

A Brave Soldier!

Sepoy Muhammad Hamidur Rahman
(Bir Shrestha)
by Shahed Latif

HAMIDUR Rahman was born on 2nd February, 1953. His father's name was Akkas Ali and his mother's name was Khaironessa. Hamidur Rahman's forefathers were from West Bengal during the war between India and Pakistan. They came to Khalispur village under Jessore district and settled there.

Hamidur Rahman studied in Khalispur primary school but had to discontinue his education in an effort to help his father and other family members. In the year 1971 he joined the army. At that time the whole country was all geared up for Independence, and Sepoy Mohammed Hamidur Rahman driven by his patriotism, joined the East Bengal Regiment along with the other soldiers and officers and went to the war. Hamidur Rahman had his first army training from the East Bengal Regiment, and he was transferred to the East Bengal Centre in Chittagong after completing his training. Hamid came to meet his mother for the last time on the 25th of March and joined his station at the border post of Sylhet.

This was a very important border outpost near Sreemongal under Sylhet district. This was strategically very important to both the Mukti Bahini's and the Pakistani's. The Mukti Bahini's decided to capture

Dolia outpost from the enemies. The C company, the 1st East Bengal Regiment, was given the charge of capturing this outpost. And Hamidur Rahman was one of the soldiers in the company.

The company decided that they would attack in the early hours of 28th of October, and accordingly, they made their move on the 27th of October. The company decided that they would make their final assault around 4:00 am. But due to heavy fog, nothing within 20/25m could be seen. This made the attack impossible. Lt Quayum ordered Habildar Makbool to climb up a tree and keep an eye at the enemies. However, the enemy started firing at the company, the reason for this being that the enemies were also keeping a close eye on the situation. The company, taken aback by this surprised attack, also fired back and asked the artillery for bomb attacks to divert their attention.

The artillery followed its orders and it seemed to work, because the enemy unit in BUP were not prepared for this, and they seemed to be confused and retreated from the artillery attack. The Mukti Bahini's had a different strategy in mind. As the enemies were busy putting out the fire the order came for the final assault. At first a few Mukti Bahini's were injured. The

unharmed soldiers left the injured soldiers behind and proceeded to capture this outpost. But this was not an easy task, for the enemy had planted mines on the road and many more soldiers were injured. Yet in spite of everything they kept on fighting with the initiative to capture the outpost. The soldiers had to keep on fighting, even though they came very close to the BUP outpost but was really finding it hard to carry on their attack. The enemy soldiers built up a trench at a very important place the trench was hidden in dense forest and the Mukti Bahini's were not able to fire their machine gun.

Hamidur Rahman crawled up to the enemy trench, climbed in and had a hand-to-hand fight with the enemies. At one time the firing stopped and the Mukti Bahini's captured the BUP outpost from the Pakistani's. The jubilant Mukti Bahini's ran towards the trench to congratulate Hamidur Rahman, since it was for him that they captured the BUP outpost. Hamidur was killed as a result of the hand-to-hand brawl and the two enemies were also injured. They buried his dead body there.

Due to space constraint in our Teens and Twenties section, the second last installment of Bir Shrestha is being accommodated in the Rising Star section.

For the Love of A Country

by Sadia R Chowdhury

THIS time I didn't have very high expectations about what the *ghor* would look like. However, I was in for a surprise. The Khan family was rather well off financially. They owned a prosperous store in Baitul Mukarram. The complex was rather large, at least five rooms. There was a strong tin roof to keep the rain out, something that was a problem the last time we went to gram. They had large farms where they grew their own rice and jute to export out of the country. They even had a bathroom! Even though this is nothing now, it was considered a luxury in the gram.

As we walked in, I could smell the delicious odors of food on the stove.

As we walked in, we were greeted by several women who told us to sit down and eat some lunch. There was enough food to go around. They even invited the two soldiers in, but they declined politely.

As we ate, the mother of the family talked of her sons and her husband, who had all went to fight in the war. There were no males in the family above the age of twelve. They found it rather odd that Tarek and Kamal Bhai were still at home, but they never really say anything.

