

Bengali Refugees Say Soldiers Continue to Kill, Loot and Burn

By SYDNEY H. SCHANBERG

Special to The New York Times

KUTIBARI, India, Sept. 21—
The latest refugees from East Pakistan report that the Pakistani Army and its civilian collaborators are continuing to kill, loot and burn despite the central Government's public avowals that it is bent on restoring normalcy and winning the confidence of the Bengali people.

The dozens of refugees

interviewed by this correspondent today, all of whom fled into India from East Pakistan in the past week, describe the killing of civilians, rape and other acts of repression by the soldiers, most of them West Pakistanis.

As the refugees talked in their overcrowded, half-flooded camps in and around this Indian village about four miles from the border and 60 miles northeast of Calcutta, the sound of shelling could be heard from the frontier. It was impossible to tell whether the shells came from the Pakistani Army, the Indian border forces or the so-called liberation forces of Bangla Desh (Bengal Nation), the name the Bengali

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The New York Times

Published: September 23, 1971

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separatist movement has given to East Pakistan since the attempt to repress the movement began in March.

Most of the refugees interviewed came from the region of Faridpur, the family home of Sheik Mujibur Rahman, jailed leader of the Bengalis.

Nearly All Are Hindus

The refugees said that although general living conditions were very difficult in East Pakistan, they would have stayed had it not been for the killings. Nearly all the latest arrivals are Hindus, who said that the military regime was still making the Hindu minority its particular target.

They said the guerrillas were active in their areas and that the army carried out massive reprisals against civilians after every guerrilla raid.

Nira Pada Saha, a jute trader in Faridpur District, told of a reprisal against a village near his that had sheltered and fed the guerrillas. Just before he fled five days ago, he related, the army struck the village, first shelling it and then burning the huts.

"Some of the villagers didn't run away fast enough," he said. "The soldiers caught them, tied their hands and feet and threw them into the flames."

There were about 5,000 people in the village, most of them Hindus, Mr. Saha said, and not a hut is left.

Others Do 'Dirty Work'

According to the refugees, the army leaves much of the "dirty work" to its civilian collaborators—the razakars, or home guards—it has armed and to the supporters of right-wing religious political parties such as the Moslem League and Jamaat-i-Islami, which have usually backed the military regime.

The collaborators act as intelligence agents and enforcers for the army, the refugees say, by pointing out homes and villages and people who have helped the guerrillas. Often, the refugees added, the collaborators make arrests at random and for no reason.

"The razakars and the others come into a village and pick just any house," said Dipak Kumar Biswas, a radio repairman from Barisal District. "Then they arrest whatever able-bodied young man is in that house and hand him over to the army. We don't know what the army does to them. They never come back."

The refugees said that despite reprisals and police-state activities, local people were continuing to provide food, shelter and information to the guerrillas.

Makhan Lal Talukdar, a rice farmer, said he fled a few days ago after some razakars swooped down on the crowd gathered at the weekly bazaar and opened fire. Six people were killed, he said, and many wounded.

Refugee Flow Goes On

Mr. Tulakdar crossed into India with his family of eight but had to leave his father behind in hiding because he was too old to make the trek.

About 15,000 people from his area fled to India after the bazaar incident, Mr. Tulakdar said. Some 20,000 to 30,000 refugees pour into India every day, joining the millions—the latest estimate is 8.6 million—already here.

The Pakistani President, Agha Mohammad Yahya Khan, has urged the refugees to return, promising them assistance, and he has offered amnesty to the guerrillas.

The promises only evoke bitter laughter from the refugees. "We fled to save our lives," said Rajendra Das, another farmer. "They are still killing us. We will not go back until there is complete independence."

Though rice is somewhat short in the refugees' areas, with the price up 40 per cent as a result, other foods are said to be plentiful. However, many people are going hungry, the refugees said, because they lack money and jobs.

Economic life has been badly disrupted since the army began its assault. Particularly hard hit have been the farm laborers and those who do menial labor on Government public-works projects, most of which have been halted.