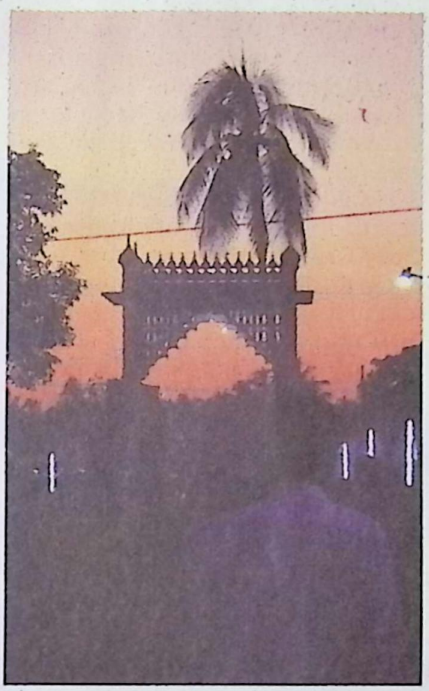
which also included many sadhus. The festival began with an official performance that also included performance by renowned artist Fareeda Parveen. Later Hiller and Salman visited Lalon Shah's grave, which was an interesting experience for Hiller. He was impressed by the different groups of artists that took part in "jam sessions" by simply improvising with their drums, flutes, ek-taras and do-taras. Their melodious tunes captivated Hiller despite of his lack of understanding of the lyrics. He expressed a sense of satisfaction upon hearing the mystical melodies of Lalon Shah.

The presence of many simple people and shadhus, as well as intellectuals and artists from all over Bangladesh and their interest and passion for our music, culture and heritage overwhelmed Hiller. He also had the opportunity to interact with the different types of people and artists participating in the festival.







While interviewing Hiller he proudly spoke of his amazing impression of the activities in Lalon mela. He admitted of not being able to think of anyone in the United States of Lalon's stature, who to Hiller is a living legend of Bengali cullture. He also researched about Lallon Shah and discovered various films and books devoted to his character that are also available in Europe and the United States. Hiller stated his satisfaction with the unknown secret of Lalon's art in different parts of the world and believes that his message is a relevant one in our days.

Upon reminiscing, Hiller mentioned about an interesting situation that he experienced on the last day of the festival. As Hiller and Salman were enjoying the music sitting behind the shrine of Lalon's, they noticed two "trouble makers" who were high and were very disruptive by trying to physically harass the performers. As Hiller observed the provocative situation he became immensely impressed by the way the performers simply smiled at the two and diffused the situation very effectively, almost by ignoring them. As a result of their calm headed actions, about twenty minutes later the troublemakers left the premises without the audiences having to do much. Hiller was surprisingly impressed of how the people dealt with the situation effectively, which otherwise would have led to a chaos due to the two men's provoking actions. As a humorous endnote, Hiller mentioned that the whole experience at the Lalon Akhra at Chheuria reminded him of Woodstock of the United States, in Bangladeshi style.

Hiller had captured various photographs and video footages that he hopes to convert into a documentary in the upcoming months, preferably after his return to the United States. Some of the photos that Hiller and Salman took of the festival are reproduced in the pages.

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