

Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendro and Bangladesh's Declaration of Independence



From left: Mr. Ashikul Islam, Dr. Syed Anwar Ali, Mr. Dilip Chandra Das.

This post is coauthored by MMR Jalal and Mash. [[Original Link](#)]

The last message from Dacca Betar Kendro was delivered by announcer Nazma Akhtar.

She declared: (01)

"The 75 million people of Bangla Desh, freedom-loving as they are, have been subjected to brutal genocide by the army.

"The people of Bangla Desh will shed more blood rather than forget the injury. We will never allow the sacrifice to go in vain."

Soon after the Pakistan army took over Dacca Betar Kendro in the early hours of March 26, 1971. The Pakistanis renamed the radio station as "Radio Pakistan Dacca" and used it to announce martial law orders. The Pakistan army's attempt at silencing the voice of the Bengalis had begun. Bengalis however fought back. The war of Bangladesh's Liberation had begun.

On the evening of that same day a small radio station started broadcasting defiantly in the face of the Pakistan military's bloody onslaught on the Bengalis. The clandestine radio station, located in Kalurghat north of the city of Chittagong, declared to the world: "The Sheikh has declared the 75 million people of East Pakistan as citizens of the sovereign independent Bangla Desh." The station called itself [Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendro \(Free Bengal Radio Station\)](#).(02)

For the next four days the radio station engaged in a propaganda battle with the Pakistan army. While the Pakistan army claimed all was calm in Bangladesh, the clandestine radio station declared liberation forces were marching on the capital and Pakistani soldiers were surrendering. While the Pakistan army claimed it had crushed the will of the Bengalis, the clandestine radio station declared that the Pakistani military governor General Tikka Khan had been assassinated. While the Pakistan army claimed the Bengalis had been defeated, the clandestine radio station claimed to have formed a provisional government of Bangladesh.

In those early days of the genocide Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendro declared to the world that Bengalis would not give up, that Bengalis would fight, and that the sacrifice would not go in vain. And the world listened. The small radio station in Kalurghat in those four days refused to be silenced. It rallied the morale of the Bengalis and it frustrated the Pakistani army.

The men and women of Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendro and the men of the East Bengal Regiment who defended the station from attack, and announced to the world that an organized Bengali resistance was fighting back, ensured that Pakistani tanks and airplanes could not silence the voice of the 75 million people of Bangladesh.

[\[Click here \(03\)\]](#) for recordings of broadcasts from Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendro]

[\[Click here \(04\)\]](#) for foreign press reports on Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendro and the Declaration of Independence]

[\[Click here \(05\)\]](#) to view other relevant documents]

Recently the Bangladesh military government [decided to rewrite \(06\)](#) the history books in Bangladesh to more accurately reflect the history of how the independence of Bangladesh was declared on March 26, 1971. In the tug of war between the Awami League and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, the history of Bangladesh has been rewritten several times over the past three decades. The AFP [reports \(06a\)](#) on the controversy and the recent change:

School textbooks in Bangladesh have been revised to reflect the latest government version of the role of two slain leaders when the country won independence in 1971, an official said Wednesday.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who led Bangladesh's bitter independence struggle against Pakistan, is now once again referred to as the "father of the nation," said Mosir Uddin, head of the National Curriculum and Textbook Board.

Sheikh Mujib, who died in a military coup in 1975, is credited with the independence declaration at midnight on March 25, 1971 and referred to by his popular name of "Bangabandhu" or friend of Bengalis in the new texts.

In another change, former president Ziaur Rahman, who was slain in an attempted military coup in 1981, was acknowledged to have made an independence proclamation "on behalf of Bangabandhu at Kalurghat Radio Station in Chittagong, on March 27", he added.

School textbooks containing the changes have already been printed and would be read in the schools from January 2008, Uddin said.

The place of the two leaders in the nation's history remains a deeply sensitive subject in Bangladesh.

Since 1991, textbooks have been subject to alterations by governments led alternately by Sheikh Mujib's daughter, Sheikh Hasina Wajed, and Ziaur's widow, Khaleda Zia. The two women are bitter rivals and lead the country's two main political parties.

Supporters of Sheikh Hasina's Awami League believe that independence was proclaimed by a regional party leader acting on the instructions of Sheikh Mujib.

Members of Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), however, say it was the former army chief Ziaur who made the historic proclamation.

In revising the history books, the current government [relied \(06b\)](#) on the government's official history of the war of independence published in 1982:

"This is more authentic than the others we have seen in the past. This is based on authentic documents. All the references are taken from the official history of the war of independence published by the information ministry in 1982," he said.

The official history has given rise to the following timeline:

- Sheikh Mujibur Rahman wrote down an independence declaration sometime after midnight on the morning of March 26, 1971
- Sheikh Mujib's declaration was broadcast on the day of March 26, 1971 from Kalurghat transmitter in Chittagong. However, very few people heard that broadcast.
- Ziaur Rahman, then Major Ziaur Rahman, broadcast a declaration on behalf of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on March 27, 1971 from Kalurghat that was picked up by the foreign press and the world came to know about Bangladesh's declaration of independence.

The above timeline is reflected in the Wikipedia article on [Bangladesh's Declaration of Independence \(07\)](#), in the Wikipedia article on the [Kalurghat radio transmitter \(08\)](#), and in the Virtual Bangladesh [article \(09\)](#) on the Declaration of Independence, among others.

According to all three articles, the timeline suggests that until Major Ziaur Rahman broadcast his speech on March 27th, the outside world did not hear about Bangladesh's independence. For example, the Wikipedia Kalurghat article [states \(10\)](#):

An English translation of the first declaration of independence by M A Hannan on 26th March 1971...It is believed that the first declaration of independence was not widely noticed by international media and the international community.

Major Ziaur Rahman's opening words in Bangla, "Ami Major Zia Bolchi", that is, "I am Major Zia speaking", were picked up by news agencies, and were given wide publicity across the globe. *Ami Major Zia Bolchi* were followed by declaration of a sovereign and independent Bangladesh...

These words were picked up first by a Japanese ship anchored in Chittagong harbour, and were flashed to the world. News of Zia's declaration was first broadcast by Radio Australia, and the world at large came to know of birth of Bangladesh.

The Virtual Bangladesh article [states \(11\)](#):-

Soon after the Pakistani army crackdown on the night of March 25, 1971, the first declaration of independence was made over the radio by M. A. Hannan. Very few people heard this declaration and Major Zia's famous "Ami Major Zia Bolchhi" declaration over Chittagong radio on March 27 was picked up by foreign news agency and was given wide publicity.

The facts and the available documentary evidence however paint a starkly different picture.

A survey of leading English language newspapers from every continent in the world clearly shows that the world came to know about the independence of Bangladesh from Sheikh Mujib's original message received in Calcutta on the morning of March 26th and from broadcasts from Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendro on the evening of March 26th.

The Statesman published from New Delhi on March 27, 1971 explains the two messages in the following [article \(12\)](#):

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman made two broadcasts on Friday following the Pakistan troops move to crush his movement, says UNI.

In a message to the world broadcast by an unidentified wireless station monitored in Calcutta, the Awami League leader declared that "the enemy" had struck and that the people were fighting gallantly.

In a subsequent broadcast over a radio station, describing itself as "Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra" (free Bengal wireless station), monitored in Shillong, he proclaimed Bangla Desh an independent republic.

