

The Terry Fox Run for Cancer Research Fighting Cancer in Bangladesh

by Ali Sarkar
Last week, we told you about Terry Fox. In 1980, this courageous Canadian ran 5,500 kilometres -- a distance equal from Dhaka to Mecca -- to raise money for cancer research. Terry had an artificial leg because of bone cancer. But he wanted to run from one side of Canada to the other. It was an extraordinary journey. Half way across the country, Terry had to stop. His cancer returned and spread to his lungs. Terry died the next year. But, his dream sparked a worldwide movement. The Terry Fox run for Cancer Research is now held every year in 35 countries and had raised more than Tk 402 crore since it began 13 years ago. On November 4, the first Terry Fox Run will be held in Bangladesh. More than a thousand school children in Dhaka will take part. The funds to be raised will go to the Bangladesh Cancer Society. In this second of a three part series, we tell you about the fight against cancer in Bangladesh.



lighted with the proposal and will pay due attention to it.

HERE is a Bangla phrase that goes 'cancer has no answer'. It highlights a belief in our country that cancer is incurable and sure to result in a painful death. It is a fear that strikes many people. It is estimated that some 200,000 people develop cancer each year in Bangladesh and that cancer kills 150,000 others. With the rapid growth in population the number of cancer patients in the country is also rising, according to medical professionals. In Bangladesh, about 45 per cent of male patients suffer from mouth and throat cancer, while 35 per cent of female patients suffer from cervical and breast cancer. Surgery, radio therapy and chemotherapy are the three most common

treatments. But the country's facilities are not adequate to meet the demand. The cost of treatment is also very high, which few of our people can afford. It is estimated that about 800,000 Bangladeshis are now suffering from some form of cancer and the bulk of patients are poor. Yet, there is hope. A survey conducted by the Bangladesh Cancer Society shows that about one-third of cancer cases can be checked and about one-third can be cured. In order to ward off fatalistic attitudes in the minds of most people, a handful of professionals, armed largely with sincerity and dedication, have initiated the gigantic task of creating awareness about cancer. A large body of senior med-

ical professionals who have been treating cancer in Bangladesh for many years have formed the Bangladesh Cancer Society, with a primary aim of reducing mortality rates. To do this, they have embarked upon a series of activities worth commending. The society is growing fast, drawing more and more professionals who volunteer to serve in the fight against cancer. Since its inception, the Society has been publishing booklets, leaflets and posters with warnings about the disease and how to lead a healthier lifestyle to prevent cancer. The messages are simple: give up smoking, cut down on fatty foods and keep active. These materials have reached many cities and towns. Organizers now want to spread the message to remote parts of the country as well.

The Society also wants to dispel unnecessary fears about cancer and to assist the Government of Bangladesh to detect and treat the disease. A 'cancer quiz' programme has been created to promote awareness among students. Some members of the Society visit different schools to answer questions from young people and to advise them on steps they can take to protect themselves from cancer. The programme has generated much enthusiasm, covering major colleges and high schools in the capital city. The Society has a plan to extend this programme to other areas of the country as well.

The Society is also running a free cancer clinic for detection of cancer. It has requested that the National Curricula and Text Book Board include a cancer related chapter in its 9th or 10th grade text book. The NCTB is said to be de-

velopment countries, such as Bangladesh, will eradicate epidemics, but by the turn of the century will also become more susceptible to modern-day illnesses, such as heart disease and cancer. Now is the time to begin the task of taking on cancer and to develop resources to provide people with adequate and innovative cancer treatment.

That is why the Terry Fox Run for Cancer Research is so important. It can be a key step in raising awareness about cancer, while also providing important start-up money for research. Terry called his run across Canada a 'Marathon of Hope'. Now the marathon comes to Bangladesh, bringing hope to many cancer patients. Thus the legacy initiated by a young, brave crusader in a far away country finds a home in our country. It is our responsibility to cherish and kindly the light that Terry Fox lit when he began his 'Marathon of Hope' so many years ago.

