



Unison of souls on the soil of Bangladesh

Pahela Baishakh celebrations in the capital

ZAHANGIR ALOM

Bangalees hailed Pahela Baishakh, the first day of the Bangla year 1425, on Saturday amidst vibrant pageantry, leaving behind the gloom of the past and pledging to uphold the nation's opulent cultural heritage.

Tens of thousands of people from all walks of life, in traditional attire, poured into the streets, parks and open spaces across the capital and elsewhere in the country from early morning to welcome the Naboborsho. Hundreds of thousands of Bangalees living across the world also ushered in the Bangla New Year to revisit the glorious culture. Like previous years, prominent cultural organisations and educational institutions kept the verve of Pahela Baishakh celebrations in the capital.

Chhayanaut, one of the leading cultural organisations of the country, set off their Borshoboron programme at Ramna Botomul with a flute recital by noted flautist Murtaza Kabir Murad set to Raga Aahir Bhairav.

Artists of Chhayanaut presented solo and group renditions and recitations at the event. Apart from renditions of morning raga-based songs of Rabindranath Tagore, Kazi Nazrul Islam and DL Roy, several folk numbers were also rendered on the occasion.

Among the soloists, noted Tagore singer Laisa Ahmed Lisa performed "Joi Bole Chol" while renowned Nazrul singer Khairul Anam Shakil rendered "Jago Arun Bhairab". Promising singers Mahmudul Hasan and Susmita Debnath Suchi presented "Ganga Sindhu Narmada" and "Aji Gao Mahageet" respectively at the programme. Noted elocutionist Hasan Arif recited a Humayun Azad poem "Shubhechchha" while Shameema Nazneen presented a Nirmalendu Goon composition "Prithibijora Gaan" at the event.

In her speech, Chhayanaut president Dr. Sanjida Khatun emphasised on returning to the roots where our identity is deeply embedded. She urged all to indulge in the natural grace of Bangladesh and to take the sublime achievement and essence of world music, literature, art, philosophy and science in the reality of globalisation. She also urged all to take the path of truth and beauty to ennoble our souls and become good human beings.

Another major attraction of Pahela Baishakh



A large number of people joined the Mangal Shobhajatra; (above) Chhayanaut's Borshoboron event at Ramna Botomul.

PHOTO: STAR

was Mangal Shobhajatra, a massive parade attended by thousands of citizens. The colourful procession was brought out by artists of the Faculty of Fine Art, University of Dhaka (DU). Vice Chancellor of DU Professor Akhtaruzzaman with DU teachers, Cultural Affairs Minister Asaduzzaman Noor and cultural personalities led the procession. Diverse folk-themed designs that speak of our rich culture and folklore featured in this year's Mangal Shobhajatra, themed on "Manush Bhojle Sonar Manush Hobi".

Large structures of the sun, water buffalo, tepa putul, birds, elephant, heron with fish, together with a number of flamboyant masks were displayed at the vibrant procession to augment the visual delight of Mangal Shobhajatra. People danced along to the beats of dhol and other musical instruments.

There were scores of cultural shows arranged by different organisations, keeping the Dhaka University area alive with heavy rush of people. It was a day of untainted fun and merriment.

Artists of Wrishej Shilpi Goshthi welcomed the Bangla New Year with performance of music, dance and recitation by noted and promising artists. The event was held at Narkel Bithi Chattar near Shishu Park.

A festive spirit took over the capital and other parts of the country. Women in saris and men in panjabi -- decorated with Baishakhi motifs -- ushered in the New Year. Many had panta bhat with fried hilsa, daal, green chilli and onion at home, restaurants and fairs. Youngsters had their cheeks painted with folk-themed emblems that added further colours to the celebration.

The festivities stretched over to Suhrawardy Udyan, Dhaka University and Dhanmondi Lake areas, bringing the city traffic system to a standstill. Many foreigners clad in traditional Bengali clothes were also seen enjoying in and around the venues of celebration.

The crowd dispersed in the afternoon when the maiden nor'westers of the season followed a heavy shower.

Shurer Dhara marks Silver Jubilee with fervor

ROKON SHAHRIAR

Shurer Dhara, the music school founded by noted Tagore singer Professor Rezwana Chowdhury Bannya concluded its four-day silver jubilee programme at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre from April 11-14 in the capital.

The big show, bundling together Chaitra Sankranti, Borshoboron and Shurer Dhara's silver jubilee was

Nahid and VC of Dhaka University Professor Dr. Aktaruzzaman also spoke. Solo songs by Iffat Ara Dewan, Fahim Hossain Chowdhury, Aditi Mohsin, Bulbul Islam, Monomoy Bhattacharya (India) and Agniv Bandopaddhya, dance by artistes of Shurer Dhara, recitation by Rupa Chakroborty and dance drama "Prempothe" by the troupe Imon from Jalpaiguri, India featured in the cultural programme.

A seminar on "Atmojiboner



Rezwana Chowdhury Bannya leads the "Hajar Kontthe Borshoboron" programme.

enriched with seminars, discussions, songs, dances, and recitations by experts and distinguished guests from home and abroad. The festivities kicked off on April 11 in association with Channel i (who also broadcast the show, live), inaugurated by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. It was attended by Cultural Affairs Minister Asaduzzaman Noor and Professor Emeritus Anisuzzaman, among others.

The second part of the programme featured a cultural programme with performances of chorus songs by artistes of Shurer Dhara, solo songs by Fahmdia Khatun, Sadi Mohommod, Salma Akbar, Shama Rahman, Sajed Akbar, Laisa Ahmed Lisa and Srikant Acharya (India), recitation by Asaduzzaman Noor, dance performance by Nriyandan and presentation of the dance drama "Chandaliika" by Byatikrom from Guwahati, Assam (India).