The Statesman published from Calcutta on March 27, 1971 lays out the timeline of the two messages from the previous day in the following [article \(13\)](#):

Mr. Rahman, in a message to the world broadcast by an unidentified wireless station monitored in Calcutta this morning declared that the enemy had struck and that the people were fighting gallantly.

In a subsequent broadcast over a radio station, describing itself as "Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra" (free Bengal wireless station) monitored in Shillong, Mr. Rahman proclaimed Bangla Desh an independent republic.

The Times of India published from Bombay on March 27, 1971 provides the text of the message received from the first broadcast in the morning in the following [article \(14\)](#):

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman said in a message to the world today that the people of Bangla Desh were fighting gallantly for their freedom.

The message, broadcast by an unidentified wireless station, was picked up here.

It was believed that the station was located at Chittagong or Chalna in East Pakistan.

Mr. Rahman said in the message: "Pakistani armed forces suddenly attacked the East Pakistan Rifles base at Bilkhana and Rajarbagh near here at zero hours today, killing a lot of

"Stern fighting is going on with the EPR in Dacca and the police force. The people are fighting the enemy gallantly for the cause of the freedom of Bangla Desh.

"Every section of the people of Bangla Desh must resist the enemy forces at all costs in every corner of Bangla Desh.

"May Allah bless you and help you in the struggle for freedom from the enemy.

"Jai Bangla."

The Statesman from New Delhi on March 27, 1971 also provides the text of the first message in the following [article \(15\)](#):

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. Jai Bangla."

In the evening on March 26, 1971 Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendro at Kalurghat came alive for the first time and broadcast multiple messages. These broadcasts were all monitored and reported on. Most significantly, in one report from Kalurghat on the evening of March 26, 1971, the announcer was monitored in India as saying: "The Sheikh has declared the 75 million people of East Pakistan as citizens of the sovereign independent Bangla Desh." This announcement as well as the previous message was flashed around the world on [news wires \(16\)](#) on the evening of March 26th, 1971. Bangladesh's declaration of independence thus became front page news on nearly all, if not all, major newspapers around the world published the following day on March 27, 1971. A sampling of the reports from March 27th, 1971 on English language newspapers on every continent of the world announcing Sheikh Mujib's declaration of independence can be found at the [end of this post \(17\)](#). There is simply no doubt that Bangladesh's declaration of independence was heard around the world on March 26, 1971 from Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendro at Kalurghat and reported on in world newspapers the following morning.

According to an [article \(18\)](#) in the Bangladesh Observer published on April 23, 1972 the first persons to broadcast Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's declaration of independence in the evening on March 26, 1971 from Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendro in English were Ashikul Islam, a WAPDA engineer, and in Bengali, Abul Kashem Sandwipi. Later in the evening M. A. Hannan also broadcast the declaration in a speech.

Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendro continued to broadcast from Kalurghat from March 26th to March 30th, when Kalurghat was abandoned due to Pakistani air attacks.

On March 28, 1971 Indian newspapers reported that a Major "Jia Khan" or "Zia Khan" had also broadcast an announcement on March 27th. Zia Khan was identified by the announcer as "Chief of the Liberation Army of Bangla Desh".

The Statesman published from New Delhi on March 28, 1971 [reported \(19\)](#):

In another broadcast the radio claimed that freedom-loving people of Baluchistan, the North West Frontier Province and Pakhtoonistan had declared independence, following the example of Bangla Desh.

The person who spoke on the radio was identified as "Major Jia, Chief of the Liberation Army of Bangla Desh".

The Times of India published from Bombay on March 28, 1971 [reported \(20\)](#):

Major Zia Khan, chief of the Bangla Desh liberation army, declared over the free Bangla Radio tonight that Bangla Desh would be rid of the Pakistani military administration in two or three days.

The West Punjabi soldiers "will be annihilated" if they did not surrender, he said.

The reports misidentified Major Ziaur Rahman as "Zia Khan" or "Jia Khan". The reports did not make any mention of a declaration of independence by Major Zia on March 27, 1971. These two reports in the Indian newspapers on March 28 were not picked up by the world press. Beyond the Indian newspapers, a survey of major English language newspapers around the world on March 28, 1971 found no reports on Major Zia's broadcast on March 27th. Some relevant news reports from March 28, 1971 can be found at the end of this post [here \(21\)](#).

On March 28, 1971 broadcasts from Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendro monitored in India announced that a provisional government of Bangla Desh had been formed and that Major Zia Khan or Major Jia Khan (again misidentifying Major Ziaur Rahman) had been declared the temporary head of the provisional government. The Kalurghat broadcasts announced that the provisional government "would be guided by Banga Bandhu Mujibur Rahman".

The Statesman published from New Delhi on March 29, 1971 [reported \(22\)](#) on a speech by Major Zia declaring himself the provisional head:

In a broadcast over the Free Bangla Radio Major Jia Khan, commander-in-chief of the "liberation army" said: "I hereby assume the powers of the provisional head of the liberation army of Swadhin Bangla Desh.

"As provisional head I order the freedom fighters of Bangla Desh to continue the struggle till ultimate victory. Jai Bangla". He said the enemy was bringing additional troops both by the sea and by the air.

He appealed to all peace-loving peoples of the world to come to help of "the democratic minded fighting people of Bangla Desh."

Major Jia claimed that the "liberation army" had killed 300 men of the Punjab Regiment at Comilla. Other men of the regiment fled at the end of the fighting.

This report of the formation of a "provisional government" with "Major Zia Khan" as its temporary head was picked up and widely reported in the world press on March 29, 1971. There is however no report of Major Zia's declaration of independence in the world press on March 29, 1971. A sampling of world news reports from March 29, 1971 can be found at the end of this post [here\(23\)](#).

The official Bangladesh government document on the Liberation War, published in 1982 as 15 volumes called *Bangladesh Swadhinata Juddho: Dalil Potro* and used by the current military government to alter the text books, contains the text of Major Ziaur Rahman's Declaration of Independence in Volume 3. It [reads \(24\)](#) as follows:

Major Zia, Provisional Commander-in-Chief of the Bangladesh Liberation Army, hereby proclaims, on behalf of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the independence of Bangladesh.

I also declare, we have already framed a sovereign, legal Government under Sheikh Mujibur Rahman which pledges to function as per law and the constitution. The new democratic Government is committed to a policy of non-alignment in international relations. It will seek friendship with all nations and strive for international peace. I appeal to all Government to mobilize public opinion in their respective countries against the brutal genocide in Bangladesh.

The Government under Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is sovereign legal Government of Bangladesh and is entitled to recognition from all democratic nations of the world.

The date for this speech is given in the *Dalil Potro* as March 27, 1971. The speech is sourced in the *Dalil Potro* to The Statesman published from New Delhi on March 27, 1971. However the March 27, 1971 Statesman published from New Delhi does not contain this speech.

The first reports of Major Zia's speech cited in the *Dalil Potro* appeared in the Indian newspapers on March 31, 1971. According to Indian reports the speech was broadcast from Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendro on the morning of March 30, 1971.

The Statesman published from New Delhi on March 31, 1971 [reported \(25\)](#) on page 9:

Calcutta, Mar 30 - The Government under Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is the sovereign legal Government of Bangla Desh and is entitled to recognition by all democratic countries of the world, Maj Jia Khan, provisional Commander-in-Chief of the Liberation Army, declared this morning, reports UNI.

In a broadcast over Free Bangla Radio on behalf of the Sheikh, Maj Jia Khan said: "The new democratic Government is committed to a policy of non-alignment in international relations. It will seek friendship with all nations and strive for international peace.

