INDIA REPORTS FOE IN ROUT IN EAST AS ENCIRCLEMENT OF DACCA GAINS;

PAKISTAN REPLIES

Insists Force Holds On in East and Denies Loss of Big Cities

BY SYDNEY H. SCHANBERG
Special to The New York Times

CALCUTTA, India, Dec. 9—The commander of India's eastern forces said tonight that the retreat of the Pakistanis in East Pakistan had become a rout as Indian troops continued to push the foe into an ever-shrinking circle whose center is Dacca, the regional capital.

The eastern commander, Lt. Gen. Jagjit Singh Aurora, said that the air force had had a "field day" the last 24 hours, shooting up river boats loaded with Pakistani troops trying to escape.

[In Rawalpindi, according to a Reuters dispatch, Paki-
stan continued to insist that her troops were holding fast in the country's eastern wing and denied again that Indian forces had captured major cities.]

Calcutta Airport Shut

In India, the Calcutta airport was unexpectedly closed to commercial traffic for the day, and there was speculation that the Indians were moving troops by air from the East Pakistan front, where they feel sure they are going to win, to the western front, which is 1,000 miles away, on the border with West Pakistan. The Government denied this but gave no explanation for the airport's closing.

In East Pakistan the Indian forces still have two vast rivers to cross before they can mount a full assault on Dacca, whose airport has been damaged by continuing Indian air attacks.

These rivers—which are more than a mile across in places—are the Padma, in the west, which the Indians are fast approaching, and the Meghna, in the east, which they reached today. The rivers, which eventually merge south of Dacca, are usually crossed by ferry. Some of the narrower sections have bridges, but the Pakistanis have blown these as they retreated.

"We Are Making Plans"

That may slow the Indian advance somewhat, but General Aurora gave the impression at his briefing for newsmen that he was not going to wait long before starting to cross. "We are making plans," he said.

Coming from the west, Indian troops, after capturing Mogura, have moved forward a few miles to a smaller river, the Mahanadi, where the Pakistanis had destroyed the ferry. The Indian forward point is 22 miles from the big obstacle, the Goshundo Ghat, crossing on the Meghna, with Dacca about 35 miles farther on.

The Indians took three im-
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portentous towns on or near the Megna—Ashuganj, Chandpur and Daulatdia, the last less than 25 miles from Dacca.

General Aurora and other Indian military officials expressed the belief that the Paki-

The Pakistanis’ flight was explained by General Aurora in this way: “When you get out-

The general said he thought that if Pakistani Army head-

The Eastern Command chief who visited several captured towers at the front yesterday and today, described his recep-

“When my helicopter landed at the airfield,” he continued, “a crowd of people about 2,000 had col-

Cantonment Surrounded

The military cantonment about 15 miles from Comilla has not been captured but has been encircled, the general said, adding that “We’re letting them stay surrounded for the time being.” He said there was either a brigade or a division commander inside.

Not all the Pakistani troops are caught in that tightening circle at the center of East Pakistan. There are pockets all over the region, some still fighting hard, but they are cut off from their supply lines and their destruction or surrender seems only a matter of time.

Not many Pakistanis have surrendered yet, a fact that raises images of possible Dunkirs at the ports and river crossings.

Something like Dunkirk may have been happening. General Aurora said the air force and navy had been bombarding such places as Golaula Ghat, Narayanganj, Chandpur, Kach-

The air cease-fire at Dacca is apparently academic for the Pakistanis. General Aurora re-


IN THE WEST: Pakistan said its troops were consolidating their positions on the Kashmir front (1), where they had scored gains. Heavy fighting was reported in the Sialkot area of West Pakistan (2). Many casualties were reported in Indian air and naval attack on Karachi (bomb burst).

IN THE EAST: An Indian general said his forces were pushing Pakistanis into an ever-shrinking area (black arrows), but Pakistani continued to insist her troops were holding fast. An Indian air raid on Dacca (bomb burst) hit an orphanage near airport, reportedly causing casualties.

KILLED IN ACTION IN EAST PAKISTAN: The bodies of Pakistani soldiers lying in a road about 10 miles east of Jessore yesterday. They died in a clash with Indian forces.

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