

12th Anniversary and
Independence Day
Programme

Organiser: Liberation War
Museum
Venue: Liberation War Museum,
5, Shugun Bagicha
Date: March 22-28
Time: 6:30 pm

Independence Day
Programme

Organiser: University of Liberal
Arts (ULAB)
Venue: ULAB Auditorium, H 56, R
4/A (Salmosjid Road), Dhanmondi
Date: March 27
Time: 2pm onwards



Group Art Exhibition

Title: 65th Grand group art exhibition
of reputed Bangladeshi Artists
Organiser: Saju Art Gallery
Venue: Saju Art Gallery, F/40-41,
D.C.C. north Super Market, 2nd,
circle, Gulshan
Date: March 22-April 23
Time: Saturday to Thursday
10am to 8pm.



Film Screening

Organiser: Children's Film Society
Venue: Goethe-Institut
Bangladesh, H 10, R 9,
Dhanmondi
Date: March 27
Time: 5pm onwards
Film: Ek Akash (India) and My
Neighbour Totoro (Japan)

Independence Day celebration
at Liberation War Museum

Children light candles at the Liberation War Museum

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

On the occasion of its 12th anniversary and Independence Day, the Liberation War Museum has organised a week-long programme that started from March 22. On March 24, Birpratik Tajul Islam was invited to deliver a speech on his experience during the war.

The welcome speech was delivered by one of the museum's founder trustees, Akku Chowdhury, who, as he put it, along with the other members -- Dr. Sarwar Ali, Aly Zaker, Sara Zaker, Ziauddin Tariq Ali, Asaduzzaman Noor and Mofidul Hoque -- work as catalysts to keep

the museum "functioning" smoothly.

A valiant freedom fighter, Tajul Islam recounted how he was injured three times during the war. The first injury was in Kamalpur field, where even after getting seriously hurt, he escaped from the hospital to go the battlefield again. His second injury was in Dhalai and third at Sylhet's MC College on December 14, 1971. After his last injury, he was sent to Shillong. On December 16, he lost his consciousness and recovered after six days. Many believed that he would not survive the last injury but the brave fighter bounced back to health. He explained how he had witnessed the demise of many of

his comrades, how he had saved several women and children subjected to torture and how on several cases he battled on, believing that he was breathing his last.

He was especially moved by the December 14 incident at MC College where many of his dearest friends became martyrs namely, Nur Nabi, Sipahi Taher, Sipahi Jalal and Sipahi Mahiuddin. He recalls one occasion where despite an injury he held cover fire and had to carry one of his severely injured mates on his shoulder. Their initial determination was boosted by the martyred Anwar. Holding his bloodied belt, the combatants swore that they would not let his sacrifice go in vain.

After his eloquent speech, there was a cultural performance by Shamoli Ideal School and College. A *Jatra* performance, presented by Nipen Pal and his troupe from Tangail, was next to follow.

On March 25 the programme started at 6:40 pm with lighting candles.

Children (between the ages of 3 to 9) accompanied by members of Boddybhumi Shontan Dol (BSD) lit candles at the museum premises in remembrance of the people murdered by the Pak army on the night of March 25, 1971. During the session, members of BSD rendered the song *Aguner poroshmoni chhoapraney*.

A short discussion followed. Liberation War Museum trustees Aly Zaker and Mofidul Haque spoke on the occasion. After the discussion a cultural programme was held starting with a performance by BSD. BSD is a cultural organisation formed by the family members of the people murdered at the Jolladkhana Boddybhumi. This was the first public performance by the organisation. Members of the organisation presented songs, short play and recitation.

Next on stage was Bangladesh Abrittji Samannay Parishad. Members of the organisation -- Ahkamullah, Rafiqul Islam, Hassan Arif, Laila Afroz and others presented a group recitation featuring excerpts from the writings by Maniruzzaman and Nirmalendu Goon.

Shorkalpan Abrittji Chakra staged a group presentation titled *Razaker-er Namta*.

The last performance of the day was staged by the Dhaka wing of Jatuya Rabindra Sangeet Sammilan Parishad.

In remembrance of our Independence Day, the Liberation War Museum has organised the Liberation War Book Fair that will be held everyday from 10am to 7pm at the museum premises.

PHOTO: SHAHJAT KAMOL

Mahanagar Natyotshab '08

"Zahir Raihan Sanskritik Kendra should motivate cultural practices in Old Dhaka" --- Mayor of Dhaka



ERSHAD KAMOL

Mayor of Dhaka City Corporation, Sadeq Hossain Khoka is the mastermind of the newly built Zahir Raihan Sanskritik Kendra, where the ongoing theatre festival titled Mahanagar Natyotshab '08 is being held. DCC has constructed the centre with an aim to boost more cultural activities in Old Dhaka.

