

Life in Dhaka The Flooded Economy!

by A Husnain

The property market in 'rich' Dhaka city will not be the same again. The high flood areas have been seen and noted by the public and the investors.

THIS year's over-flooding is exceptionally severe. And its effect on the economy and the market will reverberate well into the next millennium. This is not the time and place for an in-depth perspective view, but the adverse effects in some areas could be grasped by laymen.

The property market in 'rich' Dhaka city will not be the same again. The high flood areas have been seen and noted by the public and the investors. These locations, all over the city, including the posh areas such as Banani, Gulshan and Baridhara, would be avoided by prospective new owners and tenants, bringing down the rentals or sale prices.

The lending banks have to keep a close tab on the borrowers. Let us hope there won't be a fresh generation of bank loan defaulters, even after several extensions. O Mercy, do not stretch thy hands too much, lest it be severed permanently!

Internally, within the city, a migration of residents is likely between the dry and wet areas, changing the valuation figures of sites and properties. This is one of the ways nature brings

about changes in fortunes! Nature has not been very unkind to us, considering the natural calamities in other parts of the world (China, India, USA, Japan, South and North Korea).

This year more silt has been brought down into the delta (where Bangladesh is located) by the three mighty rivers due to abnormal landslides in the sub-Himalayan belts. The next year's floods would spread out more due to shallower bottoms, and the waters would recede more slowly. Other stagnant sectors may take some tips from nature.

Raiuk and DCC have stupendous BMRE plans ahead for the next couple of years to make the metropolitan Dhaka livable — provided the projects could be invested from some sources. Their track records have to be improved if they plan to compete with nature and urban migration; — and graft. Man and Nature are against these two high-profile service agencies, one semi/demi/hemi autonomous, and the other run (on paper only) by the people's representatives. These high-sounding entitlements build up false hopes of achievement and

fulfillment in the wretched residents of the 15th largest city in the world.

Since we are overwhelmed with quantity, perhaps we are prone to under-estimate quality. Quality is an elusive target, as the input and processing are not visible to the public eyes, only the output. The internal system loss must be visible to those who work on the assignments, not to the outsiders who access the resulting products or the services.

Dredging is a catch-word, until its magnitude is pointed out: the normal discharge of silt is around 2,000,000,000 (two billion) tons. To remove even half a million tons (0.025 per cent of the total silt) how many dredgers would have to work for how many months working 18 hours a day, and what would be the cost (restricting the operation to the essential inland waterways routes)?

We cannot fight nature at this magnitude, so we have to have a mix of adaptive planning, and flexible control measures. Let the experts work on this new Master Plan of river congestion below the water-line and announce the staggering

figures, to enable us to get mentally and physically prepared for the next year's monsoon.

Our transport system has to be amphibian to some extent, for instant change-over during emergencies. Our communication system has to go wireless (which is now possible and economically viable, in fact, cheaper).

The Gulshan-wallas have to add to their fleet of vehicles by acquiring the poor man's cycle pedal rickshaw, a couple of inflatable rowboats; and the roofs of high-rise buildings have to be designed for helicopter landing (and on the ground floors only cars will sleep). The sale of out-board motors might go up. But we do not have canned food — this industry was neglected, although we have enough food and fruits to fill in millions of disposable cans for us at home and abroad. The new trend will be weekly water-proof shopping (whatever it means).

Dhaka should have a new look by the year 2000 (do not forget the millennium bug Y2K). There are other bugs, human and otherwise, but it would be wise to keep our mouths shut for the time being.

Recalling Mother Teresa Her Mission, Vision and Conviction

by Father Patrick Gomes

TODAY September 5, we come to recall the day when the body of the "living saint" mother Teresa was laid into the tomb. One year passed in a twinkling of an eye — today is the first death anniversary of mother Teresa. Today we pay our tribute to her and the best way to do so is to recall her life and her values that she practised i.e., love and charity for the poor and destitute. Today on the death anniversary we can make a global reflection of the life of Mother Teresa: her vision, mission and conviction which will bring us a conviction that it is love and charity which count most in our life.

