



# REVISITING TIMELESS FOLK SONGS OF BANGLADESH

The Daily Star celebrates Pahela Baishakh

ZAHANGIR ALOM

*The culture of Bangladesh is composite and manifests itself in various creative forms, including music, dance and drama; art and craft; folklore and folktale; languages and literature; philosophy and religion; distinct cuisine and culinary tradition; and of course festivals and celebrations.*

Pahela Baishakh, the first day of the Bengali calendar, is the largest secular festival of Bangladesh, a land of music. Folk music, in particular, is deeply connected with the psyche of the country and resonates through the villages of Bengal. Bangladeshi folk songs play a pivotal role in celebrating time-honoured festivals like Chaitra Sankranti, Pahela Baishakh, Nabanna, Paush Parban, Pahela Fulgun and more.

Bangladesh has a rich tradition of folk songs, with lyrics rooted in the vibrant tradition of spirituality, mysticism, and devotion. Folk has come to occupy the lives of Bangladeshis almost more than any other genre of Bangla music. Folk music has a very strong base and popularity, thanks to the immense contributions by great mystic bards of our country.

To revisit the glorious culture and heritage of Bangladesh, Star Melodies, an initiative of The Daily Star to promote Bangla music, hosted a celebration of traditional

folk songs composed by Mahakobi Alaol, Fakir Lalan Shai, Hason Raja, Palli Kobi Jasimuddin, Abbasuddin Ahmed, Radharaman Dutta, Shah Abdul Karim, Rashid Uddin, Jalaluddin Khan, Abdul Latif and others.

The event, held at the AS Mahmud Hall of The Daily Star Centre on April 8, featured a folk instrumental recital by Anupom Biswas and troupe and songs by Indra Mohan Rajbongshi, Deepti Rajbongshi, Waqel Ahad, Nurjahan Alim, Tanveer Alam Shawjeeb, Sinthi Saha and Kamal Hossain.

With traditional instruments like ektara, dotara, dhol, banshi, khamak, mondola, several instrumentalists set off the event playing folk melodies. They started off with playing an essence of Raga Kafi. Then followed a medley of traditional folk melodies, composed by mystic bards of Bangladesh, along with a few folk themed Tagore songs at the event.



Nurjahan Alim



Waqel Ahad

Eminent artiste Professor Indra Mohan Rajbongshi rendered three lesser-known folk songs "Bhobo Sindhu Morey Koro Paar", "Din Gele Aar Din Hobey Na" and "Kon Kitab Lekha Achhey". Deepti Rajbongshi came next to present a Lalon song "Barir Kachhey Arshi Nagar" and a Jasimuddin song "Amar Bondhu Binodiarey".

Upholding the spirit of humanism, promising singer Waqel Ahad first performed the song "Manush Dhoro Manush Bhojo". He also rendered three other popular songs including - "Gram-er Noujowan" and "Takdum Takdum Bajai" -- that shed light on celebrating festivity in unison.

Nurjahan Alim, daughter of legendary singer Abdul Alim, melodi-

cally presented a Hason Raja song "Lok-e Bol-e Bol-e Rey". She later performed a popular Bhawayia song "Oki Garial Bhai", composed by folk legend Abbasuddin Ahmed. The artiste wrapped up her part with the Abdul Alim number "Porer Jaiga Porer Jomi", composed by Abdul Latif.

Tanveer Alam Shawjeeb rendered a Radharaman Dutta song "Bhromor Koiyo Giya" while Sinthi Saha and Kamal Hossain performed "Amar Sonar Moyna Pakhi" and "Ei Je Dunia Kisher Lagia" at the event.

Following the performances by the featured artistes, eminent Nazrul exponent and Star Arts & Entertainment Editor Sadya Afreen Mallick, who anchored and directed the programme, called on Tanveer Alam Shawjeeb and Waqel Ahad with The Daily Star's Zahangir Alom, Fahmim Ferdous and Kamal Hossain to lead a popular folk song "Sadher Lau". The audience too performed the song in chorus.

Music exponents -- Masud Ahmed, also the Comptroller and Auditor General of Bangladesh, and Professor ABM Nurul Anwar spoke at the event. Masud Ahmed beautifully elaborated on the timeless appeal of Bangla folk songs in contrast with modernism and urbanisation while Nurul Anwar emphasised on music especially folk melodies compared to other forms of art. Mizanur Rahman, GM, Finance and Administration, on behalf of The Daily Star, gave the vote of thanks.

A Baishakhi fair at the entrance of AS Mahmud Hall with several stalls displaying traditional sarees by Tangail Sari Kutir and Banolata; Nakshikantha from Jessore, ornaments and crafts, drew enthusiastic crowd. Simantic Creative Concern assisted in the programme.

In an explosion of melodies, rhythms and colours, every Pahela Baishakh sees Bangladeshis from all walks of life celebrating the coming year with much fanfare.



(Clockwise from top left) Indra Mohan Rajbongshi performs at the soiree; Prof Nurul Anwar speaks; Sadya Afreen Mallick anchors the progmm; Waqel Ahad, Tanvir Alam Shawjeeb and others sing the closing chorus; and visitors buy bangles from the fair.

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

## Three plays by Theatre on Pahela Baishakh

A CORRESPONDENT

Prominent theatre troupe 'Theatre' is going to celebrate Pahalra Baishakh by staging three plays consecutively on the very first day of the Bangla New Year.

The event will be held in Mahila Samiti at Baily Road. The event will commence from 11am

with the play "Paayer Awaaj Pawa Jay". Directed by Abdullah Al-Mamun and scripted by Syed Shamsul Haque, the play has been re-adapted by Sudip Chakroborthy. This production will be followed by "Maya Nodi", written and directed by Maruf Kabir at 5:30pm. The event will conclude with "Meraj Fakir-er Maa" at 7:30pm, written and directed by Abdullah Al-Mamun.

To announce this event, Theatre arranged a press conference on April 12 at the VIP Lounge, Dhaka Press Club. Among guests present at the conference were Theatre director Ramendu Majumdar, Managing Director of BSS Cables Ltd and sponsor of the event Abu Noman Hawlader and Director of Expressions Ltd Syed Apon Ahsan.



A scene from "Payer Awaj Pawa Jay".

## TV WATCH



## POTTER MAJHE GOLPO on Rtv

A CORRESPONDENT

Marking Pahela Baishakh, a special single-episode TV play titled "Pother Majher Golpo" will be aired on Rtv tonight at 9:15pm. Written and directed by Ashfaque Nipun, it stars Tahsan, Tisha, Shahed Ali, Amanul Haque Helal and others. The romantic thriller picks up

from a Valentine's Day TV play "Shunte Ki Pao" by Nipun, centering on the lives of Dilshad and Abid. At the end of that play, Dilshad had left her husband on the day of their marriage anniversary, and every year Abid goes out looking for her wife on this day.

The play is presented by Dabur Amla Hair Oil.