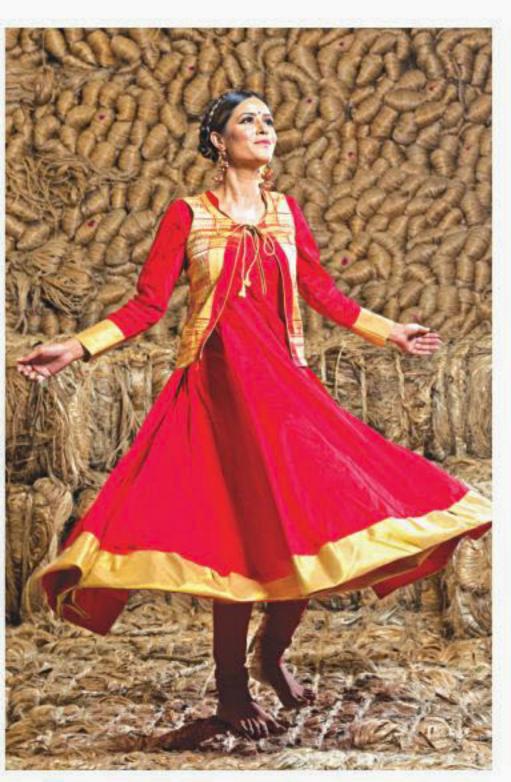


Every year, towards the beginning of summer as the sun prepares to change its motion, indigenous tribes in the Chittagong Hill Tracts gear up to celebrate the muchawaited, auspicious festival of Choitro Shonkranti.

sun moves towards the north and

This time of the year – when the the length of the day increases – is



celebrated with enthusiasm and devotion. Devotees offer prayers to the sun deity as it is the giver of life and sustenance.

A very important aspect of this festival is bathing in rivers, which is believed to absolve one of one's sins and strengthen the mind, body and soul. Members of this community

sprinkle water on each other to

wash off sins and enhance communal bond and friendship.

A jovial atmosphere prevails all around as every household prepares celebratory food and sweets. Charity is considered the most benevolent of all acts and is highly encouraged during this time of the year.

The spirit of solar energy permeates every aspect of this celebration



as red, orange and yellow are primary colours used. Vibrant decorations are used to set the tone, and men and women choose attires in these colours to add to the mood.

Fancy, vivid ribbons are worn by women, coiled in their beautiful braids and buns. The celebrations continue for a few days as welcoming the sun's new phase is believed

to be beneficial for spiritual and mental well-being.

Some people believe in visiting holy sites and shrines on this day to attain higher religious understanding. Choitro Shonkranti is one of the auspicious religious festivals in the indigenous community owing to the opportunity it provides to the devotees to wash off their sins and



start afresh.

Yeasmin

By Sabrina N Bhuiyan Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed **Model: Shrabosti and Tania** Wardrobe and accessories: Tenzing Chakma Make-up: Farzana Shakil Photoshoot coordinator: Isha

