

Austrian mime to help Indo-Pak peace process

Times of India
Yudhvir Rana | TNN

Amritsar: There is an Austrian contribution to take the track-II diplomacy of Indo-Pak peace process beyond Punjab, to the southern, eastern and western states of the nation with the help of mime — a performance art that has the ability to transcend language barrier by not using words.

Andreas Gaeska, Austrian mime performer and actor who is currently taking mime workshops in both Amritsar and Lahore, told the *TOI* on Thursday that through mime an artiste could express his emotions, sentiments and feelings with his body language and didn't need any words. So, people of different cultures and languages could understand it, he added.

Gaeska went to Lahore on the invitation of Rafi Peer Theatre Group that recently held Saanjh: Amritsar-Lahore festival here, in collaboration with an NGO, Punarjyot, an offshoot of Spring Dale Educational Society. He said he took mime workshop in Lahore and was now in Amritsar to impart mime techniques to students and check their potential for future performances. Gaeska is also a mime



SPEAKING VIA ACTIONS: Austrian mime performer and actor Andreas Gaeska taking mime workshops in Amritsar

performer with Austrian company Teatro Buffo and has toured around the world, giving mime performances.

"We are of the view that we should take Saanjh beyond Punjab and mime is the best medium to bridge the language barrier," said Shavinder Sandhu, director, Punarjyot.

Gaeska said he was pleased to find mime enthusiasts both in Amritsar and Lahore. "There is a keenness among students to learn the art which requires one to be alert as well

as relaxed at the same time," he said.

Rajiv Arora, headmaster, Spring Dale School, where Gaeska is currently taking a workshop, said mime required precision of execution of different techniques to convey the message emphatically among the audience through creative means. Initially, students were learning its fundamentals, but in the later stage, Gaeska would undertake a longer workshop to make them understand its subtle techniques.

Putting his act together

HT Correspondent

Last week saw the conclusion of the month-long mime workshop organised at Spring Dale Senior School in collaboration with Austrian Cultural Forum, New Delhi. Actor, Director and musician from Austria, Andreas Ceska, conducted the workshop.

"Since April 1, it has been such a wonderful journey for me to discover these young students and share this artwork with them," says Andreas, who was invited to Spring Dale Senior School, Amritsar, by late Dr Shivinder Singh Sandhu, former Managing Trustee.

In the first part of the workshop, Andreas had organised a mime performance of the students for the school's Annual Theatre Festival - 'Peace Begins With Me'. In the performance, the game of chess was used as a symbol to depict the negative effects of war. The performance ended on the note that the people around the world should unite together to give peace a chance.

Andres' love for theatre started at a young

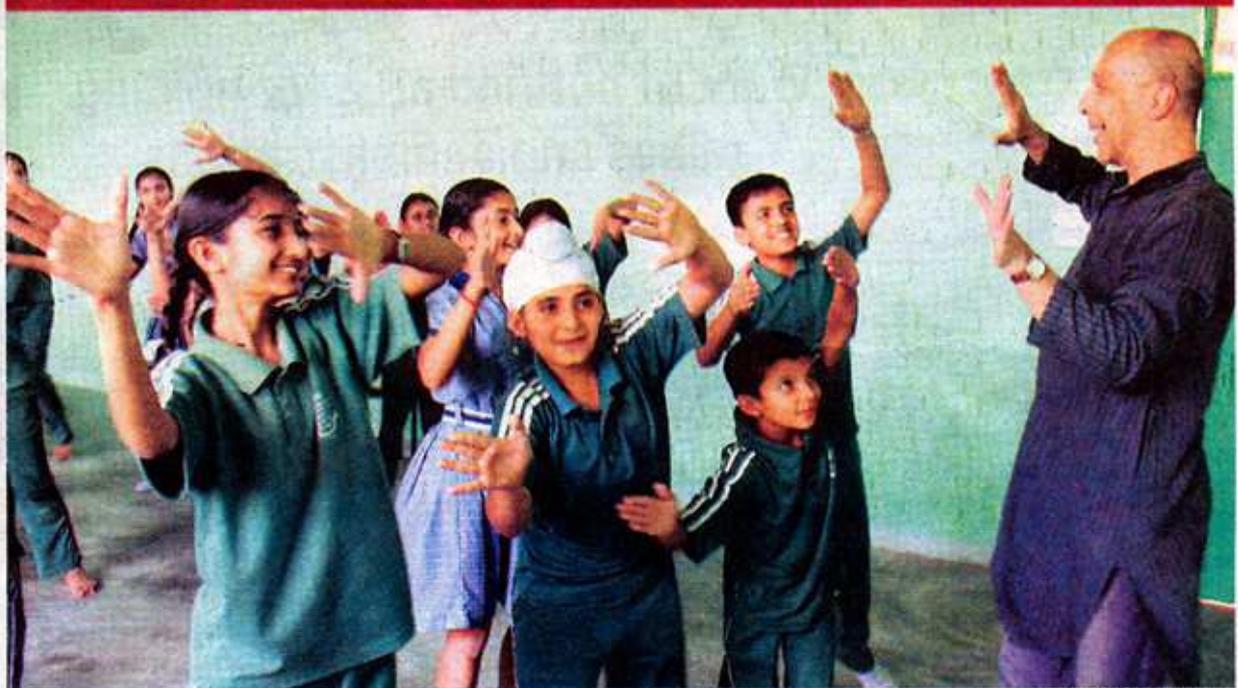
age of 14, performing street theatre in Italy. At the age of 29, he co-founded a theatre company, Treats Buffo (theatre of the fool).

As a teacher, he feels that it is important to integrate mime in theatre. As an actor and producer, he likes to work with young and contemporary authors. "For me, it is more appealing to work on what is living now," he adds.