Born to be a mother: The Mother came to this world according to the plan of God. Mother Teresa followed God's plan throughout her life — to be the mother of charity, love and compassion for those who have none. By loving selflessly the Mother fulfilled the command of Jesus: "I want that you love as I have loved you" (Gospel of St. John 15: 16-17). Her loving charity was beyond caste, language and religion. What does God say to Mother Teresa now? According to the parable narrated in the gospel of St. Mathew, we may verbalise the words of the divine King to Mother Teresa: "When I was hungry, you gave me to eat, when I was thirsty you gave me



to drink, when I was in the prison you came to see, when I was naked you came to clothe me; so now enter into the home of eternal bliss prepared for you." (cf. Gospel of St. Mathew 25:30-31).

To be a consecrated person: "Religious" and "Consecration" are two very important words that directly speak about the identity of mother Teresa: A person who takes the life of consecration is religious. This is the consecration through the evangelical vows of religious life. The essential characteristic of this vocation is the free offering of a person to God and men in order to be the living sign of God's love and charity in the midst of money, power and pleasure. The religious, priest or nun/Sister/Brother, living in a community decides to follow Jesus in his poverty, chastity, obedience as witness of love against the hate of sin. Briefly speaking consecrated obedience is a complete acceptance of the will of God. The person with the vow of obedience commits himself to fulfill the plan of God always and everywhere, through persons, situations and events of life. Consecrated chastity embraced for the sake of the kingdom of God manifests the power of Christ as a sign and source of a greater service. Consecrated chastity springs from prayer and becomes communion with our brothers and sisters. Chastity generates concern for the less loved. Religious poverty is complete confidence in God. It is solidarity with our brothers and sisters, particularly with those who are suffering. Poverty is fighting for human dignity. Poverty is service.

The model of all evangelical poverty is Jesus on the cross. After having embraced these three vows a religious enters into a religious institute/congregation recognized by the Church. According to the charisma of that religious institute, then he/she leads his/her life. Because this life demands a total consecration, once for all, for God and his people, it is also termed as Consecrated life. When one enters into this state of life, he/she consecrates himself/herself freely, radically and unconditionally. In this sense, Mother Teresa was a true and authentic religious, consecrated person.

Her mission, vision and conviction: From what we have reflected above we can now list out synthetically the clear conviction, vision and mission of Mother Teresa.

1. To be a religious nun: Embracing Christ pronouncing the vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience, religious life itself demands a self abandoned love for the others; it demands a total consecration of God and to human being.
2. To leave the convent and start the journey without knowing what comes ahead: She took voluntarily the path of suffering and uncertainty only to suffer with the sufferers and to love those who are unloved, taking Christ as her model.
3. To wear a simple dress: In an ordinary sari, with the cross of Christ on the shoulder and the holy rosary, she sought blessing and constant intercession of Virgin Mary.
4. To go to the poor and destitute with her heart full of love, compassion and charity: Yes, she went to the slums, goes to the streets to be the compassionate Christ. She ate what they ate. She gave them human dignity and love. She saw Christ in them.
5. To be with the Lord God praying for hours: That is her strength — to have complete confidence in God.
6. To offer each and everything to and for the poor: She accepted the Nobel prize to be used for the poor.
7. To remain simple, humble and most ordinary — a virtue that made her extraordinary.

From vision to reality: The slums of Calcutta, intolerable hunger, unwanted children,

people dying without food and human dignity, drug addicted people confused about moral values, people with AIDS she saw and observed, felt for and was moved. And this inner spiritual sensation of Mother for these poor and destitute existing all over the world did not remain only at the level of her feeling; it pushed herself to the field of charity in action. She saw Jesus born and lying in a manger only to expose his love for the poor; she literally went to the slums, to the poor, to the dying, to those who are poor in many ways only to embrace them in love and charity. She saw Christ's suffering in the suffering of the poor. What was her conviction? I believe, she said to herself she had made a radical choice to follow Christ and his ideals. As a religious nun/Sister, if her identity is a consecrated woman, then consecration must come out through the action of love and charity. Jesus coming to this world consecrated himself totally for the salvation of mankind by healing the sick, forgiving the sinners above all

