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# Bengals accused of Arab slayings

Dispatch of the London Times



**HILI, India** — Thousands of helpless Moslem refugees who settled in Bengal when the sub-continent was partitioned were reported to have been massacred in East Pakistan during the last week by Bengalis who set upon the minority community that is identified culturally and linguistically with West Pakistanis.

This was reported by Bihari Moslem refugees who crossed the border into India this week and by a young British technician who crossed the Indo-Pakistan frontier at Hili.

The technician, who does not want to be identified because he has to return to Bengal, was trapped in the northern regions of Bengal after civil war erupted.

He said that hundreds of non-Biharis must have died in the northwestern town of Dinajpur alone after victorious Bengalis there drove the Punjab regiment out of the town last week.

"After the soldiers left the mobs set upon the non-Bengali Moslems from Bihar," he said. "I don't know how many died but I could hear the screams throughout the night."

The police and the Awami

The police and the Awami League were able to restore order and camps were set up to protect the non-Bengali minority community. In other parts of region Biharis who have been rounded up will be held as hostages against the lives of the estimated 400,000 Bengalis settlers who are stranded in West Pakistan.

Thousands of non-Bengalis have already been evacuated by boat from the turbulent eastern wing of West Pakistan and in the western province where communal trouble erupted last month. Countless numbers of terrified Bengalis are queuing for air and sea passages back to their home province.

The British technician also substantiated hitherto unverified reports that the army had been routed in most of the major towns of the northern regions of the provinces which are now under the control of the liberation front.

The technician, who was traveling near Dinajpur at the time, said that he could feel the tension the moment that President Yahya reimposed martial law.

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“There had been no trouble or rioting in the area until then,” he said. “But on the Friday morning the army took up positions. There were about 500 members of the Punjab regiment and about the same number of men from the East Pakistan Rifles stationed in the town.

“We all knew that the East Pakistan Rifles were about to mutiny. It was tense and eerie. A curfew was imposed on Friday and Saturday but nothing happened. Students walking down the street out of earshot of army troops kept muttering ‘Hail, Bengali’ and everyone knew that something was about to happen.” He continued:

“On Sunday morning the army put the deputy district commissioner under house arrest, presumably because he had hoisted the new flag of Bengal on Republic Day.

“A little later troops expecting trouble began to dig trenches around their headquarters in Circuit House. And at about 3 o'clock on Sunday afternoon the Bengali troops in the E.P.R. lines rebelled and firing broke out between the army and the police.