

Historic March

Bangabandhu Tells U Thant

Bangalees Facing Genocide

Media Flashback

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman said on Wednesday that ordering the withdrawal of UN personnel, Secretary General U Thant has taken cognizance of the hazards to life in Bangladesh.

But Mujib said — U Thant's responsibilities did not end merely with the evacuation of UN personnel; for "the threat is that of genocide and denial of fundamental human rights guaranteed by the UN Charter to the 75m people of Bangladesh."

Sheikh Mujib said, "those who thought they could impose their will upon us by force stand exposed before the world."

"The people of Bangladesh will realize their right to live as the free citizens of a free country. The people's will reign supreme in Bangladesh," he asserted.

Following is the statement: "The people's will reign supreme in Bangladesh. All branches of the govt. including

the Secretariat, government and semi-government agencies, courts, railways and ports, are complying with the directives issued by us in the name of the people of Bangladesh. Those who thought they could impose their will upon us by force stand exposed before the world. They have failed to justify, either before world opinion or to the right-thinking people of West Pakistan, the naked use of force against innocent unarmed people.

"Yet the reckless anti-people forces are persisting in their desperate course. The military build-up continues. Arms and military personnel are being brought in everyday from West Pakistan. Curfews are being imposed in Rangpur and Rajshahi.

"Not content with building-up these forces of physical destruction, the ruling coterie is conspiring to ruin the economy of Bangladesh. This is for the vindictive purpose of aggravating the economic plight of the people, which is pitiable enough after 23 years of colonial exploitation."

Compiled by Iftokhar Ahmed Chowdhury and Ekram Kabir from the Pakistan Observer of Dhaka, Mar. 11, 1971.

"An atmosphere of terror has been created and thereby foreign experts are being intimidated to evacuate from Bangladesh. By persisting in the military build-up, a state of emergency is sought to be maintained during which all development work and even relief and rehabilitation work is still being brought to a standstill. Even till now no account has been received from generous donors of cyclone relief, despite repeated demands for publication.

"Today the Secretary General of the United Nations, U Thant, has authorized the evacuation of UN personnel and has thus taken cognizance of the hazards to life and property to which the military forces are exposing those who are in Bangladesh. Indeed he should realise that his responsibilities do not end merely with the evacuation of UN personnel; for the threat that is now held out is that of genocide and the denial of the fundamental human rights guaranteed by the UN Charter to the 75m people of Bangladesh.

"The people of Bangladesh remain determined to fight to the last and to make every sacrifice in order to fulfil their goal of emancipation and to realise their right to live as the free citizens of a free country. Their high morale should be an inspiration to those who love freedom all over the world. The people of Bangladesh know that history is on their side, no matter what weapons of destruction it can muster, can deny them ultimate victory."

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Curfew in Rajshahi Lifted

CURFEW has been lifted from Rajshahi town from Wednesday night, according to

reports reaching Dacca, reports PPI.

Earlier, the authorities there ordered that curfew will be clamped down for eight hours every night from Tuesday till further order.

The General Secretary of All Pakistan Awami League, Mr A H M Kamruzzaman, urged upon the authorities on Tuesday night to withdraw the curfew order and "to leave the maintenance of law and order exclusively to the police, assisted, if necessary, by Awami League volunteers."

Foreign Countries Urged to Support Struggle

THE Working Committee of Bangla Jatiya League (Ataur Rahman group) in a meeting on Wednesday called upon Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to declare an interim national government for Bangladesh.

The meeting which was held on Wednesday at the party office was presided over by party chief Mr Ataur Rahman Khan. The meeting also urged upon the governments of all the foreign countries to lend their support to the struggle of the 75 million people of Bangladesh.

Oath of Office Issue B.A. Siddiqy's Stand Lauded

SIXTEEN advocates of the Dacca High Court in a joint statement to the press on Wednesday lauded the stand of Mr Justice B A Siddiqy, the Chief Justice of the High Court of East Pakistan, in not administering oath of office to the erstwhile Governor designate of the province.

Justice Badruddin Ahmed Siddiqy refused to swear-in Lt. Gen. Tikka Khan as Governor of East Pakistan, following the general's arrival in Dhaka on Mar. 7.



