

INDIA

Refugees 1971

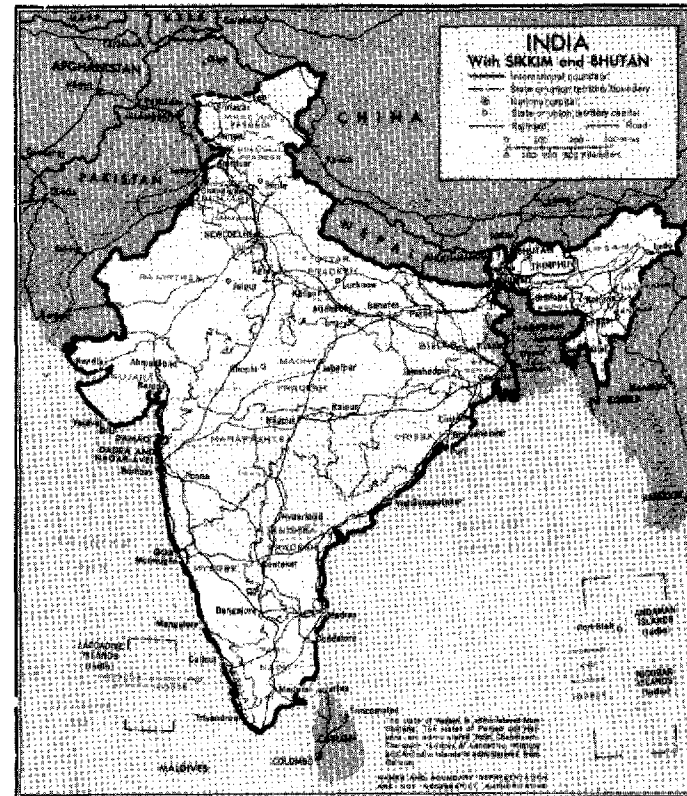
...from civil strife in East Pakistan, numbering nearly 10 million, cross the border into India creating enormous food, shelter and medical problems for that country. Massive international aid is essential.

Value of India Assistance	\$335.0 million
Value of US Assistance	102.3 million
Value of Assistance by 57 Other nations and by International Organizations	191.2 million
	\$628.5 million

DETAILS:

Refugees from East Pakistan began seeking safety in India in the last days of March, 1971. Floods of frightened people, mostly without possessions, started moving across the border, usually on foot. They numbered more than a million by the end of April, over 4 million by the end of May, 6 million by the end of June and 8 million by the end of August. By the end of November, the Government of India's count exceeded 9 million men, women and children—7 million in 1,000 camps. The rest found shelter in India's cities and countryside. All required assistance from India and the international community.

This report terminates on December 17, the cease-fire date of India-Pakistan hostilities, which commenced December 3. After December 17, the problem was to help refugees return to their homeland and provide food and shelter until they could be rehabilitated. These efforts will be described in future reports.



ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS:

India's response to a human emergency of such staggering proportions aroused the admiration of the world. Steps taken included establishing within the Government of India a Refugee Coordinating Committee, with the Minister of Rehabilitation as chairman. Relevant government agencies were represented on this committee, as was the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and UN agencies engaged in assistance to the relief operation. The Committee, with offices in New Delhi and in Calcutta nearer the refugee areas, directed the massive relief work of federal and state government workers, and of Indian voluntary agencies, including the Indian Red Cross. The Committee coordinated appeals for and receipt of international assistance, directed distribution of food and sup-



One of many refugee camps in India

plies, requisitioned properties for camps and centers, established refugee registration procedures, issued ration cards, and otherwise fully directed a very large relief program. The GOI preferred that actual work among refugees be performed by Indian nationals and restricted the number of outside volunteer workers. While not all problems were solved immediately, the Government's actions were considered effective, especially in view of the magnitude of the disaster.

An estimate of the total cost of India's refugee assistance through December 16, 1971 was placed at \$335 million. Variables and residual costs, unknown at the date of this summary, could revise these figures.

UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

On April 26, with 686,000 refugees already within her borders, India asked Secretary General U Thant to organize a relief assistance program. After an on-the-ground UN assessment, the Secretary General on May 19 made an appeal for international contributions and designated the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, to serve as "focal point", i.e. coordinator for UN support.