"We have already formed a sovereign legal Government under Sheikh Mujibur Rahman which pledges to function as per law and the constitution.

"We therefore appeal to all democratic and peace-loving countries of the world to immediately recognize the legal democratic Government of Bangla Desh."

He appealed to all Governments to mobilize public opinion in their respective countries against the "brutal genocide" in Bangla Desh.

Maj Jia Khan said the Pakistan Government was trying to confuse and deceive the people of the world through contradictory statements.

"But nobody will be deceived by Yahya Khan and his followers," he said.

The Times of India published from Bombay on March 31, 1971 [reported \(26\)](#) on page 15:

Calcutta, March 30. The Government under Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is the sovereign, legal Government of Bangla Desh and is entitled to "recognition from all democratic countries of the world." Major Zia Khan, Provisional Commander-in-Chief of the Liberation Army, declared this morning.

In a broadcast over Free Bangla Radio on behalf of the Sheikh, Maj. Zia Khan said: "The new democratic Government is committed to a policy of non-alignment in international relations. It will seek friendship with all nations and strive for international peace."

Maj. Zia Khan began the broadcast with these words: "I, Major Zia, Provisional Commander-in-Chief of the Bangla Liberation Army, hereby proclaim on behalf of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman the independence of Bangla Desh.

"I also declare," he continued, "we have already formed a sovereign legal government under Sheikh Mujibur Rahman which pledges to function as per law and the Constitution."


This speech by Major Zia on March 30 that was reported in the Indian press on March 31 was not widely reported in the world press. The declaration of independence, as announced on the morning of March 30, 1971 by Major Zia, was not reported in any of the English language world newspapers outside India that were surveyed. A sample of the world papers that did report on the March 30 speech can be found at the end of this post [here \(27\)](#).


After Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendro ended transmission at Kalurghat in the afternoon of March 30, 1971, Major Zia would make his way to Brahmanbaria and [meet up \(28\)](#) with Major Khalid Musharraf and Major Shafiullah on April 3, 1971. He would go on to serve as a sector commander under Colonel M.A.G. Osmani, the commander in chief of the Mukti Bahini (Bangladesh Liberation Army).


Contrary to the conventional wisdom that has developed over the last three decades due to the constant rewriting of Bangladesh's official history, the world press reports from late March 1971 make clear that Bangladesh's declaration of independence was widely reported throughout the world based on the broadcasts from Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendro on March 26th, 1971. There is no doubt that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's original message about attacks on EPR and police barracks in Dhaka at midnight was widely reported in the world press. Although Major Zia's broadcasts from Kalurghat on March 28th about the creation of a provisional government were widely reported in the world press, Major Ziaur Rahman was not credited in the world press for declaring the independence of Bangladesh.


Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendro Audio (March 28-30, 1971)


The following audio fragments are recordings of broadcasts from Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendro located at Kalurghat, Chittagong from March 28, 1971 to March 30, 1971. The recordings include broadcasts by Major Ziaur Rahman, Lieutenant Shamsheer Mobin Choudhury, as well as from the civilian announcers of Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendro. Broadcasts are in both English and Bengali.


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Foreign News Reports

March 27, 1971

The Statesman (New Delhi), India, March 27, 1971

Bangla Desh declares freedom - Rahman's step follows army crackdown (29).

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.

...

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, but shall die as worthy children of Bangla Ma (Mother Bengal)", adding, "The flag of Bangla Desh is flying in all villages of Bangla Desh."

...

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 of free Bangla Desh to continue 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 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. Jai Bangla."

The Statesman (New Delhi), India, March 27, 1971 *[Two steps to freedom \(30\)](#)*.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman made two broadcasts on Friday following the Pakistan troops move to crush his movement, says UNI.

In a message to the world broadcast by an unidentified wireless station monitored in Calcutta, the Awami League leader declared that "the enemy" had struck and that the people were fighting gallantly.

In a subsequent broadcast over a radio station, describing itself as "Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra" (free Bengal wireless station), monitored in Shillong, he proclaimed Bangla Desh an independent republic.

The Statesman (Calcutta), India, March 27, 1971
[Bangla Desh declares independence - Street fighting in Dacca and Chittagong \(31\)](#).

New Delhi, March 26

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman tonight proclaimed East Pakistan a "Soverign Independent People's Republic of Bangla Desh". The declaration, broadcast over a clandestine radio station, was made shortly before President Yahya Khan went on the air in the west wing to announce that he had ordered the Army to reassert its authority in the Eastern wing, says UNI and PTI.

In his clarion call in tune with the defiant mood of the people, who, aided by the East Pakistan Rifles and police, were fighting the west wing troops in different parts of Bangla Desh, said: "We shall not die like cats and dogs, but shall die as worthy children of Bangla Ma".

...

Mr. Rahman, in a message to the world broadcast by an unidentified wireless station monitored in Calcutta this morning declared that the enemy had struck and that the people were fighting gallantly.

In a subsequent broadcast over a radio station, describing itself as "Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra" (free Bengal wireless station) monitored in Shillong, Mr. Rahman proclaimed Bangla Desh an independent republic.

The Statesman (Calcutta), India, March 27, 1971 *Proclamation by Rahman (32)*.

Agartala, March 26

Broadcasting tonight from a clandestine radio station identified as the Voice of Independent Bangla Desh the announcer said Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has declared the 75-million people of East Pakistan as citizens of the sovereign independent Bangla Desh, says PTI.

The clandestine radio, evidently located in the northern region of East Pakistan, said that the East Bengal Regiment, the East Pakistan Rifles and the entire police force have rallied behind Mr. Rahman in the struggle for independence.

...

The broadcast called upon the people of free Bangla Desh to continue the current movement till the last enemy soldier is vanquished.

It said Mr. Rahman is 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.

Free Bangla Desh flags, the broadcast said, have been fluttering all over East Pakistan and millions of people led by the Awami League are ready to make any sacrifice to preserve the independence of Bangla Desh.

The Statesman (Calcutta), India, March 27, 1971

Chittagong Radio Station captured (33).

Shillong, March 26

Freedom fighters of Bangla Desh today captured the Chittagong Radio Station in East Pakistan.

The Times of India (Bombay), India, March 27, 1971

Mujib proclaims free Bangla Desh (34).

New Delhi, March 26

A "sovereign, independent People's Republic of Bangla Desh" was proclaimed by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman today even as President Yahya Khan ordered the army to "fully restore the authority" of his Government in the turbulent eastern wing.

The declaration, broadcast over "Voice of Independent Bangla Desh", said: "The sheikh has declared the 75 million people of East Pakistan citizens of independent Bangla Desh".

...

Shortly after, there were reports of heavy casualties in the civil war in boiling Bangla Desh. "The Voice of Independent Bangla Desh" announced in a broadcast that the reinforced West Pakistani troops which had fanned out all over the province had been surrounded in at least six cantonments.

It said the personnel of the East Bengal Regiment, the East Pakistan Rifles and the entire police had the troops surrounded in Chittagong, Comilla, Sylhet, Jessore, Barisal and Khulna.

The broadcast said heavy fighting was continuing.

...

Bangla Desh tonight appealed to the United Nations and to Asian-African countries to render it all assistance in its fight for freedom.

In a late night broadcast, Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra said: "The liberation war now going on in Bangla Desh is part of the Afro-Asian countries' movement for liberation from colonial domination."

...

