

Bidding farewell to a cultural icon

Even today, timeless numbers like 'Ekbar jete dei na amar chhotto shonar gayn', 'She je keno elo na', 'Ektara tui desher kotha bol re ebar bol', 'Aul Baul Laloner deshey' and many more fill one with a rush of warm feeling and the peaceful touch of melody. A warrior who had fought his way through the war of independence in 1971 with Shadhin Bangla Betaar Kendro, spreading his messages of confidence, condolence, love, the joy of victory and the agony of defeat, Anwar Parvez passed away last week.

Anwar Parvez, one of the most brilliant music directors and composers of Bangladesh, died at the Heart Foundation Hospital in Dhaka on Friday after a prolonged ailment at the age of 65. He was suffering from prostrate cancer for a long time and was under treatment at the Holy Family Red Crescent Hospital. Later on, he was shifted to the National Heart Foundation hospital on Friday. Several cultural concerts and musical shows were organised to arrange funds for his treatment. However, nothing could stop Parvez from finally leaving his earthly abode and stepping into the other side of life. "I wish something more could be done for him," cried Parvez's wife, Jesmine Parvez. Cultural icons of the country such as Runa Lalia, Alamgir, Parvez's sister Shahnaz Rahmatullah and many more were present at the funeral. Parvez also left behind two daughters, a son and a host of friends and admirers.

It is sure, however, that Parvez was a happy man during his last few days when the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) rated three of his patriotic songs in the 20 popular Bangla songs selected through a survey.

A number that had created a revolution amongst the people of the country and instilled a fighting spirit amongst the freedom fighters is 'Joy Bangla Banglar Joy'. This used to be the opening and the closing song of the Shadhin Bangla Betaar Kendro during the Liberation War. Composing this song at the age of 27 for the film 'Jai Bangla', the inspirational number kept the spirits high at the camps. "It was not that the song was composed for any particular party. It was rather composed at a time when people were united under a single banner for a common cause -- independence," said Parvez, in an earlier interview with The Daily Star. "When a composer works with a song, he has to depend on his basic instincts and his 'third eye'. His vision must not only focus on the context of the song, but also on the impact the song would have on the audience. So, when I was asked to compose a tune for the particular film, the first thing I



Anwar Parvez will always be remembered for his inspiring patriotic songs.

visualised was the half-fed and half-clad people in distress, having lost all hope of livelihood, but still holding dear the hope of independence. And I wanted to create a tune that would re-ignite that hope into an engulfing flame."

Abdul Jabbar and Parvez's illustrious sister Shahnaz Rahmatullah along with co-artists lent their voices to the song. Shahnaz Rahmatullah had also sung Parvez' other famous patriotic compositions created after Independence, namely, 'Ekbar jete dena amara chhotto shonar gayn' and 'Ektara tui desher kotha bol re ebar bol'. These numbers took over the hearts of millions in the country and abroad.

Parvez was also one of the leading names in film music. He had composed songs for several Bangla films such as Abhijan, Madhu Maloti, Shonar Harin, Talalq, Shokal Shandhya and many more. He had never won any major award but his songs hummed by millions, was his greatest reward. His demise marks an irreparable loss to our cultural arena.