rumour that the Punjabi Army came to disarm the Bangali soldiers, thousands of locals created the barricade so that the Army from Dhaka Cantonment could not reach Joydebpur. Seeing the agitated mob, I requested them to go away instead of following the order of the brigadier to retaliate. For a few minutes I tried to make them understand that if they continue to show their resistance, the Punjabi soldiers would realise that we were revolting against the Army, which would be a premature action. However, they did not listen to me. But, the brigadier became angry with me seeing such initiatives instead of taking any action. Subsequently, I ordered a warrant officer to fire on the ground so that the locals go away, though the Brigadier kept on ordering me to shoot at the mob. All on a sudden, taking a weapon from a soldier someone from the mob shot at the troops. One soldier wounded. Then the brigadier himself took control and ordered to shoot. Then a non-Bangali warrant officer fired at the mob that killed two civilians. Then the mob left and the barricade was removed. Subsequently the troops left for Dhaka Cantonment. I saw the anger and mistrust in the eyes of Brigadier Arbab Jahenzeb."

"At that moment even the troops led by Brigadier Jahenzeb Arbab did not dare to use heavy weapons considering the Bangali troops might react, since the Pakistani Army were suspicious about our activities from the beginning of March 1971", he adds.

"In fact, the March 19 incident was not an isolated occurrence, rather part of a series of consequences", continues General Chowdhury, "I had the opportunity to know the intention of the Pakistani Army high-ups, since for two years I served as the Aide-de-Camp (ADC) to the Chief Martial Administrator of East Pakistan Major General Khadem Hossain Raja before joining the Second East Bengal Regiment at Joydebpur in 1970. It was clear to me that the Army would not accept the six-point demand and other political movements of Bangladesh Awami League. When the military took time to hand over power after the national elections in 1970, it was clear to me that Army high-ups were planning something different to quash the movement. On the other hand observing the ongoing political activities I anticipated that Bangabandu might declare Independence on March 7. If that happened a war would be likely. So, I talked with my Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Masud, initially, then with other Bangali officers and soldiers. At the same time I used to gather information from Dhaka Cantonment. The Army at Dhaka Cantonment became suspicious about the ongoing activities of Second East Bengal Regiment at Joydebpur. Which is why Brigadier Arbab came to the Joydebpur Palace to test the loyalty of the rest of the officers."

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According to Major General (retd) Moinul Hossain Chowdhury Beer Bikram, the March 19 incident virtually separated the Second East Bengal Regiment from the 57 Brigade. Within three days the commanding officer Lt Colonel Masud was called at Brigade; he faced brutal torture during the nine-month long Liberation War at Dhaka Cantonment, says General Chowdhury. He continues, "Troops at Dhaka Cantonment could not move to control our mutiny, since they were not prepared enough to attack a battalion at that time. We took the opportunity and isolated the non-Bangali officers and soldiers at Joydebpur. We knew that our job with the Pakistani Army had ended on March 19 and we had to face court martial unless the Liberation War began. In fact, I was one of the officers against whom the Pakistani Army carried out court martial in absentia during the Liberation War."

In fact, the soldiers and officers of the Second East Bengal Regiment used to patrol the roads and Joydebpur was virtually under the control of the regiment since March 19, says General Chowdhury. According to him they began to move the families of the soldiers to safe places and prepared for a war against the Pakistani Army. "On March 27 when we came to know that Bangali officers in Comilla and Chittagong cantonments had also revolted, that same night, breaking into the ordinance factory, I led the battalion towards Mymensigh to join the other freedom fighters. Major Shafiullah, who later became chief of the Bangladesh Army after the Independence, who was also a major of the regiment, left Joydebpur on March 27 morning and received us at Mymensingh."

During the Liberation War Major General (retd) Moinul Hossain Chowdhury Bir Bikram served as the commanding officer of Bengal Regiment under S Force. Winning many important battles such as Akhaura battle, his battalion reached Demra, Dhaka on December 16. He also served as a Battalion Commanding under Z Force in the crucial Kamalganj battle.