Monitors, speculating on the location of the radio which was first heard this evening with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's unilateral declaration of independence, broadcast live, averred it might be the former Chittagong station of Radio Pakistan.

Radio Australia, however, said it was located in the north-east part of Bangla Desh.

The Times of India (Bombay), India, March 27, 1971

Gallant fight for freedom, Mujib tells the world (35).

Calcutta, March 26

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman said in a message to the world today that the people of Bangla Desh were fighting gallantly for their freedom.

The message, broadcast by an unidentified wireless station, was picked up here.

It was believed that the station was located at Chittagong or Chalna in East Pakistan.

Mr. Rahman said in the message: "Pakistani armed forces suddenly attacked the East Pakistan Rifles base at Bilkhana and Rajarbagh near here at zero hours today, killing a lot of

"Stern fighting is going on with the EPR in Dacca and the police force. The people are fighting the enemy gallantly for the cause of the freedom of Bangla Desh.

"Every section of the people of Bangla Desh must resist the enemy forces at all costs in every corner of Bangla Desh.

"May Allah bless you and help you in the struggle for freedom from the enemy. "Jai Bangla."

The Age, Australia, March 27, 1971

Dacca breaks with Pakistan (36).

Dacca, March 26

East Pakistan today declared itself independent of the central Government in Karachi.

The declaration followed a broadcast by President Yahya Khan outlawing East Pakistan's dominant political party, the Awami League, and accusing its leader, Sheik Mujibur Rahman, of treason.

Indian radio monitors reported that Sheik Mujib made the independence proclamation from a radio station believed captured by his supporters from army authorities.

The radio station called itself "Swadhin Bangla Betar Ketar Kendra (Free Bengal Radio Station)."

...

Wireless monitors in Calcutta said Sheik Mujib, in a special message, appealed to East

Pakistanis "to resist the enemy forces at all costs."

The monitors said the message was believed to have originated from a wireless transmission in either the port city of Chittagong or Chalna.

The message quoted Sheik Mujib as saying:

"Pakistani armed forces suddenly attacked the East Pakistan Rifles base at Bilkhana and Rajarbagh, at zero hours today, March 26, killing a lot of unarmed people.

"Bitter fighting is going on with the EPR in Dacca and the police force. The people are fighting the enemy gallantly for the cause of the freedom of Bangla Desh (Bengali nation).

"Every section of the people of Bangla Desh must resist the enemy forces at all costs in every corner of Bangla Desh.

"May Allah bless you and help you in the struggle for freedom from the enemy."

The Daily Telegraph, United Kingdom, March 27, 1971

Civil war flares in E. Pakistan (37).

New Delhi

Last night on a clandestine radio calling itself "The Voice of Bangla Desh" (Free Bengal), the Sheikh proclaimed the province "the Sovereign Independent People's Republic of Bangla Desh."

Earlier the Sheikh broadcast a message saying that the Army under the martial law governor, Gen. Tikkah Khan, made a sudden attack on the East Pakistan Rifles' base and on a Dacca police station, killing many people.

The Rifles have a base at Rajabg, a Dacca suburb.

Sheikh Mujib said: "People are fighting gallantly for the cause of freedom. May Allah bless you and help in your struggle for freedom."

Asahi Evening News, Japan, March 27, 1971

East Pakistan cut off from world as heavy fighting rocks cities (38).

Petrapole, West Bengal, March 26

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, leader of the now outlawed Awami League which tonight declared East Pakistan's independence, reportedly went underground with his top advisers.

Baltimore Sun, USA, March 27, 1971

10,000 civilians reported killed in Bengal strife (39).

New Delhi, Saturday, March 27 (Reuter)

Radio Pakistan announced today that Sheikh Mujib was arrested only hours after he proclaimed independence for East Pakistan, the Associated Press reported.

Forces loyal to the East Pakistan leader, who earlier had proclaimed an independent Bengali republic, were reported to have captured the Chittagong station of Radio Pakistan last night.

...

Earlier, a clandestine radio monitored in India said Sheikh Mujib had proclaimed East Pakistan the sovereign independent People's Republic of Bangla Desh (Bengali nation).

The Bangkok Post, Thailand, March 27, 1971 *[Pak](#)*
[near civil war \(40\).](#)

New Delhi, Friday

A civil war situation developed in Pakistan today as President Yahya Khan outlawed the Awami League of East Pakistan, as its leader, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman proclaimed independence for the province under the name of "Bangla Desh."

Indian radio monitors reported Sheikh Mujibur Rahman made the independence proclamation from a radio station believed captured by his supporters from army authorities, calling itself the "Free Bengal Radio Station."

The Boston Globe, USA, March 27, 1971

East Pakistan secedes, civil war breaks out (41).

New Delhi, India

A clandestine radio monitored in India said Sheikh Mujib, who first declared the independence of East Pakistan yesterday as the new People's Republic of Bangla Desh (Bengali Nation), had gone underground.

The broadcast, thought to originate from the northern region of East Pakistan, called on the people to fight until all enemy troops were vanquished.

The radio, describing itself as the Voice of Independent Bangla Desh, said West Pakistani troops had been surrounded by Bangla Desh forces in Chittagong, Comilla, Sylhet, Jessore, Barisal and Khulna.

The Bangla Desh forces were from the East Pakistani regiment, East Pakistan rifles and

police, the radio said.

The broadcast proclaimed Sheikh Mujib as the only leader of Bangla Desh, whose "commands should be obeyed by the people to save the country from the ruthless dictatorship of West Pakistanis."

...

A later broadcast from the clandestine radio, monitored in Calcutta, broadcast an appeal from Rahman urging East Pakistanis to fight the troops in the streets and calling on neighboring countries and the United Nations to come to East Pakistan's assistance. UN officials said East Pakistan had already asked for UN membership.

The Press Trust of India, quoting sources on the border with East Pakistan's Chittagong district, said Rahman's "Bengal Liberation Army" had captured the radio station at the port city of Chittagong after a battle with Pakistani troops.

Buenos Aires Herald, Argentina, March 27, 1971

Bengali independence declared by Mujib (42).

New Delhi

Sheikh Mujib ur-Rahman last night proclaimed East Pakistan the sovereign independent People's Republic of Bangla Desh, according to a clandestine radio report monitored near the East Pakistan border.

The declaration of independence came as fighting was reported to be raging between federal troops and followers of Sheikh Mujib. Firing was heard at the border, and reports coming from across spoke of heavy fighting.

...

The PTI said it was monitoring a clandestine radio station in East Pakistan on which Mujib, who had gone into hiding, declared the province a sovereign, independent nation. He urged his followers to "struggle for freedom from the enemy."

The news agency said the broadcast was being monitored in Agartala, capital of the Indian territory of Tripura, and that an unidentified announcer was reading the message he attributed to Mujib.

The broadcast said Pakistan federal troops had attacked the Khana base of the East Pakistan Rifles and a police station at midnight on Thursday, killing many people and sparking the insurrection.

Christian Science Monitor, USA, March 27, 1971

East Pakistan in breakaway struggle (43).

After teetering on the brink for the whole month of March, Pakistan seems finally to have split in half.

An agency dispatch from New Delhi - still unconfirmed at this writing - quotes a clandestine radio monitored near the East Pakistan border as announcing the establishment in East Pakistan of "the sovereign republic of Bangla Desh."

...

Friday night's announcement was reportedly made by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, leader of the Awami League which had swept the polls in East Pakistan in last December's national election for a constituent assembly.

