

The first time our flag was hoisted, we were in tears:

SHARMILA BANERJEE

SHARMIN JOYA

Eminent dancer Sharmila Banerjee is the lead Manipuri instructor at Chhayanaut Sangeet Bidyatan. She also spearheads the dance school, Nriya Nandan. During the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971, she alongside her family were forced to flee to India, as their home in Raozan, Chattogram was completely destroyed.

She was one of the witnesses of the uplifting of the flag of Bangladesh at the Pakistan high commission on December 6 for the first time in history, after Indira Gandhi recognised Bangladesh as a nation. The Daily Star caught up with the artiste to listen to the memories of those days.

"Within just a few days of the beginning of the war, Chattogram was under attack. On the midnight of April 28, when we were already robbed and in the same clothes for ten days, our village home was destroyed.

Finding no other way, we started walking towards Betunia hill in Rangamati, and walked 85 Kilometers in just two days.

I was with my 75-year-old Thakuma (grandmother), my Kakima (aunt) who was eight months pregnant, and 36 other family members with three hundred people from our village. We did not have any food with us. However, we then crossed the Subroon border and reached Agartola. From there, we went to Kolkata by train.

In May, artiste Swapan Chowdhury informed us that they have formed an association 'Mukti Sangrami Shilpi Sangstha' with Sanjida Khatun, Wahidul Haque along with Mahmuduzzaman Benu, and Debabrata Chowdhury among others. We were invited to join them. After that, we went to 144 Lenin Sarani, which was made the office for practice and rehearsals.

Noted intellectuals of Kolkata like Nirendranath Chakraborty, Dipendranath Bandyopadhyay, Debesh Ray, Shankha Ghosh, Proshun Basu, and Amitabh Dasgupta supported us dearly, and they were in the committee as well.

While Dalia Noushin, Sharmin Morshed, Rafiqul

Islam, Kalyani Ghosh, along with Tareq Ali, Enamul Haque, Syed Hasan Imam, Shahin Samad, and Shila Momen were the members of 'Muktir Gaan'.

The association decided to hold a fundraising concert for the artistes to create awareness. We decided present "Rupantor Gaan" on stage which was written by Shahriar Kabir, and narrated by Syed Hasan Imam on July 3 at Rabindra Sadan.

The aim was to outline history based on the song. The task was not at all easy in the context of contemporary politics. It highlighted the struggles of 1952 to 1971. Mustafa Monowar designed the entire set.

On July 4, all of the noted artistes of Kolkata including Aparna Sen, Shambhu Mitra, Tripti Mitra, Debabrata Biswas, Kanika Banerjee,

Ashoketaru Bandhyopadhyay, Nilima Sen and Suchitra Mitra among others performed in the fund raising event, where we sang the chorus.

During the war, we went to the camps located at the borders, to meet and sing for the war refugees to boost their confidence. We would cover two to three camps every day. The aged people would cry their hearts out, and they would want us to spend more time with us. We would also cover Muktijoddha camps, and they would never let us go without having lunch with them.

On the morning of December 6, we were informed that India has recognised Bangladesh as a free nation, and that our national flag will be raised at the high commission. The artistes of 'Mukti Sangrami Shilpi Sangstha' were called to sing the national anthem, "Amar Shonar Bangla". We all attended the event with tears of joy.

At that time, radio Akashbani Kolkata was flaring with "Shono ekti Mujiborer Theke Lokkho Mujiborer Konthoshorer Dhoni" on Angshuman Ray's voice.

We came back to Bangladesh in the second week of February, 1972, almost after nine months.

The memory is still fresh in my mind, and the emotion cannot be expressed in words."