Having worked in countries like US, Italy and France, coming to India was initially a cultural shock. Nonetheless, Andreas is grateful to late Dr Shivinder Singh Sandhu and former principal Manveen Sandhu for giving him an opportunity of cultural exchange. "They were a wonderful couple. I really respect them a lot for being as incredible as creating wonderful things in this world. Their force is definitely continuing to motivate many young minds," he said.

Talking about the future, Andres hopes to collaborate with Spring Dale Senior School on several other projects, including a tour of theatre festivals across various cities.

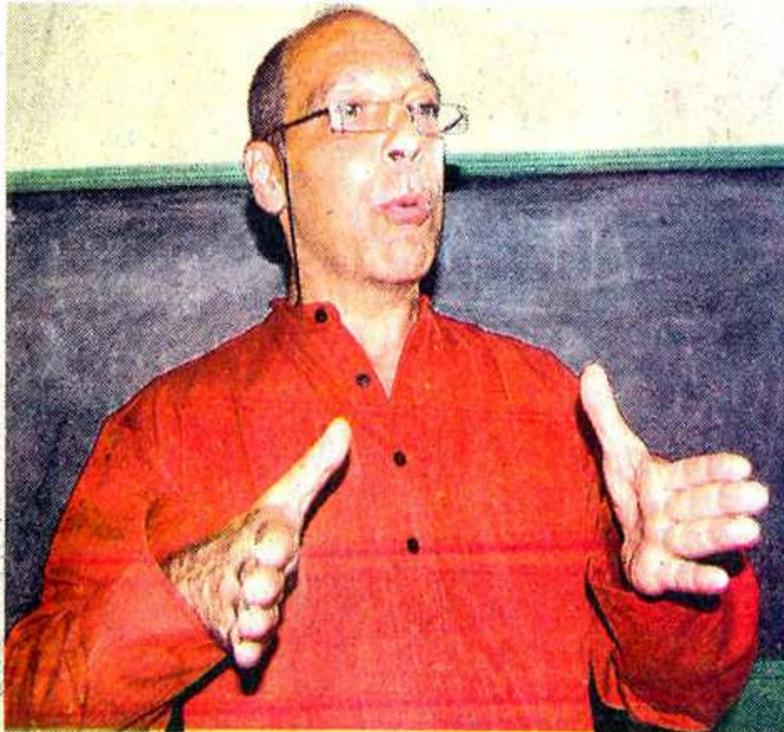
Austrian actor conducts mime workshop at Spring Dale



MUNISH BYALA/HT

Saanjh Peace
Festival

Pak, Indian kids share stage



Andreas Ceska, director of the play

NEERAJ BAGGA
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

AMRITSAR, OCTOBER 10

A play on futility of war enacted together by students from Pakistan and India was the most striking event on the first day of the 14-day South Asia Foundation's (SAF) Saanjh Peace Festival here today.

A Vienna (Austria)-based mime artist and director theatre group Andreas Ceska from Teatro Buffo was the director of the play. He said the play in mime form conveyed the meaning of peace symbolically. Five child artists from Lahore and 22 from India, of the Spring Dale Senior School, featured in the presentation.

The concept of mutual harmony between India and Pakistan was through a mime presentation under the banner of Indo-Pak Children's Theatre Production.

The SAF-Peace festival aimed to bring people of both the nations together. Though, the relations between the two nations were marred by inconsiderate acts of vested interests, but serious attempt must be made to cement the ties.

Peace festival to unite Indo-Pak from Oct 10

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Amritsar: Separated during Partition, India and Pakistan share an incredible love-hate relationship. If anti-social elements from the neighbouring country continue to inflict wounds of terror and hatred on Indian soil, good Samaritans from both sides have always striven to keep the warmth between the nations alive. One such concerted effort is the South Asia Foundation (SAF) Peace Festival, 2009, being organized in partnership with Saanjh (organisers of Amritsar-Lahore festival) from October 10 to 23.

Supported by Punarjyot,

Rafi Peer Theatre Workshop (RPTW), National School of Drama, National Academy of Performing Arts (NAPA), Indian Council of Cultural Relations, Gurbaksh Singh-Nanak Foundation, the festival, as the name suggests, aims at promoting bonhomie between the countries, whose relations are every now and then made sour by cruel acts of those opposed to peace.

"Peace cannot be maintained by force, it can only be achieved by understanding. The festival, we hope, will invoke a kind of sensitivity to help curtail aggression by highlighting similarities in languages, cultures, roots, lifestyles, dialects and shared



heritage of the twin cities of Amritsar and Lahore that bore the brunt of Partition...." said Kirat Sandhu, director, Spring Dale Senior School, where the show will unfold.

The 13-day event to be spread across venues such as Wagha Border, Preet Nagar, Art Gallery, BBK DAV College and Punjab Naatshala

will have presentations by RPTW, Lahore, Sain Zahoor, NAPA, Karachi, Raghu Dixit, Arif Lohar, Goonga Sain, Mangniyars, Tina Sani and Swami Bandhoo. A mime presentation by Indo-Pak Children's Theatre Production — involving child artistes from both countries and directed by Andreas Ceska, a theatre artiste from Vienna, Austria — will be the curtain raiser on Day One.

"To focus on common problems pertaining to women and children, often the most vulnerable members of society, a seminar 'Building Blocks for Peace' will be addressed by Pakistan human rights activist Asma

Jehangir, Salima Hashmi, daughter of renowned poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz and Teesta Seetalvad, a Mumbai-based journalist, activist and educator on October 14 in our school," said Rajiv Sharma, principal, Spring Dale.

With youth holding the key to world's progress, children will splash a huge collage on both sides of the Wagha border during 'Painting for peace' event to be held on October 16. Three well-known actresses from India and Pakistan including Sheema Kirmani and Sania Saeed will also render solo performances on October 21 in BBK DAV College for Women.

