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.

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 shelter 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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A Refugee Finds Ruins in East Pakistan

By the New York Times Correspondent

POLETTO, Pakistan—At the ruins of his house in Bangla
di, amid the rubble and ruins of his home and garden, my father told me his story. "After the war, we had to leave our home and go to the United Nations camp. We lived there for two years, and then we were allowed to return to our home. We returned and built a new home. But then the war started again and we had to leave again. We have been living in this refugee camp ever since."

He pointed to the ruins of his home and said, "This is where we lived for so many years. It was a beautiful home, with a large garden. But now it is just a pile of rubble."

I asked him how he had been able to survive all these years. "We have been able to survive by farming and working in the fields. We have been able to support ourselves and our family."

My father then told me about the difficulties he had faced during the war. "We were constantly under attack from the enemy. We had to hide in the fields and work hard to survive."

He went on to describe the conditions in the refugee camp. "The camp was very crowded and dirty. We had no food and no shelter. We lived in tents and huts."

Despite these difficulties, my father said he was grateful to be alive. "I am grateful to the United Nations for helping us during the war. They provided us with food and shelter."

He ended by saying, "I hope one day we will be able to return to our home in Bangladesh and rebuild our lives. But until then, we will continue to live in this refugee camp."

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I asked him how he thought the situation in Bangladesh was. "I think the situation is very difficult. There are still many people who are homeless and hungry."

My father then talked about the future. "I hope that the situation in Bangladesh will improve soon. I hope that the people will be able to get back to their homes and rebuild their lives."

He ended by saying, "I believe that the United Nations and the international community will do everything they can to help the people of Bangladesh."

I asked him if he had any hope for the future. "Yes, I have hope for the future. I hope that the people will be able to rebuild their lives and have a better future."