

Historic March

March 19, 1971



People Clash with Army Troops at Joydevpur: Three Killed

Media Flashback

Compiled by **Ezzam Kabir, Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury and Dipak Kumar Karmakar**

CURFEW was imposed on Friday evening in Joydevpur town, about 22 miles from Dacca following exchange of the fire between the local people and Army personnel resulting in casualties to both sides, it was officially stated in Dacca on Friday night, reports APP.

Bangladesh are ready to make any sacrifice to attain their rights. The streets, lanes of Bangladesh are reddened with martyrs' blood. Today the soil of Joydevpur is moistened with Bengali blood. He talks about the concerned quarter. How much more blood you want! How much more blood can quench your thirst? We want peace, but you use violence, but Bangladesh cannot be held in check by force.

—The Daily Ittefaq Saturday, March 20.

Advisers Meet after Mujib-Yahya Talks

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and President Yahya had their third round of closed-door talks in President Bhavan on Friday afternoon. The talks which lasted one and a half hours was followed by a meeting of Mujib's and the president's advisers in the same evening.

Sheikh Mujib, aided by a team of six party leaders would meet the president and his advisers on Saturday at 10 in the morning.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, after his talks with the president, briefing local and foreign newsmen at his house, said that he had discussed for one and a half hours the political situation of the country. Stating that the talks would continue he said, "It is not an easy matter. It requires sufficient time".

He told the newsmen that after the meeting of advisers Friday evening he would meet the president for further talks on Saturday morning at 10 along with his party leaders. The president would also have his own advisers in the talks, he added.

He said that in his Saturday morning's talks with the president he would be accompanied by Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, Kamruzzaman, Mansoor Ali, Leader of the 'Bengal Assembly', Khondakar Mushtaq Ahmed, and Dr. Kamal Hossain.

When a newsmen wanted to know what would be the formula on the basis of which the adviser-level meeting would be held, he said, "My advisers will

discuss this (Friday) evening on what formula and how they will proceed."

He told a questioner that in Friday morning's talks only 'two of us' (President and Sheikh) were there.

When a newsmen wanted to know who would be the president's advisers, he said, "The president knows it".

He replied in the negative when he was asked if his talks with the president was on the basis of a formula or anything written.

When a newsmen asked him if his four-point demand had come up in the talks, Mujib observed, "My stand is absolutely clear before the world". He added that every body knew what for 'our people' struggled and sacrificed their lives.

He parried a question if his party would participate in the National Assembly session scheduled to begin on March 25.

"I hope for the best and prepare myself for the worst" was his reply to a newsmen who wanted to know if Mujib

had been satisfied with his talks with the president. Sheikh Mujib said that any political leader from West Pakistan coming to meet him was welcomed. "I am ready to welcome any political leader from West Pakistan. My door is open" he said in reply to a question if Mr. Bhutto was among those who were welcomed.

A foreign journalist, who wanted to know when his talks with the president would conclude, was advised by SMR to wait and see. He asked the foreign journalists from distant countries to "kindly see my wonderful land and unfortunate people" while they stayed there. —The Pakistan Observer, March 20, 1971.

Action Committee Protest Firing

THE Swadhin Bangla Students Central Action Committee brought out a procession in the evening protesting the killing of unarmed people at Joydevpur. They also held a street corner meeting in front of the New Market, the meeting was addressed among others, by Mr. Abdul Qudus Makhani and Sheikh Shahidul Islam, leaders of Chhatra League. —The Pakistan Observer, March 20, 1971.

To send back ship with food

CHITTAGONG, Mar 18 (APP): Awami League President Jahur Ahmmed MPA of Chittagong proper, has demanded that the President of Pakistan should immediately send back the ship with food to Chittagong. The ship, bound for Chittagong, was recently taken back to Karachi at the middle of the journey.

He also demanded the assurance of not taken back ships with food grains bound for Chittagong and Chalna in future.

—Purbadesh Saturday, March 20

Father of a martyr

Last 2nd March, Shaheed Ahsanullah (Ratan) was killed by the military. Sorrow-stricken father of the martyr, Mohammed Abdul Haqim, in a newspaper, appealed to the people to continue the struggle until the independence of the country is attained.

