

**Editor and Publisher**  
(The Daily Star)

Mahfuz Anam

**Editor (Star Weekend)**

Sushmita S Preetha

**Staff Writers**

Naimul Karim

Md Shahnawaz Khan Chandan

Zyma Islam

Nilima Jahan

Amiya Halder

Maliha Khan

**Staff Photographer**

Kazi Tahsin Agaz Apurbo

**Graphics & Illustrations**

Manan Morshed

**Make-up**

Md Saiful Islam

**Production**

Shamim Chowdhury

Published by the Editor from  
Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon  
Industrial Area, Dhaka on  
behalf of Mediaworld Ltd., 52  
Motijheel C.A., Dhaka-1000.



PHOTO: MD MOAZZEM MOSTAKIM

**"Our memories do not visit us in chronology, and the story we form by joining up the memories involves choices with the purpose of making a whole and finding a pattern."**

— Zia Haider Rahman, *In the Light of What We Know*

**SNAPSHOT**

**REMEMBRANCE**

It must have been either the 22nd or 23rd (of January 1972). I went with Suraiya to Jagannath College. Classes had not begun yet. She was just going to have a look around. She taught philosophy there. We climbed the stairs to the 1st floor of the old building and wandered around the verandah. After exchanging a few words with the guard we were coming down when we realised that following us from behind was a middle-aged man wearing a *lungi* (sarong) and a soiled vest. I suddenly realised that he had silently followed us up from below. As we reached the bottom of the stairs, we wondered for a while where to go from there. Suraiya had heard of a room where people were brought in and tortured. They had brought a colleague's brother there. Her husband had somehow managed to get him freed. The man asked us, "Do you want to go to that room *apa*?" I was thinking whether the man was a spy or just demented. I asked, "Which room?" He replied, "That room.... where they used to take everyone to be killed."

I shuddered and asked "Who are you?" He replied, "I am the guardian of one of your students. My daughter is Malati. She studied at your school. I too was brought here. I don't know how I escaped." I turned and took a good look at him. He was fair. His face round and broad had such a shadow that it seemed he had taken stage make up. Where was Malati, I wondered? Was she no longer alive? Why was her father wandering



ILLUSTRATION: MANAN MORSHED

# The Jagannath College Concentration Camp

**BASANTI GUHATHAKURTA**

**TRANSLATED BY:  
MEGHNA GUHATHAKURTA**

these dark corridors? Was he crazy? Then I asked him, "Will you take us to that room?"

Just past the college gate at the left is the principal's living quarters and behind the garden is a row of newly built two-storied buildings. We retraced our footsteps to the bottom of the staircase

there. The man led us to the room, which had popularly come to be called "the red room". We took the narrow verandah facing the south. There was no lock on the door. With one push of his hand, he opened the door. It was a big room, a few benches and high benches littered across it. There was blood on the floor, on the benches and the high benches had blood splattered on top. The most horrifying scene was where some hapless victim must have been pierced by a bayonet and the blood gushing from his heart sprinkled high on the eastern walls. The walls all around bore witness to this gory

incident, the stains appearing like sparklers in the night. At some point it had trickled down slowly against the walls and onto the high benches from where it clotted in a thick mass on the floor. It was not possible for us to remain there much longer. A silence-filled terror struck us. But even so, our guide, Malati's father, kept on saying, "Look *apa*, this must be where they dragged the bodies through the door onto the narrow corridor and staircase. We saw the one-foot wide brush mark of blood gradually thinning out as it reached the stairs. Our knees started to crumble. Our guide

must have had more stories to tell. We did not ask him, we *could* not ask him, and the stories remained untold. A silence enfolded us as we got into our car. The man put his palms together to say farewell. My head was spinning, my throat parched. I tried to wet my mouth with my spit. It was only on reaching Suraiya's house that I could regain my strength with a cup of hot tea.

I had not told anyone of this event, not even my daughter. The face of Malati's father haunted me night and day. Where was Malati? How was she? Was she alive? Why couldn't I ask about her to our guide, about her family? Did he come to tell me something as a guardian, as a father? Why did I not ask him about her? Now after so many years, on March 1990 I am thinking I must have been mad not to do so. I must have lost my senses.

\* respectful form of address

Source: Basanti Guhathakurta, *Ektattor Smriti [Memories of '71] (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1991), 145-6.*

## MAILBOX

Please note we have a new email address:  
starweekendtds@gmail.com

### A much awaited compensation verdict

It is indeed a great achievement that the High Court finally stood up for the family of Tareque Masud who was killed in a road accident. The suit for compensation, filed under the Motor Vehicles Ordinance 1983, led to the verdict which is the first compensation trial held directly in the High Court instead of in a lower court.

Bangladesh is ranked one of the worst countries with regard to road accidents. However, very few cases are filed for compensation of road crash victims. This verdict not only delivers justice to Tareque Masud's family but also provides relief to the long unheard victims of reckless driving who will



PHOTO: STAR FILE

hopefully feel empowered now to sue the responsible parties for the compensation they rightfully deserve.  
*Nuzhat Rifa Ehsan  
Baridhara, Dhaka*

### Shame on you Donald Trump

As the most powerful leader of the world we expect that you intend to make the world a more peaceful place. We thought you would try to avoid anarchy and turmoil. But you are creating critical divides without any concern for the repercussions.

Trump recently declared recognition of Jerusalem as the capital city of Israel. We can't tolerate such an incendiary announcement. Jerusalem

is a holy place for us, the capital of Palestine. The Palestinian people have long been suffering from attacks on their lives and encroachment on their homeland and the US has undoubtedly had a hand in this.

So, Trump should think about this act which has enormous repercussions as it will no doubt, and already has, lead to flaring up of tensions in that part of the world as well as creating further divides elsewhere.

*Naem Ariyan  
University of Chittagong*

### Celebration of our glorious Victory Day

Tomorrow, we are going to celebrate the 47th glorious Victory Day of Bangladesh. On this day in 1971, our country achieved independence after a nine-month long war against the Pakistani military forces. The hearts of millions of people will remember the joy and glory of the victory. Some hearts of those who lost their near and dear ones will be bruised with agony. The victory of Bangladesh didn't come in one day. Much awaited, our victory came by sacrificing the lives of three million innocent people and the modesty of two hundred thousand women.

We will always be indebted to our freedom fighters who snatched victory from the clutches of the Pakistani military and gave us a place on the world map. Many a freedom fighter embraced martyrdom for the cause of emancipation. Without their unparalleled sacrifices, the country would not have seen the light of victory.  
*Md Abul Khaer  
Govt Saadat University College, Tangail*



PHOTO: STAR FILE

The opinions expressed in these letters do not necessarily represent the views of the Star Weekend.

বিশ্ব বলেছিলো- পদ্মা সেতু 'সম্ভব না'  
একজন প্রধানমন্ত্রী আর ১৬ কোটি বাঙালি বলেছিলাম-  
'কেন না!'

**BSRM**  
building a safer nation

শেখ হাসিনা