Chicago Tribune, USA, March 27, 1971 *Pakistan*
Sheik arrested (44).

New Delhi, India, March 27 (Saturday)

Radio Pakistan announced today that Sheik Mujibur Rahman was arrested only hours after he proclaimed independence for East Pakistan.

...

As Yahya spoke, Indian radio monitors picked up a message which was broadcast from clandestine radio transmitters inside East Pakistan and which announced the province's independence. The province is separated from West Pakistan by 1,000 miles of Indian territory.

The radio station used by the sheik called itself the Voice of Independent Bengal. It broadcast an appeal to the United Nations and to other Asian and African governments to rally to its cause.

The Globe and Mail, Canada, March 27, 1971
Civil war in East Pakistan (45).

New Delhi

Open rebellion broke out in East Pakistan yesterday, with fighting reported in several cities and a clandestine radio station broadcasting a proclamation of an independent people's republic.

The proclamation was attributed to Sheik Mujibur Rahman, the East Pakistani nationalist leader, whose Awami League has been campaigning for autonomy for the eastern wing of Pakistan.

...

Reports of fighting also came from what one Indian dispatch described as a clandestine radio station, presumably in the northern part of East Pakistan. This, it said, was the same station that announced the proclamation of an independent nation, Bangla Desh, whose name is Bengali for Bengal Nation.

The broadcast said those battling for East Pakistan independence had surrounded troops from West Pakistan in the cities of Chittagong, Comilla, Sylhet, Jessore, Barisal and Khulna. Heavy fighting was continuing, the broadcast added.

"Sheik Mujibur Rahman is 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," the broadcast said.

Hong Kong Standard, Hong Kong, March 27, 1971

Mujib sets up independent republic (46).

New Delhi, Fri

While fighting raged Pakistan President Yahya Khan outlawed the Awami League of East Pakistan as provincial leader Sheikh Mujib proclaimed independence for the province.

Indian radio monitors reported Rahman made the independence proclamation from a radio station believed captured by his supporters from Army authorities.

The radio station called itself Free Bengal Radio Station.

The Press Trust of India (PTI) reported Awami League supporters had captured the radio station in the port city of Chittagong.

...

Sheikh Mujib called on his people to resist the Army after President Yahya clamped a 24hour curfew on Dacca and other areas and warned that anyone on the streets would be shot on sight.

PTI said Sheikh Mujib told East Pakistanis "to resist the enemy forces at any cost in every corner of Bangla Desh (Bengali nation)."

The news agency said Sheikh Mujib's message was carried by wireless and was monitored in Calcutta.

Los Angeles Times, USA, March 27, 1971

Civil war flares as East Pakistanis claim independence (47).

New Delhi

Sheik Mujibur Rahman declared independence for East Pakistan Friday as the long smoldering feud between the two wings of the Islamic nation flamed into open civil war.

A clandestine radio broadcast monitored here from a station identifying itself as "The Voice of Independent Bangla Desh (Bengali homeland)", said, "The sheik has declared the 75 million people of East Pakistan as citizens of the sovereign independent Bangla Desh."

The Times of London, United Kingdom, March 27, 1971

Heavy fighting as Shaikh Mujibur declares E Pakistan independent (48).

Civil war raged in the eastern region of Pakistan last night after a radio broadcast announced that Shaikh Mujibur Rahman had proclaimed it an independent republic.

The Times of London, United Kingdom, March 27, 1971

President says traitors must be punished (49).

Delhi, March 26

Shaikh Mujibur Rahman tonight proclaimed East Pakistan the Sovereign Independent People's Republic of Bangla Desh, according to a clandestine radio report monitored near the East Pakistan border.

The Press Trust of India (P.T.I) published the report which was monitored at Agartala, in the Indian territory of Tripura, about 56 miles east of Dacca. P.T.I. said that the broadcast was not made by the Shaikh himself but by an unidentified announcer.

The broadcast said that troops of the East Bengal Regiment, the East Pakistan Rifles, and the "entire police force" had surrounded West Pakistan troops in Chittagong, Comilla, Sylhet, Jessore, Barisal and Khulna, and that heavy fighting was continuing.

A later message said that forces loyal to Shaikh Mujibur had captured the Chittagong station of Radio Pakistan forcing troops to retreat after fierce fighting.

...

The broadcast called upon the people of "free Bangla Desh" to continue their movement for independence "until the last enemy soldier has vanished". It said that the Shaikh was "the only leader of the people of independent Bangla Desh" and his command should be obeyed to save the country from "the ruthless dictatorship of West Pakistanis".

The Philadelphia Inquirer, USA, March 27, 1971

Civil war hits E. Pakistan as rebels revolt (50).

New Delhi (AP)

Civil war broke out in East Pakistan on Friday as President Agha Mohammed Yahya Kahn sought to reimpose martial law in the province and Sheikh Mujieb Rahman, Awami

League leader, proclaimed independence.

...

As Yahya spoke, Indian radio monitors picked up a message broadcast from clandestine radio transmitters inside East Pakistan announcing independence for the province, which is separated from West Pakistan by 1000 miles of Indian territory.

"The shiekh has declared the 75 million people of East Pakistan as citizens of the sovereign independent Bengali nation," Indian monitors quoted an announcer as saying.

The radio station used by the shiekh called itself the Voice of Independent Bengal. It broadcast an appeal to the United Nations and to other Asian and African governments to rally to its cause.

The Pretoria News, South Africa, March 27, 1971

[*10000 slain in Pakistan civil war \(51\)*](#)

New Delhi

Troops used tanks and artillery against followers of breakaway leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who has since been arrested.

The civil war broke out after Rahman proclaimed the region an independent republic.

San Francisco Chronicle, USA, March 27, 1971

[*Civil War in East Pakistan — Fierce Battles Reported \(52\)*](#)

New Delhi

Civil war broke out in East Pakistan yesterday after Awami League leader Sheik Mujibur Rahman proclaimed independence.

...

Indian radio monitors picked up a message broadcast from clandestine radio transmitters inside East Pakistan announcing independence for the province - which is separated from West Pakistan by 1000 miles of Indian territory.

"The sheikh has declared the 75 million people of East Pakistan as citizens of the sovereign independent Bengali nation," Indian monitors quoted an announcer as saying.

The radio station used by the sheik called itself the Voice of Independent Bengal. It broadcast an appeal to the United Nations and to other Asian and African governments to rally to its cause.

The Straits Times, Singapore, March 27, 1971

Mujibur proclaims Bangla Republic (53).

New Delhi, Fri.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman tonight proclaimed East Pakistan the sovereign Independent People's Republic of Bangla Desh, according to a clandestine radio report monitored near the East Pakistan border.

Tonight's broadcast, identified as the "Voice of Independent Bangla Desh," said: "The Sheikh has declared the 75 million people of East Pakistan as citizens of the sovereign Independent Bangla Desh."

The broadcast said personnel of the East Bengal Regiment, 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, it said. - Reuter.

The Washington Post, USA, March 27, 1971

Rebel leader arrested in Pakistan war (54).

New Delhi, March 27 (Saturday) (AP)

Radio Pakistan announced today that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was arrested only hours after he proclaimed independence for East Pakistan. Civil war raged in East Pakistan, claiming heavy casualties in some areas.

...

As Yahya spoke, radio monitors in India picked up a message broadcast from clandestine radio transmitters inside East Pakistan announcing independence for the province - which is separated from West Pakistan by 1,000 miles of Indian territory.

