



Traditional dance performance in 'Krishoker Boishakhi Ananda'

PHOTO: SM NASIR

# In the quagmire of festivity and reality

*This is a day of cultural unity without distinction between class and religious affiliations*

SHYKH SERAJ

It's a day of festivity where our roots are engraved. The day reminds us of our cultural unity in the region and tells us how firm bondage could be. It's the first day of Boishakh, the Bengali New Year.

On this note, on the first day of Bengali New Year, at present, Bangladesh is faced with political unrest which has hampered the achievements of the country, undoubtedly. Yet, we are happy with gloomy faces.

Bangladesh is a country that belongs to humid tropics and is vulnerable to a number of natural hazards like cyclone, flood and riverbank erosion, which almost regularly displaces a large number of people. A large number of these people are farmers are the nation builders.

Pohela Boishakh largely belongs to the rural people of Bangladesh. It's not the city-dwellers, it's the rural people who make the villages colourful where festivity bears a different colour. "Hridoye Mati O Manush" introduced farmers' game show, 'Krishoker Boishakhi Ananda' (Farmers' Boishakhi Delight) which is also a great way to connect the urban people with the rural essence of Bengal. We have to go deep down to understand the pulse of these marginal people. Are they really enjoying Pohela Boishakh? Is it hard to enjoy anything after tackling the natural calamities, they produced food for the nation which they can't sell; they don't get fair price for their produce. Recently, their agricultural products are being burnt on streets in the name of Hartals (shutdown)? How many blows do you need to stop the development of Bangladesh? How much oppression will go over them?

South Asia is one of the most important regions of the world for international economy and international politics. It contains one fourth of world's population. Once, most of the countries of this region were under the British colony for about 200 years. Since Bangladesh achieved independence from Pakistan in 1971, socio-economic and political development

has faced various challenges.

Nevertheless, in past few decades Bangladesh has done a very good job regarding socio-economic development.

There have been notable reductions in population growth rate and infant mortality rate in Bangladesh. Although facing massive cyclones and floods, it increased agricultural productivity and food production. Meanwhile, we enhanced the literacy rate.

Economic progress of Bangladesh is nothing but a wonder to economic analysts. Per capita income has tripled after since 1971; average life expectancy increased from 50 to 65 years and the rate of literacy doubled. Meanwhile, population growth has decreased from 3.5 per cent to 1.5 per cent. Annual GDP growth rate was 3.7 per cent in 1990 and is more than 6 per cent now. Currently, the country's foreign exchange reserve remains at an all-time high at over \$12.7 billion (as of December 2012) propelled by the inflow of remittances and decrease in import bills.

However, all these achievements and expectations would go in vain as the country is continuously faced with political unrest, bloodshed, death, burning of farmers' golden crops etc. This year's Farmers' Voices in Budget has started (Krishi Budget Krishoker Budget), organized by "Hridoye Mati O Manush". In a recent field discussion in Natore's Shankarbhag, farmers were deeply concerned about the restless hartals. They demanded to keep transportation, supply chain and stores of all agricultural and food related products outside the purview of hartals and strikes, where Industries Minister Dilip Barua was the chief guest.

The country of Bangladesh needs to be stable with the intervention of the government right now. If we are unable to ensure a happy, steady and a risk-free life for the citizens and safe transportation and marketing of farmers' produce, they won't go near the enjoyment of the Pohela Boishakh. Because, if these people keep on smiling, it's always a good sign for Bangladesh. And, if we keep on striking them hard, Bangladesh will soon lose its achievements that it made over the last couple of years. So, on the first day of the Bengali New Year, let us all stand and take oath for the rural community who genuinely are contributing to the welfare of Bangladesh, a country where we also live, where our developments are connected too. Shubho Nababarsha to all my readers!



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## Pesticide free Pheromone trap

HOSSAIN SERAJ, Magura

Using Pheromone trap, at least five thousand acres of land in 62 villages of Jessore, Magura and Jhenidah districts are now being used to produce toxic-free vegetables.

Farmers in the areas are now producing toxic-free vegetables using 'pheromone trap' instead of harmful pesticides. This method better protects human health as well as the environment in the area.

Farmers in the three districts, under Krishi Projukti Bastobayan Kendro (KPBK) with the cooperation of BARI (Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute) waved goodbye to pesticides in 2004.

To check pest attack, instead of harmful pesticides they began to use pheromone trap and bio-agent (beneficial insects) produced in the laboratory of Safe Agriculture Bangladesh Limited (SABL) and other companies like Ispahani Agro-Biotech Limited.

Farmers of Gaidghat village under Bandobila union in Bagherpara Upazila of Jessore, Sikandarpur and Nagorpur in Jessore and Piarpur in Shalikhra Upazila of Magura are inspired by the new method of pest control.

