

Mini Quadir

Leaving footprints on the sand of time

KARIM WAHEED

MINI Quadir is known as an accomplished Tagore artiste. Mini is also adept in the genre of gono sangeet (songs of the masses). She has been an active member of the cultural organisation Kranti since 1967. According to Mini, "Kamal Lohani, Altaf Mahmood and Sheikh Lutfur Rahman were some of the prominent members of Kranti. We had the opportunity to learn songs from these noted composers."

However, singing is not the only trait that makes Mini stand apart. Mini has several feasts to be proud of. The first flag of Bangladesh to be hoisted was made by Mini and she is one of the very few women who worked as 'transporters' for the freedom fighters in Dhaka during the Liberation War. She used to move ammo from Dhaka to a camp of freedom fighters in Savar.

In a cabin in Sikdar Medical College, where she is being treated for gall bladder stones, Mini reminisces on incidents and experiences during 1971:

"My cousin Manirul Haq, who was the president of 'Dhaka Chhatra League' then, asked me to make a flag. I was good in needlework. I was told that the flag should be bottle-green with a red sphere in it. I started working on it; I can still recall how excited I was. However, I had to make modifications twice. I was almost done with the flag when I was told that a white map of our country has to be in the centre of the red sphere. Later I was told, that map has to be golden, not white. I borrowed some *absaai* (glitter) from my cousins and made the map golden. That was the first flag of our country, as far as I know."

"On the eve of March 25, I performed two songs -- a gono sangeet for a programme of Kranti and a Tagore song for another show, both aired live from DIT building (the then TV Station). A colleague showed me huge objects covered in *trepol* (tarpaulin). I was told these were tanks. While performing, we



Mini Quadir, one of the few women who worked as 'transporters' for the freedom fighters

apprehensively watched paratroopers marching into the building. However, they left after a while. I contemplated what was going on. That all became clear a few hours later. The co-worker who dropped me off in his car was stopped on his way home by the Pakistani military and the car was burned.

"We all moved to our village home in Darikandi, Comilla. On our way we came across stacks of dead bodies; vultures had started feasting. I was just a teenager. I can still see images of the scavengers pecking on eyes of the deceased.

"My uncle had a launch and we figured it'd be safer to live on the boat. I still remember the launch getting stuck at times in piles of

bodies thrown in water; their hands tied at the back. How would you feel if you see your parents, brothers, sisters, friends, namely your fellow countrymen slaughtered like that? I wanted to kill the butchers who were committing these massacres in the same method applied by them.

"We returned to our home in Rokonpur, Old Dhaka in June, 1971. People were crossing the border but my family didn't want to leave the country. One day, my brothers asked me if I'd like to assist them in moving some ammo (guns, grenades, bullets and other explosives) to a camp in Savar. There were several check posts, where the military would thoroughly inspect men for arms. Apparently, they

didn't check women. The plan was: I'd be in a car packed with arms, which will go through all the check posts. After crossing all the points, I'd get off the car and return home.

"Of course there was the possibility of getting blown up to pieces or getting caught. I knew if the latter was about to happen, my brothers would kill me first and then kill themselves. We were aware of the 'ingenious' ways Pakistani military tortured women.

"I remember accompanying my brothers and their friends in a procession celebrating victory on December 17. We were in a rural area just outside Dhaka. Villagers offered us water and *muri* (rice flakes) though we were not parched or starving. Some greeted us with leis that had one or two flowers in them. That was all those poor villagers could pull together. How many kings or queens received a heartfelt ovation like that?

"However, I do feel dejected sometimes when I see undeserving people labeling themselves as *Muktijoddha* (freedom fighters). I know quite a few, who were in a rush to flee to India during the War. I'm not trying to deride whatever contribution they had made to the Liberation War, living in the safety of another country but it makes me livid when people comment, 'What have you done living in Dhaka during the war?'

"In 2004, 33 years after the war, I was honoured by the Council of Urban Guerrilla Dhaka '71 with a crest and medal for my contributions. Apparently, I couldn't be located when I was previously considered by other organisations for the honour. I remember once at a family gathering, my young nephews and nieces asked me about the war. I was narrating what I'd seen during the war and was interrupted by a relative who pulled her children away saying, 'my naive kids believe everything people cook up.'

"Whom do I blame? Whom can I blame?"

"Whom do I blame? Whom can I blame?"

In Conversation

Hashem Khan's River of Blood

FAYZA HAQ

In 1971 Hashem Khan was a 28-year old teacher at the Institute of Fine Arts. In the non-cooperation movement, students, teachers artists and the intelligentsia as a whole were involved. Khan recounts those momentous days: "People realised that they would have to fight for their freedom. The inspiration for the guerilla war came from Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's speech on March 7. The artists took out a procession and the preparation for this took us 10 days.

