

INDIA REPORTS FOE IN ROUT IN EAST AS ENCIRCLEMENT OF DACCA GAINS;

PAKISTAN REPLIES

Insists Force Holds On in East and Denies Loss of Big Cities

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Special to The New York Times

CALCUTTA, India, Dec. 9—
The commander of India's eastern forces said tonight that the retreat of the Pakistanis in East Pakistan had become a rout as Indian troops continued to push the foe into an ever-shrinking circle whose center is Dacca, the regional capital.

The eastern commander, Lieut. Gen. Jagjit Singh Aurora, said that the air force had had "a field day" the last 24 hours, shooting up river boats loaded with Pakistani troops trying to escape.

[In Rawalpindi, according to a Reuters dispatch, Pakistan continued to insist that her troops were holding fast in the country's eastern wing and denied again that Indian forces had captured major cities.]

Calcutta Airport Shut

In India, the Calcutta airport was unexpectedly closed to commercial traffic for the day, and there was speculation that the Indians were moving troops by air from the East Pakistan front, where they feel sure they are going to win, to the western front, which is 1,000 miles away, on the border with West Pakistan. The Government denied this but gave no explanation for the airport's closing.

In East Pakistan the Indian forces still have two vast rivers to cross before they can mount a full assault on Dacca, whose airport has been damaged by continuing Indian air attacks.

Those rivers — which are more than a mile across in places—are the Padma, in the west, which the Indians are fast approaching, and the Meghna, in the east, which they reached today. The rivers, which eventually merge south of Dacca, are usually crossed by ferry. Some of the narrower sections have bridges, but the Pakistanis have blown these as they retreated.

'We Are Making Plans'

That may slow the Indian advance somewhat, but General Aurora gave the impression at his briefing for newsmen that he was not going to wait long before starting to cross. "We are making plans," he said.

Coming from the west, Indian troops, after capturing Magura, have moved forward a few miles to a smaller river, the Madhumati, where the Pakistanis had destroyed the ferry. The Indian forward point is 22 miles from the big obstacle, the Goalundo Ghat crossing on the Meghna, with Dacca about 35 miles farther on.

The Indians took three im-

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Calcutta Airport Is Shut, Hinting Big Troop Move

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portant towns on or near the Meghna—Ashuganj, Chandpur and Daudkandi, the last less than 25 miles from Dacca.

General Aurora and other Indian military officials expressed belief that the Pakistanis were trying to fall back on a few areas of concentration.

The Pakistanis' flight was explained by General Aurora this way: "When you get outmaneuvered and feel you are going to get beaten badly, unless you are willing to sacrifice to the last round, which only happens in a very few places, a chap says, 'Let me get the hell out of here and see if I can fight in another place.'"

The general said he thought that if Pakistani Army headquarters in West Pakistan had its way, it would fight to the bitter end. But he described the Pakistani troops in East Pakistan as disorganized and short on ammunition and said: "They may try a last-ditch stand, but they would be in a very tight corner if they do."

The Eastern Command chief who visited several captured towns at the front yesterday and today, described his reception at Comilla, taken yesterday, as "quite touching and exhilarating because this was an area I was able to get to first, before other commanders."

"When my helicopter landed at the airfield," he continued, "a large crowd of people—about 2,000—had collected. They just mobbed me—handshaking, hugging, embracing, tears of joy. It just went on and on. Then they lifted me up on their shoulders and carried me around. It was embarrassing but very touching."

Cantonment Surrounded

The military cantonment about 15 miles from Comilla has not been captured but has been encircled, the general said, adding that "we're letting them stay surrounded for the time being." He said there was either a brigade or a division commander inside.

Not all the Pakistani troops are caught in that tightening circle at the center of East Pakistan. There are pockets all over the region, some still fighting hard, but they are cut off from their supply lines and their destruction or surrender seems only a matter of time.

Not many Pakistanis have surrendered yet, a fact that raises images of possible Dunkirks at the ports and river crossings.