The Mayor said, "It is the duty of the city corporation to ensure opportunities and venues for recreation. We planned to construct the cultural centre at Loharpool around three years ago. The Tk 7.2 crore project has been solely financed by DCC. I personally talked to the leaders of Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation to share ideas during its construction. I believe the centre will be able to satisfy the needs of the

cultural groups."

On the impact of the festival, the Mayor said "The locals, who often can't make it to Mahila Samity Stage, will be able to watch popular productions by the leading troupes of the country."

"Moreover, the centre also provides a dance and music training centre, a health centre and a library. In fact, the centre should play an important role to motivate the local cultural practices," he added.

Sadeq Hossain Khoka further added that the Zahir Raihan Sanskritik Kendra would exclusively be used for theatre, dance and music performances.

"We will involve the theatre leaders during the hall booking and in case of setting up the rates. We don't expect to make profit from the cultural centre," the Mayor said.

"Totaram" to be staged
today

As part of the ongoing Mahanagar Natyotshab '08, Theatre (Topkhana) will stage *Totaram* today at the Zahir Raihan Sanskritik Kendra, Loharpool Sutarapur.

Featuring the story of an individual named Totaram, Mohitlal Majumder's play *Totaram* develops following William Blake's idea of 'higher innocence' (innocence-experience-higher innocence).

Totaram, a naive individual, becomes rich by illicit means. After attaining wealth he goes through a conflict between his rationality and greed. Eventually, Totaram realises his mistake and subsequently becomes enlightened.

The play is directed by Hafizur Rahman Shuruj.



Actors of Theatre (Topkhana) in the play Totaram

PHOTO: STAR

Shadhinata Utsab
by Sammilito
Sanskritik Jote

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Sammilito Sanskritik Jote (SSJ) arranged a three-day long cultural programme titled "Shadhinata Utsab" to celebrate the Independence Day. The programme started simultaneously at the Central Shaheed Minar premises and Rabindra Sarobar, Dhanmondi on March 24 and ended yesterday. Highlights of the first day's cultural programme were renditions of patriotic songs, recitation and street theatre performances by associate cultural organisations of SSJ.

Air Vice Marshal (Retd) A.K. Khandakar, deputy chief of the Liberation Forces, inaugurated the programme at the Central Shaheed Minar premises. Theatre personality and President of SSJ Nasiruddin Yousuff, noted actor Asaduzzaman Noor, Secretary General of Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation Jhuna Chowdhury and General Secretary of SSJ Golam Kuddus were present at the inaugural programme.

At the Shaheed Minar premises members of Wrishiz Shilpi Gosthi and Ustad Momtaz Ali Khan Sangeet Academy performed group songs. Members of Dhaka Sharokalpan and Prokash recited poems, while Dyash Bangla Theatre and Opera staged a street play at the programme.

At the Rabindra Sarobar, Chhayana started the programme with a group song. Sanskriti Shaily also performed a number of group songs. Members of Roudra Karoti and Srijan recited poems. Aboyab Natyadal and Theatre Centre staged street plays *Samayer Mangal* and *Uttari* respectively.

The solo performances at the venue included *Ekti Bangladesh*, *O amar Bangla ma tor* and *Tumi manush diya* rendered by Saija Hossain, Sanjida Manzurul and Sheikh Alawal respectively.

Red and green on silver screen

Depiction of Liberation War in movies

(From left) Azizul Hakim, Chandni, Bipasha Hayat and Mahfuz in *Jaijatra*

KARIM WAHEED

Quite a few feature films, short films and documentaries have been made on the Liberation War in last 37 years. The first movie based on the war was made in India. Umrapasad Moitra wrote the original script in Bangla and I.S. Johar developed the Hindi script in Mumbai for the movie *Jai Bangladesh*. Renowned actor Kabir played the lead role in the film. However, apparently the Liberation War was not accurately portrayed in that movie and it was strongly opposed by the Bangladeshi side; subsequently, the Indian government banned the film.

Here's a list of some of the noteworthy movies that have stirred the audience's emotions and managed to generate interest in the Liberation War among the post-war generations:

Ora Egarofon (1972): Produced by Masud Parvez and directed by Chashi Nazrul Islam, this movie made a major impact on the audience for its realistic treatment, moving storyline and adept performances by actors Khasru (who was actually a freedom fighter),

Dhirey Bohey Meghna (1973): Directed by Alamgir Kabir, the documentary-style of narration in this movie moves away from the conventional format. This movie was well received by both the critics and movie enthusiasts. Babita, Ajmal Huda, Mustafa and Khalil were credible in their roles.

