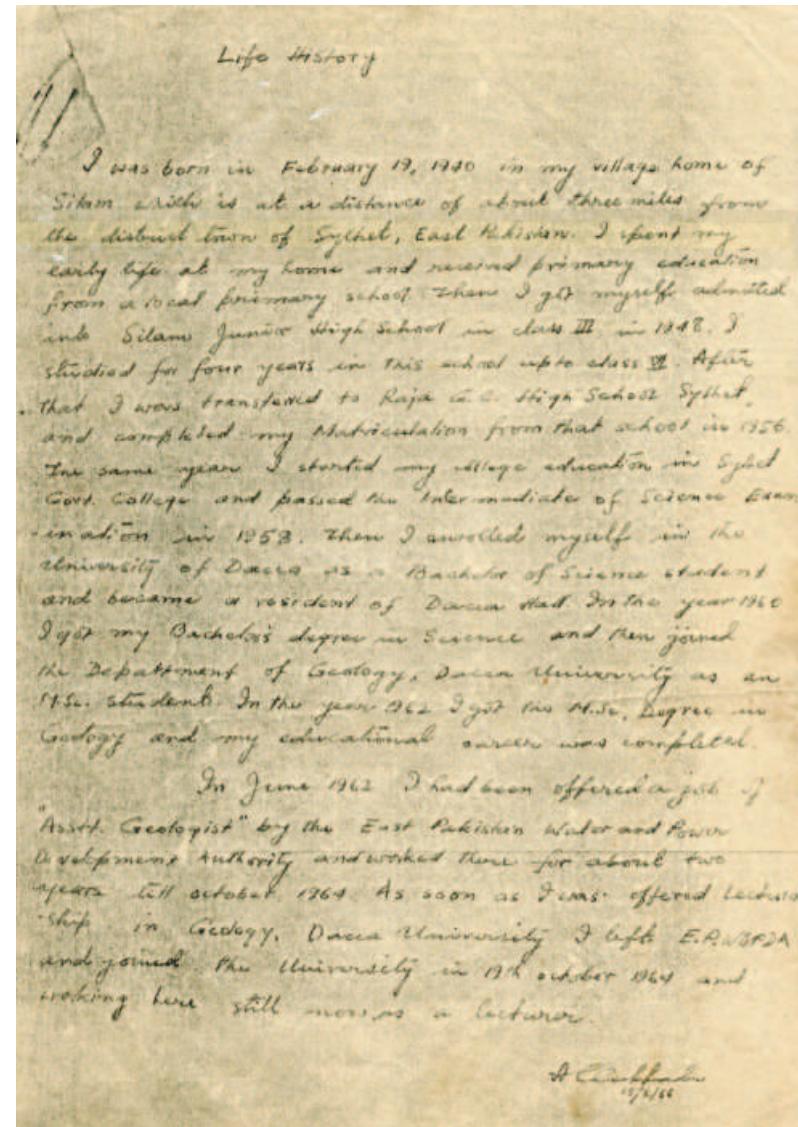


AN ARCHIVE
OF ABSENCE

These memorabilia, preserved by the Liberation War Museum, bear witness to lives and ideas violently cut short in 1971. Together, they form an archive of memory—documenting loss, resistance, and the enduring absence left by the martyred intellectuals.



Abdul Muktadir's handwritten short autobiography, 1966.

ABDUL MUKTADIR (1940–1971)

A life in geology,
interrupted

Abdul Muktadir was a gifted geologist and a deeply admired teacher at Dhaka University, whose life was shaped by learning, teaching, and an unwavering commitment to his students. Born in Silam village in Sylhet, he completed his Master's degree in Geology from Dhaka University in 1962 and soon joined the university's Geology Department as a lecturer. His academic distinction later took him to the United Kingdom to pursue a PhD, and he was preparing to continue advanced research in the United States—ambitions abruptly extinguished by the violence of 25 March 1971.

At dawn, while preparing for Fajr prayers, he responded to a knock at his door. He was seized by soldiers and shot on the spot. His body was later recovered by relatives and buried near a mosque in Purana Paltan.



Abdul Muktadir's pen.



The torchlight that belonged to Abul Hashem Mia.

ABUL HASHEM MIA (1940–1971)

A life lit by courage

Abul Hashem Mia was a scholar of Political Science and Law, having earned his degrees from Dhaka University. During the Liberation War, he took up arms and fought under Major A.T.M. Haider in Sector 2, combining intellectual commitment with active resistance.

On 7 December 1971, following the liberation of Majidee in Noakhali, he joined a victory rally celebrating freedom. It was there that a sniper's bullet, fired by a Razakar, ended his life. He was killed at the very moment independence was being realised.