Something like Dunkirk may have been happening. General Aurora said the air force and navy had been bombarding such places as Goalundo Ghat, Narayanganj, Chandpur, Khulna, Barisal and other ports. He said that at Chandpur, a river steamer carrying 400 to 500 troops was hit by tanks and planes and set ablaze.

"Now they're caught by the air force and I think the casualties are going to be very high," he added.

Explaining why he thought the offensive had turned into a rout, the general said: "My own view is that their superior commanders had not worked out their pattern of battle to the extent they should have."

He described as one of the latest Indian successes the en-

circlement of a group of Pakistani troops about 15 miles below Jessore, on the road to Khulna. Foreign newsmen who visited the scene found the Pakistanis fighting a tenacious rear-guard action.

Reports are beginning to multiply that Pakistani troops are killing Bengali civilians as they retreat and that Bengalis are killing Pakistanis and those who collaborated with them.

Near Jhikargacha, on the road from the Indian border to Jessore, a British photographer was taken to a well filled with the bodies of 40 Bengali civilians whom the villagers said had been killed by soldiers.

In the opposite reprisal, a Sikh infantry captain at Jessore said that in four days of fighting, he had seen at least six instances of Pakistani soldiers tortured to death by Bengalis.

Three civilians charged with collaborating with the Pakistani occupation army were found shot dead in a field in a village near Jessore, their hands tied behind their backs.

General Aurora said that in the areas the Indian Army had taken, he had given strict orders that "there will be no summary executions and unarmed people will not be killed."

He said that only a few summary executions had occurred in his areas but that "in some areas which are still not liberated, a certain number of political executions must be taking place."