by his suffering and death on the cross and by his glorious resurrection. She must therefore do something to change the situation of the poor. This is a divine inspiration, a vocation that Mother received from God. The oral witness says that she received that inspiration once when she was travelling by train.... The root of all this was loving charity for mankind. Mother followed this way of Christ. She saw the suffering Christ in the bitter reality of poverty. She touched Christ when feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked. All that she was, all

conscience.

Her source of strength: Where did she receive such a strength to bring out such a revolution of love and charity in action? She says: Union with God through prayers and contemplation, through daily holy Mass where she received the heavenly food, the Christ in consecrated bread. Therefore, hopelessness, despair, agony never could impact on Mother Teresa; no curfew or any such political or social obstacles or even any human crisis could stop Mother to march forward with the charity and love for the poor.

Universal character of her mission: She by her loving charity embraced the whole world, offered her charity to all peoples irrespective of caste and religion. A Muslim, a Hindu, a Buddhist, a Christian, even an atheist was equal to her. And that is why the whole world pays tribute to her; calls her a "living saint!"

From one shoot comes many: Mother started the journey. Many joined her. There was something very authentic, very meaningful for life that attracted others. To them she offered only one invitation: "come with me with your love and charity and let us spread out to the whole world the gospel of love." She became the founder of the Congregation of Missionaries of Charity which has its branches almost all over the world. And naturally charity has become the only charisma and standard of value of this congregation.

Mother remains immortal: On this day last year Mother Teresa departed from this world very peacefully. Television camera focused on the prayerful funeral ceremony which the Indian Government arranged in cooperation with the Catholic Church of India. Came His Eminence Cardinal Sodano, Secretary of State of the Holy See as the representative of the Holy father Pope John Paul II to preside over the funeral Mass in the presence of huge gathering of people from all over the world who came to pay tribute to her. The poor, the orphan do feel and will always feel the absence of their Mother; the whole world feels her saintly presence in the world. They call her "angel of the poor", "mother of the universe", "a living saint"... Thus she remains alive in the hearts of each one of us. Her tomb is the symbol of her eternal presence. She is ever alive! How can the children forget their mother? She hears the welcoming word from the heavenly Father: "Now enter into the home of bliss which has been prepared for you." And form this world above the Mother prays for her children, sends her blessings for them.

Today on her first death anniversary we pray to Mother Teresa very particularly to look upon those who are flood affected and ask her blessing! May God through Mother Teresa's intercession protect the flood affected and destitute of our country! Amen.

