

From: Dr. Ramendu S. Dewan,
c/o Dr. H.D. Locksley, Department of Chemistry,
Salford University, Salford M5 4WT, England, U.K.

Date: February 27 , 1987

Sub: An appeal to save the Chakma and other tribes of the
Chittagong Hill Tracts from the total annihilation by the
Bangladesh Government.

Dear Brother,

May I present to you the following information relating to the
plight of over 37,000 Jumma (the people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts)
Refugees who have taken refuge in the neighbouring Indian State of Tripura:

1. An urgent action appeal, "Refoulement - India: Tribal refugees from Bangladesh", circulated by Amnesty International on 8 January 1987.
2. A press release, "Bangladesh - Refugees face forced repatriation", issued by Survival International on 9 January 1987.
3. A statement, "Repatriation of tribespeople unwelcome", disseminated by the Anti-Slavery Society on 8 January 1987.
4. An urgent appeal sent by the International Work Group For Indigenous Affairs to Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India, on 17th November 1986.
5. A statement, "Points of view", issued by the Organizing Committee Of The Chittagong Hill Tracts Campaign in December 1986.
6. A picture of a Chakma Refugee mother trying to "beat the cold in a hole" published in the Statesman Weekly (Delhi and Calcutta) of December 13, 1986.
7. A report, "Dhaka begins taking refugees back", taken from the Times of India of November 25, 1986.
8. An article, "Ordeal of Chakma refugees", carried by the Times of India of November 29, 1986.
9. A news, "24,000 Chakmas to go back", from the Times of India of December 4, 1986.
10. A piece, "Delhi hails Bangla step on refugees", taken from the Times of India of December 8, 1986.
11. A report, "Dhaka and Delhi agree on border measures", published in the Times (London) of December 9, 1986.
12. An article, "Humans can't take it any more", carried by the Statesman Weekly of December 13, 1986.
13. A news, "Bangla refugees may return", from the Times of India of December 14, 1986.
14. A piece, "Dhaka informs India of Bahini trouble", taken from the Times of India of December 29, 1986.
15. A report, "700 more Chakmas come to Tripura", published in the Times of India of December 30, 1986.
16. An article, "Extremists create Indo-Bangla rift", carried by the Times of India of December 31, 1986.
17. A news, "Tiwari arrives in Dhaka", from the Times of India of 7th January 1987.
18. A piece, "Bangladesh assures security to Chakmas", taken from the Times of India of January 8, 1987.
19. A report, "Delhi, Dhaka for joint steps on Insurgency", published in the Times of India of January 9, 1987.

20. An article, "Repatriation sure death for Chakmas", from the Statesman of January 8, 1987.
21. A news, "India-Bangladesh border accord", carried by the Times (London) of January 9, 1987.
22. A piece, "Tiwari's Bangladesh visit fruitful", taken from the Times of India of January 12, 1987.
23. A news, "More Chakmas pour in", published in the Times of India of January 13, 1987.
24. A report, "Delhi apathetic to Chakma issue", carried by the Times of India of January 15, 1987.
25. An article, "Chakmas' repatriation does not come off", from the Times of India of January 16, 1987.
26. A news, "More tribals pour into Tripura", taken from the Times of India of January 17, 1987.
27. A piece, "Repatriation of Chakmas delayed", published in the Times of India of January 19, 1987.
28. A news, "Bangla query on Chakma impasse", carried by the Times of India of January 19, 1987.
29. An article, "Chakma families refuse to go back", from the Times of India of January 20, 1987.
30. A report, "Better to die in India, say Chakmas", taken from the Times of India of January 23, 1987.
31. A piece, "Bangla opposition walk-out", published in the Times of India of January 25, 1987.
32. A news, "Dhaka rejoinder on Chakmas", carried by the Times of India of January 30, 1987.
33. An article, "India not stopping Chakmas", from the Times of India of January 29, 1987.
34. A report, "BSF struggles with 2,500 refugees", taken from the Times of India of February 2, 1987.
35. A news, "Dhaka ready to take back Chakmas", published in the Times of India of February 2, 1987.
36. A report, "200 Chakmas slip through BSF net", carried by the Times of India of February 3, 1987.
37. A piece, "More DPs pour into Tripura", from the Times of India of February 9, 1987.

As part of the Bangladesh Government policy to seize the Jumma villages and farmlands for the members of the majority community of Bangladesh, the Bangladesh armed forces in league with the Bengali settlers massacred the innocent tribal men, women and children of some 70 villages in Matiranga, Panchari, Khagrachari, Dighinala and Lakhmichari Upazillas (Sub-Districts) in April, May and June 1986. The invaders stole stocks and valuables, burnt houses, destroyed Buddhist and Hindu temples, tortured the villagers, abducted and raped women, converted forcibly many tribal people to Islam, and murdered at least 500 Jummas including monks. Tens of thousands of helpless tribespeople fled to the adjoining forests for their lives and some 30,000 Jumma refugees sought shelter in the Indian State of Tripura. After depopulating the area, the Bangladeshi military regime has already distributed the tribal villages and farmlands to its co-religionists.

The humane Government of India has set up 4 camps at Thakumbari (over 13,000), Silachari (3,000), Korbuk (5,000) and Kathalchari (12,000) to lodge over 33,000 Jumma refugees including those who arrived by the first

arrivals. It is spending about 5 million rupees a month to save the lives of over 37,000 Jumma evacuees.

Originally, the Bangladesh Government denied that these uprooted people were Bangladesh nationals. However, the ever-mounting international pressure compelled it to take them back. Under an agreement reached by Dhaka and New Delhi, the Government of Bangladesh agreed to repatriate 300 families every day starting from 15th January 1987, to rehabilitate them in their ancestral villages and on their farmlands, to provide them with rations for six months, to give 500 rupees to each family for the construction of their houses, and to arrange security for their lives and properties. It also agreed to restore normalcy in the region by restraining the law-enforcement personnel and the Bengali settlers from attacking the tribal villages before the repatriation began.

On 6th January 1987, a delegation consisting of 6 refugee leaders led by Mr. Prabhakar Chakma, a Commander of the (Indian) Border Security Force (BSF), and an Officer of the Tripura Government (India) visited the CHT in order to see for themselves whether conditions congenial for the return of the displaced people were created or not. They saw that the Bangladesh Govt. had done nothing to rehabilitate the evacuees except erecting tents at 3 transit camps near the repatriation points. It also did not allow the delegation to visit the native villages of the Jumma refugees. Clearly the Bangladeshi regime did not wish to show that the tribal villages and farm lands had already been appropriated by its coreligionists nor did it want to remove the illegal Bengali immigrants from the refugees' ancestral villages and farm lands. The delegation was completely dissatisfied with the arrangement made by the Bangladesh Authorities for the repatriation of the displaced people.

In the meantime, the Bangladesh Government-directed systematic genocide of the Jumma people was continuing unabated. By 15th January 1987, over 4,000 new refugees, many of them with bullet wounds, entered Tripura and reported that the Bangladesh law-enforcement personnel and the Bengali settlers had stepped up inhuman atrocities on the people of the CHT and that they were committing arson, rape, torture, murder and religious persecution on an unprecedented scale. For example, Udayan Chakma, a five-year-old refugee boy of Pagajyachari village, told a reporter of the Times of India that the Bangladesh Army killed his father and kidnapped his mother. He managed to slip into the nearby jungle where he was spotted by a neighbour, Mr. Promod Chakma. This rescuer himself was a victim of the Bangladesh Government terrorism. His house was burnt down and all his villagers including their womenfolk were subjected to inhuman torture. Mr. Promod Chakma, Udayan Chakma and their surviving neighbours had no other alternative but to flee to Tripura. One Mrs. Soli Marma from Dighinala area said that "all the male members of her family were killed while she and her two daughters, both minors, were criminally assaulted by (the Bengali) resettlers."

The Bangladesh Government violence had escalated so much so that even on 14 and 15 January 1987 the Bangladesh armed forces and the Bengali settlers attacked the tribal villages adjacent to the proposed repatriation sites on the international border. The sounds of rifle and Light Machine Gun firings could be heard and flames could be seen in Tabalchari and Taidong areas within Bangladesh from the Indian side of the border. All these factors had convinced the Jumma refugees that the Bangladeshi regime had no intention to abide by the terms of the accord and that the situation in the CHT was not safe for their return. The Chief Minister of Tripura, Mr. Nripen Chakraborty agrees with their views. He said, "The Chakmas are not our citizens. They are a population from another country. Their very presence is a risk in that sense. Why should I take the responsibility, but the important thing is that there is no security on the other side (of the border)". So the Jumma refugees refused to go back to Bangladesh and appealed to the Indian Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, not to repatriate them to Bangladesh by saying that "Repatriation under these circumstances :

The Jumma evacuees fear that they will not survive if they are sent back to Bangladesh. Their fear is real and firmly based on historical facts. It is, perhaps, worth recalling that some 18,000 Jumma refugees sought shelter in Tripura as a result of genocidal campaigns launched jointly by the Bangladesh armed forces and the Bengali settlers in the Feni valley in 1981. As usual, the Bangladesh Government denied that they were from Bangladesh. But the international community forced it to repatriate them. The Government of Bangladesh assured the refugees that - i) they would be rehabilitated in their native villages, ii) their farm lands would be restored to them, iii) they would be provided with rations for six months, iv) funds would be made available for the reconstruction of their houses, and v) adequate security measures would be taken for their lives and properties. After their repatriation at the border, the refugees were given an equivalent of US \$8 per family and then abandoned to their fates. They could not return to their own villages because their villages and farm lands had already been occupied by the Bengali immigrants. It is very likely that many of these displaced people died of starvation and diseases.

Due to the Bangladesh Government-directed massacres in the Bhusanchara area in Barkal Upazilla on 1st May 1984, over 4,000 tribal refugees had to take refuge in the Mizoram State of India. They were also repatriated on 1st January 1986 on the promise that they would get back their ancestral villages and farm lands and that they would be provided with food and money for their rehabilitation. After their forcible repatriation from Tibira Ghat and Tagalak Bag refugee camps in Mizoram, the personnel of the Bangla Desh Rifles (BDR) put them in motor launches and divided them into two groups - all male refugees on the upper decks and all women and children on the lower decks. Then a BDR Commander told the refugees - "You dirty Kafirs (non-believers), there is no body in the world who can save you now from us. Why did you go to bloody India? Do you think bloody India can save you right now?". After he finished his speech, the Bengali soldiers attacked the hapless evacuees. They stripped clothes from all women and girls and gang-raped them. All male refugees were beaten severely and tortured inhumanly. It is important to note that these refugees were not rehabilitated and they were not taken to their native villages. Most possibly many of them died due to lack of food and medicines. Their fates still are not known.

All human rights groups expressed their deep concern about the repatriation of the Jumma refugees to Bangladesh and urged the Indian Authorities not to return the evacuees to the CHT against their will until their safe return might be reasonably assured. "Amnesty International was concerned that tribal refugees due to be repatriated to Bangladesh might become victims of arbitrary arrest, torture or extrajudicial execution." In a press release, the Director of Survival International, Mr. Stephen Corry said, "In the context of the continuing genocidal war against tribal peoples in the Chittagong Hills, the forced repatriation of refugees is wholly unacceptable. Their forced return is likely to lead to yet further killings". Mr. Peter Davies, OBE, the Director of the Anti-Slavery Society, sent the following telegram to the Secretary-General of the United Nations: "The Government of India has agreed to repatriate to Bangladesh the tribal peoples from the Chittagong Hill Tracts who are presently living as refugees in the Indian state of Tripura. I am deeply concerned about their fate if they are repatriated and respectfully urge you to use your good offices to ensure proper and impartial monitoring of their resettlement". A similar appeal message sent by the IWGIA to the Indian Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, is as follows: "The International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs is deeply concerned at threatened forced repatriation of 6,000 refugees from Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh currently in Tripura State. IWGIA seriously fears for their lives if they are returned to Bangladesh. Please ensure that refugees are not returned until their safety in Bangladesh can be completely guaranteed. International Community is closely watching fate of refugees in Tripura".

