

লাইফ ম্যাগাজিনে বাংলাদেশের মুক্তিযুদ্ধ

LIFE



The year in
PICTURES
1971

EAST PAKISTAN

The anguished birth of Bangladesh



The merciless assault of wind and cold



আমার বঙ্গ কন

লাইফ ম্যাগাজিনে বাংলাদেশের মুক্তিযুদ্ধ

প্রকাশ কালঃ ফেব্রুয়ারী, ২০১৩

সম্পাদনা

ই- বুক টিম।

প্রচ্ছদ ও অলঙ্করণ

ই- বুক টিম

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ভূমিকা

বাংলাদেশের মুক্তিযুদ্ধ সারা পৃথিবীতেই আলোড়ন সৃষ্টিকারী একটি ঘটনা ছিল। আন্তর্জাতিক মিডিয়াতেও সাড়া ফেলেছিল মুক্তিযুদ্ধ। গণহত্যার ভয়াবহতা, শরণার্থীদের সীমাহীন দুর্ভোগ, স্বাধীনতার জন্য একটি জাতির সংগ্রাম এবং তাকে ঘিরে বৈশ্বিক রাজনীতির জটিল মারপ্যাঁচ - এই সব কিছুই ছিল এসব মিডিয়ার মনোযোগের কেন্দ্রে। বিশ্ব জুড়ে প্রতিপত্তিশালী পত্রিকাগুলো যথেষ্ট গুরুত্বের সাথে কভার করে মুক্তিযুদ্ধের ঘটনা গুলো। এর সাথে সাথে যুক্ত হয়েছিলেন সেই সময়ের কিংবদন্তীর ফটোগ্রাফাররা।

ফটোগ্রাফি জগতের অন্যতম শীর্ষস্থানীয় পত্রিকা লাইফ ম্যাগাজিনেও বেশ কয়েকটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ প্রতিবেদন প্রকাশিত হয় এ সময়ে। মোট চারটি প্রতিবেদনের মাঝে তিনটি মুক্তিযুদ্ধ চলাকালেই প্রকাশিত হয়, মুক্তিযুদ্ধের তিনটি ভিন্ন পর্যায়ে। অন্যটি প্রকাশিত হয় ৩১ ডিসেম্বর, ১৯৭১ তারিখে লাইফ ম্যাগাজিনের একটি বিশেষ সংখ্যায়। অনেক গুলো অসাধারণ এবং দুর্লভ ছবি সম্বলিত প্রতিটি প্রতিবেদনই ইতিহাসের অনন্য দলিল।

আমারব্লগ বরাবরই মুক্তিযুদ্ধের দলিলগুলো অনলাইনে ছড়িয়ে দিতে সচেষ্ট, মুক্তিযুদ্ধের ইতিহাসকে সবস্তরের মানুষের হাতের নাগালে নিয়ে আসার প্রচেষ্টা সবসময়ই অব্যাহত রাখা হয়েছে আমারব্লগের পক্ষ থেকে। সেই একই উদ্দেশ্যে আমারব্লগের এবারের প্রচেষ্টা লাইফ ম্যাগাজিনের এই চারটি প্রতিবেদন নিয়ে ই-বুক - লাইফ ম্যাগাজিনে বাংলাদেশের মুক্তিযুদ্ধ। ঐতিহাসিকভাবে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ এই প্রতিবেদনগুলোকে একসাথে সংকলিত করার এই প্রচেষ্টা মুক্তিযুদ্ধের ইতিহাস চর্চায় আগ্রহী পাঠকের উপকারে আসবে বলে আমরা আশা করি।

মুক্তিযুদ্ধের চেতনা ছড়িয়ে পড়ুক প্রজন্ম থেকে প্রজন্মে।

জয় বাংলা।

সূচীপত্র

১। ১৮ জুন, ১৯৭১

২। ২৭ অগাস্ট, ১৯৭১

৩। ১০ ডিসেম্বর, ১৯৭১

৪। ৩১ ডিসেম্বর, ১৯৭১

১৮ জুন, ১৯৭১

Pakistan Faces



Drained by hunger and disease, Pakistani men line up (above) in an Indian village to draw food ration cards.

Overloaded with desperate refugees, an Indian bus passes the abandoned corpse of an infant killed by cholera.

refugees endure chaos and cholera

Emptied of All Hope



CALCUTTA

The Bengali villager lowered the handkerchief from his mouth long enough to mutter one word, "cholera," and hurried on his way. The deserted crossroads in Indian West Bengal was only three miles from the East Pakistan border. Over that border, for weeks now, terrified and dispirited refugees had been streaming in search of sanctuary from the brutality of West Pakistani soldiers. The short-lived state of Bangla Desh

was dead, but among these sorry folk the dying continued.

To the left of the crossroads lay Karimpur, a refugee camp abandoned when cholera erupted among the 15,000 East Pakistanis sheltering there. Leaving 700 dead lying in the open, the survivors had fled in panic. The cholera traveled with them.

