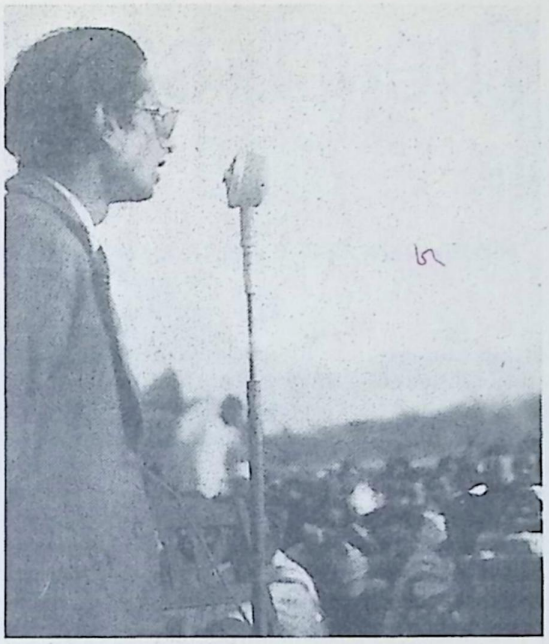
sions. I also gave a speech in the student meeting at Amtala as a member of the Shongram Parishad." Like many other people who fell victim to the subsequent shooting, baton charge and arrests made by the Pakistani government on that day, Hassan too was arrested while leading a procession in support of Bangla at Tolaram College in Narayanganj. Later he was released by the Sub Divisional Officer, who was also an Urdu speaker and was sympathetic towards him.

In his long illustrated political journey, Dr Hassan came in touch with many significant personalities. "Sheikh Shaheb and I shared a close relationship," Dr Hassan recalls his acquaintance with Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. After the language movement, Yousuf Hassan along with Mohammed Toaha and Ali Ahad formed a peace committee in East Bengal where prominent political leader Ataur Rahman Khan was elected as the chairman, and Yousuf Hassan became the general secretary. "Back in 1954, a significant number of delegates and observers from 37 countries gathered in Peking, China, for the Peace Conference of the Asian and Pacific Regions. Pakistan also sent 30 representatives to attend this event, among which West Pakistan had 25 representatives and East Pakistan had only 5 of us- Tofazzel Hossain, Manik Miah, Ataur Rahman Khan, Khandakar Mohammed Illias, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Yousuf Hassan," he says.



Dr Hassan giving speech in Adamjee Majdur Union during his service as the vice president of the union .



From left- Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Khandakar Muhammad Illias and Yousuf Hassan

Throughout his entire life he was involved with left wing politics. Following his interest in leftist politics, Hassan joined Dhaka University as a research scholar to do his PhD on "Development in Different Languages and Urdu in Bengal," under the supervision of Dr Andalib Shadani, the head of the Urdu Department of the university. "Regardless of the quality, rigour and ethics that he showed in his research, the then Governor Monayem Khan did not hand over his thesis result to him for two years," says his only son, Kaif Hassan. As soon as he lost his governorship in February 1971, Yousuf Hassan could finally complete his doctoral degree and became Dr Yousuf Hassan.

Due to Parkinson's disease, articulating his thoughts clearly and intelligibly has become a little difficult for him, but that does not keep him from taking a trip down the memory lane. "No matter how hard it is for him to talk, he loves reminiscing those moments with us," says his wife Nasim Ara. "It's been over 50 years, but I can clearly remember what happened half a century back on the day of February 21," says the man in a tender voice.

"His life was never easy," says his proud son. "My father was arrested quite a few times for one reason or the other, mostly because of the animosity that the Pakistani leaders felt for him, despite him being an Urdu speaker, he always stood by the Bangali."

"I was called a traitor, the Pakistan government used to consider me as an Indian agent, even my citizenship was at stake for quite a long time," adds Hassan after a brief silence. "In 1956, the Pakistan Government seized my passport, as I supported the language movement. I had to fight to restore my citizenship in 1958. But I always did what seemed right to me."

His contribution to the historic movement of February 21 as well as his illustrated political career remains almost neglected by the people of our country. He preferred staying out of active politics, and out of the limelight after Bangladesh gained its independence in 1971. He focused instead on living a simple life far from the chaotic life of Dhaka. His life teaches us to stand up for the right no matter what. His life tells us a tale of courage and righteousness. ■