



Fifty-year-old Ajit Kumar Haldar performs at the traditional Charak festival held on the ground of Satbaria High School in Sujanagar upazila of Pabna on Pahela Baishakh, the first day of Bangla New Year on Saturday.

PHOTO: STAR

# Enthusiasm everywhere

*Pahela Baishakh adds to the colour of rural life*

STAR COUNTRY DESK

People across the country celebrated Pahela Baishakh, the first day of Bangla New Year, with traditional festivals marking local cultural features on Saturday.

Thousands of people from all walks of life gathered at Handial village in Pabna's Chatmohar upazila to celebrate the first day of Bangla New Year, 1425.

The function, arranged by youth organisation Gen YZ, was dedicated to the memory of Mughal emperor Akbar, founder of Bangla calendar.

A colourful procession carrying traditional heritage of rural life was brought out from Handial Bazar.

Along with others, people from indigenous community 'Mahato' of Baghalbari village joined the programme.

"Akbar was the founder of Bangla calendar and so, we have dedicated

the traditional rural festival Pahela Baishakh to the memory of the late king," said Humayun Kabir, coordinator of Gen YZ.

Music, dance, and staging drama highlighting typical rural life were features of the daylong programme.

Meanwhile, several thousand people gathered at Satbaria High School field in Pabna's Sujanagar upazila to see the traditional Charak festival and the accompanying fair.

Charak festival begins on Chaitra 30 of Bangla calendar and ends on celebrating Pahela Baishakh every year but the Satbaria people celebrate it on Pahela Baishakh followed by a fair every year, said Pradip Kumar Sharma, organiser of the festival.

"Although Charak Puja is a religious function of the Hindu community, people belonging to different religious communities together organise the festival, showing



One of the 223 kites registered for competition at the traditional kite festival held on the bank of the Jamuna in Shibalaya upazila of Manikganj, marking Pahela Baishakh.

PHOTO: STAR

communal harmony," he said.

Marking a special feature of the event, Ajit Kumar Haldar, 50, moved around from the charak tree with a rope tied to two long iron hooks pierced on his back to remove the injustice and evil power from the society denying life risk.

"I am performing this at the yearly function for the last 20 years and no accident happened," Ajit said.

The bank of the Jamuna river near Aricha Ghat in Shivalaya upazila under Manikganj assumed an amazingly colourful festive look as hundreds of kites of different types and sizes were flying in the sky on Saturday afternoon.

Shatadal Samajik O Sangskritik

Sangathan organised the kite festival to celebrate Pahela Baishakh.

Local lawmaker AM Naimur Rahman Durjoy handed over colour television sets as prizes to the winners under 16 categories.

The district administration arranged programmes including colourful rally, discussion, cultural function and fair at Chhayabithi Mancha on the deputy commissioner's office premises. Jahid Maleque Swapan, state minister for health and family welfare, were present as chief guest with deputy commissioner Md Nazmus Sadat Selim in the chair.

A daylong Charak Puja and fair was arranged at Majapara village of

Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila on Saturday.

During the Charak Puja one of the devotees danced wearing the mask of 'Goddess Kali' and played Barsha game while some others tied their backs with sharp hooks and then they moved around a bar with a long rope.

Twenty-two girl students of AF Mojibur Rahman High School of Faridpur Sadar upazila got bicycles as Bangla New Year gift.

AF Mojibur Rahman Foundation made the donation for the poor and meritorious students.

Our correspondents from Pabna, Manikganj, Lalmonirhat and Faridpur contributed to the report.



Green activists among locals take part at a human chain in Habiganj on Pahela Baishakh, urging immediate measures against grabbing and pollution of the district's rivers.

PHOTO: STAR

# Murder accused stabbed dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

An accused in a murder case, who was stabbed by miscreants at Mymensingh town's Shehora Munshibari area on Saturday night, succumbed to his injuries at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) early yesterday.

The victim was Mohammad Dihan, 25, son of Abdus Salam of the area.

Dihan was the prime accused in Robin murder case filed with Kotwali Police Station last year, police said.

A gang of miscreants stabbed Dihan indiscriminately near his residence at Shehora Munshibari, leaving him critically injured, said Khandaker Shake Ahmed, officer-in-charge (investigation) of Kotwali Police Station.

Hearing his screams, locals rushed to the spot and took him to MMCH, where he died early yesterday.

Police sent the body to MMCH morgue for autopsy.