Next week: Cancer research and the progress being made



I look nice to read in the media that at last our government has decided to update some bottomless-basket legislation to protect the neglected, unsanitary and unhealthy consumers from the clutches of the unethical business men and practices. What the consumers see is a complete sell-out in the opposite camp; a booming one-way business. The best investment bond, the naughty say, is 'corruption bond', earning more interest than the WES bond provides (16 per cent).

Political and media noise will only create the sound of silence, unless the updated regulatory process is practically and strictly enforced. This is asking a lot, as our political leaders, on both sides of the fence, shed crocodile tears on non-issues, and give birth to still-born schemes. The humble shrimp has no tears to speak of, and tears of the sentimental kind cause the fury of the round-the-year-overflooding, not only of the rivers, but also of the streets.

Before the process, comes the processing; with the powerful close-fisted business lobby influencing the more powerful bureaucrats, providing complimentary tickets to the spectator consumers. The consumer industry is a spectator sport, full of googlies, but no sixers. Play cricket, and no bouncers please at the unprotected consumers.

Also, street bonfire is unlikely, as consumer-interest is not a lively political issue to attract the right type of activists (who will found the refreshment packets?). Anyway, these are academic issues. Let the consumer point his *nalish-water-gun* at some of his visible targets:

- Stop fiscal cheating on price marking on the product package. Two examples: The printed price is eight taka on a packet of cigarettes. It is re-tailed at ten taka, and sold by the wholesalers at nine taka plus, as the latter do not get enough commission, to enable the retailer to sell to the consumer at the printed price. The manufacturer evades (may be lakhs of taka) excise duty annually by pointing to the printed retail price. A packet

of biscuits is marked at six taka, but sold at eight, due to 'transportation' cost from the factory located at a western border town. Then why print the price?

- Print the full postal address on the packet, so that the consumer can complain directly to the manufacturer. In the majority of cases, the mailing address is missing. Also the list of ingredients used in an edible product is not printed in most cases. The net weight is also not indicated all the time.
- The warranty, guarantee, and the BSI notices are absent. Are the inspectors carrying out their duties, or doing 'business'?
- Why no deterrent disciplinary action against regulatory staff for dereliction of duty? Transfer of staff after three years has been a standard practice in administration for hundred of years all over the world.
- Introduce strict inspection of factory inputs and outputs.

Nip it in the bud. The consumers' dilemma: presume, assume, or consume? friend, philosopher and guide stepped in, not on my neck, but on my side, as an angel sent by God. He just got me transferred from the news desk and put me in the editorial desk. What a change! Is it a dream? Definitely not, but unbelievable. And only a person like Abul Mansur Ahmed could do this, none else. He had realised that although as a translator I was not doing well, but as an essayist I was not bad as he had already published some of my articles in the post editorial columns. One particular article which he appreciated very much was titled, 'Who are behind the wars?' In this article I pinpointed that it is neither the people, nor the army *Jawans*, nor even the army generals were responsible for waging wars. They were just victims of circumstances. The real 'merchants of death' were the manufacturers of war materials, arms and ammunitions. They were the 'war barons.'

I don't know exactly where to begin or how to begin when I think of a great and inimitable character, a charming personality like Mr. Abul Mansur Ahmad. He was a brilliant journalist, an astounding litterateur and a born politician. To the subcontinent, and particularly to his own country, he occupies an enviable position with due grace and grandeur. But to me, an humble admirer, he was "a friend, philosopher and guide" in the true sense of expression. I will restrict this 'piece', just to show my personal relationship with him, however brief it might have been. I came into contact with this great personality at three different stages in three different capacities: First, as a political worker when I was Vice President of the Calcutta Islamia College Union in the forties. He was then deeply involved in the All Bengal Muslim League as its Publicity Secretary. Secondly, I came more and more closer to him when he was the Chief Editor of then newly published prestigious Bengali daily *Ittehad*. Under his patronage, I joined this new daily as a practically 'novice' sub-editor. Perhaps he wanted me to be a journal-

