

Adivasi cultural festival

A glimpse of indigenous culture

KAVITA CHARANJI

THE Bangladesh National Museum (Shaheed Zia Auditorium) hummed with activity on the first day of a three-day Adivasi cultural festival on March 19. Brightly attired young people from various indigenous communities thronged the venue and gave city dwellers a taste of their little known and delightful culture. Centre stage were five ethnic communities: Oraon, Bawm, Rakhaing, Lyngngam and Tripura. The function was organised by the Society for Environment and Human Development (SEHD) in tandem with several community-based Adivasi organisations and other groups.

Bangladeshi tribes enjoy singing, dancing and playing musical instruments. To preserve their rich heritage, the festival showcased all these art forms. The programme began with the rendering of a song, *Hamni Hiki Bangladesh* by a group of Oraon young people. Then followed a dance by four young Tripura girls clad in ethnic attire and carrying baskets. At the end of the dance, the girls threw flowers at the audience, much to the delight of the numerous people who turned out at the event.

Among the highlights of the magi-

cal evening was the Oraon Karam dance. An interesting story surrounds the Karam festival: one version is that the Oraons believe that the Karam tree gave them refuge when they were driven out by the Aryans. From this time onwards, they celebrate this festival and worship the tree with songs and dances.

An enthralled audience watched the Rakhaing combat with a tiger. In this exciting dance, a man with a sword engages in a fight against a tiger. As the music reaches a crescendo the duo battle it out. The momentum picked up later when a group of young Lyngngam girls and boys, dressed in vibrant colours, performed their native dance.

The tag end of the programme featured the popular *Rukha-Tia* or bamboo dance by Bawm girls and boys. The audience watched spell-bound as the unflinching performers danced between bamboos without losing their momentum. The finale was a bottle dance by the Tripura ethnic community. The dance is generally performed by lighting a lamp on a bottle and swaying to the music with the bottle balanced carefully on the performers' heads. The bewitching dance was a fitting conclusion to a splendid cultural evening.



Riveting performances at the festival

The cultural festival over the next two days will feature other Adivasi com-

munities such as Chakma, Marma, Khasi, Santal, Monipuri and Mro,

among others.

Festivals like this can go a long way in bridging the yawning cultural divide between the Bangalee majority and indigenous peoples. The need for such a bridge cannot be overstated since Adivasis from various corners of Bangladesh remain disadvantaged and marginalised. Their culture is endangered and only with the aid of organisations such as SEHD can they find a place in the sun. Meanwhile, dancer Pinky Tripura from the Tripura community of Rangamati has the last word: "I am elated at gaining insights into diverse communities. A festival on this large scale goes a long way in opening one's eyes to the lives and culture of the indigenous peoples."

PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL



Discussion and cultural programme

Poet Abu Zafar Obaidullah remembered

KARIM WAHEED

Poet Abu Zafar Obaidullah Khan's fifth death anniversary was on March 19. To mark the day, Bengal Foundation held a discussion reflecting the poet's life, accomplishments and a cultural programme at Bengal Shilpalaya, Dhanmondi.

Poet Asad Chowdhury reminisced on his acquaintance with Obaidullah. According to Chowdhury, "Abu Zafar Obaidullah stands out among the poets of our country for his originality. Poetry is thought of as 'an affair of details through lyrical composition'. Obaidullah was a poet who didn't believe in overuse of words. He was completely in control of his 'words'. Through subtle references he used to make immense impact. His poetry spoke of our masses, the oppressed rural folks and nature. 'Ma', or the image of 'mother' is present in many of his notable poems."

Asad Chowdhury added, "The

trend of highlighting our agro-based civilisation makes his poetry remarkable. He was a nature-lover at heart; references of different plants, trees and herbs are usual features in his poetry."

Iffat Ara Dewan then presented *adhunik* songs from the '40s, *Tumi chirodin jodi nahi rohibey, Jodi bhuley jao morey*. The artiste also rendered a Nazrul song *Shanjher pakhira phirilo kulaye*, a composition by Abdul Ahad, *Tumi aami dui teer* and a song of Atul Prasad, *Ami bandhinu tomar teer-e toroni amar*.

Bulbul Islam rendered *Gobheer rojoni namilo hridoye, Tomar dwaar-e kano ashi* and *Ami shuduur-er plyashi*.

Poet Belal Chowdhury recalled how Abu Zafar Obaidullah, popularly known as 'Sentu bhai' to him and his peers, was actively involved in launching a convention of poets titled 'Padabail'. Belal Chowdhury suggested that an organisation should be dedicated to focus on Obaidullah's life and works. The organisation can also



provide awards to emerging poets in recognition of their talent or sponsor publications.

The programme ended with recitations of Abu Zafar Obaidullah's poems by eminent cultural personality Asaduzzaman Noor (MP).

