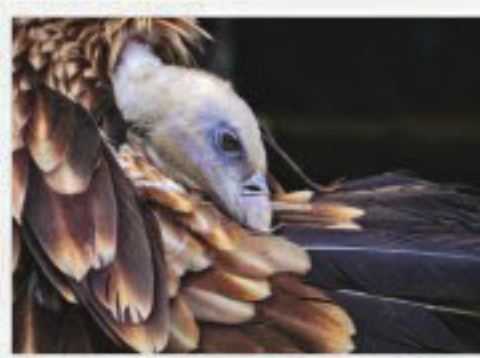


WHAT'S ON

German/Bangla Movie Night
 Film: Kebab Connection
 Venue: Goethe Institut Dhaka
 Date: March 29
 Time: 6pm-8pm



Photography Exhibition
 Bangladesh in Frames VII
 Venue: Drik Gallery
 Date: March 26-March 30
 Time: 3pm-8pm



Solo painting exhibition
 Living in Inferno
 Artists: Krishna Chattopadhyay
 Venue: Shilpangan Gallery
 Date: March 14-28



Shadhinota Concert
 Organiser: Gonojagoron Moncho
 Venue: Projonmo Chatter, Shahbagh
 Date: Mar 26
 Time: 4pm onwards



Photography Exhibition
 In the name of ...
 Organiser: AMRA
 Venue: Alliance Francaise de Dhaka
 Date: Mar 20-28
 Time: 3pm-8pm



Mirror on the struggle for freedom

STAR MELODIES HOSTS MUSICAL SOIREE

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Marking the glorious 44th anniversary of Independence Day, Star Melodies of The Daily Star hosted an evening of songs capturing the spirit of Liberation of Bangladesh and a few other countries, at the Daily Star-Bengal Arts Precinct on March 24. The most well loved melodies of the country echoed through the walls in the voices of four reputed singers, while a lovely touch was added to the programme by showing songs of the freedom movements of six other countries on a projector screen.

The event, titled "Deshe Deshe Shadhinota O Mukti'r Gaan" began with a choral rendition of "Mukti'r Mondir Sopan Toley", a song written by Mohini Chowdhury and composed by KC Dey on the freedom movement of undivided India. Sadya Afreen Mallick, Editor of Star Arts & Entertainment along with other members of the team then gave the audience an introduction to the event, and the artists. The four singers -- Mohiuzzaman Chowdhury, Dinat Jahan Munni, Badrunnesa Dalia and Mahmudul Hasan rendered several solos each -- interspersed by songs from South Korea, Algeria, Vietnam, Indonesia, Ireland and Palestine's freedom movements.

Mohiuzzaman Chowdhury performed "Ma Go Bhabna Keno", "Rokto Golap Futechhe Oi" and "Salam Salam Hajar

Salam"; Dinat Jahan Munni sang "Ek Nodi Rokto Periye", "Sei Rail Line er Dharey" and "Sob Ko'ta Janala Khuley Dao Na"; Badrunnesa Dalia rendered "Ek Sagor Rokter Binimoye", "Ekta Bangladesh", and "Shadhinota Ek Golap Fotano Din"; Mahmudul Hasan performed "Je Mati'r Bukey Ghumiye Achhe" and "Mora Ekti Phool Ke Bachabo Boley".

Speaking at the event, The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam said that the songs added a special dimension to the Liberation movement, and even today can take people back to those days. Eminent expatriate artist Monirul Islam reminisced the sacrifice of the freedom fighters, and the role of the then Art College (now Faculty of Fine Arts, DU) from where the posters against the oppressors were brought out. Thespian Tabibul Islam Babu lamented the fact that many people who opposed the country's Liberation in 1971 hold important positions today, and thanked The Daily Star for organising a programme to rekindle the spirit of freedom among the audience.

The event came to a close with the entire audience singing the iconic song "Purbo Digonte Surjo Uthechhe", written by Govinda Halder and composed by Samar Das, along with the artists.

Simantic Creative Concern and Eastern Bank Limited assisted in the event, for which set design was conceptualised by Selim SH Chowdhury.



Clockwise from top: Badrunnesa Dalia, Mohiuzzaman Chowdhury and Dinat Jahan Munni; eminent artist Monirul Islam among the audience; artistes render a chorus; a scene from a documentary.

PHOTO: STAR

A tribute to Sirajul Islam

SADYA AFREEN MALLICK

Veteran actor-director Sirajul Islam who passed on the day before yesterday (March 24) leaves behind a deep imprint in the film industry. The winner of the prestigious National Award for the film "Chandranath" in 1985, Siraj transformed the face of Bangladeshi cinema with his roles in over 300 films, the most notable "Raja Elo Shohorey", (his first feature film) and "Sheet Bikel". Alongside he found the time to pursue his passion for theatre-- stage plays "Kena Bechar Pala" and "Fa(n)sh" are remembered even today.