"The sheikh has declared the 75 million people of East Pakistan as citizens of the sovereign independent Bengali nation," Indian monitors quoted an announcer as saying.

The radio station used by the sheikh called itself the Voice of Independent Bengal. It broadcast an appeal to the United Nations and to other Asian and African governments to rally to its cause.

[The Indian news agency PTI said last night that forces loyal to Sheikh Mujibur had captured the Chittagong station of Radio Pakistan, forcing Pakistani government troops to retreat, after fierce fighting, according to Reuter.

March 28, 1971

The Statesman (New Delhi), India, March 28, 1971

Secessionist forces offer stiff resistance (55).

In another broadcast the radio claimed that freedom-loving people of Baluchistan, the North West Frontier Province and Pakhtoonistan had declared independence, following the example of Bangla Desh.

The person who spoke on the radio was identified as "Major Jia, Chief of the Liberation Army of Bangla Desh".

The Times of India (Bombay), India, March 28, 1971

Tikka Khan is shot, Mujib promises victory in day or two (56).

Agartala, March 27

Major Zia Khan, chief of the Bangla Desh liberation army, declared over the free Bangla Radio tonight that Bangla Desh would be rid of the Pakistani military administration in two or three days.

The West Punjabi soldiers "will be annihilated" if they did not surrender, he said.

The Boston Globe, USA, March 28, 1971

Government claims E. Pakistan victory (57).

New Delhi

Throughout the day, the Pakistan central government and the followers of Sheik Mujib engaged in a war of words.

Within minutes of government announcements, the sheik's clandestine radio network came on the air giving a counterversion. Then Radio Pakistan would issue a denial.

Chicago Tribune, USA, March 28, 1971

Civil war continues in Dacca (58).

New Delhi, India, March 27 (AP)

Radio Free Bengali carried a message from Rahman last night proclaiming independence for the province.

The Manila Times, Philippines, March 28, 1971 [10,000](#)
[killed in Pakistan \(59\)](#).

New Delhi, March 27

As of noon Saturday Indian monitors had not reported any broadcasts from the clandestine "Voice of Independent Bangla Desh (Bengali Nationale) which was on the air intermittently until late Friday.

The radio had carried a message Friday night proclaiming independence for the province, which is separated from West Pakistan by 1,000 miles of Indian territory.

"The Sheikh has declared the 75 million people of East Pakistan as citizens of the Independent Bangla Desh" Indian monitors quoted an announcer as saying.

March 29, 1971

The Statesman (New Delhi), India, March 29, 1971

Appeal to nations for recognition (60).

Calcutta, Mar 28

The Free Bangla Radio today announced a provisional Bangla Desh government headed by Major Jia Khan and said its forces were on the march on Dacca from Chittagong, reports PTT.

...

The government would be guided by Banga Bandhu Mujibur Rahman, at present directing the freedom struggle from his underground headquarters in Chittagong, the broadcast said.

Major Jia Khan has been the chief of the liberation army of Bangla Desh since the resistance movement against West Pakistani troops started on March 25.

Major Jia Khan in a broadcast appeal sought recognition to his Government from peaceloving Governments.

He also sought material assistance for the freedom fighters.

...

In a broadcast over the Free Bangla Radio Major Jia Khan, commander-in-chief of the "liberation army" said: "I hereby assume the powers of the provisional head of the liberation army of Swadhin Bangla Desh.

"As provisional head I order the freedom fighters of Bangla Desh to continue the struggle till ultimate victory. Jai Bangla". He said the enemy was bringing additional troops both by the sea and by the air.

He appealed to all peace-loving peoples of the world to come to help of "the democratic minded fighting people of Bangla Desh."

Major Jia claimed that the "liberation army" had killed 300 men of the Punjab Regiment at Comilla. Other men of the regiment fled at the end of the fighting.

The Statesman (Calcutta), India, March 29, 1971

Provisional government of Bangla Desh formed (61).

New Delhi, March 28

Free Bangla Radio which announced the formation of the Provisional Government headed by the Liberation Army Chief, Major Jia Khan, said the march to Dacca had begun at 8-45 a.m. from Chittagong where Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had reportedly set up his headquarters.

Earlier, Major Zia assumed powers as Commander-in-Chief of the Bengal Liberation Army. In a broadcast over the Free Bangla Radio he said: "I hereby assume the powers of the provisional head of the Liberation Army of Swadhin Bangla Desh. As the provisional head I order the freedom-fighters of Bangla Desh to continue the struggle till ultimate victory. Jai Bangla."

He said that the enemy was bringing additional troops by sea and air. He appealed to all peace-loving people of the world to come to the help of "the democratic-minded fighting people of Bangla Desh."

Major Zia requested all freedom fighter in and around Chittagong to assemble at the Lal Dighe Maidan for an important announcement. He directed them to carry with them whatever weapons they possessed.

The Times of India (Bombay), India, March 29, 1971 *Zia*
heads provisional regime (62).

Calcutta, March 28

Free Bangla Radio today announced a provisional Bangla Desh Government headed by Major Zia Khan and said its forces were on the march to Dacca from Chittagong.

The Government would be guided by "Banga Bandu" Mujibur Rahman, who is directing the liberation struggle from his revolutionary headquarters in Chittagong, the radio said.

Major Zia Khan, who has been the liberation army chief since the start of the resistance movement on Thursday, in a broadcast appeal, sought recognition to his Government from peace-loving governments. He also sought material assistance for the freedomfighters.

...

Meanwhile, the Voice of Free Bangla Fighters exhorted all young people possessing arms to report to the Bangla Desh army chief, Maj. Zia, Capt. Nasir and Capt. Phuian at Lal Digi Maidan in Chittagong and asked them to fight under their command.

The Age, Australia, March 29, 1971

Pakistanis rally to sheik's call (63).

New Delhi, March 28

Supporters of the East Pakistani leader, Sheik Mujibur Rahman, today formed a provisional Government under the temporary leadership of Major Zia Khan.

A rebel radio, announcing the new Government, identified Major Zia as head of the liberation army of Sheik Mujib's Awami League. The radio did not explain why Sheik Mujib had not been appointed leader of the Government.

The Baltimore Sun, USA, March 29, 1971

Rebels report Bengali regime (64).

New Delhi, March 28 (Reuter)

Another radio message, monitored in Calcutta, reported that a provisional Bangla Desh (Bengali Nation) government had been set up in the East.

[The broadcast said Major Zia Khan had been named temporary head of a provisional government of Bangla Desh "under the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman," according to the Associated Press.

[Clandestine broadcasts have identified Major Zia as the head of the "Liberation Army" of the Awami League.]

The secret radio said the provisional government in East Pakistan would be guided by the leader of the Awami League, Sheikh Mujib, who it said was directing "the liberation struggle from Chittagong, the main port in East Pakistan, which the rebels claim to control.

The Bangkok Post, Thailand, March 29, 1971

Dacca asks for more troops (65).

New Delhi, Sunday

The call for more troops followed a clandestine radio message announcing that supporters of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had set up a provisional Bangla Desh (Bengali nation) government in East Pakistan.

They appealed for recognition and support.

The message, monitored by the Press Trust of India (PTI) in Calcutta, said the Government would be headed by a Major Jia Khan.

Major Jia had been identified in rebel radio reports last night as the head of the liberation

army of the sheikh's outlawed Awami League.