The few days we spent at the Khan's were some of the most memorable days of my

life. There was never a sad moment. The whole gram was so happy that their sons had gone to fight, that they had large festivities every night. I spent most of my time playing with the girls of the village. The mothers were always cooking food. There was never a shortage. In fact, because I was from the city, I was always given the delicacies.

On December 16, everybody in the village turned on their radios to see what was going on during the conference. That afternoon, the treaty between East and West Pakistan had been signed. Bangladesh was now an independent nation. That night, we had the largest party ever. There was dancing, and singing throughout the whole night.

The next day, Amma wanted to go home. However, Abba wasn't sure that it was safe yet. He wanted to make sure before we left for Dhaka. After a few more days, we prepared for our return journey to Dhaka.

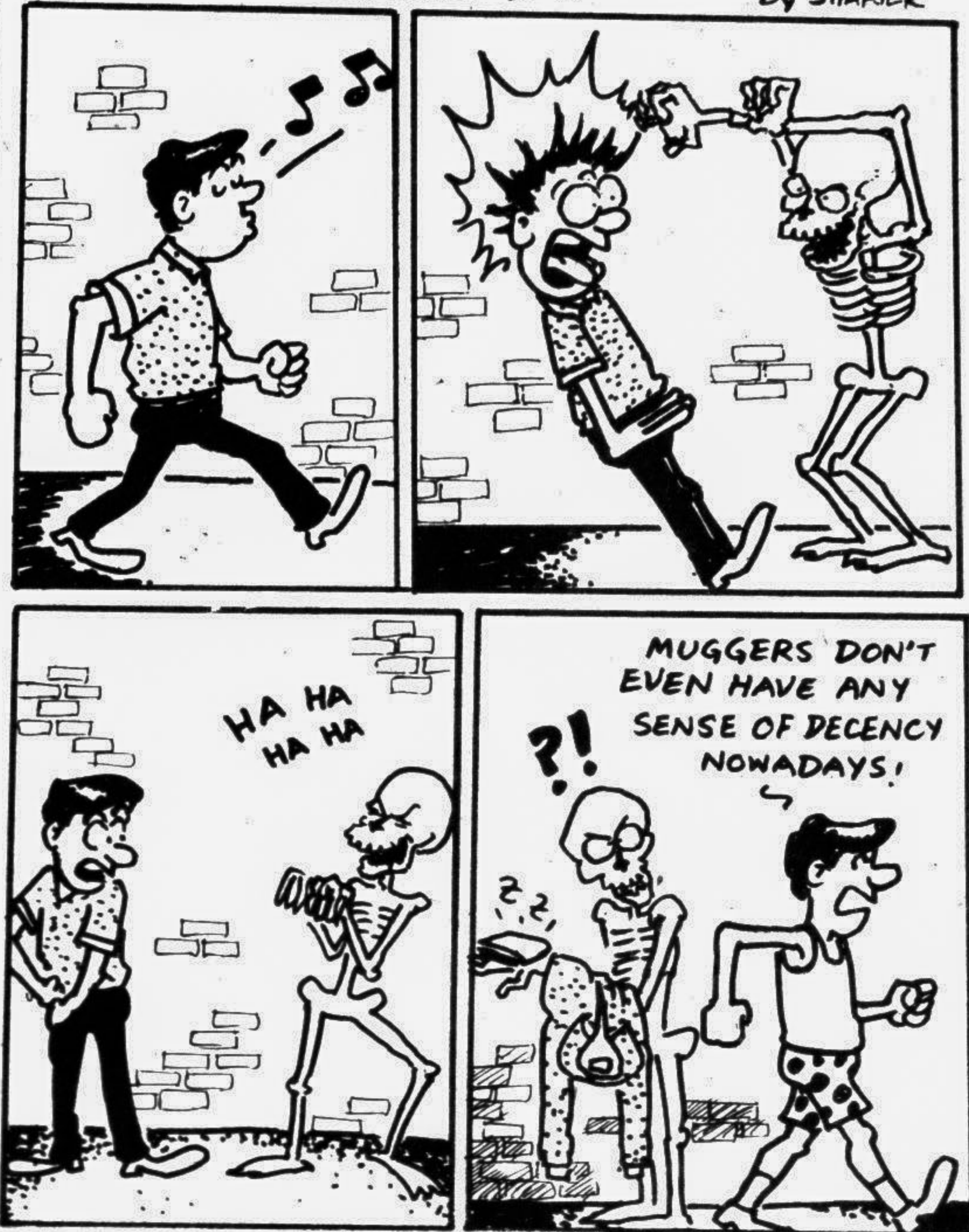
The dead bodies that were in the river before were still there. However, they did not bother us as much. Nothing could destroy our happiness.

