

## THIRD INDO-PAKISTAN WAR

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*The following poem was composed for the valedictory function following the conclusion of the laboratory course on 'Recombinant DNA techniques' held at the Molecular Biology Unit of the Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi during February 2-22, 1981 sponsored by the Committee on Genetic Experimentation (COGENE) with the support of UNESCO, ICRO and the UNEP/UNESCO/ICRO Panel on Microbiology. This course was the first Genetic Engineering Course held in India and the first of its kind in South-East Asia. Twenty candidates were selected for training from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Hongkong, China, Japan, Korea and Malaysia (the only candidate from China failed to attend due to visa problem). The laboratory course revolved around the cloning of yeast DNA fragments into plasmid and phage lambda vectors. The DNA fragments cloned were identified by DNA-DNA hybridization. Enzymes like restriction endonucleases and T4 DNA ligase etc. were prepared as part of the laboratory exercise. During these three weeks' laboratory course work continued nonstop throughout the day and sometime till late at night and the activities of the students and the teachers created a war like atmosphere. This situation has been depicted in the poem. Late Ahmad Bukhari (originally from Pakistan) of the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory headed the visiting faculty constituted of Joe Sambrook, Rashika, M. Hershey, Ronni, Green, all from Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory and Ann Skalka from Roche Institute of Molecular Biology. Maharani Chakraborty, In-Charge of the Molecular Biology Unit was the organizer on the Indian side. Hence the name Indo-Pakistan War was chosen. This made pro-Indira Gandhi Ahmad Bukhari somewhat unhappy as he did not like to be compared with the dictator Zia-ul-Haque. Barbara Hohn from Switzerland joined as teacher at the end to make the students familiar with cosmids.*

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