

Pakistani General Disputes Reports of Casualties

The writer of the following dispatch is a member of the first group of foreign newsmen granted permission to enter East Pakistan since the Government expelled correspondents in late March. News articles from both East and West Pakistan are subject to censorship.

By MALCOLM W. BROWNE
Special to The New York Times

DACCA, PAKISTAN, May 6—Gen. Tikka Khan, the military governor of East Pakistan, said today that his staff had estimated that 150 persons were killed in Dacca on the night of March 25, when the army moved to reassert control over this province.

The general, speaking at a reception, said that other estimates of the number of people killed, ranging up to 10,000, were wildly exaggerated.

In addition to this correspondent, General Tikka Khan saw five other correspondents. They represented The Associated Press, Reuters, Time Inc., The Financial Times of London and Hsinhua, the Chinese Communist press agency.

Dacca Seems Peaceful

The sprawling city of Dacca, situated on a flood plain crisscrossed by the countless streams and rivers making up the Ganges River Delta, appeared peaceful.

Vehicular traffic was fairly heavy although most shops remained shuttered. It has been estimated that half the city's population fled to villages and forests when the fighting began. Even Dacca's Intercontinental Hotel was operating with only 20 per cent of its normal staff.

Some Bengali slum dwellers complained to newsmen that the outside world had not been

told of the "massacre" here. General Tikka Khan is known as a particularly tough army commander and has been accused by opponents of having ordered indiscriminate killing in Dacca and elsewhere on the night of March 25.

"We are accused of massacring students," he said, "but we did not attack students or any other single group. When we were fired on, we fired back."

"The university was closed, and anyone in there had no business being there," the general continued. "We ordered those inside to come out and were met with fire. Naturally, we fired back."

"I have always believed that if you take strong measures immediately, you avoid getting casualties as things go on."

The military governor said that armed resistance to Government forces in East Pakistan had practically disappeared

and he was thinking soon of ending the curfew in Dacca. He conceded, however, that the vital railroad from the port of Chittagong on the Bay of Bengal to the interior was still not running because many bridges had been dynamited and because of other obstructions.

"Our main task now is to forget what is past and work to rebuild East Pakistan," the general said. "If the entire population works hard, we hope to accomplish this in one year."

General Tikka Khan said East Pakistani separatists had surrendered in large numbers or were simply leaving their weapons along roads and disappearing. He saw no possibility of the emergence of a guerrilla war here of the type fought in Vietnam, although Indian infiltrators could continue to foment trouble, he said.

The governor said food was in adequate supply although distribution remained a problem.