

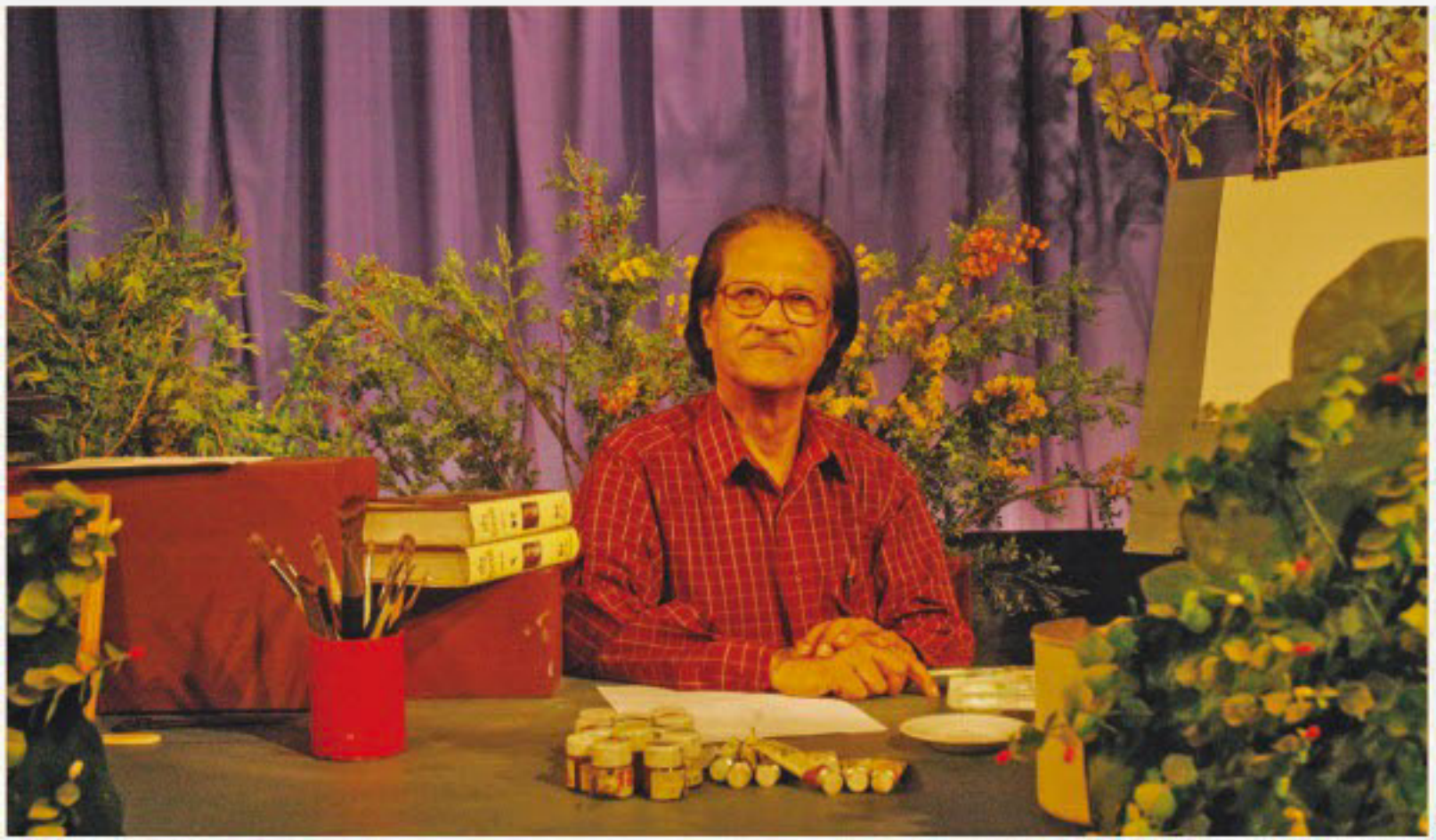
Cultural activist recalls the Liberation War: Mustafa Monowar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The scenes from the refugee camps in West Bengal in 1971 are indelibly printed in Mustafa Monowar's mind: Grim, distressed faces and a deathly silence which enveloped everyone, including the children. "They were getting basic necessities such as food and clothes but laughter, which is crucial for human beings, was missing. Even the children did not play together. The trauma was tremendous because of the inhumanity of the Pakistani army. So I thought I would have puppet plays to boost the refugees' morale and bring back laughter in their lives," says Monowar, puppeteer, artist, director and producer of TV programmes and author of screen plays.

