

WHERE IS SHEIKH MUJIB?

Both sides claim supremacy in fighting

By Gerald Ratzin

NEW DELHI, India, March 29 (Reuter) — The whereabouts of East Pakistan's breakaway leader, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, remained a mystery today as both the army and the rebels claimed supremacy in the war-torn east.

The absence of on-the-spot reports from the troubled area, compounded by conflicting estimates of developments

there, further clouded an already chaotic situation.

Sheikh Mujib, who declared independence Thursday for the 73 million people of the east, was reported by the official Radio Pakistan to have been arrested.

But other reports, believed to come from the Sheikh's supporters, said he was directing the "liberation struggle" from

the eastern city of Chittagong.

Rift widens

The crisis was widened today by the threat of a deepening of the rift between Pakistan and India as a direct result of events in the east, which is separated from West Pakistan by 1,000 miles of Indian territory.

Pakistan Radio last night said calm prevailed

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in all major eastern towns and the countryside with the army in control.

But clandestine radio stations, said to be manned by Awami League supporters of Sheikh Mujib, asserted that heavy fighting was still in progress and reported the capture of several key towns from West Pakistan troops.

Strict press censorship is in force and virtually all foreign correspondents were flown out of the eastern capital of Dacca Friday.

Radio Pakistan said the situation was quiet in Dacca and that the curfew would be lifted again today from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Banks were told

to reopen and government and other workers were asked to return to

NEH DELHI, March 29 (UPI) — Free Bengal Radio claimed today that combined forces of the Pakistan army, navy and air force have killed at least 300,000 East Pakistanis in the past 48 hours.

The broadcast, monitored in Shillong, also announced fierce fighting was in progress in Dacca.

The radio also said in a broadcast monitored in Calcutta that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's liberation army recaptured radio Dacca. The radio went off the air at noon and did not broadcast its usual late afternoon news program.

their jobs. But all accounts held by the Awami

League were frozen.

The radio conceded that there had been trouble in Khulna, about 30 miles from the Indian border, and attributed it to "mob of miscreants." The Press Trust of India (PTI) quoted travelers reaching India as saying the martial law administrator at Khulna had been seriously wounded.

The official radio also said the situation in Chittagong, East Pakistan's main port, was improving. According to the army-controlled Radio Dacca, several thousand troops had been airlifted to Chittagong and the martial law authorities had asked for more reinforcements from West Pakistan.

Bangla Desh

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"Free Bangla Radio," monitored in Calcutta announced the establishment of a provisional government of Bangla Desh (Bengali nation) under Maj. Jia Khan, described as the head of the liberation army."

The clandestine station said Sheikh Mujib would guide the government from Chittagong, where he was directing the "liberation struggle."

Observers here were puzzled as to why he had not been named to head the provisional government if he were free.

The "liberation army," through unconfirmed reports reaching India, claimed to be holding Chittagong, Comilla, Rangpur, Saidpur, and to have seized army cantonments at Jessore and Khulna. They were resisting in the face of severe shelling and bombing, the reports said.

Meddling

The simmering Indo-Pakistan dispute was brought into the crisis when the Pakistan government accused India of interference in its domestic affairs. It also charged that India had set up a clandestine radio on a ship in the river Hoogly near Calcutta which was broadcasting concocted stories about the situation in East Pakistan.

India repudiated both allegations as baseless.

At public meeting in Delhi and Bombay, political leaders of all parties called on the Indian government to recognize the provisional Bangla Desh government.