All political parties in Tripura and all Indian human rights bodies requested the Governments of Tripura and India to keep the Jumma refugees

in Tripura until normalcy in the CHT is restored and the rehabilitation of the refugees in their native villages under the supervision of the UNO or a humane and neutral country is arranged. Various pressure groups and conscientious people from many civilized countries shared the views of the evacuees and persuaded the Government of India to save the lives of the refugees and to let them stay in Tripura till the crisis in the CHT is justly resolved.

The compassionate Indian Authorities responded to the pleas of the conscience-keepers of the mankind and did not carry out the proposed repatriation of the Jumma refugees, which was due to begin from 15th January last, on humanitarian grounds. The great sympathy of the Indian Government for the Jumma refugees can be best summed up by the following report published in the Times of India of January 23, 1987: "Use of force, either to stop tribals from entering India or to repatriate them, is prohibited by the Centre as a humanitarian gesture". This humane policy of India has saved tens of thousands of Jumma people from certain death at the hands of the fundamentally hostile Bangladesh armed forces and the Bengali settlers.

If the Jumma displaced people are deported to Bangladesh, then they have no chance to survive at all. Their past experience shows that the Bangladesh Government does not keep its promises. Doubtless, it will never implement the terms of the recently concluded Indo-Bangla accord on the refugee problem. In fact, the Bangladeshi regime has already violated all the provisions of the agreement. For example, in the second half of January 1987, over 7,000 new refugees arrived in Tripura and another batch of 2,500 fresh evacuees were about to enter Tripura. The continuing flow of refugees indicates that the Bangladesh Government is still indulging in the systematic extermination of the CHT people and that it has no intention to restore peace and normalcy in the region. It has not removed the illegal Bengali settlers from the tribal villages and farmlands yet and so no one believes that it will rehabilitate the Jumma refugees. The Government of Bangladesh has failed totally to create the normal conditions for the return of the uprooted Jumma people. All political observers are of the opinion that if the refugees are sent back to Bangladesh, then the extremely hostile Bangladeshi regime will either starve them to death or herd them into concentration camps where they will be tortured, raped and murdered.

The military regime of Bangladesh is now willing to repatriate the Jumma evacuees for obviously three reasons. Firstly, it wants to hush up the refugee problem by misleading the international community. Secondly, it is intent on solving the crisis in the CHT simply by killing all Jumma people. Thirdly, its policy is designed to Islamise the CHT as soon as possible. On 26 May 1979, Brigadier Hannan and Lt. Col. Salam declared in a public meeting at Panchari: "We want only the land, and not the people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts". Mr. Ali Haider Khan, the Deputy Commissioner of the CHT, and Mr. Abdul Awal, the former Commissioner of the Chittagong Division, threatened the Jumma leaders on many occasions by saying that they would be extinct in the next five years. The Jumma refugees are fully convinced that the assurances of the Bangladesh Government are totally unreliable and they are little more than government propaganda stunts.

The Jumma displaced people wish to return to the CHT if the military regime of Bangladesh ceases its hostility by removing the non-tribal settlers from their villages and farmlands and also by withdrawing all armed forces of Bangladesh from the region. The genocide of the indigenous population in the CHT will never stop unless and until the invaders are expelled from the traditional tribal homeland. The Bangladesh Army is nothing but an occupation force and its accomplices, the Bengali settlers, are nothing but criminals by any definitions. According to the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation of 1900, any outsiders found guilty of committing any activities prejudicial to the interest of the Jumma people are liable to be arrested, punished and expelled from the CHT. So these two oppressing groups must leave the area to facilitate the return of the Jumma refugees.

people. They will never rehabilitate the refugees in their ancestral villages nor will they provide the evacuees with adequate funds for their rehabilitation. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary for the refugees to have their rehabilitation programme supervised jointly by international bodies such as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, International Red Cross and other humanitarian organizations. At the same time, the CHT should be opened to human rights groups, journalists and international inquiry commissions. Their very presence in the area will reduce the level of government violence to a great extent.

As the non-tribal police force is committing genocide against the Jumma people, it ought to be replaced by an indigenous police force. The Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation of 1900 has a provision for such a police establishment known as the Chittagong Hill Tracts Frontier Police. This indigenous police force should be reestablished as soon as possible so that it can restore rule of law and justice in the CHT. This measure will not only ensure the safe return of the refugees but it will also bring peace and order in the entire tribal homeland.

The Jumma refugees believe that the following measures are absolutely necessary for their safe return to the CHT:

1. Removal of non-tribal settlers from the CHT.
2. Withdrawal of all Bangladesh armed forces including the non-tribal police force from the CHT.
3. Reestablishment of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Frontier Police force in accordance with the provision of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation of 1900.
4. Implementation of the refugee rehabilitation programme under the auspices of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Red Cross.
5. Adequate financial help for the rehabilitation of the Jumma refugees in their ancestral villages and on their farm lands.
6. Inquiry into Matiranga, Panchari, Khagrachari, Dighinala and Lakhmichari massacres under the auspices of the UNO or a group of human rights organizations.

Although the Jumma refugees are causing serious financial strain on the Tripura State, the State Government of Tripura is looking after over 37,000 Jumma refugees as much as possible. The Central Government of India has already spent many million rupees for these refugees. But the needs of the evacuees are much greater. They need more relief supplies, basic medical facilities and drinking water facilities. Over 1,000 children and old people died due to malnutrition. There is no educational facility for the refugee children. Such an enormous burden is too much for India alone. I shall be most grateful to you if you would kindly help the Jumma refugees until the crisis in the CHT is justly resolved.

I appeal earnestly to you to compel the Bangladeshi regime to implement the above-mentioned measures in order to ensure the safe return of the Jumma refugees to their ancestral villages and farm lands. The very survival of the Jumma people depends on your compassion and help. With my high regards.

To

**Mr. Rudolph C. Ryser,
Chairman of the Center for World Indigenous Studies,
P.O. Box 82038, Kenmore,
Washington 98028,
U.S.A.**

Yours sincerely

Ramendu



**amnesty
international**

INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT
1 Easton Street London WC1X 8DJ
United Kingdom

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

**URGENT
ACTION**

AI Index: ASA 20/01/87
Distr: UA/SC

For action only by: AUSTRALIA, CANADA, FRANCE, JAPAN, NETHERLANDS, SWEDEN,
SWITZERLAND, UK, USA, VENEZUELA - Please organize up to 10 appeals per
section

UA 08/87

Refoulement

8 January 1987

INDIA: Tribal refugees from Bangladesh
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Amnesty International is concerned that from 15 January 1987 tribal refugees from the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh are to be sent back to that country from India against their will. It is urging that they not be repatriated until the circumstances are such that their safe return may be reasonably assured.

Some 24,000 tribal people from the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh are presently living in refugee camps in the Indian state of Tripura, which borders Bangladesh. They had sought refuge in India mainly during May and June 1986. At that time, Amnesty International learned of numerous raids by Bangladesh military and paramilitary forces, together with non-tribal Bangladeshi citizens settled in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, on settlements of tribal people in the northern area of the hill tracts. This reportedly resulted in the extrajudicial execution of non-combatant tribal villagers and the burning of their homes.

It has been announced that the refugees will be returned in groups of 300 families at a time. The Bangladesh Government has recently held talks with the Indian authorities to negotiate the return of these refugees and is reported to have given assurances that they will be assisted in rehabilitation by receiving rations for six months and help in constructing new homes.

For several years, Amnesty International has received reports of arbitrary arrests, torture and extrajudicial executions of non-combatant tribal people living in the Chittagong Hill Tracts committed by the Bangladesh Army and paramilitary forces. Since the mid-1970s, there has been armed opposition to the Bangladesh Government from the tribal Shanti Bahini (Peace Forces), which is also responsible for the killing of non-tribal residents of the hill tracts and members of the security forces. Amnesty International's concerns were described in detail in a report published in October 1986, Bangladesh 1986: Unlawful Killings and Torture in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

On 18 July 1986 Amnesty International had appealed to the Chief Minister of Tripura that on humanitarian grounds tribal people from the Chittagong Hill Tracts should not be repatriated against their will whilst the circumstances are such that their safe return cannot reasonably be assured. Amnesty International is concerned that tribal refugees due to be repatriated to Bangladesh may become victims of arbitrary arrest, torture or extrajudicial execution.

Telephone 01-833 1771 Telegrams: Amnesty London WC1 Telex: 28502

Amnesty International is an independent worldwide movement working for the international protection of human rights. It seeks the *release* of men and women detained anywhere because of their beliefs, colour, sex, ethnic

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/express letters:

- expressing concern about the planned 'refoulement' against their will of tribal people from the Chittagong Hill Tracts temporarily resident in Tripura to Bangladesh;

- respectfully urging that they be permitted to remain in India until the circumstances are such that their safe return may be reasonably assured.

APPEALS TO:

His Excellency Mr Buta Singh
Minister of Home Affairs
Ministry of Home Affairs
New Delhi
India

Telegrams to: Home Affairs Minister, Delhi, India

COPIES TO:

His Excellency Mr Nripen Chakraborty
Chief Minister of Tripura
Office of the Chief Minister
Agartala
Tripura
India

and to diplomatic representatives of India in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY, to arrive by 15 January 1987.

— Please take action as soon as you receive this Urgent Action appeal. Carefully read the recommended action. If possible, send a telegram or express letter immediately to one or more of the addresses given. Other letters can be sent afterwards.

— Telegrams and letters should be brief and courteous. Stress that your concern for human rights is not in any way politically partisan. Refer to relevant provisions in international law, such as the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

Article 3 — "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person."

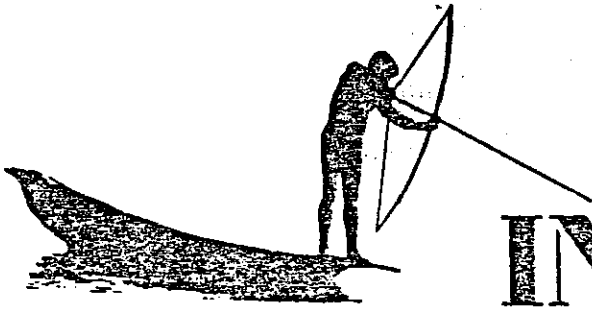
Article 5 — "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

— The name of Amnesty International may be used, although letters written in a private or personal capacity may be more effective.

— Copies of appeals should be sent to relevant diplomatic representatives in your country.

— In Urgent Action cases, Amnesty International has to act rapidly to prevent the ill-treatment of prisoners. An appeal is issued when Amnesty International believes it has received reliable and accurate information in such cases. It is not always possible to verify all details independently and in some instances the situation outlined in the appeal may change. Urgent Action participants are always notified of any significant new facts.

— Copies of any replies received from government authorities should be sent immediately to your section's Urgent Action coordinator or direct to the Campaign and Membership Department of the International Secretariat. If appropriate,



SURVIVAL INTERNATIONAL

FOR THE RIGHTS OF THREATENED TRIBAL PEOPLES

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

9 JANUARY 1987

BANGLADESH

REFUGEES FACE FORCED REPATRIATION

Over 24,000 refugees who have fled the genocidal war in their homelands in the Chittagong Hill Tracts now face the prospect of being forcibly repatriated by the Indian Government.

According to the Bangladesh authorities, the repatriation is to commence on 15 January.

The refugees are unwilling to go however, despite the appalling conditions in the refugee camps. In a recent telegram sent to the Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi the refugees appealed against the decision. 'Repatriation will mean sure death to us' the telegram says.

