

## FOCUS

## End of CHT Insurgency : Chronology of Events

**T**HE first batch of former Shanti Bahini insurgents, the armed cadres of Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) laid down their weapons before Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Khagrachhari Stadium on February 10.

Following is a brief chronology of the events centering the Chittagong hill tracts.

**January 7, 1973 :** "Shanti Bahini" emerge as the armed wing of Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) with Jyotirindra Bodhipriya Larma, better known as Shanti Larma, as its commander in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

**May 29, 1977 :** Shanti Bahini insurgents launch a major offensive against a tiny band of local security force. The security was beefed up with Bangladesh army and navy personnel after the surprise attack. The ratio between people and securitymen stood at 1:5 immediately as security was tightened.

**March 25, 1980 :** Kalampati mass killing. Local Parliament member Upendra Lal Chakma accuses the army for the incident at a press conference in Rangamati and alleges that some 300 tribals were killed. Visiting opposition MP Shahjahan Siraj and Rashed Khan Menon were present in the conference.

**December 1980 :** Ziaur Rahman's government condemns the Kalampati mass killing and passes a bill in parliament relating to the "troubled areas (CTI)." The bill makes provisions for the police sub-inspectors and army non-commissioned officers to shoot any insurgent and launch search (without warrants against any person possessing illegal arms).

**February 5, 1982 :** A tribal delegation led by Subimal Devar, tribal affairs secretary to the president, calls on President Justice Abdus Sattar to discuss problems relating to the CHT. Justice Sattar cancels some educational and service quotas granted to the tribals by Ziaur Rahman's government.

**July 27, 1982 :** New President H M Ershad discusses CHT issue with three major tribal leaders. He authorizes Major General

Mannaf, general officer commanding (GOC) of Chittagong area, to visit Rangamati as the government representative.

**October 24, 1982 :** Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) splits at its annual conference. Manabendra Narayan Larma, a former MP and founder of the organisation, becomes leader of one faction, while the other was led by Priti Kumar Chakma.

**June 14, 1983 :** The two factions of Shanti Bahini lock in armed clashes against each other for the first time.

**November 10, 1983 :** M N Larma and his seven comrades killed at Kalyanpur Refugee Camp in Ejara village of Amparpur sub-division in the Indian state of Tripura in an offensive launched by the rival "Priti Group".

**June 29, 1985 :** Two hundred and thirty three (233) members of "Priti Group" surrender their arms after agreements with the government. But leaders of the group Priti Kumar Chakma and Bhabatosh Dewan remain in hiding.

**October 21, 1985 :** First round of official talks between the army officers and PCJSS, the political wing of Shanti Bahini, starts at Puigang area at Panchchari thana under Khagrachhari hill district.

**June 2 1986 :** Shanti Bahini ravage some settlers' villages. They also kill members of the Bengali non-tribal settlers in a gruesome way.

**July 27 1986 :** Shanti Bahini launch their second massive offensive against the non-tribal settlers in the Hill Tracts (CHT). The non-tribals, in retaliation, ravaged some tribal villages. As tension mounts, hundreds of tribals from the CHT leave home for Indian state of Tripura as refugees. The government denies the tribal claims that 50,000 non-tribals Bangladeshis in 30,000.

**September 19, 1987 :** Tribal leaders call on President H M Ershad and seek political solution to the insurgency problem in the Hill Tracts. Arshad forms a national committee to look after the CHT issue with Planning Minister A K Khan-doker as its chief.

**December 7, 1987 :** After a

long break of two years second round of talks between army officials and PCJSS leaders, begin at Puigang village.

**January 24 and 25, 1988 :** Third round of official talks between army officers and the PCJSS begins at Puigang village.

**February 17, 1988 :** Fourth round of official talks between army and the PCJSS begin.

**June 19, 1988 :** Fifth round of official talks between army and the PCJSS held at Khagrachhari Circuit house.

**May 4, 1989 :** Shanti Bahini launch armed attacks to foil local government system in the hills. Abdur Rasheed Sarkar, chairman of a local Upazila Parishad, killed in the attack. The Bengali settlers, in retaliation, set Chakma villages on fire resulting in huge casualties.

**May 10, 1992 :** The government forms a committee headed by Communications Minister Colonel (retd) Oli Ahmed to resolve the insurgency problem in the Hill Tracts. But the lawmakers from the hills term the committee as "illegitimate" as none of them were included in the committee.

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**April 10, 1992 :** BNP government forms an enquiry committee to probe the "Logang incident" where several persons were reportedly killed in a clash between the tribals and non-tribals.

**July 8, 1992 :** BNP government passes a bill in Jatiya Sangsad for extending the time-frame of the local government councils in the three hill districts despite strong opposition by Awami League and tribal legislators.

**July 10, 1992 :** The government forms a committee headed by Communications Minister Colonel (retd) Oli Ahmed to resolve the insurgency problem in the Hill Tracts. But the lawmakers from the hills term the committee as "illegitimate" as none of them were included in the committee.

**August 1, 1992 :** Shanti Bahini declare unilateral ceasefire. The time limit for the ceasefire is extended for 35 times until December 31, 1997.