This season, they are growing vegetables like Korola (balsam apple), gourd and eggplant without the use of harmful pesticide. They are also being

financially benefited by producing vegetables using 'pheromone trap' at lesser cost comparing to pesticide and also protecting environment, KPBK sources said.

Pheromone, the principal ingredient is used to check pest attack in vegetable fields instead of harmful pesticides. It is considered as the 'silent revolution' in pest control management and environment protection.

"Farmers in the area are now very much interested in using 'pheromone trap' instead of harmful pesticides, as it costs lesser comparing to pesticide, and also is protecting the environment", said the president of KPBK Lakkhan Chandra Mondal. Farmers



PHOTO: STAR

A farmer displaying his pesticide free bitter gourds

in the area usually buy pheromone from the office of Ispahani Agro-Biotech Limited at Jessore district town. The research organization under a special permission of the agriculture ministry, imported pheromone for using it on research, and development, Lakkhan added.

Pheromone is not commercially available in the markets now, Lakkhan said. He, however, is not eager to use the word 'crisis' regarding the non-availability of pheromone in rural markets.

Ratan Das, a farmer at Raghobpur village in Bandobila said that pheromone should be easily available to the farmers in the markets. Using pesticide is at least four times costlier than using pheromone trap and beneficial insects.

At present, farmers have to spend Tk. 50 only for a single pheromone trap. "From sowing to harvest, a vegetable land of one higha needs Tk. 2,400 only in producing vegetable using pheromone trap and beneficial insects while using pesticide it costs at least Tk 12 thousand", said Ayub Hossain, a farmer of Premchra village in Bagharpara upazila.

When contacted, the Chief Scientific Officer (CSO) of BARI's Entomology Division Dr. Syed Nurul Alam said that pheromone based technology promises

to eliminate the use of pesticide in vegetable cultivation saving about one third of the farmer's total expenditure. Pheromone trap is a chemical capsule that is kept in a plastic bottle half-filled with water. It attracts adult insects that flock to the bottle and drown, the CSO added.

Farmers who earlier used to apply heavy doses of pesticide in their vegetable fields, now needs this wonder capsule they call 'tabiz' (talisman) along with some beneficial insects.

Scientists call the principle ingredient 'pheromone' - the female sex hormone of insects that attract the male who are drowned into the water kept in the bottle of the 'pheromone trap'.

However, to remove the female insects, the farmers have also to use other insects like Bracon, Habator, Trichogramma, Chilonis and Chrysopa.

BARI in 2003, took up Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programme to discourage farmers using harmful pesticide and to inspire them in producing toxic-free vegetables.

The programme assisted by DFID achieved a great success. The National Resources Institute (NRI) UK, Asian Vegetable Research and Development Centre (AVRDC) Taiwan and multinational company Syngenta cooperated in the research.



PHOTO: STAR

Devotees offer milk, sweetmeats and flowers at a symbolic charak tree as traditional Charak festival centring Bothor Shib Mandir at Bothor village beside the Boral River in Chatmohar upazila under Pabna district started on Friday. The three-day festival will end on Bangla New Year Pahela Baishakh today.

## Youth killed in Madaripur clash over disputed land

*10 hurt in Jaintapur of Sylhet*

UNB, Madaripur

A young man was killed and 15 others injured in a clash between two groups of villagers over a disputed land at Mahmudi village in Sadar upazila on Friday.

The deceased was identified as Shawkat Bepari, 25, son of Motaleb Bepari of the village.

Quoting witnesses, police said there had been a longstanding enmity between Motaleb Bepari and Majibor Hawladar over ownership of a piece of land.

An altercation ensued between the two groups over cutting down a tree on the disputed land at about 2.30pm.

Later both the groups, equipped with lethal weapons, attacked each other, leaving 16 people injured.

The injured were rushed to Sadar Hospital where Shawkat died at about 7.30pm.

In Sylhet, ten people were injured in an attack by their rivals over a land dispute at Birakhai village in Jaintapur upazila on Friday.

Of the injured, Joyanal Abedin, 30, Runu Miah, 28, Mustafa, 32, Rezia Bibi, 60, Ali Ahmed, 50, and Ajufa Begum, 25, were admitted to the upazila health complex in critical condition.

Sources said there had been a longstanding dispute between two brothers Joyanal

Abedin and Gulam Mustafa, son of MALI at the village, over their ancestral property.

The dispute was resolved in local arbitrations many times, which Mustafa did not accept.

As a sequel to that, he along with about 15 cohorts, stormed into the house of Joyanal at about 7.00 am injuring his (Joyanal's) 10 family members and later confined them to a room.

On information, a team of police led by sub-inspector Gonesh of Jaintapur Model police station rescued them.

Both sides lodged complaints with the local police station in this connection.

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