The refugees have crossed into India since last April following renewed attacks on tribal villages by the Bangladesh armed forces. Tribal resistance to the Government-sponsored colonisation of their lands by Bengali settlers has led to an escalation of violence in the hills. Since the early 1980s the Bangladesh military has stepped up its brutal counter-insurgency campaigns in areas where the tribal guerrilla force the Shanti Bahini (Peace Force) is active. Despite the closure of the region to foreign visitors, repeated reports of the torture, massacre, rape and pillage of tribal villagers at the hands of the Bangladesh military have emerged from the area. Over one thousand Chakma refugees have crossed the border into India in the last two weeks.

Earlier this month, representatives of the refugees, mainly Chakma tribals from the northern part of the CHT, accompanied members of the Indian paramilitary Border Security Force and Tripura State Government, on an official visit to the CHT. They received assurances from the Bangladesh authorities that returning refugees would be provided with 500 rupees each, food for six months and funds for the reconstruction of their houses.

But other Chakma express no confidence in these guarantees, which they say offer them 'no security for their lives or property'. They point out that refugees repatriated in 1981 were never properly rehabilitated. Repatriation should only take place they say after the situation in the CHT has been normalised and they are demanding the removal of Bengali settlers from their villages and the withdrawal of the Bangladesh armed forces. They have also demanded that the rehabilitation programme be carried out under the auspices of the United Nations or that of a 'humane and neutral country'.

Survival International's Director, Stephen Corry, said today:

'In the context of the continuing genocidal war against tribal peoples in the Chittagong Hills, the forced repatriation of refugees is wholly unacceptable. Their forced return is likely to lead to yet further killings'.

Survival International has sent telexes to the Indian authorities urging them not to go ahead with the planned repatriation without the refugees' free consent. Though the Indian Government is not a signatory to the UN Convention on Refugees, the human rights organisation has appealed to the Indian Government to abide by the spirit and terms of the convention which prohibits the forced repatriation of refugees.

For further information contact: Luke Holland, Survival International: 01

813161875
FGNIN

ATTN: MR NARAYAN DATT TIWARI
MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

SURVIVAL INTERNATIONAL EXTREMELY CONCERNED AT UNDUE HASTE IN REPATRIATION OF TRIBAL REFUGEES TO THE CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS. WE URGE THAT REPATRIATION IS NOT CARRIED OUT WITHOUT THE REFUGEES FREE CONSENT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE HUMANE PRINCIPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION RELATING TO THE STATUS OF REFUGEES. THE PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE OF REFUGEES REPATRIATED TO THE CHT HAS BEEN VERY NEGATIVE. WE ALSO URGE CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO REFUGEE DEMANDS FOR INVOLVEMENT OF UNHCR TO SUPERVISE ANY VOLUNTARY REPATRIATIONS.

YOURS SINCERELY, STEPHEN CORRY, DIRECTOR, SURVIVAL INTERNATIONAL. CC. UNHCR

TELEX REPLIES TO: 933524 (GEONET G)
quoting box GEO2:SURVIVAL

813165705
DMO

ATTN: RT HON MR RAJIV GANDHI
PRIME MINISTER

SURVIVAL INTERNATIONAL EXTREMELY CONCERNED AT UNDUE HASTE IN REPATRIATION OF TRIBAL REFUGEES TO THE CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS. WE URGE THAT REPATRIATION IS NOT CARRIED OUT WITHOUT THE REFUGEES FREE CONSENT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE HUMANE PRINCIPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION RELATING TO THE STATUS OF REFUGEES. THE PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE OF REFUGEES REPATRIATED TO THE CHT HAS BEEN VERY NEGATIVE. WE ALSO URGE CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO REFUGEE DEMANDS FOR INVOLVEMENT OF UNHCR TO SUPERVISE ANY VOLUNTARY REPATRIATIONS.

YOURS SINCERELY, STEPHEN CORRY, DIRECTOR, SURVIVAL INTERNATIONAL. CC. UNHCR

TELEX REPLIES TO: 933524 (GEONET G)
quoting box GEO2:SURVIVAL

4528144
RESPI

ATTN; JEAN-PIERRE HOCHE
UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

24,000 TRIBAL REFUGEES FROM BANGLADESH'S CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS ARE DUE TO BE FORCIBLY REPATRIATED FROM THE INDIAN STATE OF TRIPURA COMMENCING THE 15 JANUARY. THE REFUGEES HAVE APPEALED FOR THE ASSISTANCE OF THE UNO. PREVIOUS REPATRIATIONS HAVE PROVED EXTREMELY NEGATIVE. SURVIVAL INTERNATIONAL URGES THAT STEPS ARE TAKEN TO PREVENT FORCED REFOULEMENT.

YOURS SINCERELY, STEPHEN CORRY, DIRECTOR, SURVIVAL INTERNATIONAL.

REPATRIATION OF TRIBESPEOPLE UNWELCOME

The "unwelcome" repatriation of Bangladeshi refugees from India will begin on 15 January 1987.

About 15,000 men, women and children from the 13 mainly Buddhist tribes of the Chittagong Hill Tracts in the south of Bangladesh have been living as unofficial refugees in India's Tripura state for the last year to 18 months. Now, in an agreement reached between New Delhi and Dhaka, they will be repatriated to Bangladesh in batches of 300 families.

The Anti-Slavery Society has received news that the leading tribal political organization, the Jana Samhati Samiti (United Peoples Party), regards the move as "unwelcome", although on the surface the resettlement terms seem generous: 500 rupees per family plus provisions to last six months from India, and money for housing from Bangladesh. But this does not take into consideration the fact that the traditional homes of the hill people have been taken over by Bengalis.

The active encouragement by the government in this encroachment on to tribal lands is one of the reasons for the refugee problem in the first place. It is also one of the reasons for the current armed conflict between the tribespeople and Dhaka taking place in the tracts.

The Anti-Slavery Society has made numerous reports to the United Nations on this situation and today expressed its concern to the President of Bangladesh, the Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights, Mr Hector ~~Charry~~ Samper, in Geneva, and the United Nations Secretary-General in New York.

Attached is the text of the telegram sent to Mr Perez de Cuellar.

Issued on behalf of the Anti-Slavery Society by Alan Whittaker

180 Brixton Road, London SW9 6AT

telephone: 01 582 4040 (office)
01 582 8323 (home)

8 January 1987

Telegram to the Secretary-General of the United Nations
United Nations Plaza, New York, N.Y.10017, USA

The government of India has agreed to repatriate to Bangladesh the tribal peoples from the Chittagong Hill Tracts who are presently living as refugees in the Indian state of Tripura. I am deeply concerned about their fate if they are repatriated and respectfully urge you to use your good offices to ensure proper and impartial monitoring of their resettlement.

Peter Davies
Anti-Slavery Society, London

URGENT ACTION - CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS

17/11/86

Since May 1986, thousands of indigenous people from the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh have been forced to leave their homeland and seek refuge in India, mainly in Tripura State. Currently there are 30,000 refugees in four camps in South Tripura - Takum Bari, Karbook, Silachari and Kathal Bari. They are suffering from malnutrition (200 have died already) and need emergency aid badly. Their prospects if they return to Bangladesh, however, are worse as they face the likelihood of being killed by the Bangladesh Armed Forces or Bengali settlers who are being incited to attack the CHT inhabitants.

This morning, 17/11/86, IWGIA received a cable from Calcutta telling us that the Indian government are planning to repatriate 6,000 refugees from Tripura at any moment. If the Delhi government does this they will be over-riding the wishes of the Tripura government and send these refugees to their fate. IWGIA has sent the Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi, the following telegramme and we urge you most strongly to do the same.

ST- OG TELEGRAFVÆSENET

TELEGRAM

Grundfakst og ordafgift	Kr.	Øre	Modt. af	Sendt kl.	AI
Andre afgifter					
I alt					

dleveringsstation	Ord	Dato	Kl.	Tj. bem.
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NAME AND ADDRESS	H.E. Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister, Prime Minister's Secretariat, New Delhi, India
	The International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) deeply concerned at threatened forced repatriation of 6000 refugees from Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh currently in Tripura State STOP IWGIA seriously fears for their lives if they are returned to Bangladesh STOP Please ensure that refugees are not returned until their safety in Bangladesh can be completely guaranteed STOP International Community closely watching fate of refugees in Tripura STOP
	Respectfully, Board and Directors of IWGIA

BRUG VENLIGST BLOKBOGSTAVER - PLEASE USE BLOCK LETTERS

Organizing Committee Chittagong Hill Tracts Campaign

PO Box 11699 1001GR Amsterdam The Netherlands

ABN bank no 544157788

POINTS OF VIEW

I. The Organizing Committee Chittagong Hill Tracts Campaign (OCCHTC) establishes the following facts:

- a. The situation of indigenous peoples in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) is critical. The magnitude and the methods of oppression justify the term genocide.
- b. The crisis in the CHT of Bangladesh has parallels in other parts of the region, namely Tripura, Mizoram, the Chin Hills and Arakan. In all these cases plains people have moved into the hills, thus invading the territories of the indigenous peoples. Conflicts between the indigenous peoples and the settlers have been exploited by outside interests who explain these confrontations in religious terms.
- c. Although the British colonial legislature provided some protection to the CHT people (against invading people from outside their area), the jurisdiction discriminated against them by denying various rights such as: choice of settlement, legal aid and the right of trade and transport.
- d. Successive governments have gradually taken various rights away from the indigenous people. Large numbers of Bengali settlers have been encouraged to move from the plains to settle in the hills. At the same time there has been large-scale military oppression of the indigenous peoples.
- e. Because of the particular eco-system of the CHT, population density is far lower than that of the plains. The introduction of intensive wet-rice cultivation, as practiced in the plains, will lead to ecological disaster. In terms of pressure on resources, the population is already at a maximum.

II. The OCCHTC advocates the following policies:

- a. The international community should put pressure on the Government of Bangladesh to work out a political solution. In addition to usual diplomatic pressure, donor governments, in particular, should stop providing any development aid which contributes to oppression in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.
- b. The right of self-determination of the indigenous peoples of the CHT should be promoted. They themselves should decide the form that this should take. The Committee supports the CHT peoples' aim of achieving regional autonomy within a democratic state of Bangladesh.
- c. Refugees from the CHT who fled to India and elsewhere should return to Bangladesh only when their safety can be assured and their rights honoured. In the meantime they should be able to receive relief.

Organizing Committee Chittagong Hill Tracts Campaign

PO Box 11699 1001GR Amsterdam The Netherlands

ABN bank no 544157788

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- d. We condemn violations of human rights by all sides in the CHT. Military and police attacks, murder, rape, arrests, torture and arson must stop. Attacks by Bengali settlers on unarmed indigenous people as well as reverse attacks are also to be condemned. Both groups are victims of government policy.
- e. Bengali settlement in the CHT should stop. Recent settlers should return to the plains through a rehabilitation programme. The ancestral territories of the indigenous peoples of the CHT should be restored. Due respect should be paid to the human rights of both groups.

III. How the OCCHTC relates to other organizations:

- a. The Committee is independent of any political or military organizations both within and outside the CHT. The Committee acts in solidarity with the oppressed peoples of the CHT and those of the plains in their struggle for a democratic Bangladesh.
- b. The Committee supports groups which oppose ethnic, religious and sex discrimination and which aim for a classless society.