Peace fest hopes to straddle Partition divide

SAF-SAANJH initiative uses art to appeal to shared cultures of the two Punjabs

HT Correspondent

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AMRITSAR: In order to bridge the gap between the two Punjabs on either side of the International Border, the South Asia Foundation (SAF), in partnership with Saanjh, has come up with the unique concept of a peace festival. The SAF-Saanjh Peace Festival 2009 will witness participation of artistes from both the countries to heal wounds from Partition.

The 14-day festival, as per a press release issued by the organising committee, will begin with a mime presentation by Indo-Pak Children's Theatre Production directed by Vienna theatre artist Andreas Ceska, on Saturday.

The festival comes at a time when terror is threatening to ravage mutual har-

mony between the two neighbours, particularly after the Mumbai attacks. It will shed light on common problems pertaining to women and children, considered the most vulnerable on both sides of the border.

The organisers say that the SAF-Saanjh Peace Festival aims to invoke sensitivity to curtail aggression by making an appeal to the similarities in languages, cultures, roots, lifestyles and dialects between the twin cities of Amritsar and Lahore. Moreover, the festival will try to share the heritage of the twin cities that bore the brunt of Partition.

It also hopes to offer a platform for people from both sides to mingle and work collectively for promoting peace, thereby, bringing them close again.

During the 14 days, pro-

grammes will be held at different venues including Spring Dale Senior School campus, Wagah border, Preet Nagar, Art Gallery, BBK DAV College and Punjab Naatshala in keeping with the theme of the festival.

Building Blocks for Peace, a seminar-cum-interaction, will be delivered by Pakistani Human Rights activist Asma Jehangir, daughter of renowned poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Salima Hashmi and Mumbai based social activist Teesta Seetalvad on October 14 at Spring Dale Senior School. It will focus women's and children's rights.

On October 16, children from India and Pakistan would paint a collage on both sides of Wagah border as part of the "Painting for Peace" event. In another event, three known actors from India and Pakistan

including Neeta Mohindra, Sheema Kirmani and Sania Saeed would render solo performances at BBK DAV College for Women on October 21.

The festival would also include presentations by Arif Lohar, Goonga Sain and Sain Zahoor from Rafi Peer Theatre Workshop from Lahore, National Academy of Performing Arts (NAPA) from Karachi, Indian folk artist Raghu Dixit, Rajasthani Mangniyars and Pakistani singer Tina Sani and Kabir Vani by Bharti Bandhu.

The festival is supported by Punarjyot, Rafi Peer Theatre Workshop, National School of Drama, National Academy of Performing Arts, Indian Council of Cultural Relations, Gurbaksh Singh-Nanak Foundation.

‘सांझ शांति पर्व-2009’ का शानदार आगाज

अमनो-चैन की सांझ न ढले



अजीत धनखड़ ॥

लफ्ज नहीं थे, बस प्रतीक थे। संगीत की धुनों पर हाव-भाव प्रकट करने वाले किरदार जो बात कहना चाहते थे, वो बड़ी गहराई से कह गए। यही कि जंग किसी मसले का हल नहीं। लाशों के ढेर पर कामयाबी का जश्न मनाना सही नहीं। एक राह है, जो सौधे खुदा और रब तक पहुंचती है। वह है अमनो-चैन की राह। ‘सांझ शांति पर्व-2009’ के पहले दिन भारत-पाक के बच्चों ने माइम के जरिये वही राह अपनाने की नसीहत दी।

जंग का अंजाम तबाही

अक्तूबर की गुलाबी ठंड से भरी शाम में सिप्रंग डेल सीनियर स्कूल में सजे ओपन एयर थिएटर पर शांति का पाठ पढ़ाया गया। जरूरी नहीं हर बात जुबां से कही जाए। खामोशी की भी अपनी जुबां होती है। वियेना के थियेटर आर्टिस्ट आद्रेस सेस्का के निर्देशन में पेश

किए माइम में बच्चों ने उस जुबां को बखूबी लफ्ज दिए। शतरंज खेलते हुए दो राजाओं के मध्य पैदा हुए मतभेदों ने जंग का रूप अख्तियार कर लिया। दोनों राजा जंग की आग भड़काकर खुद तमाशा देखते रहे। कुछ शांति दूतों ने अबाम को जंग के भयानक परिणामों की जानकारी दी, तो शांति स्थापित होने लगी। लेकिन नामुराद सियासतों को यह कतई मंजूर नहीं था। फिर से जंग के हालात पैदा हो गए। इस बार अबाम ने चुप्पी तोड़ी और सियासतों को यह बात समझाई कि जंग से सिवाय तबाही के कुछ हासिल नहीं हो सकता।

यह बात राजाओं की समझ में आ गई और फिर से शांति कायम हो गई। पेशकश इतनी शानदार ही कि हर कोई सीट से चिपका रहा। साउथ एशिया फाउंडेशन व पुनर्ज्योत के इस कार्यक्रम के मुख्यातिथि डीसी काहन सिंह पन्नू रहे। इस मौके पर स्कूल डायरेक्टर डा. कीरत संभू, साहिलजीत सिंह संभू, प्रिंसिपल राजीव शर्मा मौजूद थे।

ओबामा को नोबेल देना सही

‘सांझ शांति पर्व-2009’ के पहले दिन पेश की गई माइम के डायरेक्टर आद्रेस सेस्का ने अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति बराक ओबामा को नोबेल शांति पुरस्कार देना सही बताया है।