As we approached Dhaka, I looked up in the sky to see a large flag, swaying with the wind, displaying its colors for all the world to see.

The End

THE GHOST

by SHARIF



Nature's Singers

by Adnan R Amin



to other warmer, tropical places. Finding it difficult to cope with the different climatic conditions, and away from their natural habitat, a large number of songbirds thus die out.

Another threat to the existence of the feathered songsters are the poachers who sell them in Singapore, Bangkok, Pakistan and other places. Experts claim that, prior to their long flights during the migration period, the birds consume a large amount of food in order to stave their bodies. In doing so, they become rather fat and their reflexes become somewhat slack. So, they become easy targets for the poachers, who sell them mostly in Singapore where there's a great demand for songbirds. Then there are also natural predators presented by squirrels, snakes and other wild animals that intrude upon the nests and the birds, themselves.

Environmental pollution imposes another serious threat to the survival of the songbirds because through environmental pollution, the natural habitat and the necessary conditions for their existence is destroyed. In the last few years, over several thousand birds have died in thirteen states of the US due to Selenium pollution. A survey tells us that during the beginning of the nineteenth century fifty million birds used to migrate to the Central Valley. This number has now slumped down to 2.5 million. Apart from that radiation from pollution, other factors have affected the birds genetically, and therefore every year numerous deformed chicks are being hatched. The 'Cowbirds' are another major obstacle in saving the feathered songsters from extinction as they tend to lay eggs on other birds' nests, destroying the original ones. Facing all these adversities, within 25 years, 40 per cent of the songbirds, 46 per cent of the Golden Winged Warblers, 33 per cent of the Wood Pewees and 29 per cent of the Orchard Orioles have been wiped out.

But a faint ray of hope peers through the cloud as the people are now gradually growing aware of the importance of such birds and are taking initiatives and contributing a lot in the worldwide effort to save them from extinction.

Translated from Ananda Mela



Quiz Club

DEAR Quiz Crackers! We have decided to stick with our original format of Quiz Club, which means there will be 10 quizzes printed fortnightly. Your answers should reach our office by a week's time.

And here are ten quizzes for you to crack. Winners of the Quiz Club will be announced in the next Quiz Club issue. So, why not you give a go and win away the Quiz Club prize.

1. What does LTTE represent for?
2. Which warlord of Liberia was evacuated recently?
3. Who is the Prime Minister of Bulgaria?
4. The writer of the book, *The General in His Labyrinth* is -
5. The technical term Geotropism means -
6. Haber Process is used to make -
7. What is the function of a hydrometer?
8. What is the capital of Finland?
9. The state religion of Senegal is -
10. Who is the Ameer of the local political party, Jamaat-e-Islami?

Answers:-

1. 15
2. Sherwani
3. Shamsur Rahman
4. Thruddin
5. Cholon Bill
6. Banderban
7. Srimangal
8. 106
9. Sheraj-u-Dawla
10. 1345 AD

The Family Song

by Inshirah Kishwar Sakhawat

This poem is dedicated to Mrs Kishwar Sakhawat.

MOTHER
Just like a beautiful rose
Complexion and all
Standing in the doorway
'Insh'ra' her sweet voice calls
I come out of my room and it's her I see
Just looking at her beautiful face
My heart jumps with glee.
I smell the sweet of honey
As I breathe her in,
And see her glow
Through her golden skin
I kiss her cheek and hug her tight
And proudly say: 'Mother, it's my life you light'

This poem is dedicated to Mr Kazi Yusuf Sakhawat

FATHER
As I see him climb up the stairs
Strong and powerful yet eyes filled with care.
He drinks some water as I walk through the door,
Every day I love him more than before.
And as I hug him I say:
'Hi Dad, how was your day?'
We share a moment of conversation
And then he washes up to rest
And as I close the curtains and leave the room I say:
'Dad, you're the best!'
In time I got to see
It's you who makes my life so special to me.