Many Foreigners Caught

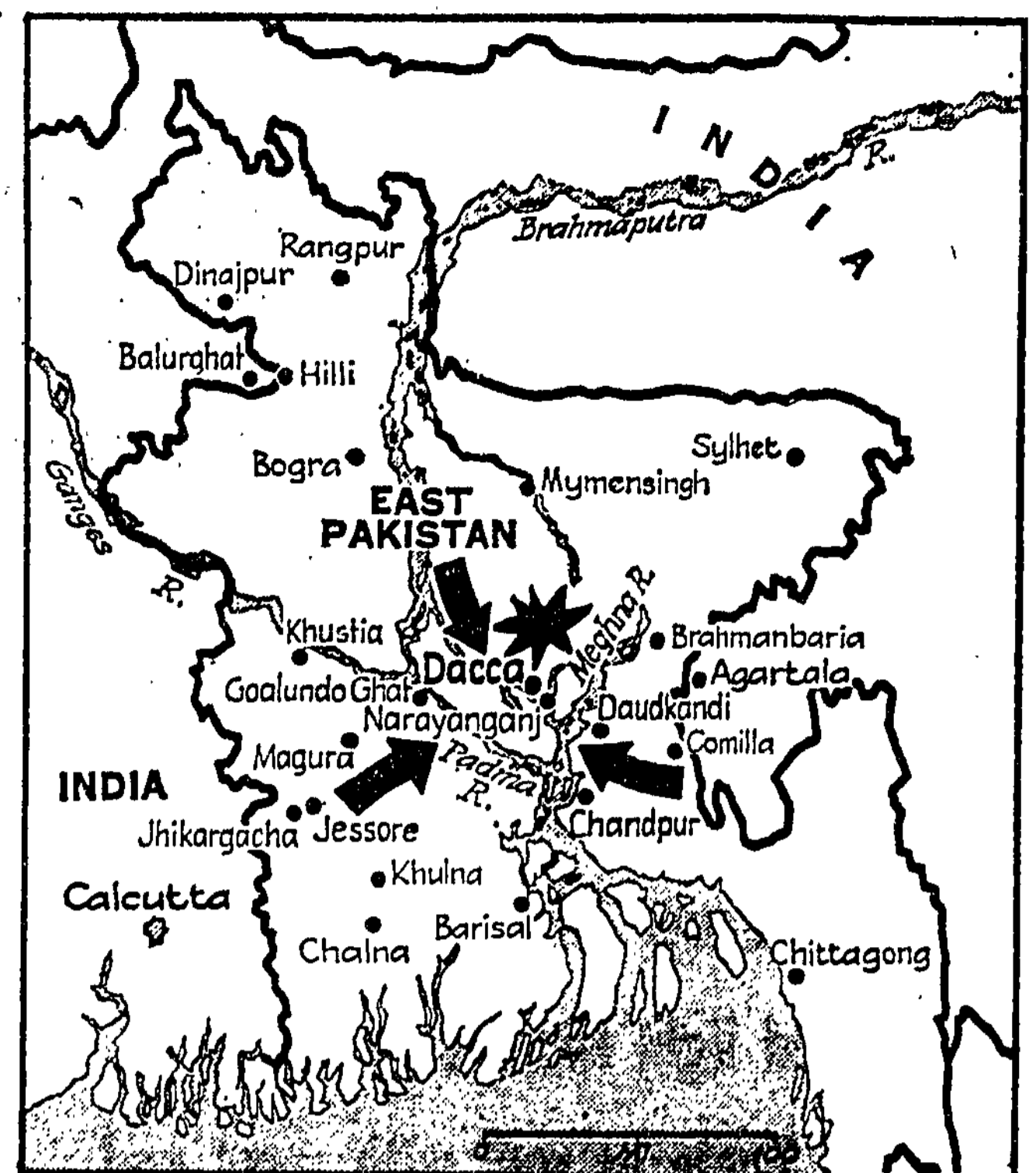
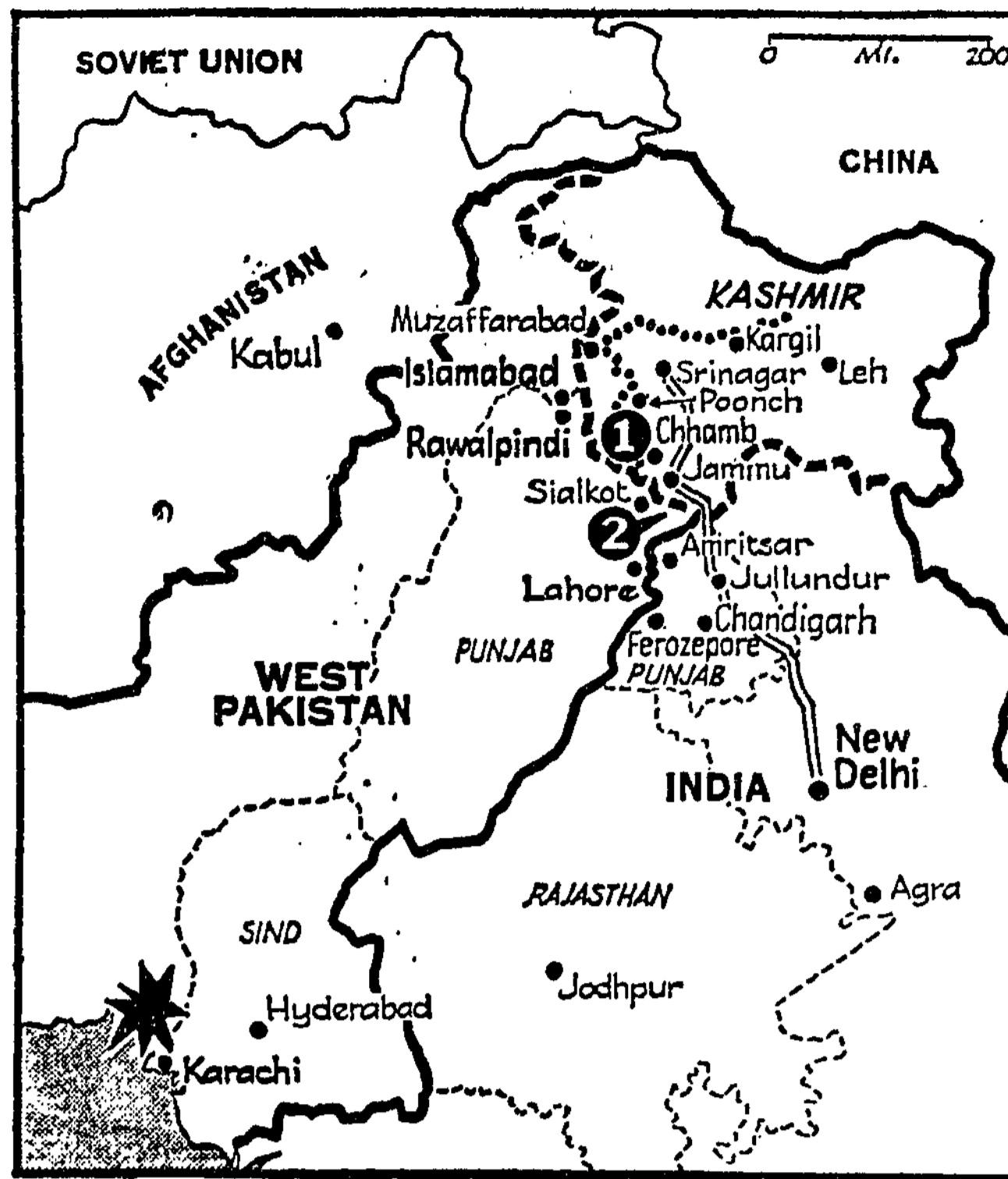
"It has to happen," he continued. "They have no other way of controlling these areas. This is the method of all guerrillas."

