

শিরোনাম	সূত্র	তারিখ
প্রেসিডেন্ট ইয়াহিয়া কর্তৃক জাতীয় পরিষদের অধিবেশন স্থগিত	মর্নিং নিউজ	২ মার্চ, ১৯৭১

YAHYA PUTS OFF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SESSION
Text of President Yahya Khan's statement on March 1, 1971

The following is the text of President Yahya Khan's statement:

“Today, Pakistan faces her gravest political crisis. I, therefore, consider it necessary to apprise you of the situation and the action that I propose to take to resolve our present difficulties.

But before I do that let me recount to you the steps that I took from the day that the responsibility for the administration of this country devolved on me to transfer power to the elected representatives of the people.

In my very first address to the nation, I had indicated the need for the smooth transfer of power. Since then we have moved forward step by step towards the achievement of this aim.

In spite of there being Martial Law in the country I did not ban the political parties and in fact permitted full political activity with effect from the first of January 1970.

Later in March 1970 the Legal Framework Order under which elections were to be held, was duly notified. All other work, including delimitation of constituencies and preparation of electoral rolls, was completed with speed.

The election campaign which was long and arduous, ended up in, what we may all claim with pride one of the most peaceful and well-organized general elections on the basis of adult franchise.

As you know, the elections were finally completed on 17th January 1971.

Just prior to the elections in my address of the 3rd of December, 1970, I had suggested to the leaders of the political parties that it would be useful for them to employ the period between the elections and the first session of the National Assembly in meeting each other and arriving at a consensus on the main provisions of our future constitution.

I had, at the time, indicated that to be successful these meetings would call for spirit of give and take, trust in each other and realisation of the extreme importance of this particular juncture in our history. Appreciating the great significance of such exchanges of view between political leaders I tried to facilitate the process by giving them enough time to do so.

I, therefore, decided to fix the third of March as the date of the inaugural session of our National Assembly.

In the past few weeks certain meetings between our political leaders have indeed taken place. But I regret to say that instead of arriving at a consensus some of our leaders have taken hard attitudes. This is most unfortunate. The political confrontation between the leaders of East Pakistan and those of the West is a most regrettable situation. This has cast a shadow of gloom over the entire nation.

The position briefly is that the major party of West Pakistan, namely, the Pakistan People's Party, as well as certain other political parties, have declared their intention not to attend the National Assembly session on the third of March, 1971. In addition, the general situation of tension created by India has further complicated the whole position. I have, therefore, decided to postpone the summoning of the National Assembly to a later date.

I have repeatedly stated that a constitution is not an ordinary piece of legislation but it is an agreement to live together. For a healthy and viable constitution, therefore, it is necessary that both East and West Pakistan have an adequate sense of participation in the process of constitution making.

Needless to say I took this decision to postpone the date of the National Assembly with a heavy heart. One has, however, to look at the practical aspects of such problems. I realized that with so many representatives of the people of West Pakistan keeping away from the Assembly if we were to go ahead with the inaugural session on the 3rd of March the Assembly itself could have disintegrated and the entire effort made for the smooth transfer of power that has been outlined earlier would have been wasted.

It was, therefore, imperative to give more time to the political leaders to arrive at a reasonable understanding on the issue of Constitution-making. Having been given this time I have every hope that they will rise to the occasion and resolve this problem. I wish to make a solemn promise to the people of Pakistan that as soon as the environments enumerated earlier become, conducive to Constitution making I will have no hesitation in calling the Session of the Assembly immediately. As for myself. I would like to assure my countrymen that I shall do everything in my power to help the political leaders in achieving our common goal with even handed justice which I have all along been doing.

"In the end, I pray to Almighty Allah to guide us all in acting according to the dictum of the Father of the Nation, namely, faith, unity and discipline. I appeal to the political leaders and all my countrymen to exercise the utmost restraint at this grave hour of our lives."