Vultures in a brooding, strutting flock brought sickening certainty that this road we drove along was no innocent country thor-

oughfare. The flesh-eaters were glossy, repulsively replete. Further on appeared the first of many piles of discarded clothing, sadly eloquent of the cholera victims who needed them no longer. Then through the car window came a breath of tainted air, the cloying reek of death unseen yet certain somewhere out there in the rice field. We passed the corpse of a baby, the clean-picked skeleton of a young child, and then dead refugees wrapped in mats and saris and look-

CONTINUED

Text by JOHN SAAR

Photographed by MARK GODFREY



At a refugee camp near Krishnanagar (above), thirsty refugees have used water from roadside ponds contaminated with the cholera bacillus.

'They are dying so fast that we can't keep count'

CONTINUED

ing like parcels fallen from a speeding truck. A single-decker bus ground along, people crammed tightly inside and perhaps 70 more clinging to finger-holds on the back and roof. Above the mouths masked with hands or cloth, the eyes were frightened. A stream of vomit abruptly gushed from a window. Cholera travels easily.

"They are dying in such numbers we can't even keep count," said an Indian social worker who hitched a ride with us. "It could have been avoided if the government had told them where to go. But they just kept walking and walking in the hot sun. They became exhausted. They drank from infected

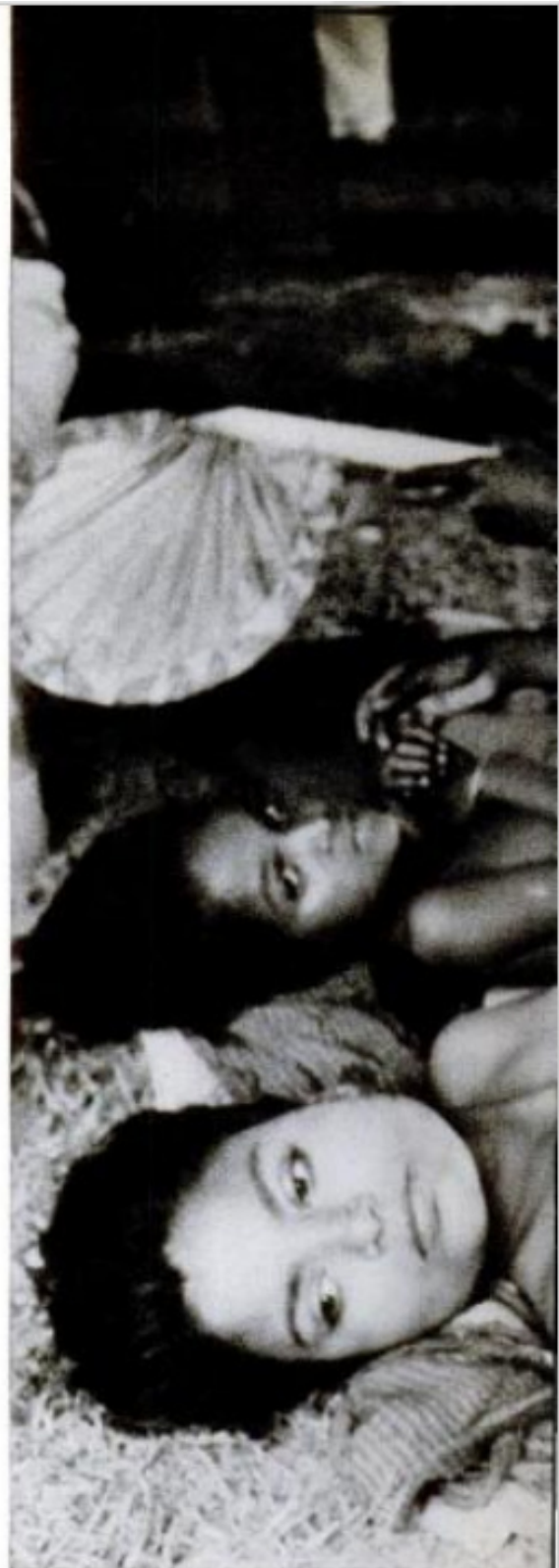
pools. Often they die in a single day because they are so weak."

The very beauty of the countryside, primed to greenness by premonsoon rains, majestic banyans and pools bright with blue-flowering lilies, seemed to mock the tragic human affairs in its midst. At the village of Kanthali a crowd of refugees argued and pleaded for places on a truck. Those already sick lay on the roadside in pathetic family tableaux of despair. For them money could not buy transport, so the still healthy haggled for the right to survival. The only hope for the dying was to reach a hospital in Krishnanagar. In the villages along the road neither vaccine nor medicine was available. Carried on improvised stretchers, ox carts and rickshas, cholera victims converged on the hospital. Those who were not dead on arrival were taken beneath the bamboo-and-canvas marquee and placed on the grass to fight for life. Hollow-eyed and only semi-conscious in the listless torpor of total exhaustion, they lay and retched. Relatives fanned the black fog of flies from their faces. Among them, hearteningly calm and well-laundered, nurses with life-saving bottles of intravenous saline solution moved through the great tent's sweltering dimness. Perhaps half the patients were children. One little girl lay arms akimbo, her wide-open eyes dulled by death. "She was about 7 years old and our ambulance found her dying alone," explained the staff nurse. "It was too late." A fatigued doctor lapsed into hand-wringing incoherence, "... the wretched condition of these people . . . we were not ready . . . even a sick dog or cat gets better treatment . . . we feel we have failed them."

