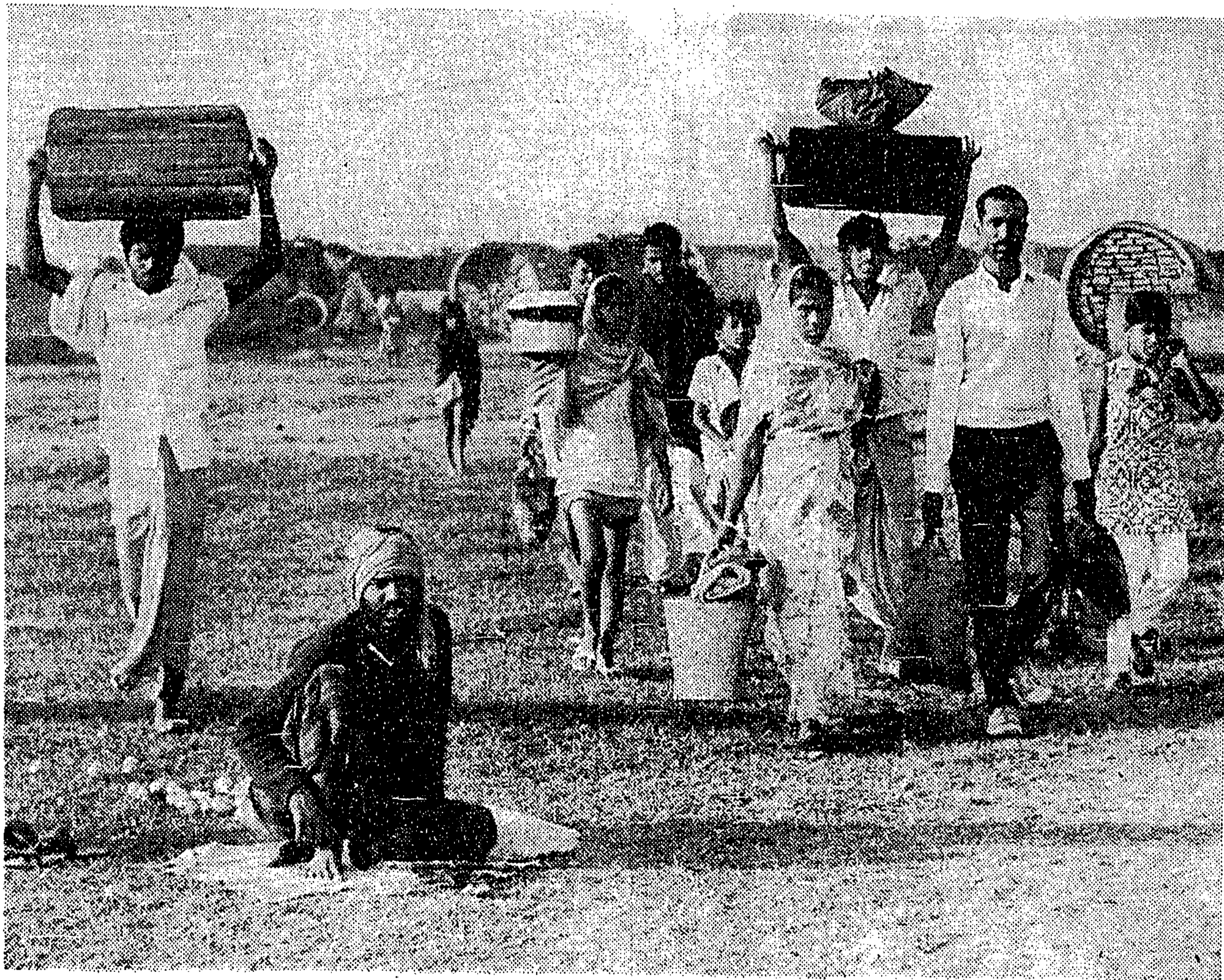


Hindu Refugee Returns, Finds Ruins in East Pakistan



Mr. and Mrs. Chandrakant Joddar, at the right, and other refugees leaving area in which they lived in pipes, rear

The New York Times/Sunil Das

By KASTURI RANGAN
Special to The New York Times

RANGPUR, Pakistan, Dec. 25—Chandrakant Joddar returned home today after living for eight months and eight days in a concrete pipe at a refugee camp in Calcutta.

