

Historic March

March 11, 1971



Student Leaders Warn Against Move to Unload Arms-ship Swat

THE four leaders of the Independent Bengal Student Action Committee (IBSAC), Nur-e-Alam Siddiqui, Shah-jahan Shiraj, A.S.M. Abdur Rab and Abdul Quddus Makhan said in a statement issued to the press Wednesday last, "We have come to learn from reliable sources that a weapon-carrying ship named M.N. Swat has dropped anchor at jetty No. 17 of Chittagong Port.

"Port workers were told to unload those war material from the ship, but the heroic workers have refused to do so.

"At the same time, 30 wagons have also been readied outside the port area to transport these weapons to Pakistani forces stationed in various parts of Bangladesh. Preparation is now going on to use military personnel to unload these weapons.

"These weapons are being brought over for use against the unarmed people of independent Bengal. We are alerting the people of Bangladesh in this connection, and we are also issuing a strong warning against the supply of these weapons.

"In addition, it has been learnt that another five ships, carrying arms and troops, will arrive at Chittagong soon.

"We are calling on people to prevent these arms and troops from being landed in Bangladesh. Any attempt to force the workers to unload these ships will also be resisted."

Biplobi Chhatra Union Gives Programme

The East Bengal Biplobi Chhatra Union has issued the following programme of action in order to achieve the aim of independence for East Bengal and establishment of a workers, peasants and working people's state:

"Propaganda to publicise the goal of independence has to be launched in various areas without delay. The people have to be motivated about a long-term resistance; small gatherings instead of big meetings

will have to be emphasised; formation of militant activist cells in every neighbourhood".

The programme called on all units to get rid of dependence and take up independence initiatives.

Curfew in Rangpur Goes

CURFEW had been lifted from Rangpur town on Wednesday night, according to delayed reports reaching in Dacca on Thursday, reports PPI.

The report said that the curfew which was in force mainly at nights for the last one week, had been lifted on Wednesday night.

Police, Ansars and AL volunteers patrolled the district town during the Wednesday night, the report added.

Time Running out Fast, Says Asghar

KARACHI, March 11: Air Marshal Asghar Khan warned his countrymen that time was running out and something must be done quickly to save the country from disintegration, reports PPI.

He said he believed there was hardly five or six day left for action. He added that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was the last link left in the rapidly loosening chain of East-West unity. "If he is also demolished, we cannot say what will happen," he said.

Retired Air Marshal said that East Wing was sitting on a volcano and if power was not transferred to the majority party immediately, even Mujib would not be able to keep the country united.

Addressing a press conference on his return from Dacca this morning, the Tehrik-i-Istiqal chief said this statement of his was a hard reality and must in no case be dismissed lightly.

From what he saw and felt during his week-long stay in Dacca, he could say with considerable amount of confidence that the AL President was under great pressure to declare independence but he had so

far been acting with extreme moderation and was still trying to control the extremists.

Asghar Khan said East Pakistanis genuinely felt insulted and humiliated over the manner in which the National Assembly session was postponed and the subsequent events that followed.

Giving his own impressions of the East Wing situation, the Tehrik chief observed that Mujib was in fact the de facto ruler of that wing.

He said since March 6 the two wings of the country had already been separated mentally, and the physical link too was about to be broken.

Civil servants, including the top brass and the secretaries were receiving and acting on orders from the AL chief. Bitterness, not without reason, was at its height, he said.

Conspirators Warned

Mr Mohammad Mahmood, former General Secretary of the All Pakistan Awami League in Kairpur on Wednesday warned the industrialists, big businessmen, zamindars and jagirdars of the country of serious consequences for their conspiracy against the people, reports ENA.

He said that the country was not founded for 22 families. They were enjoying at the cost of the people. The people would soon realise whether the AL or the PPP was the real friend of the oppressed people of Pakistan.

As soon as the AL took full control of the affairs of the country it would immediately start revolutionising the economic order in the country.

He said that the AL is preparing a black list of the industrialists, big businessmen, zamindars and jagirdars and the vested interest and when it came into power, they would be brought to book.

Media Flashback

(Compiled by Ekram Kabir from the Pakistan Observer and Sanghad of Mar. 11, 1971.)

UN Experts Should Stay, Says Mujib

SHEIKH MUJIBUR RAHMAN on Thursday conveyed his desire to Mr. K. Wolff, Deputy Resident Representative of the UNDP, that the UN experts working in East Pakistan should stay here as long as possible, reports ENA.

Mr K Wolff on Thursday called on the AL President at his Dhanmondi residence and had a long discussion on the stay of UN personnel in East Pakistan and the AL chief's Wednesday statement drawing the attention of UN Secretary General U Thant to the "genocide" in East Pakistan. He said the meeting took place at

AL chief's request. Mr Wolff said that Sheikh Mujibur expressed his concern over the "alleged military buildup" in East Pakistan and explained his statement to the UN Secretary General. Mr Wolff reiterated his opinion that the situation in East Pakistan, so far as UN personnel were concerned, was not such that they should leave immediately.