A recipient of 'Ekushey Padok', Abu Zafar Obaidullah's notable works include *Shaat Norir Haar, Kokhono Rong Kokhono Shuur, Komol-er Chokh, Ami Kingbodoroti Kotha Bolchhi, Shohishnu Protikkhai, Brishti Ebong Shahoshi Purush-er Jonyo Prarthona* and more.

Obaidullah's career was impressive. As a Secretary for Agriculture and a technocrat Minister for Agriculture, he established the present infrastructure of the agriculture sector of our country. He had also served as the Director of the Asia-Pacific region for FAO and was appointed the High Commissioner of Bangladesh to the United States of America.



Iffat Ara Dewan performing a song, (Top) Poet Asad Chowdhury speaks at the occasion

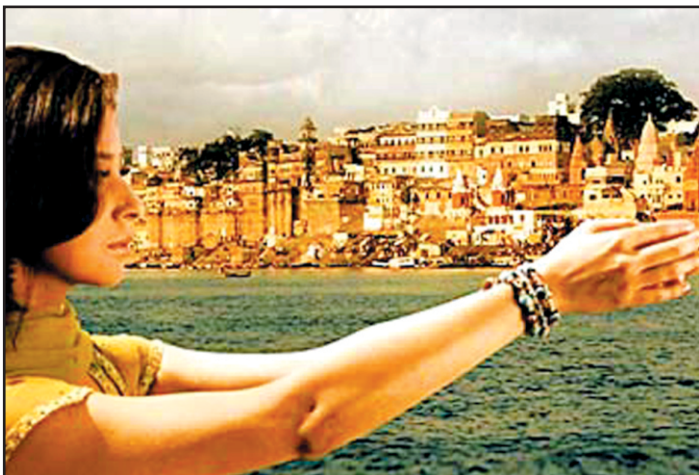
Celluloid Urmila, back with Banaras

The very setting of *Banaras* makes sure the film will be visually arresting. Shot in the holy town now known as Varanasi, it stars Urmila Matondkar, Naseeruddin Shah, Dimple Kapadia, Raj Babbar and Ashmit Patel.

Seasoned actors Dimple Kapadia and Raj Babbar play a rich Brahmin couple. In the film's landscape, they represent orthodox convention. Urmila plays their daughter, Shwetambari. She is a university student. Life goes uninterrupted for her, until she falls in love. Ashmit Patel is Soham, the object of her affection. A music teacher at the university, he is a low-caste spiritualist and disciple of Babaji, played by Naseeruddin Shah.

A defiant union like this breaks too many taboos in Banaras, and chaos surrounds the young lovers. Shwetambari's parents try to help them, but to no avail. Destiny seems to be against her. Devastated, Shwetambari abandons her hometown.

Time goes by and, after almost two decades, Shwetambari, now a teacher, comes to a crossroads. Does she return to Banaras to meet her dying father? Or continue denying herself all attachments?



Urmila in a scene from Banaras

Source: Internet

CULTURAL FEAST

- Exhibition**
Title: 12th Asian Art Biennale, Bangladesh
Venue: National Art Gallery, National Museum, Osmani Auditorium
Date: March 5-31
- Title:* Trio
Participants: Kazi Rakib, Masuda Kazi, Kazi Iqbal
Venue: Gallery Kaya, H#20, road# 16, Sector# 4, Uttara
Date: March 10-24
- Title:* Etching, engraving and wood cut print exhibit
Artist: Mohammed Muslim Mia
Venue: Art & Soul Gallery, Rd 36, House 16, Gulshan Avenue, Dhaka
Date: March 17- 26 at 11 am to 8 pm
- Title:* Exposition -- Anwar Hossein
Venue: Alliance Francaise Gallery
Date: March 16-29
- Book Launch**
Title: Meghdootom
Organiser: Bengal Foundation
Venue: Bengal Shilpalaya, 275/F Road No-27, Dhanmondi
Date: March 24
Time: 7:00pm

Puppet show Generating awareness about over-fishing

KHALID-BIN-HABIB

Fish is the fastest growing source of food in developing countries. It is the primary source of animal protein for about one-sixth of the world's population. But in Bangladesh fisheries are in a crisis -- the result of unsustainable fishing practices. Continued over fishing threatens food security, impoverishes coastal communities and degrades ecosystems. As a result, many of the important fisheries have already collapsed. It also threatens the economy of our country.

To generate awareness about the dangers of over-fishing, several media have been used. One innovative medium is puppetry, a versatile means of artistic expression, communication and instruction for 2,000 years. Puppets can both teach and persuade. Working the edge between entertainment and education, an organisation FemCom Bangladesh joined hands with the



Puppets convey a social message

Department Of Fisheries, Bangladesh Government and Community

Based Fisheries Management Project Phase-2 (CBFM) of World Fish Centre. The outcome was a puppet show performed by fishermen from a rural background at Dhanmondi, Dhaka on March 19.

