

End of CHT Insurgency : Chronology of Events

THE 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 Shantu 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 (CHT)". 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 Dewan, 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 authorises Major General

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

October 24, 1982: Parbatya Chattagram Janasanghati 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 Amarapur 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 Pujang area at Panchhari 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 Bangladeshes 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. Ershad 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 Pujang village.

January 24 and 25, 1988: Third round of official talks between army officers and the PCJSS begins at Pujang 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 Rashed 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. This is known as "Langadu Incident".

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 Col (ret'd) 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 in 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. Shantu 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 "Naniarchar Incident".

December 26, 1992: Second round of official talks between the government committee led by Oli Ahmed and the PCJSS at Khagrachhari Circuit House.

May 22, 1993: Third round of talks held between the two sides at Khagrachhari Circuit House.

July 14, 1993: Fourth round of talks held between the two sides at Khagrachhari Circuit House.

September 18, 1993: Two sides meet for the fifth round of talks at Khagrachhari.

November 24, 1993: Sixth round of official talks held between the government and the PCJSS at Khagrachhari Circuit House.

February 22, 1994: One thousand eight hundred and forty-one (1,841) tribals return home from the Indian state of Tripura in the past seven days.

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

June 4, 1994: A sub-committee led by lawmaker Rashed Khan Menon meets the PCJSS leaders at Dudukchhari of Panchhari thana under the Khagrachhari hill district.

July 10, 1994: The sub-committee meets PCJSS leaders for the second time at Dudukchhari.

July 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 Shantu 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, Shantu 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 refutes 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 Bangalee artistes 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.

He observed that the rate is higher in the SAARC region

South Asian countries, particularly Bangladesh, has no adequate equipment, especially microscope, necessary for treatment of hearing loss.

One microscope can cure 1,000 people in a year, Alberti said.

Prof Majed said Bangladesh has a very high incidence of cancer, of which about 60 per cent relates to head, neck and throat. The incidence of throat carcinoma is about ten times higher than that in Western countries.

"We are unable to deal with them adequately and scientifically due to limited manpower and resource constraint," Prof Majed said.

He said there has been tremendous progress in the field of Otolaryngology and head neck surgery all over the world, but the SAARC region, Bangladesh in particular, has not been able to keep pace with that progress.

Firearms seized, 10 held in city

By Staff Correspondent

The Detective Branch (DB) of police recovered seven firearms with ammunition and arrested ten persons in this connection from different parts of the city Monday.

During a 24-hour operation, a DB team arrested Aziz Ahmed, 30, Abdus Salam, 28, Harun-Ur-Rashid, 26, Monir, 20, Rubel, 21, Ayub, 25, Parvez Iman Hossain, 29, and Hossain Bhuiyan, 27, from Shabujbagh, Dhanmondi and Shaturapur areas.

Police recovered two revolvers, two guns, one pistol, five rounds of bullets, two cartridges and firearm parts from the possessions of the arrested persons.

Three separate cases were lodged with Shaturapur, Shabujbagh and Dhanmondi thana in this regard.

Another DB team arrested Arif Ahmed alias Russel, 28, and Bazul Rahman, 27, from a slum at Malibagh under Shabujbagh thana in the city at about 8:30 pm Monday.

Police recovered a revolver and a pistol with 12 rounds of bullets from them. A case was lodged with Motiheel thana in connection with the incident.

Crime situation improves in Khulna

KHULNA, Feb 10: Khulna district law and order review committee at a meeting held here yesterday reviewed the law and order situation in the district, reports BSS.

The deputy commissioner of Khulna presided over the meeting. The meeting was informed that the overall crime situation in the district had considerably improved following special drives against crime and criminal activities.

Poet Maniruddin Yusuf's death anniversary today

The 11th death anniversary of renowned poet, thinker and philosopher, Maniruddin Yusuf, will be observed today, says a press release, reports BSS.

A milad mahfil will be held at the Mohammadpur residence of the poet after Asr prayers today.

Maniruddin and many important literary works to his credit, including Bengali translation of 'Shahnama,' written by the great Persian poet Ferdousi.

Obituary

Akhterunnissa, wife of Kalimullah Bhuiyan, former MD of FDC, and mother of noted drama artist Laki Inam, died of liver and lung disease at a city hospital on Feb 9. She was 71, a press release of Nagorik Natyangan said yesterday.

CHITTAGONG, Feb 10: Akhterunnissa Begum, wife of late U N Siddiqui, former professor of Chittagong University, died of old-age complications at her residence here today. She was 86, reports BSS.

BANGABANDHU MURDER CASE

Verbatim Text of Cross Examination of 48th and 49th Prosecution Witnesses

Continued from Friday

Following are the excerpts of cross-examination of PW-48, in the Bangabandhu Murder Case. Air Vice-Marshal (ret'd) AK Khandaker by Advocate Sharfuddin Mukul, defense counsel for Taheruddin Thakur.

Q: Did all the three chiefs came out from the radio station together?

A: Yes. We all three were escorted to Bangabhaban together.