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT:

The Department of State's Office of Refugee and Migration Affairs (ORM) began contingency planning on March 29—four days after outbreak of civil strife in Pakistan—when it became apparent a refugee problem would develop. In early April, the Department and AID authorized four U.S. voluntary agencies—CARE, Catholic Relief Services, Church World Service and Lutheran World Relief—which had on going programs in India, to begin issuing food which had been granted to them under Public Law 480 to the refugees.

Meanwhile, the Department determined that further U.S. assistance, if requested, would be channeled through the United

Nations. Concurrently, with the UN Secretary General's appeal for international contributions, the USG granted \$500,000 in cash to the UNHCR to enable him to organize a program. The money came from the \$2.5 million which President Nixon had authorized on April 30 for initial US assistance for the refugees.

On May 20, in order to establish the basis for a major U.S. effort, the U.S. Government organized in Washington an Interagency Committee on Pakistani Refugee Relief, made up of representatives of the Department of State, Defense and Agriculture, the Agency for International Development, the Peace Corps, the U.S. Information Agency and the White House Office of Management and Budget. Frank L. Kellogg, Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Refugee and Migration Affairs, was designated chairman and Louis A. Wiesner, secretary. The committee's assignment was to coordinate U.S. Government assistance, to encourage and guide voluntary agency programs and to maintain continuing liaison with the UNHCR headquarters at Geneva and New Delhi. The committee was active throughout the period of this report.

In New Delhi, the American Embassy organized a Mission task force on refugee relief headed by L. Paul Oechsli, Deputy Director of the AID Mission. At Calcutta, entry port for refugee-assistance supplies and center of the total relief effort, an AID employee, Mr. David Nelson, was added to the staff of the Consul General as refugee officer.

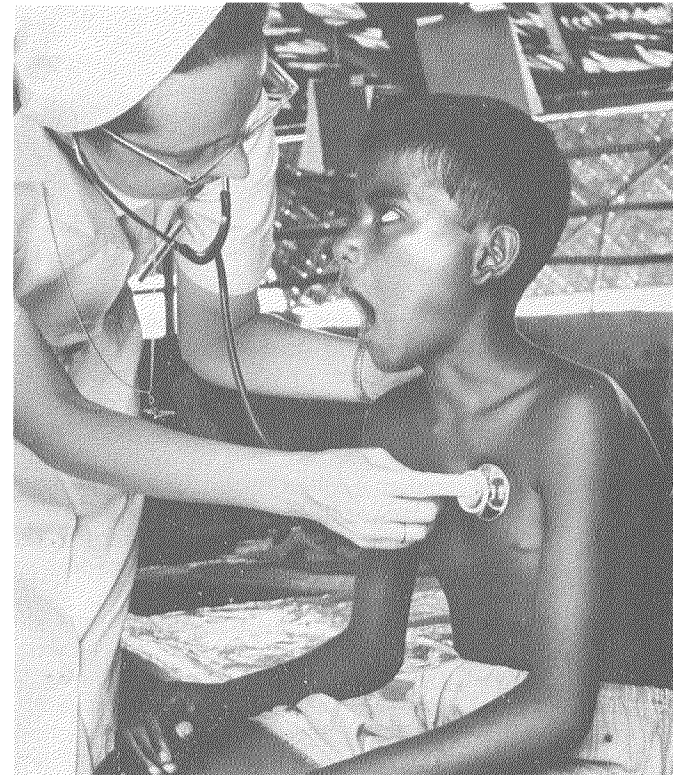
AID Resources Transportation Division provided valuable assistance to ORM in arranging charter airlifts from the US and other parts of the world to India. Because this was a refugee matter, rather than displaced people within their own country, the AID Disaster Relief Coordinator's role was of an advisory and support nature. DRC in cooperation with the AID NESABureau arranged for cash grants of AID funds to the UNHCR and ORM to support the relief efforts.

One of the early US commitments made through the UNHCR was to supply at least half the food required by the refugees. It was arranged for the Government of India and authorized

voluntary agencies to draw from existing stocks in the country against an American commitment to replace the food with PL 480 shipments from the U.S.

Five special programs of the USG were:

Anti-cholera campaign—Cholera broke out in the refugee areas, threatening refugees and local residents alike. To sup-



A boy receives a medical checkup by a Red Cross nurse at the Salt Lake Refugee Camp near Calcutta.