Jolshiri's Cultural Festival at JU

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A weeklong cultural festival arranged by **Jolshiri**, one among the numerous cultural organisations of Jahangirnagar University, started on February 9 at the Muktomoncho (amphitheatre) of the campus. With the spring approaching, students flocked to enjoy the event that included plays, musical programme, sculpture and poster exhibitions, Lathi Khela (stick dance) and more.

Jolshiri and other organisations participated in the festival. Theatre troupe Prachyanat was there with their fabulous stage production Circus Circus on the fourth day of the festival.

Upholding the slogan Oitijjher Paal Orao, Chetonay Aano Provaat (manifest the sail of our heritage, bring a daybreak in the conscience) the festival started with a rally. But the chilling and drizzling weather barred the inauguration programme that was shifted to the following day. However, Jolshiri staged their play Shobdo Brikkho (The tree of words) in the evening.

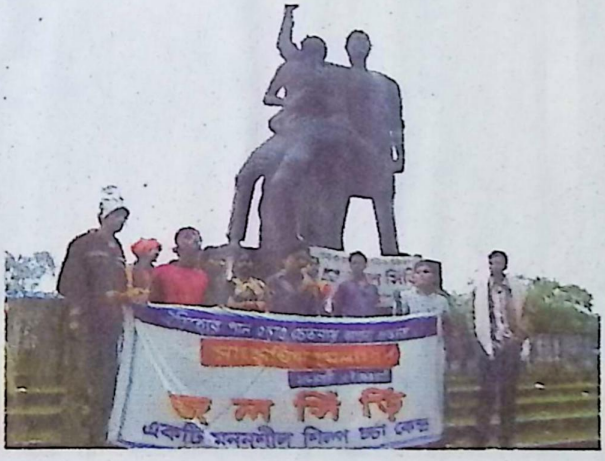
Shobdo Brikkho is a choreography-based experimental production. Rather than having any particular character, the play centres on a huge tree - the symbolic representation for the entire human civilisation. Each of the branches of the tree stands for an incident, each incident bearing a tale of exploitation. Exploitation, the all-prevailing obstacle that persists in every society throughout the human civilisation, is a major theme of the play.

Written by Apurba Paal and directed by Touhidul Islam Torun, the lead roles in Shobdo Brikkho was played by Himel, Nazmul, Gini, Hasanat, Limon, Silvi, Riya and others.

On February 10, the festival was formally inaugurated by Poet Mohammad Rafique. Kamruzzaman Munir, associate professor of the department of Zoology, Jahangirnagar University, Fatima Tabsun, Chief Co-ordinator, SEDS Drama, Stamford University and Jolshiri's general secretary Tofael Ahmed Lemon were also present at the event.

What attracted the students in the event is the huge, colourful Fanush (A large balloon made of light paper with stretched bolts at proper places with flat open 'mouth' at its bottom. Cotton or rags are wrapped around the main bolt and it flies free when fueled by fire.).

Another attraction of the event was Lathi Khela, the traditional sports of



rural Bangladesh. A professional group from the Bihari community of Mirpur participated in the haughty fight with tall bamboos.

In the past few years, Jolshiri has been including such traditional sports like Cockfight, Snake charming, Monkey's play (Banorer khela), Puppet show and others in the festival.

"To uphold our culture and tradition is one of the main objectives of our organisation," said Tofael Ahmed, general secretary of Jolshiri.

SEDDS Drama, of Stamford University then staged their play Doctor Fottas, an adaptation of Christopher Marlowe's classic, Doctor Faustus.

A musical programme by Jolshiri was arranged the next day. Prior to the event, Posters from the past Jolshiri productions were exhibited. Tahsina Nazneen Shuchi's solo sculpture exhibition titled Otikranto Chhaya was also inaugurated at the Cafeteria premises in the campus. Shuchi is a student of the Institute of Fine Arts, Dhaka University and her art works have been exhibited in several art exhibitions including the National Art Exhibition.

The musical programme was mainly based on acoustic performances, featuring Bengali songs from both Bangladesh and India. A chorus rendition of the theme song of the festival Amader kolorobey mukhorito jodi hoy was presented. The song is written and composed by Mahiuddin Ahmed Unmesh.

Circus Circus by Prachyanat was the attraction of the following day, February 12. The play deals with the life and struggle faced by a travelling circus troupe. The play is written and directed by Azad Abul Kalam. Jolshiri honoured the actor-director with a crest. Prachyanat will also participate in the forthcoming theatre festival arranged by Jahangirnagar Theatre.

On February 13, Cultural organisation Foring came up with their musical drama for the children Ichhey pabar adda on the same day. It was the first day of Bengali month Falgun, and spring was apparent in the dresses of the student-audience. Girls wearing saree and boys in kurta was a common scene on the campus that day.

Ghum, voot, pipra, another theatre production of Jolshiri was staged on February 14. It was a comedy, written by Mahiuddin Ahmed Unmesh and directed by Rifat Hasan of Jolshiri.

The festival rapped up on February 15, with a reunion of the members of Jolshiri.