

WHAT'S ON

Photography Exhibition
Bangladesh In Frames 8
Organiser: TTL BD
Venue: Drik Gallery
Date: Mar 24-26
Time: 3pm-8pm



Contemporary Art Exhibition
Title: An Abstract Affair
Artist: Mohammad Eunus
Venue: EDGE Gallery
Date: Mar 18-31
Time: 10am-8pm



Photography Exhibition
Title: London 1971: Unsung Heroes of the Bangladesh Liberation War
Venue: British Council
Date: March 3-31



Group Art Exhibition
Title: Exhibition 2017
Venue: Gallery Chitrag, H-4, Rd-6, Dhanmondi
Date: Mar 28-Apr 20
Time: 10am-8pm



Watercolor Exhibition
The Water Impala
Artist: Liza Hasan
Venue: Crystal Palace, Gulshan-1
Date: Mar 24-26
Time: 9am-9pm





HOW MUSIC AND CULTURE DROVE THE LIBERATION WAR

In conversation with Nasiruddin Yousuff

ROBINA RASHID BHUIYAN

To speak a language is to take on a world, a culture. – Frantz Fanon

Since its inception in 1973, Dhaka Theatre has since been synonymous to the national cultural voice. As one of the leading troupes that pioneered the theatre movement and its many artistic forms, Dhaka Theatre has always been devoted to representing the various traditions of our land, as well as creating new directions in theatre. Nasiruddin Yousuff was one of the founding members of Dhaka Theatre, along with Selim Al Deen and other members, all of whom were Freedom Fighters. In a recent conversation with The Daily Star, Nasiruddin Yousuff reminisces the early years of the troupe and the significance of the cultural movements during the Liberation War.

Excerpts:

“It wasn’t until 1975 that we staged our first major work. It was a musical, consisting of 17 songs as well as some choreography. This was the first musical comedy to be performed in Bangladeshi theatre, and it was received very well. After this came ‘Shakuntola’, or rather a twentieth century interpretation of the original narrative. In those early years, Selim Al Deen and I focused on abstract and other kinds of plays, but some-

thing always felt amiss. We had fought in the war to gain Independence - but were we really free? The theatre is a largely colonised domain, with many borrowed elements from the West, and the absence of a culture we could call our very own was poignantly felt. It was this realisation that spurred Selim and myself to change artistic directions, in the hopes of nurturing a culture that is uninfluenced by any historical cultural oppression. This was what gave Dhaka Theatre its identity. In 1977, we began performing the first street plays, for which we even got arrested mid-performance. It was during the military occupation of Bangladesh, and unable to look past the female cast members in colorful costumes, dancing, they could not tell that a performance was being staged. But those were the socio-political circumstances of the time, and we have had overcome those limitations since.”

“Gono-sangeet and songs of revolution had existed before the Liberation War. These were the songs that not only gave us hope and spirit to fight, but also helped shape our ideals. When night brought impenetrable darkness due to the blackouts, we used to listen to the songs of freedom through Shadhin Bangla Betar Kendra. ‘Amar Sonar Bangla’, ‘Dhono Dhannyo Pushpo Bhora’, ‘Ek Sagor Rokter Binimoye’ and other songs echoed through-

out the entire land, unifying the people, and we would hear them wherever we travelled. Culture is an unstoppable force, and it gives people something to stand for. When we were under siege on the night of March 25, none of us had weapons to defend ourselves, and we had lost during the initial stage of war. But the strength we had derived from culture and tradition, led us into victory. After April, tables turned and victory was on our side.”

“Our people have gone through cultural upheavals brought about by many oppressive years of Colonial and Pakistani rule, and that is why we have gone back to our roots, focusing on post-colonial works in order to find our national voice. We maintain close connections with theatre troupes from rural areas, and make sure their art is exposed. There is an urgent need for such patronization, or else these cultures will fade from our memories over time. Sadly, folk culture is dying due to the precedence television and radio has over entertainment.”

