



PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

LIBERATION WAR

through the eyes of differently abled artistes

RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA

Dhaka Theatre and British Council Bangladesh jointly organised Bangladesh's first physical storytelling theatre play with differently abled artistes from across the country, on Saturday.



The 20 minute technical show was showcased at the Liberation War Museum. Directed by differently abled British theatre director, Ramesh Meyyappan, the play emphasised on the theme of the 1971 genocide and Liberation War without the use of any dialogues.

The play did not have any name or titles. However, the artistes were able to relay their thoughts with immaculate expression and physical movements. Music and sounds were

beautifully used in this play as both the ripples of waves and the brutal genocide had an echoing effect on the audiences.

The unique project refrained from dialogues for a stylistic effect, but the emotional rendition of patriotic songs by blind artiste Lovely highlighted the angst and pain of the war.

In the final and concluding scene, the long and aimless walk of the *Birangona* amidst the cheering crowd portrayed the sacrifices and sadness

of Bangladesh amidst its liberation from the Pakistani army.

"We had done 8 workshops in 8 different divisions of the country, among which we selected some of the artistes and took them to Chittagong for rehearsals," mentioned eminent cultural personality Nasiruddin Yousuff, founder of Dhaka Theatre. "Dhaka Theatre and Ramesh trained the artistes and was able to stage the 20 minute

play within 20 days of rehearsal."

Ramesh Meyyappan conveyed his message on learning about Bangladesh history and culture through his interpreter Jacky.

"It's my very first time here, and I didn't have any idea about the rich history and culture of Bangladesh. I thought the theme of the show should come from the participants, and each and every one of them gave different narratives and ideas to the plot," mentioned the British director.

"The first thing I taught them was the physicality of theatre. We started off by exploring physical language with arms and the forearms. And then later on, we moved to using the entire body. To develop the narrative in a linear way, we only had 5 days and fortunately we were able to showcase the work fruitfully here today," added Ramesh.

Dhaka Theatre and British Council's project 'Disability Arts: Redefining Empowerment' (DARE) had been arranging such workshops for disabled artistes since 2013. Their first play was called "Romeo and Juliet", which was staged in 2016 and their second play was named "Fearless" staged in 2019. The final show will be showcased tentatively in March.

Vaani Kapoor

portrays transgender woman, aims to create empathy

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Noted Indian actress Vaani Kapoor plays a transgender woman in her latest film, "Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui".

Recently, she said that her casting and portrayal in the film was part of an attempt to stay away from the usual, stereotypical image of transgender people.

Talking about how transgender people are widely perceived by those who either are unaware or ignorant, Vaani said in the interview with *Film Companion*, "There are so many regressive people who have always had a reference of a man donning a woman's attire. Either you are becoming the butt of a joke or something very unusual. That stigma or phobia that is attached that there is something abnormal about them that is something one was trying to stay away from, and create a sense of normalcy. So that people can accept them."

Vaani also said that the cast and crew of the film were hoping to begin a dialogue about acceptance of transgender people in the wider community.

However, the actress added that when she first signed on for the film, she feared how her portrayal would be perceived by members of the transgender community themselves. She did not want it to be a half-baked attempt to play a transgender woman in Hindi cinema.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Solo exhibition 'Ka'-Shommondhiyo [Connected Speech]' underway at AFD

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

The solo art exhibition, "Ka'-Shommondhiyo [Connected Speech]" by Azizee Fawmi Khan, is underway at La Galerie, Alliance Française de Dhaka (AFD).

Jeremy Opretesco, Chargé d'Affaires a.i., of the European Union Bangladesh attended the opening ceremony as the chief guest.

Azizee is a visual artist based in Dhaka. After completing her MFA from the Department of Drawing and Painting, Faculty of Fine Art, University of Dhaka in 2017, she participated in both national and international exhibitions and artist residency programmes, including the 18th Asian Art Biennale, 23rd National Art Exhibition, 20th and 21st Young Artists Exhibition at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka.

She also collaborated with contemporary artists and art associations such as the British Council, Britto Arts Trust, Brihatta Art Foundation, Platform Art Space, Dhaka, Bangladesh and Rebel Creatives, Birmingham, UK. Visitors will see her journey of the past five years in her first solo exhibition. Azizee

is strongly motivated by her childhood and the lives of her predecessors, the heritage of the land she inhabits and the familiar customs that are passed on from one generation to another.

Even though the present is radically different from the past that she longs for, this exhibition is her way of reminiscing about all that now perhaps only exists inside the boundaries of her mind.

Azizee's style merges folk motifs, and local contexts with a personal take on the impressionistic styles as her canvases portray unblended strokes to create the illusion of memory. Along with traditional practices, she also works with old photographs and historical notions.

Along with a painting installation and a couple of drawing projects, 15 acrylic paintings are on exhibit at "Ka'-Shommondhiyo [Connected Speech]", which will be open to all till December 31, from 3 pm to 9 pm.



PHOTO: COURTESY OF AFD



PHOTO: COURTESY OF NOVA

A new feeling for NOVA

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Nova made a name for herself through her appearance on television and the stage. Now, this talented actress is all set to make her appearance on the big screen for the first time with the film "Mridha Bonam Mridha", which received censor clearance this month. The Roni Bhowmik directorial will be released all over the country, on December 24. In a recent chat with The Daily Star, the actress talked about the anxiety which she faces before her first big release.

The first film of your career is being released. How do you feel?

I am feeling very nervous! The feeling is similar to the fear I used to have the night before exam. However, my expectation from this project is high. First of all, it has a very simple storyline based on our daily lives, which also makes it a family-friendly film. I would request the audience to watch the film with their families in the cinema hall, I know that they'll love it!

What kind of role you are playing in this film?

I am playing the role of Oishi Mridha. She is a modern girl, reflective of present society. I do not want to reveal the whole character, but I will say that director Roni Bhowmik has tried his best to bring the best out of all the characters. Say something about your co-star, Siam. Siam is very serious and dedicated towards his job. I had worked with him on a television project before. While working with him, I noticed that he always indulges himself wholly into the character he is playing. Besides, I am working with Tariq Anam Khan as well, who has been my mentor throughout this whole project.

Why did it take so long to act in films in so many years of career?

Honestly, I was waiting for a good film to work on. Even though it took a long time, I am happy to finally receive an opportunity to be in a great story. I want to do more films now. I am receiving many offers lately, but I will choose according to my taste and proceed.

Translated by Rafsana Amin