Ekattorer Jishu (1993): Based on a story by Shahrir Kabir and directed by Nasiruddin Yousuff, this movie stands out for its bold story and high calibre performance by versatile actor Humayun Faridee. The story follows a priest's experiences and the incidents that take place at the church where he resides during the Liberation War.

Aguner Poroshmoni (1994): Written and directed by famed litterateur Humayun Ahmed, the story revolves around a middle class family trying to deal with the atrocities of the war. Their lives change overnight when a freedom fighter takes shelter in their home. Abul Hayat, Asaduzzaman Noor, Dolly Zahur, Bipasha Hayat and Shila Ahmed delivered laudable performances in the lead roles.

Matir Moina (2002): Directed by Tareque Masud, the film was initially banned from public screening by the Censor Board as it was deemed too religiously sensitive. The audience experiences the social and political turmoil during the 1960s, religious extremism and prevalent superstitions through the eyes of a young madrasa student. At the Cannes Film Festival, *Matir Moina* received the honour of being the opening film at the Directors' Fortnight section, and also won the International Critics' Prize for best film in the section. Jayanto Chatyopadhyay, Rokeya Prachee, child artistes Nurul Islam Bablu and Russell Farazi delivered commendable performances in the movie.

Jaijatra (2004): Actor Tauquir Ahmed made his directorial debut with this film. The overused theme of young men going to war was not the highlight of the movie. Instead it narrated an amazing tale of human endurance and budding relationships between people of different classes and creed during a catastrophe. Bipasha Hayat's famous histrionics were aptly used in the role of a mother who has just lost her only child in the mayhem created by the Pakistani soldiers. Other major roles were played by Abul Hayat, Humayun Faridee, Tariq Anam Khan, Azizul Hakim and Mahfuz.

From dusk till dawn

Students of CODA, SODA and UODA observe Independence Day

JAMIL MAHMUD

University of Development Alternative (UODA), College of Development Alternative (CODA) and School of Development Alternative (SODA) along with Bangladesh Chhatra Kalyan Sangstha arranged an all-night programme at the Manik Mian Avenue (in front of the National Parliament building) to observe the mass murder on March 25, 1971 as well as the 37th Independence Day. The programme included painting on the street and on canvas by artists, rendition of inspirational songs that used to be aired on the Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra, recitation and film screening.

The programme started soon after the sunset on March 25. The National Flag was at half-mast. Vice Chancellor of UODA, Professor Emazuddin Ahmed hoisted the National Flag and Founder-President of SODA, CODA and UODA Mujib Khan hoisted a symbolic black flag -- remembering the massacre of March 25.

Students, teachers and staff of the three institutions rendered songs aired on the Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra as well as other patriotic and folk songs throughout the night. Timir Nandi, a singer of Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra, inaugurated the musical programme.

Songs that inspired the freedom fighters during the Liberation War, including *Janotar sangram cholbe*, *Karar oilouha kopat*, *Nongor tolo tolo* and *Mora ekti phul be banchhabo* seemingly moved the audience. Several inspirational poems by renowned poets were also recited at the programme.

Artists G.M.A. Razzaq, Biren Shom and sculptor Ferdousi Priyabhansini inaugurated the street painting. Thirty eminent artists along with students of the Department of Fine Arts, UODA painted a part of the Manik Mian Avenue. The 2500-ft long work, which is the largest street painting of the country according to the organisers, depicted different scenes from the Liberation War.

Another segment of the programme was painting on canvas in memory of the martyrs of March 25. Later, the artworks were displayed at the venue along with 35 other well-known paintings on the theme of Liberation War.

Noted artists Hamiduzzaman Khan, Abdus Sattar, Samarjit Roy Chowdhury, Alokesh Ghosh, Shishir Bhattacharya, Kanak Chapa Chakma, Khalid Mahmud Mithu, Ivy Zaman, Ranjit Das and others participated in both street and canvas paintings.

Zahir Raihan's *Stop Genocide* and other documentaries on Liberation War were screened at the venue. The programme wrapped up with the rendition of the National Anthem along with hoisting up of the National Flag at sunrise.



Students of YODA, CODA and SODA during a chorus



Street painting on Manik Mian Avenue

PHOTO: ISHTIAQUE RA QUASREN