Dr. S. Chakravertoy, government medical officer



East Pakistani refugees fled across the border into India at many points. Many are concentrated near Krishnanagar, an area ravaged by cholera.



at the hospital, attributed the rapid spread of the cholera epidemic to sanitation problems and the refugees' vulnerability. "Many of them have walked barefoot for 300 miles without adequate food or water. The whole town has been soiled by them. Krishnanagar has become a town of fear." Because new cases were certain to double the load in a day or two, a second tent was put up at Krishnanagar. After three days of treatment, those who survived were being moved into the new tent to make room for desperately ill arrivals.

The scale of the disaster across this swath of India (see map) is staggeringly hard to comprehend. Cholera is only the first epidemic; it now afflicts areas along the entire 1,350-mile India-East Pakistan boundary. Doctors point to the possibility of small-



In a steamy, crowded hospital emergency tent at Krishnanagar, a man comforts his cholera-stricken wife. In less than a week, 70 died there.

pox, typhoid and polio in the offing. With the refugee total mounting daily, an estimated 4.5 million East Bengalis have fled into India. More than three million of them have surged into this small sector of West Bengal, itself a state which has over a million unemployed, plus the urban sinkhole of Calcutta. It is as though the entire populations of New Jersey and Connecticut had suddenly migrated to New York. In West Bengal alone, deaths from cholera and gastroenteritis have been officially placed at 3,000, but unofficial estimates range up to 8,000. Refugees are reported breaking through cordons placed around Calcutta, raising the likelihood of cholera there.

There are as many tales of sorrow and persecution at the hands of the West Pakistani troops as

there are people trudging the burning hot roads. "They surrounded our village on three sides and set fire to it. When we ran out they fired with machine guns and killed many." And from a girl whose eyes streamed tears: "They chased after us and one tried to hit me with his *lathi* [stick]. I had my baby over my shoulder and the blow crushed his head."

Many of the uprooted are aged. One such couple moved at a painful pace, the old man hobbling on a crippled left leg and a wizened old lady bent double and edging along on a 15-inch-long stick. They had not known each other before, but both had been separated from their families in the confusion of escape. "We are consolation for one another," the old man explained. "We beg for food and walk before the sun gets hot." Two nights later our head-

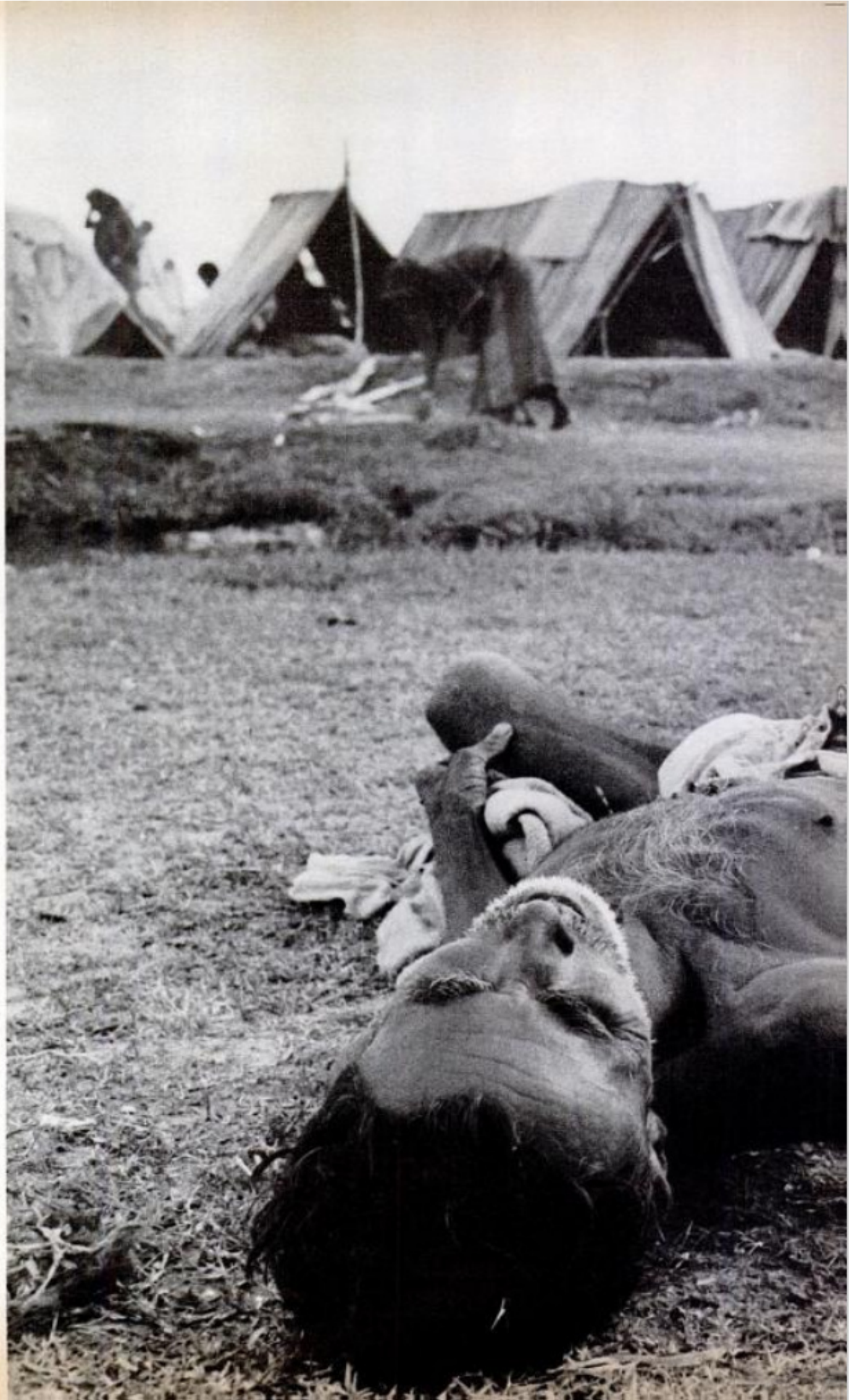
lights caught the body of an old man. We wondered and stopped, but it was not the same man.