The team of organisations strives to generate awareness about the fisheries sector in Bangladesh. The grassroots members of the team are very poor and illiterate. The organisation seeks to promote fisheries development and focuses on investment priorities geared towards poverty alleviation through cultural activities in rural areas. They are also working to raise mass awareness against the use of current nets.

Project leader, Malcom Dickson, Project director MD Mahbub Rahman Khan, CBFM-2 of World Fish Centre, Project co-ordinator of CBFM-2 of FemCom Bangladesh were present at the puppet show.

TV GUIDE

- All programmes are in local time. The Daily Star will not be responsible for any change in the programme.
- News Bulletin**
- BTV**
News Headlines (Bangla) at 8:55 am, 12:10 pm, 2:00 pm, 3:00 pm, 4:00 pm, 7:00 pm.
News (Bangla) at 8:00 am 1:00 pm, 5:00 pm, 8:00 pm.
News (English) at 3:00 pm, 10:00 pm.
Late Night News (Bangla and English) 11:30 pm.
- CHANNEL-i**
News (Bangla) at 7:15 am, 9:00am, 2:00pm, 7:00pm, 9:00pm, 10:30pm, 12:15 am.
Telecast of BTV news (Bangla and English) at 11:30 pm.
- ATN BANGLA**
News (Bangla) at 7:00 am, 10:00am, 2:00 pm, 7:00 pm, 10:00 pm, 11pm.
News (English) 8:20am, 7:00pm
Telecast of BTV News (Bangla and English) at 11:30 pm.
- ntv**
News Headlines (Bangla) at 10:00 am, 12:00 am, 6:15 pm, 9:30 pm.
News (Bangla) 7:30 am, 2:00 pm, 5:00 pm, 7:30 pm, 10:30 pm.
Telecast of BTV News (Bangla and English) at 11:30 pm.
- TARA BANGLA**
News Headlines (Bangla) at 5:30pm, 7:30pm.
Tara News (Bangla) at 8:30 pm, 11:30 pm.
Tara News Bangladesh (Bangla) at 9:30 pm.
- BBC WORLD**
Every hour on the hour

- BTV**
09:05 Musical Programme
09:25 Shashwato Jibon
10:00 Satellite programme
12:30 Shashtho Tathya
02:15 Hater Kachhey Computer
02:40 Selected Programme
03:30 Shomarocho
04:00 Shonggeeta
04:30 Prottyashar Alo
05:05 Jibondhara
05:30 Udbhid O Jibon
06:10 Shondhyamaloti
07:00 Quiz Quiz
07:30 Musical Programme: Gaan Shudhu Gaan
07:50 Swadhinota Mohan Swadhinota
08:35 Protidin Bangladesh
08:45 Drama Serial: Shaap Ludu
09:25 Drama Serial: Aronye Anador
10:25 Teknaf Thekey Tetulia
10:30 Kothamala
- CHANNEL-i**
09:30 Shongbad Potrey Bangladesh
09:45 Public Reaction
09:50 Trityomatra
11:05 Cricket Online
11:30 Amar Chhobi
12:30 Aaj Dupurey O Citycell Tarokakothon
01:05 Ebong Cinemar Gaan
01:45 Public Reaction
02:40 Special Programme
02:45 Bashundhara Amader Gaan
04:05 Sa Re Ga Ma
05:30 i-Sports
06:00 Chitrava Jhonkar
06:35 Antoralar Kotha
07:50 Shera Radhuni 1412
09:35 D Rockstar
10:00 Drama Serial: Shei Tumi Ei Tumi

- ntv**
08:35 Aajker Shokal
09:05 Drama Serial
09:30 Crime Watch
10:00 Music Express
11:00 Cine Gaan
11:30 Gambhira
12:02 Old Single Episode Drama
01:00 Muktagon
03:15 Tiffiner Fakey
04:25 Gallery
04:50 Snapshots Of Change
05:20 Apnar Jigyasha
06:20 Shubho Shondhya
06:50 Frankly Speaking
08:25 Drama Serial: Labonya Prova
09:10 Dance Programme: Nupur
09:50 Drama Serial: Amader Anondobari
- ATN Bangla**
10:30 Anyodrishti
11:05 Drama Serial: Ek Akasher Swapno
12:15 Amar Computer
12:50 Musical Programme
01:30 Cine Gaan
02:30 Drama Serial: Teen Tekka
03:15 Drama Serial: O Amar Chokkhu Nai
03:45 Aha Ki Anando
04:20 Talk Show: Somosomasi
04:45 Ispahani Pure Snax
05:10 Quiz Time
05:10 Talk Show: Nari
05:45 Islami Sawal O Jobab
06:20 Aynar Samney
08:00 Shukhnagar Apartment
08:30 Drama Serial: Ferari Syren
09:00 ATN Taroka Tarokader

