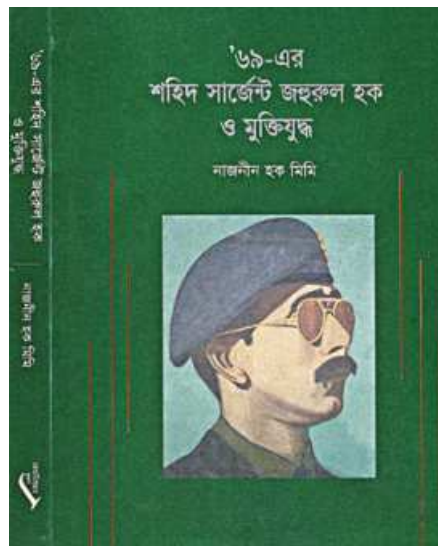


Shahid Sergeant Zahurul Haque: An intimate profile

February 14, 1969. 3rd Punjab Regiment Barrack, Dhaka Cantonment. Sergeant Zahurul Haque, along with some other accused in the historic Agartala case, was interned there. They used to share their small amount of food with poor children waiting outside the barbed fence of the confinement. But West Pakistani guards used to chase away the hungry children and hurl abuse at them. On that night, when a guard named Manjur Shah was beating a child, Zahurul Haque suddenly jumped on him and snatched his rifle. Zahurul warned him against the inhuman behaviour, and returned the rifle.



The next morning, Manjur Shah shot point-blank at Sergeant Zahurul Haque and his two inmates at the door of his cell in the jail. They were taken to the Combined Military Hospital.

Dr Ali attended the heavily injured Zahurul and his friend Fazlul Haque. He requested the military authority to take them to Dhaka Medical College for better treatment, but authorities denied permission.

Zahurul breathed his last around 10AM the same day, and the news of his demise spread around the city like wildfire. The ongoing protest against Ayub Khan got a new momentum; protesters set fire to the state guest house and other government buildings. In the face of mass protests, the government finally withdrew the historic Agartala case (officially called State versus Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Others) on February 22, 1969. Bangabandhu, along with other accused, was released on the following day, and the rest is history.

Zahurul Haque (1935-1969) was a sergeant of the Pakistan Airforce. He was the 17th among the 35 people accused in the Agartala case. He was arrested in December 1967 on the charge of planning

an armed insurrection against the government.

Several books have been written on the historic case and the massive protests surrounding a glorious chapter of Bangladesh history. But the book titled '1969, Martyred Sergeant Zahurul Haque & Liberation War' stands out, as it gives an intimate profile of a key participant in this historical event. The author, Nazneen Haque Mimi, is Zahurul Haque's niece. She grew up with the family accounts surrounding her uncle, and researched the memories and material possessions of her family members to get to know the person under the uniform. She got hold of the two trunks sent from Pakistan after Zahurul's death and discovered an artist. Zahurul used to paint and do wood carving.

After 1965's Indo-Pak War, he had made miniature airplanes using parts of damaged aircrafts. Some of his paintings are preserved in the National Museum and Liberation War Museum.

Mimi's research mind took her to the close associates of Zahurul Haque. Their accounts reveal new information about the revolutionary and his efforts for the national emancipation of Bengalis.

Flight Sergeant Mafizullah, a trusted friend of Zahurul, says in his letter to Mimi, that Zahurul was closely involved with the Bangla Mukti Front (Bengal Liberation Front) since 1964. This organisation was formed by Bengali officials and soldiers with the aim of armed revolution against the Pakistani junta.

The book also contains a rich collection of photos and letters of Sergeant Zahurul Haque with his friends and families.

The author's erudite prose, storytelling and research perfectly match her emotion and enthusiasm that make the book more than a historical work; it is an intimate profile of a true patriot, revolutionary.

By Shamsuddoza Sajen
Photo: Collected

◆ HOROSCOPE ◆



ARIES (MAR. 21-APR. 20)

Take a break. Your partner may be unsure of your intentions. Try not to take sides. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



TAURUS (APR. 21-MAY 21)

Trips will be adventurous. Emotional matters can overwhelm you. Overcome any obstacle that comes your way. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



GEMINI (MAY 22-JUN. 21)

Make rewarding connections. Travel will be knowledgeable. Think before you act. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



CANCER (JUN. 22-JUL. 22)

Health issues can arise this week. Keep your emotions in check. Reach out and make new friends. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



LEO (JUL. 23-AUG. 22)

Investments will be profitable. Emotional connections can happen. Don't push your luck. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEP. 23)

You will do well in social settings. Catch up with old friends. Don't meddle in others' affairs. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



LIBRA (SEP. 24-OCT. 23)

Friends may not take your side. Don't let anyone pressure you. Your emotions will all over the place. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



SCORPIO (OCT. 24-NOV. 21)

Take on extra work. Make quick financial investments. Try to be understanding of your partner. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

Your communication skills will pay dividends. Focus more on work. Don't blow situations out of proportion. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 20)

Someone special has been noticing you. Don't be afraid of opposition. Opportunities will come flying. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



AQUARIUS (JAN. 21-FEB. 19)

Take time for some maintenance. Do your own thing. Your charm will entice those with common interests. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



PISCES (FEB. 20-MAR. 20)

Try to compromise. You can learn more if you listen rather than rant and rave. Don't push your opinions on others. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.