

WHAT'S ON

Pahela Baishakh Celebration
 Organiser: Chhayanaut
 Venue: Ramna Botomul, Dhaka
 Date: April 14; Time: 6am



Mongol Shobhajatra
 Venue: Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Dhaka
 Date: April 14
 Time: 9am



Hajaro Konthe Borshoboron
 Organiser: Shurer Dhara
 Venue: Bangabandhu Int'l Convention Centre
 Date: April 14
 Time: 5:30am



Shaatkahon Rongila Mela
 Organiser: Jatra
 Venue: Jatra Dhanmondi outlet, Rd 27
 Date: April 10-14; Time: 6pm



Bengal Baishakh Utshab
 Organiser: Bengal Foundation
 Venue: Bengal Shilpalaya, Dhanmondi
 Date: April 13-15
 Time: 6pm



"I become one with my music when I perform"
-- Kiran Chandra Roy

ZAHANGIR ALOM

Bangladesh takes pride in her exquisite and resource of folk music, and Kiran Chandra Roy can be termed a repository of it. Roy's renditions contain many esoteric elements that he offers while performing on stage. Sometimes, with an ektara in one hand and a baya fixed around his waist, the artiste in gerua (ochre) attire mesmerises the audience as he dances with his melodic live performances.

Roy recently spoke on folk music and its heritage of Pahela Boishakh. Excerpts:

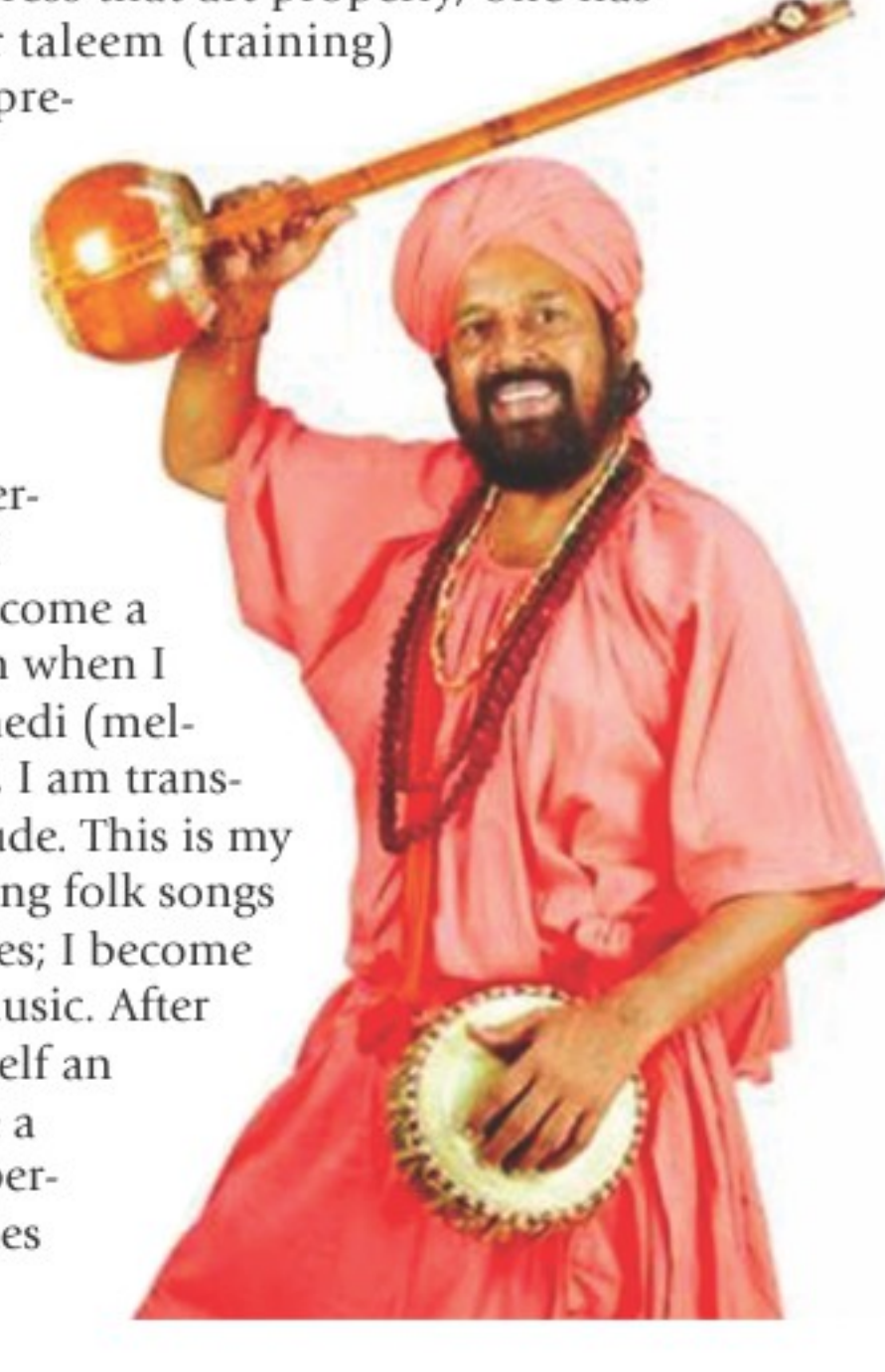
"Pahela Boishakh is a unique festival for Bengalis across the world. The important festival mirrors our secular spirit. Amongst the folk instruments, ektara, dhak-dhol and shankh come first. The single string of ektara signifies one path -- monotheism. The bauls follow the sahajia religion whose ultimate destination is monotheism. They control themselves and their soul through meditation and perseverance.