IV. Information:

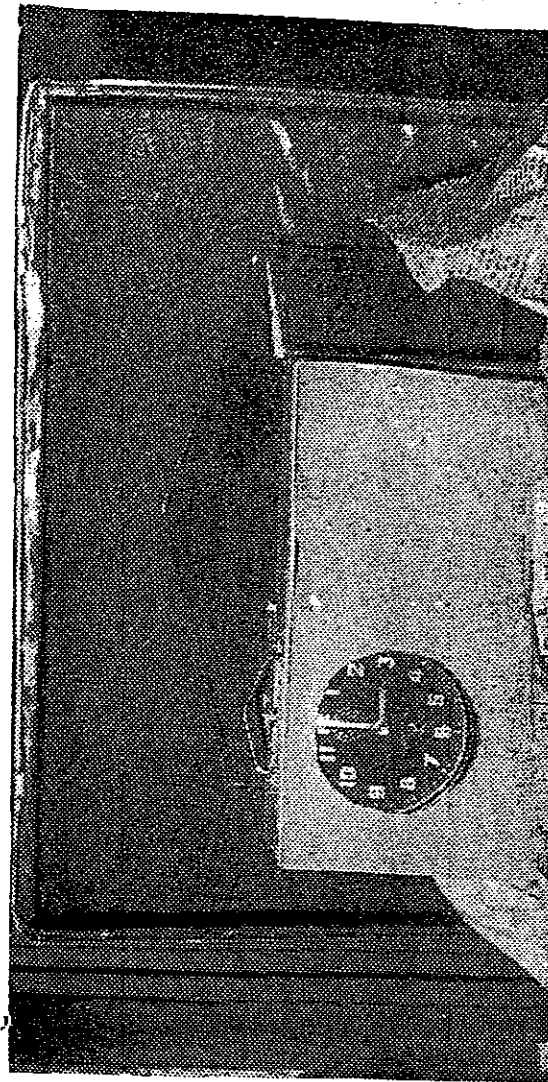
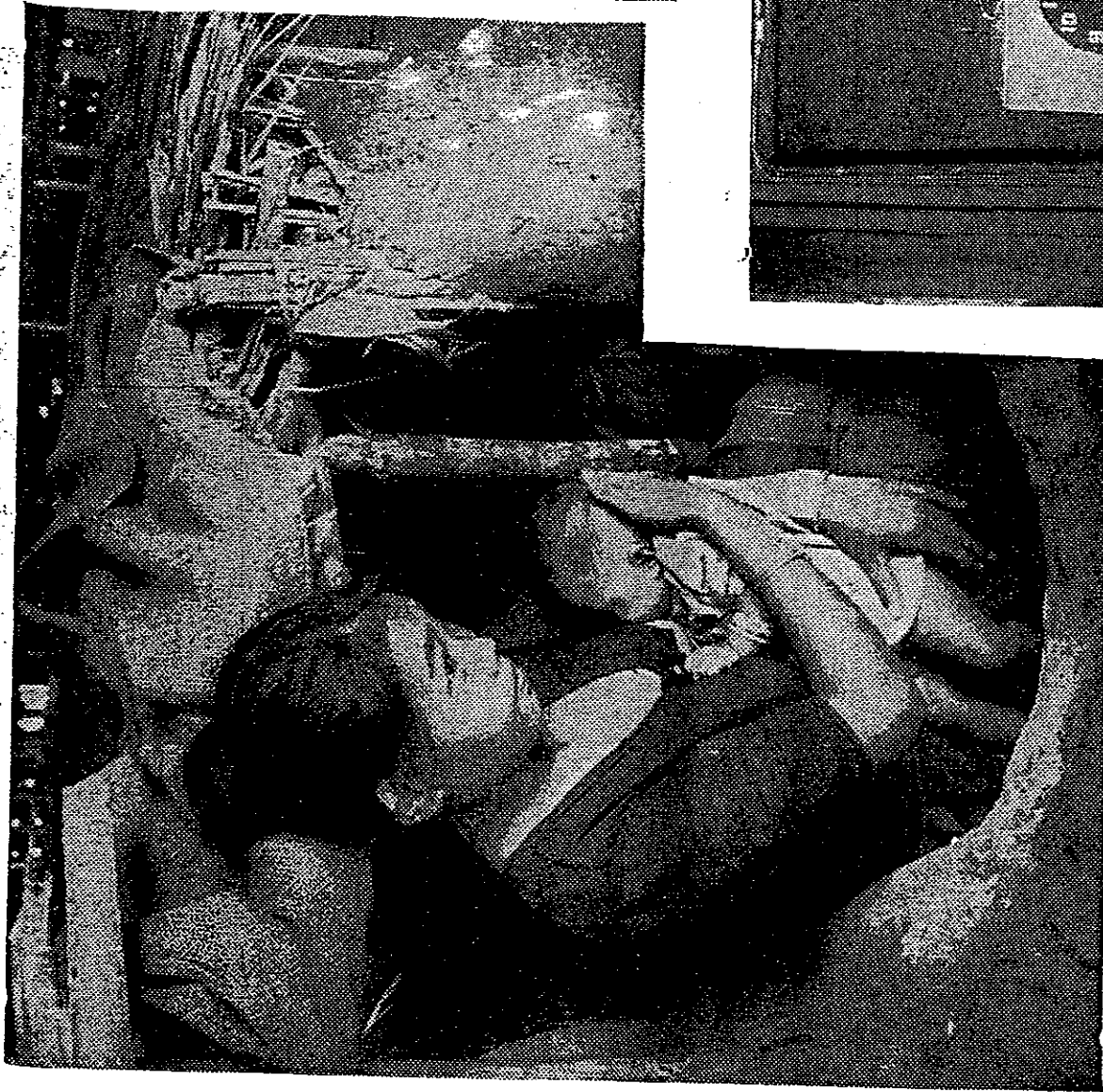
- a. In order to achieve its aim of disseminating accurate information the Committee needs to assess a wide range of points of view. It welcomes reports from as many sources as possible. In particular, more information is required on the extent to which the hill people support armed resistance. In addition, clearer information is needed on the specific demands of the CHT people for self-determination.
- b. The Committee is prepared to reconsider its opinions in the light of any new material received.

.....

December 1986.

Please forward information to: Chittagong Hill Tracts Information Network,
c/o IWGIA, Fiolstraede 10, DK-1171 Copenhagen-K,
Denmark.

CHAKMA REFUGEES FROM BANGLADESH



Above: A family of Chakma refugees from Bangladesh tries to beat the cold in a hole dug in the floor of its shack at Takumbari in the Amarapur area of South Tripura. (report on page 5) Above right: Calcutta's first officially recognized test-tube baby, born in a nursing home on November

Delhi hails Bangla step on refugees

The Times of India News Service
NEW DELHI, December 7.

THE Bangladesh government gave its commitment to repatriate the Chakma refugees, to the Indian foreign secretary, Mr. A. P. Venkateswaran, during his recent visit to Bangladesh, to attend a meeting of the standing committee of the Indo-Bangladesh joint economic commission.

Mr. Venkateswaran was impressed by the Bangladesh government's cooperative attitude on this issue. It confirmed the Bangladesh nationality of 24,000 refugees from a list of 26,000 provided by the Government of India. The identity of the rest is in the process of being established.

The Union government has been anxious to send back the refugees, who have been living in camps in the border areas of Tripura, creating tension among the local population and in a way contributing to the increased insurgency in that state.

It is also suspected that the presence of this large number of refugees in camps in Tripura has been helping the Chakma insurgents of the Chittagong hill tracts who may have been sneaking into Tripura and getting shelter among their compatriots.

SEVERAL ATTACKS

The Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, was able to put across to the Bangladesh President, Mr. H. M. Ershad, the link between the movement of refugees and the spurt in insurgency in both countries. Many non-tribals on both sides of the border have in the recent past become victims of murderous attacks by tribal insurgents.

The realisation led to the two
Colombian gunman

leaders' declaration, during President Ershad's visit to Delhi last July, that they would make all efforts to ensure the broders between the two countries stayed peaceful. As a first step, it was proposed that the Bangladesh government would create conditions for the return of the Chakma refugees.

The decision was, however, subject to the condition that the Bangladeshi identity of the refugees was established. Some misgivings were expressed in some quarters on this score since it was thought that the Bangladesh government could be naturally inclined to create confusion about the nationality of those it considers to be hostile elements.

These misgivings have apparently been removed by the Bangladesh government accepting the identity of the 24,000 refugees as being Bangladeshi. Nevertheless, their repatriation will not be an easy process.

One of the conditions the refugees may lay down is that the Bangladesh government must give up such activities as are inimical to the interests of the tribal population of the Chittagong hill tracts.

They are likely to demand guarantees for their security, their rights over land and property and against encroachment by people from the plains.

Observers feel that the success of the repatriation plans and measures to make the border peaceful are linked to a reappraisal by the Bangladesh government of its policy towards the tribals.

Book reveals facts on Calcutta streets

The Times of India News Service
CALCUTTA: Researches into Calcutta's past have always interested scholars as

r, Delhi, on Tuesday.

24,000 Chakmas to go back

By ZAGLUL A. CHOWDHURY
The Times of India News Service

DHAKA, December 3: Bangladesh will take back 24,000 Chakma tribals who had crossed into India from the Chittagong hill region.

Bangladesh had earlier agreed to the repatriation of 6,500 Chakma tribals. The latest position follows talks between the foreign secretary, Mr. A. P. Venkateswaran, and his Bangladesh counterpart, Mr. Fakhruddin Ahmed, here.

Mr. Venkateswaran is here in connection with the meeting of the standing committee of the Indo-Bangladesh joint economic commission and the Commonwealth senior officials' meeting.

Meanwhile, the standing committee of the joint economic commission concluded its deliberations and signed agreed minutes today. Mr. Venkateswaran and the Bangladesh external resources division secretary, Mr. M. K. Anwar, signed the minutes.

Afghanistan e on Feb. 1

Dhaka and Delhi agree on border measures

From Ahmed Fazi
Dhaka

Senior military commanders of India and Bangladesh, two countries harassed by a recent spate of tribal insurgency on their common border, have worked out a new agreement to stop cross-border terrorism, officials at the Interior Ministry said here yesterday.

The officials disclosed that under the accord both sides have promised not to give sanctuary to the tribal guerrillas fighting a separatist war.

More than 15,000 Bangladeshi tribal people, including a large number of women and children, left the Chittagong Hill Tracts district in south-east Bangladesh for bordering Indian villages after the Army stepped up its campaign against guerrillas belonging to the outlawed Shanti Bahini (peace force).

Authorities said that the exodus to the Indian state of Tripura began in the wake of an outburst of bloody ethnic clashes between Muslim Bengali settlers and Buddhist Chakma and Marma rebels last May. At least 24 Bengalis were killed last month in the latest violence in the hills.

The guerrillas are demanding the expulsion of the settlers and a separate homeland for half a million tribal people living on nearly one-sixth of Bangladesh's land area.

Bangladesh has accused India of harbouring Chakma dissidents; in turn, it was blamed by Delhi for helping Mizo tribesmen.

with particular State but a national problem.

Humans can't take it any more

From ASHIS CHAKRABARTI

TAKUMBARI (South Tripura), Dec. 4.—“We braved the rain and walked through jungles. Some of us have walked even 15 days to reach here. The BSF patrols intercepted many of us. But we fell at their feet, begging them not to send us back. We said we'd rather die here as many of our children and elders have died on the trek”. Mr Sureshwar Chakma paused for a breather, raised his eyes and then added almost in a whisper: “We've seen and suffered cruelties you will shudder to imagine. But humans can't take it any more”.

An LMF doctor who graduated from Chittagong Medical School in the 1940s, Mr Chakma stood surrounded by a crowd of rickety, pot-bellied children. After the disturbances in the Chittagong Hill Tracts on April 30 this year, he fled his home near Panchari in the northern part of the CHT and now finds himself at the refugee camp here, along with his wife, son, two daughters, sister and daughter-in-law. For six months the man has been trying to plan a future for the family. “But I've given up. Our lives are no longer ours”.

LIKE CATTLE

The atmosphere in the refugee camp is appalling. The squalor in and around the one square kilometre area in which 11,430 of the refugees from CHT have been huddled like cattle is deepened by the nauseating smell of dry fish, the staple food of the Chakmas, Marmas (Mog), Tripuris and other tribes of the CHT. The flat top of a bushy, raised land, locally called “teela”, was cleared to set up the rows of bamboo shacks to shelter the refugees. Situated at a distance from the nearest local settlement, the camp is meant to keep the hapless lot in isolation so that they do not intrude upon society.