Mr Haqim said in his passionate statement, "The glori-

ous death of my young son has revealed to me and my countrymen the true meaning of patriotism. I call upon the people, participating in the movement, to go ahead boldly."

—The Daily Ittefaq Saturday, March 20

Soviet Envoy
SOVIET Consul-General in Dacca, Petrov Vaitin called on Awami League Chief Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at latter's Dhanmondi residence on Friday evening and remained with Sheikh for sometime, reports PPI.

'The Dialogue Was Nothing But a Farce'

By **Asiuzzaman**



Mizan Chowdhury

"I respect Mujib for his foresight and uncompromising attitude for the country's independence," Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, the acting general secretary of the then East Pakistan Awami League, said.

Talking to The Daily Star about his role in organising the liberation movement, during the historic month of March 1971, Mizan Chowdhury said that March was an eventful month and as he lost his diary when his house was burnt, he had forgotten many things.

Sheikh Mujib was the defacto President of Bangladesh from March 7 onwards following his historic address at the Race Course Maidan.

"A complete non-cooperation movement was started from that day and everything came to a halt," Chowdhury, who was in Dhaka until March 23, said.

"We (Tajuddin, Syed Nazrul, myself and four others) prepared the March 7 speech and I was on the dais of that grand rally," Chowdhury who is currently the acting chairman of the Jatiya Party, said adding that "we basically worked as a messenger of Mujib."

He said that on March 23 he was assigned to make arrangements to keep all the three ferries (Katchpur, Meghna and Daudkandi) off the near side of Dhaka so that the leaders could easily flee if the talks failed.

"I arranged accordingly, but Sheikh Mujib refused to go on hiding saying that the people would be the victim of Pakistan army's atrocities when they searched for him."

Claiming himself as the silent witness to three genera-

tions, he said that the West Pakistan rulers forced them to go for independence.

They (West Pakistan rulers) vitiated the mind of the people of this region by some villainous acts and made the people conscious about their activities.

First of all, they played an autocratic role with the Six Point demands and entangled the leaders of East Pakistan into the 'Agartala Sarajitra Mami' (Agartala Conspiracy Case).

"I have forgotten all the Six Points, but the message of the movement was simple autonomy for this region," he said. "Six Point demanded that all authorities except defence and foreign affairs should be given to the provincial government."

Moreover it included formation of a para-militia of its own for the region of East Pakistan.

The idea of forming separate militia came following the

Indo-Pak war in 1965 when East Pakistan was completely unprotected.

"The security of West Pakistan is the security of the East", the then West Pakistan rulers boastfully said, he reminded.

Finally in 1970, they refused to hand over power to a party elected with sweeping majority. The Awami League had won 160 seats out of 162.

"All this idiotic behaviour by the West Pakistani rulers forced us to go for liberation war," Chowdhury added.

He said that until the last moment the Pak rulers betrayed the people of the eastern region.

Offering a dialogue with Sheikh Mujib, they started airlifting plain clothes West Pakistan troops and shipment of arms and ammunition.

"We knew that the dialogue was nothing but a farce, although the leaders attended it," he said adding that "Zulfikar Ali Bhutto who was the opposition leader of the West Pakistan, had engineered the failure of the talks."

He (Bhutto) cautioned the West rulers that there would be two Pakistans if the assembly sat.

Most of the leaders left Dhaka on March 24 when the dialogue ended without any outcome, but all were prepared to organise the liberation war.

"I heard the bang of heavy cannon firing from my home town of Chandpur on that black night (March 25)," he said adding that "the Biharis were more brutal than the Pak army at that time."

He said that he crossed into India with the late Abdul Malek Ukil on March 31.



Continuous movement: Young men protest army killings

Feature

In Praise of Humble Vegetables

by **A S M Nurunnabi**

HUMAN species is known to have subsisted for thousands of years on a diet high in vegetable content and low in animal products. The human body was perhaps designed to handle plant-based food. Our teeth, for example, are structured more for grinding than for tearing meat. And we have long, convoluted intestinal tracts designed for the slow digestion of fibrous plant food, not the carnivores' short, straighter tracts that quickly process animal flesh. Human biology is thus adapted to achieve optimum function on a diet low in fat, high in fibre and rich in micro-nutrients.