"Bengalis are very conscious of their cultural roots. Boishakh reminds us of our heritage and culture. I have already set a single tune on my ektara and that is the melody of embracing just one path towards Bangalee culture marking this Boishakh.

"The motto of music is to create multitude of rasa in the hearts of the audience. The inspiration behind are the blessings of my guru of 14 years, Khandakar Nurul Alam. He is unequivocally revered in our country. His knowledge of music cannot be described in words. Whatever I have learnt from him constitutes my entire achievement of music.

"Artistic attachment is a prerequisite to creating rasa in the hearts of the audience. If an artiste cannot delve deep into his thoughts, he cannot create any artistic appeal. To express that art properly, one has to have proper taleem (training) from the true preceptor.

"When I perform baul songs, my soul subconsciously turns baul, when I perform bhatiali, I instinctively become a boatman, again when I present a bichhedhi (melancholic) song, I am transported to solitude. This is my way of presenting folk songs of various genres; I become one with my music. After all, I think myself an actor alongside a singer while I perform," concludes Roy.



Celebrations galore to usher in a new dawn



The Mongol Shobhajatra is one of the highlights of Pahela Baishakh celebrations. PHOTO: STAR

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pahela Baishakh is the biggest and most popular festival of Bengalis, celebrated amidst lively pageants leaving behind the gloom of the past and giving new impetus to the nation's cultural heritage.

With the first rays of sunlight, Chhayanaut's borshoboron celebrations will begin at the capital's Ramna Botomool at 6:15am. The flagship Pahela Baishakh programme will have recitations and rendition of songs, to usher in the New Year. State TV and a number of private channels will air the proceedings live. The theme for this year's celebration is "Swadesh O Sampriti".

Dhaka's Pahela Baishakh celebrations remain incomplete without the Mongol Shobhajatra. With the theme "Jagoto Koro, Udyoto Koro Nirbhoy Kore Hey", a colourful procession by students and teachers of the Dhaka University's Faculty of Fine Arts will begin at 9am from the FFA premises and go through various streets. There will also be a puppet show at the faculty throughout the Pahela Baishakh celebrations, alongside

bioscope and traditional jatrपाला being staged at FFA premises.

Surer Dhara, one of the leading music schools, together with Channel i are holding their own Pahela Baishakh celebrations titled "Hajaro Konthey Borshoboron", that began at the stroke of dusk yesterday on Chaitra Sangkranti -- the last day of the Bengali calendar -- and will continue past noon today at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the capital.

Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy premises will also light up to mark the occasion, with an evening session from 6pm featuring solo and choral songs, dance, recitation, puthi-path and more.

Bengal Foundation's three-day Baishakh celebrations also continue with a Dhak and folk music session in the morning, and performances by renowned artistes in the evening, at the Bengal Shilpalaya in Dhanmondi.

Fashion outlet Jatra's "Shaatkahon Rongila Mela" festival continues, with Ashor performing at their Dhanmondi outlet at 3pm and Kanganini Sufia taking stage from 6pm.

A four-day "Taste of Dhaka"

food festival at the Kalabagan field is also draped in Baishakh spirit, bringing in traditional Bengali delicacies in the daylong fair, along with puthi-path and baul songs.

Apart from these, various cultural organisations will keep the day abuzz all over Dhaka with various programmes, at the usual spots like Rabintra Sorobor, Dhanmondi, and Hakim Chatter, Dhaka University.

On the occasion of Pahela Baishakh, Bangladesh National Museum (BNM) is arranging a three-day programme featuring discussions, musical soiree and pitha festival. Civil Aviation Minister Rashed Khan Menon inaugurated the event as chief guest yesterday. Kamrun Nahar Khanam, director general of BNM delivered the welcome speech. Shamsuzzaman Khan, DG Bangla Academy; Dr Ranjit Kumar Bishwas, Secretary, Ministry of Cultural Affairs; and Simin Hossain Rimi MP were present as guests at the programme. M Azizur Rahman, president of Bangladesh National Museum's Board of Trustees presided over the programme.