On arriving in East Pakistan with his wife and a 5-year-old son Mr. Joddar discovered that he did not have even a concrete pipe for shel-

ter now. His house was virtually razed after he and his Hindu family fled the Moslem marauders who, abetted by the Pakistani Government, were terrorizing the Bengalis of East Pakistan and, in particular, the Hindus there during the attempt to repress the Bengali separatists.

Worse still, Mr. Joddar learned that the crops in his

six-acre field had been harvested by someone else. There were few people in the village, and the primary school where Mr. Joddar used to work as a geography teacher was a ruin.

"I wish I had not returned so early," he said with a sigh as he stood before his ruined home. "I didn't realize things are so bad here."

When he set out early this

morning Mr. Joddar, disgusted with living in the refugee camp on Indian doles, had high hopes.

The camp, the biggest and one of the better maintained, houses 250,000 of the millions of refugees in rows and rows of tents. Several families are crowded together in a tent, with an open sewer

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EAST PAKISTANI RETURNS: Chandrakant Joddar looking at ruins of his house in Rangpur, wrecked by Moslems after they drove him and other Hindus out, to refugees in India.

A Refugee Finds Ruins in East Pakistan

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running beside it. Mr. Joddar considered himself lucky when he got his family into one of the six-foot concrete pipes intended for underground drainage. He walled up one end with brick leaving holes for ventilation, and fixed up a small courtyard at the other end that served as kitchen and living room. Inside the pipe, about 5 feet in diameter, he installed a rope bed.

"Compared to families in tents we were better off," Mr. Joddar related. "We had privacy and better protection against sun and rain."

Mr. Joddar, who is 25 years old, is also lucky to have only a small family. His 22-year-old wife, Durgarani, was popular in the colony, where 25 other pipes were occupied by refugee families.

The parents of the Joddars are also refugees. After Mr. Joddar decided that he would go to the village first and prepare the house for their return, he sent word to them that he was going today and that they should start as soon as possible. When he discovered how bad things were, he told them to wait.

130-Mile Cab Ride: \$20

He hired a cab for 150 rupees, or \$20, for the 130-mile trip. Rangpur is only 70 miles from Calcutta by the shortest route but it was cut in many places during the two-week Indian-Pakistani war, so the family had to go through Jessore. Eager to return to the comforts of their village, they did not mind.

Mr. Joddar did not wait to collect the two-week ration that the Indian Government grants to each refugee family wanting to return home. "I'll have plenty of food in my place," he had said as he loaded his belongings.

When the Joddars became refugees in April they had few things of their own. In the eight months in India Mr. Joddar earned some money by working as a part-time accountant in the camp and bought saris and ornaments for his wife and clothes for himself and his son.

"Everyone else is waiting for the Government to provide them transport and assistance to go back to their villages," Mr. Joddar said at the camp. "I am not waiting. Now that my country is free I need have no fear. I am a teacher and my village will need my services urgently."

He said that the "bad" Moslems had all been destroyed. Even before the Indian victory, he said, his village, which had a population of 10,000, mostly Hindus, was relatively safe from the extremist Moslems. "No one dared to come into our village and give us trouble," he said.