Various groups of researchers have demonstrated that it would be wrong to imagine that food of animal origin is always of high nutritive value and that those obtained from plants are secondary in importance. Of course, it is true that meat is a good source of protein, both in quality and quantity. It has a well-balanced amino-acid profile, is rich in essential amino acids and efficiently utilized by the human body. Meat is a good source not only of protein but also of minerals

and vitamins. Its iron content is highly bio-available and superior to that of plants. Vitamin-12 occurs in meat but not in plants.

As economic development proceeds, there is a natural desire to enjoy a diet containing more meat. Unfortunately, according to available evidence, the incidence of chronic diseases is likely to increase in the wake of such a dietary change. Some components of meat are associated with undesirable effects on health. It is reasonably certain that meat, as a source of saturated fat and cholesterol, is an important factor in the development of some diseases, such as atherosclerosis and cancer.

As recently as 1970s, protein deficiency was widely thought to be the fundamental cause of global malnutrition. Acting on this assumption, considerable efforts were made to increase people's intake of "quality" protein from

animal sources. It is now being recognized that even in totally vegetarian diets containing a diversity of food items, plant sources tend to complement one another in amino acid supply. Although the total amount of protein in the diet may need to be higher in vegetarian diets to provide an adequate intake of all the amino acids, the usual concentrations of proteins in these diets are sufficient.

In both affluent and developing countries, the dietary pattern associated with an increasing risk of chronic diseases is characterized by high consumption of sugar-rich food, and of those meat and other animal products rich in saturated fat and dietary cholesterol. On the other hand, vegetarians have been consistently shown to have lower blood pressure than non-vegetarians, regardless of age, weight and pulse rate. This observation suggests that some

component of animal products, possibly protein or fat, may have an adverse effect on blood pressure in well-nourished populations.

Evidence indicates that a diet that is low in total and saturated fat, high in plant food, especially green and yellow vegetables and citrus fruits, and low in alcohol and salt-pickled, smoked and salt-preserved food is consistent with a low risk of many of the major types of cancers of the world-to-day, including cancer of the colon, prostate, breast, stomach, lung and oesophagus. The mechanisms underlying these effects are not fully understood.

The present objective views, taking into consideration the merits and limitations on each side, seem to be as follows. There is no reason why meat should not be eaten in moderate amounts, but its excessive consumption or the eating of meat products that have not been properly processed can be harmful. Meat is not essential in the composition of balanced diet.

It is important to establish a sound nutritional policy with guidelines and comprehensive education programmes in order to challenge the widely held view that more meat means better health. We can live without meat even though it is an excellent source of nutrients. Mixtures of cereals, pulses, vegetables and some animal food, in adequate amounts can supply all the dietary requirements.

The excessive consumption of meat is an unhealthy feature of modern life, with its origins in the developed countries.

The trend of current thinking on the issue is somewhat on the following lines:

- * plant foods provide protein as well as numerous vitamins and minerals;
- * foods of animal origin are no longer viewed as dominant items in our optimum healthy diet;
- * consumption of saturated fat contributes far more to the total blood cholesterol levels than does dietary cholesterol;
- * both saturated fat and dietary cholesterol are abundant in fatty products of animal origin;
- * fat intake, and especially saturated fat, is also linked to the risks of several types of cancers;
- * energy-dense "rich food" is not "best" food in a healthy diet.



The virtue of vegetables is catching the imagination of the more conscious fast. So the items' prominence in the kitchen.

Health

India Reviving Grandma's Herbal Medicines

by **Prakash Chandra**

GRANDMA'S remedies for common ailments, and even for the more difficult ones, are getting more than just a cursory look from Indian health authorities.

And Professor Ranjit Roy Chowdhary, emeritus scientist at the prestigious National Institute of Immunology in this city and who has just written a book on herbal medicines, said one of his greatest sources of information on medicinal plants was grandmothers.

"They (grandmothers) are a treasure-house of information..." and their proven remedies are not only without toxic side-effects but are also cost-saving, according to the Professor. Grandmothers rely on ingredients that are usually available at home. "No one, thus has to pay the big bills charged by doctors and chemists. Besides, you don't have to rush to see a doctor every time."