लंबे समय से थिएटर से जुड़े वियेना (ऑस्ट्रिया) के आद्रेस तीसरी बार भारत आए हैं। वैश्विक शांति स्थापना के लिए सक्रिय आद्रेस बताते हैं कि भारत-पाक में संस्कृति से लेकर खानपान तक में समानता है। लाहौर में भी उन्होंने वही अनुभव किया जो अमृतसर में है। दोनों शहरों में एक जैसी कला, संस्कृति और परंपराएं धड़कती हैं। राजनीतिक कारणों की वजह से ही दोनों देशों में कड़वाहट आई है, जिसे आपसी सद्भाव से सुलझाया जा सकता है। कार्यक्रम की रिहर्सल के बारे में वह बताते हैं कि बच्चों ने उन्हें बहुत सहयोग दिया। हर चीज को समझा और बेहतरीन परफॉर्मेंस दी।



नोबेल पुरस्कार पर प्रतिक्रिया व्यक्त करते माइम के डायरेक्टर आद्रेस सेस्का।
रमणी फोटो रमन रमणी

जैसा देश है तेरा, वैसा देश है मेरा

जब दोनों मुल्कों में सबकुछ एक जैसा है तो, फिर ये सरहदें जमींदोज क्यों नहीं हो जाती? क्या योजना की जकड़ने हैं? ये जलते सवाल उठाए ‘सांझ शांति पर्व’ में शिरकत करने आए पाकिस्तानी बच्चों ने।

कायल हुए मेहमान नवाजी के

माइम शुरू होने से पहले ही मैं इन बच्चों की तलाश में था। स्कूल के मीडिया को-ऑर्डिनेटर के बताए पते पर तीसरी मंजिल पर स्थित कमरे में पहुंचा। वहां बहुत-से बच्चे थे। उनमें से पाकिस्तानी बच्चे कौन हैं, यह पहचाना बहुत मुश्किल था। वैसे भी ईसान के माथे पर उसके मजहब या मुल्क की तहरीरें थोड़े ही न लिखी होती हैं। स्कूली बच्चों ने बताया कि पाकिस्तानी बच्चे प्रोग्राम पेश करने चले गए हैं। प्रोग्राम खत्म होने पर ही उनसे मुलाकात हो पाई। इन बच्चों के चहरे रंगों से पुते थे और हिलबास भी कही थे, जो उन्होंने माइम में पहने थे। इन पांचों बच्चों में से कई ऐसे थे, जो पहले भी



भारत में आ चुके थे। सभी लाहौर के रहने वाले हैं, जो वहां के पंजाब थिएटर ग्रुप से जुड़े हैं। ब्रह्मर्षी की छात्रा इकरा मेहमाननवाजी से गदगद थी। अमृतसर में वह छठी बार आई है। वह कहती है, ‘मुझे इस बात का जरा भी अहसास नहीं हुआ कि मैं पिछले चार दिन से अपने मुल्क में नहीं हूँ। भारत-पाक में कुछ भी फर्क नहीं है। यूनिवर्सिटी स्टूडेंट मीरा के भी यहां कई दोस्त बन गए हैं। उसे नए दोस्त बड़े प्यारे लगे। अमृतसर में दूसरी बार आए कंप्यूटर साइंस के स्टूडेंट मुज्ताबा तारीक

सवाल उठाते हैं कि जब दोनों मुल्कों की अबाम अमनो-चैन चाहती है, फिर सियासतें पीछे क्यों हट रही हैं? छठी क्लास की स्टूडेंट नयनतारा के नयनों से भी खुशी झलक रही थी। उसे यहां के कुलचे बहुत पसंद आए। आठवीं के छात्र यासिर तारीक के लिए अमृतसर घूमना यादगार रहा। यहां के पनीर का तो वह मुरीद बन गया। बातचीत के दौरान जब पाकिस्तानी राष्ट्रीय गीत की धुन बजी, तो बच्चे स्थिर हो गए। यही जज्बा तब भी देखने की मिला, जब भारतीय राष्ट्रीय गीत बजा। अबाम क्या चाहती है, इसका इससे बेहतर उदाहरण कोई और नहीं हो सकता।

नेटवर्किंग साइट्स से जुड़े रहेंगे

सोमवार को ये बच्चे पाक लौट जाएंगे। दिसंबर में फिर इनका आना होगा। तब वे दिल्ली में अपनी पेशकश देंगे। उन्होंने कहा कि सोशल नेटवर्किंग साइट्स के जरिये वे नए दोस्तों के संपर्क में रहेंगे।

Indo-Pak kids' mime act sends out message of peace

HT Correspondent

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AMRITSAR: As a curtain raiser for the 14-day South Asian Foundation (SAF) and Saanjh Peace Festival, students of India and Pakistan shared the stage to promote mutual harmony between the two neighbours by presenting a mime play.

The presentation was under the banner of Indo-Pak Children's Theatre Production directed by Austrian director Andreas Ceska.

The presentation was based on music beats where the artists displayed facial emotions as per the situation with-

out delivering dialogues.

The thematic presentation of the play was a game of chess between two kings, which results in a war between the two nations.

During the war, the kings remain in the background. However, the brunt of the conflict is borne by the public. The waged war causes enormous damages to the public, which leads to depression and mistrust.

Later, some peace ambassadors understand the futility of the war and the need to co-exist peacefully. The enlightened ones then reach out to their neighbours and a mass movement takes shape

by setting the peace in.

However, when peace comes, the kings join again for a game of chess and a warlike situation begins to take shape again.

Having understood the absurdity of war, the common people refuse to fight and say no to war, which helps usher in an era of eternal peace.

"The theme of the presentation is let there be peace," said Ceska.

On the occasion, chief guest Deputy Commissioner Kahan Singh Pannu said, "Saanjh is a landmark festival in the history of Amritsar. Since its inception, it has been bringing the best artists to promote their hidden talent."



