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## EDITOR'S NOTE

The role of women in our Liberation War though acknowledged sporadically has been on the whole under-represented for various reasons, a patriarchal mindset being one of them. Yet it cannot be denied that women were intensely involved in the struggle that represented a collective passion to free the motherland transcending religion, class or gender. This is why mothers gave their blessings to their beloved young sons and daughters who joined the war not knowing whether they would ever see their children again. This is why young women, some mere teenagers took up arms, trained for warfare and plunged into the battlefield.

Yet there were many other ways that women fought in this war. They fought at home secretly helping Muktiyoddhas to hide their weapons, give them food and shelter. They tended to the freedom fighters when they were wounded in makeshift hospitals. They endured the worst kinds of sexual violence, watched their menfolk be taken away to torture and death, they fled the burning homes, the rapists and plunderers to become refugees, they endured the long wait to go back home as they tended to their families. All these women are fighters and survivors; without their selfless contributions it is unlikely that this war would have been won.

Through this Victory Day supplement we would like to salute all our women freedom fighters—those who took up arms in active combat as well as those who worked behind the scenes in hospitals, at home and in the refugee camps. These are their stories of bravery and unfailing passion for their country brought to life through their accounts in this special issue.

We thank the writers who made this issue possible. This is only a glimpse into the many stories and experiences of women in 1971 that remain untold.

**Mahfuz Anam**

*Editor & Publisher*