the conference, the Bangladesh Foreign Minister

3 killed

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tonight, BDR were deployed at the troubled spots to assist police and the situation came under control, police officials said.

A tense situation is prevailing in the city. Security has been tightened.

BNP meanwhile called a half day hartal in Chittagong tomorrow to protest what it said attack on its meeting here today.

MOU signed

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of the Chinese government had extensive talks with his Chinese counterpart, Niu Maosheng.

Razzak invited China to participate in the international seminar on the feasibility study on the Ganges barrage project scheduled to be held in Dhaka in February, 1998.

Maosheng assured Razzak that China was eager to render all possible assistance and co-operation to Bangladesh in the areas of flood control and water development.

'Trend of globalisation increasing'

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury yesterday said that with each passing day, more and more people around the globe are becoming interested in building contacts among nations for the welfare of all, reports BSS.

"The trend of globalisation with emphasis on greater cooperation among nations is increasingly being accepted by a greater number of people for the good of humanity," Abul Hasan told a seminar at the auditorium of British Council in the city.

British High Commissioner to Bangladesh David Walker chaired the seminar styled as "Post CHOGM Commonwealth Europe and Bangladesh: Prospects for Investment and Trade." Organised by the British Council, the seminar was also addressed by EC country head Michael Drury, former foreign secretary Faruque Sobhan, The Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam and Bhorer Kagoj Editor Motiur Rahman.

Abul Hasan Chowdhury said it is encouraging to note that more and more people are now talking of the need for greater contact and cooperation with nations both within their neighbouring region and outside.

Expressing his firm optimism about the success of

Mirpur vagrant centre

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During a visit to the vagrant centre Monday, this correspondent saw dozens of people moving around the centre trying to supply food or lobbying for the release of their sons, daughters or relatives, confined there for the last three months.

Some of them claimed that the inmates who had fled from the centre arranged by others who demonstrated on Sunday did so because they were living there in a miserable condition. The 13 are yet to be traced out.

The Department of Social Services runs the centre which can accommodate up to 200 vagrants. But the centre has often been used as a 'dumping place' for tokais, according to sources in the department. Besides young girls, picked up by police for their alleged involvement in flesh trade, are also confined there, violating the existing law related to vagrants, said a senior official of the department.

The Controller of Vagrants in a letter to the Commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) in August had said that police were also arresting girls working in beauty parlours and sending them and those involved in flesh trade to the vagrant centre. This affected the atmosphere of the centre resulting in immoral degradation of the vagrants, the letter added.

Officials of the department alleged that police were more interested in arranging the 'street girls' so that they could realise money from them. They dump the young girls in the vagrant centre creating problems there.

The officials added that the department had to spend a good amount of money for treatment of the girls as they carry various contagious diseases.

Replying to a question a senior official said they had to keep children, under the age of 16, in the vagrant centre although it contradicted the Children Act, 1974 and the Children Rules, 1976.

The press conference was also attended, among others, by the BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and Jatiya Party (ZM) co-chairman Kazi Zafar Ahmed.

Hartal in Ctg

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alleged during the press conference, adding that the attack was launched from the direction of the circuit house which was also subsequently attacked.

"Police did not attack the meeting," she said and firmly ruled out that it was due to intra-party conflict.

Begum Zia also said that Alliance will observe a hartal on November 16, if the government signed the peace treaty with the Parbatyia Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity on the day, adding that hartal will be shifted coinciding with the date of signing of the treaty.

Expressing her suspicion over the content of the treaty, she questioned as to why the government was hiding it from the people. "The government should immediately make public the content of the treaty it proposed to sign with the Parbatyia Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity. The government should place the treaty before the Jatiya Sangsad before it is signed," she said.

Speaker's call

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pected, the Speaker made the request to the Home Minister. However, the minister was not present in the House at the time.

Standing on a point of order, Syed Rafiqul Islam, MP, drew the Speaker's attention to the alleged attack and damaging of Hotel Golden Gate, owned by the MP, in Chittagong yesterday and blamed 'armed cadres' of the opposition BNP for the attack. He said that the armed cadres made the attack after being incited by 'provocative speeches' delivered by the BNP Chairperson in a Chittagong rally yesterday. He demanded exemplary punishment for the persons responsible for the attack.

Mosharraf Hossain and ABM Abul Kashem, two other Treasury Bench members from Chittagong, also spoke on the same issue and held the opposition BNP responsible for creating anarchy at a time when a peace accord was going to be signed ending insurgency in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

Mosharraf alleged that the attack was made on the hotel in Chittagong in a planned manner and a policeman Abdul Mannan was also gunned down by the terrorists.

Nurul Islam Nahid, an Awami League lawmaker from Sylhet, dropped his planned point of order to express his solidarity with the others regarding the violence in Chittagong.

Jute workers

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strike across the country.

Leaders of Pakal Sramik Karmachari Sangram Parisad, Suta-Bastrakal Sramik Karmachari Federation, Bastrashilpa Sramik League and Jute Spinning and Twine Mills Sramik Karmachari Federation addressed the press conference.