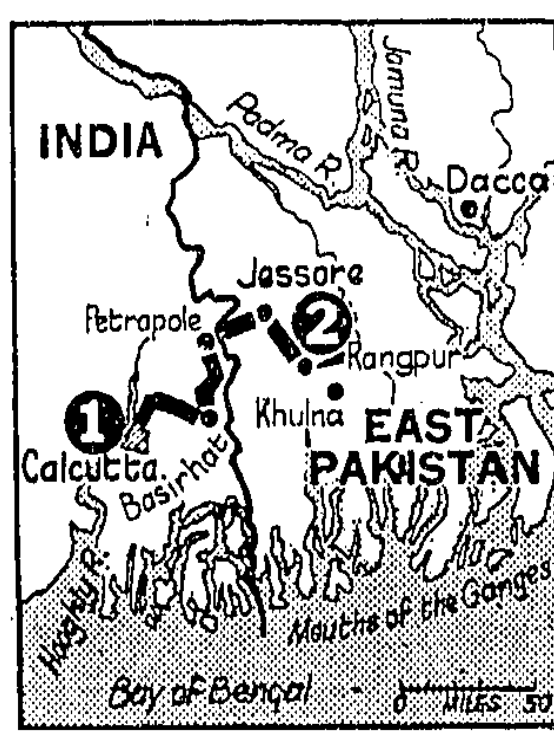
Raid by the Razakars

But on the night of April 13, he recalled, a band of razakars—non-Bengali Moslem collaborators with the Pakistani Army—raided Rangpur.

"No doubt they had the blessings of the Pakistani Army," Mr. Joddar related. "As they began looting we brought our guns out. Yes, we were ready for them. There was a brief shooting and we had killed 31 of them. None of us were hurt."

"We thought then that the trouble was over," he continued, "but, we were grossly mistaken. The next day the Pakistani troops came, only 16 of them, but they had machine guns. They entered our village, rounded up 15 of our leaders, lined them up against the wall and shot each one of them. My two uncles and the headmaster of my school were among them.

"Then the razakars and



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Refugees returned across border from Calcutta (1) to home in Rangpur (2).

Moslems from other villages joined the Pakistani troops in an orgy of looting and raping. They pulled out the women by their hair. Those who were good-looking they took. Others, they just kicked them into the ponds."

"We knew that it was dangerous to remain in the village any more," Mr. Joddar said. "My family—my parents, my wife's parents, our brothers and sisters—all of us started running. Each one of us took a small bagful of rice and the ornaments and the money. As the Moslems were tearing down our village we were on the road to India."

In Khulna District, Mr. Joddar said, there were 19 other villages like Rangpur with Hindu majorities, and none were spared.

"Can you imagine the entire countryside drained out on the only road?" he said. "The road was full of people—about 30,000 and at one time. We never walked. We ran and ran as though some devil was chasing us. For two days we ran. We took only short rests in the night in some safe village on the way. We didn't have time even to cook. Many of us ate raw rice soaked in water. Many old men and women and children died on the way. We simply discarded their bodies and went on."

On reaching the Indian border the army of refugees rested for a day, then dispersed.

The Indian Government did not allow refugees to take jobs. Carefully segregated from the local population they were constantly reminded that they belonged to Bangladesh, as the Bengalis termed the state they sought to establish, and were going back as soon as the situation returned to normal.

"I didn't believe then that there would be such a thing as normalcy in my home country," Mr. Joddar said before he set out, "but there it is now."

During the Joddars' return journey there were not many refugees on the road, for a mass return has not yet begun. According to official figures, of the 9.8 million refugees spread along the Indian border with East Pakistan, only 118,000 have returned so far. The Indian Government has prepared a remigration plan to send the refugees in large groups to transit camps to be set up in East Pakistan, but construction has not started.

Few of the refugees had property and most, it seems, are not too eager to return. The Hindu fear the extremist Moslems. "Unless the Government provides them transport, food, protection and assistance to rebuild their homes they will not go back," said Mr. Joddar, speaking for Hindu refugees.

Mr. Joddar's disillusionment started when he reached the road to Rangpur. A bridge was blown up so the family had to transfer from the cab to a boat.

It was dark when, after a slow, arduous trip, they pulled alongside a banana

grove in Rangpur. A half-moon provided some light but accentuated the darkness of the shadows—a scene both eerie and romantic.

Lush but Gloomy

The village, lush with vegetation, appeared plunged into gloom. Of the 2,000 families only 15 had returned home. There is no electricity and the mud road through the village is not usable. Many of the good houses were pulled down, their doors and beams missing.

Mr. Joddar went to the home of his maternal aunt, Thakur Dasi, a widow, who had returned earlier after losing two daughters and a son to cholera. "Have you come, my children, to share the misery?" she asked.

Mrs. Dasi's family had been able to harvest their rice crop, however, and she said there was enough to feed the Joddar family.

Mr. Joddar saw difficult times ahead, for the village and for himself.

"I doubt Rangpur will be the same again," he mused. "They say when people die prematurely they become ghosts. I think this village is full of ghosts."