**October 7, 1992 :** The probe body report on Logang incident published. It charges Shanti Bahini for the massacre.

**November 5, 1992 :** Oli Ahmed committee holds its first meeting with PCJSS at Khagrachhari Circuit House. Shanti Larma leads the PCJSS delegation.

**November 17, 1992 :** Reported army action against tribal students protest. The government forms a probe body to investigate the matter known as "Nanjarchar Incident."

**December 26, 1992 :** Second round of official talks between the government and the PCJSS at Khagrachhari Circuit House.

**May 5, 1994 :** Seventh Round of official talks held between the BNP government and the PCJSS at Khagrachhari Circuit House.

**July 14, 1994 :** Second Phase of repatriation of the tribal refugees. Three thousand three hundred and forty-five refugees return home from the Indian state of Tripura.

**August 28, 1994 :** The sub-committee meets PCJSS leaders for the third time at Dudukchhari.

**December 26, 1994 :** The sub-committee holds talks with PCJSS for the fourth time at Dudukchhari.

**July 12, 1995 :** Sub-committee meets PCJSS for the fifth round of talks at Dudukchhari.

**October 25, 1995 :** The sixth round of talks (13th round of official meeting) between sub-committee and PCJSS ends without any resolution.

**June 23, 1996 :** Twenty-eight woodcutters brutally killed, allegedly by Shanti Bahini men in the deep forest in the first such incident since Awami League government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina came to power.

**September 30, 1996 :** The Cabinet forms the National Committee on Chittagong Hill Tracts headed by Chief Whip Abul Hasnat Abdullah involving BNP and Jatiya Party lawmakers. The two BNP MPs, however, although remained absent from the committee activities.

**December 21, 1996 :** The national committee (of Awami League government) meets the PCJSS for the first time at Khagrachhari Circuit House. The meeting resumes on December 24 after a two-day recess.

**January 25, 1997 :** PCJSS leaders led by Shanti Larma arrive in the capital Dhaka for the first time since the insurgency began. They stay in the state guest house "Padma" during the three-day second round of official talks.

**March 12, 1997 :** The third round of talks (two-day) begin

at Padma state guest house in Dhaka.

**March 28, 1997 :** Six thousand seven hundred and eight tribal refugees return home from Indian state of Tripura.

**May 11, 1997 :** The fourth round of talks begin at Padma (Dhaka). On May 14, the national committee and PCJSS announce before the reporters waiting in front of the guest house that they have reached a "consensus" and would sign a peace treaty soon.

**July 14, 1997 :** Fifth round of talks between the national committee and PCJSS begin at Padma (Dhaka). It continues up to July 18.

**September 14, 1997 :** Sixth round of talks between the two sides began at Padma, on September 17, Shanti Larma announces that the national committee and PCJSS have formulated the draft of the peace agreement.

**October 14, 1997 :** Leader of the opposition and BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia alleges at a public meeting in Bogra that the Awami League government is planning to withdraw military from the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

**October 17, 1997 :** Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina refuses the claim by Begum Zia saying the government has no plans to withdraw military from the Hill Tracts.

**November 1, 1997 :** In response to the opposition demand for disclosing the draft of the peace accord, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina says it may create complications if the draft is disclosed before its signing.

**November 30, 1997 :** Seven thousand six hundred and twenty tribal refugees return home under the nine-day repatriation package.

**November 26, 1997 :** Seventh round of official talks begin at Padma state guest house.

**November 30, 1997 :** The national committee and the PCJSS agree on all issues of the draft accord after mid-night.

**December 2, 1997 :** The two sides sign the historic peace accord in the presence of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her Tejgaon office.

—BSS



Khagrachhari, February 10: Tribal and Bangladeshi artists celebrating surrender of arms.

— Star photo by Mohsin

## Metropolitan



Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad addressing the inaugural session of the first SAARC ENT Congress at Hotel Sheraton in the city yesterday.

— Star photo

### First regional ENT congress begins

## SAARC countries lack equipment, doctors to treat ENT diseases

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad yesterday said early diagnosis and timely treatment can mitigate the sufferings of a huge number of patients in the SAARC countries suffering from ENT diseases, report agencies.

Azad was addressing the inaugural session of the first SAARC ENT Congress '98, organised by the Society of Otolaryngologists and Head and Neck Surgeons of Bangladesh, at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel.

The Minister expressed the hope that the 4-day Congress will explore avenues for the doctors of this region and other parts of the globe to share knowledge and expertise in this field and make room for cementing professional ties.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof PW Alberti, General Secretary of International Federation of Oto-Rhino-Laryngological Societies, said the SAARC countries do not have enough surgeons and equipment to deal

with the ever increasing hearing loss of people.

There is one surgeon for every three lakh people in the SAARC countries, against one surgeon for 19,000 in Japan, the ENT specialist said.

More than 400 ENT specialists from SAARC and other countries, including India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, UK, USA, Japan, Thailand, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan and Singapore, are participating in the Congress.

Chaired by Prof M Alauddin, the inaugural session was addressed, among others, by Health Secretary Mohammad Ali, Prof MA Majed and Prof MN Amin.

Alberti said about 5 to 6 per cent of people, irrespective of their age, are suffering globally from hearing loss, while more than 15 per cent of the elderly are suffering from this problem due to middle age diseases.

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