

DESH DECLARES

Rahman's Step Follows Army Crackdown

CIVIL WAR ERUPTS IN EAST PAKISTAN

Awami League Leaders Go Underground

PAKISTAN'S EASTERN WING, RECHRISTENED THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF BANGLA DESH BY SHEIKH MUJIBUR RAHMAN IN A CLANDESTINE RADIO BROADCAST, WAS IN THE THROES OF A CIVIL WAR ON FRIDAY WITH WEST WING TROOPS RESORTING TO FORCE TO REGAIN CONTROL AND THE PEOPLE, AIDED BY THE EAST PAKISTAN RIFLES AND THE POLICE, RESISTING THE ATTEMPT, REPORTS UNI.

HEAVY FIGHTING WAS GOING ON IN DACCA, CHITTAGONG, SYLHET, COMILLA AND OTHER TOWNS, ACCORDING TO REPORTS FROM ACROSS THE BORDER GATHERED BY UNI BUREAUS IN SHILLONG AND CALCUTTA AND CORRESPONDENTS CLOSE TO THE BORDER IN THE EASTERN SECTOR. CASUALTIES WERE BELIEVED TO BE HEAVY.

EMISSARY SENT TO SEEK AID

SHILLONG, Mar 26.—An emissary of Bangla Desh had been sent abroad to seek the help of "foreign Powers", Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra reported tonight, says UNI.

Without mentioning the name of the emissary, the mode of his transport from the troubled East wing and the names of the foreign Powers, the Betar Kendra appealed to "everyone" to help the cause of Bangla Desh.

The radio called the emissary a "liaison officer" of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, but it did not name any place where the emissary was sent.

The broadcast instructed all villagers of East Bengal to possess arms "forthwith" to resist the West Pakistani troops.

Mr Rahman and other Awami League leaders had gone underground, according to highly reliable reports received in Gauhati by PTI and UNI. A later report said Pakistan troops went hunting for them but could not find them.

Speaking over "Swadhin Bangla" (Free Bengal) Betar Kendra, Mr Rahman later proclaimed the birth of an independent Bangla Desh.

The declaration was made shortly before General Yahya Khan went on the air in the West wing to announce that the army had been instructed to reassert the Government's authority in the East wing. He called Mr Rahman and his followers traitors.

Mr Rahman in his broadcast declared defiantly: "We shall not die like cats and dogs—suburbidie as worthy children of Bangla Desh (Free Bengal)", adding: "The flag of Bangla Desh is flying in all villages of Bangla Desh".

The broadcast said personnel of the East Bengal Regiment, the East Pakistan Rifles and the entire police force had surrounded

West Pakistani troops in Chittagong, Comilla, Sylhet, Jessore, Barisal and Khulna.

Heavy fighting was continuing in

An announcer on the clandestine radio station, evidently located in the northern region of East Bengal, said: "The Sheikh has declared the 75 million people of East Pakistan as citizens of the sovereign independent Bangla Desh".

The broadcast called upon the people to resist the current movement till the last enemy soldier was vanquished. It said Mr Rahman was the only leader of the people of independent Bangla Desh and his commands should be obeyed by all sections of people to save the country from the ruthless dictatorship of West Pakistanis.

Mr Rahman in his broadcast asked the people "to resist the

YAHYA CALLS RAHMAN A TRAITOR

President Yahya Khan in a broadcast on Friday night charged Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with committing an act of treason and insulting the Pakistan national flag, reports PTI.

He said the Awami League leader and his followers "are enemies of Pakistan".

He said: "They want Pakistan to break; this is a crime which will not go unpunished".

General Yahya Khan said it had been decided to ban all political activity in the country. As far as the Awami League was concerned, it was completely banned as a political party.

President Yahya Khan said it had been decided to impose Press censorship. As soon as the situation permitted he would take fresh steps for effective transfer of power to elected representatives of the people.

The General earlier gave details of his efforts to arrive at a "reasonable solution" of the political crisis.

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"FREEDOM AT ALL COSTS"

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enemy forces at any cost in every corner of Bangla Desh".

"May Allah bless you and help in your struggle for freedom from the enemy, he said.

Mr Rahman said: "Pakistan armed forces suddenly attacked the East Pakistan Rifle base at Pielkhana and Rajabag police station in Dacca at zero hours on March 26 killing a number of unarmed people. Fierce fighting is going on with East Pakistan Rifles at Dacca.

"People are fighting gallantly with the enemy for the cause of freedom of Bangla Desh. Every section of the people of Bangla Desh are asked to resist the enemy forces at any cost in every corner of Bangla Desh. May Allah bless you and help in your struggle for freedom from the enemy Jal Bangla"

The first victim of the military crackdown in the province was Dacca Betar Kendra, the world's only source of news from East Pakistan. Troops seized the radio station early on Friday and announced a 24-hour curfew in Dacca and its surrounding areas.

When the radio came back on the air it announced itself as "Radio Pakistan, Dacca" and broadcast 16 martial law orders.

All flights between Karachi and Dacca have been suspended and teleprinter links between the two cities cut.

At least 10,000 West Pakistani troops have landed at Chittagong and Chalna (Khulna district) during the last 24 hours. They arrived in the five ships and have since been dispersed to the three cantonments in Dacca, Comilla and Jessore. This brings the total number of troops in East Pakistan to 70,000.