It will be recalled that U Thant directed the UN Deputy Resident Representative in Dacca to take necessary decisions on the matter of evacuation of the UN experts.



Artists at the forefront of freedom struggle

Movement Has Reached Unprecedented Heights, Says Tajuddin Ahmed

MR Tajuddin Ahmed, General-Secretary of the East Pakistan Awami League, in a statement last night said the "people's movement has attained unprecedented heights."

This, he said, had been possible "because every person in his own sphere has taken it as his sacred duty to implement, in spirit and in substance, all the directives of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman issued in the name of the people of Bangladesh."

Mr Tajuddin added: "The high sense of responsibility displayed by people in all walks of life is a source of inspiration to all. While the struggle must continue, we have to exert all our energies to maximize production and to keep our economy in full gear."

"We are determined to foil the conspiracy of the vested interests and the anti-people forces to destroy our economy and to inflict suffering on our hungry masses. In order to do so, our people must be prepared to give of their best in all spheres of production." "They must at the same time be prepared to practise a high degree of austerity. All those engaged in economic activities must subject themselves to rigorous discipline in every respect for the victory of the people's cause."

More exemptions

He said keeping the above objectives in view the following further exemptions and clarifications are being issued:

Banks: In supersession of all previous exemptions and clarifications relating to banks it is provided as follows:

- (1) Banks shall remain open for banking operations from 9 am to 12 noon and for administrative purposes till 4 p.m. (with the usual recess periods). But on Fridays and Saturdays banks shall remain open for banking operations from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. and for administrative purposes till 12-30 p.m. Balancing of books and all usual working practices shall be observed in respect of permitted transactions.

(2) Banks shall carry on their operations including receiving deposits of any amount, inter-bank clearances without any limit within Bangladesh and inter-bank transfers within Bangladesh and drawings by T.T or mail transfers within East Pakistan subject to the following restrictions:

(a) Payments of wages and salaries provided all pay bills duly certified by a representative of the workers organisation concerned or the wage register is presented along with the cheque.

(b) Bonafide personal drawings of up to Rs. 1,000 in a week.

(c) Payment for purchases of industrial raw materials including sugarcane for sugar mills, jute for jute mills, etc.

The statement said payment up to a limit of Rs. 10,000 in a week for a bonafide commercial purpose, including purchase of all commodities was required by consumers in Bangladesh. This amount may be drawn in cash or by cash draft. But before making payments the bank shall satisfy itself from past records that the drawer is a bonafide industrial or commercial organisation or trader and the amount being drawn is not in excess of his normal average drawings in a week during the past one year.

(3) The crossed cheques and crossed demand drafts may be issued and deposited in any account within Bangladesh.

(4) Teleprinter service operated by the banking system within Bangladesh shall resume operation.

(5) The National Bank of Pakistan shall continue its entire discounting function throughout Bangladesh in order to enable other banks to meet their demands.

(6) Foreign travellers cheques may be encashed by an authorised dealer.

(7) Diplomats may freely operate their accounts and foreign nationals may operate their foreign exchange accounts.

(8) There shall be no operation of lockers.

(9) No remittances shall be effected outside Bangladesh either through the State Bank or otherwise.

He said the State Bank shall observe the same banking and office hours as other banks and shall remain open for the purpose of taking all necessary steps for the smooth functioning of the banking system in Bangladesh within the framework of the restrictions defined above.

A K Khan Urges Yahya to Meet Mujib's Demands

CHITTAGONG, March 11: Mr A K Khan, former Central Minister, yesterday said that President Yahya Khan should without any further delay, discuss with the majority leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman the ways and means of early transfer of power to the people's elected representative's, reports AIP.

"Otherwise," he added "the fate of the National Assembly as well as of the nation is uncertain."

In a statement issued here, he said the four-point demand of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman made at the Ramna Race Course meeting last Sunday, deserve every patriotic Pakistani's support and acceptance by the government.

Service Associations Support Mujib

THE Federation of Central and Provincial Services Associations and Professional Societies' Steering Committee, in an emergency meeting at the Dhaka University Club on Wednesday, adopted a resolution endorsing solidarity of its members with the people of Bangladesh. The committee also put on record its "unflinching faith" in the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the majority party leader in the National Assembly. The Federation President Dr Innas Ali presided over the meeting.

Feature

Development

Woman of Steel Changes the Green Debate

by Atiya Singh

Environmentalist Medha Patkar has fought for seven years to stop the building of a giant dam in India. She is not likely to succeed, but in leading public agitation she has given the ecological movement in her country a new direction. For that, she has just been awarded the 1991 Right Livelihood Award, known as the alternative Nobel Prize. Gemini News Service reports on the fighter they call a woman of steel.

