

A02

Manzur made frantic bid for civil, army backing

Troops didn't respond to rebel cause

By A Staff Correspondent

The fourth instalment of the White Paper on Chittagong mutiny and the killing of President Ziaur Rahman issued on Friday stated the post-mutiny activities in Chittagong by the General Officer Commanding of the 24 Infantry Division.

The White Paper said that after being briefed by Lt Col Delwar regarding the details of action at Circuit House the leader of the mutiny General Manzur went to 6 East Bengal Regiment in civil clothes and ordered Major Dost Mohammad Sikder Second-in-Command of the 6 East Bengal Regiment to send troops of platoon strength to military police gates and signals centre. From there he came to his office and ordered all available divisional staff officers Brigade Commanders Commandant East Bengal Regimental Centre Commandant Bangladesh Military Academy and Artillery Centre all divisional troops commanding officers to come to office immediately.

General Officer Commanding addressed the officers and told them that the President had been killed by some young officers and he was with them the White Paper stated. He emphasized that the country was not administered properly and a revolutionary council is to take adequate measures to correct it. He then asked every one present to touch the holy Quran which was kept in his office to take an oath of allegiance and pleading support to him and the revolutionary council. Every one present had touched the holy Quran.

The White Paper stated that from 8 a.m. on May 30, 1981 he gave similar briefing to civil and military officials. However neither Navy nor Bangladesh Airforce gave any encouraging support at any time to the rebel cause. The White Paper said that General Manzur then addressed series of meetings with the civil military officers and troops. The troops did respond spontaneously to his call.

The White Paper stated that by early afternoon of May 31 the rebel leader Major General Manzur and his cohort could read the writings of the wall very clearly. At 6 p.m. on May 31 General Officer Commanding called a conference attended by senior officers in the garrison including the brigadier-battalion commanders and his staff officers. General Officer Commanding asked their views whether to start negotiations or not. With the exception of Lt. Col. Motiur Rahman and Lt. Col. Delwar every one suggested that negotiations was the only peaceful answer.

Brigadier Hannan was nominated by GOC to start negotiation with Dacca at around 6.30 p.m. Brigadier Hannan started the negotiations with Army Headquarters with a dictated sentence by General

Manzur "I feel there is a scope for negotiation. You have to send two negotiators to Chittagong and announce it over radio and also Radio Bangladesh should stop anti-revolutionary broadcast".

The White Paper said the negotiations over telephone continued up to around 1.30 a.m. on June 1, 1981. Ultimately the rebel leader could

feel that Dacca was firm not to accept his conditions and he fled away like a coward General.

The following is the third instalment of the chapter II (two) of the White Paper on the assassination of President Ziaur Rahman.

(Post Mutiny Activities):

General Officer Commanding's quick reaction:

After evacuating Lieutenant Colonel Fazle Hussain and Captain Jamil to Combined Military Hospital, Lieutenant Colonel Dilawar went to Major General Manzur's house and in all probability briefed him regarding the details of action at the Circuit House. The leader of the mutiny then personally drove his staff car in civil cloth, went to the office of 6 East Bengal Regiment where he found Second-in-Command of 6 East Bengal Regiment Major Dost Mohammad Sikder and ordered him to send troops of platoon strength to the military police gates and signals centre. He ordered 2

companies of 6 East Bengal Regiment to move to Shuvapuri Bridge for taking up defence against possible attack of the loyal forces from Comilla.

On further instructions from Lieutenant Colonel Motiur Rahman Major Salam, Brigade Major 203 Infantry Brigades and Captain Ilayas Lieutenant Moslehuddin of 6 East Bengal Regiment along with the troops of 6 East Bengal Regiment left for Shuvapuri at around 9-30 a.m. on 30 May 81 and took position near Shuvapuri Bridge and new bridge on Feni River.

Oath Taking Ceremony. General Officer Commanding went to his office from 6 East Bengal Regiment and ordered all available Divisional Staff Officers, Brigade Commanders, Commandant East Bengal Regimental Centre, Commandant Bangladesh Military Academy and Artillery Centre all available Divisional Troops Commanding Officers to come to office immediately. General Officer Commanding addressed officers and told them that the President had been killed by some young officers and he was with them. He emphasized that the country was not administered properly and a Revolutionary Council is to take adequate measures to correct it.

He then asked every one present to touch a holy Quran which was kept in his office to take an oath of allegiance and pleading support to him and the Revolutionary Council. Every one present had touched the Holy Quran.

From 8 A.M. on 30 May 81 Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner Metropolitan Police Commissioner Chittagong Sector Commander Bangladesh Rifles, Deputy Inspector General of Police Chittagong Range, Commanding Officer 38 Light

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Anti Aircraft Regiment Artillery Base Commander Bangladesh Airforce and his staff Officer (Operations) General Staff Officer-2 (Operations) arrived at the Divisional Headquarters met General Officer Commanding and similar briefing and oath-taking was repeated. However neither Navy nor Bangladesh Airforce gave any encouraging support at any time to the rebel cause.

Atmosphere in the Division Headquarters: Atmosphere in the Division Headquarters after General Officer Commanding's briefing was one of euphoria. Whispered consultation were going on in full swing between the officers. Most active were Lieutenant Colonel Mahboob, Lieutenant Colonel Motiur Rahman and Lieutenant Colonel Dilawar. Lieutenant Colonel Dilawar was irritably active. He made frequent visits to the General Officer Commanding's Office and passed down the orders to Lieutenant Colonel Moti and Lieutenant Colonel Mehboob. Among others who were seen very active were Major Khaled who made frequent visits to the Divisional Headquarters and also Major Iazzani, Major Muzaffar Major Gias and Major Momin. Brigadier Mohsin was kept in the Division Headquarters while General Manzur went out to address the troops and civil officials in the Deputy Commissioner's office. Consultation were also done by the General Officer Commanding with Colonel Rashid and Colonel Nazrul. Throughout Saturday the spirit of the gentlemen seemed very high and were bursting with enthusiasm.

Deployment of Troops: At 11 A.M. on 30 May 81 General Officer Commanding called all brigade Commanders, East Bengal Regimental Centre and Sector-1 Staff Officers of the Division in his office and gave deployment order as stated below:

(a) With a mission to defend own area of responsibility against any external threat, the outline of deployment was as under:-

(a) Denv axis Shuvapuri - Sitakunda - Chittagong.

(b) Denv Beach Land derhat and Kumbra.

(c) Defend Chittagong Airport and Seaport.

(d) Defend Chittagong Cantonment Chittagong 303 Infantry Brigade group was given the task to defend axis Shuvapuri - Sitakunda - Chittagong and Kumbra.

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