

PAKISTANI STRIFE SAID TO CONTINUE

Despite Official Assertions,
Reports Tell of Fighting

By SYDNEY H. SCHANBERG

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NEW DELHI, May 24—Despite official descriptions of normality in East Pakistan, guerrilla activity and the army crackdown continue, according to reports from the area.

This picture of disrupted life has been provided by authoritative foreign sources inside East Pakistan, by foreigners who have recently visited the area and by information gathered by this correspondent on a recent tour of border regions. Foreign newsmen, except for six taken on a brief Government-guided tour early this month, have been barred from the province since the army crackdown began on March 25.

The foreign informants report that the Pakistani Army has been able to widen its control of vital installations and major towns and cities. But they said that guerrilla and terrorist activity by Bengali insurgents—buttressed by Bengali noncooperation in general—have prevented the army from establishing an effective civil administration in most of East Pakistan.

Evidence of Fighting

While the army asserts that "organized armed resistance has been liquidated all over the province," the foreign sources say there is considerable evidence to the contrary.

On May 12, they say, Bengali insurgents clashed with army troops only 15 miles northwest of Dacca, the provincial capital, at the town of Admin Bazar.

On the same day, insurgents reportedly captured the Rocket, a large well-known river steamer that plies between Dacca and Khulna to the southwest. Many foreign tourists used to take the Rocket for the leisurely and scenic ride.

The foreign informants say about 300 passengers were on board when the steamer was sized near Khulna. All were reported to have been robbed.

Foreign sources also say that Bengali activists are making and exploding fire bombs and grenades in Dacca.

Martial-law authorities last week announced the arrest of 10 persons for throwing grenades in Dacca.

The regime warned of "exemplary punishment" for creating "panic and a feeling of insecurity." The authorities have offered rewards for information leading to the capture of "saboteurs."

Destroying Rails and Bridges

Reliable informants also report that separatist forces have continued to destroy rail lines and bridges. The insurgents, informants say, are also seizing barges and destroying cargoes of jute, whose export provides the biggest share of Pakistan's foreign exchange.

The army, according to these sources, continues to carry out bloody reprisals against civilians wherever the insurgents are active. The particular targets are said to be young men, intellectuals, members of the now-banned Awami League, once East Pakistan's principal party, and the minority Hindus, who voted heavily for the Awami League in December's election for a constitutional assembly.

The army, the informants report, has been enlisting, and in many cases arming, anti-Awami League segments of the population to try to suppress the Bengali insurgence. These minority segments, it is said, include non-Bengali Bihari Moslems and supporters of traditionalist, religiously oriented parties.

The informants say some Biharis have been informing on and killing Bengalis. But the army, these sources say, has been much more sweeping and systematic in its attempts to force compliance from the hostile population—razing villages and sometimes killing large groups of Bengalis. Many Bengalis fleeing to India—more than three million have entered the country, according to Indian officials—have been shot at, and killed or wounded, the sources assert.