The Sardar Sarovar Dam is being built in Gujarat, the artificial reservoir created by it would uproot large populations from their age-old homes environment, in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.

When completed the Narmada would submerge 250 villages, the homes and fields of around 70,000 tribal peoples and 11,000 hectares of forest.

Thousands of agitators, led by Patkar, under the banner of the Save Narmada Campaign, seek to stop the Sardar Sarovar being built.

They say rich croplands and pristine forests will be inundated and irreparable ecological damage done to the area. Patkar says: "Thousands of evicted farmers and tribals will never get proper compensation. Lives will be affected, a lifestyle will disappear. In the name of development greed has transcended need."

The people are not against development schemes. They

want small indigenous water conservation schemes, not mammoth projects.

The pro-dam lobby is a powerful coalition of rich farmers, politicians, industrial-

ists and contractors. But for Patkar it would have steamrollered all opposition. Says one environmentalist: "She's no ordinary woman. She believes in the righteousness of



MEDHA PATKAR
FIGHTS AGAINST DAMS

her cause. She cannot be bought or bent. She can only be broken."

Patkar learnt militancy from her parents who are trade unionists. She has a master's degree in social work from the prestigious Tata Institute of Social Sciences. In 1989, she gave up doctoral studies on slum dwellers to work with the tribals.

"My heart is with the tribals," says Patkar. She realises the hardships that will be involved if 70,000 are uprooted. She tried to explain to them. But even those to be affected did not listen. The tribals did not trust her. She was an outsider and an alien.

Patkar persisted. She started living with them, learnt their language and won their love and trust. She knitted 120 disparate organisations of tribals and non-tribals — to be affected by the Narmada — into one movement.

Says former environment minister Maneka Gandhi: "She has singlehandedly kept the movement going even when there was no hope of success."

Last year the protest movement organised a long march to focus national and international attention. Police stopped the marchers, who camped for days, shouted slogans, sang Bhujans (religious songs) and went home.

"The marchers taught us brotherhood," recalls Patkar. "They taught us to share." They carried their grain with them and the farmers brought their tractors and fed all the tribals.

The tribals and villagers are still determined to stop the dam. The World Bank, which had pledged \$450 million, has withheld the money until re- settlement plans are completed for those who would be displaced.

— Gemini News

(Atiya Singh is an Indian freelance journalist specialising in human interest features and political and economic affairs.)

Ancient Cattle Breed Back into Favour

By Norman Sowerby

WHEN European ranchers first came to southern Africa they brought their own breeds of cattle with them, arguing that they were larger than the local variety, produced more beef and calvea earlier.

Their disdain for local breeds resembled that which the owner of a pedigree dog might have towards a mongrel. Now, however, something of a turnaround seems to be in progress and the popularity of the local breed, known as Nguni, is at an all-time high among cattle ranchers. And for very good reasons.

The Nguni is named after the people thought to have trekked south over several centuries from pre-Saharan North Africa.

In the area now known as Algeria, rock paintings dating back 7,000 years show a well-watered grassland, an abundance of game and herds of domesticated cattle thought to be forerunners of the Nguni breed.

The cattle often have humps above the shoulder-blades, long, often lyre-shaped horns, and irregularly patterned hides of white and black, red or brown shades.

Theories of southern migration by the Nguni people include the supposition that Nguni cattle developed their major characteristics on the slow trek south. These characteristics were developed for survival in the new, tougher environment.

The cattle have the ability to walk long distances, endure extreme heat and survive in areas where there might be as much as 10 kms between grazing and water.

Other characteristics are equally important. The Nguni have developed a thick, loose skin and short glossy coat which play an important part in heat dissipation and heat resistance.

The thick skin is much more difficult for ticks and parasites to penetrate than is the thinner skin of exotic breeds in Africa.

Cattle sensitive to heat — the thin-skinned long-haired breeds — keep to the shade of the trees, which is exactly where the ticks they are so vulnerable also congregate. The Nguni can forage on regardless of the heat.

The thick-skinned Nguni also bleeds freely when bitten or injured. In such thick-skinned animals a plug is formed almost immediately and healing is thus very quick. The breed's long, mobile

tail is effective in flicking off flies and ticks, and its long curved horns can repel an attack even by lions.

In addition, the Nguni is a browsing as well as a grazing animal, which means it can survive in drought conditions on leaves, twigs, pods and even tree bark.

It is true that the traditional Nguni is not as large as breeds

of 400 beasts.

Reilly says Mkhaya may be the only place in Africa where visitors can see black and white rhino in the same area on the same day.

An although visitors generally come to see the "glamour game", economically it is the cattle which are the mainstay of Mkhaya.