From their different stories a terrible picture emerged. The initial Pakistani army attempt to crush the Bangla Desh independence movement by killing its leaders had apparently bloomed into a full-scale religious attack on East Pakistan's Hindu minority. In recent weeks almost all of the refugees have been Hindus evicted from their homes by Muslims acting under the orders and threats of the army.

Booty-hunting Pakistani soldiers intercept refugees before they cross into India and rob them of

TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 26

An old man lies dying of cholera in a refugee camp, a victim of the desperate shortage of medical supplies and food. So far at least eight nations, including the U.S., have announced plans to help, but the magnitude of the crisis dwarfs even major efforts. Certain kinds of aid will inevitably arrive too late. Officials believe that cholera vaccine is already virtually useless, given the rapid spread of the epidemic. A bacterial disease usually transmitted by poor sanitation and contaminated water, cholera causes violent diarrhea and vomiting, quickly dehydrating the victim. Intravenous infusions of saline solution, if given in time, can work. With inadequate treatment, however, the refugees have been dying so fast that survivors are unable to cremate them according to Hindu custom. At best, they are buried in hastily dug graves that are often dug up by ravenous dogs and jackals.





Rising waters and a wait for no rice

CONTINUED

cash, clothes and jewelry. They have even taken cooking pots and snatched saris from the shoulders of fleeing women. The worst allegations of the kidnapping, detention and mass rape of girls are not conclusively proved. Yet many families allege their daughters were carried off, and a relative shortage of young girls in the refugee camps has been noted.

A fresh terror is the monsoon rains. Seven days ago 20,000 people moved onto a bleak open field only 30 miles from Calcutta. They were to be the occupants of a new camp called Kalyani Five. The ground was dry, but the monsoon was imminent and the shawl of gray sky overhead was bruised and ominous. The only shelter available was rough-sewn bulrush mats. Even as these were being distributed, sheets of rain hurled by gale-force southwest winds swept over the field. For the three million or more refugees who live in low-lying camps like Kalyani, time began to run out.

The pounding rain beat Kalyani Five to a liquid mud, searching for the chinks in the frail improvised tents, reducing the refugees to a state of sodden, shivering misery. Lightning flashes revealed whole families intertwined for warmth. Children, many of them naked, whimpered from the wet and the 15° drop in temperature. As waters crept higher, poisonous snakes came among the people.

Meanwhile, under a phalanx of threadbare umbrellas, men gathered in a surging mass around the only relatively permanent shelter in Kalyani Five, a bamboo-and-canvas structure housing the rice supply. For men whose families had not eaten for three or four days, food was tantalizingly close. They patiently queued and requeued throughout the day. But there was no rice issue—the only officer with the necessary authority failed to show up.

The episode was unfortunately typical of the way the creaky Indian bureaucracy has hampered the most well-meant attempts to help. Coupled with the slow and as yet pathetically inadequate response of Western nations (the U.S. came through initially with a mere \$2.5 million but has since allotted an additional \$15 million), it offers many refugees hope for little more than slightly delayed death. Already there are numerous cases of rice supplies running out, of starving families denied aid because their papers were incorrectly stamped.

The man responsible for Kalyani Five is the magistrate of Nadia District in West Bengal, Dipak Ghosh, an energetic 34-year-old whose eyes are



dark-ringed from the strain of caring for 600,000 refugees. "Kalyani is on our conscience. We just cannot give them shelter. I make 12 trunk calls and send 14 telegrams every day for tarpaulins, but there are none to be had."