"There were many posters and festoons and 500 artists took part in the procession under the leadership of Zainul Abedin. This was called *Shadheenatar Michhil*. The four words of the alphabets of freedom were hung around the necks of four young women. The war began on March 26. I had a brother who was a doctor and the two of us went to the village. There we were attacked and while my elder brother was killed, I was wounded. Along with my mother and niece, I was at the hospital for two weeks. When I came back I found that all my friends had left for the war including my close friend Shahadat Chowdhury."

Since he was wounded, Hashem Khan decided to stay back in Dhaka, and help those who were going to the war, by distributing food, clothes and medicines. Thus for nine months he had, in his own way, joined the freedom struggle. During that time he did a few drawings and sketching. Later on relying on these sketches he made many paintings and had an exhibition in 2000 in the National Museum where he had dwelt on the subject of the River of '71.

He went to Meghna, Sitalakhy and Buriganga and felt that the colour



Fascinating artwork by Hashem Khan on Liberation War

had changed over the last 35 years. He felt that the blood and bodies of lakhs of people were immersed in the river waters. This stirred him so much that he did six large paintings on that subject. He says that he is still strongly influenced by the Liberation War and goes back to that theme again and again in his paintings. Sometimes these works were figurative and at times abstract. Every March he is reminded of the subject and does sketches and paintings on that theme.

The Liberation War, according to Hashem Khan, has given a lot of courage and strength to the people. "We had fought against the well trained Pak army but because we were motivated we won," he says. In his paintings of the period he drew attention to the fact that in '71 the colour of our rivers had changed, mixing with the blood of the sacrificed people. "It was as if the river was crying". In the painting dedicated to the war there is the inclusion of the mother handing over the rifle to the son to go to war and in the backdrop are the ploughs of the ordinary people who have gone to the war. The sky is awash with red and black. *Rokto jokhon dieychi aro dibo* and *Joy Bangla* are the lettering on the canvas. Hashem Khan says that he was aware of the struggle for freedom since 1952 when he was a schoolboy. He was linked with the famous poster *Shonar Bangla shoshon keno?* He had also done the logo, monogram and poster on the 'Six Points'.

National Rabindra Sangeet festival ends



Artistes of Rabindra Sangeet Shilpi Sangsta perform at the festival

Grand finale of DRockstars held

KHALID-BIN-HABIB

The much-awaited grand finale of DRockstars featured a live performance at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Centre. The outcome of the neck to neck competition, based on the public and judges' votes, was also revealed during the three-and-a-half-hour finale on March 24. After over seven months of tireless scouting, Shuvo from Dhaka became Bangladesh's first DRockstar, a winner all the way.

Managing Director of Grameen Phone Limited (GP), Erik Ass delivered a speech through a video clip on the giant screen. He said, "Djuice is not only the name of a GP's mobile brand, it also the brand name of the Bangladeshi youngsters. The DRockstars show by Djuice on Channel i gave viewers a glimpse of the life, struggle, hopes and aspirations of young rock singers. I hope, the finalists will capture the hearts of millions of Bangladeshis by their spectacular performance and stardom success."

The colourful prize giving ceremony featured a rock show by the DRockstars 10 finalists. Ayub Bachchu, Azam Khan, Partho and Agun also rocked with the finalists in a medley of Bangladesh's favourite songs. Eminent media personality, Faridur Reza Shagor, acting head of marketing of GP, Rubaba Dowla Matin, rock icon Ayub Bachchu and singer Hasan Habibur Rahman Reza Jewel attended the prize giving ceremony.



Finalist Shuvo receives the award from Faridur Reza Shagor

In the course of the show, Ayub Bachchu sought to encourage the participants and put them at ease. Talking about Shuvo, Ayub Bachchu said, "I think there is no difference in the performance of the 10 finalists. DRockstars fans had absolutely loved their performance and I am sure that they will make waves in rock music across the nation."

The DRockstar Shuvo was handed over a cheque of Taka 3 lakhs along with contracts for music shows and albums and many other prizes. The nine other finalists won Taka 50,000 as prize money as well as a music contract from Djuice. In addition, there

Special programmes on ATN Bangla

To mark Independence Day, ATN BANGLA will air special programmes today. The special children's programme, hosted by Fardeen Dighie, is titled *Chhorde Anonde Sadhinota*. The programme featuring solo and group performances-- will be telecast at 11:30 am. Mala Khuram of Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra will join the children in a discussion. *Abaor Tora Manush Ho*, a film on post Liberation War of Bangladesh, directed by Khan Ataur Rahman, will be telecast at 2:30 pm. A documentary, featuring the huge global support to our freedom movement, *Muktijuddhey Bishwo Bibek*, will be telecast at 5:10 pm.



