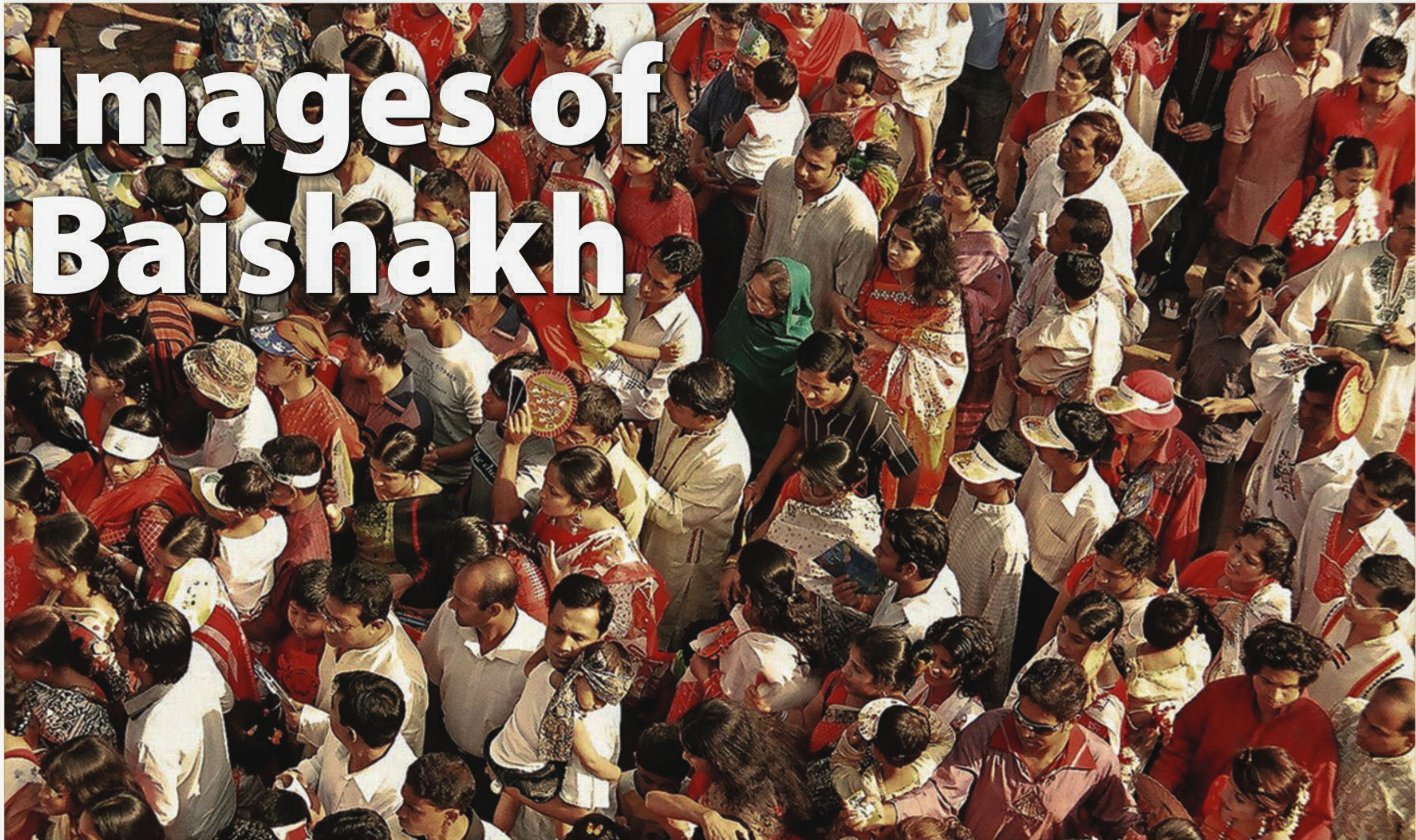


# Defining Pahela

# Images of Baishakh



SANJIDA JUI

The coming of Kalbaishakhi (Nor'wester) is welcomed by the biggest secular festival of Bangladesh, Pahela Baishakh. Named after the star 'Bishakha', in line with the names of other Bengali months also named after constellations, romanticised notions of Baishakh were embedded in the hearts of millions, primarily due to Rabindranath Tagore's love for the month. Pahela Baishakh is a day that sees countless celebrations all across Bangladesh and worldwide, wherever Bengalis have thrived. Over the years the festival has become synonymous with certain images. On the first day of the Bangla year 1418, we take a look at these elements that go a long way in defining this spectacular

BY TAKIR HOSSAIN, JAMIL MAHMUD, ZAHANGIR ALAM, SHAH ALAM SHAZI AND AKRAM HOSEN MAMUN



MUMIT M.

## Tepa Putul

Perhaps the oldest toy, dolls are not just for children; they often symbolise prosperity and are considered sacred. In all likelihood, *Tepa Putul* or indigenous clay dolls have their origins in the images of deities, made by potters. They are shaped by hand, dried in the sun and fired in kilns. Originally, there were never painted. *Tepa Putul* were not made for sale. These dolls were generally gift items or for sacrifice. At some point, artisans faced financial crises and began looking for alternative means of earning money. Thus they started selling these dolls. Now the dolls are painted in yellow, red, green and black.

*Tepa Putul* are mainly made in Mymensingh, Chittagong, Dinajpur, Rangpur, Manikganj and Faridpur. Most potters live in close proximity to rivers where silt is easily available.



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