And he did do that through his puppet plays, such as "Agachha", "Rakhash" and "A brave farmer". The play with maximum impact was Agachha. Drawing a parallel between unwanted weeds and the Pakistani oppressors, the play shows how the farmer pulls out the weeds that ruin his crop and throws them away just like the Pakistani rulers need to be weeded out before they destroy the ethos of the country.

The greatest accolade for Monowar was the audience's spontaneous laughter in the camps, particularly in Kalyanpur. Young and old alike joined in mirth fuelled by the satire. Monowar, as he admits, was moved to tears at the response. "I was so emotional because I saw their laughter and joie de vivre had returned. I realised that it was almost as important to laugh as to have food," says the versatile artist. One old man in the refugee camp said



it was the first time that he had laughed after a month.

Another proud memory is of when Lear Levin, an American documentary filmmaker, visited the country and made a film on these puppets. Later, Tareque Masud added many shots to those taken by Levin and called his film "Muktir Gaan".

Coming back to the present, Monowar says puppetry is a very good medium for satire. Though Bangladeshi politicians are not accustomed to satire, he says he uses it subtly to lampoon them. Now he is busy with reviving folk stories and great writers of children's tales through puppetry. He has also worked on Hans Christian Andersen's "The Nightingale" and "The Ugly Duckling".

Meanwhile, Monowar is upbeat about the puppetry medium. As he says, "Puppetry is a great medium to learn aesthetics and painting. All art forms can be combined in puppetry—painting, voice and oratory, for example. It is a very important medium for children." And his delighted young and old fans would tend to agree.



Asad Chowdhury speaks at the programme; Bipasha Hayat paints as Khushi Kabir looks on.



Depicting Liberation War on Canvases

"Rong-Tuli te Muktijuddho" at Channel i

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Marking Independence Day 2015, satellite channel Channel i arranged a celebration programme titled "Rong-Tuli te Muktijuddho", dedicated to eminent artist late Qayyum Chowdhury, at its premises. Educationist Borhanuddin Khan Jahangir inaugurated the event yesterday.

Fifty renowned painters of the country took part in the art camp. The themes of paintings were Liberation War, Joy of Victory, Cruelty of War, Concentration Camp and different aspects of independence. The organiser conferred a special honour on the Liberation War Museum. Alongside artists, Freedom Fighters, elocutionists and cultural personalities attended the event. Noted artists including Monirul Islam and

Biren Shome; poet Asad Chowdhury; cultural personality Dr. Sarwar Ali; human rights activist Khushi Kabir and managing director of Channel i Faridur Reza Sagar among others, participated in the event.

Apart from this, Rezwana Chowdhury Bonnya and her troupe Surer Dhara performed patriotic songs onstage. Actor Afzal Hossain emceed the event. Channel i aired the programme live.