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Flood and Food

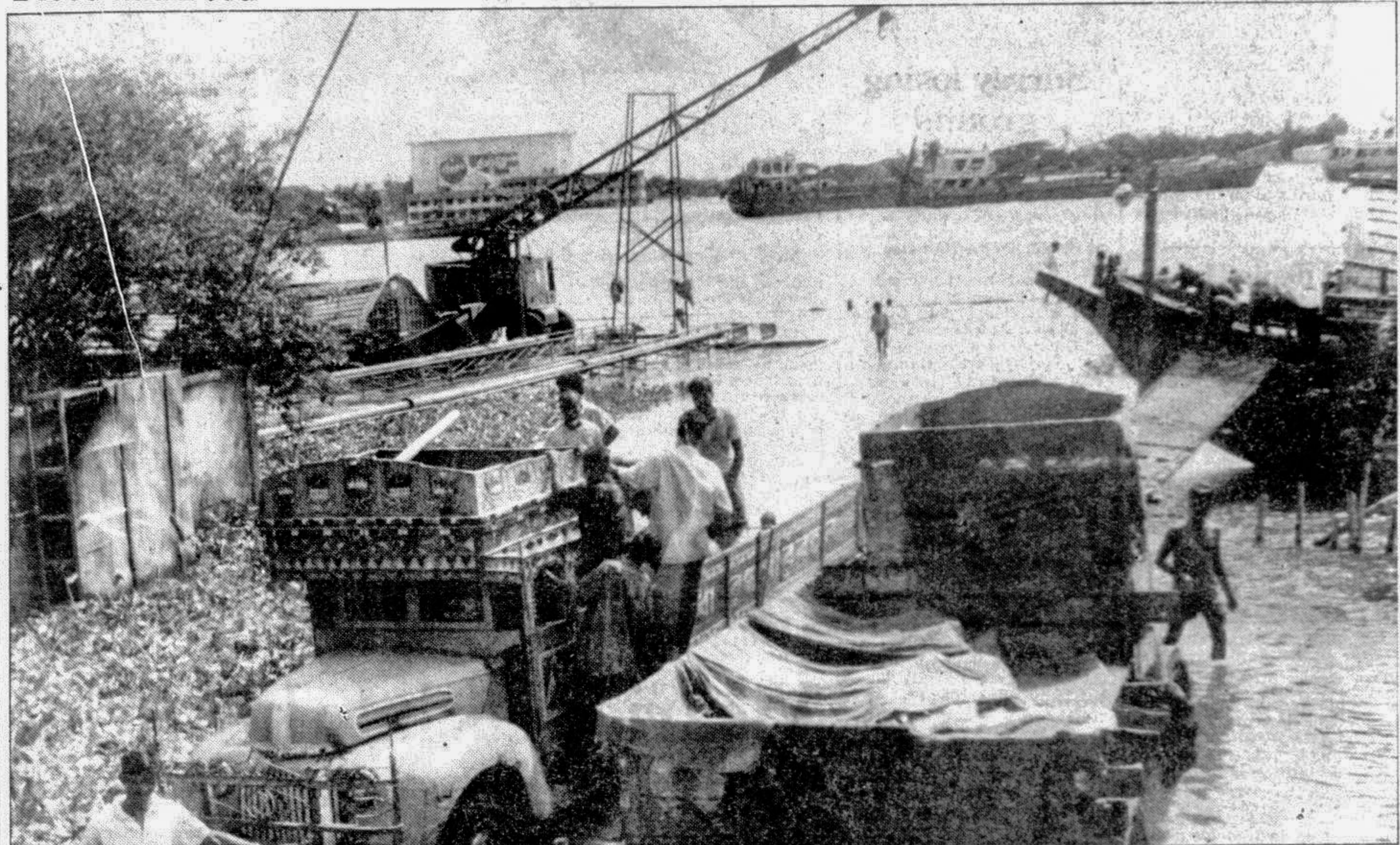
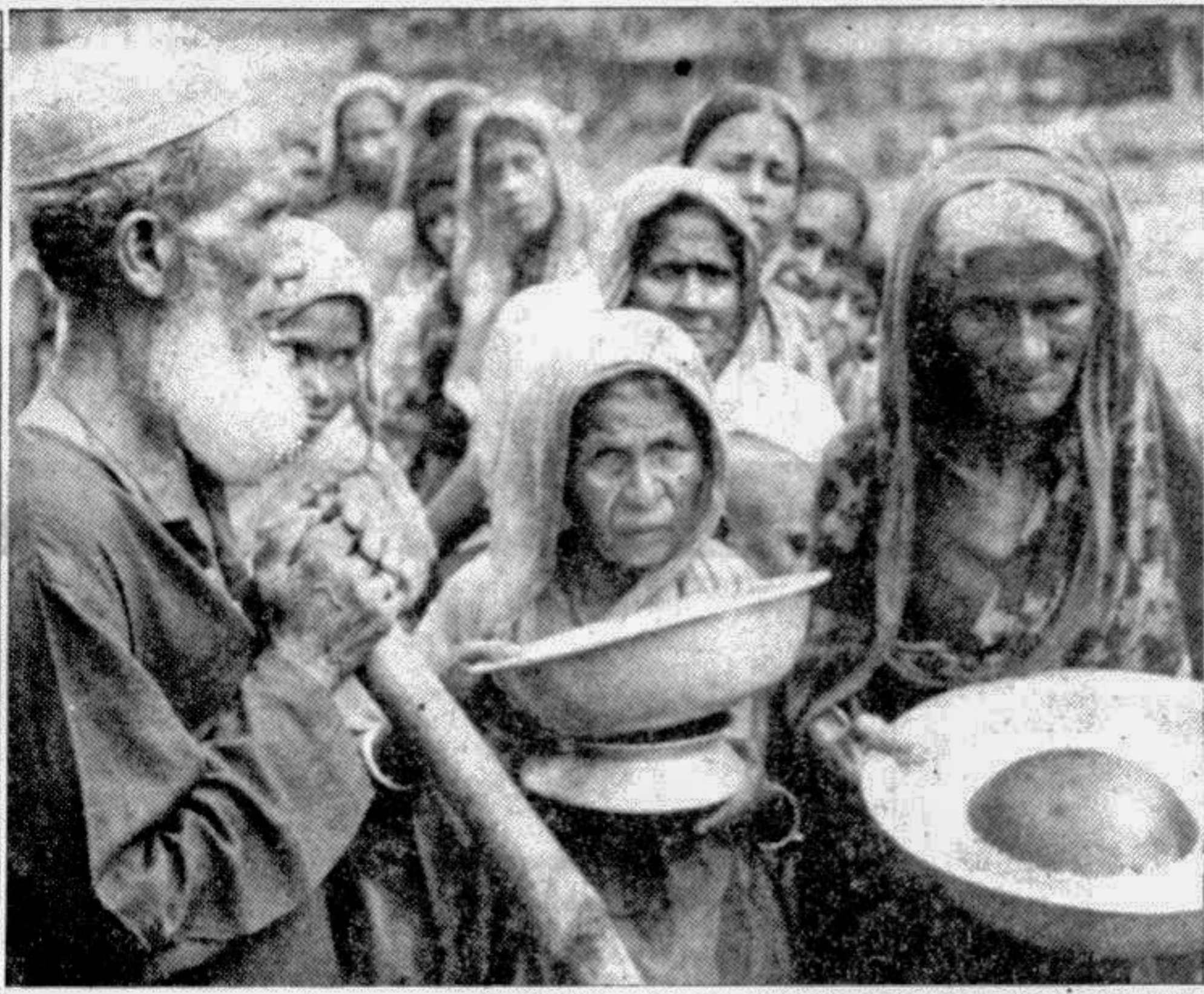