The jute-textile workers have been agitating to press home their various demands, including implementation of wage commission recommendation of 1991 in the private jute and textile mills, formulation of 5th wage commission and stoppage of privatisation.

Among the workers' leaders, Abul Bashir, Lutfar Rahman, Shahidullah Chowdhury, Badrul Alam Khan Labu, Iqbal Majumdar, Shah Alam, Mo-suiddoullah, K Alam Belal, Bachchu Mia, Siraj Sardar and Abul Hashem were present at the press conference.

List of cases

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ever, made it clear that there would be no point of consideration for those cases involving three types of crimes — murder, possessing of arms and corruption.

The BNP's list of 'political cases' includes cases against 19 party lawmakers, 52 other cases and 20 general diaries lodged with 13 thanas in the city against BNP leaders and workers since September 1.

BAC to sue

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party affiliations."

The Prime Minister further added, "The process is underway to place the BAC in the Cabinet Division to make the body more dynamic and transparent. The plan will be implemented soon after the President's approval to the proposal."

Denying the allegation that corrupt practices had increased during her government, she noted, "Development expenditure rises due to corruption... The poor countries have limited allocation of resources. It's very natural that smuggling of money through corruption creates negative impact on development work."

Pay scale

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employee sources said.

The minister urged them to raise their efficiency level and explained that the resource constraints of the government does not allow a further pay hike.

The leaders of the Parishad will review the developments at a meeting of its leaders at the Secretariat today, the sources said.

Employment bank to be set up early next year

RAJSHAHI, Nov 11: Bangladesh Bank Governor Lutfar Rahman Sarkar said here today the government has decided to set up an employment bank with the objective to provide loan among the unemployed youths, reports BSS.

The employment bank with a paid-up capital of Tk 50 crore will start functioning from early next year, he said, adding its branches will be opened in different districts in phases.

The Governor was exchanging views on the role of banking system for overall economic development of northern region at the auditorium of Rajshahi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI).

He underlined the importance of the development of human resources as well as the

Dacoity at Rly Colony in city

By Staff Correspondent

Dacoits took away gold ornaments, US dollars and cash estimated at Tk 13 lakh from the residents of senior officials of Bangladesh Railway at Railway Colony in city's South Shahjahanpur area early yesterday.

Police said a gang of about seven armed men got inside the ground floor quarter of Samsul Islam, Joint-Director General of Railway by cutting the iron grill of a window at about 4 am.

Brandishing arms to the inmates, the gang took gold ornaments worth about Tk 85 thousand and Tk 10,000 cash.

Then, five of the dacoits went upstairs while two guarded the inmates at the ground floor.

The armed men knocked the door of the house of Ataur Rahman, Joint-Director of the Ministry of Communication, and as soon as the door was opened, they stormed in to the house.

They took gold ornaments, US dollars worth about Tk 2.88 lakh and Tk 30,000.

This was the second incident of dacoity at the residence of high officials of Railway at Shahjahanpur area in last one week.

None was arrested till last night in connection with the incident. A case was lodged with Motijheel thana in this regard.

2 JCD leaders held in Sylhet

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Nov 11: Kotwali police arrested Najibur Rahman Najib and Mofajjal Hossain Bulbul, Vice-Presidents of Sylhet District unit of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal on charge of creating chaos during the torch procession of District Jubadal on Sunday night.

The Sylhet district BNP president and Secretary in charge M. Anwar and Advocate Noman Mahmud in a statement strongly condemned the arrests and demanded their immediate release. The district unit of JCD also brought out a procession and held a rally yesterday afternoon demanding release of the party leaders.

EC issues showcase on Beanibazar TNO

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Nov 11: The Election Commission has issued show cause notice on the Thana Nirbahi Officer of Beanibazar thana of Sylhet on charge of unauthorised collection of money from the candidates of the union parishad elections during the filing of nomination papers on November 4 and 5.

There are allegations that the TNO collected unauthorised money ranging from Taka 100 to 500 from the candidates as donations for a mosque.

34 symbols

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drawal of the candidature as per the UP (Election) Rules 1983, a press release of the Election Commission said.

The symbols for the member candidates in general seats are: mango, pitcher, kite, table, green coconut, see-saw, lock and key, jug, bucket, ladder, fish, cock, rickshaw and hand-fan.

The symbols for the female member candidates in reserved seats are: cup-saucer, spade, bullock-cart, rose, star, wall-clock, pen-inkpot, tubewell, betel leaf and king stork.

The symbols for the chairman candidates are: pineapple, kula, wheel, tea-cup, chair, umbrella, butterfly, candle, deer and duck.

If the number of candidates exceeds the number of symbols, then the Returning Officer concerned with allot symbol from the additional list of symbols.

If more than one candidates demand the same symbol, the Returning Officer will give them a scope for mutual understanding among themselves. If they fail, the Returning Officer would allocate the symbols through lottery.

The decision of the Returning Officer will be considered as final in distributing the symbols.

MOU signed

From Page 1

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Razzak invited China to participate in the international seminar on the feasibility study on the Ganges barrage project scheduled to be held in Dhaka in February, 1998.

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