

A handwritten notebook in which Dharendra Nath Dutta recorded his reflections on the discriminatory "Enemy Property Act", revealing his lifelong commitment to minority rights and constitutional fairness.

DHIRENDRANATH DUTTA (1886–1971)

A champion of communal harmony

Dhirendranath Dutta was an octogenarian lawyer, politician, and lifelong advocate of linguistic justice and communal harmony—one of the earliest and most courageous champions of the Bengali language in Pakistan. In 1948, his historic demand in the Pakistan Constituent Assembly that Bangla be recognised alongside Urdu ignited the first spark of what would later become the Language Movement.



A veteran of the Quit India movement, Dutta endured years of imprisonment for his anti-colonial activism. After the United Front's victory in 1954, he served as Health Minister, where he played a pivotal role in expanding public healthcare. His efforts contributed to the establishment of medical colleges in Rajshahi and Chattogram and the creation of tuberculosis and community clinics across the country, laying foundations that outlasted his tenure. Even in retirement in Comilla, age did not diminish his commitment to justice.

On 29 March 1971, Pakistani military personnel stormed his home and abducted both Dutta and his son. The 85-year-old statesman was taken to the Comilla cantonment, where he was tortured and killed. His body was never recovered.

Dutta's life was defined not only by language rights but by an unwavering defence of constitutional justice. His work consistently stood against discrimination, exclusion, and authoritarian abuse, making his murder an act of symbolic erasure as much as a physical one.



The car used by Dr Fazle Rabbee during the Liberation War.

FAZLE RABBE (1932–1971)

The physician who turned his car into a lifeline of liberation

Dr Mohammad Fazle Rabbee, a distinguished Professor of Clinical Medicine and Cardiology at Dhaka Medical College, was revered not only for his medical brilliance but also for his moral courage. A lifelong believer in justice and human dignity, he rejected a nomination for Pakistan's Best Professor Award in 1970—a quiet but resolute act of conscience that reflected his political clarity and ethical resolve.

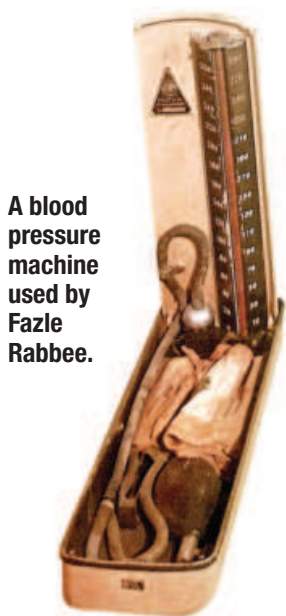


During the Liberation War of 1971, Dr Rabbee emerged as one of the medical profession's most steadfast allies of the resistance.

He treated wounded freedom fighters, victims of torture, and women subjected to violence, extending care even to Urdu-speaking Biharis when others turned away.

Among the objects he left behind, his Morris Minor car stands as one of the most powerful symbols of his bravery. It was more than a vehicle; it became a moving lifeline of liberation. Dr Rabbee used it to transport injured freedom fighters, deliver medicines, and quietly support underground networks. At times, he handed the car over to freedom fighters for their missions, never asking questions and never revealing identities—even when threatened.

On 15 December 1971, Al-Badr men abducted Dr Rabbee from his residence in Siddheswari. His body was later recovered from the Rayerbazar Killing Field. He was murdered in the final hours before victory—one more life taken in the systematic attempt to erase Bangladesh's intellectual and moral leadership.

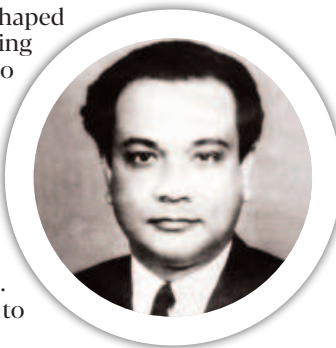


A blood pressure machine used by Dr Fazle Rabbee.

ABDUL ALIM CHAUDHURY (1928–1971)

A compassionate rebel in a doctor's coat

Dr Abdul Alim Chaudhury lived a life shaped by medicine, intellect, and uncompromising patriotism. Born in Kishoreganj in 1928 into a zamindar family, he chose not to inherit privilege but to question it—envisioning a society where dignity and justice were shared by all. After earning his MBBS from Dhaka Medical College and completing further medical training at the Royal College in England, he could have pursued a secure and prosperous career abroad. Instead, he returned home, determined to serve his own people.



From his student days, Dr Alim was politically conscious and unafraid of authority. He marched during the Language Movement of 1952 and was imprisoned in 1954, experiences that only deepened his resistance to Pakistani repression. His activism extended beyond the streets and into the world of ideas. His pen, as incisive as his scalpel, found expression in journals such as Jatrik and Khapchhara, and later in his efforts to establish a branch of the Bangla Academy in London.

When the Liberation War erupted in 1971, Dr Alim transformed his medical chamber into a place of refuge. He treated wounded freedom fighters, sheltered those in hiding, and supplied medicine and financial support to resistance networks operating in secrecy. Friends warned him repeatedly of the danger he faced, urging him to leave. He refused. "If everyone leaves, who will work from within?" he asked.