Q: From radio you went to Bangabhaban via cantonment.

Q: On August 16 the news of allegiance and photographs of three chiefs of armed forces were published in the newspapers.

A: I don't remember.

Q: Did you made any protest of the news about you published in newspapers and broadcast in radio on or after August 16?

A: I don't know whether any news was published or broadcast on the basis of my statement.

Q: When Mushtaque became the President?

A: Shortly before noon.

Q: It is not true that Taheruddin Thakur wrote the allegiance announcement in front of you.

A: It is true.

49th PW

Following are the excerpts of cross-examination of PW-49, in the Bangabandhu Murder Case, Rear Admiral (ret'd) MH Khan by Advocate Khan Saifur Rahman, defense counsel for Lt Col (ret'd) Syed Farooqur Rahman.

Q: You addressed a press conference on Talpatti.

A: Yes, in 1981.

Q: In that press conference you said that failure of government's timely action led to the taking over of Talpatti Island by the Indian authorities.

A: Yes.

Q: You got two trawlers from the government after that press conference.

A: I was in business. Taking loan from BSB I bought those trawlers. The government did not give those to me, it was a commercial transaction between bank and a client.

Q: You were in Haji Mohsin for about two hours. You were quietly sent away from Shafullah's residence to Haji Mohsin, so that army officers who gathered there can discuss among themselves.

A: Not true.

Q: The road beside your house straight went to radio station from cantonment.

A: Yes.

Q: Did you hear any sound of military movement while strolling in your house on August 15 morning.

A: No.

Q: Could you hear sound if there was tank movement on that road.

A: I saw tanks near the radio station. But I did not hear sound of tank from my house.

Q: The investigation officers has interrogated you.

A: No. I gave a statement.

Q: You have told the IO that total army discipline was destroyed. Nobody was in command.

A: Bangabandhu was murdered. His assassination has created a backlog. A jewel was lost, how could there be a discipline.

Q: You heard the radio announcement that army took over power from the government.

A: Yes.

Q: Have you been taken in captivity on August 15.

A: I was forced by the gang, which was also a form of captivity.

Q: Those armed people you saw in the room of the Army Chief, escorted him on way to radio station?

A: That gang escorted Shafullah. We were also escorted.

Q: You and Air Chief followed them.

A: My jeep followed them and there was another jeep behind my jeep. But, I don't know whether Air Chief was behind me.

Q: Did you go to see the body of Bangabandhu.

A: No. I could not move anywhere from August 15 to August 17. I was confined at Bangabhaban.

Q: Did you go to see the body of Ziaur Rahman.

A: No.

Q: You said you heard that you were asked to go to Bangabhaban at the directive of Khandaker Mushtaque. You realised the truth after going to Bangabhaban.

A: Mushtaque gave the order at the radio station.

Q: Three chiefs of the Armed Forces made their allegiance to the Mushtaque government.

A: In our service there is lawful and unlawful orders. We gave our allegiance for the people and the nation.

Q: What you saw in the radio station was a ceremonial function.

A: No.

Q: What took place at Bangabhaban was a ceremony.

A: What took place after the killing of Bangabandhu can't be a ceremony. It was vague.

Q: Was your participation official or unofficial?

A: As Chief of Naval Staff I always looked my Navy. I tried to save a situation. As the Naval Chief I acted to save the nation and also in order to avoid further chaos and killing.

Q: Were you three chiefs together at Bangabhaban?

A: At first we were not, but later we remained together till August 17.

A: After everything became calm, as Chief of Navy, did you take action against those 14 to 15 army personnel, whom you found aggressive at 46, Brigade, for their conduct.

A: They were army officers. I don't know what action army took against them.

Q: You are pretending that you did not know anything before hand of the incident. You three chiefs used to know everything before and aftermath of the incident.

A: It is not true.

Q: As Naval Chief you did not have any compulsion.

A: I was in confinement.

Q: You were asked to say, what you are saying now. Everything has been erased from your memory.

A: There are some incidents, which you can't forget. That incident is still in my memory and I have said what is still in my memory.

—UNB

Further texts of cross examination will be published as and when received.

'Academic atmosphere of Udayan Biddalaya to be badly affected'

By DU Correspondent

Guardians of the students of the Udayan Biddalaya, located on the Dhaka University campus, have said that the academic atmosphere of the school would be badly affected once the proposed multi-storey building is constructed beside the school building.

The Dhaka University authorities have selected the site between the newly built two-storey residence building for the Pro-Vice Chancellor of the university and the five-storey school building.

The Education Minister ASHK Sadek will lay the foundation of the 14-storey building which would be used as the residence for the teachers of the Dhaka University. There would

be 52 flats in the building, the budget for which has been fixed at Tk 16 crore, sources in the university said.

The Udayan Biddalaya, a renowned school in the city, has more than 2000 students. The school is housed in a five-storey building in a congested campus.

There is no open space for the students even to have a walk during the leisure time, the guardians said. The only open space that the students now use during the leisure period is the site selected for the building at the northern corner of the school.

Talking to The Daily Star, Shyam