PHOTO FEATURE by A K M Mohsin

When government food godown at Millbarrack, Dhaka is itself in the grip of flood waters (above), volunteers distribute dry food among the affected (below, left), while others wait for their turn at a gruel kitchen (below, right).



Eco-friendly Move

Ribena Amla, the vitamin C-rich health drink from SmithKline Beecham Consumer Healthcare, and the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) has announced a partnership to create awareness about the environment among school children. The two organisations have planned to organise a nature spellathon. The

contest will encourage participating students to learn new words and facts related to the environment. The money collected from this event will be utilised by the WWF for the further causes related to endangered species, preservation of forests and other ecological issues.

'Green' Tech Oil sans Cholesterol

The Jamshedpur-based National Metallurgical Laboratory has designed eco-friendly melting furnaces that can turn the large number of foundries in and around Agra into less-polluting units. The system can also be replicated elsewhere in the country where clusters of foundries operate, according to company officials.

A Chinese farmer has developed a technique that can help produce cholesterol-free edible oil from tea seeds. Fang Shunzhong of the Jinhua city, said that 14 kilogram (kg) of high-quality oil of a transparent yellow colour can be produced out of 100 kg of tea seeds. At present, China-based Lansiang

Green Food Co Ltd, is the only company to use the technique for producing the oil. The oil will cost US \$10 per kg. The China quality supervision and inspection centre says that the various indices of Fang's tea oil exceed those of the national first-degree edible oil standards.

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