



A LIFE LESS ORDINARY
BY ALY ZAKER

We were in our village for twelve days. I must confess that during those days every night had brought for us a nightmare of a possible attack by the army. Fortunately for us, the raiders were wary of intruding in to the Bangladeshi villages for fear of being ambushed. They did not know our villages well enough. Did not comprehend our language and, most of all, were mortally worried of our people who were hostile towards them. Our village was open on all sides and we could have an un-intimidated view of the horizon in any direction. Towards North West was Bhairab. We could clearly see the Sabre Jet Fighters of the Pakistan Air Force were strafing to destroy the Railway Bridge across the Meghna River at Bhairab. This was done with intentions of disrupting communication between Southern Bangladesh and Central Bangladesh. We were very happy to be in Ratanpur. But then news came of the army advancing towards the villages of Bangladesh and it was felt that my brother-in-law was not safe here. We were advised to cross over to Agartala as soon as possible. A date was

The border and beyond!

fixed and we left home very early in the morning with a heavy heart. We were ten in the group comprising my cousin her husband the lawmaker, their three children, my sister, her husband and their daughter, I and a friend of ours. We had to walk a distance of 16 kilometers to reach the village of Bejora near the Tripura border. It was quite an ordeal, especially with the children. They were to be carried on our shoulders for most of the way. The highway between Comilla Cantonment and Sylhet used to be considered as the real border between India and the then East Pakistan. Crossing that road was dangerous as the Pakistan army was moving through it constantly and fired indiscriminately on any moving object beside the road. We were to cross the highway at a point near the Company Ganj Bazaar. We found all the shops of the market closed when we arrived there. Some of the shopkeepers were within the closed shops. Upon enquiry they implored us to be very careful while crossing over the highway. Fortunately for us we could cross over to the other side

without any trouble.

The walk to our destination passed without any major incident. A cousin received us very warmly at Bejora. He happened to be the Chairman of the local Union Council. We were told that we had to travel by boat across the border. The river went under the railway bridge at Shaldanodi. This narrow river, belonging to sector two and commanded by Major Khaled Mosharraf saw many important battles during our Liberation War. We were naturally worried while crossing under the bridge. However, things went smoothly. A few more minutes and we were within the Indian Territory. We found a suitable place in a banana plantation beside the river. We landed with a mixed feeling. We were naturally relieved that we were safe but were very sad having to leave our country behind. Some of us cried out loudly. The very thought of becoming a refugee made me sad and brought tears in my eyes. I remember having told my friend how miserable the countless millions who had to leave their homes must have

felt during the partition of Bengal. Between the riverbank and the nearest Indian police station was some distance away. We walked the distance quietly and finally arrived at the Bakhshnagar Thana. The scene here at the police station was one of pandemonium. There were thousands of people seeking registration as refugee and only a handful of policemen to attend them. My cousin-in-law being a member of the Parliament got special attention. And that saved our day. Soon we were travelling by a decrepit jeep, some of us hanging from its ceiling, to arrive at a place called Sonamura. This journey was through a hilly road. We were greeted en route by groups of young people who asked us about the news of Bangladesh. On inquiry, they told us that they had fled from their posts in the Pakistan army and were waiting to join the liberation war. I thought that not all was over for us and that we could perhaps fight a war for our own homeland. From Sonamura ten of us rented a contraption that was called a taxi to take us to Agartala.

