

Demoralized East Pakistanis Abandon Provisional Capital

By DENNIS NEELD

Chuadanga, Pakistan, April 16 (AP)—Demoralized forces of East Pakistan abandoned this provisional capital without a fight today. Thousands of refugees streamed out of the city toward the Indian border.

Pakistani government troops captured Kushtia, 30 miles to the north, and resistance everywhere appeared to be crumbling.

Retreat Broadcast

The Indian government radio, consistently partisan, spoke for the first time of a Bangla Desh retreat and reported that the followers of Sheik Mujibur Rahman were turning to guerrilla warfare. Bangla Desh (Bengali Nation) is the name the rebels gave East Pakistan when they declared its independence three weeks ago.

There was little evidence of guerrilla fighting in the Chuadanga region, however. Bangla Desh troops appeared battle shy and ready to throw away their arms. There was confusion

everywhere. Rebel officers had virtually given up the fight.

Chuadanga, a city of about 25,000 people which the recently formed Bangla Desh government established as its provisional capital, was almost deserted.

Refugees said Chuadanga was shelled and then strafed by two Pakistani Air Force jets shortly before noon.

Buildings Damaged

When foreign newsmen reached the town later, several streets were pitted with small craters and the walls of the police station were pocked by machine-gun bullets. Several buildings were damaged by rocket or mortar fire.

A dead cow and two dead dogs still lay in the main street. Twelve people were said to have been killed in the attack, but there were no officials on hand to verify the report.

A Bengali peasant driving a little herd of cows and carrying a goat around his neck emerged from an alley.

The entire town was shuttered and empty. Green, red and white Bangla Desh flags hung from deserted buildings.

The headquarters of the commander in chief, Maj. Mohammed Osman, were abandoned. Arm chairs still stood on the balcony. There were unconfirmed reports he had left for the nearby town of Maypur near the Indian border.

3 Men In Jeep

A military Jeep headed out of town with three wounded men lying in the back.

A lone pedicab still plied for hire and a handful of Bangla Desh partisans—Mukhti Fauj (liberation forces)—cycled off into the distance with rifles slung over their shoulders.

There was no sign of the Pakistan Army or of any attempt by the Bangla Desh fighters to defend the town.

According to some reports, Pakistani troops had established an advance post three miles from Chuadanga but their main force probably was much further away.

Long columns of refugees straggled out of Chuadanga by every route, heading for the Indian border 15 miles to the west.

Officials in Calcutta said 100,000 refugees so far have reached India. Makeshift camps have been set up on the border, but many refugees are finding shelter with relatives and friends.

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Food is being provided in the camps by the Indian government.

The Flight Continues

The refugees were leaving on foot and by mule and creaking bullock cart, on bicycles and rickety pedicabs. Hundreds jammed ferry boats across a border river.

All carried their belongings in bundles on their heads or slung from bamboo poles across their shoulders. They carried cooking pots, oil lamps and their sleeping mats. One family balanced a complete bamboo hut on a bullock cart. A woman had the keys of her home tied to her veil.

Too weary to continue any further, an old Bengali sat by the wayside staring into the distance. His family had gone on without him.

Newsmen reached Chuadanga aboard a truck carrying food to a nearby police station. It was escorted by a **Bangla Desh** soldier wearing a green tin hat and carrying a World War II rifle.

He stopped at every hamlet and at gunpoint ordered a handful of men to board the truck. Most of them had slipped away before the next halt and the object of the exercise was incomprehensible.

Soldier Dozes

At a command post close to the border the Bengal officer in charge dozed in a canvas arm chair, waking occasionally to denounce the United States for having failed to come to the assistance of **Bangla Desh**. His Jeep stood outside ready for a quick getaway. Troops milled around listless and demoralized. No effort was made to throw up defenses.

After three weeks of resistance, **Bangla Desh**, it seemed, was dying.

Raids By Indians Alleged

Karachi, **Pakistan**, April 16 (AP) — Indian saboteurs tried to blow up two giant power plants in East **Pakistan** today, but were foiled by the Army and suffered heavy casualties, Radio **Pakistan** reported.