The guerrillas he was talking about are the Mukti Bahini (Liberation Forces), the insurgent army that has been fighting for the independence of East Pakistan since the Pakistani troops swept into the province March 25. India has recognized the insurgent government of Bangla Desh, or Bengal Nation, as the Bengalis call East Pakistan.

Caught in the war are the many foreign nationals living in Pakistani cities. To allow their evacuation by air, India and Pakistan have agreed to a temporary air cease-fire at Karachi Airport tomorrow morning and the next morning and at Dacca Airport from 6 P.M. tomorrow to 6 P.M. the next day.

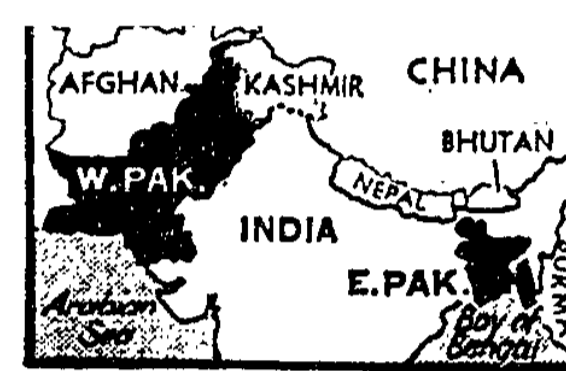
Diplomatic sources here said there were 540 foreign nationals in Dacca, including 20 children.

The air cease-fire at Dacca is apparently academic for the Pakistanis. General Aurora reported that today the Indian Air Force shot down the last of the 23 Pakistani fighter plane in East Pakistan, an American-supplied F-86 Sabre jet.