Asked about his current work, Yousuff says “I have finished a film, and right now I am awaiting its release. I have plans to start a new theatre venture as well, based on Syed Altaf Mahmud’s life. I also have plans to work on a couple of more films – one of which will be an attempt to construct a grand narrative of the Language Movement.”

Contemporary singers' thoughts on patriotic songs

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

With Independence Day upon us, and every year, a number of new patriotic songs are composed and aired on the day on various TV channels, alongside the classics from Shadhin Bangla Betar Kendra. Some new singers of this generation talked about the songs of Independence Day in a recent talk with The Daily Star.

Excerpts:

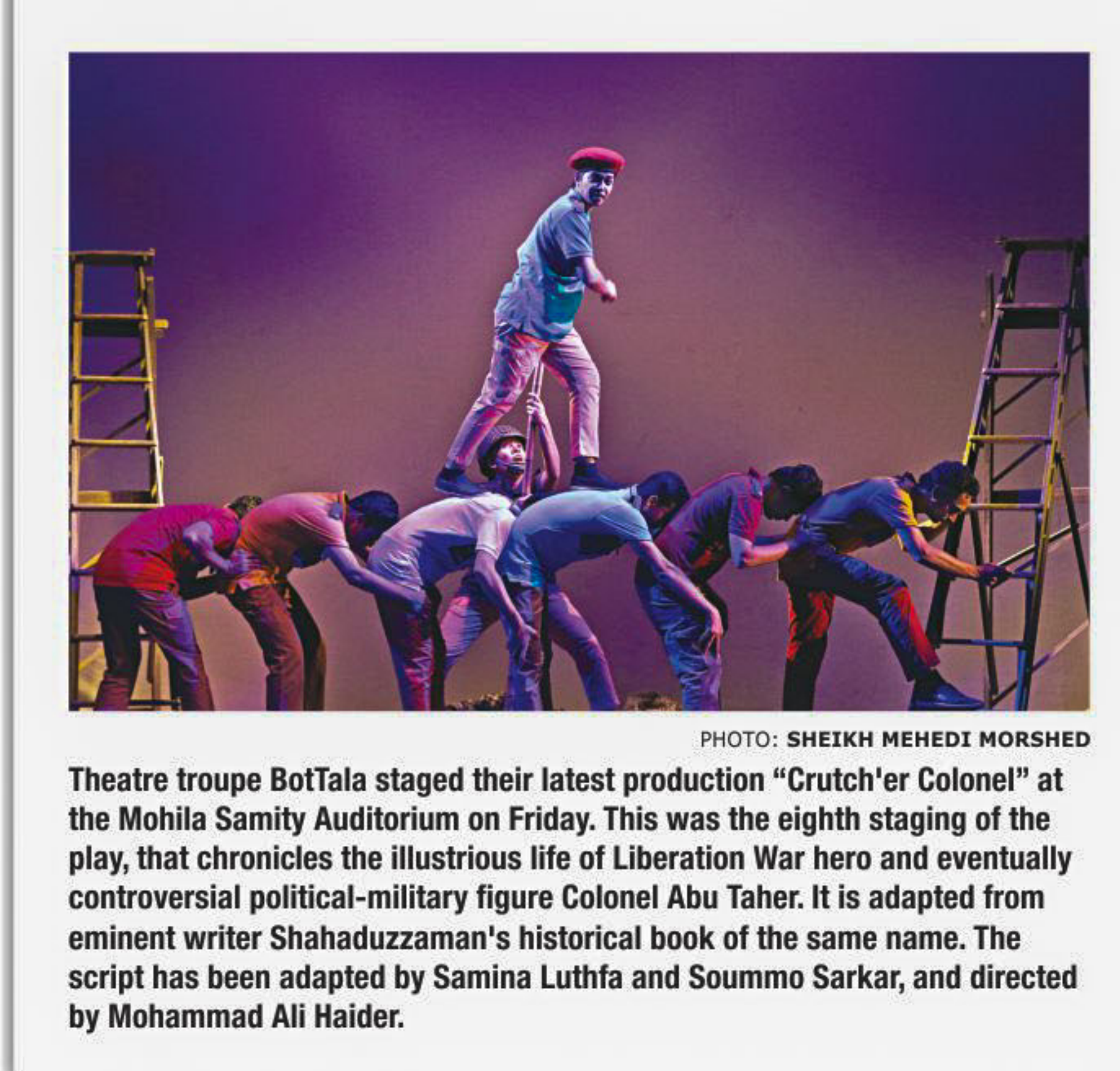
Sabbir
I have prepared 15 songs of Shadhin Bangla Betar Kendra for Gazi TV marking the day. Besides, I have also done some new tracks. When I sing these songs, I feel the spirit of patriotism and can imagine what the brave Freedom Fighters went through on the battlefield. Such patriotic songs inspires me greatly.