Rafiqul-Abida The Baishakhi couple

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Pahela Baishakh holds a special meaning for noted singers Rafiqul Islam and Abida Sultana. Years ago on this momentous day they were married.

Naturally as Pahela Baishakh comes around, it is cause for a double celebration. Going back down the years Rafiqul Islam and Abida Sultana talked about what the festival means to them:

Some thoughts of Pahela Baishakh in your early years?

Abida: My father was posted in Munshiganj where we celebrated the day for about five years. We used to feast on sweets and I performed at several music shows. Later, when we settled in Dhaka the festival was celebrated with songs and plays at my grandmother's house in Siddeshshori.

Rafiqul: I spent my childhood in Rajshahi. On Pahela Baishakh, the opening of hal khata (new ledgers) was an important event. The fair at Rajshahi's Dargapara was also a major attraction.

You two got married on Pahela Baishakh. What does the day mean to you?

Abida: Not just that, we first met that day. We also performed a duet on the first day of the Bangla New Year and finally we tied the knot on Pahela Baishakh.

Rafiqul: In those days, in Rajshahi, Muslims weddings were arranged on the basis of the calendar and according to



that there was no date for the wedding a day before "Chaitra Sankranti". I still remember that there was a heavy downpour the day after our wedding.

What about your first Baishakh celebrations after your marriage?

Abida: At the time we lived in Banglamotor and took part in a musical soiree.

Have you ever celebrated your wedding anniversary abroad?

Rafiqul: Several times for professional reasons. Once we went to perform in Rome, Italy, on Pahela Baishakh. The event was deeply appreciated by the packed audience.

Do you still visit Ramna Botomul on the day?

Abida: Earlier, we used to visit regularly and enjoyed the chorus to usher in the first day of Pahela Baishakh. But as it gets very crowded now, we usually refrain from it.

Gulzar chosen for coveted Dadasaheb Phalke Award

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

His poems and lyrics were like a whiff of autumn sunshine. For generations, his songs evoked romantic feelings like in "Dil Dhundta Hai Phir Wohi Fursat Ke Raat Din" in the film "Mausam" and "Tere Bina Zindagi Se" in "Aandhi", or in a philosophical strain like in "Musafir Hoon Yaaro" in "Parichay" or pure eroticism like the number "Bidi Jalaile" in "Omkaara". He had something memorable for everyone, cutting across all ages.

So, it's but natural that poet-lyricist and film director Gulzar has been chosen for Indian government's top film award Dadasaheb Phalke award for the year 2013. And that is somewhat ironical for the award by the Congress-led UPA government has gone to a man whose directorial venture "Aandhi", starring Suchitra Sen and Sanjeev Kumar, was banned during the Congress government rule way back in the 1980s because the main role essayed by Sen was perceived to be modelled after Indira Gandhi.

At the age of 79, any other award may not have meant much for Gulzar especially after the song "Jai Ho" penned by

him for multiple Oscar-winning film "Slumdog Millionaire" won both the Academy award and Grammy awards.

But the Dadasaheb Phalke award, as he says, "is special" for him because "it is a national honour. It is a feeling of fulfillment of not one song, screenplay but the total body of work one does. I feel blessed," said Gulzar, whose name was unanimously recommended by a seven-member jury.

Born as Sampooran Singh Kalra in 1934 in present-day Pakistan's Punjab, Gulzar and his family were among the many victims of the partition. The family moved to Amritsar but Gulzar came to Bombay and began to work as a garage mechanic while writing poetry in his spare time.

Gulzar started his career in 1956 and as a lyricist got his first break in Bimal Roy's "Bandini" and the song "Mora Gora Ang Lai Le" filmed on Nutan, became an instant hit. The music was by the inimitable SD Burman.

Gulzar's finest work, both as a director and a lyricist, are sensitive manuscripts of the human heart as evidenced by films like "Koshish", "Aandhi", "Maachis", "Achanak", "Mausam", and "Ijaazat". He



has also made films with a political content like "Mere Apne" (on youth unrest), a Hindi remake of Tapan Sinha's Bengali film "Aponjon", "Maachis" (on Punjab terrorism), "Aandhi" and "Hu Tu Tu". And his television series, "Mirza Ghalib" is regarded as an all-time classic.

Over the years, Gulzar teamed up with composers like Salil Chowdhury, RD Burman, Hemanta Mukhopadhyay, Madan Mohan, Kanu Roy, Shankar Jaikishan, Laxmikant-Pyarelal, Madan Mohan, Rajesh Roshan, Anu Malik, and Shankar-Ehsaan-Loy, AR Rahman and

Vishal Bhardwaj. Along with lyrics, he has also contributed to several films as script, story and dialogue writer.