JYOTIRMOY GUHATHAKURTA (1920–1971)

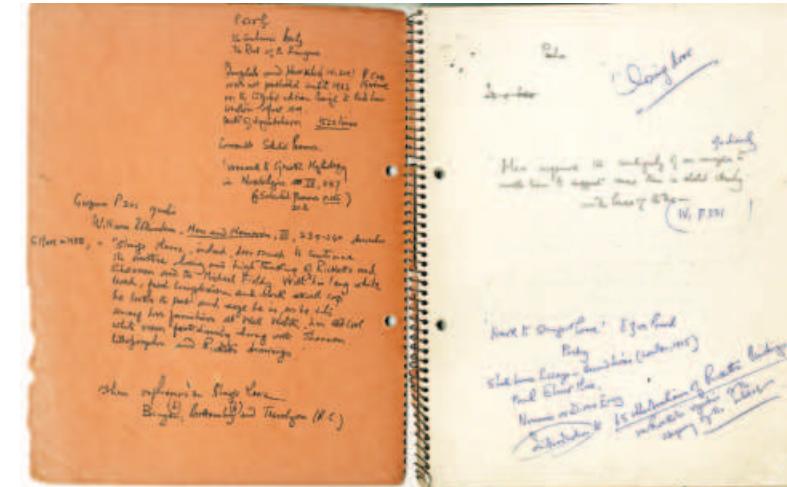
A deeply committed
humanist

Dr Jyotirmoy Guhathakurta was among Dhaka University's most distinguished educationists—an intellectual shaped by liberal, secular, and humanist ideals. Born in Mymensingh to a family of teachers, he demonstrated exceptional academic promise, graduating first in his class from Dacca University in 1942. He joined the Department of English in 1949 and soon became a guiding force within the university community.

Throughout the 1950s, he co-edited the journal *New Values*, championing rational thought, ethical humanism, and cultural openness. After completing his PhD at King's College London in 1967, he returned to Dhaka University as a dedicated teacher and scholar, later serving as provost of Jagannath Hall.

On the night of 25 March 1971, Pakistani soldiers dragged him from his flat at 34/A in the university residential quarters and shot him repeatedly in the back. Left bleeding under curfew, he lay waiting for death. His wife and young daughter managed to drag him back into their home, but his wounds could not be treated. The following day, students—risking their lives—took him to hospital, where he died on 30 March 1971 from severe loss of blood.

Deeply engaged with international humanist circles, Dr Guhathakurta represented Bangladesh's intellectual spirit abroad, participating in global conferences and writing essays in both Bangla and English. His commitment to critical inquiry and artistic reflection extended into his private life, revealing a mind constantly engaged with culture and ideas.



A notebook in which Jyotirmoy Guhathakurta reflected on Men and Memories by William Rosenstein, exploring themes of nineteenth- and twentieth-century British art and society.



The panjabi worn by Giyasuddin Ahmad.

GIYASUDDIN AHMAD (1933–1971)

A historian of courage
and conscience

Professor Giyasuddin Ahmad's life was inseparable from the values he taught. Born in Narsingdi in 1933, he grew into one of Dhaka University's most beloved teachers, admired for both his intellectual rigour and personal warmth. After completing his MA in History, he joined the university as a young lecturer in 1958, quickly earning a reputation for excellence in the classroom.

A Commonwealth Scholarship later took him to the London School of Economics, where he specialised in International History. He

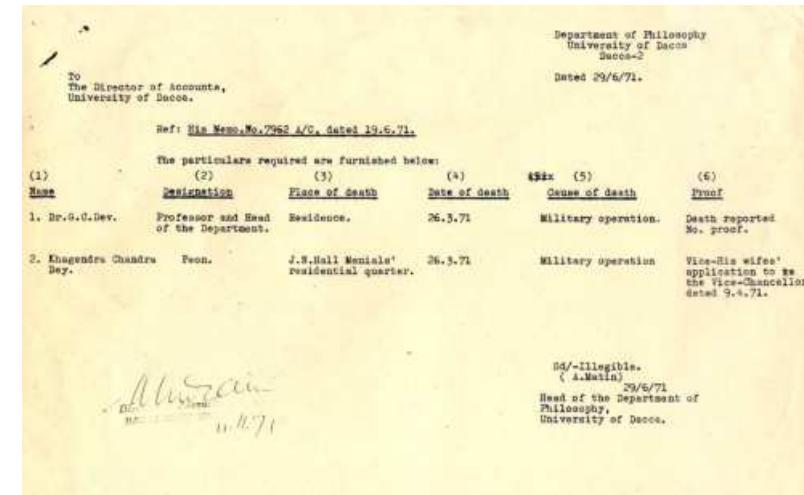
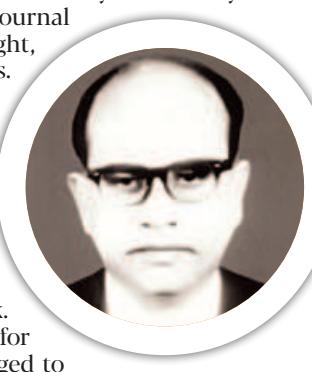
returned to Dhaka University in 1967 with deepened scholarship and the same unassuming humility that endeared him to generations of students and colleagues.