- PICK OF THE DAY**
- Shei Tumi Ei Tumi**
On Channel-i at 8:00 pm
Drama Serial
Cast: Azizul Hakim, Shumi, Shahed
- Rtv**
10:40 Taroka (Acting) Mukto Shonglap
06:30 Desher Gaan
07:30 Hridoye Shur Aashey
07:45 Shukho Thakun Deho
08:45 Mone
09:30 Human Nature
10:00 Shakthakar
10:30 Aaj Potrikay
10:30 Drama Serial: Dhaka Crime File
11:00 Drama Serial: Rater Galpo
12:00 Drama Serial: Aagurtuk
01:00 Drama Serial: Bhoror Swapno
- HBO**
02:30 Islamic Programme
04:15 Tomar Bina Tarer Geeti
05:30 Apon Shimanay
06:00 Path Chawatsei Anando
06:30 Rtv Exclusive
06:35 Cine Dhoom
08:00 Drama Serial: Boral
08:50 Parer Shillai Gaan
10:50 Weddings of the world
- STAR MOVIES**
10:00 Sweetest Thing The
11:30 Million Dollar Baby
01:45 Species
03:30 10 Things I Hate About You
05:05 City Slickers
07:00 Haunted Mansion The
08:30 Species II
10:00 Cat's Eye
11:45 Kung Phoeey
- STAR PLUS**
11:30 Shanti
02:00 Bhabhi
02:30 Kesar
03:30 Saarthi

- Unforgiven**
On HBO at 09:30 pm
Genre: Drama
Cast: Clint Eastwood, Hackman, Morgan Freeman
- STAR MOVIES**
10:00 Sweetest Thing The
11:30 Million Dollar Baby
01:45 Species
03:30 10 Things I Hate About You
05:05 City Slickers
07:00 Haunted Mansion The
08:30 Species II
10:00 Cat's Eye
11:45 Kung Phoeey
- STAR PLUS**
11:30 Shanti
02:00 Bhabhi
02:30 Kesar
03:30 Saarthi

- DISCOVERY**
10:30 War Zone
11:30 Extreme Engineering
12:30 FBI Files
01:30 Wild Discovery
02:30 Detective Stories
03:30 Living Pulse
04:00 Mystery Hunters
4:30 Wild Discovery
05:30 War Zone
06:30 Dangerman Adventures
08:30 With Geoff Mackley
08:30 Jounkard Wars
09:30 Fastest, Tallest, Biggest
10:30 Science Frontiers
11:30 Crime Night
- NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC**
10:30 Seconds From Disaster
11:30 Murder Dolls
12:30 Sleeping Beauties - The Incorrupt
01:30 Different Ball Game
02:30 Seconds From Disaster
03:30 Animal Nightmares
04:30 Backyard Science
04:45 Doc Eureka
05:00 Serious: Arctic
05:30 Planet Wild
06:00 Croc Chronicles

- STAR SPORTS**
10:00 Rugby Hoq Asia 6 Nations Round 5 (Generic)(T)
11:30 Wild Discovery
02:30 Detective Stories
03:30 Living Pulse
04:00 Mystery Hunters
4:30 Wild Discovery
05:30 War Zone
06:30 Dangerman Adventures
08:30 With Geoff Mackley
08:30 Jounkard Wars
09:30 Fastest, Tallest, Biggest
10:30 Science Frontiers
11:30 Crime Night
- ESPN**
12:00 Australia Tour Of South Africa Castle Lager/Mtn Test Series 2006 South Africa Vs Australia 1st Test Day 5 Highlights(S)
01:30 Nba Basketball San Antonio Spurs
04:00 Icc Cricket World (R)
04:30 English Premier League Highlights
05:30 Super Spells With Wasim Akram (R)
06:30 Winter X Games Ix - Day 2 Part 1 Mtl Aspen Cousa (R)
08:30 Uefa Champions League Magazine Shows
09:30 Sportscenter Asia
10:00 Uefa Champions League Magazine Shows
10:30 The Football Quiz Kick-Off Round 1(R)
12:00 Cricket Classics Sehwaq's Best
12:30 Australia Tour Of South Africa Castle Lager/Mtn Test Series 2006 South Africa Vs Australia 1st Test Day 5 Highlights(R)
- TEN SPORTS**
01:30 Sri Lanka v Pakistan:3rd ODI (1st Session)
02:15 Sri Lanka v Pakistan:3rd ODI (Lunch)
05:45 Sri Lanka v Pakistan: 3rd ODI (2nd Session)
08:00 WWE: Smackdown
10:00 Sri Lanka v Pakistan:3rd ODI highlight