Ghosh has fought hard and will fight on, but he is unmistakably weary and dispirited: "Can we cope? The civil administration ceased to be able to cope long ago. The influx was under control until two weeks back, but since then the roads have been so jammed with refugees we could not get through and it's total chaos." Dropping his hand to the desk in resignation, he added, "I don't know what will happen. I feel physically sick when I see these children without any clothes lying on the wet ground. Clearly, many of them will die."

Ghosh and others believe that the problem is vastly beyond the capability of the administration, and that the Indian army must step in. All other work in Nadia, for instance, has been stopped to free staff for the refugees. And worse is yet to come. Even under dry-season conditions, the sheer cost of handling the refugees mounted to eight million rupees a day (\$10,664). This, for a nation whose per capita income is among the lowest in the world, is a major imposition. It has inspired talk of radical alternatives by the Indian government. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi has given notice that India is unwilling to accept the refugees on any but a short-term basis. Hawks are talking about a war that would force Pakistan to stop expelling refugees and to accept the return to their homes of refugees already in India.

In the refugee-clogged districts social tensions are reaching a flash point, although the sympathy of the West Bengalis for the newcomers has so far been enormous. In the village of Kanthali, for instance, a tubby, globe-faced man named Nalini Mohan Biswas, who runs a farming and trading business, welcomed 125 cholera victims into the courtyard of his home when they collapsed while passing through town. Biswas himself was unprotected by a vaccination. Even so, he nursed the stricken refugees so conscientiously that only four died.

But such rare and extraordinary efforts are only pinpoints in a vast tragedy. Narayan Desai, secretary of a national volunteer group, has no doubts about the gravity and explosiveness of the refugee issue: "I see a series of calamities, beginning with huge health problems. I imagine that thousands will die every day. Perhaps it is already too late." ■





At left, refugees who have crowded onto land at the edge of Calcutta's Dum Dum Airport huddle on the slightly raised roadway to wait for food rations. No ration cards were issued for three days because Indian officials claimed that the refugees were a hazard to aviation. The 40,000 in the crowded camp must share 150 latrines. Below, at Camp Kalyani near Calcutta, a man pleads with hungry refugees clamoring for rice. They waited all day, but the rice was never issued.



The merciless assault of wind and cold



monsoon rain



Using rush mats because there are no tarpaulins available, refugees try to shield themselves from rain and whipping winds. In normal times, with the temperature commonly reaching 90°, children often run around naked. Now, exposed to the cold rain and the mud, they are particularly susceptible to pneumonia. Like many areas where refugees are now living, this one will be under two feet of water when the monsoons end in late July.

২৭ অগাস্ট, ১৯৭১



Touring a Pakistani refugee camp, Senator Kennedy pauses for a word with a 65-year-old man (left), wasted by diarrhea, who explained that he had been constantly hungry for four months. At another camp, an emaciated refugee saluted Senator Kennedy with a smile.



Photographed by **DICK SWANSON**

A fact-finding mission to the refugee camps of north India

KENNEDY'S SEARING TRIP THROUGH PAKISTANI GRIEF



"Zindabad Kin-a-dee!" ("Long live Kennedy!") roared the huge, ragged crowds of Pakistani refugees as, with clenched fists upraised, they hailed the arrival of Senator Edward Kennedy in the refugee camps of northeast India. The senator, who is chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Refugees, was in India for a quick fact-gathering, whistle-stop tour of the camps. But the joyful welcome and enthusiastic expectations of the refugees rapidly turned the trip into a searing personal experience, as all the hopes and sorrows of a desperate people were brought to focus on him. The refugees, now counting almost eight million, huddled in the monsoon mud, dying from malnutrition, cholera and pneumonia, and nursing the wounds of battle. Still pouring over the East Pakistan border at a rate of 35,000 a day, they show no inclination to return home until the army occupation is ended, their leader Sheik Mujibur ("Mujib") Rahman is released from West Pakistan (where he is now on trial for his life) and East Pakistan is guaranteed a measure of independence. To these people Kennedy seemed a ray of hope, and perhaps a powerful ally. His trip included a secret meeting with the provisional prime minister of Bangla Desh, but he was denied a visa to enter Pakistan itself. Kennedy left India sounding as if he intended to initiate decisive action back home. "We are providing millions of dollars in military aid to West Pakistan," he said, "and blood money to look after the refugees."



Crowds of refugees wave and chant as Kennedy arrives for a camp tour. At first the welcomes were clearly well organized, but when he made some unplanned and unannounced visits later in his trip, he was received with as much enthusiasm.

