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19TH DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF ALHAJ MOHD. SABDER ALI

FOUNDER MANAGING DIRECTOR OF
AGRABAD HOTELS LIMITED

AN EXTRAORDINARY GENIUS IN INDUSTRY HAJI MOHAMMAD SABDER ALI

Advocate Azizul Hoq Chowdhury

Haji Mohammad Sabder Ali is among the top luminaries of a few distinct industrialists who have played memorably bold and farsighted roles in the socio-economic development of Bangladesh through their multiple industrial endeavours. The courage and farsight that he has shown in the field of export trade and specially in hotel industry, will remain a special source of inspiration for our future generations.

Late Sabder Ali was born in village Jaipara under Dohar thana of Dhaka district. His academic career began at Jaipara High School. His professional career started in Calcutta as a businessman. Soon after the partition in 1947 he wound up his business in Calcutta and came to Chittagong. Although initiating mainly as an importer and twine trader he emerged, later, as an industrialist establishing Asia's famous Leather

processing industry — Monty Tannery — in 1961. At the end of his illustrious life he was owner of eight large industrial and commercial establishments.

Through his latest contribution Hotel Agrabad late Sabder Ali earned Special recognition as the organiser of tourism and hotel industry. In spite of having seven more industrial establishments to his credit, he is more popular among the public as the founder of Hotel Agrabad.

It is important to mark that to build up so many multiple enterprises could have been possible within his short life, just because of his dedication, honesty, tireless industriousness, perseverance and a trader's farsight and expertise. And because of this he has acquired an honourable and glorious

place among that rare few Bengali traders.

Hotel Agrabad is the first international standard hotel in the queen of the east port city, Chittagong. This has not only enhanced the elegance of port and commercial city Chittagong, but this Hotel Agrabad is also representing Chittagong at home and abroad. It earns foreign exchange on one hand; and, on the other receiving, international awards, has brought in rare honour and recognition for country and the nation.

Late Sabder Ali single handedly took up the costly and risky endeavour of establishing an international standard hotel at a time and situation when top businessmen-industrialists of the then Pakistan could not even imagine it. Perhaps in the interest of the country's economic progress, ultimately the government would have to think of establishing this international standard hotel.

The difference in thought and idea, out look and farsight with his contemporary other Bengali businessman led to creation by him of Hotel Agrabad, the milestone of pride, for the then Bengali traders.

Although the social worker, promoter of education, God-fearing Sabder Ali was born in Dohar thana of Dhaka district, but he did love Chittagong. That's why he resided in Chittagong and did his business there. However, he did not absolutely forget his birth place—Jaipara where he set up a girls' high school under his patronage.

The financial and other charity to Kadam Mobarak Muslim Orphanage in Chittagong

initiated by him during his life time is still continuing. Haji Sabder Ali was born in 1330 BS and died in 1381 BS, leading a life of only 51 years. This span of life is obviously short for a rare enterprising personality like him. Had he not died an immature death 19 years from now, undoubtedly more achievements would have been added to the economic development of the country, including the development of the neglected tourism industry.

Late Haji Sabder Ali is no more today, but his undiminished contributions are there to imbibe the future generations in the struggle for development and national progress, for decades to come.

On this day of his sad demise, the solemn 10th of Muharram, it is our utmost prayer to Almighty Allah — let him rest in peace in Heaven.



ALHAJ MOHD. SABDER ALI

Feature

Health

Role of potato in changing dietary habits

by Dr Mujibur Rahman Khan
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DESPITE large gains in food production in the past, Bangladesh has been importing food continuously because of relatively greater increase in requirements due to addition of new mouths, every year. Future prospect of production of required amount of food is not bright either, because the country is quite prone to natural calamities such as flood, drought, cyclones, etc. On top is her already existing low-technology base and socio-economic standing of its people. Even five per cent of her people cannot get adequate food and nutrition to maintain their normal health. Per capita intake of calorie has been reduced to 1985 kcal in 1985 from 2094 kcal in 1975 while that of protein to 45.5 gm from 58.4 gm during the same period. There exists a deficiency of protein, vit. A vit. B2 (Riboflavin) and vit. C in the food of about 30%, 60%, and 93% of the population respectively.

Potato is a versatile food and one of the three leading staple food crops of the world. It can substitute rice to a great extent. In the light of existing nutritional as well as food deficit situation in the country, the role of potato in changing the dietary habits and also reducing dependence on cereals cannot be overemphasised.

Dietary habits of people

An average Bangladeshi eats three meals per day. Rice alone provides about 75% of calories, equivalent to some 13.6 Oz of rice per capita per day. Wheat provides about 10% and the remaining 15% of the calories are supplied by different food groups. Starchy roots and sugars together supply some 6% of the calories. The important protein foods — pulses, animals products and fish provide 5% of the calories (FAO Food Balance Sheet, 1972-74). Particular characteristics of the family diet vary with season, socio-economic status, geographic and ecological area. Review of consumption behaviour and food availability of people suggest not only a quantitative but also qualitative deterioration.