Playback success on Jhilik's radar

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Jhilik won the musical reality show Channel i Shera Kontho in 2008. Since then, she's made it big and her powerful voice continues to move music lovers. The Daily Star recently caught up with the talented singer. Excerpts from an engaging interview:

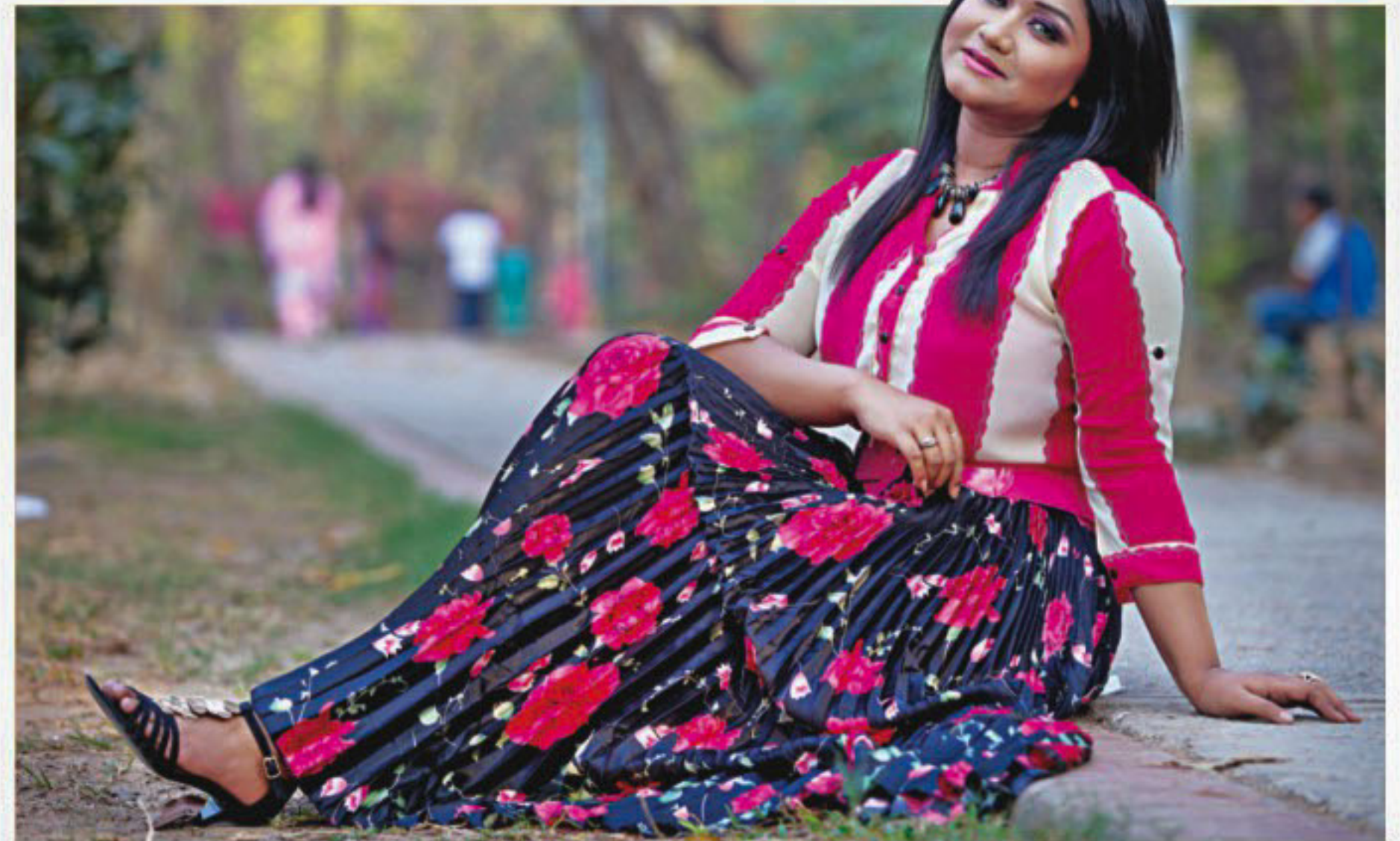


PHOTO: RIDWAN ADID RUPON

How do stage shows dovetail into your career?

Jhilik: I'm now very busy with stage shows in Dhaka and elsewhere in the country. Soon I will do stage shows frequently. On the occasion of Bangla Noboborsho, I will fly to Japan on April 19.