Almost 300,000

"Many of the children in the camps Kennedy visited were in the last stages of malnutrition," reports correspondent John Saar, who accompanied the senator on his trip. "They lay with rib frames exposed like birdcages, or sat like an empty purse on their rumps." Kennedy discovered that almost 300,000 of the children in the 1,150 refugee camps need immediate nutritional rehabilitation. Without it, most will



At a camp eight miles from Calcutta, Senator Kennedy crouches in the doorway of a cell-like room to ask a mother about her two undernourished babies (above). During a tour of refugee hospitals, which were filled

with hundreds of dying children, Kennedy paused by the bed of a baby (right) lying motionless with an unblinking stare. A nurse told him that parents only brought children to the hospital when they were almost dead.



children who may die without nutrition

die, and many of the survivors will be blind or mentally retarded from vitamin deficiency.

Kennedy wasted no time in beginning his tours. Within an hour of his arrival in Calcutta, the first Indian flies settled on his white handmade shirt as he squatted under the broiling sun, questioning an old lady before her hutch of twigs and grass. Everywhere he went, people stopped him to tell stories of personal

and family tragedy, but reactions to misfortune varied. Some refugees seemed resigned to the horrors they had experienced, but most of the young men still nourished a fierce sense of nationhood. Beside an old lady, shriveled and dying in the rain, a hysterical son spat angrily, "I want to go back and fight. Our country is being run by animals." In one overcrowded hospital, Kennedy saw a child with shrapnel

splinters in his chest, a girl who had been raped and then shot by the West Pakistanis, a woman who had been shot in the stomach, a boy with an arm full of bone splinters. The cumulative effect of four days of such sights left Kennedy deeply shocked and depressed. "It was much worse than I expected," he said. "I have a collection of personal observations and experiences that have really burned into my soul."



১০ ডিসেম্বর, ১৯৭১

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India takes up the cause of the Bengalis with

In Pakistan, now



aid and an invasion it's war



Several miles inside East Pakistan, Pakistani troops drag away the stiff corpse of an Indian soldier. General Niazi, resting comfortably on his shooting stick, has no qualms about the threat from India: "We can beat the Indians when they outnumber us three to one."

Unofficially we are at war," declared General A.A.K. Niazi, West Pakistan's spit-and-polish senior military officer in East Pakistan. But with just whom was a matter of debate. In fact, the enemy appeared to consist of virtually the whole population of East Pakistan, plus contingents of the Indian army which crossed the border two weeks ago and stayed there. With India's intervention, the already tragic East Pakistan situation slid yet nearer to another futile and exhausting Asian war, this time between two of the poorest nations on earth.

East and West Pakistan have Mohammedanism in common, but little else. The two parts of the country are a thousand miles apart, and the rough Punjabis and Pathans of the West, who run the government and fill the ranks of the army, feel contempt for the slender, dark-skinned Bengalis of the East. The crisis began months ago when the Pakistani army crushed a powerful independence movement in East Pakistan, arrested its leader and instituted a military reign of terror. Hordes of Bengali refugees flooded into India—nine million of them, according to New Delhi. It was this intolerable burden that brought the Indian army in—along with, perhaps, a chance to sneak a blow at their old enemy while it was having trouble. The Indians at first denied having attacked, until casualties (left) and captives proved otherwise. Then they said they were merely raiding the border to silence Pakistani batteries that were shelling Indian villages. Ominously, India's Prime Minister Indira Gandhi termed the mere presence of West Pakistani troops anywhere in East Pakistan "a threat to our security."

So far the half-war is being fought with quaint Sandhurstian echoes of team spirit and stiff upper lip, and with old-fashioned weapons and tactics ill suited to East Pakistan's watery terrain. A greater threat than the Indians (although Pakistan professes to despise it) lies deep within Pakistani lines. There, thousands of Mukti Bahini, Indian-trained Bengali "freedom fighters," are slowly preparing a guerrilla war of the kind that military minds like General Niazi's, despite the object lesson of Vietnam, seem unable to cope with or even comprehend.

Hunting for Mukti Bahini behind the lines

by JOHN SAAR

DACCA

Thirty miles inside East Pakistan, Mukti Bahini (below) display their determination and weird weaponry, which includes World War II bolt-action Enfields and modern light automatics, some captured from the enemy.

Make sure you have a Bengali driver," we were advised when we began our search for the Mukti Bahini, the East Pakistan guerrillas. Out past the airport, where stripped-out PIA Boeing 707s bring in uniformed replacements from Karachi and take out wounded soldiers with the civilian passengers, we pass two checkpoints with curt nods from Pakistani soldiers and a third after a cursory search. "They are so rude," says our guide Ishaque, ignoring the fact that we are after all off to meet their enemy. The country loosens his tongue and he talks about the inevitability of Bangla Desh, Free Bengal.

"All the people are for it now. And they are ready to pay the price. People do not speak about how their homes were burned, they only say how many West Pakistanis were killed. My 15-year-old son Daud joined the guerrillas. We told him not to but he went, and when I asked him, 'Aren't you afraid?' he said, 'No, my gun will speak for me.'"

