The Patriots in the Shadows

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The Daily Star **and eminent guests honour the unsung heroes of the Liberation War on July 7.** PHOTO: STAR FILE

If you are a Mahali, you can still hear Rebati's screams echoing in the hills of Khadim tea garden in Sylhet, forty-two years after she sacrificed her life for the freedom of her motherland. Liberation War researcher Lt Col (retd) Kazi Sazzad Ali Zahir, Bir Pratik, who dug out Rebati's story from the lost pages of history that mostly accounted the heroic tales of enlisted freedom fighters and leaders, was asked by the Mahalis why Rebati still haunts the hills.

"I contemplated the answer for sometime and then told them that she comes back because she has not received justice for all these years," said Zahir, as he read out the story of Rebati Mahali, a tea- garden labourer of the indigenous community. On April, 1971 Pakistani Army attacked the