

Mutineers disgraced profession of arms

Manzur had sky-high political ambition

By A Staff Correspondent

The Chief Prosecutor in his opening address to the General Court Martial charged the wrongdoers who staged a mutiny in Chittagong on May 29 and 30 last with violation of law discipline of the Army and oath of obedience. In staging the mutiny the Chief Prosecutor accused, the wrongdoers committed heinous crimes including killing of President Ziaur Rahman and some others who included officers and soldiers of Bangladesh Army.

The address of the Chief Prosecutor published in the second instalment of the Chapter three of the White Paper contained summary of facts relating to the offences committed by the accused persons who staged the mutiny and killed President Ziaur Rahman.

The Chief Prosecutor said that Major General M. A. Manzur plotted by any means and put the country under the feet of a government headed by him under the cover of Martial Law and administered by a so-called "revolutionary council". Major General Manzur, the Chief Prosecutor said was a man of sky-high political ambition and was extremely jealous and intolerant of others and suffered from an inherent complex that he was superior to the rest in the Armed Forces as well as in the country.

The Chief Prosecutor said that it had now been surfaced that Major General Manzur was even cruelly critical of

Late President and used to pass very unkind remarks and observations about him. The Major General, the Prosecutor said, had diverted more attention and energy towards his political plan to stage the mutiny instead of effectively meeting the insurgency activities in Chittagong Hill Tracts. After the joining of Major General Manzur to 24 Infantry Division as GOC on November 24, 1977, the Chief Prosecutor said, the forces of the Division were augmented and additional battalions and brigades were raised for effectively meeting the insurgency activities in Chittagong Hill Tracts. But, the Chief Prosecutor added, Major Gen. Manzur used to take personal pride in it as if the forces were his personal forces to be used for fulfilment of his political ambition and aggrandisement. Major General Manzur's catch words were that the country should be ruled by him and the freedom fighters of his choice along with him for a better rule, the Chief Prosecutor said.

He said that Major General Manzur used to create occasions to address the officers and soldiers under his command for delivery of political speech. Being an Army officer, Major General Manzur used to indulge in group meetings and discussions on political affairs of the country with the observation that nothing is going right in the country and as such it was

his duty along with others to take steps for setting things right, the Chief Prosecutor said.

The Chief Prosecutor said that Major General Manzur and his men became busy and active to hatch conspiracy and because of this indifference, the casualty figures in the Chittagong Hill Tracts rose by late 1980. To black out his mischievous activities the Detachment Commander of Directorate General of Forces Intelligence Lt. Col. Lais was barred by Major General Manzur from entering into Chittagong Cantonment the Chief Prosecutor said. At the same time he added the Divisional Field Intelligence Unit was fully tasked to assist Major General Manzur in his heinous plan.

The following is the Second Instalment of Chapter III of the White Paper on the Chittagong Mutiny and assassination of President Ziaur Rahman, containing the opening address of the Chief Prosecutor of the General Court Martial.

"Note: The opening address by the Chief Prosecutor has got many repetitions of the report as given earlier. However this opening address has not been curtailed so as to ensure the publication of the 'prima facie' case as presented by the prosecution to the Court.

Chapter III (Continuation)
Opening address by the chief prosecutor:

"The Hon'ble Court

"I most humbly beg your kind leave to make my opening address in this Court room wherein we have assembled for the administration of justice and upholding without any compromise the discipline and dignity of the Army of Bangladesh and punishment of the wrongdoers who have violated the provisions of law discipline of the Army and who are a disgrace to the honourable profession of arms.

Among the wrongdoers are the accused who not only made mockery of the soldiers' oath of obedience to discipline to provisions of law and military authority but also defied and violated the same in conspiring causing and staging a mutiny at Chittagong on the night between 29th and 30th May 1981. While causing and staging the mutiny the accused not only committed the offences of mutiny but also committed heinous crimes including killing of President Ziaur Rahman, the President of Bangladesh and some others who included officers and soldiers of Bangladesh Army.

"Before submitting a summary of facts relating to the offences committed by the accused persons I would like to give a short background of the tragic and shocking occurrence which had taken place at Chittagong on the night referred to herein above.

"A senior soldier being BA-103 late Major General M.

A. Manzur was posted to 24 Infantry Division as GOC who assumed the command of the Division on 24th November, 1977. Prior to his above mentioned posting he was the Chief of the General Staff at the Army.

wherein he enjoyed considerable powers in the re-organisation of the Army and did not like his transfer from the said seat of decision making. After his joining at Chittagong the forces of the Division were augmented and additional battalions and Brigades were raised. The raising of the forces under his command was allowed for effectively meeting the insurgency activities in Chittagong Hill Tracts. But said Major General M.A. Manzur used to take personal pride in it as if the forces were his personal forces to be used for fulfilment of his political ambition and aggrandisement.

"Major General M.A. Manzur was a man with sky-high political ambition. He was extremely jealous and intolerant of others and suffered from an inherent complex that he was superior to the rest in the Armed Forces as well as in the country. It has now surfaced that he was even cruelly critical of late President and used to pass very unkind remarks and observations about him.

"This aggressively ambitious person instead of fully meeting the insurgency activities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts gradually diverted more attention and energy towards his political plan which he had been harbouring in himself for a long time.

"Accordingly he plotted to eliminate the late President by any means and put the country under the feet of a Government headed by him under the cover of Martial Law and administered by a so-called "Revolutionary Council". Although the equality of all citizens have been guaranteed and practised with equal rights under the Constitution of the country, this over-ambitious politician taking the advantage of his uniform and position started indoctrinating and motivating the soldiers and officers in his contact as well as under his command. His catch words were that the country should be ruled by him and the Freedom Fighters of his choice along with him for a better rule. This end must be achieved, according to him by any means including application of force and physical elimination of late President Ziaur Rahman.

With this nefarious design and end in view he moved for the hour of strike as was done on the night between 29th and 30th May last very calculatively. He augmented the force level under his command got officers of his choice posted in key appointments on the primary consideration of their blind loyalty to him and his

philosophy. On different occasions he used to tout the orders and directives of the Army Headquarters and managed to obtain virtual control of several establishments in his area which were the establishments of the Army Headquarters. While at his request and in appreciation of greater national interest special allocation of funds were made available at his disposal, he used to cash it by saying that he can do things better than the Army Headquarters. While laying the foundation stone of any of the construction of the establishments in his area or celebrating the completion of works he never used to invite any of his superiors and always while opening a new building or a barack inscribed his name on a marble plaque.

"He used to create occasions to address the officers and soldiers under his command for delivery of political speech. Being an Army Officer he used to indulge in group meetings and discussions on political affairs of the country with the observation that nothing is going right in the country and as such it was his duty setting things right. To black out his such mischievous activities the Detachment Commander of Directorate General of Forces Intelligence Lt. Col. Lais was barred by him from entering into Chittagong Cantonment.

"At the same time, the Divisional Field Intelligence Unit was fully tasked to assist him in his heinous plan. With passage of time Major General Manzur and his other accomplices became quite indifferent towards their actual duties. They became busy and active to hatch conspiracy. Because of this indifference the casualty figures in the Chittagong Hill Tracts by late 1980 rose. As for instance it may be mentioned here that Brigadier Moinuddin Ahmed, Commander of Infantry Brigade did not visit his main operational Headquarters at Bandarban for about two months. Then suddenly he visited on 28th May last his operational Headquarters to advise some elements of 1 E. Bengal to be prepared and available at Kalurghat bridge on the fateful night of 29th-30th May 1981, covertly for taking part in the mutiny.