DOWN THE MEMORY LANE Recalling an Inimitable Personality by AMM Shahabuddin

ist. Unfortunately, I couldn't come up to his expectation. Lastly, I met him as an information officer when he became Pakistan's Central Minister for Commerce and Industries. But at all these three stages, I didn't find any change in his attitude towards life, the same old humble pattern he followed. Now, I add here a few anecdotes about my sweet-bitter experiences, first as a sub-editor, and later as an asst. editor of *Ittehad* in which my 'big boss' had the last laugh. My trouble began when I started working as a sub-editor. As I had already stated, I was a 'novice' in true sense. I did not have the slightest knowledge of journalistic translation from English to Bengali, not to speak of knowing any journalistic jargons. So when, on the first day, I was given an English piece, I was torn from the teleprinter for

FEMINE charms often override masculine laws. Good man often is infatuated by bad woman and vice versa. But when a king who theoretically can do no wrong goes philandering, the casualty is his taste which crosses personal boundary to reach national arena. The nation shares the disgrace in the same way as it shares national joy with the king in the vanguard. A leader's private life permeates the public life. As his heart accepts anything repugnant to social or public taste he sways his good sense, his good judgment and his sense of public decency. He loses ethical mandate to admonish or administer.

Yet many women of bewitching beauty and grace were wooed by Rajas and Maharajas, rulers and royalties, politicians and potentates in all ages. Alauddin Khiljee went to Deccan not with a scheduled plan to fall in love. But there he met Devela Devi, the queen, whose husband he killed. The queen did not resist Alauddin, rather accepted him as the pawn on the chess-board of power which every woman of ambition pursues to gratify her passions. Alauddin brought her to Delhi and married Devela made and married political decisions which Alauddin could hardly parry. Then comes the British imperial love which cast off earthly power, the crown and sceptre, like a handful of dust and upheld love above all earthly gifts which this world can yield. Private love clashed with state interest. Edward besmeared himself with the stigma but kept state above personal scandal. He renounced. Lady Simpson who enthralled Edward VIII did not, however, enjoy or exercise earthly power. But her abiding love for Edward or vice versa flowed incessantly. She

goes parallel with Mamtaz Mahal, the empress of Shahjahan, to whom the worldly joy or happiness consisted only in the man she loved. She did not pick money, nor accepted gratification. Providence rewarded her. On her mortal remains shines a mausoleum which this world has not seen before, or ever. Socially reputed to be bad but liked by many who mattered and who paid heavy prices, Theodora was one. Her last anchorage was with Byzantine Emperor Justinian. Daughter of a bear trainer, observes a historian, she grew up in the odour of a circus, became an actress and a prostitute, shocked and delighted Constantinople with her lewd pantomimes. She was accused of practising abortion with repeated success but ultimately had to give birth to an illegitimate child. She later became mistress of Hecebolus, a rich Syrian, who later deserted her. For the time being she was not seen in Alexandria. Again she reappeared in Constantinople as a poor but honest woman. She used to earn leaving by spinning wool. Emperor Justinian met her, instantly fell in love with her, first made her his mistress, then promoted to wife and then was elevated to a queen. Theodora became a matron whose imperial chastity no one impugned. She was avid of money and power. She slept much like a crocodile, gorged heartily exotic food and strong drinks. Justinian remained enamoured of her, bore with philosophic patience and indulgence her interference with his schemes. The people's love for Justinian

transformed into hatred because of his wife. Another woman reputed to be bad was loved and adored by a great general of the rank and reputation of Alexander, Caesar, Salahuddin and Napoleon. The husband was Belisarius — the general of Emperor Justinian. The Emperor doted on Theodora, his general, in turn, adored Antonina, a woman of enthralling beauty with multiple interest. Antonina was known for her infidelities which her husband Belisarius bore with melting fury. In his campaign to far-off lands, Belisarius took his beloved with him. At the height of the raging battle, Belisarius never forgot to return to the camp for a while to kiss his beloved or to receive one. In the thick of battles when his men reach for enemy's throat, Belisarius sought and sent messages of love like those which Napoleon sent to Josephine. Khasru Pervez, the mighty Persian King was so much enamoured of his beloved wife, Shirin, that he could not accept the mortality of his consort. She was the fairest among his 3000 wives. He assembled all philosophers and thinkers of his empire to devise ways to bestow immortality on Shirin. On being told that it was beyond their power to make her immortal, he asked sculptors to carve likenesses of Shirin on marble and stone. This was done with Shirin insensate and speechless. Khasru was killed by his son at the order of Heraclius. Shirin was spared for a natural death later because of her virtues. Yazid II, the Umayyad