But the new interest in Indian traditional remedies may have to be a race against time as both the "experts" — like grandmothers — and the medicinal plants seem to be endangered species.

Environmental degradation has destroyed millions of herbal trees and plants throughout the world. Scientists are not certain how many hundreds of varieties of herbal plants are now extinct. India, like the rest of the world, is losing many of its medicinal plants as loggers and property developers exploit forest resources.

The breakup of traditional family structures primarily as a result of increased urbanisation has made grandmothers a rare species in many Indian households. The traditional family is breaking up, at least in the urban areas, and, as we are losing our grandmother, we are also in danger of forgetting the traditional cures which they provided for common ailments," Professor Chowdhary lamented.

Many experts believe that if herbal medicine is practised on a larger scale, big savings for the national budget can be achieved.

According to Dr Ishwar, a practitioner of naturopathy (the treatment of disease without drugs and usually involving diet, exercise, massage, etc) in Faridabad, some 40 miles from Delhi, said, "If

It herbal medicines are promoted in an organised fashion, it will be a big boon for nearly three-fourths of complaints reported in primary clinics are common ailments.

herbal medicines are promoted in an organised fashion, it will be a big boon to the middle class."

"For nearly 75 per cent of the complaints that are reported in the country's primary clinics are common ailments like cold, diarrhea, constipation, headache and backache. These can be cured by using herbal medicines rather than expensive antibiotics. Larger budgets for medicines and health care staff are being required by primary health clinics. Some health experts believe these budgets can be reduced if villagers did not run to these clinics everytime they are suffering from a common ailment. The fact is, many rural people have abandoned grandmother's remedies in favour of pills and tablets.

Professor Chowdhary, whose book on herbal medicine will soon be published by the World Health Organisation (WHO), is suggesting that India's health ministry make a scientific study of medicinal herbs and ask its staff to prescribe these at primary health clinics.

India has more than 100,000 clinics which require the services of doctors. However, many medical graduates do not want to work in the villages. Herbal medicines could be dispensed by village

health workers. Professor Chowdhary wants medical experts to prepare a list of common ailments and the known herbal cures for them. Herbs which are available in each district should be identified and prescribed to patients.

Dr HK Mishra, an adviser at the Union Health Ministry on the Indian Ayurveda and Sidha systems of medicine, has doubts, however, about government's willingness to promote traditional medicine. Having also suggested the use of herbal medicine for common ailments, Dr Mishra noted that traditional medicine remains of little interest to the government which had allocated less than 4 per cent of the national health budget for it.

Only two states — Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat — have assigned doctors for Ayurvedic medicine, a traditional Hindu system of medicine based on naturopathy and homeopathy. The latter system treats a disease by the administration of minute doses of remedy that would in healthy persons produce symptoms of the disease treated.

Dr Mishra said the current state of affairs was ironic as he pointed out that the West is beginning to turn to herbal medicine while India is in danger of losing its herbal plants. He added that developing countries in Africa and

Latin America are beginning to organise traditional systems of medicine.

Critics say that India's neglect of its plant and herbal resources is reflected by the fact that American scientists were the ones who studied and developed the insect-repellent properties of the Neem tree, which grows almost everywhere in India.

Dr Mishra said India has already lost some 50 medicinal plants as the country's forests are being cut down.

Professor Chowdhary said tribal communities, who have also a long tradition of herbal medicine, now have to walk much farther — sometimes up to 50 miles — to collect the herbs they need.

Although government has started to take steps to promote herbal medicine — like a project for the cultivation of rare species of medicinal plants — experts feel much more needs to be done.

Dr Mishra has pleaded for a well-developed system for the teaching of traditional Indian medical practices. The system should involve hospitals, pharmaceutical and drug-testing laboratories.

Professor Chowdhary says the initial steps to promote traditional medicine should begin at primary health clinics which should have their own herbal gardens.

—Depthnews Asia

CANCER'S SEVEN WARNING SIGNALS

1. Change in bowel or bladder habits
2. A sore that does not heal
3. Unusual bleeding or discharge
4. Thickening or lump in breast or elsewhere
5. Indigestion or difficulty in swallowing
6. Obvious change in wart or mole
7. Nagging cough or hoarseness

If you have a warning signal, see your doctor.