स्प्रिंग डेल स्कूल में आयोजित कार्यक्रम के दौरान नाटक पेश करते हुए बच्चे।

जागरण

‘यह धरती भी सांझी है, आकाश भी सांझा है’

जागरण प्रतिनिधि, अमृतसर : यह धरती भी सांझी है, आकाश भी सांझा है का संदेश देते हुए पाकिस्तानी स्कूली बच्चों ने स्थानीय स्प्रिंग डेल स्कूल में माइम पेश किया। पाकिस्तानी बच्चों व स्प्रिंग डेल स्कूल के बच्चों ने मिलकर भारत और पाकिस्तान के बीच आपसी सौहार्द के विकास में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाई। यह माइम व नाटक कार्यक्रम इंडो-पाक चिल्ड्रन थियेटर प्रोडक्शन के अंतर्गत प्रस्तुत किया गया।

इसमें बताया गया कि किस प्रकार शतरंज के खेल में दो राजाओं के मतभेद उभरे और यह मतभेद युद्ध का कारण बने। पूरे युद्ध में दोनों राजा खुद तमाशा देखते रहे और इसकी अग्नि में आम जनता जलती रही। आम लोगों का बहुत नुकसान हुआ और दोनों देशों में तनाव बन गया, परंतु कुछ शांति दूतों ने लोगों को युद्ध के भीषण परिणाम की जानकारी दी व मिलकर रहने का संदेश दिया। इससे शांति की नई लहर पैदा हुई। माइम

♦ पाकिस्तानी बच्चों ने माइम पेश कर दिया आपसी सद्भावना का संदेश

के निर्देशक आंद्रेस सेस्का का कहना है कि युद्ध का अंत शांति ही है।

इस अवसर पर डीसी केएस पन्नू मुख्य अतिथि के रूप में पहुंचे। पुनर्ज्योत की निर्देशक कौरत संधू ने कहा कि सांझ के रूप में शांति पर्व की शुरुआत उनके अभिभावकों ने, भारत व पाकिस्तान के बीच समाजिक, सांस्कृतिक तथा आध्यात्मिक विकास के लिए की थी। प्रिंसिपल राजीव शर्मा ने कहा कि यह कार्यक्रम प्रीत नगर, बीबीके डीएवी कालेज, पंजाब नाट्यशाला, आर्ट गैलरी और बाघा बाईर के पास भी करने का फैसला लिया गया। इसके आयोजन के लिए डा. कौरत संधू और साहिलजीत संधू की सभी ने प्रशंसा की।



CULTURAL BONHOMIE

Day One of Saanjh unfurled umpteen song and dance performances, besides a few daring acts



The fest continued on a traditional note with various artistes sharing their incredible talents



singing 'Dama Dam Mast Kalandar'.

This was followed by performance of kabliya dancers from Rajasthan.

Dr Kirat Sandhu Cheema, director, Punarjyot, tells that her parents conceived Saanjh with a view to modulate the mindless hatred that divided both the countries. "This legacy has not only been passed on to me, but also to my entire team and all the peace lovers that we are

associated with. We intend to carry it a step further," she adds.

Usmaan Peerzada, CEO, Rafi Peer Theatre Group, on the other hand, says, "Seeds of Saanjh were sown by late Dr Shivinder Singh Sandhu and Manveen Sandhu in collaboration with my brother Faizaan Peerzada. As long as there is Saanjh, there would always be hope of peace between India and Pakistan," he said.

Archana Matharu

archana.matharu@gmail.com

Indian artistes dominated the show on the first day of Saanjh, the seventh Amritsar-Lahore

Festival that kicked off in Amritsar on Friday evening at Spring Dale Senior School.

Being organised by Punarjyot Amritsar and Rafi Peer Theatre Group, Lahore, the festival aims at building cultural bridges between India and Pakistan.

Reiterating the message of peace, spiritual leader and founder of Art of Living, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, inaugurated the festival.

Addressing the gathering, Sri Sri urged the people of India and Pakistan to make concentrated efforts to promote peace between the two countries. "Saanjh is more of

a celebration of the spiritual aspects of the common culture of east and west Punjab. It is a process, which has enabled people on both sides of the border to regain their paradise, which had been lost due to partition and the consequent political discord between India and Pakistan," shares Sri Sri.

The festival began with the performance of Chhehartara-based Sain Brothers.

Twenty-four-year-old Manmeet Sain and his 19-year-old sibling Kiranpal Sain rendered four qawwalis at the festival, which were highly appreciated by the audiences. "This is a big platform for us to showcase our talent at the international level," says Manmeet Sain.

Lending a foreign tinge to the fest, Andreas Ceska from Austria, put together a mime

performance under the title 'Theatre for Peace-Circus for Peace'. The performance saw school children along with professional artistes evincing the message of peace.

Besides the rhythmic moves in salsa steps and special meditation for peace, the performance also comprised some breathtaking acts of gatka, juggling and mono cycling. Finally, the participants sported placed with 'Theatre for Peace' written on it.

Day One of the fest continued on a traditional note with folk song presentation by Manganiyars from Hamira in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan, led by Kheta Khan.

Beginning the performance with Bulle Shah's verse, the folk singers concluded the musical extravaganza with the praise of the almighty

Different yet same

India feels like home to us', say children from Pakistan in Amritsar for Saanjh-2010



Shaheen P Parshad

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Same weather, sights and sounds, similar people and lifestyles, only the names of the countries differ.

There is hardly any difference in the life in India and Pakistan. In short, India feels like home to us every time we visit the country," was the common observation of the children in the 14-member Pakistani delegation comprising artistes taking part in Saanjh-2010 Amritsar-Lahore Festival, being organised by Punarjyot, Amritsar and Rafi Peer Theatre Group, Lahore.

Citing the similarities between India and Pakistan, the children from across the

border found the political discord between both the countries as irrelevant and urged the politicians on both sides to work for peace.

Happy at being in Amritsar for the ninth time on the occasion of Saanjh-2010, Meeran, a child artiste from Pakistan, says, "It still feels as if I am in Pakistan, only that the names of some of my friends here differ a little from us. But their habits, lifestyle, hobbies and thoughts are the same as that of any child in Pakistan."