Women volunteers of the Chattra Union prepare for battle ahead.

Asghar Khan Says

Air Marshal (Rtd) Asghar Khan said in Dhaka on Wednesday that political settlement alone could resolve current crisis that has beset the nation. In an interview with Eastern News Agency (ENA) prior to his departure for Karachi this afternoon, the retired Air Marshal maintained that the use of force could not work against the unwilling people.

About the stand taken by Sheikh Mujib, whom he met thrice during his current week-long visit, the Air Marshal asserted that the Awami League chief had taken a correct and logical stand and Mujib could not do any thing else under the existing situation.

He said the situation in East Pakistan was changing too fast and whatever was valid two weeks ago was no longer valid today and similarly whatever was applicable today might not be applicable tomorrow.

Asghar Khan noted with distress that already great damage had been caused and further delay would bring about irreparable loss.

Referring to the president's forthcoming visit to East Pakistan, Asghar Khan said that the president would be in a position to realise the gravity of the situation after his personal experience.

March 10, 1971

More Media Flashback

Compiled by Iftokhar Ahmed Chowdhury and Ekram Kabir from the Ittefaq, Mar. 11, 1971.

Statement of the Independent Bengal Student Action Committee

YESTERDAY (Wednesday): Leaders of the Independent Bengal Students Action Committee (IBSAC), Nur-e-Alam Siddiqui, ASM Abdul Rab, Shajahan Shiraj and Abdul Guddus Makhani issued the following statement:

a) We have come to learn that money is being extorted in the name of the Action Committee in various parts of Dhaka. People are being asked to contact Sgt. Zahurul Huq Hall (formerly Iqbal Hall) if such cases of money collection comes to light. b) Volunteers are being ordered to release journalists, ordinary citizens and people carrying Action Committee pass, during searching of cars at night. c) It is our request to all Bengalee soldiers, members of the East Pakistan Rifles (EPR), Police, Intelligence Branch, Criminal Investigation Department etc that they should not cooperate with the colonial government of Pakistan. d) We request all patriotic citizens of Bangladesh to extend all kinds of help to freedom fighters engaged in the struggle for liberation. If any Bengalee person or Bengalee-owned organisation opposes or puts obstacles in the path of the liberation struggle, then they would be severely punished. e) We have learnt that despite availability of seats on Pakistani and foreign airlines, Bengalees are not being allowed to come to Bangladesh. We have also learnt that, with the active help of Pakistani military forces, non-Bengalees resident in Bangladesh are being repatriated free of cost and with a special pass and car arranged by the army. We want to make it, absolutely clear that, if Bengalees are continued to be prevented from coming to Bangladesh, then we shall erect barricades on the Airport Road and refuse to allow any non-Bengalee from flying off to Pakistan.

Wali Khan says...

KARACHI, Mar 10: Chief of the National Awami Party (NAP) Khan Abdul Wali Khan said during a discussion with journalists last night, "if we don't go to the assembly, then it will have to be understood that we are indirectly supporting those forces which do not want to transfer power to the elected representatives of the people."

Before leaving Karachi for Peshawar last night, he also said, "We have to frame a constitution first, so that power can be transferred."

Wali Khan said that he would be going to Dhaka on Mar 13 to hold talks with Awami League chief Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to discuss the latest situation in the country. He said that newly-elected assembly member Gaus Bux Bejeerjo would be going to Dhaka with him. — PPI

Decision to Comply with Sheikh Mujib's Orders

CLASS II employees of Bangladesh's Civil Service (circle officers, Revenue) have decided to comply with orders given by Awami League President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, it was learnt yesterday.

According to reports, the decision to follow the instructions of the majority leader in parliament was taken at a recent meeting of Circle Officers of the Development and Revenue Division.

Sheikh Mujib Talks to Foreign Journalist

AWAMI League chief Sheikh Mujibur Rahman yesterday (Wednesday) said in Dhaka, that 70 million Bengalees are today totally aware of their rights and determined to realise those rights at any cost.

Mujib made the comments to a representative of The Times newspaper of London



yesterday, during an interview at his Dharmadmi residence.

He told the visiting journalist, "Bengalees have shed plenty of blood. They want an end to this shedding of blood now."

