

East Pakistan Secedes, Civil War Breaks Out

From Wire Services

NEW DELHI, India

Civil war was reported in East Pakistan yesterday and thousands of villagers fought West Pakistani troops in four major cities, even using spears and clubs in the battles, the Press Trust of India news agency (PTI) reported.

UPI said early this morning that fierce street fighting was raging in the capital city of Dacca and the governmental All-India radio in neighboring India reported army troops were using tanks against the rebels.



MUJIBUR RAHMAN

... labeled a traitor

Quoting "highly reliable reports, reaching Indian border areas, the India news agency said fighting was raging in Chittagong, Dacca, Camilla and Rangpur, Dacca, with a population of 789,000, is the largest city in the eastern province.

As the army moved to crush a secessionist movement led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman — denounced as a traitor by President Yahya Khan in a nationwide broadcast earlier yesterday — the agency said the fighting had assumed

the proportions of civil war.

One report said 1000 West Pakistani commandos were flown into East Pakistan via China during the past two days.

The Indian news agency was quoted by UPI as saying reports from along the border indicated 10,000 additional Pakistani federal troops arrived aboard five ships Thursday night and early yesterday at Chit-

tagong and were quickly moved into Dacca, Comilla and Jessore. The 10,000 reinforcements would raise the total number of federal Pakistani troops in East Pakistan to about 70,000.

The East Pakistan Rifles a type of civil militia, and the police have sided with Rahman's Bengali followers in the battle against the army, all reports said. Most of the federal soldiers are Punjabis from West

Pakistan, where the federal government is seated. There were no figures immediately available on the total number of East Pakistani troops.

Dacca Radio, which supported Rahman, said in an early morning broadcast at least 110 persons were killed and several hundred wounded by army attacks on civilians in Dacca, Rangpur and the port city of Chittagong. Shortly afterward, the radio said it was leaving the air because it had been taken over by army troops.

Reuter said fighting was said to be heavy in Rangpur where West Pakistan troops are reported to have shot and killed at least 20 persons two days ago.

Associated Press reported that United News of India, in a dispatch from the east Indian state of Assam, described heavy casualties in the provincial capital of Dacca. It said about 200 East Pakistanis had been chased across the border by troops.

The news agency dispatch also quoted reports PAKISTAN, Page 6

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from the border that a railway bridge had been blown up and a railway station destroyed near the Indian frontier city of Agartala.

United News of India said later that at least eight persons were killed and more than 100 injured when Pakistani troops fired on demonstrators at Ramgarh near the border with the Indian state of Tripura.

The agency said that at Rajshahi, 125 miles north of Calcutta, troops shot their way into the local radio station, killing or arresting employees who offered resistance.

It added that troops took over a college in the city after a bloody clash with the staff and students.

At Jhinaidaha in the Jessore district, the agency said troops opened fire on residents who gathered in thousands to seize the local airfield.

A large number of people were reported killed in the same city when a crowd attacked the jail in an attempt to free persons arrested by martial law authorities earlier in the day, the agency added.

Unconfirmed reports said some East Pakistani members of the police force and another paramilitary organization had fled across the border into the Indian territory of Tripura.

Authoritative sources said the border crossing had led to an earlier presumption in some quarters in Tripura that Pakistani army contingents themselves had entered India.

A clandestine radio monitored in India said Sheikh Mujib, who first declared the independence of East Pakistan yesterday as the new People's Republic of Bangla Desh (Bengali Nation), had gone underground.

The broadcast, thought to originate from the northern region of East Pakistan, called on the people to fight until all enemy troops were vanquished.

The radio, describing itself as the Voice of Independent Bangla Desh, said West Pakistani troops had been surrounded by Bangla Desh forces in Chittagong, Comilla, Sylhet, Jessore, Barisal and Khulna.

The Bangla Desh forces were from the East Pakistani regiment, East Pakistani rifles and police, the radio said.

The broadcast proclaimed Sheikh Mujib as the only leader of Bangla Desh, whose commands should be obeyed by the people to save the country from the ruthless dictatorship of West Pakistanis.

Rahman was quoted by UPI as declaring: "If the enemy dares enter your town or village, hurl on them powdered red pepper, soda wafer bottles and sundry items. Use hand grenades if you have them."

A later broadcast from the clandestine radio, monitored in Calcutta, broadcast an appeal from Rahman urging East Pakistanis to fight the troops in the streets and calling on neighboring countries and the United Nations to come to East Pakistan's assistance. UN officials said East Pakistan had already asked for UN membership.

The Press Trust of India, quoting sources on the border with East Pakistan's Chittagong district, said Rahman's "Bengal Liberation Army" had captured the radio station at the port city of Chittagong after a battle with Pakistani troops.

Pakistani President Yahya Khan, in accusing Rahman and his Awami (People's) League followers of treason in a Radio Pakistan broadcast, said he had ordered the army to take whatever steps necessary "to restore the authority of the (federal) government" in East Pakistan.

The presidential broadcast came from Karachi in West Pakistan. The government imposed total censorship in both the east and west sections of the country, divided by 1000 miles of Indian territory.

The 75 million East Pakistanis are primarily Bengalis, who speak a different language and differ culturally from the 55 million Punjabis of West Pakistan.

A State Department spokesman in Washington said Americans reaching the US consulate in East Pakistan had reported that Pakistani troops and tanks had spread through Dacca and "extensive firing, including the use of tanks," comments closely and with

Press officials Charles Bray said reports coming from Consul General Arch K. Blood in Dacca were fragmentary, however.

"We are watching developments closely and with concern," Bray said.

There are no plans now to evacuate the approximately 1100 Americans, including 200 officials and their dependents, now in East Pakistan.

Rahman, who is called familiarly "Mujib," has been a political activist seeking autonomy for East Pakistan since the country was given independence by Britain in 1947. He has been arrested and jailed six times since 1948 for his political activity, the last time in 1968.