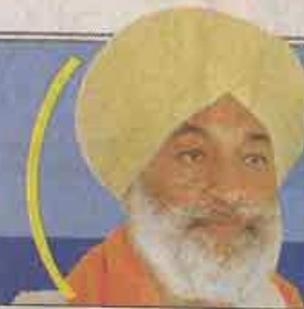
Behwal Asad Rasool, another student accompanying the group, avers that initially he feared people in India would stare at their group the moment it reached Attari border. "However, my fears were allayed when we

got a normal treatment at Attari. I too, did not find any difference."

Umair Miraj, another student with the group, feels that the Indian cuisine reminded him of Pakistan. "Our curries, our agricultural practices and even languages are so similar. And yet the moment the children enter school, they are taught to hate their counterparts across the border. I just cannot understand why this is so," he says.

Meeran further states that the efforts like Saanjh definitely help change the mindset of public, but politicians are the ultimate decision makers of our destinies, the need of the hour is to transform the attitude of the bureaucrats on both sides.

amritsar first



quotemartial

Manpreet used the Sunday rush at Harmandir Sahib to beef up his claim of a large turnout.

BALWINDER SINGH BHUNDER, joint secretary, SAD

'Schools can help make borders irrelevant

GIVE PEACE A CHANCE Students from across the border call for change in curriculum to include lessons in harmony

Shaheen P Parshad
shaheen.parshad@gmail.com

AMRITSAR: It was only appropriate for school students to have the loudest word on Children's Day. At the Seventh Amritsar-Lahore Saanjh Festival, schools-goers from across the border on Sunday said that with people's desire for peace between India and Pakistan growing, it's time for schools on either side of the fence to propagate the feeling of brotherhood and harmony.

The kids' group, part of the larger Pakistani delegation, joined hands with their Indian counterparts to stage 'Theatre for Peace: Circus for Peace', a production directed by Austrian Mime Director Andreas Ceska, at Spring Dale School.

"We need to give a friendly tone to the curriculum in schools in India and Pakistan," said Meeran, a student from Lahore; the others echoed her.



Students from India and Pakistan together on stage at Spring Dale School in Amritsar on Sunday.

She averred that people-to-people contact programmes by various individuals and organisations had done a lot to bring the masses of both the countries closer; "now it

is the turn of the schools to chip in and trigger a change of mindset among the students".

Umair Miraj, another student accompanying the group,

said that change of mindset at all levels was essential to give peace another chance in the region.

"People, including the politicians, in both countries should

realise now that hating their neighbors would only add to their own miseries," the teenager added.

Another young man, Taimur, said, "Peace is absolutely nec-

essary to allow people on either side to co-exist and grow together. Educational institutions must take up a leading role if we want peace to reign in the region."

Alisha makes best poster

ALISHA MAHAJAN of DAV Public School won the first prize in the Peace Poster Contest organised by Lions Club, Amritsar (Gold Temple). GS Mathar, club's district chairperson said that Alisha's painting had been selected by the club to send it to Lions International Office in Chicago to represent the club. "The painting would be sent through the district governor to the Lions Headquarters in US where a panel of international level judges would screen entries from all over to select \$5000 winner.

HTC, AMRITSAR

में सांझ-2010 में गूंजे हिन्द- पाक गायकों के स्वर

पंजाबी संगीतकार हरभजन मान की आवाज पर झूमे शहरवासी

कडनी
कअप,
डा.
भारत
क लोग
बिटिक
उन्होंने
टीज की
गोर दिया
का थीम

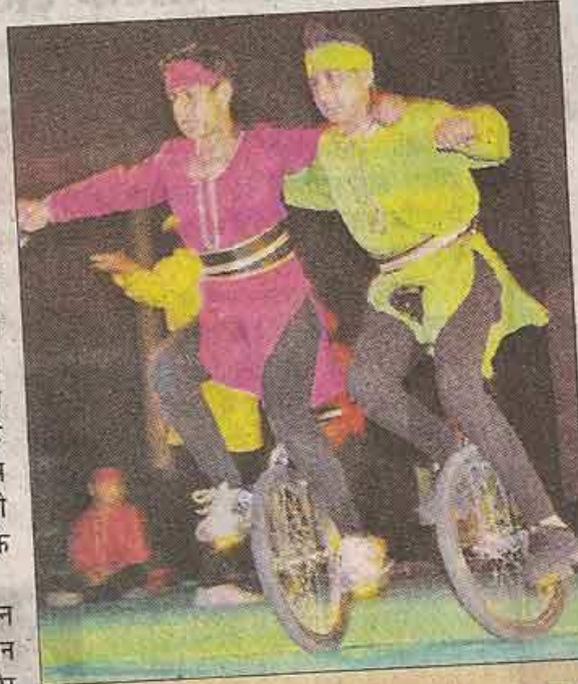
न ने
सा

(वर्मा):
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नायती राम
हमारी पम्मी,
हंस राज
वेता भगीरथ

अमृतसर, 13 नवम्बर
(अनुज): पंजाबी गायक
हरभजन मान शनिवार 7वें
अमृतसर-लाहौर महोत्सव
सांझ-2010 के दूसरे दिन
पाकिस्तान के गायकों और
संगीतकारों के साथ मंच पर
उतरे। अपने पंजाबी गीतों से
हरभजन मान ने सभी को नाचने
पर मजबूर कर दिया।
बिक्रमजीत सिंह मजीठिया
मुख्यातिथि ने कहा कि चाहे
इन दोनों देशों के बीच अब
बार्डर बन चुके हैं, पर इनकी
संस्कृति, इनके लोग और उनके
दिल आज भी एक हैं।