The radio did not give any explanation why Major Jia had been appointed de facto leader of the provisional government instead of Sheikh Mujibur.

The Boston Globe, USA, March 29, 1971

E. Pakistan: Army claims control, but rebels report gains (66)

New Delhi

Another radio message, monitored in Calcutta, reported that a provisional Bangla Desh (Bengali Nation) government had been set up in the East.

The clandestine radio report of a provisional government in East Pakistan said it would be guided by Awami (People's) League leader Sheikh Mujib, who was said to be directing "the liberation struggle" from Chittagong, the main port in East Pakistan.

According to the radio, quoted by PTI, several thousand troops of the "liberation army" were marching from Chittagong to Dacca, the capital.

The radio said that Maj. Zia Khan, in command of the "liberation army," had appealed for recognition of the provisional government.

The Boston Globe, USA, March 29, 1971

Fighting wanes in East Pakistan as army tightens grip (67)

New Delhi

The radio announced formation of a rebel government under army Maj. Gen. Zia Khan in Chittagong yesterday and said his forces were marching toward Dacca, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said.

Buenos Aires Herald, Argentina, March 29, 1971

Rebel government set up under army major (68).

New Delhi

East Pakistan's clandestine radio announced yesterday the establishment of a rebel government under an army major, and said his forces were marching on the capital of Dacca, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported.

...

Free Bengal Radio, a clandestine transmitter that purports to be the voice of Sheikh Mujib Ur-Rahman's rebel army, announced the formation of a provincial Bangla Desh (Bengal country) government, PTI said.

The broadcast, monitored by PTI, said the underground government was being headed by

Major Zia Khan and that his forces were on the march to Dacca from the city of Chittagong.

The radio said the rebels would be guided by Mujib, who, it said, was directing the "liberation struggle" against West Pakistan from his headquarters in Chittagong.

PTI quoted the broadcast as saying that Major Zia Khan had appealed for material assistance for his troops and recognition of the rebel regime by "peace-loving governments."

Chicago Tribune, USA, March 29, 1971

Report E. Pakistan revolt crushed by West troops (69).

Colombo, Ceylon, March 28

A rebel broadcast monitored by Indian sources said a Maj. Zia Khan had been named temporary head of a provisional government of Bangla Desh "under the leadership of Sheik Mujibur Rahman." Bangla Desh means Bengali Nation.

Clandestine broadcasts have identified Maj. Zia as the head of the "Liberation Army" of the Awami League.

The Globe and Mail, Canada, March 29, 1971

Army in control of Dacca, banks to reopen, radio says (70).

New Delhi (AP)

But a broadcast monitored by Indian sources yesterday by Indian sources yesterday said that Major Zia Khan had been named temporary head of a provisional government under the leadership of Sheik Mujib. One clandestine broadcast said that Sheik Mujib was at "revolutionary headquarters." The location of the headquarters was not given, but the rebels had claimed to hold the port of Chittagong.

Other clandestine broadcasts out of East Pakistan, where there is a strict news blackout, identified Major Zia as head of the liberation army of the Awami League.

...

The clandestine radio quoted a rebel spokesman as announcing a series of directives to the civilian population. They included orders that all airports in the province should be made unserviceable to prevent the arrival of airborne troops; that no able-bodied persons should leave the cities for the rural areas; that all former army personnel knowing how to drive should report to Awami League offices; that owners of gasoline stations should give fuel only to "freedom fighters with special permits" and the entire province should be blacked out at night.

Hong Kong Standard, Hong Kong, March 29, 1971

Mujib sets up govt in E. Pak (71).

New Delhi, Sun.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's supporters today formed a provisional government in East Pakistan and appealed to other countries to extend immediate recognition, a clandestine radio broadcast reported.

The broadcast, monitored by Indian sources, said a Major Zia Khan had been appointed temporary head of the new government of Bangla Desh (Bengali nation) "under the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman."

Major Zia had been identified in clandestine radio reports last night as the head of the liberation army of the Sheikh's Awami League.

The radio did not give any explanation why Major Zia had been appointed the de facto leader of the provisional government instead of Sheikh Mujibur.

The Jakarta Times, Indonesia, March 29, 1971

Bangla Desh Republic Proclaimed (72).

The ruling East Pakistani Awami League party under Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is seeking autonomy from West Pakistan and the Sheikh defied President Yahya Khan Friday by declaring the province independent as Bangla Dech (Bengal Nation) Republic.

Los Angeles Times, USA, March 29, 1971

W. Pakistan reported in full control of Dacca (72b)

Colombo, Ceylon (AP)

However, Rahman's followers insisted that they were winning the civil war.

A broadcast, monitored in New Delhi, said a Maj. Zia Khan had been named temporary head of a provisional government of Bangla Desh "under the leadership of Sheik Mujibur Rahman." Bangla Desh means Bengali nation.

Clandestine broadcasts have identified Maj. Zia as the head of the "Liberation Army" of the Awami League.

The Manila Times, Philippines, March 29, 1971

Fighting continues in East Pakistan (73).

New Delhi, March 28 (AP)

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's supporters Sunday formed a provisional government in East Pakistan and appealed to other countries to extend immediate recognition, a clandestine radio broadcast reported.

The broadcast, monitored by Indian sources, said a Major Zia Khan had been appointed temporary head of the new government of Bengali Desh (Bengali nation) "under the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman."

...

It broadcast a statement by Major Zia who announced that he is the commander-in-chief of the liberation army.

The radio did not give the first name of Zia nor any details about him.

Zia declared over the radio: "I hereby assume powers of the provisional head of the liberation army of Swadhin Bangla Desh (Independent Bengal Homeland)."

He said: "I order the freedom fighters to continue the struggle till the ultimate victory, which will soon be ours."

The Free Bengal Radio asked all young people possessing arms to report to Major Zia or to his two top aides, whose names were given as Capt. Nasir and Capt. Phuian, at the Lal Digi (Red Lake) boulevard in Chittagong.

The New York Times, USA, March 29, 1971

Both sides claim gains in Pakistan; all news banned (74).

Reports from India quoted the clandestine nationalist radio as having said that a provisional government headed by Maj. Jia Khan, who was described as Commander in Chief of the forces of Bangla Desh, had been installed. Bangla Desh is Bengali for Bengal Nation.

The radio said the government would function under the direction of Sheik Mujibur Rahman, whose Awami League was in effective charge of the administration of East Pakistan until the military began to take control Friday.

The Philadelphia Inquirer, USA, March 29, 1971

W. Pakistan controls Dacca; Death toll may reach 7000 (75).

Colombo, Ceylon (AP)

A broadcast, monitored in New Delhi, said a Maj. Zia Khan had been named temporary head of a provisional government of Bangla Desh "under the leadership of Sheikh Mujib Rahman." Bangla Desh mean Bengalli Nation.

Clandestine broadcasts have identified Zia as the head of the "Liberation Army" of the Awami League.

The Pretoria News, South Africa, March 29, 1971

Rebellion is over, says Pakistan (76).

New Delhi

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

The clandestine station said Sheikh Mujibur would guide the Government from Chittagong from where he was directing the "liberation struggle."

San Francisco Chronicle, USA, March 29, 1971

Confusing war reports in Pakistan (77).

New Delhi

Another radio message monitored in Calcutta, reported that a provisional Bangla Desh (Bengali nation) government had been set up in the east. Earlier reports, often confused and contradictory, claimed thousands of people had died in fighting which was said to include planes bombing towns and tanks used against civilians.