emphatically a slave girl, Habiba by name, whom he bought for 4000 gold pieces before he became caliph. His brother, Caliph Suleiman, compelled him to return the girl to the seller. Though parted, Yazid never forgot her beauty and tenderness. When he came to power his wife, perhaps out of conjugal affection, asked him whether there was anything in the world left to be desired. The Caliph affirmatively said it was Habiba. The dutiful wife sent for Habiba, presented her to the Caliph and retired to the obscurity of the harem. One day, feasting with Habiba, Yazid playfully threw a grape pit into her mouth. It choked her and she died in the arms of the Caliph. Seven days later, the Caliph died of grief. Among, perhaps, many unknown, we know of one slave girl who died laughing when she heard that the Sultan, her master loved her. It was Sultan Muhammad of Turkey who ardently loved a slave girl but could not express it lest it lowered his royal dignity. A royalty should not stoop down so low to love a slave girl. One day, the Sultan finding the girl all alone, mustered courage to tell her in unmistakable passion of love that the Commander of the faithful loved her. The girl, overjoyed at being loved by no less a person than the Sultan, started laughing non-stop and gasped out of breath. The bereavement the Sultan suffered was too heavy to bear. In memory of his beloved he built a mausoleum at Istanbul on her mortal remains. The boast of heraldry and pomp of power of the Sultan failed to restrain his mind from seeking comfort from a slave girl. Nature in its peculiar ways avenges and levels the slave and Sultan in their station of life.

Distant Drum M N Mustafa

In Your Brimming Face by Hubert Francis Sarkar

Clumsily I walk, my gaze desperate to pierce the expressionless, cueless sky. Harried and hurried pedestrians walk by. But, where is that holy place, where is that holy solace? Ma, amazing grace is the reminiscence of a deep embrace, the gospels writ large in your brimming face. Machetes flash as the thuggee clash and the mantras of the holy books are drowned in the mishmash. Yet, no avatar, no angel can stop the gushes. Surreal animals run a juggernaut through the moments. Far more tranquility existed inside Jacob's tent when Yahweh Himself tormented that tent. And, in our motherland, the sel-absorbed masterminds With a thin smile lurking in their lips, spoil and stifle the wonderkid. Blind, utterly blind are these masterminds. Ma, exasperatingly, the wheel of time grinds. Yet, it is no serendipity that splendid patterns are embroidered. Even amidst fanatical quests of the Darwinian cultists, persists a yearning to have a holy abluition to wash out all these curses, all these scars. Your radiating face, your tender embrace remain ever as the

gems of the gems. And, in charismatic magnificence, all those martyrs, all those savants celebrate a sacred name, a sacred anthem — hold aloft an undying flame.

Ma, only then become futile the claims of the bearers of a gory emblem, the prescribers of nostrums, the instigators of mayhem.

How Rumours Spread Continued from page 9

vagueness of the source is an important factor in the making of a rumour. It is found that in the case of a particular rumour all interested persons go on repeating it with great relish, without anyone caring to trace its origin. It is quite natural and logical that a rumour can no longer remain a rumour if it can be traced to its source. In that case, it will either be verified and become a fact or contradicted. It should be borne in mind that any rumour to be a rumour, must be short-lived and related to the present. Therefore, the best way, as psychology tells us, to kill a rumour is to identify the source that dispels the fog of

vagueness that surrounds it and sustains it. It is said that rumours after the Pearl Harbour incident swept over America like a wild fire, adversely affecting the morale of the American people. The rumours, however, were instantly nipped in the bud when the US government came out with detailed accounts of the destruction of the Pacific Fleet by the Japs, giving the exact time, and date of the treacherous attack, along with the figure of casualties. The rumours soon died down. Rumours appear to undergo qualitative changes of the kind found in serial reproduction experiments, but there are some differences with regard

