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Special Report

Unesco meet to celebrate 3000 years of Parsi culture

SUJATA DUGAR

TIMES NEWS NETWORK [THURSDAY, JANUARY 22, 2004 01:09:11 AM]

KOLKATA: If your idea of the Parsi community is restricted to the lip-smacking dhansak and the Tata empire, think again. For showcasing the richness, age-old tradition and immense contribution of the Parsi community towards the development of the country, is the Unesco Parzor (Parsi Zoroastrian) exhibition to be held in the city.

Organised by the Delhi-based Parzor and Calcutta Zoroastrian Community's Religious and Charity Fund, the two-day programme will begin on January 24.

"The celebrations include an exhibition of heirloom textiles, artefacts, documents and film screenings, which will give an insight into the Zoroastrian heritage and culture," said Sam N. Medora, CEO of the Fund. It is the brainchild of Unesco, which declared the year 2003-04 as the 3000th anniversary of Zoroastrian culture.

Titled 'Pictures with a Purpose', the exhibition, to be held at the Olpadvala Hall, will provide a rare insight into one of the oldest religions and cultures of the world, as declared by Unesco.

The first of its kind exhibition on the community being held in Kolkata, the celebrations had kickstarted in New Delhi last year before going to Mumbai and Baroda to commemorate the 3000th anniversary.

To be inaugurated by West Bengal governor Viren J. Shah, the Parzor exhibition will include some rare textiles of the community — sarees, caps, menswear culled from old families, Parsi snacks comprising chicken farcha, patrel, bhakras and khajur ni ghari apart from the must-have dhansak. Two films will also be screened. Asha — the Law of Harmony and a documentary — In War and Peace: The Life of Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw MC.

On January 25, there will also be an audio-visual presentation by Sabina Gadihok from her film 'Three Women and a Camera.' It will cover the life and times of India's first woman photo journalist Homai Vayarawalla.

"Ours is a cohesive community and they have remain rooted to their religious beliefs and culture despite having spread all over the world," said Fund trustee Cyrus J. Madan.

Little wonder, the Parzor celebrations are an effort to create the awareness and provide knowledge of its heritage, especially the youth and children, from both within and outside the community.

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