Presided over by Professor Biswajit Ghosh, second day's programme included a seminar on "Padma Parer Ganer Kobi" (Poets from Across the River Padma), where Professor Rezwana Chowdhury Bannya presented the keynote paper on which Professor Agniv Bandopaddhya (India) and Professor Azizur Rahman Tuhin discussed. Parliament speaker Shirin Sharmin Chowdhury was the chief guest in the second part of the day's programmes, where education minister Nurul Islam

Nattyorup" was the third day's opening event that was presided over by Professor Shafi Ahmed. The keynote paper was presented by Professor Soumitra Basu (India) while thespian Ataur Rahman and Professor Partha Chakroborty (India) discussed on the topic. The second part included songs by Shurer Dhara singers and solo performances by Lily Islam, Mahiuzzaman Chowdhury and Anima Roy while Bratoty Bandopaddhya (India), Prova Majumdar (India) and Bhaswar Bandopaddhya presented recitations. This was followed by the drama "Falguni" enacted by Shurer Dhara members, and a dance jointly performed by Shurer Dhara and Dance Department of Dhaka University. The third day concluded with a documentary on Shurer Dhara, its achievements and vision. Finance Minister AMA Muhih was the Chief Guest in the day, while Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu also spoke.

The fourth and concluding day was a celebration of the Pahela Baishakh, the first day of the Bangla New Year. At dawn, a thousand voices sang the "Esho Hey Boishakh Esho Esho" with Shurer Dhara artistes, led by Bannya, followed by various solo and chorus performances.

The writer is a contributor to The Daily Star.



Bengal Foundation's Pahela Baishakh celebrations ended at the capital's Bengal Boi yesterday, after four-days of music and good vibes. The programmes included a wide range of musical performances, from a group classical sarod recital by Bengal Parampara Sangeetalay students, songs by Sharmin Sathi Islam and Halima Parvin and Bhajan Baul, recitation by Hasan Arif, a concert by Joler Gaan and authentic folk music performance by bauls coming all the way from Faridpur.

A star-studded affair

Nagorik Natya Sampradaya celebrates golden jubilee

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A number of renowned thespians of Nagarik Natya Sampraday assembled at the Mahila Samity Ananda Angan, Bailly Road in Dhaka on April 13 to celebrate the golden jubilee of the pre-eminent theatre troupe. Several artistes rendered Tagore compositions like "Antor Momo Bikoshito Koro" and "Rangiyee Diye Jao Jao" in unison while dancers presented live performances. Theatre artistes greeted the celebrated thespians, artistes and cultural personalities -- Aatur Rahman, Abul Hayat, Hasan Imam, Ramendu Majumdar, Hashem Khan, Asaduzzaman Noor, Aly Zaker, Sara Zaker, Sultana Kamal, Laila Hasan, Jhuna Chowdhury, Keramat Maula and others -- on the occasion with Uttario. The jewels of theatre lighted candles to symbolically diffuse the rays of cultural conscience.

Going down memory lane, several of the honoured theatre artistes expressed their fond memories of Nagarik Natya Sampraday with which they journeyed for the last 50 years.

It was amazing to know the 45-year experience of veteran thespian Aatur Rahman with the troupe while Asaduzzaman Noor shared his maiden experience of taking the stage as a proxy actor as the main cast Abul Hayat was bedridden in the hospital.

It is a milestone achievement of Nagarik Natya Sampraday as they



Eminent personalities light candles to mark the opening of the festival.

PHOTO: STAR

contributed much to the country's theatre scene with bringing many reputed and classics productions on stage. The organisers instituted Syed Shamsul Haque, Khaled Khan and Zia Haider memorial awards to recognise best three theatre activists. From the next year, the troupe will hand over awards to the deserving artistes annually.

The opening day (April 13) of the three day (April 13-15) celebration programme concluded with staging a Natyamala, compiled and directed by Aly Zaker. Theatre

artistes with their vivacious presence took the stage of Mahila Samity to perform parts of their acclaimed productions -- "Baki Itihash", "Nurul Diner sarajibon", "Raktokarobi", "Shot Manusher KhoNje", "Mukhosh", "Dewan Gazir Kissa" and "Galileo".

The troupe celebrated Baishakh with the rendition of solo songs by promising singer Jayita and recitations by renowned elocutionists --Aatur Rahman, Asaduzzaman Noor, Abul Hayat, Nima Rahman, Nazneen Naz,

Nayla Tarannum Kakoli and Mahfuz Rizvi on April 14.

Nagarik Natya Sampraday wrapped up their golden jubilee programmes with premiering a romantic play "Open Couple" by Dario Fo and Franca Rame yesterday. Translated and directed by Sara Zaker, Ziaul Hasan Kislul and Sara Zaker played respective roles in the play.

A three-day exhibition titled "Nobo Natyer Abhijatra" also concluded yesterday at the Mahila Samity Bhaban.



The Bangladesh Embassy in Kathmandu organised a Baishakhi fair at its Chancery premises on April 14 to celebrate the Bangla New Year 1425 in a joyous manner. The day's festivities included a Pittha festival, a cultural programme, traditional games. Bangladeshi ambassador to Nepal Mashfee Binte Shams distributed prizes among the winners. The programmes ended with a mini Bangladesh food festival showcasing typical Bangladeshi cuisine.



Noted Tagore singer Shama Rahman performs in a solo musical soiree, held at Bani Sufia Kamal auditorium of Bangladesh National Museum (BNM) on April 13. BNM organised the programme marking Chaitra Sangkranti 1424 and Pahela Baishakh 1425.