The protein/calorie ratio of the overall food supply is 8.9% and that of fat/calorie is 6%, which are too low. Millions do not have enough balanced food to eat. Protein can not function normally in calorie deficit condition, because in such condition protein must be

used to overcome the calorie deficiency. Thus protein will not be available for vital functions such as body maintenance and growth.

The small stature (nutritional stunting, besides being genetically controlled) of Bangladesh population (70-75% of the international norms) attests to the long term deficiencies of the diet. The result of too much deficiency or nutrients in the diet are obvious either in the form of impaired physical and mental growth, blindness, or even death (especially in case of children) in extreme cases.

Food constituent

(per hectare)
Fresh weight (tons) 15.0
Dry weight (tons) 3.8
Calorie (Lac Kcal) 14.5
Carbohydrate (kg) 3391
Protein (kg) 239
Fat (kg) 14
Total Minerals (kg) 89
Calcium (g) 1500
Phosphorus (g) 6003
Iron (g) 105
Carotene (mg) 3601
Thiamine (g) 15
Riboflavin (g) 104
Niacin (g) 180
Vitamin C (g) 2551

Thus, in vicious cycle of food and nutrient deficit conditions, the country is not in a position to produce healthy citizens to lead her towards progress and prosperity.

Need for change in dietary habits

Food production and its availability have effects on the consumption pattern and food habits of the people. There is a prevalent thinking that food deficiency, which mainly means cereal deficiency, is an artificial deficiency, because from balanced diet point of view, the country can be said to be self-sufficient, if not surplus, in cereal production. Many prevalent diseases are due to deficiency in nutrient intake which is also the direct consequence of prevalent food habits.

Food intake is an essential biological need for human survival. This need has contributed much to shape the human society in respect of activities particularly relating to

food production, distribution and utilization. But food habits of an individual or a population are much more than a mere biological impulse. Sticking to a particular food-habit may be detrimental for a nation especially when sudden scarcity of certain food item occurs.

Potato can be instrumental to changing food habits in parts of the world — particularly in Bangladesh, where cereal is eaten in abundance and somewhat too large in quantity without sufficient consumption of vegetables, fruits, meat, milk or eggs. Potato can serve as a kind of compromise be-

rice and wheat in terms of its contribution to various food constituents per hectare can be easily judged from the following table.

There is a general notion that consumption of potato leads to increased body weight; but in fact, potato has got the lowest percentage of fat (0.1%) among all the major staple food crops such as maize (3.4%), wheat (1.5%),

barley (1.3%), rice (0.5%), etc. Potato deserves special reference for its unique quality of having an appreciable quantity of vit-C (17 mg/100 gm). Daily consumption of 200-250 gm of potato is enough to meet the entire daily requirement of vit-C (40 mg). Many will wonder if equal weights of potato, mango and pomegranate contain about equal quantity of vit-C and by less than doubling the weight of potato, it is possible to reach the vitamin C contents of tomato, orange, grapefruit and litchi. Intake of minerals is much higher through a potato dish than through a rice or wheat dish. Potato dish gives much more calcium than a rice dish. High fibre content is an additional benefit for potato dish.

Potato recipes for changing dietary habits

Potato is a versatile food, because it can be used in various forms both as staple and vegetables. Ahmed and Kamal (1980) prescribed 69 recipes of potato of various forms: soups, salads, baked potatoes,

stuffed dishes, mashed potatoes, crisp potatoes, fried potatoes, sour potatoes, potato-meat, stews, potato mixed vegetables, potato-fish, snacks, desserts and sweets. Every recipe has its own speciality in composition and use of ingredients. Different ingredients such as onion, flour butter, milk, egg, sugar, pepper & other spices, different vegetables and fruits etc are used with potato in right amount and proportion for the preparation of a particular recipe. Potato dishes also vary in dignity based on style of preparation. It is a diet of the poorest

problem. In the table below it has been shown that potato has the potential capacity to produce more food per unit area in unit time as compared with rice and wheat.

Production of balanced food including tubers vegetables, pulses, milk, meat and eggs may be the ultimate solution towards attaining self-sufficiency in food.

Bangladesh has been meeting the food deficiency by importing food grains worth thousands of dollars every year. Potato can play a vital role in reducing dependence on food

the residual moisture of the soil under properly mulched condition.