Explaining the reasons behind the current popular uprising, the Awami League chief said that the 70 million Bengalees want to achieve political and economic emancipation, and they are not ready to compromise on this matter.

He also said that for the past 23 years, the ruling class has exploited Bangladesh as a colony. Bengalees want an end to this colonial rule and oppression, Mujib said.

He said that the handloom and other cottage industries of Bangladesh were destroyed in order to protect the market of the West Pakistani capitalists and industrialists.

Mujib said the Bengalees had no power to undertake any development programme in Bangladesh, including solution to the food problem.

"The people of this country are leading an inhuman and unbearable existence," Bangabandhu said.

He asked the journalist to project to the world the true picture of the people of this country.

Daultana Urges Yahya to Talk to Mujib

LAHORE, March 10 — Mian Mumtaz Muhammad Khan Daultana, President of Pakistan Muslim League (Council) suggested here yesterday that the president should go to Dacca at once and meet Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to remove misunderstanding and discuss all issues as exhaustively and intimately with Sheikh as he had already done with Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

Feature

Asian Nations Adopt Environment Strategy For Region

Wirasak Salayakanond writes from Bangkok

A diverse group of countries have adopted a remarkably common stand on development and environment.

Thirty-two Asia-Pacific countries recently adopted a Regional Strategy for Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development in a meeting organised by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

The bottom line: The region is to adopt measures to achieve economic development without harming the environment.

A top ESCAP official described the unanimous adoption of the strategy as a watershed development in environment protection which reflected "unity in diversity" among countries stretching from Iran to the Cook Islands, from Australia to China.

"The most encouraging factor in respect of the strategy was that it was accepted unanimously by a very diverse group of countries as well as 16 UN agencies," Dr K F Jalal told Depthnews Science. Dr Jalal is the chief of ESCAP's Division of Industry, Human Settlements and Environment.

The strategy was adopted amid diverse standpoints, as noted by a declaration made by senior government officials who attended the meeting:

"Although each country has its own distinctive environmental problems, many of these have the same root causes such as widespread poverty. Even when root causes are not shared among countries, their eradication often still requires international coordination."

"We were indeed concerned that the participants would have vastly different thinking, influenced by their own national priorities," Dr Jalal recalled. "Yet we decided that the issue was of paramount importance to every single participant and I am glad we reached a unanimous decision on the Strategy."

The "Regional Strategy for Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development" was first discussed at a ministerial-level conference on environment and development held last October. The draft strategy was endorsed by the Bangkok meeting.

In early April, the Regional Strategy was formally endorsed by ESCAP government ministers during its annual session

in Seoul, South Korea. It will be sent as the Asia-Pacific region's input for the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) to be held in Brazil in 1992.

It was agreed that ESCAP's regional input to the UNCED next year would be a three-part paper dealing with regional issues and concerns. It will include an abstract of the "State of the Environment Report 1990," an ESCAP ministerial report, as well as the Regional Strategy itself.

ESCAP member countries were of one mind that the Strategy should spawn an action plan with mechanisms for implementation. No sooner was this proposed when the question of financing came out.

The meeting also noted the need for funding. Budget has been allocated only under four specific areas in the Global Environmental Facility. They cover the ozone layer, biodiversity, fresh water and climate change.

The application of remote sensing technology should also look into environmental management. There should be demonstration projects which would translate environment management concepts into practice. Environmentally sound farming practices should also be promoted.

— Depthnews Science

Environment

Elephants Threatened As World Reconsiders Ivory Ban

by Mark Richardson

THE lives of thousands of elephants could come back onto the international market this March.

They will be slaughtered if the world decides to slacken its international ban on ivory trading at the annual Convention on Endangered Species (CITES), to be held in Kyoto, Japan.

The outright ban was imposed at the convention three years ago following massive public concern that elephants faced imminent extinction. During the previous decade, a million African elephants — two-thirds of the species — had been killed for their tusks.

On March 2, five African countries — Zimbabwe, South Africa, Malawi, Botswana and Namibia — will ask at CITES for the total ban to be lifted so they can trade once again in ivory.