Though not a political activist in the conventional sense, Professor Ahmad was a figure of quiet courage—outspoken when principles were at stake, and deeply committed to human dignity. During the Liberation War, he discreetly raised funds for the families of martyred colleagues, helped arrange medical care for injured freedom fighters, and stood steadfastly beside students and co-workers during the darkest days of 1971. Twice, he was taken in by the Pakistani army for interrogation. Twice, he returned unbroken.

In the final hours, however, there was no escape. On December 14, 1971, Al-Badr men abducted him from Mohsin Hall. Weeks later, his body was recovered from Rayerbazar. He died as he had lived—brave, compassionate, and resolutely unwilling to bow to fear.



A money bag belonging to Giyasuddin Ahmad.



A letter dated 29 June 1971 from the Department of Philosophy, Dhaka University, formally confirming the death of Dr Gobinda Chandra Deb during the military operation.

GOBINDA CHANDRA DEB (1907–1971)

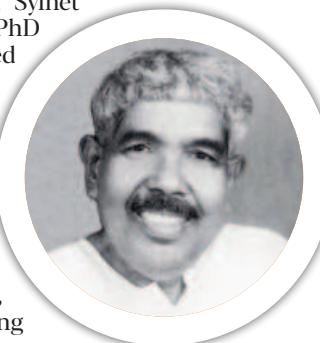
The silencing of a
philosopher

Dr Gobinda Chandra Deb was among the finest philosophers produced by Bengal, a thinker whose life was guided by profound humanism, ethical reason, and compassion. Born in Sylhet and educated in Calcutta, he earned his PhD from Calcutta University in 1944 and joined the Department of Philosophy at Dhaka University in 1951. A scholar of pragmatic idealism, he believed deeply in intellectual freedom and the inherent dignity of all human beings.

Known for his gentle, ascetic way of life and lifelong bachelorhood, Dr Deb was often regarded as a sage within academic circles. He opened his home to students, many of whom he embraced as family, offering not only intellectual guidance but personal care and moral support. His classroom and his home alike were spaces of dialogue, tolerance, and trust.

On the night of 25 March 1971, as the Pakistan Army launched its assault on Dhaka University, Dr Deb was in his campus residence with his adopted daughter Rokeya Sultana and her husband, Mohammad Ali. The house came under heavy gunfire throughout the night. When soldiers arrived at the door, Mohammad Ali opened it while reciting from the Quran. It did not spare him. Both Ali, a Muslim, and Dr Deb, a Hindu, were shot dead on the spot. Their bodies were later taken to the grounds of Jagannath Hall along with other victims of the massacre.

Dr Deb's death marked the violent end of a life devoted to peace, reason, and human dignity. His murder was not incidental but symbolic—the silencing of a philosophical voice that stood firmly against hatred and exclusion.



The personal logo seal of Rashidul Hasan.

RASHIDUL HASAN (1932–1971)

Believing in his people,
without fear

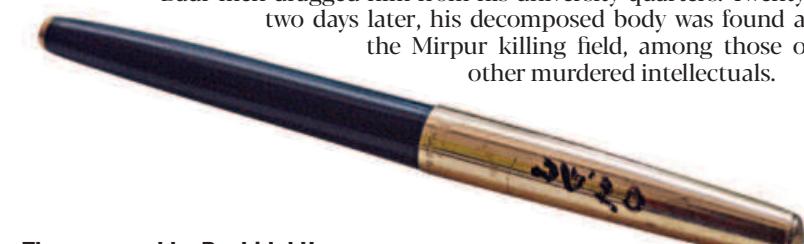
Rashidul Hasan was a beloved teacher of English at Dhaka University and a fearless believer in the rights of his people. Born in 1932, he migrated to East Pakistan in 1949 and soon emerged as a principled academic whose voice carried moral authority both inside and beyond the classroom.

Deeply shaken by Muhammad Ali Jinnah's declaration of Urdu as the sole state language, Rashidul Hasan openly warned that the people of East Pakistan would resist. His prediction proved prophetic. An outspoken supporter of student movements and pro-democracy politics, he stood firmly against linguistic and political domination, a stance that made him a marked figure in the eyes of pro-Pakistani collaborators.

A poem from his diary (5 June 1970) captures the depth of his anguish and devotion as the nation struggled to be born:

Ekhon amar desh amar osru jole
Amar desh amar ontore
Amar desh aaj bikkhubdho shagor bondor shob bheshe geche
Jahaj hetha bheshe bheshe fere
Othoba jahaj dube geche
Duburira udhao howeche

In September 1971, he was abducted for the first time. After twelve harrowing days, he was released—an escape that seemed almost miraculous. But the danger had already closed in. On the morning of December 14, Al-Badr men dragged him from his university quarters. Twenty-two days later, his decomposed body was found at the Mirpur killing field, among those of other murdered intellectuals.



The pen used by Rashidul Hasan.