One can hardly stand erect inside the huts without the head hitting the thatched roof. Young mothers laid out beds of straw and tattered clothes for new-born babies in trenches dug beneath the huts. The blankets promised by the Government were yet to arrive.

With daybreak, the menfolk and children toiter about the road that cuts across the rows of shacks. Women crowd round the tubewells sunk by Government agencies. Some of them have gone dry. The women often made through an adjacent nullah to fill the pitchers. Once a week, they gather outside the camp commander's office to collect their ration. Twice a day—in the morning and the evening—there is total chaos at a corner of the camp office where the patients crvine in pain

The death rate, not only here but also in other three camps for these refugees at Korbuk, Silachari and Rishyabari, is alarming. According to official estimates, about 700 refugees died in these camps between May and November. The Takumbari camp, opened on July 1, has seen 196 deaths, mostly of children. Although there were 153 births, a large number of the new-borns did not survive beyond a few days. At the Korbuk camp, about two kilometres north of here, where 5,479 refugees are sheltered, 251 of them died since May. There were 108 births there during the period.

Bangla refugees may return

The Times of India News Service

NEW DELHI, December 13: The 26,000 refugees who took shelter in southern Tripura following anti-insurgency operations launched by Bangladesh army in neighbouring Chittagong hill areas, are expected to start returning home from next week.

The return of the refugees was discussed by the foreign secretary, Mr. A. P. Venkateswaran, with his Bangladesh counterpart during his visit to Dhaka last week.

The issue of identifying the refugees has been causing some worry in Delhi since the Bangladesh government had stated that it would take back only those refugees who could be identified as being Bangladeshi.

Mr. Venkateswaran was pleased with the co-operative attitude of the Bangladesh authorities. He was informed in Dhaka that the authorities there had been able to verify the identity of 24,000 refugees and they would be taken back. The identity of the rest was in the process of being established.

Following discussions in Dhaka military commanders of the two countries met Demagiri in Mizoram last Sunday and decided upon the mode of conducting anti-insurgency operations on both sides so that they did not interfere with normal life of the tribal population.

Besides, the Bangladesh authorities gave the assurance that conditions would be created in the Chittagong hill tracts that would give confidence to Chakma refugees about their security in their homeland.

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Dhaka informs India of Bahini trouble

By ZAGUL A. CHOWDHURY

DHAKA, December 28.

INDIAN high commission sources here have described as "strong protest" with lodged a "strong protest" with New Delhi over the killing of 19 Bangladesh nationalists by the Shanti Bahini insurgents recently.

"Such reports are baseless," the source said, adding that the acting Indian high commissioner in Dhaka, Mr. Himachal Somia, was called to the foreign office to express Dhaka's "concern over the incident."

The sources said that such concern by Bangladesh was nothing new in the wake of the presence of Chakma refugees and Dhaka's allegations that Indian territory was used by the Chakma tribals, known as "Shanti Bahini" insurgents.

The subject was under constant discussion between the two countries at different levels, the sources said adding that Bangladesh had said it had no evidence of Indian involvement.

The report of Bangladesh lodging a "strong protest" was published only in one daily here and it was picked up by the foreign media. Indian high commission sources said the acting high commissioner was called to the foreign office for expressing Dhaka's concern

Panel in Kazakhstan to enforce discipline
MOSCOW, December 28 (PTI): A co-ordination council has been set up

700 more Chakmas come to Tripura

By SUMANTA SEN

The Times of India News Service

AGARTALA, December 29. The tiny north-eastern state of Tripura, which is already reeling under the pressure of a heavy influx of Chakmas from Bangladesh, is now forced to play host to more such tribals who have come over in the course of the last seven days.

Over 700 Chakmas have fled their homes in Bangladesh and crossed over into Tripura and are now staying at a camp at Kathachhari. With their arrival, the total number of Chakmas now staying in Tripura has gone up to around 30,000.

The newly-arrived tribals alleged that they were forced to leave their homes because of persecution by men of the Bangladesh Rifles and the Bangladesh Army, particularly in the Rangmah area.

According to reports available here, Bangladesh security forces struck back after being attacked by the rebel Shanti Bahini there.

Tough discussions are going on between the two countries, there is as yet no decision as to when the Chakmas would be able to return home.

They themselves do not want to return without a guarantee that there would be no further repression from the authorities in Bangladesh. The Tripura chief minister, Mr. Nirpen Chakraborty, also has similar views. Dhaka, on its part, had originally denied that many Chakmas had crossed over, but it subsequently modified its stand.

Last night, the issue of these hapless Chakmas had come up during a meeting between representatives of the Tripura Upajati Juba Samiti (TJUS) and the Union minister of state for home, Mr. P. Chidambaram, who had come here for a day's visit.

The TJUS leaders requested the Union minister to ensure that the Chakmas were able to return home and live peacefully.

'Fit' Arun Nehru back

Extremists create Indo-Bangla rift

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BOMBAY, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31.

The Times of India News Service
NEW DELHI, December 30.

THE killings by underground extremists in Tripura and Chittagong hill tracts in Bangladesh have led to accusations by both countries against the other of allowing its territory being used by the hostiles.

India holds the view that TNV men, who committed a series of massacres in South Tripura recently, have been getting shelter in the neighbouring Chittagong hill tracts.

Similarly, the Bangladesh government has stated that Shanti Bahini men, who killed 19 persons in a cinema house in Rangmah, went from India. Rangmah in Chittagong hill tracts is a border town separated from India by a narrow river, Feni.

Accusations are however not leading to a solution of the problem. Military commanders of the two countries met recently and decided on measures for preventing transborder crossings by the extremists. The fresh spurt of killings on both sides shows that no tangible

improvement in the situation has suited. The continued hostile activities of insurgents are contributing to such relations.

Another sensitive issue which is creating problems is repatriation of 26,000 Chakma tribals who had shelter in South Tripura forest. Although the Bangladesh government has agreed to take back refugees, it appears that the Chakmas are reluctant to return because they feel that their life in the tagging hill tracts will not be owing to the attitude of the government at Dhaka.

Ravi Shankar

"doing well"

NEW YORK, December 30. Doctors examined noted straits Shankar say they will know later if he needs bypass surgery to possible heart disorder.

He is doing well. There are "serious problems," said a doctor at Lenox Hill hospital in New

Delhi, Dhaka for joint steps on insurgency

DHAKA, Jan. 8 (UNI).

INDIA and Bangladesh today agreed to take effective measures for ending "cross-border" insurgency.

The external affairs minister, Mr. N. Tiwari, and his Bangladesh counterpart, Mr. Humayun Rashid Chowdhury, told a joint news conference at the end of the former's three-day visit to Dhaka that "both countries are committed to cooperate for ending the problem of insurgency in the Chittagong hill tracts".

Mr. Tiwari also denied that there were any training camps on the Indian side of the border and that India was providing sanctuary to insurgents.

The Indian stand has been that Tribal National Volunteers (TNV) guerrillas have been operating from Bangladesh.

Mr. Tiwari said that an estimated 14,000 Chakma tribals, who had fled Bangladesh, would be repatriated and the formal announcement in this regard would be made on Saturday.

Mr. Chowdhury also said the two countries would cooperate to end the problem "once for all".

Import pass-book

summit...

Later, addressing newsmen at the airport before his departure for New Delhi, Mr. Tiwari described his visit as "fruitful and successful" adding that the discussions centred on matters relating to SAARC and all important bilateral issues including sharing of river waters and boundary demarcation.

JCE MEETING

Both sides reaffirmed their determination to strengthen bilateral relations," Mr. Tiwari said.

On the river waters issue, Mr. Tiwari said the two delegations took stock of the work done by the joint committee of experts (JCE).

Regarding border demarcation, he said so far 4,025 km. had been demarcated, leaving only 133 km.

He said the Indo-Bangladesh joint economic commission would meet in the first half of 1987, possibly in April, to review the progress in economic cooperation and a Bangladesh delegation would visit New Delhi by the end of this month to discuss extension of the protocol on inland water transit.

Mr. Tiwari also said direct dialing between the two countries would be introduced on March 26, the national day of Bangladesh, in accordance with the decision taken at the SAARC summit...

Bangladesh assures security to Chakmas

Kour babies born during Christmas meet large stockings and toques in

AGARTALA, Jan. 7 (PTI).

THE Bangladesh authorities have assured the Chakma refugees that they will get "security and safety" after their repatriation to the Chittagong hill tracts, according to Mr. B. N. Bhattacharya, D.G., BSF, Tripura.

Mr. Bhattacharya told PTI here today that an eight-member delegation, consisting of six representatives of the Chakma refugees, one each from the BSF and the district administration, had visited the hill tract yesterday and inquired into the prevailing situation. They also met representatives of the BDR, district administration, village headmen, besides, others.

The Bangladesh authorities assured them that each refugee family would get Rs. 500 after their return, besides free ration for six months.

Meanwhile, in an urgent telegram to the Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi and the external affairs minister, Mr. N. D. Tiwari, the representatives of the

refugees requested them to 'stop repatriation of the Chakma refugees', UNI and Reuter add: Meanwhile, the influx of tribal refugees, mostly into Chakmas, from Bangladesh into Tripura continued unabated.

According to official sources here, nearly 1,000 refugees have taken shelter in Katha Charri camp.

The fresh influx might pose problems for the repatriation of the tribals to Bangladesh, the sources said.

The tribal refugees, who fled to Tripura because of a guerrilla war in southern Bangladesh, will start returning home next week, officials in Dhaka said.

Starting on January 15, they said, 300 would return every day from makeshift camps in Tripura. Dhaka has agreed to open reception centres at some border checkpoints to help with rehabilitation, one official told Reuters.

The refugees crossed the border in May, fearing for their lives after Shanti Bahini guerrillas killed several soldiers of the Chittagong hill tracts.

Tiwari arrives in Dhaka

By ZAGLUL A. CHOWDHURY

The Times of India News Service

DHAKA, January 6: The minister for external affairs, Mr. N. D. Tiwari, arrived here today on a three-day visit during which he will "primarily discuss" matters related to South Asian co-operation. He will also discuss bilateral matters like the issue of Chakma tribals.

"I am excited to be here since I am in Bangladesh for the first time," remarked Mr. Tiwari to newsmen at the airport. "I hope my talks will be useful to further the development of SAARC as also for resolving bilateral issues."

As for bilateral matters, he said Bangladesh had already agreed to take back 24,000 of the 29,000 tribal refugees in India.

He said the Ganga water issue was a subject of constant discussion between the two countries. It would also come up during the talks this time.

Answering questions about Tin Bigha, he said the delay in handing over the corridor to Bangladesh was caused by legal issues.

Gulf ship fires

cided to end cross-border violence, which led to more than 500 deaths last year. At least 18 people were killed in a Christmas Day massacre, when tribal guerrillas belonging to the outlawed Shanti Bahini group attacked Ramgarh, a border town. The guerrillas are fighting for a separate homeland for Bangladesh Chakma and Marna tribesmen.

India-Bangladesh border accord

From Ahmed Fazl, Dhaka

India and Bangladesh the Indian state of Tripura patched together an accord to combat tribal insurgency on their common eastern border, as 24,000 tribal refugees in India prepare for their trek home to Bangladesh, officials said yesterday.

Mr Narayan Datt Tiwari, India's External Affairs Minister, and Bangladeshi leaders have agreed to start the repatriation of refugees from

the Indian state of Tripura next Thursday. About 29,000 Chakma tribesmen sought shelter in Tripura last year. "Insurgency along the border has become a cause for grave concern," Mr Humayun Kashed Chowdhury, Bangladesh's Foreign Minister, was quoted as saying. Mr Tiwari said yesterday that both countries had de-

Repatriation sure death for Chakmas'

AGARTALA, Jan. 7.—Representatives of the Chakma refugees have in an urgent telegram requested Mr Rajiv Gandhi and the External Affairs Minister, Mr N. D. Tiwari, to "stop the repatriation" of the refugees, report PTI and UNI.