Fardeen to host a children's programme



A scene from the TV play 'Char Girisher Bishonnoto', starring Tazin and Sohel Arman, to be telecast on Channel i tonight at 7:50pm

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

tion at the Shishu Academy Auditorium.

National professor Kabir Choudhury inaugurated the festival, followed by a group song *Hingshaye unmotto prithi* by the members of the RSSS. Veteran cultural personality Kalim Sharifi presided over the programme.

On the second day a musical soiree on selected songs of Tagore was held. A discussion on the evolution of the style of Tagore songs was held in the evening.

On the third day, Language Movement veteran, artist Imdad Hossain was accorded a reception followed by a musical soiree.

PHOTO STAR

A three-day Grameen Phone 17th National Rabindra Sangeet Festival, organised by Rabindra Sangeet Shilpi Sangsta (RSSS) ended yesterday. The programme featured a musical soiree and poetry recita-

TV GUIDE



Mohor

On Channel-i at 8:30 pm

Genre: TV drama

Cast: Mamunur Rashid, Bijori, Fazlur Rahman Babu

PICK OF THE DAY



Mohor

On ntv at 9:00 pm

Genre: TV drama

Cast: Humayun Faridee, Aupee Karim, Shahed

All programmes are in local time. The Daily Star will not be responsible for any change in the programme.

BTV

08:45 March past from Parade Square
12:30 *Shastha Tathy*
01:00 *Kheladhuha*
01:30 *Protayashar Alo*
02:15 online
02:40 *Bangla Feature Film*
05:30 Special programme for Independence Day for children's

Kobita path
06:10 *Musical Programme*
07:00 *Drama: Porichoy*
08:45 *ntv*

09:45 *Public Reaction*
09:50 *Tritiyo Matra*
11:05 *Tele Prescription*
11:30 *Hridoye Mati O Marush*

01:05 *Ebong Cinemar Gaan*
01:30 *Shangbadporey*
01:45 *Bangladesh*
02:40 *Public Reaction*

02:45 *Tritiyo Matra*
03:15 *Boshundhara Amader Gaan*
03:45 *Sa re ga ma*
03:30 *Rong tuli te*

04:25 *Muktijuddho*
05:20 *Apnar Jigyasa*
06:20 *Shubho Shondhya*
06:50 *Docudrama: Krishnophobor*

07:50 *Special Drama: Chor Gersher Bishonnoto*
10:00 *Talk show: Bangladesher Hridoye*

11:25 *Hridoye Shur Ashey*
12:45 *Shukhi Thakun Deho*
09:30 *Phinix*
02:30 *Problem Child 2*

12:50 *Sornali Shadakalo*
01:00 *Shw Theke Sadhinota*
02:30 *Bangla Feature Film: Abar Tora Marush Ho*

04:45 *Isphani Pure Snax Quiz Time*

STAR MOVIES

05:10 Documentary Programme: *Muktijuddhe Bishwo Bibek*
05:45 *Islami Sawal O Jobab*
06:20 *Shure Gane Shadhinota*
08:00 *Amader Shadhinota*
08:30 Documentary Programme: *Ami Shadhinota Enechi*
08:50 Special Drama: *Poddio*

08:35 *Ajaij Shokal*
10:05 *Parade*
11:00 *Amader Poteka*

11:30 *Drubotra*
12:05 *Akatturer Ethishe Nari*

12:30 *Magazine Programme: Sopner Shukhri*
01:05 *Shukhri Shima*
01:30 *Muktagan*
02:35 *Talk Show: Kalatri O Gornodharm*

03:15 *Band Music: Suprio Bangladeshi*
04:25 *Dance Programme: Ahonkara Chirojagroto*

05:20 *Apnar Jigyasa*
06:20 *Shubho Shondhya*
06:50 *Docudrama: Krishnophobor*

07:00 *Drama Serial: Rimonter Aaina*
09:10 *Special Drama: Mahabub Alir Golpo*

11:25 *Dindarpur*

04:40 *Day Sadhin Bangla Betar Kendro*
01:15 *Unforgiven*

04:40 *Day Sadhin Bangla Betar Kendro*
01:15 *Unforgiven*

STAR PLUS

05:30 *Shishu Kishor onurshan*
06:30 *Rtv Exclusive*
07:00 *Father Of The Bride*

08:00 *Talk show*

08:30 *Special Drama: Station Ektetur Magazine Programme: Bishwa Torone Bojjoyonti*