

A village fair

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creaking but fun local version of a Ferris wheel, and a similar merry-go-round, all painted in bright colours and rural motifs, run on the heave-ho of the owner's staff, and no motor whatsoever. Perhaps some game vendors too, offering you the chance to shoot balloons with an ancient wooden airgun, or a small circus troupe would be performing. Or perhaps, a 'jatra-dol' or a rural magician showing tricks, or artists performing with puppets. The bioscope was popular too, with people sticking their faces under a curtain, looking at pictures of various things of wonder from around the world.

Village fairs were the culmination of the Bengali tradition of enjoying festivals, and keep people connected to their roots, while providing a much needed boost to the incomes of handicraft workers and artisans, nurturing the age-old crafts of weaving, clay pottery, painting and wood carving.

If all of this evokes memories of simpler days in you, just hop skip to a large village somewhere outside the cities, and experience once more, the joy of a village fair. Just FYI, the Sonargaon Folk Art and Craft Museum organises a three-day fair, with a rigorous effort to preserve the traditional "Graam-er Mela," for three days on the occasion of Pahela Baishakh. Hop over to buy yourself some local toys like tepa putuls, crafts like Shok-er Hari, clay pottery and toys, and of course 'taant' clothes and jamdani saris. Shubho Noboborsho.

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Photo: Intisab Shahriyar



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