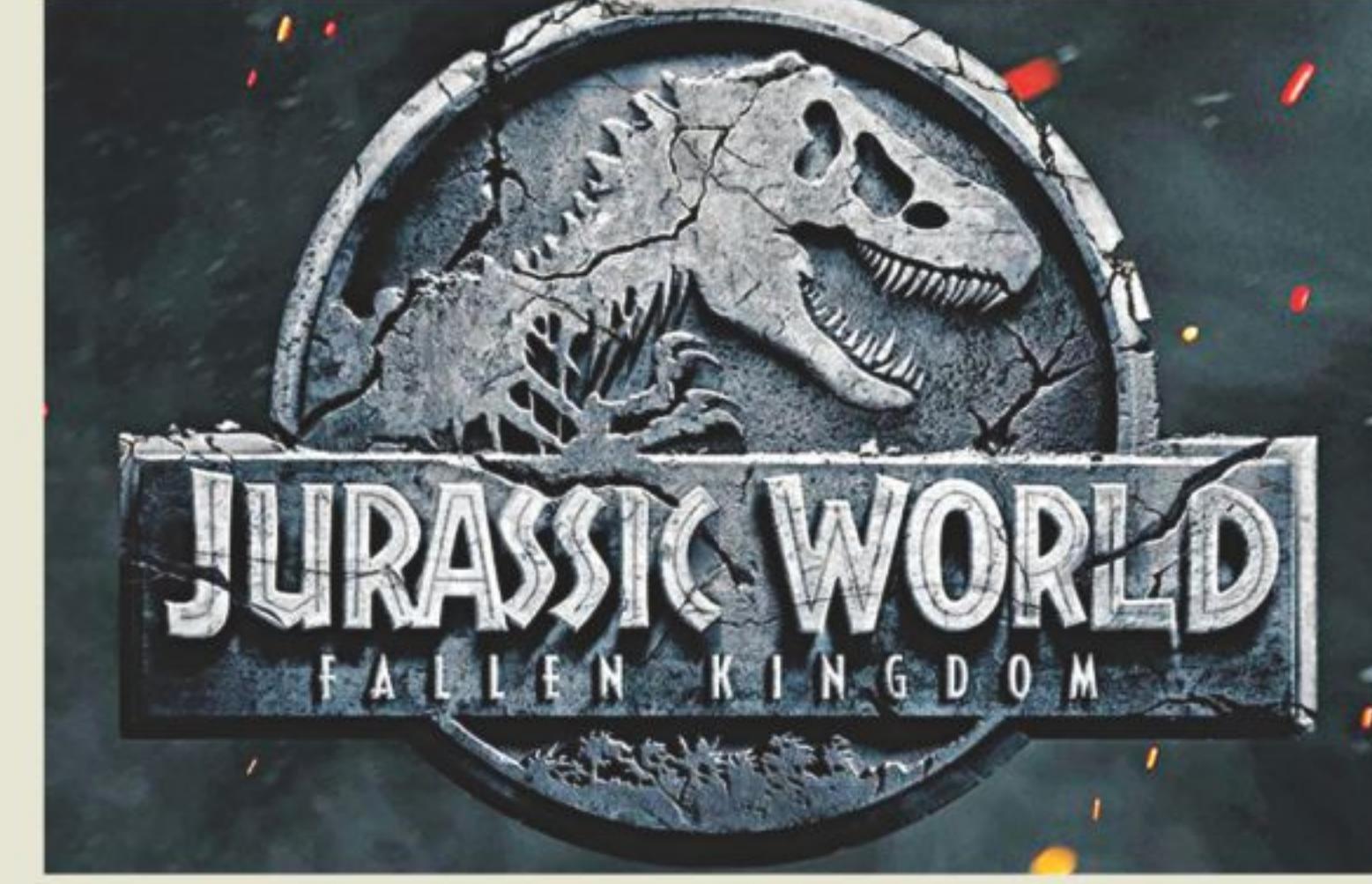
UPCOMING



Ralph Breaks the Internet: Wreck-It Ralph 2



Avengers: Infinity War



Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom



Incredibles 2



M:I 6 - Mission Impossible

MOVIES TO WATCH OUT FOR IN 2018!

2017 is coming to an end after giving us a hefty list of chartbusters that included the likes of 'Guardians of the Galaxy 2', 'Beauty and the Beast', 'Wonder Woman', 'Justice League' and many more. With 2018 looming on the horizon, these are five films that we think will generate a lot of buzz next year!