to the temporal and motivational characteristics. Folk-tales and Rumours Folk-tales and rumours have certain factors in common, the most important being the vagueness of the source, which turns a fact into a legend. In the case of folk-tales, the element of interest found in the rumour, remains. Psychologically speaking, without interest folk-tales like rumours cannot grow and survive. But the basic difference between folk-tales and rumours lies in time. Rumours, as already stated, are always related to the present and present alone, whereas folk-tales are connected with the past and particularly with the deeds of bravery and chivalry. The interest in them do not subside. Like rumours folk-tales must have vagueness of

source which is a prerequisite for the making legends. Every nation has its folk-tales and legends but there is much similarity in certain aspects of all folk-tales, despite differences in languages and nationalities. They are all based on national interest and mostly on extra-ordinary intellectual or physical deeds of bravery, courage and chivalry; secondly, they are all vague regarding their sources. In all the three cases, namely, serial reproduction, rumour and folk-tales we would not fail to notice certain characteristics in common, notably, that they change in accordance with the interest and attitude of persons transmitting them, yet, they all show differences primarily in social functions which they serve.

AROUND 50 men live in caves located on forested hills overlooking the fertile Kangra Valley at the foot of the Himalayas in northern India. Unmindful of the bone-chilling cold and heavy snowfall, they rarely come out of their caves or huts for days at a time. Living like hermits in deep meditation, they are Tibetan by birth but monks by choice. They are carrying on the Yogic traditions of ancient Tibet. Yoga has multifarious uses: it helps meditators to concentrate, athletes to keep themselves in shape and other individuals to remain healthy. In the case of the hermits, their main focus is meditation to attain enlightenment. Their worldly needs are kept to the barest minimum. Jampa Tenzin, 58, took up the solitary lifestyle 24 years ago. He became a monk at the age of seven and studied elementary Tibetan Buddhist Scriptures for the next 14 years at a monastery near his family home in southern Tibet. However, in March 1959 after the Chinese annexed Tibet, he came to India along with other Buddhists. In an interview, Mr. Tenzin said: "The initial period of exile was very depressing I didn't know what destiny held for me.

Asian diary BY ARJUNA

Where Science Ends

"The options before me were either to become a good monk, or study and then serve the Tibetan administration at Dharamsala, North India, or to join the army."

Sitting in Padmasana (lotus posture) on a low bed in his weather-beaten hut, Mr. Tenzin went on to describe his life and explain his practice of meditation.

To his right, a lone butter lamp flickers in front of the small altar. The tiny room filled with Buddhist scriptures is the hermit's study room, living room, bedroom and kitchen — all rolled into one.

Asked what prompted him to become a hermit, he said: "After wandering in Nepal for several years I came into contact with an elderly Tibetan Yogi, who taught me how to meditate."

Then one day he heard a lama's sermon — "Whether one believes in religion or not is one's right, but if you do, you must work hard for it." These words motivated him to become a hermit.

But then frustration overtook him because he felt his progress was slow. He moved to Dalhousie — a former British hill station in northern India — to continue his monastic life.

"There I was stagnating. The thought of karmic effect scared me. But still I wasn't sure what I wanted to accomplish," he said.

Then with just 80 kilograms of wheat flour and US\$5, he climbed the hills behind Dharamsala to become real hermit.

He recalled: "The first three years were the most difficult, meditating in caves and not knowing when your provision of food would run out. Time passed by slowly."

However, during the sixth year, I achieved some success in the practice of *Tummo*, an advanced form of meditation which helps generate heat in one's body. Since then I have never looked back."

Surprisingly, an Indian Sikh took Tibetan Buddhist vows, donned the maroon robes of monkhood and the ordination name of Tenzin Chhodak.

A former student of bio-chemistry and computer science who had worked in New York, Tenzin Chhodak is happy to join the hermitage. "Where science ends, Buddhism begins," he remarked with a smile.

— *Dephnews Asia*