Four hours in a boat, a pointed wooden sliver powered by a tireless boatman with whipcord arms, through an idyllic waterscape alive with fish and fowl. There is smoke on the horizon and the reason is gradually picked up in shouted exchanges with passing boats. "They burned those four villages yesterday because they were sheltering Mukti Bahini." More news from a man mending a fish trap and Ishaque says, "There are Mukti in that boat over there." As we approach they start to paddle furiously but Ishaque persuades them to wait and we talk to them. They have been traveling for 11 days and nights, from the Indian border to the East Pakistani interior. They produce automatic rifles and submachine guns of British design and explain they were trained to use them by Indian army and Mukti Bahini instructors. Up until now guerrilla activity has been concentrated close to the sources of sanctuary and resupply along the Indian borders. Ishaque is concerned about the possibility of internal fighting among the Mukti Bahini. There are three groups represented in the independence forces: the pro-Bangla Desh, the independents and the Communist extremists. "They have an agreement now to fight the common enemy but I do not know what will happen in the future."

The boat trip is of staggering beauty: minnows skipping along the surface flash as momentary diamonds, and porpoises plunge and frolic as the sun sets. Yet there is discord and unease. Distant shots startle wild duck to flight and set a flock of cranes wheeling and swooping like papers before a fan. In the twilight people are on the move, yelling to one another in alarm, carrying their pos-

CONTINUED





In tent cities (left) springing up a few miles within India, thousands of East Pakistani volunteers are openly trained to fight as guerrillas. In some camps they drill with wooden rifles. In others (right), they lack even these.



'We will win with our own hands'

CONTINUED

sessions to their boats, leaving their villages for safety. Only who knows where safety lies? Unlike the battlewise Vietnamese, these people are helpless, bewildered, unable to sense the answer to a threat.

The darkness leads to a village and the home of a schoolteacher who delivers an eloquent and ordered disquisition on the differences of language, race, culture and climate separating the two Pakistans. That a successful man of middle years with family position and security to lose should wholeheartedly ally himself with the guerrillas seems impressive. He sends for the young men and in minutes they stand behind him shoulder to shoulder, a crescent of strong faces, teeth and protuberant cheekbones gleaming in the dim glow of a hurricane lamp. The words stumble out in faltering English but nothing can destroy the strength and passion of the message. "We don't want the Indians to help us. We will win our own country," one of the group says, raising his clenched fists, "with our own hands."

The next morning we set off before dawn to walk to a village where, we were told, 300 Mukti were holed up getting ready for an operation against a major target. We were still three miles away when over the noises of a waking hamlet—the pounding of rice and the crackling of kindling—we hear the machine guns. The metronome bursts of automatic fire seep through the dawn mist like muffled drums and we know it for what it is, a thoroughly professional half-light attack by the Pakistani army. For the first time Ishaque tells us that his son is in the village, and lapses into worried distraction. We keep moving through well-kept hamlets with rich grain fields and tethered goats and cows. Outside each highly combustible home stand stricken family groups staring in the direction of the firing. A cyclist races past, wheels bouncing recklessly off the tree roots, and then four hurrying Mukti openly carrying their weapons. They explain that the Pakistani army has surrounded the village, killed the guards and brought in mortar fire. They were all too surprised to fight back, they say, and everyone had tried to run. Ishaque asks after his son. They have no news and he turns away.

The firing is coming steadily closer and the Mukti advise retreating to another village where more of their comrades are to meet. There, in a motley group of 30 or so, badly shaken and carrying little more than their ammunition, Ishaque finds his missing son.

On the long way back Ishaque tells how his son is hard hit by the loss of three good friends. "I asked him to come home, but he didn't want to. I said, 'Come home and when you have some ammunition and the leader reorganizes, then you can go back.'"

Taking shelter under a banyan tree in a camp just inside India are two of the war's saddest victims, refugee women from East Pakistan.



৩১ ডিসেম্বর, ১৯৭১

The Year in Pictures 1971

EAST PAKISTAN

The anguished birth of Bangladesh

Over all the earth in the year 1971, no place and no people suffered more terribly than East Pakistan and its tormented inhabitants. Their suffering clings to our minds. Yet out of that span of utter misery a kind of hope emerged at last, because on a day in mid-December East Pakistan itself ceased to exist. In its place stood a new state called Bangladesh (Bengal Nation), enormously crowded, bitterly poor, the eighth most populous country in the world—but finally independent.

