

**An Interview of someone on their personal experience of
living through 1971,(March 15,2023)**

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Name of the interviewee : Shahjahan Anisur Rahman

Age : 60

Gender : Male

Religion : Islam



Description : Being the eldest of his five siblings, Shahjahan

Anisur Rahman born and grew up in Kamargram,Alfadanga,Faridpur. His father, born and raised in Faridpur, was an officer of ship and his mother was a homemaker. He completed his graduation and post graduation from Department of Zoology,University of Dhaka.From the beginning of his career, he has been a govt. employee in the Department of Fisheries. For his job's purpose,he has visited India, Malaysia,Philippines and Ireland to give training about fisheries related cultivations. At present, he is working as a senior quality control officer in Quality Control Laboratory,Savar,Dhaka. He is the father of two daughters.To say more about his personal life, he is fond of cooking and traveling.

Shahjahan Anisur Rahman remembers that he was in his native village named Kamargram near Alfadanga in Faridpur from 25/26 March to 16 of December in 1971 as he was a village dweller by birth then. When the war of independence in 1971 started fully, “ I was very shocked and feared.And it was very surprising to me”, he says.

The war affected him and his family very deeply. Being a member of an ordinary family of a small village, they took the risk to give shelter to the freedom fighters of their area. “In

October, 1971, our two houses were burnt by the cruel Pak military and their associate razakars. We were in shortage of food. We always panicked.” In addition, they hid somewhere to avoid the Pakistani military. According to Shahjahan, both their everyday lives and their educational interests were completely hampered. An incident which Shahjahan could look back on easily is that “The bomber jet plane and helicopter of Pakistani Military were used to move around with big sound and roaring repeatedly near our village.”

Shahjahan believes in "Joy Bangla," the most well-known motto of the Bengali nation. “I always support Bangladesh. The Pak regime deprived us and used to exploit us economically and socially. Now, we are Independent. And we are in a better position than Pakistan in economy, socially, education and every side. Our GDP and Dollar reserves are also more than Pakistan,” he says. So, as per Shahjahan, the view of Bangladesh has been changed and developed gradually more than Pakistan. He also adds that he wants a corruption free and developed Bangladesh in future for which our brave brave freedom fighters fought and sacrificed their lives.

The Liberation war of 1971 could give the people of the then East Pakistan their most desired identity as a distinct nation. Therefore, along with the bigger number of people, Shahjahan also supported this war in 1971. He narrates, “I wanted to be an independent citizen, free from exploitation and also wanted the freedom of expression.”

While giving the interview, Shahjahan became nostalgic. He took a moment to take a trip down to his memory lane of the crucial moment of the year 1971. At that time, most of the people wanted to be a part of the war, the fight against West Pakistan. Shahjahan was also not out of the way from them. “Our full family supported the freedom fighters. My grandfather gave them

shelter in our house and helped them in other ways also. I also indirectly participated in the war. I used to supply food and drinking water to the camp of the freedom fighters which was cooked by my grandmother and mother. I used to inform them about the further and future movements of razakars in our village,” he recounts.

Shahjahan also shares an interesting and almost unknown story about the war of independence in 1971 that wishes to share with the future members of the origination. He describes, ”There was an army camp in Bhatiapara, near our village. Yet our country got the victory of freedom on 16 December, 1971, this area was not free from the Pak army by then. Because, the commander of that camp was not ready to surrender at all in that time. On the morning of December 18, 1971, before surrendering, the camp commander committed suicide by using his own pistol. Then the freedom fighters occupied their camp and seized their arms and thus we got the massive victory all over ”.

The moment of getting the news of victory was one of the most beautiful memories of Shahjahan. As per his speech, it was very joyful news to them.” We were shouting, dancing, and at that time all our sorrows went away”, he says with excitement. But, he also describes the after condition of the war-devastated newly born Bangladesh in this native area in this way, “Hungry, poor and ill and weak people were returning from India and other hideouts to their own villages with empty hands, losing their all wealth and many dear ones; this scenario was very painful to me.”

When asked, Shahjahan responds affirmative to the fact that the demand created by many to take the assets and possessions of war criminals who have been found to be responsible for human rights violations and distribute it to the families of martyred Bengali freedom fighters, other honest Bengalis, and their families who were damaged by Pakistan's criminal war against the East Bengali people in 1971. To elaborate, he further states that “ the razakars were not the actual owner of this wealth. Moreover, this process helped the families of the freedom fighters and other bengalis who lost their dear and near ones in the war of 1971.”

Here remains a topic of discussion of the war of independence of 1971. And that is about the “Birangona—the War heroines” of our country; women who were raped by the Pakistan army and their local collaborators ,known as “Razakars”. According to Shahjahan, those women are very respectable to him forever as they sacrificed their own “honor” for the independence of the country. He also portrays the then social view on “war-heroines” of the then newly born, war-torn Bangladesh, “ At that time,general people were not ready to accept them back to their families in fear of shame and disrespect. Which is really a matter of great regret that they were deprived of their well-deserved respect and acceptance in their families as well as in their societies.But I still honor them, I bow to them for sacrificing for Bangladesh.”

Topic : History of the Liberation War of Bangladesh,1971

Language : English

Physical description : 1 attached video file

Genre : Filmed interview
