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Signs Remain Of E. Pakistan Slaughter

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Mymensingh, East Pakistan — Government soldiers pass time here stooting the bloated vultures of Mymensingh which have been feeding for the last two months on human bodies.

Mymensingh, about 70 miles north of Dacca, is the most populous district in all south Asia and is the center of Pakistan's jute-growing region.

But there is every evidence here of a slaughter of massive proportions during the period of bitter strife that began March 25.

No Casualty Figures

Army officials from West Pakistan commanding the occupation of the region decline to disclose over-all casualty figures, which, in any case, may not be known.

"There were so many bodies here," one officer said, "it was impossible to identify them or bury them. We had to just throw them into the river (the Braham Putra River, a tributary of the Ganges).

Army officials introduced correspondents to people who told of a slaughter of Bihari residents by the dominant Bengali group led by the outlawed Awami League. One man spoke of mass rape and mutilation of women by Bengalis in the town.

1,000 Killed

Officials said the Bengalis had killed at least 1,000 Biharis before government forces retook Mymensingh in a one-day battle April 15.

Authorities said that of a

heavily-armed Bengali insurgent group of about 1,000, nearly all had been killed in the fighting. The insurgents were said to have been well-trenched and armed with anti-aircraft machine guns, mortars and rocket launchers largely of India origin.

Mymensingh district, a vast, alluvial plain dotted with tropical fruit plantations and largely planted with jute, has about seven million inhabitants and population density of close to 2,000 persons a square mile.

Bengali Supporters

The overwhelming majority of its people are Bengali supporters of the East Pakistan separatist movement. The occupying army is made up mostly of West Pakistani officers and troops.

From the MI-8 Soviet-built helicopter from which correspondents were shown the eastern region of East Pakistan, massive destruction in towns and villages was visible as well as a number of bridges demolished by rebel forces.

Officials said a clash was fought with the "miscreants" last night near the Indian border but on the whole the situation was in hand.

Fighting Stops

Correspondents saw no evidence of continuing fighting.

Mymensingh itself was largely deserted apart from a handful of people at the market place, who carefully saluted passing army jeeps.

At intervals along the streets lined with ramshackle houses,

bodies had been buried in shallow graves and covered with piles of red bricks. Brick graves of this type had been planted even on the porches of houses which themselves were unoccupied and closed.

Newsmen were shown a stock of several hundred rifles, seven machine guns and mortar ammunition purportedly of Indian origin and allegedly captured from infiltrating Indian border troops.

Indian Prisoners

In Dacca, the capital of East Pakistan, correspondents also were shown three prisoners said to have been captured from the ranks of infiltrating Indian forces inside Pakistan.

The three men said they had been sent to Indian border posts on the frontier and had removed their unit badges before crossing the frontier. Pakistani authorities said they had captured five Indian border guards in all, one of them wounded.

There seems little question at this point that the army is in full control of all major towns in East Pakistan, most of which have been evaluated by at least half their residents.

Army officials said pockets of resistance continue with insurgents trying to blow up

bridges and other lines of communication, but that "search and destroy" operations with helicopter support are rapidly neutralizing them.

Tanks have been widely used in towns, where they apparently smashed rebel strongpoints a matter of hours, in most cases.

Despite the desolation of its streets and the preponderance of vultures, the city of Mymensingh itself displays virtually no battle damage. The main loss of life apparently occurred in the fields and fruit groves outside, as well as in clusters of huts burned to the ground.

The local jute transportation shed is deserted and from the air it appeared that very few farmers were working their fields.

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