Gulzar was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award in 2002, and the Padma Bhushan in 2004. He has won a number of national film awards and 20 Filmfare Awards.

Gulzar's poetry has been published in three compilations: "Chand Pukhraaj Ka", "Raat Pashminey Ki" and "Pandrah Paanch Pachattar". His short stories are published in "Raavi Paar" (also known as "Dustkhat" in Pakistan) and "Dhuan". He is also credited with having created a new type of stanza in Urdu poetry named "Triveni" (a stanza of 3 lines).

Gulzar is married to leading actresses Raakhi. The couple has a daughter, Meghna. When their daughter was only one year old, they separated but never divorced. Meghna grew up with her father and, after completing her graduation in films from New York University, went on to direct films like "Filhaal", "Just Married" and "Dus Kahaniyaan". She also authored the biography of her father in 2004.

TV Programmes on Baishakh



A scene from "Subarna Rekhra Banishiwala".

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

ATN Bangla

ATN Bangla will air colourful programmes marking Pahela Boishakh. The channel will air live Borshoboron programme from Bogra at 7:40 am. Directed by Liton Adhikari Rintu, a programme "Horek Rokom Jibon" for the children will go on air at 10:30am while dance programme "Rong-e Rong-e Boishakh" will be aired at 11:15am. Indigenous cultural programme will follow at 12:15pm. Written by Brindaban Das and directed by Syed Awlad, TV play "Haalkhata" will go on air at 3:10pm. Other special programmes "Rong-e Bhora Boishakh", "Boishakhi Anandey", and tele-film "Mon" will be aired at 5:30pm, 8pm and 11pm respectively.

Channel i

Channel i and Shurer Dhara will jointly hold the event "Hajaro Konthey Borshoboron 1421" at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC) from 5:30am.

Apart from this, a Boishakhi fair will take place at BICC premises. Channel i and Ruposhi Bangla Television will air the event live till 2pm.

Maasranga Television

Maasranga Television will air live Chhayanaut's Borshoboron programme from Ramna Botomul at 6:15am. The channel will also air live (from Baridhara) a special Boishakhi programme "Hridoy Nanche Boishakhi Sajey," participated by Shama Rahman, Nanzina Toma, Mou and her troupe, and artistes of Baridhara Society. Swikriti Prashad Barua has produced the programme.

Chhayanaut's "Deshghar-er Gaan" will be aired at 12:30pm. Classical dance "Nrityanadan" will be aired at 2:30pm. Noboborsho special TV play "Subarna Rekhra Banishiwala" (written and directed by Gautam Koiree) will go on air at 8pm. Produced by Tofael Sarkar, dance programme "Pahadi Nritya" will be aired at 9:20pm. Special programme "Jui-er Sathey Boishakhi Sajey" will be aired at 10:55pm. Beautician Kaniz Almas Khan will judge the programme.

IT'S TRUE!

Mughal Emperor Jalaluddin Muhammad Akbar -- the third Mughal Emperor, introduced the Bengali Calendar for relatively easier tax collection, as the lunar Hijri calendar did not agree with the harvest sessions. Primarily this calendar was named as "Fasli San" and then Bongabdo or Bangla Year was launched in March 1584. Akbar ordered to resolve all dues on the last day of Chaitra; as the next day was the first day of the New Year (Bengali New Year), the day for a new opening; landlords and would distribute sweets among their tenants, while businessmen would do the same for their customers as they commenced a "Halkhata" (new ledger) and locked their old ones. The air of festivity and fervour gradually turned Pahela Boishakh into a major celebration.



Atul Dodiya in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Dhaka is organising an art workshop at the Drawing and Painting Department. Internationally renowned artists Atul Dodiya and Prasanta Sahu will conduct the workshop, which will open tomorrow (April 15) at the poet Sufia Kamal Auditorium, National Museum, Shahbagh. Eminent artist Professor Rafiqun Nabi will inaugurate the workshop as chief guest. Professor Syed Abul Barq Alvi, dean, Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Dhaka and Durjoy Rahman Joy, managing director of Winners Creations Ltd will be present as guests of honour.

Depart, an English art quarterly will also accord a reception to Atul Dodiya at its Monipuri Park office in the city today. The artist will talk about modern art and its varied aspects. Senior artists, critics and scholars will attend the programme.

Born in Mumbai in 1959, Atul Dodiya, one of the most sought-after contemporary artists today, completed his BFA from the Sir JJ School of Arts. He insightfully references and makes accessible interna-



tional art historical and political imagery in his complex painting and installation practice. The painter came into prominence in 1999 with his series on Mahatma Gandhi, where the painter sought to reconstruct images from a forgotten biography of the leader.