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Rayerbazar memorial.

PHOTO: STAR

EDITOR'S NOTE

Today is a black day in our history. The brutal killing of some of the brightest members of the intelligentsia by the occupation army of Pakistan and local collaborators stand out as one of the most horrendous acts of atrocity committed anywhere in the world. These martyrs and intellectuals were inspired, in one way or another, by the call made by the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman for independence, undertaking enormous risks and paid the ultimate price for it.

On this day, we remember and grieve for all our loved ones who were picked up from homes and the streets, in the dead of night and broad daylight – many ending up in the killing fields and many whom were never traced or heard of again. In this year's supplement, we publish a collection of articles by people who lost their colleagues, close confidantes and family members forty-eight years ago. The articles were translated into English by members of the Editorial team and we have tried to highlight the stories of lesser known martyrs from Rajshai, Dhaka, Magura and Barishal districts, who were mostly picked up by Razakars, Al-Badr and other paramilitary outfits allied to the Pakistani cause. Each of the pieces was originally published in Bangla by Bangla Academy's "Smriti '71" volumes.

To truly honour the memory of our beloved intellectuals, we must keep alive their sacrifice through deeds and not words alone. That would be best served if we preserve the memory of the killing fields nationwide in a fitting manner so that younger generations born after the war of independence do not forget the sacrifices made by their predecessors who loved their country enough to lay down their lives for it.