Audio, TV, live programmes, playback and stage shows -- what is your favourite medium?

Jhilik: It's hard to make such comparisons.

Like, you can render any songs on television but you can't do so on stage where you have to give priority to the audiences' tastes. On the other hand, singing for audio albums and playback for films are quite different experiences.

Do you playback for films as well?

Jhilik: I've done playbacks for at least 18 movies. Although I'm known as a pop singer,

I really want to be a successful playback singer.

Tell us about your latest music video.

Jhilik: The song is from my last solo album "Prothom Prem". The music video titled "Beshamal" features Imran and me. The audience has received the video warmly as they often request us to sing its numbers at stage performances.

Daylong Japanese film screening today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Embassy of Japan in Dhaka is hosting a day-long Japanese film screening event today, at Hotel Summer Palace in the capital's Baridhara.

The event, "Tora-san - Our Lovable Tramp Drama Series", will screen three must-watch films from a Japanese series "Otoko wa Tsurai yo" ("It's tough being a man"), starring late Kiyoshi Astumi as Tora-san, 'a kind-hearted vagabond, who is always in love'.

The first of the films, "Tora-san's Sunrise and Sunset" will begin at 10:15am; "Tora-san's Many-Splintered Love" will begin at 12:30pm and "Tora-san Goes North" will be screened at 2:45pm.

Japanese ambassador Shiro Sadoshima will inaugurate the event.



Russo Brothers to direct next two "Avengers" movies

Joe and Anthony Russo will direct both parts of Disney-Marvel's "Avengers: Infinity War" with the movies shooting back-to-back in 2016 and 2017.

The brothers have directed "Captain America: The Winter Soldier" and will direct the upcoming "Captain America: Civil War".

The news had been widely rumored in recent weeks. The brothers are taking over the "Avengers" franchise from Joss Whedon, who directed 2012's "Avengers" and the upcoming "Avengers: Age of Ultron", which opens May 1.

For the Russo brothers, this makes four Marvel films — the most Marvel has ever committed to with a single director. Whedon will have directed only two "Avenger" films, and Jon Favreau helmed only two "Iron Man" films.

The time commitment necessitated by the two "Avengers" films makes it seem unlikely that the Russos will be able to direct a film in between. The Russo brothers are currently attached to "The Gray Man" at Sony and are also in talks to direct a "Ghostbusters" film with Channing Tatum. Sony Pictures, where both films are set

up, will now have to decide whether to wait for the two or figure out some way to get one of these projects done before "Avengers: Infinity War" starts prepping.

The Russos recently signed a three-year first-look feature deal with Sony Pictures -- that begins in April.

The siblings will next direct Disney-Marvel's "Captain America: Civil War." That film will include Sony's new Spider-Man character as part of the new deal between Sony and Marvel.

Source: Variety

"Queen", "Haider" and "Chotushkone" big winners

Indian National Film Awards announced



Kangana Ranaut-starrer film "Queen" was cited as the best Hindi film at India's 62nd National Film Awards, announced on Tuesday. Kangana who portrayed the character of Rani in the film, was named the best actress.

Shahid Kapoor's "Haider" and Priyanka Chopra-starrer "Mary Kom" bagged key honours while Chaitanya Tamhane's "Court" was named the Best Feature Film.

"Haider", a Kashmir-set modern adaptation of Shakespeare's Hamlet, won five awards. Its helmer Vishal Bhardwaj was named the best music director but lost out the best director award to Bengali filmmaker Srijit Mukherji.

Srijit's "Chotushkone" -- a film about four directors' attempt to make four short stories, won two more awards -- best cinematography and original screenplay.

Priyanka Chopra-led biopic "Mary Kom" was named the best popular film providing wholesome entertainment. Bhardwaj was also named for best dialogues in the movie while Sukhwinder Singh clinched the best male playback singer for the song "Bismil". Its other two wins were in the categories of choreography and costume design.

Source: Indian Express