

Army take over after night of shelling

EAST PAKISTAN fell to the army of President Yahya Khan on Friday after a night of indiscriminate, cold-blooded shelling that left Dacca and most other towns in the province at least temporarily under army control.

Central Government troops seized power in Dacca shortly before midnight and then in three hours of unprovoked shooting, proceeded to encircle and attack key areas of the city.

By morning several buildings were burning. The streets were deserted, political activities had been banned and the army had completed its occupation. Scattered outbursts of small-arms fire and shelling continued throughout the day as tanks and lorry-loads of camouflaged soldiers moved backwards and forwards through the city.

There was no immediate word on the number of dead and wounded, but, judging by the intensity of the firing around the dormitory area of Dacca

By SIMON DRING,
who wrote this despatch in Dacca on Friday, before being expelled with other foreign journalists.

University, civilian casualties will prove to be high. Army losses must be light, if any, as there was almost no sign of armed resistance in the city.

With communications between Dacca and the rest of the province as well as the outside world completely severed it was impossible to tell how the occupation was proceeding elsewhere.

The takeover by the army came only hours after it became clear that the talks between Pakistan's political leaders to resolve the country's constitutional crisis had collapsed.

Army commanders refused to explain what was happening except to say "We are assuming control." A haphazard curfew was clamped on the city around 11 p.m. and all foreign journalists and guests at the Inter-

continental Hotel were warned that they would be shot if they tried to leave the building.

It was not clear whether there had been widespread arrests but it was thought that one of the first targets in a military clampdown would be Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, political leader of the East Wing, who led the Bengali uprising this month.

The West Wing majority party leader, Mr. Zulfikar Bhutto, was kept under close surveillance at the hotel and eventually flown out, a puzzled and nervous man with his aides in a special military aircraft on Friday morning.

The first official word on the operation came on Friday morning when Dacca Radio broadcast an announcement by Gen. Tikka Khan, martial law administrator for the East Wing, that steps had been taken to "arrest a deteriorating situation."

The announcement, read in English, Bengali and Urdu, said: "A grave situation has arisen in East Pakistan in which open defiance of the present Administration has assumed alarming proportions beyond the normal control of the civilian police and soldiers."

Strict censorship

Action was being taken "in the interests of national security."

There then followed a list of martial law regulations including strict censorship, a ban on the carrying of sticks or weapons, and the ordering of all Government workers to be back in their offices within 24 hours.

Pakistan Radio said the Indian High Commissioner, summoned to the Foreign Office in Islamabad, was told the Pakistan Government took "serious exception" to the Indian Parliament debating the Pakistan situation. He was told this would be a "dangerous precedent."

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