The representatives said "inhuman torture, killing, arson, rape, large-scale eviction of Chakmas by the Bangladeshi forces and illegal occupation of land by the Muslims continued unabated".

They also said that the influx of refugees was still on and in the last week of December over 700 Chakmas had reported to the four evacuee camps in South Tripura district. "Repatriation under this circumstances means sure death for the refugees," they added.

An eight-member delegation, consisting of six representatives of the Chakma refugees, one each from the BSF and district administration, had visited the Chittagong Hill Tracts yesterday and inquired into the prevailing situation. They met representatives of the Bangladesh Rifles, district administration and village headmen.

The influx of Chakma refugees, however, continued unabated. According to official sources here, the fresh influx might pose problems for the repatriation of the tribals to Bangladesh.

According to the BSF DIG in Tripura, Mr B N. Bhattacharya, the Bangladesh authorities have promised to provide relief and rehabilitation for tribal refugees when they returned home to the hill tracts.

In a joint meeting of Bangladesh and Tripura officials at Ashram on the Bangladesh side of the international border with Tripura yesterday it was agreed that each tribal family would be paid 500 takas for the reconstruction of their houses and provided free ration for six months besides ensuring their security and safety.

The six-member tribal refugees delegation, the additional district magistrate of South Tripura and the BSF commandant attended the meeting. The Bangladesh delegation was represented by the additional deputy commissioner and Khagrachari additional superintendent of police besides tribal headmen from four different villages of the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

The meeting was a part of the agreement reached at Sabrum in Tripura recently. The report of this meeting would be examined here, the sources said and added that another meeting might be held for finalization of the repatriation of the tribal refugees.

Earlier, in the meetings at the district and sector command levels between Indian and Bangladesh officials, it was decided that the repatriation of Chakma refugees would start from January 15. Official sources, however, said "a de-

cision regarding the repatriation will be taken on January 10".

At present over 30,000 refugees, displaced from the hill tracts in last April, have been sheltered in Silachari, Korbuk, Kathalchari and Takumbari camps.

(BOMBAY) MONDAY,
JANUARY 12, 1987
PAGE 9

Tiwari's Bangladesh visit fruitful

BY ZAGLUL A. CHOWDHURY
The Times of India News Service
DHAKA, January 11.

BANGLADESH is satisfied with the outcome of the recent visit of the Indian external affairs minister, Mr. N. D. Tiwari, to Dhaka.

"The talks have enabled both sides to discuss bilateral issues and other subjects like South Asian co-operation," the foreign secretary, Mr. Fakhruddin Ahmed, told newsmen here today.

He said Mr. Tiwari, whose visit to Dhaka was the first after he took over the new portfolio, had himself described it as a goodwill visit to familiarise himself with bilateral and other issues. The three-day visit had accomplished its objective, Mr. Ahmed said.

Replying to questions, the Bangladesh foreign secretary said Dhaka had once again requested New Delhi to hand over the "Tin Bigha Corridor" to Bangladesh without any

further delay. Mr. Tiwari stated legal issues as factors responsible for the delay in handing over Tin Bigha, but said that it would be transferred to Bangladesh as early as possible.

Mr. Ahmed confirmed that repatriation of about 24,000 Chakma tribals would begin from January 15. Asked about the Indian contention that the total number of refugees in India was about 29,000, he said the number might be marginally more than 24,000.

The foreign secretary had to face a volley of questions on bilateral issues with India.

"ENEMY PROPERTY"

"It is an old issue which is being discussed from time to time, he said about "vested property," more commonly known as "enemy property" to describe the property left behind by the minority community after the 1965 Indo-Pakistan war.

Some newsmen wanted to know whether talks on this subject during Mr. Tiwari's visit amounted to "interference in Bangladesh's internal affairs."

"The issue came up since complaints were received from relations of some people in India" Mr. Ahmed explained.

Regarding reports published in the Bangladesh press about India constructing a "ring road" with Soviet assistance along the Assam sector of the border with Bangladesh, Mr. Ahmed said: "We are watching everything but it is not a matter of serious concern as yet."

About other matters, the foreign secretary said President Ershad would pay a state visit to Indonesia from January 13, and attend the Islamic summit in Kuwait later this month. He said the opening of the SAARC secretariat in Kathmandu on January 15 would be a "great occasion" and the foreign minister, Mr. H. R. Chowdhury, would attend it.

He told a questioner that the foreign minister's visit to Moscow, which was earlier postponed, was expected to take place soon.

The visit was to take place from December 25 last, but was postponed owing to Mr. Chowdhury's pre-occupation with the U.N. general assembly session. Mr. Chowdhury is the president of the general assembly.

THE TIMES OF INDIA
TUESDAY, JANUARY 13,
1987, PAGE 1
(BOMBAY)

More Chakmas pour in

AGARTALA, January 12 (PTI): Repatriation of 24,000 Chakma refugees is being "jeopardised" with the fresh entry of 2,000 such persons into south Tripura in the past 72 hours, according to a state government spokesman here today.

The spokesman said the Tripura government was ready to repatriate the Chakmas and the Bangladesh government was willing to take them back.

City Weather

Delhi apathetic to Chakma issue

The Times of India News Service
CALCUTTA, Jan. 14.

THE continued influx of Chakmas into Tripura from the adjoining Chittagong hill tracts of Bangladesh should cause the government in Delhi to sit up and take some positive measures to prevent this inflow.

This is all the more essential in view of the persistent belief in Dhaka that it is Delhi which is encouraging the rebel Shanti Bahini in the Chittagong hill tracts against the Ershad regime.

The influx of Chakma peasants from the hill tracts takes place whenever the Bangladesh security forces come down heavily on them as a reprisal for attacks by the Shanti Bahini. The Bahini has for long been demanding autonomy for the Chakmas and has also been resisting Dhaka's plans to settle more and more Bengalis in that tribal homeland.

In the past the Bahini leaders had enjoyed a degree of rapport with the authorities in Delhi. This caused Dhaka to make the accusation against the government of India. Unfortunately, New Delhi seems to be dragging its feet in meeting the situation with the result that a small state is being forced to play host to such a large number of refugees whose presence is slowly creating a kind of social tension.

Tripura is suffering in other ways also. The Chittagong hill tracts also house the headquarters of the rebel Tribal National Volunteers (TNV) and it has been noticed that each action of the Shanti Bahini in Bangladesh leads to the TNV stepping up its activities in Tripura. The state chief minister, Mr. Nripen Chakravarti, is convinced that on these occasions the TNV acts under instructions from Dhaka.

So far New Delhi has chosen to view the problem of influx from a strictly legalistic point of view, namely that the Chakmas of Chittagong being foreigners had no right to enter Indian territory. Left on its own, the Border Security Force would perhaps have pushed back the entire lot but for the intervention of the state government which maintains that humanitarian considerations demand that these hapless people be given shelter and not thrown back to the wolves.

Strangely enough, at one point of time, central agencies in Tripura were even questioning the statistics given out by the state government as they were suggesting that the figure of arrivals had been inflated to get more

Indo-Lankan talks to

central assistance. The suggestions were, however, dropped when it was found that Dhaka was also questioning the figures. Now of course, Dhaka has also got round to accepting the figure provided by the Tripura government.

The Chakma issue should make Delhi act in more than one direction. Within India, no other north-eastern state takes kindly to them and Mizoram is against these people enjoying a district within the Union territory. Tripura is the only state where they can find homes, even though these Chakmas are Indian nationals.

So far the Union government has shown no signs of preventing a section of the Indian people from being treated as the wretched of the earth. Just as it does not seem to be too interested in refuting the charges made by Bangladesh. And who bothers if a small state has to suffer in the process, as who in Delhi or the rest of the country has heard of places like Takumbari or Sabrum?

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Chakmas' repatriation does not come off

By ZAGLUL A. CHOWDHURY
The Times of India News Service

DHAKA, January 15: The much-awaited repatriation of Bangladeshi tribal refugees from India did not take place today although the repatriation of over 24,000 refugees was to begin in small batches from today.

The repatriation of the first batch of the refugees was to begin through Tabalchari border outpost in Haggrachari district in Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill tract.

Reports from the Chittagong Hill tract said that all preparations for the repatriation were made, but it did not take place. According to Mr. Khurshed Anwar Khan, deputy commissioner of the Khagrachari district, the Indian side did not bring 100 families who were to be repatriated today.

City Weather

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More tribals pour into Tripura

AGARTALA, January 16 (UNI): The uncertainty continued to cloud the planned repatriation of over 24,000 tribal refugees to Bangladesh as authorities today reported some 300 more tribals poured into Tripura last night, seeking shelter from alleged atrocities across the border.

Official sources said the south Tripura district authorities may attempt again to persuade the refugees, currently sheltered in camps, to return home to the Chittagong hill tracts in Bangladesh.

The refugees, who number over 33,000, yesterday refused to go back, saying they feared they would be made the target of violence by Bangladesh security forces and plains people settled in the Chittagong hill tracts.

About 100 families were to have been repatriated yesterday.

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AHMEDABAD, January 16 (UNI):

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Repatriation of Chakmas delayed

By ZAGLUL A. CHOWDHURY
The Times of India News Service

DHAKA, Jan. 18: While the repatriation of the Chakma tribal refugees from India to Bangladesh has not materialised, it appears that fresh efforts would have to be made with new arrangements for repatriation of these people.

The repatriation of more than 24,000 Chakma tribals was to begin on Thursday in small batches after the agreement was reached at the highest level of foreign ministers of the two countries.

The Indian minister for external affairs, Mr. N.D. Tiwari, and his Bangladesh counterpart, Mr. H.R. Chowdhury, had said during Mr. Tiwari's recent visit to Dhaka that the repatriation would begin on January 15. Both sides had agreed to take measures to end the insurgency.

But the much awaited repatriation of the first batch through Talachari border post in Bangladesh did not come off, giving rise to uncertainty. The Bangladesh side believes that the tribal insurgents known as "Shanti Bahini" stalled the repatriation because "they want to use those refugees as a weapon against Bangladesh." Official sources here told "The Times of India News" Service, "We had prepared to receive the refugees but the unexpected development has disappointed us".

Asked what steps were being taken for fresh arrangements, the sources said they were still awaiting full reports about the aborted repatriation. The deputy commissioner of kharachari in the Chittagong hill tract visited the area yesterday to report to the government about the situation. The sources alleged that the Shanti Bahini was also instigating other tribes like the Mog and Tipara to insurgency and were blocking the repatriation of the refugees. Bangladesh, however, says the number of insurgents is very small.

While the main causes of stalling of repatriation of the first batch still remain unclear, the Bangladesh side says they are ready to accept the

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Chakma Families Refuse To Go Back

The Times of India News Service
AGARTALA, January 19.

THE scheduled repatriation of 24,000 Chakma refugees, that Bangladesh had agreed to take back on January 15 came a cropper, after the 150 Chakma families identified for deportation refused to return in view of "the abnormal situation" in the Chittagong hill tracts.

Over 33,000 tribal evacuees from Chittagong hill tracts were currently lodged in the four refugee camps — Takumbari (over 13,000), Silahcherri (3,000), Kerbuk (5,000) and Kathalcherri (12,000).

Major Hurdle

Over 3,000 of them entered south Tripura in the first week of January after fresh fighting broke out between Bangladesh security forces and the outlawed Shanti Bahini guerillas, who killed 38 persons, including eight army men, in the last round of conflict.

The Tripura chief secretary, Mr. N. P. Nawani, told this correspondent that unless fresh diplomatic ground was broken in discussions between India and Bangladesh, the fate of the proposed repatriation of the tribal evacuees was doomed. The Centre had given clear instructions to the Tripura government that it would not appreciate the use of force in ensuring repatriation, but would like the persuasion tactics for the same.