Liza
When the day comes, I become very busy with live and stage shows. I also do record songs for the occasion. This time, I have to go through the same schedule. Basically I do perform tracks of Shadhin Bangla Betar Kendra, besides patriotic songs.

While singing the songs, I feel the love to my country. I often regret that I was not present in the 1971 Liberation War. If I were a grown-up then, I would have gone to the battlefield. Although I sing different types of songs, I feel very comfortable performing patriotic songs.

Ronti
Patriotic songs are on the top of my choice of songs. The songs of Shadhin Bangla Betar Kendra inspired the freedom fighters during the Liberation War. I will perform songs on three private channels on the occasion. To me, everyone - especially new generation should perform more patriotic songs and thus patriotism will grow in us.

Kornia
Independence Day, 21st February and Victory Day are very special for me. This year I have performed several songs on the occasion of Independence Day. I become very emotional when I sing songs on these occasions. I feel like in a way I’m doing something good for the country. We should patronize patriotic songs and help popularize them further.




TV WATCH

“Hangor Nodi Grenade” on Boishakhi TV

A CORRESPONDENT

In observance of Independence Day, Boishakhi TV will air acclaimed Liberation-War based film “Hangor Nodi Greande” at 10:50am today. Renowned filmmaker Chashi Nazrul Islam made the film in 1997, based on Selina Hossain’s novel of the same name. Suchorita, Sohel Rana and Aruna Biswas are among the central cast. The film won three national film awards – for Best Director (Chashi Nazrul), Best Story (Selina Hossain) and and Best Actress (Suchorita).



Special TV drama “Jonmo” on ATN Bangla

A CORRESPONDENT

ATN Bangla is airing a single-episode TV play at 8pm tonight marking Independence Day, among other programmes. The play, titled “Jonmo” is written and directed by Raihan Khan and stars Mosharraf Karim and Jui Karim. The story is set in 1971, where a newlywed girl is picked up by Pakistani Army on her wedding night, and eventually raped and assaulted. After the country’s liberation, a boatman finds the woman in labor pain. He brings her to the boat and she has a baby on the boat. The story moves on from there.



Special TV play “Patoki” on Channel i

A CORRESPONDENT

Marking Independence Day, Channel i will air a special single-episode TV play titled “Patoki”. Ferdous Hasan has written and written and directed the play. Sajal, Sanjida Preeti, Ziaul Hasan Kislui, Abdullah Rana and others are in the cast. The play will air at 7:50pm.



Documentary “Mormosporshi” on Gtv

A CORRESPONDENT

Gtv will air a special documentary “Mormosporshi” today at 6pm, marking Independence Day. The documentary focuses on the genocide of Sherpur’s Nalitabari that left a village full of women widows. Those surviving women share their harrowing experiences of the War. Produced by HAM Razon, the programme is anchored by Zahir Raihan’s son, Bipul Raihan.

