

Parliament's joyful ovation for Mrs Gandhi

From Kuldip Nayar
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Pakistan forces in East Bengal surrendered today at 11.01 GMT and three hours later India declared a unilateral cease-fire in West Pakistan.

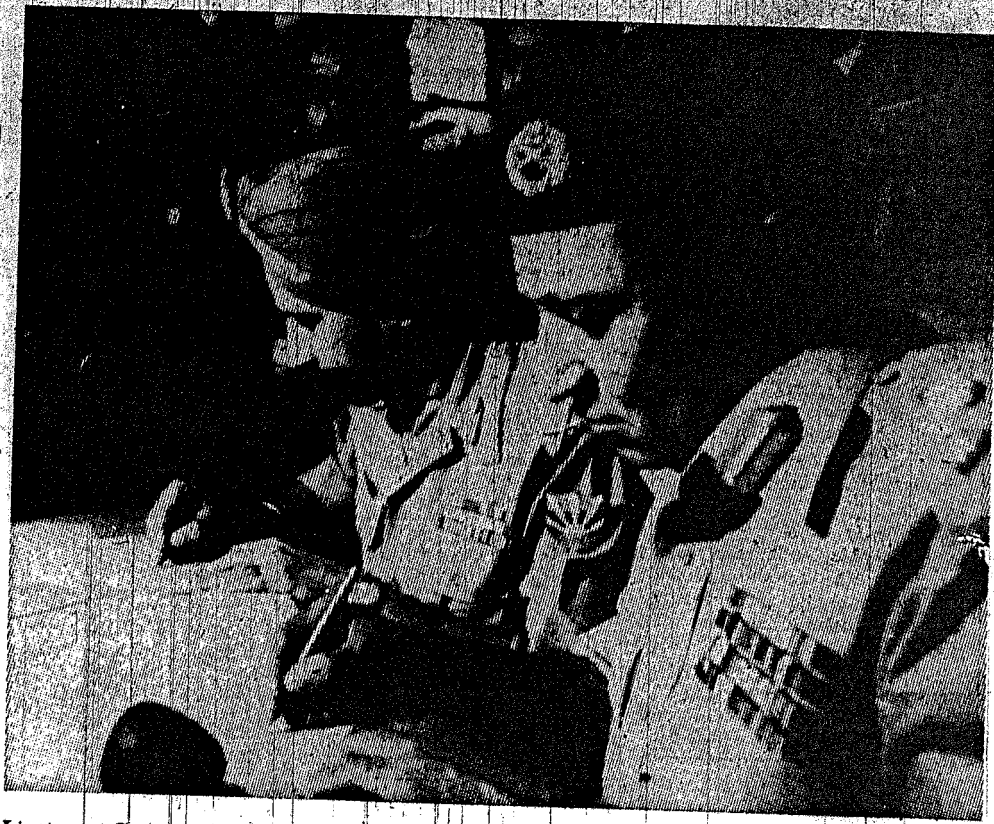
It was a day of many dramatic happenings. First, there was no response until the eleventh hour from the Pakistan military command in the East to the call for surrender made by India's Chief of Army Staff, General Manekshaw.

Then came a request from the Pakistani commander in East Bengal, Lieutenant-General A. A. K. Niazi for a six-hour extension to India's pause in bombing which started at 11.30 GMT on Wednesday. Finally came the surrender to Lieutenant-General J. S. Aurora, commander of Indian forces and the Mukti Bahini (the Bangla Desh fighters) in the East, who flew by helicopter to Dacca with his counterparts in the Indian Navy and Air Force.

On top of all this came India's unilateral declaration of a cease-fire which was decided at a hurriedly convened Cabinet meeting, and conveyed to a joint meeting of the two Houses of the Indian Parliament.

Mrs Gandhi, the Indian Prime Minister, who broke the news to Parliament first of the surrender of the Pakistan forces in East Bengal and then of a unilateral cease-fire, was given a hero's ovation such as has never been seen in the two Houses before. Members forsook all decorum to acclaim *"Indira zindabad"* [*Long live Mrs Gandhi*].

A nation which had felt concerned for the past two days over the movement of the United States Seventh Fleet into the Bay of Bengal not only felt relieved but almost appeared drunk with the heady wine of victory.



Lieutenant-General A. A. K. Niazi, the Pakistan commander in Dacca, right, signs his army's surrender document yesterday, with Lieutenant-General Jagjit Singh Aurora, commander-in-chief of the Indian Eastern Command, counter-signing.

There is, however, some worry over Peking's charge, contained in a protest Note delivered to Delhi today that India had violated the Sikkim-China border.

India had itself noticed a limited movement of some Chinese troops north of Nefa, an area through which the Chinese forces had attacked India in 1962.

The Indian people are also openly condemning the movement of the American fleet as

"Washington's friendship with the military junta of Pakistan".

It looks as if the damage to Indo-United States relations is beyond repair.

In comparison, the British Government's stock is "high" and the neutrality of London is being interpreted as a friendly gesture.

One country which is being roundly acclaimed by all Indian political parties—including the rightist ones—is the Soviet

Union. Indeed people feel grateful that Moscow had stood by them "in their hour of need".

Meanwhile a big tank battle is taking place in the Pathankot Samba sector on the western border. Indian forces in a probing operation across the Basantar river 15 miles inside Pakistan territory, met with a massive counter-attack.

An Indian spokesman said today that Pakistan has lost 40 tanks while India had lost 15.