

NEW DEMANDS SET BY EAST PAKISTANI

Break With Western Wing
of Country Is Averted

By Reuters

KARACHI, Pakistan, March 7 —Sheik Mujibur Rahman, East Pakistan's nationalist leader, offered breathing space today in the Pakistan crisis by issuing new demands rather than forcing a break with the western wing of the country.

Sheik Mujib said at a public meeting in Dacca that he was demanding an end to martial law and a return to popular rule before he would consider attending the National Assembly meeting called by President Agha Mohammad Yahya Khan for March 25, the Pakistani radio reported.

[The Associated Press reported that Sheik Mujib also called for partial strikes in East Pakistan, ordering that all government offices, courts and schools be closed and that no revenue be paid to the Government starting Monday.]

There had been fears that the 50-year-old leader of the Awami League would declare independence for East Pakistan, precipitating a civil war.

Instead, he set four conditions that he said must be met before he would attend the Assembly, the radio said. The conditions were that martial law be ended, that troops return to their barracks, that an inquiry be held into killings in strife-torn East Pakistan last week and that power be transferred to the elected representatives of the people.

His Reply to President

The demands were Sheik Mujib's reply to President Yahya's announcement yesterday of the new date for convening the Assembly, charged with drafting a new democratic constitution for Pakistan.

The President had postponed the opening session of the Assembly, originally set for last Wednesday, after it was boycotted by the West Pakistani political leader, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. The postponement in turn set off strikes and rioting in Dacca.

In elections last December, Sheik Mujib's Awami League won almost all the Assembly seats from East Pakistan and a majority of the whole Assembly.

Mr. Bhutto, a former Foreign Minister whose West Pakistan-based People's party has the second largest bloc of Assembly seats, has now agreed to attend the Assembly meeting.

Sheik Seeks Autonomy

Sheik Mujib, champion of the impoverished Bengali masses of East Pakistan, has been hailed by his followers as the founder of Bangla Desh, or Bengal Nation.

It was his call for virtual autonomy for the nation's eastern wing—separated from West Pakistan by 1,000 miles of Indian territory—that brought on the present crisis.

He told his followers today that they must be prepared to continue their struggle for emancipation "at any cost," according to the radio report.

But he also was quoted as saying, "We can live like brothers if we solve our problems."

Sheik Mujib said that he was not consulted before the President announced the date of the Assembly session, and he described this as a "lack of consideration" for the leader of the majority party.