But even as he retired as the director of Department of Films and Publication (DFP), his one dream that remained unfulfilled was to witness the revival of his beloved film-dom.

Reflective of Siraj's disillusionment with the country's celluloid world was his decision to quit films altogether. In the year 2000 he acted in the film "Ami Bou Hobo", directed by Hasmat, after which he never set foot at the Film Development Corporation (FDC).

"Possibly this is one of the very few countries without a film institute, although there is no lack of potential," said Siraj dismally.

"Khan Ataur Rahman, Zahir Raihan, Subash Dutta and others have tried at different times to develop an institute with the help of the Producers Association, but all in vain."

Siraj's journey started way back in the mid-1940s. He talked of a time when the entertainment world centred on the radio and theatre and the film world was in its infancy.

"It was the time right after Partition when many crossed the border, creating a vacuum in the cultural field. The radio station was the stepping stone for many theatre professionals," he added.

Theatre in Bangladesh took root in the '60s and progressed by leaps and bounds during the '70s. According to him, there was a spontaneous movement to promote theatre in every community, in Dhaka. This was mostly

arranged by collecting funds from affluent community members. It was a time when it was unimaginable to think about women practising songs and dance numbers even in the confines of households. However, gradually, women came to play active roles in the cultural field, pointed out Siraj.

"The railway institute, then known as Mehboob Ali Institute, situated right beside the present National Medical Hospital, was the hub of cultural activities," reminisced Siraj.

"A raised platform at the Natmondir served as an ideal stage. Despite the humble settings, eminent theatre artistes from Kolkata such as Tripti Mitra, Sambhu Mitra, Sattya Banerjee and others would often come to perform in Dhaka."

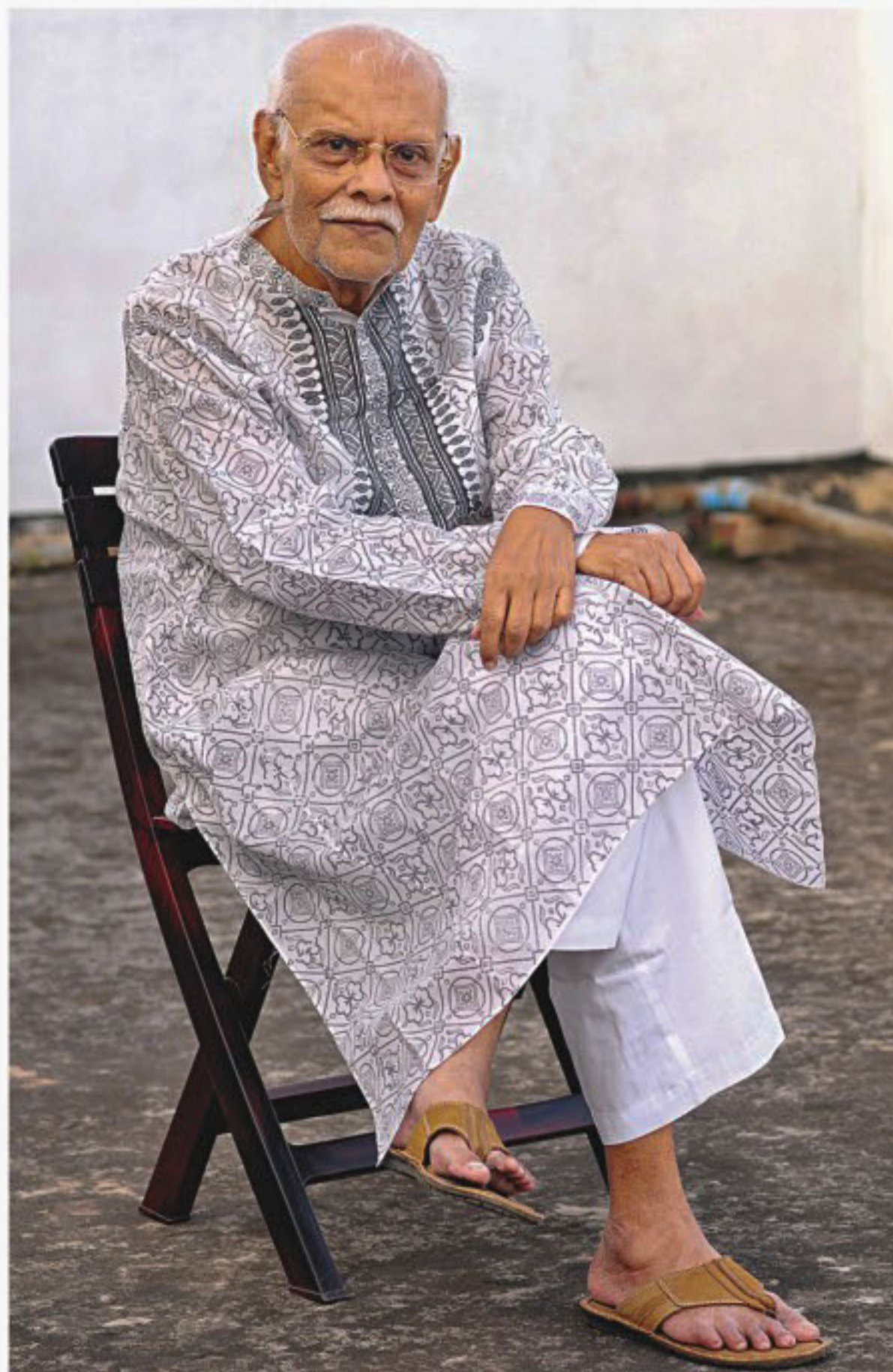
"There were no designated rehearsal locations and so rehearsals were often held in different households. Even though the locations were different there was one commonality --the scrumptious khichuri at the end of the final rehearsals!" continued the veteran actor with a smile.

