



With half of the country's population comprising farmers, Nobanno aims to celebrate the contribution of agriculture. A greater yield ensures economic stability for farmers and neighbours are invited and gifts are distributed. But the most obsessed-about aspect of Nobanno is probably the special pithas of the season. Prepared in every household with the new grains, sending clothes and cakes to relatives, especially, daughter-in-laws is a courtesy steeped in tradition.

The streets of Dhaka city, however, paint a different picture on this day. Each year, the National Harvest Festival Committee organises a Nobanno celebration in collaboration with the Department of Fine Arts of University of Dhaka. With a goal to hold on to the cultural mark of Nobanno with a clenched fist, pitha-

making competitions, folk poetry recitations, dramas and dance performances are organised. Music composed by the mystic minstrels of Bengal such as Lalon Fokir honours the heritage of the country and such 'baul' songs are sung on occasion of Nobanno all around.

The reach of Nobanno doesn't stop there. Instead, it goes on to spark inspirations in the literary world.

Rabindranath Tagore penned verses of the national anthem of Bangladesh depicting the scenic beauty of a golden Bengal in Agrabayan and an obvious reference to the abundant and ripe rice crop standing in the fields.

Igniting creative influences in countless pieces of popular literature including poems, plays and artistic paintings, Nobanno has shown its reach to be deep into the Bengali

psyche. The process of harvesting lying at the heart of Nobanno moved Bengali and English poets alike. Moreover, art exhibitions depicting the theme of the celebration have often been held to entrance the keen folk art collectors among us.

Undoubtedly, Nobanno carves the fate of farmers until the following harvest season. It has inspired both indelible and faded traditions, sparked inspirations in literary talents of Bengal and foreign lands and marks the beginning of business and agriculture in the country.

And it is all in the shadow of a grain of harvested rice.

By Ramisa Haque
Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed