

The colours of our lives



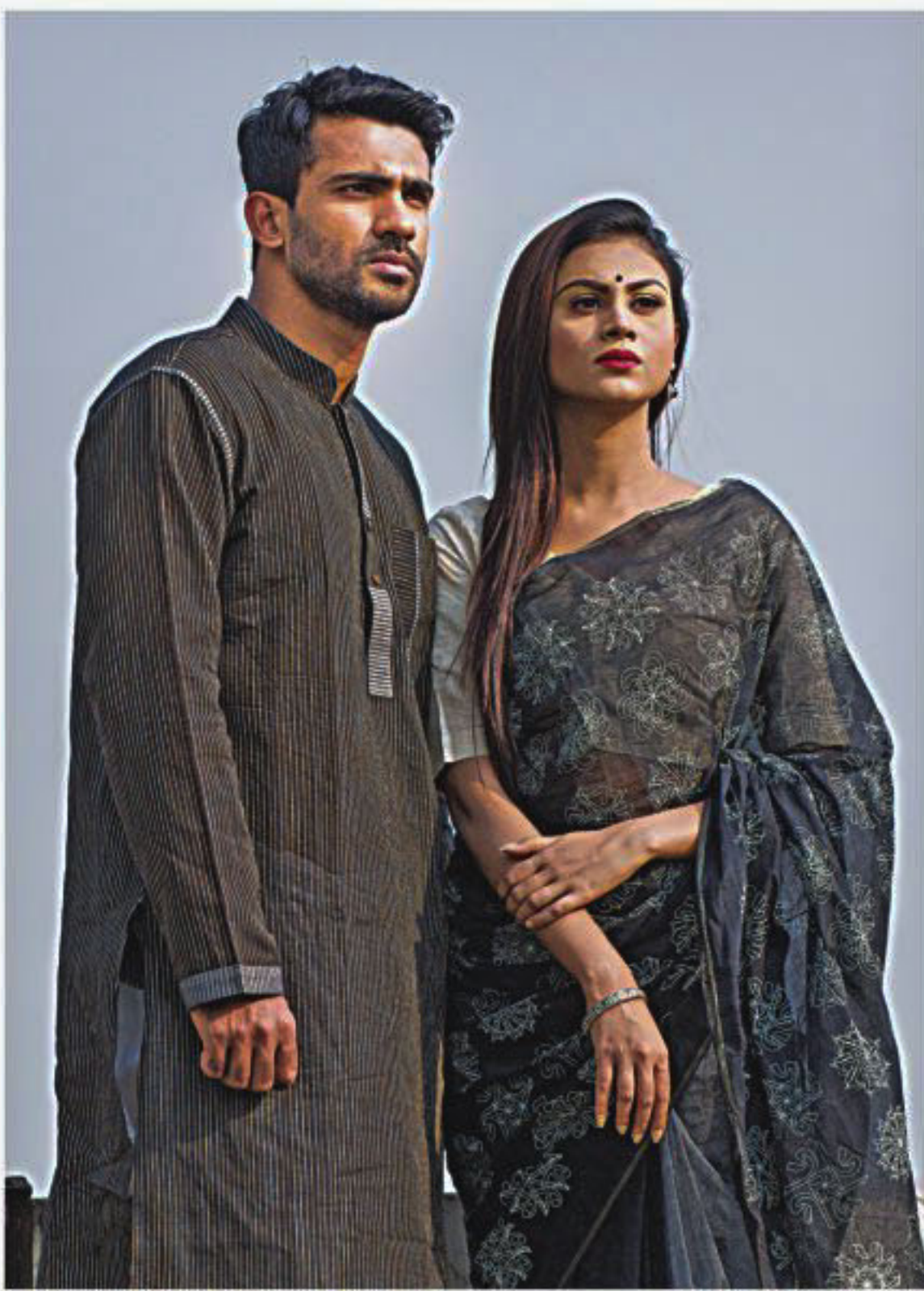
MANNAN MASHHUR ZARIF

The paper lanterns keep flying higher, and higher still; the flame beneath, propelling the 'phanush' creating a mesmerising display of colours in the sky - a fiery burst of yellow, seen through the translucent mesh of thin coloured papers.

A fleet of kites fly by manoeuvring through the lanterns as the able hands of flyers engage in a battle for the bounty - a prized kite of the person on the next rooftop.

While the battle draws to an end as the last day of Poush phases out with the sunset, the festivity of Sankranti is yet to be over. Fire breathers take centre stage and engage in a battle for supremacy. As Shakhari Bazaar celebrates Shakraine, people of Dhaka join in. In the new Gregorian calendar year, this is the beginning of the expressions of colours in our lives.

All yellow...and maybe some orange Winter rolls onto spring and the waves of yellow from expansive fields of mustard blossoms spreads even to



the sedentary urban setting, bringing about a much needed respite from the ever decreasing, yet harsh, days of winter.

The grey patches meet an overpowering force within us; the liveliness of marigolds that bloom in pots and flowerbeds is as if emanating off the moistened brush of an artist. The bedazzled cuckoo, the songster for the season, coos in search of its mate.

At Charukala's Bakultala, thousands throng the premises welcoming spring with open arms. They are dressed in softer shades of yellow to the brightest

spectrum of orange - no more so aggressive and passionate as red, but as an emotional stimulant. Like yellow, orange reflects warmth, generosity; it is light and playful, and the fusion of these two shades makes a unique expression celebrating the coming of spring.

Red all over Boishakh - days when the dazzling sun shows no sign of mercy to the mortals on earth; a time when the tarmac roads of Dhaka melt in the blazing heat, and still the time when fiery red encapsulate everything around - it's now a time to celebrate the coming of the new

Bengali year! Red is the colour of blood and fire, and is associated with passion and desire.

It would be hard to pin point the exact time in our history when red begun to symbolise the vitality of life, but representation of Pohela Boishakh through fiery shades of red has been a time long one.

Reminiscent of some of the oldest Krishnochuras in the capital blooming in, fashionistas borrow the red from the flames of the forest onto the borders of their saris. Not unlike spring, the colours of Boishakh are taken from the hues of nature.

Perhaps the coming of Boishakh has now emerged as the quintessential Bengali expression. Although its root can be traced in the annals of history, the modern day observance has been as much of a symbol of defiance against tyranny and a celebration of creed than anything else. The colourful Mongol Shobhajatra brought out by students of Charukola has recently been acknowledged as a cultural representation of Bengali lives. Although a new addition to the festivities, the theme and the importance of such endeavours now define what it means to be a Bengali!

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