



National Martyrs' Memorial is the national monument of Bangladesh, set up in the memory of those who died in the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971, which brought independence and separated Bangladesh from Pakistan. The monument is located in Savar, about 35 km north-west of the capital, Dhaka. National Martyrs' Memorial at Savar is one of the most beautiful place to visit. Early morning is less crowded but in the evening it is full of people. It is located at Savar, about 32 km north-west of Dhaka built in memory of the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971. The Monument tower is composed of seven isosceles triangular planes, each varying in size in its height and base. The planes are folded at the middle and placed one after another. The highest point of the structure reaches 150 feet. Several mass-graves and a pool of water body are placed in front of the monument. Syed Mainul Hussain is the architect of this beautiful monument.

Monument complex is spread over an area of 84 acres wrapped around by a green belt of 24.7 acre. Concrete is used for the monument tower while red bricks is used for other structures and pavements. Water pool and the platform for laying wreath are placed in front of the monument while mass-graves are on both sides.



### History:

The monument rises from a verdant land, somewhat reminiscent of the ruinous mound of the ancient city of Pundranagarain Mahasthan, Bogra. The first phase of the project was initiated in 1972, when the government acquired nearly 110 acres. The main complex required 84 acres of land, while the remaining area was allocated for a land-water greenbelt. Access roads were created during the first phase. Mass graves, helipads, parking spaces, and pavements were constructed during the second phase, between 1974 and 1982. Construction of the

main monument, greenbelt, and cafeteria, occurred in the third phase, in 1982.

With a heavyweight jury, including architect Muzharul Islam, a national design competition for the monument took place in 1978. (The previous attempt didn't yield any satisfactory results.) A 26-year-old architect, Syed Mainul Hossain (1952-2014), won the competition from a pool of 57 participants. As legend has it, Hossain's design was the jury's unanimous choice: it captured most poignantly the new nation's aspiration through an elemental composition of converging planes, achieving a sublime gesture of ascension.



Architecture:

A national competition was held for the design of the project in June 1978. Among the fifty-seven competitors Architect Syed Moinul Hossain's design proposal was selected. The main monument is composed of seven isosceles triangular planes each varying in size in its height and base. The highest one has the smallest base while the broadest base has the lowest height. The planes are folded at the middle and placed one after another. The highest point of the structure reaches 150 feet. This unique arrangement of the planes has created a structure that seems to change its configuration when viewed from different angles. The architect has used concrete for the monument while all the other structures and pavements of the complex are made of red bricks. Use of different materials has added to the gravity of the monument.

The whole complex is spread over an area of 34 hectares (84 acres) which is again wrapped around by a green belt of 10 hectares (24.7 acre). Several mass-graves and a reflection water body are placed in front of the monument. Once one enters the complex through the main gate he or she can see the monument axially but to reach it one has to walk through different ups and downs of pavements and cross an artificial lake by a bridge-all these represent the struggle for independence.

The project was constructed in three phases. The first one, began in 1972, involved in acquiring land and constructing road for the project at a cost of Tk 26 lacs. During the second phase, 1974-1982, Tk 3.77 crores were spent in order to build the mass-graves, helipad, parking space, pavements etc. In the third phase, began in August 1982, the main structure was built apart from the artificial lake, green belt, cafeteria, housing etc. The third phase required Tk 848.65 lacs. The Public Works Department of the Government of Bangladesh supervised the construction of the project. [Md Shahidul Amin and M Zakiul Islam]