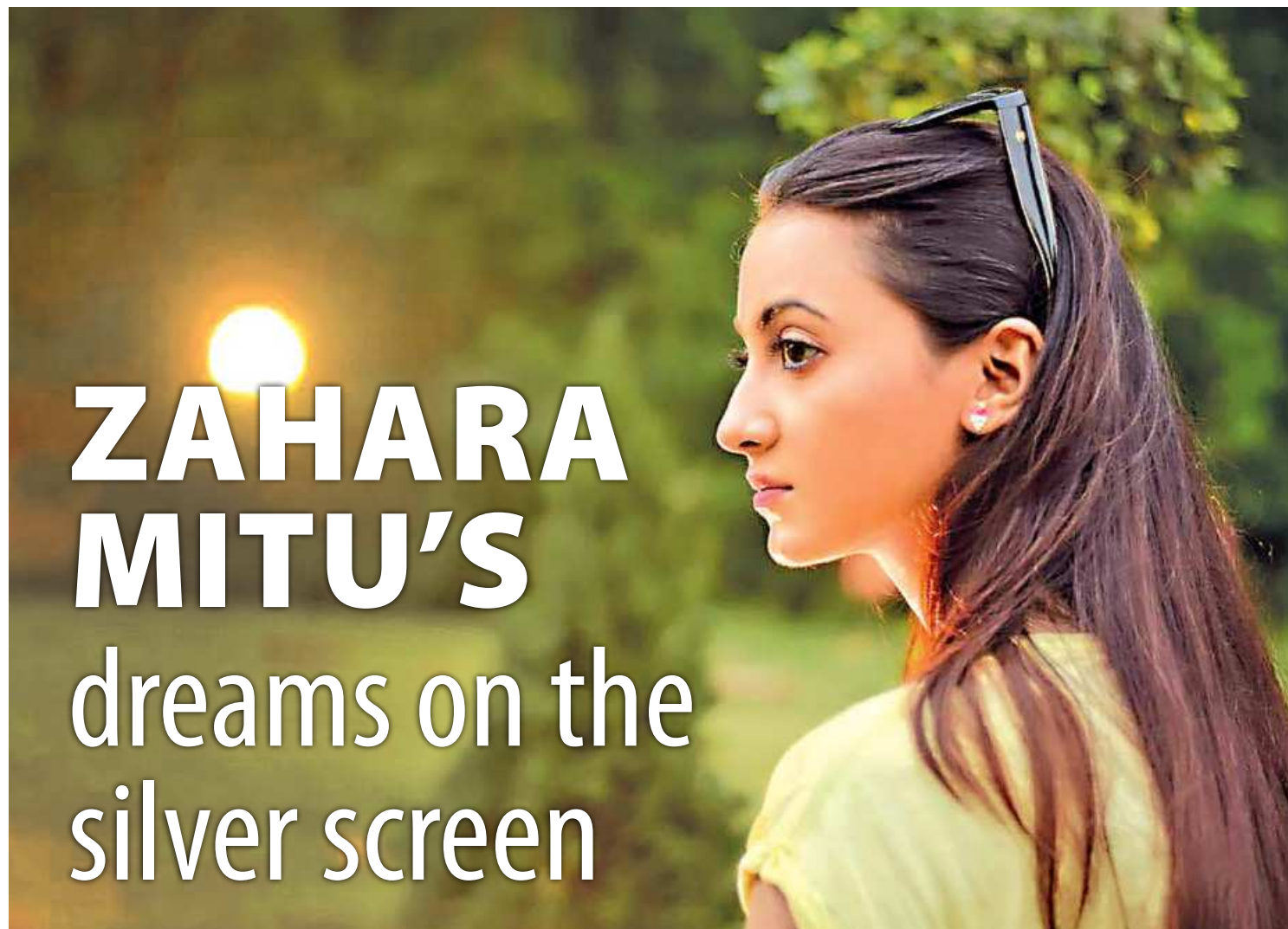


PHOTO: RIAD RANA/COURTESY OF ZAHARA MITU

SHAH ALAM SHAZI

Model and actress Zahara Mitu became a prominent face in the industry after winning the crown in Miss Super Model Bangladesh 2017. She stars in "Joy Bangla", directed by Kazi Hayat, and is currently busy with a number of movies. In a short span of time, she has worked with renowned stars like Shakib Khan and West Bengal actor, Dev. In a recent interview with The Daily Star, the talented actress talked about her upcoming projects, and more.

What can you tell us about your upcoming movie, 'Joy Bangla', which is being funded by the government?

I am playing the role of Dola, opposite Bappy Chowdhury. The film is adapted from Muntasir Mamun's young adult novel, "Joy Bangla", under the direction of Kazi Hayat. The story is set in Dhaka during the 1960s

and 70s. I read the novel in 2013 when it was available in book fairs, and really liked the plot. Now a film is being made on the same, and I am very happy to be working in it.

Are there any upcoming projects you can tell us about?

I will start shooting for "Kutagir" from December 22, and it will continue in Gazipur. The story of the film is based on rural life, and Shaheen Shumon is the director. I will be playing the role of a playful rural girl, opposite Bappy. I am also working with him on "Jontrona", directed by Apurba Rana.

