A Rare Gem Lost

GUL NAHAR BASHAR (PANNA)

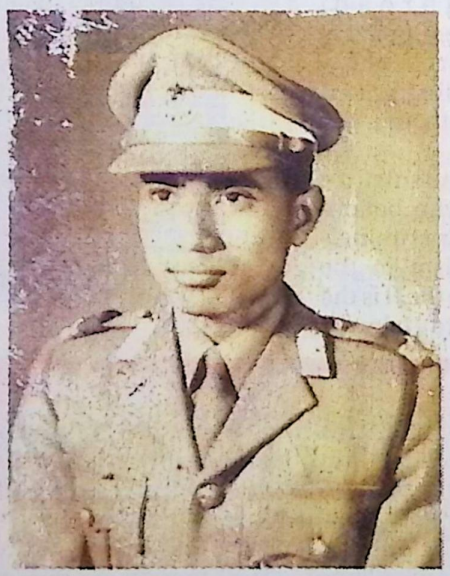
As Independence Day draws near we remember the event that will remain forever seared into our hearts for my brother and I for it was the day we were robbed of our beloved father.

The Pakistan Army killed my father Captain R A M Khairul Bashar popularly known as Capt Bashar on May 29 in 1971. He had been the Officer Commanding of Station Supply Depot (SSD), Chittagong Cantonment.

The tragic and premature death of my father was a devastating blow to our family.

Life suddenly changed for my mother. My grief stricken mother kept herself very busy with the task of raising us single handedly. But she could not absorb the shock. My mother died on November 4 in 1992. My brother and I still find it very painful to reminiscence about our parents. It is not easy to look back.





Captain R A M Khairul Bashar.

The Pakistan Army killed my father after inflicting inhuman torture on him because of his outright denial to become a state witness against Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The then army junta of Pakistan wanted to hang Bangabandhu in a Pakistani jail by bringing treason charges against him. It was between April and May in 1971. Pakistani General Tikka Khan was the military administrator of the then East Pakistan. My father was a captive in the hands of Pakistani forces at a concentration camp at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in Dhaka. A crack force of Pak army led by Major Sarfaraz gave a proposal to my father to become a state witness against Bangabandhu at a Joint Interrogation Cell. My father straightaway rejected the proposal. It unnerved Major Sarfaraz who informed the matter to the higher authorities of the military administration. At once, the Pakistani military junta decided to kill him after inflicting inhuman torture that lasted for over a month. They brought many charges including treason charges against my father. They also brought another charge of killing a Pakistani Colonel against him.

My father's fellow comrades at the concentration camp did not find him after May 29.

We did not get my father's dead body. We still do not know whether my father received a proper Islamic burial or not. I was only a year old and my brother Iqbal Bashar (Babu) was yet to take birth at the time of this tragic event. My father's tragic fate exposed the brutality and tortures of the Pakistan army, which is unmatched in human history! I cannot wipe out that memory for a moment. I cannot go further, I cannot imagine what happened next, I wish my father could have escaped that inhuman torture.

I am constantly haunted by the brutal death of my father and I cannot be at peace until his killers are punished. Any war crime trial should include, at least a symbolic indictment of the military leadership of then East Pakistan under Lt General Tikka Khan and all other officers working with him in the eastern command of Pakistan armed forces.

Let the process start. It must begin by gathering data on which military unit committed what crime and which one of the officers were in charge of that unit. At least a symbolic trial would put the world focus on these crimes.