Dihan was wanted in several cases, including murder, snatching and extortion, lodged with Kotwali Police Station, the OC said.

Police suspect that the killing might have occurred due to previous enmity.

No case was lodged and none was arrested as of filing of this report.

# Unique reunion on border

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Thousands of Bangla speaking people from Bangladesh and neighbouring India thronged two sides of the barbed wire fence on the borders in Panchagarh and Thakurgaon districts yesterday and had a unique get together on the occasion of Pahela Baishakh, the first day of Bangla New Year.

The authorities allowed the meeting yesterday following request from the Indian side.

Even the scorching heat and the barbed wires could not spoil the reunion that started from around 10:30am and continued till 4:30pm at Shukani, Magurmari and Omarkhana borders in Panchagarh and Haripur, Betna, Dabri, Kathaldangi, Bujruk and Dharmagarh borders in Thakurgaon.

Standing on both sides of the fence, people were seen exchanging greetings and gifts with their near and dear ones as token of good wishes.

A number of people who came to meet their



relatives said people living on both sides of the border had been related in various ways before the partition in 1947.

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) provided drinking water, saline and emergency medical service for the crowd, said Col Mohammad Shamsul Arefin, sector commander of Thakurgaon BGB.

# Man hacked to death by nephew

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

A former union parishad (UP) member, who was hacked by his nephew and his men at Mathbaria upazila yesterday, died on the way to Barishal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital.

The victim was Abdul Latif, 50, former union parishad member and resident of Bakshir Ghatchora village.

UP member Md Abul Kalam said Latif had a dispute with his nephew Al Amin over their paternal land for a long time.

Latif along with his cousin Idris Ali was going to appear before a court in the district.

When they reached Tulatala area in the upazila around 6:30am eight youths, led by Al Amin, hacked them with sharp weapons, leaving them critically injured.

Locals took them to Mathbaria Upazila Health Complex.

As their physical condition deteriorated, they were referred to Barishal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College hospital. Latif died on the way.

# Save govt water bodies

*Speakers tell Sakhipur rally, want action against grabbers*

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Speakers at a rally in Sakhipur upazila yesterday demanded action against the illegal grabbers of government water bodies to protect the environment and bio-diversity.

They also protested against grabbing and filling of the water bodies.

Soukhin Matsya Shikari Samity organised the rally in the upazila headquarters, protesting grabbing and filling of water bodies.

Several hundred amateur fish catchers from different unions in the upazila, carrying their fishing tools, including polo and chabi, brought out a procession in the municipal area at noon.

After parading different streets, the procession ended at the premises of the upazila parishad. The participants held a protest rally there.

Speakers at the rally protested rampant grabbing and filling of government-owned rivers, canals, ponds and ditches by the influential people everywhere in the country, including Sakhipur, in the name of so-called development.

They demanded necessary steps by the authorities concerned against the illegal activities immediately to save the environment and biodiversity.

They also demanded recovery of all the grabbed government-owned water bodies from the influential quarters and also keeping these open for fishing by all people.

Convener of the Samity Mohammad Abed Miah presided over the rally.

Upazila unit Awami League President Kutub Uddin, former panel mayor of Sakhipur municipality Billal Shikder, incumbent panel Mayor Delwar Shikder, Councilor of the municipality Shahid Shikder, Sakhipur Press Club president Iqbal Gafur, Gozaria Union Parishad Chairman Abdul Mannan Miah, local Baul singer Abul Sarkar and Tofazzal Hossain spoke at the rally.

# BID TO LOOT TRAIN

*Three guards stabbed by criminals*

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Three security guards were stabbed on Saturday night by criminals who were trying to loot goods from a train at Darshana International Railway Station in Chuadanga.

The injured are Hafizur Rahman, 30, Abdur Razzak, 50, and Sanjit Kumar Biswas, 40. All are members of Ansar battalion.

Chief Security-in-Charge Shah Alam said a group of 10 to 12 criminals were trying to break the locks of a goods-laden wagon when the security guards were patrolling the station about 10:30pm.

The criminals attacked the guards and indiscriminately stabbed the three with sharp weapons, leaving them injured. The criminals fled the scene immediately.

Hearing the guards' screams, locals and railway staff rescued them.

They were taken to Chuadanga Sadar Hospital. Hafizur and Razzak were later shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital as their condition deteriorated.

Railway police in a drive arrested five of the criminals on the night, said Shah Alam.

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**Contact Details**  
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