Alongside theatre, there was the Film Development Corporation, better known as FDC. The film industry's pioneers were Ehtesham, Mashiuddin Shaker, Salauddin and Fateh Lohani.

There was little question of idolising any actor. As he said, "We had an original style. However, people would often call me Biswas da, referring to eminent

actor Chhobi Biswas. Dr. Rowshan Ara, Nasima Khan, Johorat Ara, Lilly Khan and others were my co-stars. In the film "Mishore Konnya" I starred with Shameem Ara of Pakistan. That was the only time I had to shave off my moustache and when I returned home late at night after a shoot, my wife almost fainted, taking me to be a stranger knocking at the door at an unearthly hour."

With his critical eye, Siraj was unhappy with the scenario in the theatre and film world--the lack of theatre space or innovation, unplanned settings, the lack of opportunities for young playwrights and most importantly the lack of initiatives to train and promote professionals.



INDEPENDENCE DAY

cultural programmes in the capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy

A two-day (March 25-26) celebration programme is on at the Nandanmancha. The event featuring discussion, music, dance and recitation starts every day at 6pm.

Bangladesh National Museum

BNM has organised a musical programme at 7:30am at Shadhinata Stamba and Shadhinata Museum. Recitation by noted elocutionists will take place at Poet Sufia Kamal auditorium at 6:30pm.

Bangla Academy

A discussion with a cultural programme will be held at 4pm at Nazrul Mancha of the academy.

Chhayanaut

A film screening, along with a musical soiree, will be held at its auditorium at 6pm. The film titled "Itihas Konna", directed by Shamim Akhtar, is based on women's participation and role in the Liberation War.

Channel i

Satellite Channel Channel i has organised a celebration programme "Rang Tulite Muktiuddha" at its premises. Educationist Borhanuddin Khan Jahangir will inaugurate a painting making programme, participated by 50 noted painters of Bangladesh at 2:30pm. The



event has been dedicated to eminent artist late Qayyum Chowdhury. This apart, Rezwana Chowdhury Bonnya and her troupe Surer Dhara will perform patriotic songs on the main stage. Channel i will air the programme live.

Gonojagoron Moncho

Gonojagoron Moncho has organised a Shadhinata Concert at Projonmo Chatter at 3pm where 26 popular and promising bands including "Maksud O Dhaka", "Obscure", "Shironamhin", "Artcell", "Shohortoli", "Arbovirus", "Shohojia", "Old School" and "Minerva" will give performances.

Horbola

Recitation troupe Horbola is hosting a special recitation event titled "Mukti Sangram-er Kabita" at Studio Theatre Hall of BSA at 7pm.

Obohon on ntv



A CORRESPONDENT

Special single-episode TV play "Obohon" will air on ntv tonight at 9pm. Written by Pantho Shahrar and directed by Nayeem Intiaz Neyamul, the play is based on the Liberation War. The play casts Arfan Nisho, Aparna Ghosh, Dayna and Shamsul Alam Bokul among others.

Dance show Shadhinota Tumi on Maasranga

A CORRESPONDENT

Special dance show "Shadhinota Tumi" will air tonight at 9:20pm on Maasranga Television. The show features a number of dance pieces by popular dancers on the theme of the Liberation War.