Thus, since the refugees were determined not to go unless "permanent peace" returned to the Chittagong hill tracts, it would not be possible to send the refugees back.

Meanwhile, fighting between the

Bangladesh forces and the Shanti Bahini intensified over the past one week, with the guerillas striking in at least three resettler hamlets and one Bangladesh rifles camp, killing over 50 resettlers and ten para-military men.

The guerillas, operating in eight strike-units under the operational command of "Colonel" Samiran Talukdar (who is the field director of the Shanti Bahini), were poised to strike further in a wide area between Naniarehar and Tabalcherri in northern Chittagong hill tracts.

While the dreaded guerilla majors Tapash Chakma and Naitik Chakma were giving nightmares to the Bangladesh security forces, the rebel demolition squad led by Captain Monoranjan Talukdar had so far destroyed four bridges, three of them connecting roads with the inner road network of Bangladesh, over which the refugees were supposed to return.

Continuing Stalemate

Some 150 refugee families were supposed to return from every refugee camp per day and the tempo was supposed to pick up once the process got off ground. But the present stalemate was likely to result in the shelving of the repatriation process for at least another month, state government officials said.

Earlier, a six-member refugee delegation led by Prabhakar Chakma had visited Feni area, but were not taken round by Bangladesh authorities through the trouble-affected areas as per the agreed programme arrived at between India and Bangladesh district level authorities.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA (BOMBAY) JANUARY 19, 1987, PAGE 9

Bangla query on Chakma impasse

DHAKA, January 18 (Reuters): Bangladesh has asked India why close to 24,000 tribal refugees "due to return home" to the country's Chittagong hill tracts three days ago are still in India, the foreign minister, Mr. Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury, said today. Mr. Chowdhury said Bangladesh was mystified by the delay. "We did everything we were supposed to do to ensure a smooth return of the refugees," Mr. Chowdhury told Bangladesh's official BSS news agency. The tribals, mostly Chakmas, fled to Tripura last May to escape fighting between Shanti Bahini (Peace Force) rebels and troops.

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Better to die in India, say Chakmas

SILACHARI (Tripura),
Jan. 22 (UNI).

DDRIVEN from Bangladesh by a series of onslaughts and sought to be sent back by India, the Chakmas — one of the oldest Buddhist communities in the world — are on the edge of survival at home and once again the target of a systematic assault they say has begun, testing their patience.

The latest influx, sought to be reversed by the now deferred repatriation, is just the continuation of a problem which they state started way back in 1947.

Today, there are some 36,000 of them in the remote north-eastern state of Tripura. But the figure is never steady for long. Every other night their numbers swell by the hundreds as they pour across the border through tiny river streams to seek shelter in a country that is left with little option but to mother them.

Six shelter camps, set up in Tripura's south district, which borders the Chit-

tagong Hill tracts of Bangladesh, are bursting at the seams, crawling with impoverished refugees who have just stalled a repatriation programme that would have reduced their ranks by 24,535.

A few thousand have been camping in the open, seeing frosty nights through with government-supplied blankets and a one-line symbol of resistance that greets reporters. Local administrators and politicians alike: its better to die in India than be killed back home.

What is the reason for the fresh influx which began late in April last year?

As on at least three previous occasions, the refugees say this time too they are the target of almost daily violence by security forces — personnel of the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) in particular — and Muslim plains people sought to be settled by the Bangladesh government in the overwhelming tribal Chittagong Hill tracts.

According to a spokesman of the refugees, the violence, arson, killing, rape and torture are part of a long-term plan by the Bangladesh government to change the ethnic profile of the resource-rich area.

The tribals of the Chittagong Hill tracts — they include people from eight other tribes besides the majority Chakmas — have long opposed the Bangladesh government and the erstwhile East Pakistan regime with demands that range from the moderate one of "separate status" within the legal framework to the separatist call for "total autonomy".

Voicing the demands are the political front of the Chakmas, the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samiti (PCJSS) and its armed wing, the Shanti Bahini.

On January 15, the scheduled day of repatriation, Satyaban Chakma, a 33-year-old high school teacher from Tabalchhari in the Chittagong Hill tracts, negotiated with a host of harassed district officials on behalf of the refugees.

About 500 people belonging to 108 families were to have been sent across the border that day but every time the officials came to persuade them to board the four trucks parked along the camp to carry them to the border point three km away, hundreds of women fell at their feet, wailing. The men had fled into the surrounding jungles before the first official — a police officer — could arrive at the camp at 8 a.m.

There had been sporadic firing from Bangladesh the night before, the women said, a fact later confirmed by district officials, and they would not go back at any cost.

Satyaban Chakma said the refugees would return only if three conditions were met — there must be tripartite talks between India, Bangladesh and

the PCJSS, conditions across the border must be safe enough for the journey back, and refugees must be allowed to return to their homes — mostly razed in fires — instead of being kept in transit camps as planned by Bangladesh.

The failure of the repatriation, programme, officials admitted hours later, was a foregone conclusion.

"The Chakmas are not our citizens" declared the Tripura chief minister, Mr. Nripen Chakraborty, on January 17 in a conversation with UNI. "They are a population from another country. Their very presence is a risk in that sense. Why should I take the responsibility, but the important thing is that there is no security on the other side (of the border)".

Use of force, either to stop tribals from entering India or to repatriate them, is prohibited by the Centre as a humanitarian gesture.

Said Mr. B. N. Bhattacharjee, DIG of the border security force at Agartala. "They come with such sordid tales of atrocities. Our men could stop them but that will not help the situation".

But what is clearly worrying authorities is the possibility that the ranks of incoming tribals may be easily infiltrated.

Intelligence officials at Agartala point to the chances of "mischievous elements" slipping into India, in view of the situation in Tripura, where a band of extremists going by the name of the Tribal National Volunteer is on the prowl seeking tribal collaborators in a self-declared mission to carve out a "Free Tripura."

DMK leader, 212 party men freed

TIRUCHIRAPALLI, January 22 (PTI): Mr. Anbil Dharmalingam, DMK leader and former Tamil Nadu minister, and 212 other party volunteers, who had been imprisoned on January 9 for burning copies of article 17 of the Indian constitution as part of the party's anti-Hindi agitation, were released from jail here yesterday following orders by the Tiruchirapalli judicial first class magistrate.

The magistrate, in his verdict said the imprisonment of the accused till yesterday from the date of arrest had been treated as punishment.

Thousands of DMK volunteers all over the state including the party president, Mr. M. Karunanidhi, were arrested on December 9 last year for burning copies of article 17.

'India not stopping Chakmas'

By ZAGUL A. CHOWDHURY
The Times of India News Service

DHAKA, January 28.

THE Indian high commission here has repudiated recent reports in a section of the Bangladesh press that India had prevented the proposed repatriation of Chakma refugees to Bangladesh, scheduled from January 15.

The high commission, in a press release here yesterday, clarified the actual situation and denied that India was in any way involved in blocking the repatriation of the refugees.

A section of the Bangladesh press had implied that India was behind the non-repatriation of the Chakmas. Bangladesh official sources maintained that Bangladesh had made all arrangements for incoming Chakmas but the scheduled return of the tribals in batches did not take place on schedule.

Sources said that a section of the Chakma "miscreants" prevented the scheduled repatriation in a bid to keep the "so-called" Chakma issue alive and use the refugees as a "ploy" against Bangladesh.

The Indian high commission referred to reports published in a section of the press and said India was not involved in any attempt to stall the repatriation.

A press release issued by the high commission explained that as per the agreement between the district authorities on both sides a team consisting of refugee leaders visited the Chittagong hill tracts for an on-the-spot study to assure themselves that conditions were safe for their return. The team was not taken to any interior areas or to the villages of the refugees.

The refugee leaders were also not convinced by the account given by Bangladesh Rifles and district officials in the Chittagong hill tracts of the security and rehabilitation measures proposed by the authorities. The refugee leaders came back unconvinced and continued to be apprehensive of their fate once they returned to Bangladesh.

The Indian authorities, the press release said, were keen to adhere to the repatriation schedule. In view of the uncertainty explained above, it was proposed that the first batch would be repatriated only through the Tabalachar point. As repatriation pick-

ed up, the other two points would have been brought into operation.

On January 14/15, as preparation for repatriation were in their final stages, the sound of rifle and LMG firing inside Bangladesh could be heard at the repatriation point on the Indian side. High flames could be seen in Tabalachari and Taidong-Bop areas of Bangladesh. At the same time, the influx of additional refugees continued in the period immediately before the scheduled repatriation date. These refugees spread further stories of

atrocities. All these factors combined to make the refugees extremely apprehensive. Most of the male members of families selected for repatriation left the camps for nearby jungles.

According to the press release, they were brought back and attempts were again made to persuade them to cross into Bangladesh. They were totally unwilling to do so. For obvious humanitarian reasons it was not possible to repatriate the refugees using force, the high commission added.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA (BOMBAY)
JANUARY 25, 1987, PAGE 9

Bangla opposition walk-out

By ZAGLUL A. CHOWDHURY
The Times of India News Service

DHAKA, January 24.

ALMOST the entire opposition in the Bangladesh parliament staged a noisy walk-out today, on the first day of the winter session of parliament, just before the President, Gen. H. M. Ershad, was about to deliver his address.

The Awami League-led eight-party alliance, which boycotted two other previous sessions of parliament, joined today's session, but walked out from the House after about half an hour.

While the two earlier sittings of parliament were rather lacklustre events in the absence of the mainstream opposition, today's session lasted for less than two hours was marked by parliamentary fury and heated scenes.

The Awami League chief, Sheikh Hasina Wazed, who is the leader of the opposition in the House, led the walk-out when President Ershad entered the House and was invited by the speaker, Mr. Shamsul Huda Chowdhury, to deliver his speech.

Begum Hasina attempted to say something but was not allowed by the chair and then she led the noisy walk-out. "We do not want to hear him. He and violence."

about good ties with India and continuing dialogue on the outstanding issues, like sharing river waters, handling of Tin Bigha and sovereignty of Bangladesh on South Talpatty Island which India calls New Moore Island. He said, for the first time, India agreed to include Nepal in the water issue and tripartite talks were being held.

Gen. Ershad lauded the SAARC and said this had created a congenial environment for settlement of the bilateral issues through discussions among the member countries.

About the issue of Chakma refugees, he said the Shanti Bahini insurgents were attacking innocent Bangladesh nationals from "safe sanctuaries."

He said all arrangements were made by Bangladesh for the return of tribal refugees from India from January 15, but the repatriation did not take place. He said tribals were not under any repression in Bangladesh.

Gen. Ershad spoke about good relations with both the US and the Soviet Union and also with China. He said: "We are among the very few and only one in South Asia to become members of four international forums — the United Nations, the non-aligned movement, the Commonwealth and the Islamic bloc."

The speaker adjourned the House till January 31.

Khaleda held, rally disrupted

The Times of India News Service

DHAKA, January 24: Begum Khaleda Zia, one of the two main opposition leaders in Bangladesh, was taken into custody today, when the police broke up a scheduled opposition rally organised by the seven-party alliance led by the former. Scores of people were injured in violence.

The seven-party alliance and another opposition combine of five parties were observing a protest day meeting of the winter session of Parliament. They demanded the dissolution of the "undemocratic" Parliament and fresh polls.

Several other leaders of Begum Zia's party were also arrested and many vehicles destroyed. At least ten news-men were injured in police lathi-charge and violence.

THE TIMES OF INDIA (BOMBAY)
THURSDAY, JANUARY 29, 1987, PAGE 15

Dhaka rejoinder on Chakmas

By ZAGLUL A. CHOWDHURY

The Times of India News Service
DHAKA, January 29: The Bangladesh authorities yesterday contradicted the version of the Indian high commission here about the Chakma repatriation and said Dhaka was not responsible for the non-repatriation of tribal-people planned from January

in a statement here. The deputy commissioner of Kharachan district, Chhobors the Indian district of Tripura, said that the version given by the Indian high commission would "create confusion about the Chakma repatriation" and appeared to be "misleading."