Smugglers and traders will be listening closely to the outcome, knowing that legalisation will push ivory's price back to profitable levels and free up their hoarded warehouses of tusks.

Environmental pressure groups, including the London-based Environmental Investigation Agency, will be listening just as closely, anxious to learn if years of exhaustive research and investigation will be jeopardised.

The EIA spent two-and-a-half years investigating the illegality of the complex trade, sometimes using subterfuge and outright deception to track the ivory smugglers who abused the industry's legal loopholes.

Film of Chinese workers carving tonnes of illicit ivory, for example, was shot secretly in Dubai by a cameraman hiding in a packing case.

Then in 1989, after travelling across the world gathering evidence on paper and film, the EIA presented its proof to Tanzania's director of wildlife.

The evidence showed that four countries — Singapore, Taiwan, Burundi, and the United Arab Emirates — had officially imported \$50 million of Tanzanian ivory since 1986. Tanzania had records showing exports worth only \$2 million.

"So we could show that his country had been ripped off for \$48 million," recalls Allan Thornton, the EIA's founder.

"And that's just what we could prove. That was really useful for him to persuade his government that something

should be done to close the trade."

The Tanzanian government proposed an end to the trade at the 1989 meeting of CITES. Once Thornton's agency had released film of butchered elephants to the world's media, Tanzania gained support from enough countries to force the ban. Twenty African nations backed the proposal.

"It was electrifying, politically," says Thornton. "You'd always had the rich, white conservationists who hang around Nairobi, or Johannesburg, or Harare, telling the rest of the world that black Africa didn't want a ban on the ivory trade."

"The more we talked to Africans, the more we found they'd always wanted a ban. They could see it was the logical thing to do to protect elephants."

The convention's outcome in Japan next month is far from certain. Support from 75 of the 112 voting countries is required for the proposal to succeed, but many nations have refused to decide how they will vote until they hear the argument's two valid sides.

"There's been a lot of propaganda from both sides," says David Bowles of the EIA. "It's been like a shadow boxing match, with both sides assessing each other's strengths and weaknesses, and neither side giving anything away."

Until all their elephants are wiped out, there are still incentives for governments to stay in the ivory trade. Last June, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Botswana, Namibia and Zambia, which refused to take a position in the 1989 debate, agreed to set up an ivory marketing cartel based in Gaborone.

Botswana's Minister for Commerce and Industry, Ponatshego Keikilwe, told the British Parliament last year that his country needs to cull elephants to prevent overgrazing during the dry season, when they migrate across borders to Botswana's northern forests and threaten the habitat of other species.

"It should be recognised," he said, "that local people living next to elephants often see them as pests which cause damage to crops and property, which is a very different perception to that of the tourist from London."

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stonal poachers and smugglers who sell to the international market, where an average-sized elephant tusk once fetched up to \$1,000. Since all ivory trading became illegal, the reward has dropped to perhaps a quarter of that price.

Pressure on countries to maintain the ban is great, as is the potential for bad publicity.

A spokesman for the Zimbabwean High Commission in London refused to confirm his government's on-record

president Frederick Chiluba wants to save his country's elephants from persistent poaching and took the advice of local game wardens, announcing a change in policy this year.

"It's fairly safe to say that Zambia does not want to be involved in the ivory business again," said Edward Nickerson of the Zambian High Commission in London. "The enormous elephant population we once had can now be practically counted on your hands, and we're anxious to keep what we've got."

Perhaps anticipating a lifting of the ban, poachers have increased activity in Zimbabwe, South Africa and Malawi, whose governments want trade restrictions eased. But poaching has decreased in other southern African countries.

"The best data that comes from Kenya and Tanzania," Thornton says, "shows that before the ban, they were losing thousands of elephants each year. Since the ban, they've hardly lost any. The change is dramatic."

— Gemini News

Reviewing the ivory ban

The business of killing elephants

Decreases in poaching since 1989:

- Cameroon
- Central African Republic
- Ethiopia
- Gabon
- Kenya
- Somalia
- Tanzania
- Uganda

I hear you're cutting down our forest to make room for cattle for your burger bars

That's right

But don't you realise the importance of our forest?

I sure do! How on earth can I graze cattle with all those damn trees in the way?