On December 15, 1971, Al-Badr men abducted him from his home. Days later, his body was discovered in the Rayerbazar mass grave. He was killed in the final hours before victory—one of the brightest medical minds and bravest consciences extinguished just as freedom arrived.



The panjabi worn by Abdul Alim Chaudhury.

HARINATH DEY (1941–1971)

A scientist, a philosopher

Dr Harinath Dey was a gifted biochemist and reflective thinker who embodied a rare union of scientific rigour and philosophical inquiry. Born into an enlightened Hindu family, he pursued knowledge not as a discipline alone but as a moral calling. A former professor of Biochemistry at the University of Dhaka, he later served as Principal Scientific Officer at the Science Laboratories in Dhaka, where his research and leadership marked him as a rising scholar of exceptional promise.



Beyond the laboratory, Dr Dey explored the intersections of religion, science, and human reason. He authored philosophical writings that sought harmony rather than division and edited the journal Ikkhon, contributing to a tradition of thoughtful, questioning intellectual engagement.

That life of inquiry was brutally cut short during the army crackdown of March 1971. On 27 March, following a brief relaxation of curfew, Pakistani soldiers raided Malakartola Lane in Old Dhaka, rounding up eleven Hindu residents, among them Dr Dey. They were taken to the Sutrapur Army Camp, forced to kneel for hours, and later marched to the Loharpool (Iron) Bridge over the Dholai canal. There, at around 10 p.m., they were lined up and shot. Dr Dey was killed instantly; only one detainee survived to bear witness to the atrocity.



A tape recorder used by Harinath Dey, preserved as a trace of a life dedicated to listening, reflection, and knowledge.

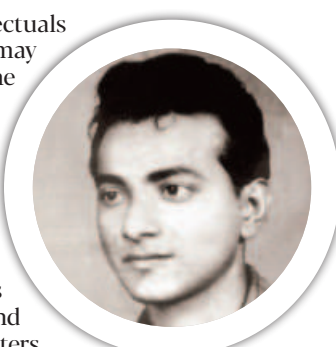


The ashtray used by Dr Azharul Haque, preserved at the Liberation War Museum.

DR AZHARUL HAQUE (1940–1971)

A quiet farewell preserved in ash

An ashtray preserved in the Martyred Intellectuals Gallery of the Liberation War Museum may appear insignificant at first glance. To the casual observer, it is merely an everyday object. But those who pause and look closely will notice cigarette filters resting in its hollow, settled among layers of dust and ash. It is only through such patient attention that the story of Dr Azharul Haque's final farewell begins to emerge.



In July 1971, Dr Azharul Haque was summoned to police headquarters and warned for treating wounded freedom fighters. Though he stopped seeing patients openly in his chamber, he did not stop practising medicine. Instead, he continued to provide secret medical care in the Hatirpool slums and other high-risk areas across Dhaka, where the injured could not afford visibility—or delay.

On 15 November 1971, while attempting to reach a hospital, the area was cordoned off by Al-Badr cadres. An ambulance carrying Dr Haque and his colleague, Dr A B M Hamayun Kabir, was stopped. Both men were assaulted and forcibly taken away at gunpoint. The following day, 16 November, their bodies were discovered in a trench near Notre Dame College in Motijheel.

That morning, before leaving his residence at Hakim House in Hatirpool, Dr Haque smoked a cigarette. He tapped the ash and placed the final cigarette butt into the ashtray he used every day. No one could have known that this ordinary gesture would become his last trace. Today, the dust and ash preserved within the ashtray seem to hold a silent farewell—to his home, and to the country he refused to abandon.



A traditional smoking pot (hukka dani) used by Ranada Prasad Saha.

RANADA PRASAD SAHA (1896–1971)

Traces of Danbir's humanity

Ranada Prasad Saha—widely revered as Danbir, the great philanthropist—was a visionary of social welfare whose life was devoted to service, compassion, and nation-building. Born on 15 November 1896, he began his public life far from comfort or privilege. During the First World War, he served in the Royal British Army, fought in Iraq with the Bengal Infantry (Bengali Paltan), and later joined the 1919 Victory March in London, where he was awarded the prestigious Sword of Honour.



After the war, Saha entered business and accumulated considerable wealth, which he consciously redirected towards public welfare. His mission was clear: to uplift the disadvantaged through healthcare, education, and social development. In 1944, he founded Kumudini Hospital in Mirzapur, Tangail—an institution inaugurated by Governor Lord Casey and destined to become one of the country's most respected centres of medical care.

During the devastating Bengal famine of 1943–44, Saha organised and sustained several langar khana (community kitchens), feeding thousands of starving people for months. His philanthropy was neither episodic nor symbolic; it was sustained, practical, and rooted in an unshakable belief in human dignity.

The violence of 1971 did not spare even such a life of service. On 29 April, during the Liberation War, Ranada Prasad Saha and his son, Bhabani Prasad Saha, were summoned by the Pakistan Army. Though they were briefly released on 5 May, both were abducted two days later and never seen again. His disappearance marked one of the most painful losses of the war—a reminder that compassion itself was a target.