

Withdrawal of ML, troops: transfer of power: enquiry

Mujib blames Bhutto for ending dialogue

Address at Dacca mass rally

DACCA, MARCH 7: SHEIKH MUJIBUR RAHMAN, LEADER OF THE MAJORITY PARTY AWAMI LEAGUE, TODAY ANNOUNCED HIS DECISION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SESSION PROVIDED HIS FOUR-POINT DEMAND WAS ACCEPTED BEFORE THE SESSION.

ADDRESSING A HUGE PUBLIC MEETING AT THE RAMNA RACE COURSE MAIDAN HERE THIS AFTERNOON, SHEIKH MUJIB LISTED HIS DEMANDS AS (1) THE WITHDRAWAL OF MARTIAL LAW, (2) SENDING OF TROOPS BACK TO BARRACKS, (3) INQUIRY INTO THE KILLINGS AND (4) TRANSFER OF POWER TO THE ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PEOPLE.

The Awami League leader announced the closure of all Government, semi-Government offices in Bangla Desh and stoppage of all rents and taxes until the demands of the Bengalis were accepted.

Sheikh Mujib declared that he did not want Premiership but the realisation of the rights of the people.

He outrightly denied having accepted the proposal for a meeting of the parliamentary party leaders of different political parties.

BACKGROUND

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman said that as the leader of the majority party he had suggested the inauguration of the National Assembly session on Feb 15 but, he said, the proposal of the minority party leaders had been accepted in summoning the Assembly for the first time on March 3.

He said, he was also not consulted before postponing the Assembly and also re-summoning it on March 25.

This negligence, he said, towards the leaders of the majority party was in fact a dishonour shown to the seven crore people of Bangla Desh.

DISCUSSIONS HELD

Sheikh Sahib said that he had discussions with various leaders for framing a durable constitution for the country. He also pointed out that he had made it clear that if a single member made any right suggestion on the floor of the House, he would be properly listened to, and his suggestion considered.

"It is unfortunate", he said, "even after all this, we have been blamed for non-co-operation."

The Awami League chief said that he had also sought help and co-operation from all groups in the National Assembly for framing the country's constitution.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared that "we can live like bro-

thers if we solve our problems peacefully and amicably."

Sheikh Sahib said that he had invited President Yahya Khan to come here. Instead, he said, the President held a five-hour secret meeting with Mr Bhutto and then made a statement summoning the National Assembly on March 25 without consulting him.

He took exception to putting all blame on him for allegedly not taking interest in the efforts of President Yahya and gave a resume of what he did in making a constitution co-operatively and in complete understanding with all who took interest in the matter.—PPI.

AFP adds: In his 20-minute speech at the end of the observance of protest week against the postponement of the National Assembly session, Sheikh Mujib gave a brief account of the current political situation in the country and said they could not agree to attend the RTC-meeting on March 10, ignoring the "bloodshed of the people."

The Awami League chief referred to his talks with People's Party chief, Mr Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, and other West Pakistan leaders on constitution-making and said: "There is still time for us to live as brothers if

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things are settled peacefully."

Sheikh Mujib said as the leader of the majority party in the country, he had suggested to President Yahya Khan to summon the Assembly on Feb 15, but it had been convened on March 3 as per suggestion of Mr Bhutto who had wanted it to begin in the first week of the current month.

The Awami League chief said even then they were ready to attend the session, adding that they were prepared to discuss the constitutional issues inside the House and outside. In this connection he also referred to his recent speech saying that any reasonable and good suggestion would be accepted even if it comes from a single member.

Referring to his talks with the PPP chief, Sheikh Mujib said the dialogue was not closed. He had also talks with other leaders of West Pakistan including Mufi Mahmood and Maulana Noorani. He added Awami League was prepared for further discussions on constitutional issues.

But, he deplored that Mr Bhutto instead of continuing the discussion resorted to threats. The People's Party chief, he said, had called the National Assembly a "slaughter house" and that West Pakistan members would become "double hostage" in East Pakistan.

The PPP chief, he said, also held out threats of strike from Khyber to Karachi if the session was not postponed.

Sheikh Mujib said 35 members of the Assembly had already arrived in Dacca to attend the session and they were ready to

participate but he deplored that the session was postponed and unjustifiable blame was put on "us accusing us of unbending attitude."

PEOPLE'S RESPONSE

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman said in response to his call for peaceful movement to protest against the postponement of the Assembly session the people came out on the streets. "But what we got? The arms bought at the cost of our money to defend the country were used against us."

He said whenever the people of Bangla Desh tried to capture power and become the master of their destiny "they pounced on us."

Sheikh Mujib referred to the sacrifices in the past and said "none can stop us from realising our rights when we are prepared to lay down our lives. We have learnt how to shed blood."

The Awami League chief, however, asked the people to be on guard against the "enemies who are amongst us" trying to create disturbances. He said they must maintain peace and discipline and added: "It is your responsibility to protect the non-Muslims and non-Bengalis."

He said the Awami League had already taken measures to extend relief to those who had suffered in the movements. He said his party would try its best to help the people, who suffered injuries and the needy.

AMMAN, March 7: A Royal spokesman today denied a Cairo Press report that King Hussein of Jordan would soon visit the United States to confer with President Nixon on the Middle East crisis.—AFP.