सांझ का दूसरे दिन
पाकिस्तान से आए रिजवान
मुआजम कव्वाल समूह और
साईं जहूर ने भी भावपूर्ण प्रस्तुति
दी। पुनर्ज्योत की निदेशक डॉ.
कीरत संधू चीमा ने कहा कि
पिछले कुछ वर्षों में सांझ एक आंदोलन बन
गया था जिसका उद्देश्य न सिर्फ आम आदमी
को जागरूक करने का था, बल्कि सीमा के
दोनों तरफ के नेताओं को भी शांति की महत्वता
के बारे में बताना था ताकि भारत और पाकिस्तान



कार्यक्रम के दौरान नृत्य प्रस्तुत करते कलाकार।
(नवदीप)

के लोग एक-दूसरे को समझ सकें और मिल-
जुलकर मानवता विरोधी शक्तियों का सामना
कर सकें। इस अवसर पर प्रि. राजीव कुमार
शर्मा, ऑस्ट्रियन कल्चर फोरम की निदेशक
वैगनोर भी उपस्थित थे।

Seventh Amritsar-Lahore Festival begins with several firsts to its credit

Amritsar, November 12 (Jasbir Singh Saggu) - Despite the challenges involved in its

orchestration, the two-day Seventh Amritsar-Lahore Festival, organized by Punarjyot, Amritsar, and Rafi Peer Theatre Group, Lahore, began on a high note on

Friday in the premises of Spring Dale Senior School with Art of Living exponent Sri

Sri Ravi Shankar inaugurating the impressive cultural mélange, which not only saw

Indian and Pakistani artists sharing the stage as usual in their quest for peace, but

also a host of cultural treats introduced for the first time. Addressing the gathering,

Sri Sri urged the people of India and Pakistan to make concentrated efforts to promote peace between the two countries. He urged the people to be tolerant and

develop understanding for each other, besides working to promote the common cultural ties that bind them and prevent situations that lead to discord. Lauding the

efforts of late Dr Shivinder Singh Sandhu and Mrs Manveen Sandhu in instituting Saanjh, he said that this festival had spiritual connotations evident through the rendition of 'Sufi kalam' by various artists. "Saanjh is more of a celebration of the

spiritual aspects of the common culture of East and West Punjab. It is a process which has enabled people on both sides of the border to regain their paradise, which

had been lost due to partition and the consequent political discord between India and

Pakistan," he said. The Festival this year became a launch pad for 24-year-old Manmeet Sain and his 19-year-old sibling Kiranpal Sain, also known as Sain Brothers

from Chheharta, Amritsar. The duo was trained under Ustaad Mithu Khan, who is associated with the Patiala Gharana. However, till now they were associated only with singing on 'Mazaars' besides a few other peace initiatives at the Attari border.

The inaugural day of 'Saanjh' saw them rendering four 'Qawwalis'-one on the significance of Saanjh, 'Maan', on the importance of a mother in one's life, 'Tota Aiwen Nahin Bolda', the first Sufi Qawwali rendered by them and 'Nai Jana Jogi De

Naal'. "This is our first big opportunity, when we have got a chance to showcase our

talent at the international level," said Manmeet Sain. Another fresh addition to Saanjh-2010 was 'Theatre for Peace-Circus for Peace', a production featuring students from India and Pakistan, directed by Austrian Mime Director Andreas Ceska.

The production, which is a form of circus art, is being staged here for the first time in

the country with amateur child artists performing along side professional

entertainers. The celebration also featured a performance by Kalbeliya Dancers.

'Kalbeliyas' is essentially a snake-charmer community from Rajasthan. They earn

their bread and butter mainly with the help of these dance performances. Another breath taking performance of the day was the one featuring the Manganiyars, another Rajasthani community that earns its living through musical performances. The Spring Dale Educational Society supports the Manganiyar Lok Sangeet Sansthan, founded for the children of the Manganiyar community of Rajasthan, based at village Hamira in Rajasthan. This institution has been set up to school Manganiyar children in music and take forward their melodic legacy. Dr Kirat Sandhu Cheema, Director, Punarjyot, said that her parents had conceived Saanjh with a view to modulating the mindless hatred that divided both the countries by bringing their masses together through cultural exchange. "This legacy has not only been passed on to me, but also to my entire team and all the peace lovers that we are associated with. We intend to carry it a step further," she added. Usmaan Peerzada, CEO, Rafi Peer Theatre Group, said that seeds of Saanjh sown by late Dr Shivinder Singh Sandhu and Mrs Manveen Sandhu in collaboration with his brother Faizaan Peerzada have now developed into a full-fledged mission of uniting hearts. "As long as there is Saanjh there would always be hope of peace between India and Pakistan," he said. Rajiv Kumar Sharma, Principal, Spring Dale Senior School, BJP Lok Sabha MP Navjot Singh Sidhu and Mayor Shawet Malik were among others, who were present on the occasion.

Saanjh festival opens in Amritsar

GS Paul/TNS

Amritsar, November 12

Despite the turbulent history of the land, the tradition of verse and music kept open the pathways of brotherhood and peace through the Saanjh, the seventh edition of the Amritsar-Lahore festival organised by Punarjyot (Amritsar) and the Rafi Peer Theatre Group (Lahore) on the premises of Spring Dale Senior School here.

The two-day festival commenced with a high note with spiritual guru and the Founder of Art of Living, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, inaugurating the cultural mélange of both sides of Punjab, which not only saw Indian and Pakistani artistes sharing the stage as usual in their quest for peace, but also a host of cultural treats introduced for the first time.

Addressing the gathering, Sri Sri urged the people of India and Pakistan to develop understanding for each other besides working to promote the common cultural ties.

The festival this year became a launching pad for 24-year-old Manmeet Sain and his 19-year-old sibling Kiranpal Sain, also known as Sain brothers from Chheharta, Amritsar. The duo was trained under Ustaad Mithu Khan, who is associated with the Patiala Gharana. However, till now, they were associated only with singing at mazaars besides a few other peace initiatives at the Attari border. The inaugural day of the Saanjh saw them rendering four "qawwalis".