He said that the high commission's version that shooting started from Bangladesh on the eve of the repatriation was untrue and added that it was in the Indian side that the shooting began from the night of January 14/15 before the start of the repatriation.

According to him, despite all arrangements made by the Bangladesh authorities and his talks with the deputy commissioner of south Tripura district, the Chakma repatriation did not take place. He asserted that Bangladesh made all arrangements for the repatriation.

Indo-Soviet centre

outsirts of Delhi or an acre of land given by the Ghaziabad development authority. There will be space enough for 30 to

of the society to another single working woman. Four kinds of units are visualised — flats for the economically weaker sec-

BSF struggles with 2,500 refugees

AGARTALA, Feb. 1 (PTI).

THE BSF jawans barely managed to keep off over 2,500 Chakma, Marma and Tipra refugees trying to escape the retaliatory raids by the resettler-dominated Village Defence Parties (VDP) in Bangladesh's Khagracherry district, according to official sources.

Sources said here today that it would be difficult to resist the 'inexorable tide of panic-stricken humanity', unless something could be done immediately to restore normalcy in the Chittagong hill tracts.

BSF officials said today that in view of the long mountainous border stretch of Tripura with Chittagong hill tracts and the paucity of border outposts it was difficult to stop the refugee influx 'unless we have shoot orders.'

Meanwhile over 4,000 new refugees from the Chittagong hill tracts have entered south Tripura since January 15 last when the proposed repatriation was supposed to begin.

A PTI correspondent, during a recent visit to some evacuee camps, observed that refugees were yet to be enrolled as displaced persons in the records. They are deprived of rations and forces to hunt for wild fruits and roots in adjoining jungles.

Some refugees with kinsmen, already in camps, manage to take out a slice from the rations available to them. About 20 children and elderly people have already died.

"But you must consider the sheer volume of the relief effort," said Mr. D. Prakash, South Tripura district magistrate.

He said the camps were housing more people than the population of most sub-divisional headquarter towns.

Talks between MP govt., doctors fail

BHOPAL, February 1 (PTI): The strike by junior doctors here entered the 22nd day as last night's dialogue between them and the Madhya Pradesh chief minister, Mr. Motilal Vora, failed.

According to Dr. Shishir Chanpuria, vice-president of the junior doctors' association, a delegation of the doctors also met the state's chief secretary and

in Tripura.

The new refugees said Bangladesh resettlers were forcibly taking their lands, while security forces, based in Chittagong hill tracts, were forcing them to move into the re-grouping centres.

One woman from Dighinala area of Khagracherry district said that all the male members of her family were killed while she and her two daughters, both minors, were criminally assaulted by resettlers.

When asked whether they had been instigated to come to India by the Shanti Bahini rebels, the refugees protested and said "They are few in numbers and already engaged in an unequal battle with lakhs of Bangladeshis. They have no time for instigating us."

Boys like dowry, girls don't: study

Shah Kashmir to see how the NC-Congress combination faces this challenge to national unity and integrity.

Dhaka ready to take back Chakmas

By ZAGLUL A. CHOWDHURY

The Times of India News Service

DHAKA, February 1: The Bangladesh foreign minister, Mr. Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury, today said his country was committed to take back the Chakma refugees from India.

He said at a press conference here that the repatriation was to have begun in batches from January 15. But it was unfortunate that the repatriation did not take place. He and his Indian counterpart, Mr. N. D. Tiwari, were at Kathmandu at that time and both of them were surprised that the repatriation did not take place, he added. "Anyway, we are prepared to take them back, we stand by our commitment," he said.

The foreign minister was briefing newsmen about the just-concluded Islamic summit conference.

Asked about the visit of the West Bengal chief minister, Mr. Jyoti Basu, to Bangladesh, he said it was a goodwill visit and different issues were discussed. However, talks on bilateral issues would be held with the Central Indian government, he said.

Curfew in Bangla border district

DHAKA, February 1 (PTI): Bangladesh authorities have clamped a dawn-to-dusk curfew in the southeastern district of Ramgarh bordering Tripura, the Bengali daily, "Ittefaq", reported today.

The curfew has been on since Wednesday in view of the activities of the "miscreants", the daily said.

Shanti Bahini insurgents, according to earlier reports, killed three persons and injured several others in two separate incidents in Ramgarh and carried out hit-and-run attacks on settlers in the Chittagong hill tracts.

Agartala: The Tripura armed police and unidentified Bangladeshi miscreants exchanged heavy gunfire at Rangmala under the Bishalgarh police station in the West District today, according to the police.

Sources said that a gang of miscreants, while escaping with 12 stolen head of cattle, opened fire on a police patrol party. The police immediately challenged and fired 31 rounds.

Beirut professors face death threat

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By SUMANTA SEN
The Times of India News Service
AGARTALA, November 28.
At least 500 persons, an overwhelming number of them being children, have died in the last six months in the four camps set up for the Chakma refugees in southern Tripura, adjoining the Chittagong hill tracts of Bangladesh.
The deaths far exceed the births. For instance, at the Karbook camp in the Amarpur sub-division, there were 186 deaths between May and August against only 55 births.
Of course, mathematically speaking,

be too great as right now there are 28,000 inmates in these camps. But these deaths underline the cruel fate of the Chakmas in the Chittagong hill tracts of Bangladesh who have always faced harassment and torture from the authorities in Dhaka. Unable to stand up to the Bangladesh army and the Bangladesh Rifles, they are forced to flee their homes and seek refuge in India, their land being immediately grabbed by the Bengali Muslims whom Dhaka wants to settle in the hill tracts.
The people staying in the Tripura camps have almost all come from the Khagracharia district of Bangladesh, trekking for four to five days to reach the border from their tribal hamlets like Dewan Para, Sarat Chowdhury Para and Nabida Para.

rice and dal. For another essential item on any tribal menu, is, however not available as that would have been too expensive. Even without this, monthly expenditure on the two camps in the Amarpur sub-division, Takumbari and Kabrook, comes around Rs. 45 lakhs.
The continued presence of Chakmas could however, pose a danger in the long run. The underground Tripura National Volunteers (TNV) very much present in the Amarpur area as in the rest of the state and possibility of its looking for recruits from among these refugees cannot be ruled out. The TNV would do this as a two-fold purpose addition to its strength and creation of a solid support base inside the Chittagong hill tracts when the refugees ultimately return.

It is a long walk without food and water and the deaths that have taken place were largely due to this strain. Entry into India also had not been easy as the Border Security Force had initially, in the month of May, chosen to stick to rules. Ultimately, however giving way in the face of the volume of the influx and insistence from the Tripura authorities that be allowed in on humanitarian grounds.

Such a support base inside the Chittagong hill tracts has become essential for the TNV as with the coming overground of the Mizo National Front, it has lost a strong ally.

Since the arrival of these people, Bangladesh has repeatedly been approached by the Indian side to take them back, but Dhaka is yet to respond, the SAARC spirit notwithstanding. In fact Bangladesh claims that only 6,000 people have crossed over whose names it has also sent to India and whom it has agreed to take back. The Tripura authorities have objected to this as such selective repatriation could lead to serious problems.

The TNV supreme leader, Mr. Be Hrangkhaw, and his wife Linda, staying in the hill tracts and, according to reliable reports, they have shifted their camp a number of times recently for logistical reasons. They need have a lot of friendly support from Chakma population in the hill tract this could well be provided by the indoctrinated by the TNV during their stay in the Tripura camps.

The Chakmas themselves are also not too willing to return to a homeland from which they have been physically ousted by the Bengali rulers in the plains. The more articulate among them, who had been school teachers or government employees before leaving their homes, have clearly told the Tripura government that they would return only if the Bangladesh authorities gave a guarantee to Mr. Rajiv Gandhi that they would be spared further persecution. Till then, they would be spared further persecution. Till then, they would prefer to lie in the Tripura camps, surviving on refugee relief, and staring at the hills in the distance beyond which lie their abandoned homes.

However, as the song goes, the future is not for us to see. The present of the sad picture of the hapless people forced to take up shelter among alien people. Perhaps they can seek consolation in the fact that a few fellow tribals in Tripura had also been rendered almost foreigners in their homeland by the massive Bengali immigration.

But then the key word is "almost" unlike those in Bangladesh the Tripura tribals did not have to seek shelter in another country. In fact, today he is turning round to fight for his rights. That is another story.

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today as pharmacists observed a one-day token strike. amateur gem show in Tucson, Ariz. In February. A P.

Dhaka begins taking refugees back

By ZAGLUL A. CHOWDHURY
The Times of India News Service
DHAKA, November 24.

Bangladesh has begun the process of taking back 6,500 tribal Chakma refugees from India as the first step towards repatriation of these tribal people.

However, Dhaka differs with India over the number of refugees in India and says the figure could be around 10,000 in comparison to a higher Indian figure.

Announcing this, the foreign secretary, Mr. Fakhuruddin Ahmed, told newsmen here today, that India had earlier said 17,000 Chakmas had entered its territory but the Bangladesh government has so far cleared 6,500 after verifications.

Asked about the alleged Indian assistance to the insurgents in the hill tract area, particularly in the wake of recent upsurge in their activities, the foreign secretary said they had no evidence to prove it.

When a newsman pointed out that the foreign minister, a few months ago,

had implied Indian involvement and whether Dhaka still believed it, Mr. Ahmed said the matter was under constant watch.

When a correspondent drew his attention to the reports published in the Indian press about the arrest and killing of Bangladesh nationals on the Indo-Pakistan border, the foreign secretary said that they had no such positive information.

Mr. Ahmed said the outcome of the Bangladesh summit was "remarkable". This would take the SAARC towards the cherished goal of regional co-operation.

The foreign secretary also referred to the talks between the Bangladesh President, Gen H. M. Ershad and the Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi.

"We have requested India to expedite the handing over of Tin Bigha. Foreign ministers of Bangladesh, India and Nepal will discuss the river water issue when they meet in Kathmandu in connection with the opening of the SAARC secretariat," he said.

Bajaj awards

NEW DELHI, November 24 (PTI):
The prestigious Jannalal Bajaj awards

B.Ed students in a quandary

AURANGABAD, November 24 (UNI): The future of nearly 400 students belonging to private-run B.Ed colleges in the region will be in jeopardy as the Maharashtra University has denied them permission to appear for their respective examinations.

The decision not to grant permission to these students was taken by a university executive body meeting recently, presided over by the chancellor, Mr. Bhagatsingh Rajurkar.

The university allows only a limited number of students to appear for the examinations every year. However, some of the private colleges, including those not recognised by the university, had given admissions to a number of students, taking donations from them. They are now seeking the university permission to let them appear for the examinations.

A committee, headed by Dr. N. Dole, appointed to look into the matter, had recommended that the students be allowed to appear for the examinations after paying the dues of the colleges.

The university, however, did not accept the recommendation. The date for submitting the examination application is December 6. The students have formed an action committee.

For Bangladesh, the departure of the Chakmas is always useful. As confronted with the running revolt by a section of them, owing allegiance to the late Manabendra Larma, Dhaka has come to look upon every tribal as a trouble maker. Dhaka also insists that New Delhi has been encouraging the Larma group and from its own point of view perhaps considered it to be only proper that India should "pay for the consequences of its own act."

Such a heavy influx would have caused considerable tension in any other Indian state but not in Tripura. The tiny north-eastern state merely sees this as history repeating itself as 70 per cent of its present population came as refugees from the erstwhile East Pakistan in 1947 when the country was partitioned. They have a natural sympathy for fresh arrivals from across the border as do the Chakma tribals of Tripura itself who are to be found in fair number in the Amarpur and Sabrum sub-divisions where the four camps are located.

So far the camp inmates have shown a considerable sense of discipline