Pakistani bombers ‘hit rebel town’

By DAVID LOSHAK in New Delhi

PAKISTAN: Air Force planes were reported yesterday to have bombed the East Pakistan town of Chittagong, West Pakistan troops tightened their grip in the East of the State. At least 10,000 civilians are said to have been killed since the Army was ordered two nights ago to crush Sheikh Mujibur Rahman’s independence movement.

The Sheikh, who has proclaimed East Pakistan to be the People’s Republic of Bangladesh (Free Bengal), broadcast a denunciatory statement that he had been arrested.

Radio Pakistan had denied his arrest but the Sheikh said he was ‘still as free as Bangla Desh’. The province would be free ‘in a day or two’ and he urged the people to go underground, reorganise and attack the invaders.

A clandestine radio message heard in New Delhi said he had set up headquarters at the port of Chittagong, where it was claimed, the Bengalis had won control.

Tanks used:

While the Sheikh was denouncing what he described as the western cultivation of the idea that only the ruling party can monopolise power and speaking for world support, the Dalip Singh, who had concentrated reports of attacks on important government officials, said his action was normal.

Other reports spoke of 10,000 manoeuvring Bengal troops being shot down by West Pakistan troops and tanks according to one article, and in East Pakistan, President’s troops had been attacked.

There were new titles for Abdur Rahman, the President of India who had stepped up his efforts to bring the rival parties of West Pakistan. It was reported that the Indian government had decided to give full support to any move for a cease-fire, to end the bloodshed.

Indian reaction:

There was strong condemnation of the West Pakistan actions in the Indian Parliament. The President, Rajiv Gandhi, speaking on the situation, said that the Indian government would not tolerate any violation of the 1971 agreement.

The Indian government had asked for a meeting of the United Nations Security Council to discuss the situation.

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