

# **E. Pakistan Rebels Hail Free State**

(From Tribune Wire Services)

**NEW DELHI, India, April 17**—East Pakistani rebels issued a formal declaration of independence today in a ceremony in a mango grove near the Indian border.

The Press Trust of India, reporting from Kushtia in East Pakistan, said Nazrul Islam, the acting president of the provisional Bangla Desh [Bengal Land] government, read a proclamation to rebel officials and newsmen in the grove at Baidyanathtala, 120 miles northeast of Calcutta.

Nazrul told the group that Bengal lost its freedom to the British in a mango grove in 1757 and it was fitting that the free government of Bangla Desh should be established in another grove in the same district.

Nazrul is acting president of the rebel government in the absence of Sheik Mujibur Rahman, the East Pakistani leader believed arrested by Pakistan authorities shortly after civil war broke out March 25. Meanwhile, reports said the Pakistan government has decided to court martial Rahman.

The rebels announced their independence March 26 but said the ceremonies today made it official. Officers of the new government were reported to have taken oaths of office a week ago.

All-India Radio said Pakistan planes had bombed the provisional government headquarters at Chuadanga, 10 miles from the Indian border. It said 50 civilians were killed and 100 injured.

It said most of the people had fled Chuadanga. However, the rebels were reported to be regrouping in the Jessore area to continue the fight against the Pakistan army.

Radio Pakistan said that Pakistani troops had ambushed an Indian supply column near Benapole along the India-East Pakistan border. "The infiltrators were killed and their war materials seized," the radio said.