Change in dietary habits can also help attain self-sufficiency in food grains. As per FAO 1979, production of rice in Bangladesh was 18.90 million tons. Which is higher than that of Thailand (17 MT); Japan (16 OMT), Burma (10.5 MT), Philippines (6.91 MT) and USA (6.76 MT). The population of these countries as on 1985 are (in millions): 100.6; 51.7; 120.8; 54.7; 239.3 respectively. A Japanese takes 380 gm of cereal and 550 gm of vegetables, roots and tubers in his total diet of 1153 gm; whereas a Bangladeshi national takes, 528 gm of cereals and only 104 gm of vegetables,

Crop	Yield (kg/ha)	Crop duration (day)	Protein Prod. (kg/ha/day)	Calorie prod. (10 Kcal/ha/day)
Potato	10737	125	1.4	35
Rice	2052	150	0.8	34
Wheat	1441	120	1.3	41

of the poor to the richest of the rich in the society. No wonder, a person with large number of diverse qualities is jokingly called "Gool Alu" (Round Potato) in Bengali. This testifies the place of potato in every dish of Bangladeshi society. Various recipes of potatoes can thus be helpful towards a systematic change in their dietary habits.

Potato-based diets for attaining self-sufficiency

In a predominantly agrarian society and rice-economy, Bangladesh had been striving for attaining food autarky — particularly self-sufficiency in cereal production from the sixties. On the top of already existing low irrigation and production technology, occurrence of sudden floods, droughts and pests attacks or diseases account for the failure to reach the production target. In Bangladesh, cultivable land is very scarce. It is not possible to increase the area of any crop without affecting others crops. Additional production has to come from vertical expansion. Potato fits very well in this scheme. In the future, we may be compelled to adopt potato as a supplementary staple food. If that happens, we will have to take up a much bigger programme of production. Potato has therefore a very considerable prospect for expansion in Bangladesh depending on the strategy adopted for solving the food

grains. Per capita availability of major food items such as food grains, potato and vegetables decreased steadily over time. However, it is satisfying to note that availability of potato and vegetables increased gradually in the recent past and potato : 47.5-16 in 1984/85 from 41.8-16 in 1980/81 and vegetables 49.7-16 from the production target of potato in 1989/90 has been set at 1.7 million tons out of an area of 0.3 million acres. The desirable area of potato cultivation is 0.42 million acres. This envisages an output of about 2.40 million tons with the existing average yield level (10-13 t/ha). With advance technology and better management practices, potato average yield can be increased to 20-25 t/ha in Bangladesh condition. That means that with both expansion of area and better yield (say, 20 t/ha), an estimated quantity of about 3.4 million tons of potatoes can be produced in Bangladesh (which is double of targeted production in 1989/90). The calorie value of the estimated quantity of potato is about half of that obtained from the imported quantity of food grains.

There is virtually no scope to further increase rice area and level of production of cereals in Bangladesh as production period of major cereals are prone to vulnerable natural calamities and cereal technology and extension services has almost reached its saturation point. On the other hand, potato can grow well even with

roots and tubers in a total diet of 762 gm. A Bangladeshi consumes more cereals even from the promising rice growing countries like Thailand (412 gm) and Philippines (342 gm). Percentage of vegetables, roots and tubers in the total diet composition is the lowest among some countries, in Bangladesh (14%) and the highest in Malaysia (72%); followed by Japan/UK (48%), Sri Lanka (26%); Philippines (25%) and Thailand (24%). Japan and USA with more population but less rice production than Bangladesh, export rice, with less than half of the population and about one third of rice production.

Our neighbours Burma and Thailand have been exporting rice since long time. Thus, dietary habits largely determine the demand and requirement of a particular food item. By simply reducing the intake of cereals to the level of Philippines, Japan or Thailand, cereal requirement in Bangladesh can be reduced by 25 to 35 per cent, which is about 5 to 7 million tons, based on 1989/90 requirement at food grain (20.7 m tons). This quantity is again 2 to 2.5 times of the import volume of 1984-85 (2.6 mt). Thus, by only changing our dietary habits presently based on heavy dependence on cereals to moderate/less dependence on it, we could be a rice surplus nation. A day will come when we could as well export rice to other countries if we learn to consume it less.

Celery Reduces Blood Pressure

A chemical in celery lowers blood pressure and cholesterol, confirming centuries of oriental folk medicine, researchers at the University of Chicago concluded.

A small amount of the chemical, equivalent to about four stalks of the green vegetable a day for humans, was found to lower the blood pressure in laboratory rats by 12 to 14 per cent and to lower cholesterol by about seven per cent.

The researchers cautioned against eating celery to reduce blood pressure because it contains sodium which raises blood pressure and has other chemicals that could be toxic if consumed in excess.

The research was presented at a meeting of the American Federation for Clinical Research in Baltimore. William Elliott and Quang Le discovered a small amount of

3-n-butyl phthalide found in celery relaxed the muscles lining the arteries that regulate blood pressure and allowed the vessels to dilate.

Celery and celery oil have been used in oriental folk medicine for centuries to treat disorders of the body's circulatory system and hypertension. But celery oil is made up of more than 30 known chemicals and only recently was the chemical responsible for its benefits identified.

Their research was sparked by Le's father, who was diagnosed with hypertension and decided to eat a quarter pound (.125 kg) of celery a day instead of reducing his salt consumption. His blood pressure dropped and stayed down for about a month.

"While it may have helped Mr Le, eating more celery is not the recommended way to lower blood pressure," Elliott said. — Reuter