

An exuberant *Pahela Baishakh* parade in Chilly Toronto.

A Little Piece of Pahela Baishakh in Toronto

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It has been more than a decade for me living in North America and unlike other weekends April 14 was a special Sunday! One of the few days that really reminds us of our cultural identity. Just like a flawless long distance call to my loving mother, Pahela Baishakh removes all the static and connects me as a soulful Bengali to my beloved Bangladesh.

It has always been heart-aching to remember the Pahela Baishakh celebrations in Dhaka: pushing through the crowds of Ramna Botomul even at 5:30 am; the faint sounds of music and Tagore songs from Shahbag Chattar lured us towards the main stage.

With the growing Bangaldeshi community in North America, the feeling and intensity of *Pahela Baishakh* these days is no less - particularly in this cold and freezing city of Toronto. Hundreds of Bangladeshis bathe in the sacred joy and spirit of the Bengali New Year.



A cultural programme to celebrate the New Year.

The temporary ecstasy and energy of the crowd creates warmth in the city even amid a freezing five degrees celsius April morning. The *boishakhi* celebration has actually become a cultural string that our monochromatic American lives fills with colour. It makes a virtual yet a global connection in the company of red and white and mouth-watering food.