

FULL TEXT OF THE PRESIDENT OF PAKISTAN'S BROADCAST TO THE NATION ON THE 26TH OF MARCH, 1971

My dear countrymen,

Assalamu Alaikum

On the 6th of this month I announced the 25th of March as the new date for the inaugural session of the National Assembly hoping that conditions would permit the holding of the session on the appointed date. Events have however not justified that hope. The nation continues to face a grave crisis. In East Pakistan a non-cooperation and disobedience movement was launched by the Awami League and matters took a very serious turn. Events were moving very fast and it became absolutely imperative that the situation was brought under control as soon as possible. With this in view I had a series of discussions with political leaders in West Pakistan and subsequently on the 15th of March I went to Dacca. As you are aware, I held a number of meetings with Shaikh Mujibur Rahman in order to resolve the political impasse. Having consulted West Pakistan leaders it was necessary for me to do the same while there, so that areas of agreement could be identified and an amicable settlement arrived at. As has been reported in the press and other news media from time to time my talks with Shaikh Mujibur Rahman showed some progress. Having reached a certain stage in my negotiations with Shaikh Mujibur Rahman I considered it necessary to have another round of talks with West Pakistani leaders in Dacca. Mr. Bhutto reached there on the 21st of March. I had a number of meetings with him. As you are aware, the leader of u

On the evening of the 23rd of March, the political leaders who had gone to talk to Mujib on this issue called on me and informed me that he was not agreeable to any changes in his scheme. All he really wanted was for me to make a proclamation whereby I should withdraw Martial Law and transfer power. Shaikh Mujib's action of starting his non-cooperation movement is an act of treason. He and his party have defied the lawful authority for over three weeks. They have insulted Pakistan's flag and defiled the photograph of the Father of the Nation. They have tried to run a parallel Government. They have created turmoil, terror, insecurity. A number of murders have been committed in the name of the movement. Millions of our Bengali brethren and those who have settled in East Pakistan are living in a state of panic. A very large number had to leave that Wing out of fear for their lives.

The Armed Forces located in East Pakistan have been subjected to taunts and insults of all kinds. I wish to compliment them on the tremendous restraint that they have shown in the face of grave provocation. Their sense of discipline is indeed praiseworthy. I am proud of them. I should have taken action against Shaikh Mujib and his collaborators weeks ago, but I had to try my utmost to handle the situation in such a manner as not

to jeopardise my plan for peaceful transfer of power, in my keenness to achieve this aim I kept on tolerating one illegal action after another and at the same time I explored every possible avenue for arriving at some reasonable solution. I have already mentioned the efforts made by me, and by various political leaders, in getting Mujib to see reasons. We have left no stone unturned, but he has failed to respond to any constructive manner. On the other hand he and his followers kept on flouting the authority of the Government even during my presence in Dacca. The proclamation that he proposed was nothing but a trap. He knew that it would not be worth the paper it was written on, and in the vacuum created by the lifting of Martial Law he could have done any thing with impunity, obstinacy obduracy and absolute refusal to talk sense can lead but to one conclusion. The man and his party are enemies of Pakistan. They want East Pakistan to break away completely from the country. He has attacked the solidarity and integrity of this country. This crime will not go unpunished. We will not allow some power-hungry and un-patriotic people to destroy this country and play with the destiny of 120 million people.

In my Address to the Nation on 6th of March, I had told

you that it is the duty of Pakistan's Armed Forces to ensure the integrity, solidarity and security of Pakistan. I have ordered them to do their duty and fully restore the authority of the Government. In view of the grave situation that exists in the country today I have decided to ban all political activities throughout the country. As for the Awami League, it is completely banned as a political party. I have also decided to impose complete Press censorship. Martial Law Regulations will very shortly be issued in pursuance of these decisions.

In the end, let me assure you that my main aim remains the same, namely transfer of power to the elected representatives of the people. As soon as situation permits, I will take fresh steps towards the achievement of this objective. It is my hope that the law and order situation will soon return to normal in East Pakistan and then can again move forward towards our cherished goal. I appeal to my countrymen to appreciate the gravity of the situation for which the blame rests entirely on anti-Pakistan and secessionist elements and to act as reasonable citizens of the country because therein lies the security and salvation of Pakistan.

God be with you, God bless you all

Pakistan Painsdabad.

Abutto reached there on the 21st of March. I had a number of meetings with him. As you are aware, the leader of the Awami League had asked for withdrawal of Martial Law and transfer of power prior to the meeting of the National Assembly. In our discussions he proposed that this interim period should be covered by a proclamation by me whereby Martial Law would be withdrawn, Provincial Governments set up, and the National Assembly would sit in two committees, one composed of members from East Pakistan and the other composed of members from West Pakistan. Despite some serious flaws in the scheme and its legal as well as other aspects, I was prepared to agree in principle to this plan in the interest of peaceful transfer of power but with one condition. The condition which I clearly explained to Shaikh Mujibur Rahman was that I must first have unequivocal agreement of all political leaders to the scheme. I thereupon discussed the proposal with other political leaders. I found them unanimously of the view that the proposed proclamation by me would have no legal sanction whatsoever. It will neither have the cover of Martial Law nor could it claim to be based on the will of the people. Thus a vacuum would be created and chaotic conditions will ensue. They also considered that the splitting of the National Assembly into two parts through a proclamation would encourage divisive tendencies that may exist. They, therefore, expressed the opinion that if it is intended to lift Martial Law and transfer power in the interim period, the National Assembly should meet, pass an appropriate interim Constitution Bill, and present it to me for my assent. I entirely agreed with their view and requested them to tell Shaikh Mujibur Rahman to take a reasonable attitude on this issue. I told the leaders to explain their views to him, that a scheme whereby on the one hand you extinguish all source of power, namely Martial Law, and on the other fail to replace it by the will of the people through a proper session of the National Assembly will merely result in chaos. They agreed to meet Shaikh Mujibur Rahman to explain the position to him and try to obtain his agreement to the interim arrangement for the transfer of power to emanate from the National Assembly. The political leaders were also very perturbed over Shaikh Mujib's idea of dividing the National Assembly into two parts right from the start. Such a move, they felt, would be totally against the interest of Pakistan's integrity. The Chairman of the Pakistan Peoples Party, during a meeting between myself, Shaikh Mujibur Rahman and him, had also expressed similar views to Mujib.