

# Mujib's Press statement: full text

**DACCA, March 3:** The following is the text of the Press statement of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, President of the Awami League, issued last night:—

"Unarmed boys have been fired upon today (Tuesday). At least two have died, and several more are seriously injured. They have been shot at because they along with the rest of the people of Bangla Desh had stood up to protest against the gross insult inflicted upon Bangla Desh by the powers that be. I strongly condemn such firing and urge the elements who are seeking to confront the people with force to desist forthwith from this reckless course. They should be reminded that firing upon unarmed masses amounts to genocide and is a crime against humanity. They should know that if Bangla Desh is afire, as it will be if such confrontation continues, they will not be able to escape the flames.

"We, as the elected representatives of the 70 million people of Bangla Desh, were ready to sit with the representatives from the Western Wing on the 3rd March for the purpose of constitution-making. Indeed some of the representatives from the Western Wing had already come to Dacca. But then a sudden and unwarranted intervention prevented this sitting from taking place. The intervention was prompted by an intransigent minority group which as the protector of the vested interests of the Western Wing and their bureaucratic lackeys, had declared that the sitting should not be held except on terms dictated by them. They had even gone to the length of nakedly threatening to 'deal with' other West Wing representatives who dared to defy such dictation. Such denial of the rights of the representatives of the majority of the people at the behest of an undemocratic minority is an intolerable insult to the people.

"Since the people of Bangla Desh would not submit to such dictation or intimidation, they are now sought to be confronted by force. It is tragic that planes which might have carried elected representatives from the Eastern Wing, should instead be engaged in lifting military personnel and arms. If these measures are intended to cow down seventy million Bengalis, the spontaneous demonstrations of the will to resist displayed throughout Bangla Desh since yesterday should prove to the world that Bengalis cannot be suppressed any more and that they are determined to be the free citizens of a free country. They will not any longer tolerate being exploited as a colony or a market.

"At this crucial hour it is the sacred duty of each and every Bengali in every walk of life, including Government officials, not to co-operate with anti-people forces and indeed to do everything in their power to foil the conspiracy against Bangla Desh.

"Now that representatives have been elected by the people are the only legitimate source of authority, all authorities are, and therefore, expected to take note of this fact.

"In the circumstances, there is no justification for the continuation of Martial Law or military rule by a single day. I, therefore, urge the immediate withdrawal of Martial Law, an immediate end to the 'confrontation' and the removal of obstacles to the exercise by the people's representatives of the power, that is rightfully theirs.

are our sacred trust and these must be protected.

(b) 3rd March, which was to have been the day for the sitting of the National Assembly, should be observed as a day of national mourning, on which occasion I will lead a procession from Paltan Maidan at 4 p.m. immediately after the conclusion of the meeting being held by Students League.

(c) In the event of radio, television or newspapers failing to cover our version of events or our statements, all Bengalis serving in these agencies should refuse to co-operate with such gagging of the voice of the seventy million people of Bangla Desh.

(d) On 7th March, 1971, at 2 p.m. I shall address a mass rally of our people at the Race Course Maidan, when further directives will be issued.

(e) I would urge our people to continue with our common struggle in a peaceful and disciplined manner. I would remind them that any breach of discipline would be against the interest of our movement and will serve the interest of agent provocateurs and the anti-people force."—APP.

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"Our movement will continue till the above demands are met and till the people of Bangla Desh realise their emancipation.

"I am announcing our programme of action till 7th March and am issuing the following directives to our people:—

(a) Province wide hartal to be observed on each day from 3rd March, 1971, to the 6th March, 1971, from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. in all spheres including Government offices, Secretariat, High Court and other courts, semi-Government and autonomous corporations, PIA, Railways and other communication services, transport, private and public, all mills, factories, industrial and commercial establishments and market. Exemptions are to be extended to: Ambulances, Press cars, hospitals, medicine shops, electric and water supply.

All persons are urged to observe the hartal in a peaceful and disciplined manner and to ensure that no untoward incident such as looting, burning, etc., takes place. In particular people should be alert against agent provocateurs and should remember that everyone living in Bangla Desh, no matter where he originates from or the language he speaks, is for us a Bengali and their person, property and honour

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