

Bidhan Chandra Roy & National Doctors Day

MN Laha*



First Day Cover cancellation commemorating Dr. B. C. Roy, India-1982. Bengal Legislative Assembly on the stamp and special drawing of R. G. Kar Hospital along side Dr. B.C. Roy

Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy (1882-1962) was second Chief Minister of West Bengal. He remained in this post for 14 yrs. as an Indian National Congress candidate from 1948 until his death in 1962. He is considered great architect of West Bengal and founded five eminent cities, including Durgapur and Kalyani.

He was an alumnus of the Medical college of Calcutta, and is one of the few who completed both F.R.C.S. and M. R. C. P. simultaneously within 2 yrs and three months in England. He was born in Bankipore in Patna, Bihar. While at medical school Bidhan came upon an inscription which read, "Whatever thy hands findeth to do, do it with thy might". Deeply impressed by these words, they became source of inspiration for him throughout his life. After graduation he joined Provincial Health Service and exhibited immense dedication and hard work.

Bidhan sailed for England in 1909 enrolling himself at St. Bartholomew Hospital. As an Asian he was refused enrolment, but was finally admitted after his repeated requests. Within two years and three months, he completed his FRCS and MRCP and returned home in 1911. On his return he taught at Calcutta Medical College and Campbell Medical School.

He organised medical education, established Jadavpur TB Hospital, Chittaranjan Seva Sadan, Kamala Nehru Hospital, Victoria Institution and Chittaranjan cancer Hospital. In recognition of his service the Doctorate of Science was conferred upon him in 1944.

A member of Brahma Samaj, Roy entered politics in 1925. He defeated "grand old man of Bengal" Surendranath Banerjee in Bengal

Legislative Council election. He was later elected to AICC Committee in 1928. He kept himself away from rivalry and conflicts and made a deep impression on leaders. Dr. Roy was both Gandhiji's friend and his doctor. During Civil disobedience movement he was arrested and detained in Alipore Jail. He was elected as Mayer of Calcutta Corporation and expanded free education, free medical aid, better roads, improved lighting and water supply. In 1935 he was elected Fellow of Royal Society of Tropical Medicine -and Hygiene and later in 1940 Fellow of American Society of Chest Physicians. Dr. Roy was also elected President of Medical Council of India in 1944.

After Independence his name was proposed for Chief Minister's post. He wanted to devote himself to his profession. However on Gandhi's advice accepted the position and took office in 1948. Bengal at that time was torn by communal violence, food shortage, unemployment and large flow of refugees after partition. He systematically worked on the immense task in front of him. Within three yrs. law and order was returned to Bengal. He played a prominent role in the selection of National Anthem.

The nation honoured Dr. Roy with Bharat Ratna in Feb. 1961. Dr. Roy died on his 80th birthday. The B. C. Roy National award was instituted in 1976 for work in the areas of Medicine, Science, Politics, Philosophy literature & Arts. In spite of his active role and achievements in politics Dr. B. C. Roy always remained a physician at heart. We celebrate the *national Doctors' Day* on the date of his birth (and death) July 1 every year.

*Gwalior |