

RASHID SINGH—WOODFIN CAMP



HORDES OF CHEERING BENGALIS WELCOMING MUJIB AT DACCA RACE COURSE

## BANGLADESH

### A Hero Returns Home

All weekend long the people of Bangladesh thronged into Dacca, preparing to welcome their beloved "Bangabandhu" (friend of Bengal). By Monday noon, hundreds of thousands of jubilant Bengalis lined the streets of the capital, waving flags and shouting over and over, "Sheik Mujib! Sheik Mujib!" Promptly at 1:30 p.m., a blue and silver British Royal Air Force Comet dropped out of a brilliant sunny sky and ground to an abrupt halt on the shortened war-damaged runway. Sheik Mujibur Rahman was home at last.

As the Comet's door opened, the first gun of a 21-gun salute cracked through the air. Then Mujib, looking thin but surprisingly fit despite his nine-month ordeal in a Pakistani prison, began a triumphant, two-hour ride through city streets to the Dacca Race Course. There, as a cheering crowd of half a million showered him with rose petals, Mujib enjoined them not to seek revenge for the 3,000,000 Bengalis slain by the Pakistani army.

"Forgive them!" he cried. "Today I do not want revenge from anybody." But Mujib also declared his firm opposition to Pakistani President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's hopes for at least a symbolic reunification of the nation. "Now I say to you Bengal is independent, and let the people of Pakistan and the people of Bangladesh live happily. The unity of the country is ended."

After Bhutto set him free, Mujib flew\* first to London—where he stayed in the same special suite at Claridge's used by former Pakistani President

\* Although an Air-India Boeing 707 was put at his disposal, Mujib chose to fly in the R.A.F. Comet, partly to parry the feared threat of assassination or attack by Pakistani fanatics, partly to avoid displaying so obviously his country's dependence on India.





# **MUJIB ON TRIUMPHAL RIDE** *Malice toward none.*

Yahya Khan—and then to New Delhi. There he was greeted with honors by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. In Dacca, Mujib's first major decision was that Bangladesh would have a parliamentary democracy on the order of Britain's, rather than the presidential system set up by the government in exile. He relinquished the presidency conferred upon him in his absence last April by the exiled Bengali leaders and assumed the post of Prime Minister. In addition, Mujib took on the defense, home affairs, information and Cabinet affairs portfolios, which will give him direct authority over the police and militia being formed from the Mukti Bahini liberation forces.

At his first official press conference last week, Mujib said that he envisioned Bangladesh as the "Switzerland of the East." It would be a non-aligned socialist state, he said, with a foreign policy of "friendship to all and malice toward none." He appealed to all nations and international organizations for help in getting the shattered country back on its feet. As for the possibility of war crimes trials against former officials of East Pakistan, Mujib said that he had asked the United Nations to establish a commission to investigate atrocities committed during the war. But if the U.N. failed to do so, he warned, "we will follow our own policy."

**No Strings.** Bangladesh, whose existence as an independent nation had previously been acknowledged only by India and Bhutan, was formally recognized last week by East Germany, Bulgaria, Poland, Mongolia and Burma. Pakistan angrily served notice that it would sever diplomatic relations with all nations that did so—a policy that will surely prove untenable as more countries follow suit. Britain, which has already promised aid to Bangladesh through the U.N., is expected to provide recognition in a few weeks. Despite the urgings of Senators Edward Kennedy and Hubert Humphrey that

the U.S. recognize Bangladesh, the White House last week said that it was not considering the move at present. Presumably, the Administration wants to wait until Indian troops are withdrawn and the new government has demonstrated its stability. U.S. Consul-General Herbert Spivack avoided Mujib's inaugural ceremonies—the only representative, apart from the Chinese, to do so.

At the press conference, Mujib went out of his way to give special thanks to the American people who had supported the Bangladesh cause. Later, in a relaxed and affable private interview with TIME Correspondent William Stewart, he indicated his desire for friendly relations with the U.S. Government. "But they must make the first move. I want recognition; and if relationships are to be improved, then the Administration must recognize reality. I have nothing against the American people. I want aid, but there must be no strings attached."

Mujib added that he found his country worse off than he had expected. "Very few times have I wept," he said. "This time I wept. We have almost 3,000,000 dead. I am sure of that figure because my organization is in every village; they know who has been killed." Then, with visible emotion, he asked: "Why did the United States Government remain silent?"

**MMR JALAL**