A Brave Heart

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WE have achieved our independence through nine-month long bloody war. Many freedom loving men and women took part in the war in different ways to liberate the country from the clutches of the Pakistani Army. There are many names not included in the history but their near and dear ones still remember them for their contribution. Let us hear the story of a brave woman named Kohinoor Begum who risked her own life as well as that of her family in order to work for the freedom fighters.

Kohinoor was born at Dhanbari in Tangail. Youngest of four and the daughter of Osman Gani Master and Khabirunessa Bibi, Kohinoor lost her parents at an early age and was brought up by her relatives. Her adopted father Shah Mohammed Wazed Ali inspired her to help people as often as she could. Since she was taught in her early age about humanity, she bore it in her mind till her last breath in 2007. To earn her living, Kohinoor worked at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH). And it's her stay at MMCH that gave her the opportunity to work for the freedom fighters.

Remembering those days, the then Ward Master of MMCH Md. Abdul Bari said that Kohinoor was a woman of great courage. He said, "I was instructed by the then Superintendent-cum-Principal of MMCH Dr. Abdur Rahim, to take medicines to the freedom fighters and Kohinoor Begum agreed to act as the courier to take medicines to freedom fighters coming from different corners of greater Mymensingh in disguise of day labourers.

Abdul Bari also said that Kohinoor Begum, a mother of four children, never thought of fleeing the scene leaving the distressed humanity though many left the hospital to save their lives.

Dr. Hashami and Dr. Achiya Khatun encouraged Kohinoor to perform her responsibilities without fear. The Pakistani Army interrogated Kohinoor as her elder son Md. Nuruzzaman Jamal was reported to have joined the War of Liberation.

She also saved the freedom loving people from the wrath of the informers of Pak Army inside MMCH. Kohinoor along with other employees of MMCH took food to the freedom fighters cooked at MMCH kitchen. Cook Hafiz Mollah, guard Abdul Mazid, Joynal Sarder, Dr. Helen, Prof Dr. Fazlul Haque and Prof. Dr. Badra Kabir assisted them.

During the war, Kohinoor was in great crisis with her four children as her husband Nurul Islam was working in



Narayanganj Adamji Jute Mills at that time. She shifted to her relative's house at Sewra Para in the town as her rented house opposite to Duldul Camp (Bihari Camp) at Patgodam area was set on fire at the beginning of the war.

Abdul Bari, now 74 years old, also informed that at the end of the war, when the freedom fighters were rushing towards MMCH for treatment, Kohinoor also served them with great care. Following her service, Bangabir Abdul Kader Siddiquee met with Kohinoor during his visit at MMCH that time.

Md. Abdus Salam, a freedom fighter from Chukaitala in the town who knew about Kohinoor's contribution said, 'I thank Kohinoor for her voluntary services for the country taking so much risk'. After liberation she never told anyone about her service but continued with her struggles as a bread earner of the family. Abdus Salam also added 'I respect this great lady and pray for her departed soul'.

Youngest son of Kohinoor, Mohibul Islam, an expatriate artiste in Canada said that he is proud of his mother. "As a small boy I observed my mother's struggle and it is still vivid before my eyes," he concluded.