...

The secret radio said the provisional government in East Pakistan would be guided by Awami League leader Sheikh Mujibur who, it said, was directing "the liberation struggle" from Chittagong, the main port in East Pakistan.

According to the radio, quoted by PTI, several thousand troops of the "liberation army" were marching from Chittagong to Dacca. The radio said that Major Jia Khan, in command of the "liberation army," had appealed for recognition of the provisional government.

There were fewer reports yesterday from the clandestine radio, said to be manned by supporters of Sheikh Mujib, but PTI carried reports saying that air force helicopters were used to fire on the towns of Comilla and Chittagong yesterday.

The Straits Times, Singapore, March 29, 1971

Provisional government formed (78).

New Delhi, Sun.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's supporters today formed a provisional government in East Pakistan and appealed to other countries to extend immediate recognition, a clandestine radio broadcast reported.

The broadcast, monitored by Indian sources, said a Major Jia Khan had been appointed temporary head of the new Government of Bangla Desh (Bengali nation) under the leadership of Sheikh Mujib.

Major Jia had been identified in clandestine radio reports last night as the head of the liberation army of the Sheikh's Awami League.

The radio did not give an explanation why Major Jia had been appointed the de facto leader of the provisional government instead of Sheikh Mujib.

The Sydney Morning Herald, Australia, March 29, 1971 *Major*

leads Dacca Govt (79).

New Delhi, Sunday

Supporters of Sheik Mujibur Rehman tonight announced in a clandestine radio broadcast that they had formed a provisional government of East Pakistan under Major Zia Khan as temporary head.

They did not explain why Major Khan, head of the Awami League's "liberation army," was de facto leader and not Sheik Mujibur.

The Pakistan Government radio has insisted the 51-year-old Sheik has been arrested.

The Washington Post, USA, March 29, 1971

[Pakistan in control of Dacca \(80\)](#).

However, Mujibur's supporters announced yesterday the formation of a provisional government headed by Maj. Zia Khan who appealed to other countries to extend immediate recognition, according to a clandestine broadcast monitored in India.

One broadcast said the provisional government would be guided by Mujibur, leader of the Awami League, who it said was directing "the liberation struggle" from Chittagong, the main port in East Pakistan.

The broadcast gave no explanation why Maj. Zia Khan had been appointed the de facto leader of the provisional government instead of Mujibur.

...

A clandestine East Pakistani broadcast said the provisional government had announced a series of directives to civilian population, including orders that all airports in the province should be made unserviceable to prevent arrival of airborne troops.

The broadcast claimed that Mujibur's supporters were in control of the towns of Rangpur, Jessore and Comilla. It did not mention any other cities.

March 30, 1971

The Manila Times, Philippines, March 30, 1971 *[Where is](#)*

[Sheikh Mujib? \(81\)](#).

New Delhi, India, March 29 (Reuter)

"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 Sydney Morning Herald, Australia, March 30, 1971

Rebels claim successes (82).

New Delhi, Monday

"Free Bangla Radio" said Sheik Mujibur would guide from Chittagong the provisional government of Bangla Desh (Bengali Nation), headed by Major Jia Khan.

March 31, 1971

The Statesman (New Delhi), India, March 31, 1971

Jia Khan's appeal for recognition (83).

Calcutta, Mar 30

The Government under Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is the sovereign legal Government of Bangla Desh and is entitled to recognition by all democratic countries of the world, Maj Jia Khan, provisional Commander-in-Chief of the Liberation Army, declared this morning, reports UNI.

In a broadcast over Free Bangla Radio on behalf of the Sheikh, Maj Jia Khan said: "The new democratic Government is committed to a policy of non-alignment in international relations. It will seek friendship with all nations and strive for international peace.

"We have already formed a sovereign legal Government under Sheikh Mujibur Rahman which pledges to function as per law and the constitution.

"We therefore appeal to all democratic and peace-loving countries of the world to immediately recognize the legal democratic Government of Bangla Desh."

He appealed to all Governments to mobilize public opinion in their respective countries against the "brutal genocide" in Bangla Desh.

Maj Jia Khan said the Pakistan Government was trying to confuse and deceive the people of the world through contradictory statements.

"But nobody will be deceived by Yahya Khan and his followers," he said.

The Times of India (Bombay), India, March 31, 1971

Bangla Desh Govt is sovereign and legal (84).

Calcutta, March 30

The Government under Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is the sovereign, legal Government of Bangla Desh and is entitled to "recognition from all democratic countries of the world." Major Zia Khan, Provisional Commander-in-Chief of the Liberation Army, declared this morning.

In a broadcast over Free Bangla Radio on behalf of the Sheikh, Maj. Zia Khan said: "The new democratic Government is committed to a policy of non-alignment in international relations. It will seek friendship with all nations and strive for international peace."

Maj. Zia Khan began the broadcast with these words: "I, Major Zia, Provisional Commander-in-Chief of the Bangla Liberation Army, hereby proclaim on behalf of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman the independence of Bangla Desh.

"I also declare," he continued, "we have already formed a sovereign legal government under Sheikh Mujibur Rahman which pledges to function as per law and the Constitution."

The Times of London, United Kingdom, March 31, 1971

[*President Yahya was advised against force \(85\).*](#)

Calcutta, March 30

Free Bengal Radio came on the air again today and announced that the new sovereign state of Bangla Desh will pursue a foreign policy of non-alignment. The clandestine radio

station continued to claim that the "Liberation Army", headed by a Major Zia Khan, had overrun the West Pakistan Army in most areas, including the port of Khulna, Jessore, and the Sylhet Comilla belt.

...

The 350 people of Jainagar have little to fight with but they have heard that Shaikh Mujibur Rahman, the Awami League leader, has declared their province a sovereign republic and say they are prepared to die for it.

The Bangkok Post, Thailand, March 31, 1971

[*War of the words' rages in P'stan \(86\).*](#)

New Delhi, Tues

Major Zia Khan, identified as the head of the provisional government of Bangla Desh, broadcast an appeal for recognition from other countries, Indian monitors reported.

"The new democratic government is committed to a policy of non-alignment in international relations," Major Zia was quoted as saying.

Supporting Documentation

- [*Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra, The Story of March 26, 1971\(87\).*](#), *Bangladesh Observer*, April 23, 1972
- [*Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Declaration of Independence \(88\).*](#), *Bangladesh Swadhinata Juddho: Dalil Potro, Volume 3*, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 1982
- [*Ziaur Rahman's Declaration of Independence \(89\).*](#), *Bangladesh Swadhinata Juddho: Dalil Potro, Volume 3*, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 1982
- [*Mujibnagar Proclamation of Independence, April 10, 1971 \(90\).*](#), *Bangladesh Swadhinata Juddho: Dalil Potro, Volume 3*, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 1982
- [*Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendro Transcripts \(fragments\), March 26-30, 1971 \(91\).*](#), *Bangladesh Swadhinata Juddho: Dalil Potro, Volume 5*, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 1982

- [Article on Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendro by Atikur Rahman published in Purbodesh \(92\) , December 15, 1972](#), *Bangladesh Swadhinata Juddho: Dalil Potro*, Volume 5, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 1982
- [Article on Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendro by Belal Mohammad \(93\) ,](#), *Bangladesh Swadhinata Juddho: Dalil Potro*, Volume 5, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 1982
- [Printout of Telex from March 26, 1971 \(94\)](#)