You are working with Shakib Khan in 'Agun'. What can you tell us about that film?
I started working on "Agun" a while back. Hopefully, the shoot will end soon. Besides, I am working on the film, "Commando" with West Bengal actor Dev, as the male lead. The shooting is yet to finish.

What are your expectations from working on movies?

I used to host different shows earlier, including the likes of BPL. I have worked on tele-fictions as well. Then, I got movie offers, which I had never expected. But now, working on films is my top priority. I really want to impress the audience with my acting. To be honest, I fell in love with the camera while working on "Commando".

Who is your most favourite heroine of the silver screen?

There are many in my list of favourites, but I would like to mention Shabnur. I love her pairing with Riaz on screen. I have seen all their movies. Shabnur's acting makes me feel a lot of emotions, which is why she is my most favourite in the industry.

Translated by Rafsana Amin

Zendaya, Tom Holland slam assumption that women can't be taller than their partners

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Celebrated Hollywood stars Tom Holland and Zendaya are making rounds promoting their latest film, "Spider-Man: No Way Home", and repeatedly being asked to address the fact that Zendaya is taller than her male co-star.

During a programme on US network SiriusXM, when the host asked the two artistes about their height difference during an onscreen kiss in "Spider-Man: Far From Home", Holland pointed out that Zendaya is not that much taller than him.

"This is normal too. My mom is taller than my dad," added Zendaya.

Holland further said that height differences between men and women, where the woman should be taller than the man is a "stupid assumption".

Zendaya added that the kiss her character, MJ, shares with Holland's Spider-Man is a nice and sweet moment between them, and said how unnecessary it is to try to cheat the height difference onscreen.

"Why not just let it be? Honestly, [I] never thought of it as a thing because my parents were always that way, so I didn't know that people cared," she said.



Zendaya and Tom Holland.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

5 latest anime shows on Netflix



Blue Period

TIASHA IDRAK

Despite the pandemic, there has been a considerable increase in the number of anime shows produced. As the curtains fall on 2021, it is time to look back on some of the shows that were released on Netflix this year.

To Your Eternity

Based on the award-winning manga series written by Yoshitoki Oima, *To Your Eternity* begins with the story of an orb.

The nameless orb, for uncertain reasons, is cast to the Earth to be observed from afar. It is capable of changing its form based on the stimulation it receives from those around it.

This is the story of an immortal being experiencing humanity through meeting new people across decades. One of the highlights of spring 2021, *To Your Eternity* can be enjoyed by both teens and adults.

Blue Period

Based on the award-winning manga series by Tsubasa Yamaguchi, *Blue Period* delivers a raw depiction of the struggles of aspiring artists, navigating through societal expectations and expressing



Komi Can't Communicate

oneself.

Yatora Yaguchi is a popular high school student who excels in both academics and delinquency. However, he feels unmotivated for he is yet to find a true calling in life. The story follows his trajectory, as he sets on a journey to become an artist.

Komi Can't Communicate

Komi can't communicate is the adaptation of the manga series by Tomohito Oda.

Tadano is an ordinary boy who prefers to stay out of trouble and blend in with others.

However, things change drastically when he takes his seat beside Shouko

Komi. With excellent grades and beautiful appearance, this student is popular for her "mysterious" personality. However, unbeknownst to everyone, she has crippling anxiety and a communication disorder which prevents her from connecting with her classmates.

Super Crooks

Small-time crook Johnny Bolt gathers a ragtag group of supervillains for one



Jojo's Bizarre Adventure: Stone Oceans

last heist. Their target: world's most notorious supervillain. What can possibly go wrong?

Based on the comic by Mark Millar and Leinil Francis Yu, this Japanese-American anime show premiered on Netflix in November.

Jojo's Bizarre Adventure: Stone Oceans

To long-time anime enthusiasts, *Jojo's Bizarre Adventure* series is a legend in its own right. Since its debut in 1987, the manga series by Hirohiko Araki is going strong till this day. With each generation's protagonist sharing the same nickname, "Jojo", this is the story of the Joestar family.

The sixth season and latest anime adaptation of this saga, *Stone Ocean*, revolves around Jolyne Cujjo, who finds herself sitting in a prison in Florida after being framed for murder. After a gift from her father Joutaro, awakens her latent abilities, Jolyne sets upon a path to discover more about her life.

This series famous for its art style and its cross-generational overarching plot. Each season tells the tale of a different protagonist and yet, they are all connected.