

President says traitors must be punished

Delhi, March 26.—Shaikh Mujibur Rahman tonight proclaimed East Pakistan the Sovereign Independent People's Republic of Bangla Desh, according to a clandestine radio report monitored near the East Pakistan border.

The Press Trust of India (P.T.I.) published the report which was monitored at Agartala, in the Indian territory of Tripura, about 56 miles east of Dacca. P.T.I. said that the broadcast was not made by the Shaikh himself but by an unidentified announcer.

The broadcast said that troops of the East Bengal Regiment, the East Pakistan Rifles, and the "entire police force" had surrounded West Pakistan troops in Chittagong, Comilla, Sylhet, Jessore, Barisal and Khulna, and that heavy fighting was continuing.

A later message said that forces loyal to Shaikh Mujibur had captured the Chittagong station of Radio Pakistan forcing troops to retreat after fierce fighting.

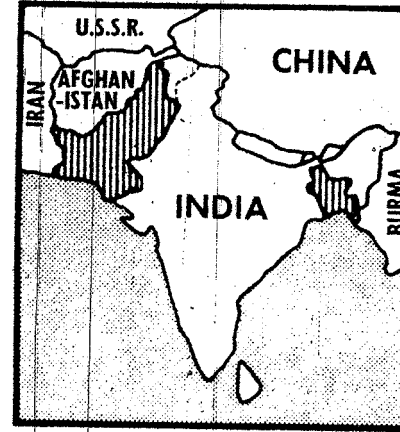
It added that West Pakistan forces were hunting for Shaikh Mujibur, who was said to have gone underground after the fighting began.

[Reports from Calcutta said Shaikh Mujibur had crossed into Indian territory pursued by Pakistani troops. The Indian Defence Ministry denied that any Pakistani forces had crossed the frontier.]

The broadcast called upon the people of "free Bangla Desh" to continue their movement for independence "until the last enemy soldier has vanished". It said that the Shaikh was "the only leader of the people of independent Bangla Desh" and his command should be obeyed to save the country from "the ruthless dictatorship of West Pakistanis".

Opposition Members of India's Parliament urged the Government to give the East Pakistani "freedom fighters" total support. Government spokesmen replied that the situation was being watched closely; there was to be a Cabinet meeting tomorrow, and the chief of the Indian Army staff, had cancelled his appointments and returned to Delhi.

President Yahya Khan said



in a nationwide radio broadcast tonight that the Shaikh's Awami League, which won an overwhelming majority of seats in East Pakistan in the elections for the National Assembly in December, would be completely banned.

He said that the Shaikh had flouted the authority of the Government and attacked the integrity of Pakistan. "This crime will not go unpunished".

He described the Shaikh's action in starting his non-cooperation movement as "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 photographs of the father of the nation. They have tried to run a parallel Government. They have created turmoil, terror and insecurity".

Of his recent talks in Dacca with the Shaikh, he said: "His obstinacy, his obduracy and absolute refusal to talk sense lead to only one conclusion—the man and his party are enemies of Pakistan. They want East Pakistan to break away completely from Pakistan."

He assured Pakistanis that his aim remained the same—namely, the transfer of power to the elected representatives of the people. As soon as the situation permits, I will take fresh steps towards the achievement of this objective."

Meanwhile, he said, all political activity throughout Pakistan would be banned, there would be a complete censorship of the press and a curfew would be imposed on Dacca and all other cities of East Pakistan.

The martial law authorities said later, according to moni-

tored reports, that anyone seen on the streets during the hours of curfew would be shot on sight.

In his broadcast tonight, President Yahya revealed that Shaikh Mujibur had proposed an interim period between the withdrawal of martial law and the meeting of the National Assembly during which provincial governments would be set up and the National Assembly would first sit as two committees, one composed of East Pakistan members, the other of West Pakistan members.

The President said he was ready to agree in principle if he received the unequivocal agreement of all political leaders, as otherwise "a vacuum would be created and chaotic conditions would ensue".

The Press Trust of India, quoting clandestine radio reports from East Pakistan, spoke of heavy casualties in the fighting between East and West Pakistan armed forces and severe fighting was said to be taking place in Dacca and several other parts.

[A United Press correspondent in Petrapole, an Indian town on the East Pakistan frontier, reported that gunfire was clearly audible from Benapole just across the border.]

The fighting is reported to have broken out at midday when West Pakistan troops moved in to seize men of the East Pakistan Rifles in their barracks at Dacca.

According to some clandestine radio bulletins, the East Pakistan Rifles have about 18,000 men in their ranks, of whom two thirds are from the eastern wing. There are also believed to be about 100,000 militiamen.

Reports in Calcutta said at least 10,000 troops had landed at East Pakistan ports, bringing in the province.

[The State Department in Washington said it was reaching the United States consulate in East Pakistan reported that West Pakistan troops and tanks were moving through Dacca, including machine-guns and tanks, was un-

The worsening crisis began reports that at least 100 had been killed and 100 injured. Machine-gunned the Rangpur district on Wednesday.

President Yahya flew to Dacca, East Pakistan for peace talks with the Shaikh Mujibur to solve the crisis threatening to tear the country apart.

They had been seen by Bhutto, the West Pakistani leader of the People's Party who has seats in the western wing.

[Mr. Bhutto arrived in Dacca tonight from Lahore and declared that "Pakistan has last been saved".]

Violence had broken out yesterday in West Pakistan, a 10-hour curfew was imposed on the Punjab province and Lyallpur after a day of clashes.

The clashes broke out between the People's Guards and the wing of Mr. Bhutto's party, who defied an official order to march through the city.

Our Diplomatic Service writes: There have been reports of casualties in British communities in East Pakistan or of damage to property. There may be about 600 British in the eastern wing of Dacca.

London demonstrators said a policeman was injured and people were arrested after some 300 East Pakistani students hurled other missiles at the High Commission in Square, Belgrave Square, London.

Shaikh Mujibur Khan

Leading a

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Reports in Calcutta said that at least 10,000 West Pakistan troops had landed at East Pakistan ports, bringing the total now in the province to about 70,000.

[The State Department in Washington said that Americans reaching the United States Consulate in East Pakistan had reported that West Pakistan Army troops and tanks had spread through Dacca and "extensive firing, including the use of tanks", was under way.]

The worsening in the Pakistan crisis began yesterday with reports that at least 35 people had been killed and more than 100 injured when troops machine-gunned large crowds in the Rangpur and Chittagong district on Wednesday.

President Yahya Khan had flown to Dacca from West Pakistan for protracted talks with the Shaikh in an effort to solve the crisis which was threatening to tear Pakistan apart.

They had been joined by Mr. Bhutto, the West Pakistan political leader whose left-wing People's Party won a majority of seats in the western province

[Mr. Bhutto arrived in Karachi tonight from Dacca and declared that "Pakistan has at last been saved".]

Violence had also flared yesterday in West Pakistan, where a 10-hour curfew was clamped on the Punjab industrial town of Lyallpur after a day of clashes.

The clashes began when the People's Guards, the militant wing of Mr. Bhutto's party, defied an official ban and marched through the streets.—
Reuter, U.P.I. and A.P.

Our Diplomatic Correspondent writes: There have been no reports of casualties among the British community in East Pakistan or of damage to British property. There are believed to be about 600 British subjects in the eastern wing, mostly in Dacca.

London demonstration: A policeman was injured and eight people were arrested last night after some 300 shouting Pakistani students hurled stones and other missiles at the Pakistani High Commission in Lowndes Square, Belgravia.

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