Fishy Wishy

by Ashiq Jahan Khondker

GURGLE goggle giggle goop.
I like to swim, I swim a loop!
I always have to be in school,
That's why my life is not that cool!

I really hate to be a nerd,
I wish that I could be a bird!
If I could jump out of the sea,
I'll tell you what I'd wish to be!

I'd be a gray rhinoceros,
To kill the fishermen because,
They like to eat our scaly skin.
And fry our bony guts within!

A very sharp and stinky knife,
Cut the scales right off my wife!
I hate to be a bony fish,
So that's the story of my wish!

Aranyak Natyadal

— A distinct theatre group

— Pallab Majumder Chanchal

ARANYAK Natyadal is an established and popular theatre group in Bangladesh. After liberation, cultural development has certainly come a long way in the country. Aranyak was formed by several talented artists. Noted TV and theatre personalities Mamunur Rashid, Shanta Islam, Azizul Hakim and Pavel are to name just a few. Through its various productions, Aranyak highlights the persisting problems and evils of the society. Humanity and the purpose of living are its two main themes. The group of performers attempt to express their philosophies through clear and uninhibited narration, rather than slogans and hard dialogue. In the last few years, it has developed shows about the life of the struggling masses. Aranyak believes that art, culture and the human struggle for a better life go hand in hand. They are an inseparable entity, destined to the same goal. It is a group theatre association with not only a special craving for art, but more for human beings irrespective of, cast, creed, religion and colour.

The latest show of Aranyak Natyadal is a stage drama written by Mannan Hera and directed by Azad Abul Kalam (Pavel). The drama named 'Agun Mukha' is about the bitter experience in a concentration camp. It focuses on the acute conflict between the two classes of our society. The Saffron dressed law enforcing people represent the interest of the upper class of the society. On the other hand, the other class, the revolutionaries' conviction, love for human-

ity and commitment towards the society can uproot a government and shatter the world. By breaking all the conventions and age old policies, the revolutionaries want to give the world they love, a new look.

The main role of these revolutionaries in every phase of the development of each society is to make a bridge between the conflicts or gaps. By risking or sacrificing their lives, they keep the cycle of the civilization mobile. Such an experience is narrated here. In the prelude of the drama, a narrator starts with a speech at the audience and goes on to explain what they are about to see. The viewers will feel the pressure of the characters shown in the drama. They have a different conception about the world and society as well as human beings. Their patriotic feelings are very keen and uncompromising.

The play depicts the incidents that takes place in a concentration camp, where revolutionaries are interrogated by the law enforcing officials.

The distinct political beliefs and its contradiction with tradition lies behind the dialogues. The contradiction between the oppressive character of the state machine and the public interest becomes clear from their conversation. The rebels are interrogated by turns. We find all of them blind folded and hand cuffed. After some time of relentless interrogation, the sound of torture could be heard from behind the stage. Among the three revolutionaries, one is a beautiful woman named Rupa, who