Another fresh addition to the Saanjh was 'Theatre for Peace-Circus or Peace', a production featuring students from India and Pakistan, directed by Austrian Mime Director Andreas Ceska. The production, which is a form of circus art, is being staged here for the first time in the country with amateur child artistes performing along side professional entertainers. The celebration also featured a performance by 'Kalbeliya' dancers.

Dr Kirat Sandhu Cheema, Director (Punarjyot) said her parents, the late Dr Shivinder Singh Sandhu and Manveen Sandhu, had conceived the idea of the Saanjh to modulate the mindless hatred that divided both the countries by bringing their masses together through cultural exchange.

***** THE DAWN- LAHORE, PAKISTAN

The Punjab Theatre will hold a workshop with an Austrian director, Andreas Ceska, on Nov 1 at the Interactive Resource Centre. Children between 13 and 18 years will participate in the workshop based on circus and mime.

Working with the Punjab Theatre as volunteers, the participating children will go to India on Nov 12 to perform theatre in Amritsar with Indian children. Mr Ceska will also hold a theatre workshop with children in India.



Of the youth, by the youth

At the 7th Youth Performing Arts Festival, the courage of the organisers was supplemented by that of the people who turned up in large numbers to attend

By Sarwat Ali

It has always been assumed that it required courage to mount a production or to organise a festival in Pakistan, but now the word courage is being interpreted in a totally different way. Previously it was the loss of revenue or reputation that mattered, now it is the loss of one's life that is feared.

It used to happen, mostly in the rural areas on melas and urs, that the tents and stage of the performing artists were uprooted or destroyed by a few elements, most of whom wanting some undue concessions used the pretext of a moral cause. Usually, it was primarily the consequence of not getting the police on board albeit with some harassment by and large the shows went off well in a reasonably secure environment. But now the situation has changed as the arts and in particular the performing arts are being targeted.

The courage of the organisers was supplemented by the courage of the people who also turned up in large numbers to attend the various performances of the festival. For staging any public event these days, there is a lot of apprehension and in this festival too it was feared that the audiences may stay away because of security concerns but at least this fear was allayed by the good turnout. Since it was a youth festival, it was mostly the youngsters who came to applaud and support their friends and class fellows and many parents who wanted to see their children perform.

Like the earlier festivals, the most positive aspect of the 7th Youth Performing Arts Festival held at the Alhamra Cultural Complex under the aegis of Rafi Peer Theatre Workshop (RPTW) was the large number of groups that took part in performances of theatre, dance, mime and music. Some of the plays written by the youngsters themselves on the problems faced by the youth and the way they view this society from their perspective was indeed a very healthy prospect and one hoped that this young talent would in future take writing and theatre more seriously, honing it in the process.

The theatre groups that took part in the festival were Lahore Grammar School with Mirza Sahiban, Fatima Jinnah Women's University with Katvi Chat, Pattan Lok Natak with Leeray Chor, The Institute of Space Technology with Ibne Kabeel, Natak with Aik Election Soo Afsanay, Lahore Grammar School (Main Gulberg) with Labyrinth, National College of Arts with Three Jones, Theatre Thespians Karachi with Waiting for Godot. University of Engineering and Technology with Basti Daad, Chand Bagh School with Lami Judai and Macbeth. Mass Foundation with Permasher Singh, City School with Pygmalion, Mir Theatre with Angan Tera, Gram Gram Performing Arts Society of Beacon House National University with 8 Bajay, Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture with Eight Openings, and LACAS with Absolutely! {Perhaps}.

Other than theatre, there were many dance performances principally by Umair Arif, Suhae Abro, Mohsin Babar, Reza Shah and Bina Jawad Ensemble.

The Mime section was well represented by Neo Transitional Mime, National College of Arts Auto Crash, Government College University Faisalabad Snow White in 2008", Lahore School Drama and Entertainment Society Her Imperfect Prayer Cycle, Gram Gram Performing Arts Society, Beacon House National University Just Like Hitler, University of Engineering and Technology Death Beat, Fankaar Theatre Na Tu Aye Ge and NCA, Rawalpindi Ishq Deway Joag.

The film section constituted several films by: Beacon House University, Fatima Jinnah University, Indus Valley, Lahore Grammar School. While a workshop conducted by **Andreas Ceska (Austria)** focused on theatre mime and movement was also held at the festival, it proved to be a good occasion to conduct the workshop because young performers had converged to the festival from all over the country.

Many of the promising young performers of the last five years did not take part in the festival. As one wave of promising youngsters passes and is replaced by another there seems no gradual transition of the mantle. Ideally one set of youngsters should stay long enough in the field to gain sufficient experience and then work with their younger counterparts to pass on that experience as part of a process. This ensures a gradual accumulation of experience and craft which, by the end of the day, becomes a substantial pool of skilled human resource.

The ideal situation is when the youngsters work with the more experienced because it is a mutually beneficial relation. The new ideas and the enthusiasm need a discipline and a worked out craft, and in such a partnership the ground is laid for a fruitful exchange.

In the last decade or so, the explosion of the television networks and the proliferation of the channels have provided a ready-made opportunity which was not there earlier for the performers. Many of the youngsters who make an appearance in a festival, like the one under review, get sucked by the voracious appetite of these channels much too soon and gain quick fame which works to their detriment in the long run. It just does not give them enough gestation periods to work on their craft and develop an individual expression. Only in the case of some lucky, fame and fortune does not become a roadblock in the development of their talent.

RPTW now holds four major Festivals — The World Performing Arts Festival, The National Folk Puppet Festival, The International Mystic Music Sufi Festival and Youth Performing Arts Festival. Full marks to them

"THE NEWS"- Lahore, Pakistan