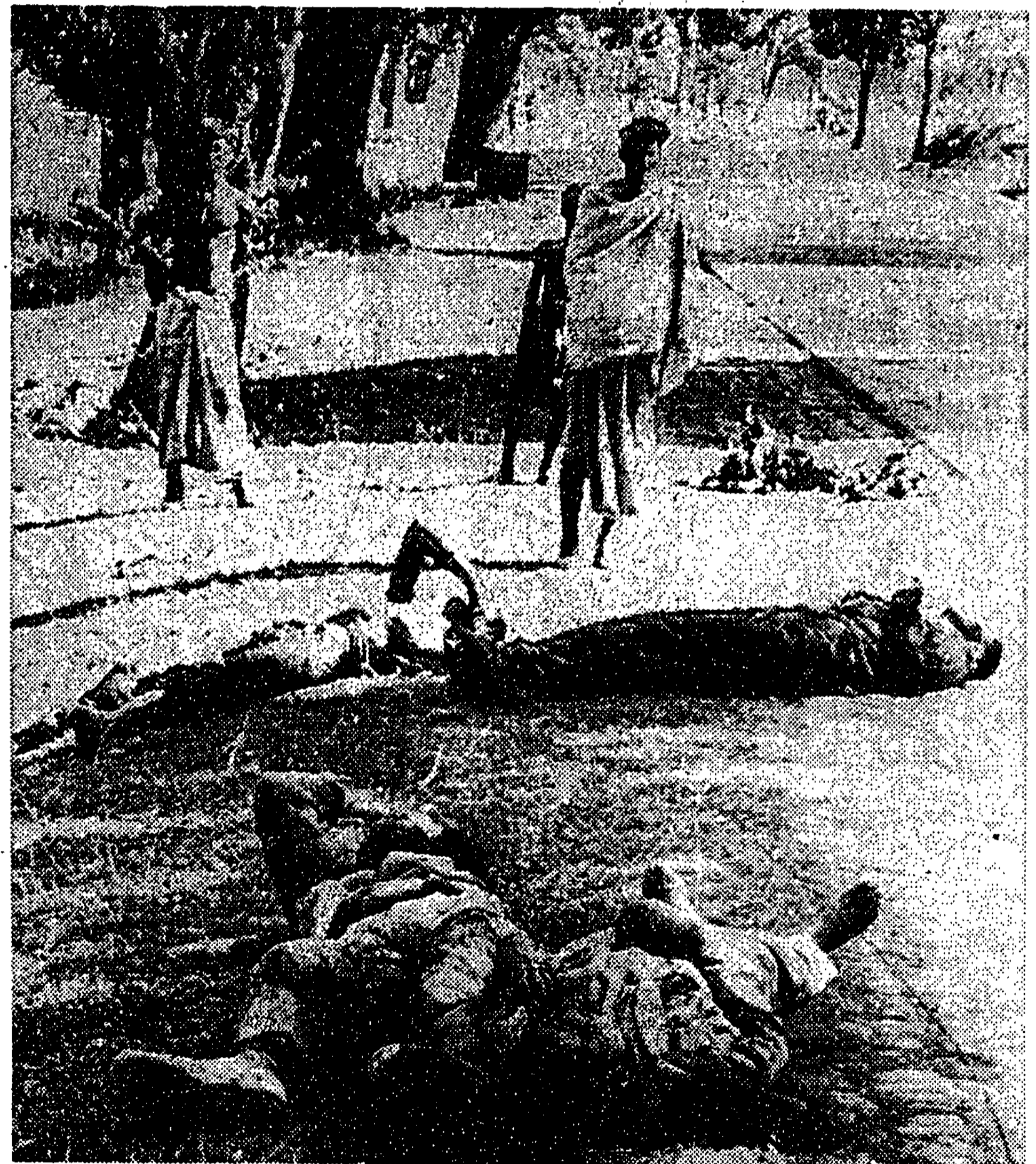


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IN THE WEST: Pakistan said her troops were consolidating their positions on the Kashmir front (1), where they had scored gains. Heavy fighting was reported in the Sialkot area of West Pakistan (2). Many casualties were reported in Indian air and naval attack on Karachi (bomb burst).



IN THE EAST: An Indian general said his forces were pushing Pakistanis into an ever-shrinking area (black arrows), but Pakistan continued to insist her troops were holding fast. An Indian air raid on Dacca (bomb burst) hit an orphanage near airport, reportedly causing casualties.



KILLED IN ACTION IN EAST PAKISTAN: The bodies of Pakistani soldiers lying in a road about 10 miles east of Jessore yesterday. They died in a clash with Indian forces.