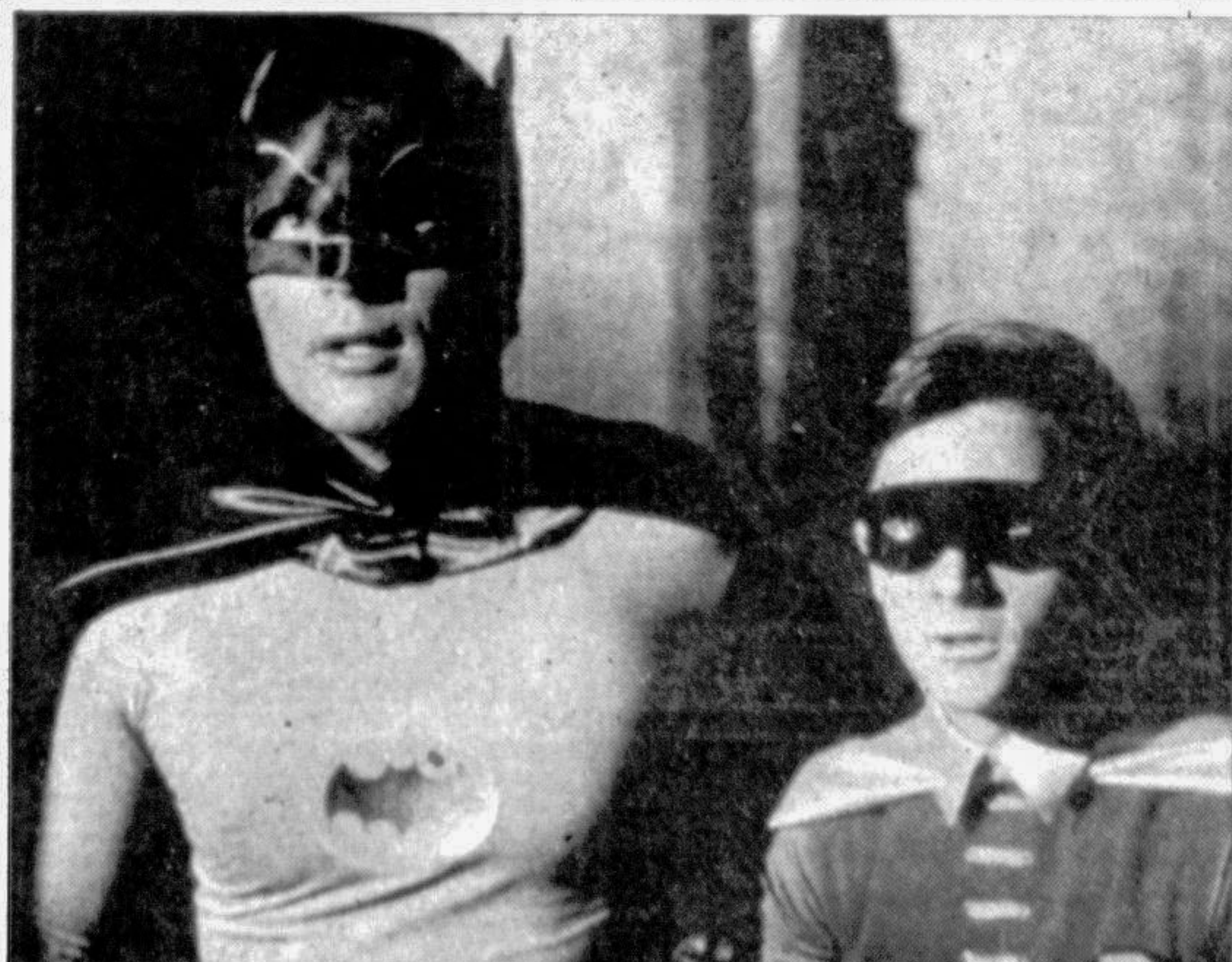
remains resolute and uncompromising in spite of torture and hard interrogation.

In the play, 'she tries to maintain communication with the help of a camp attendant who is sympathetic to their cause. But that person is caught red handed by the officials and then shot dead. The female comrade Runa is found anxious for a time being as the officials give her a condition; if she doesn't sign a bond of betrayal with the other comrades, her daughter will be killed. But despite all the threats, Runa remains unyielding and does not betray neither her comrades nor her glorious cause.

Ashim is another dedicated comrade, who had to endure severe torture. The third comrade is Badal, who is also Runa's husband. His desire to lead a normal, stable life with his wife and daughter had led him into a trap and made him give up his underground terrorist life.

In the end, the officials kill all three of the comrades. The last scene is not shown directly but with a artistic figurative expression, hanging a doll in the noose. The hanging of the doll portrays the destruction of the rebellion by the brutal forces of the state. The director with his brilliant direction of lighting, staging and acting aptly presented the revolutionary spirit of the comrades and the conflict between the state and their political belief.

Aranyak Natyadal deserves special praise for such a remarkable performance. We wish them every success.



Your Favourite Bat Personality — Batman and Robin.