

Tale of a dejected freedom fighter

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It took long 34 years for a freedom fighter to fulfill his dream of seeing the National Memorial at Savar.

"I wished to see the sacred place for once in my life and at last my dream has come true. It might be my first and last visit here," said Rashedul, a 65-year-old freedom fighter.

He came to Savar from Garagram of Nilphamari, where he fought against Pakistani occupation forces in 1971, to pay tributes to the martyrs of the liberation war.

He left Rangpur for Nabinagar at 10:00pm on Thursday night.

In the golden days of his youth, Rashedul fought against occupation,

communalism and fundamentalism for a country free from inequality, injustice and discrimination.

But the post-war political leaderships have only increased his frustration with the rise of militants, fundamentalists and razakars (collaborators of the occupation forces).

Since the independence everything changed before his eyes except his financial condition.

Being a freedom fighter he could never prepare his mind to seek assistance from others and struggled throughout his life as a poor farmer.

His poverty compelled him to stop the education of his two sons only to join as workers in garment factories.

During the tenure of Awami League, he received some assistance from the government but after the assumption of power by the BNP-led four-party alliance that irregular assistance was also stopped.

"I am a Chasha (farmer) and not worth of talking about the civil society you belong to. Your leaders very often asked us not to look back in the past although anti-liberation forces are taking their seat in parliament," said Rashedul in a melancholy voice when questioned about the current political unrest and the rise of militancy across the country.

"I heard a razakar placed floral wreath here today under national security while I had to wait in queue several hours outside the main entrance on security grounds and law enforcers refused to let me touch the monument or even to get very close to it," added a dejected Rashedul, standing several hundred yards away from the monument while resting her eyes on the top of it where the sunlight was reflected highlighting the supreme sacrifices of the liberation martyrs.

"We are poor, helpless and exhausted of being betrayed. We can do nothing except seeing," whispered Rashedul repeatedly as he moved towards the exit with a blank look in his eyes.