

Throng Die In Slaughter

Bloody Clashes Reported in East Pakistan Conflict

MYMENSINGH, East Pakistan (AP) — Systematic slaughter between indigenous Bengalis and non-Bengali migrants left thousands dead here before order was restored, survivors of the bloody clashes said Friday.

One army officer said his men had disposed of thousands of the bodies in mass graves outside the town. "We couldn't bury them all," he said. "We just threw some away in the river."

Most victims were Moslem Biharis from India but many Hindus also were reported massacred by Bengalis whose drive for autonomy from West Pakistan led to civil war March 26.

Responsible government and other sources estimate at least 30,000 were killed in communal violence since March 1 across

East Pakistan, not counting Bengalis shot by army troops putting down what officers call a "full-fledged insurgency."

Senior officers deny any women or children were knowingly killed by soldiers but say hundreds of men had died in the fighting since March 26.

"There were 5,000 non-Bengalis where I lived and now there are 25 survivors," said the assistant postmaster of this nearly empty town 90 miles north of Dacca and capital of one of the world's most densely populated districts.

He showed reporters a neck wound where he said Bengalis shot him through the throat before knifing him and dumping him in the river. He managed to reach safety and treatment, he said.

At the postal workers' settlement, a foreigners' quarter called Shanti Para, a young Bihari woman told how her husband and older children were killed. She said she bought her own life with jewelry and household goods.

Across a dirt road, a shirtless Bengali man told one reporter that many Biharis had killed Bengalis. He said his family fled to rural areas in fright.

Continued...

to rural areas in fright.

When an officer escorting the party of six foreign newsmen approached, he said loudly, "I welcome the soldiers. I want peace."

One army commander blamed many of the killings on Bengali toughs who ordered a curfew when they controlled the town and sneaked around in darkness systematically executing non-Bengalis.

The army captured Mymensingh on April 23 after fighting for 24 to 36 hours, the commander said. Like many non-garrison towns across East Pakistan it was first held by defecting elements of the Pakistan armed forces and Bengali volunteers until army units could move in with artillery and intensive groundfire.

Earlier, in Dacca, East Pakistan's capital, newsmen were shown a huge display of weapons which the army said were cap-

tured in East Pakistan but came from Indian government stocks.

The newsmen were the first allowed into Dacca since the civil war broke out.

Markings on the weapons indicated they were made in the past few years at Kirkees munition factory. There were also some Soviet and Czech arms and ammunition.

Dacca itself was a sullen city limping back to life with deep battle wounds.

Pakistani army units completely controlled the city. Thousands of Pakistani flags hung limply over rows of homes and shops — many shuttered.