Says Reilly: "The remark-

able thing about Mkhaya nature reserve is that its Nguni cattle, having themselves been snatched from the threshold of extinction only 13 years ago, are now almost wholly responsible for financing the purchase and upkeep of rhinos and elephants which have found refuge at Mkhaya."

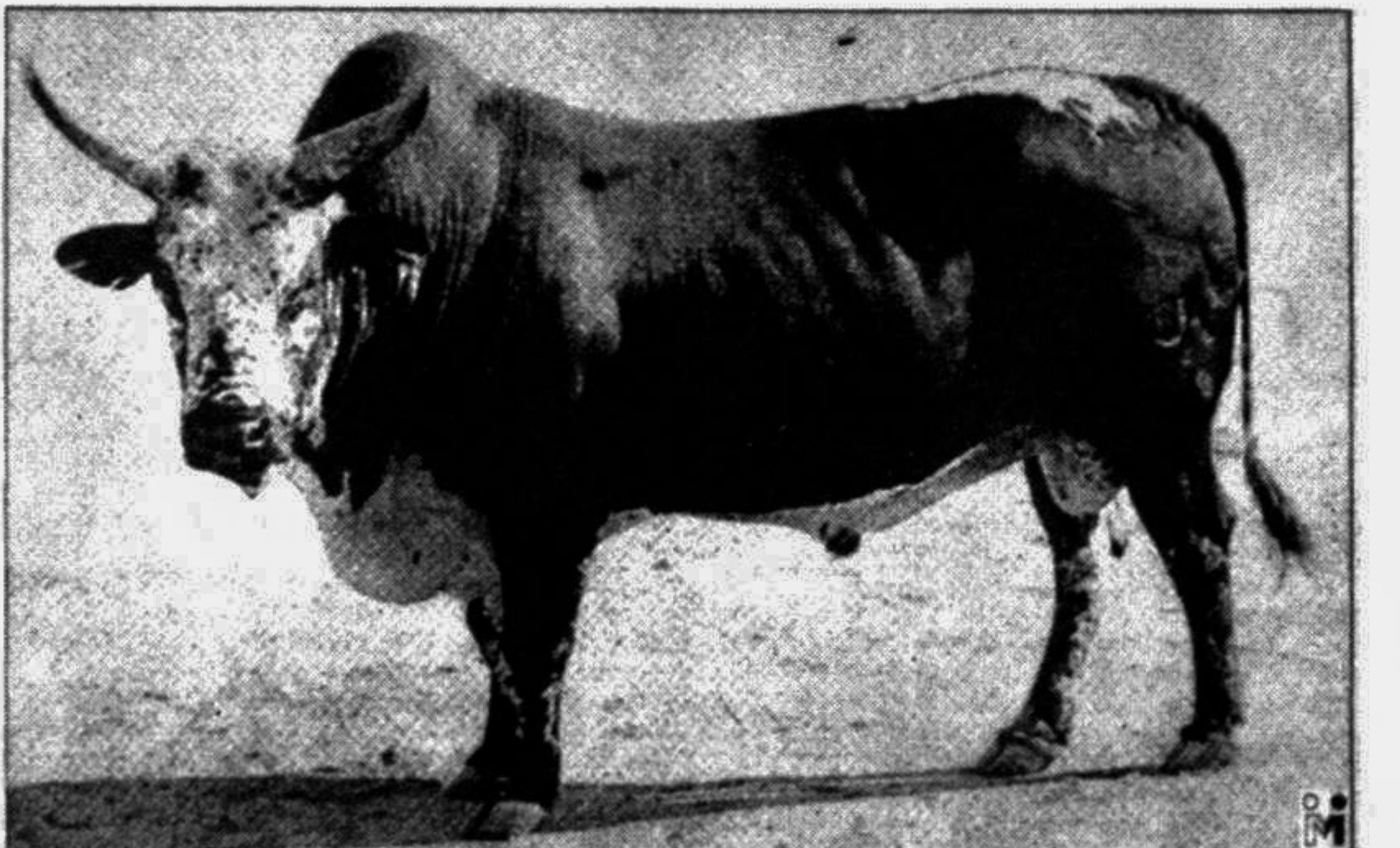
In Swaziland, early concern that the Nguni breed was vanishing was expressed 15 years ago by the then monarch, King Sobhuza.

Sobhuza, who came to the throne in 1922, was a traditionalist. He saw the impending disappearance of the Nguni as a blow to Swazi culture, tradition and heritage, since the ownership of cattle is as important in Swazi society as it is elsewhere in Africa.

Reilly, who was responsible for setting up the country's

first wildlife sanctuary on a farm he donated to the National Trust, took up Sobhuza's concern, impressed with the practical arguments about the animal's suitability for the environment and its profitability.

Behind him now is an army of smallholders dedicated to the breed.



Battle over the Narmada mega-project