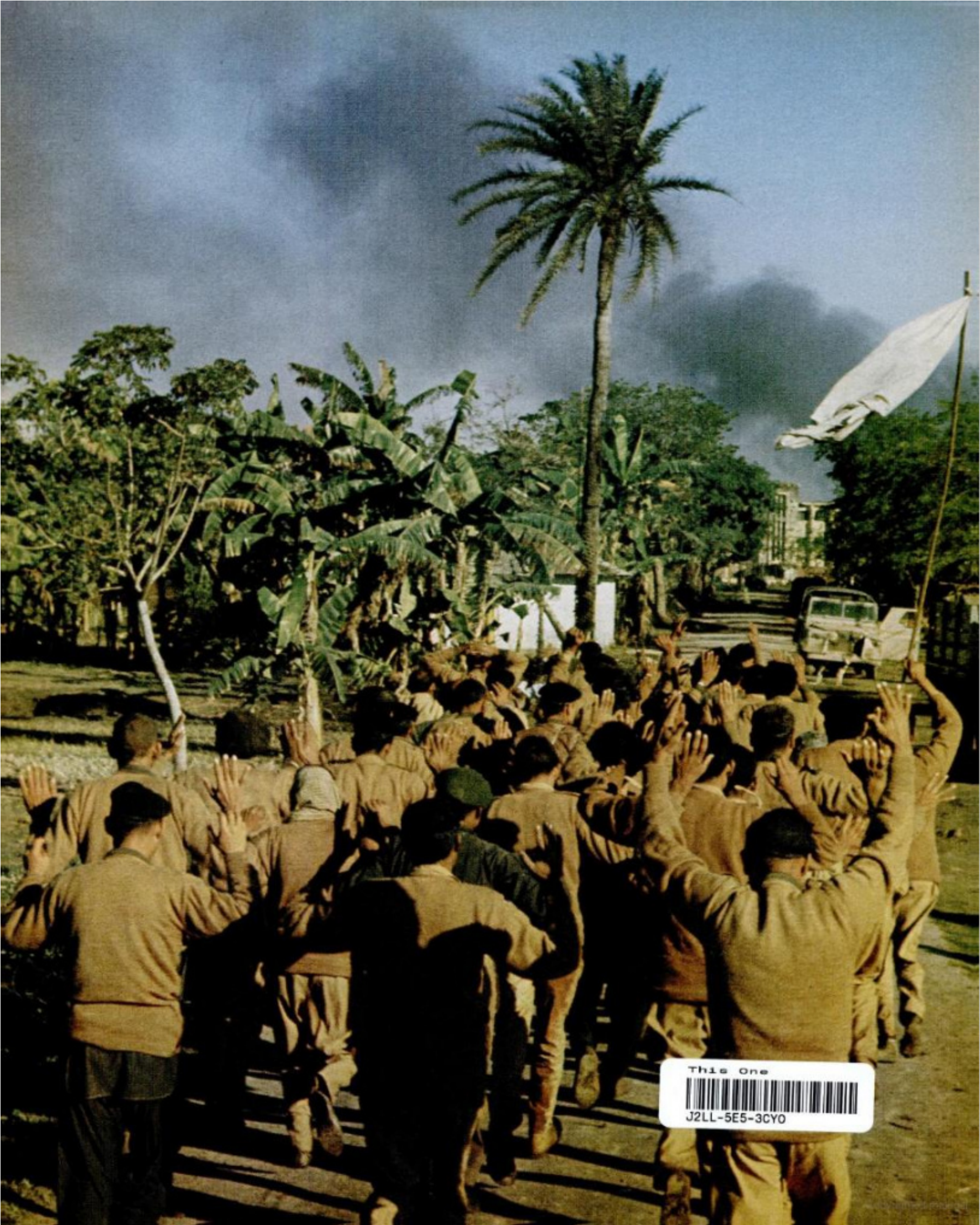
It happened convulsively, as if the agony of common people had grown so great as to make armies march and nations fall. United to West Pakistan only by the Muslim religion, East Pakistan's second-class status became desperately ob-

vious last spring when the central government outlawed a local independence movement, clapped its leader in jail, and ordered 80,000 West Pakistani troops to restore control by force. Fleeing the terror, East Pakistanis left their farms and villages and poured into India by the millions, perhaps ten million in all. Disease, monsoon rains, hunger, privations of every kind laid them waste. Still the Pakistani government refused to ease its bloody grip on the East. At last, moved partly by the need to solve the refugee problem and partly by the urge to deal their historic enemy a crushing blow, the Indians loosed their tanks and troops across the border. Within 14 days the Pakistanis yielded, Bangladesh gained its freedom, and the year's most terrible story drew to an aching close.



Shouting "Joi Bangla" ("Victory to Bengal") and waving weapons, East Pakistanis welcome Indian troops entering Jessore. At right an Indian soldier





This One



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EAST PAKISTAN

CONTINUED



The real tragedy of East Pakistan took place not to the rumble of tanks and the crackle of gunfire but to less dramatic sounds: flies buzzing, rain falling, children and grown men wailing. All during the spring and summer months refugees from the West Pakistani terror campaign staggered into India. Many walked for weeks, virtually without food, never finding shelter. Indian relief facilities collapsed under the strain, and foreign aid was pitifully inadequate. In June monsoon rains began (below), and the death toll from bronchial pneumonia began to exceed the earlier chief killers, cholera and starvation. The family at left had walked for 16 days. Within a day of reaching India the wife fell sick with cholera and quickly died. The survivors mourned her, cremated her corpse, then straggled away toward Calcutta, 60 miles farther on. Death often came first to the very young: dazed with hunger, the refugee woman at right waits passively for her baby to finish dying.



