

# Made with love and care

## Busy time for local artisans ahead of Pahela Baishakh



From left, potters in Madaripur and a craftsman in Lalmonirhat making traditional items. The photos were taken recently. PHOTOS: STAR

**SUZIT KUMAR DAS, Faridpur**  
Potters in Madaripur district are busy preparing for the upcoming Pahela Baishakh, the first day of Bangla year. They are making various earthen items for the traditional fairs in towns and villages in the four upazilas of the district. On a recent visit to different potters' villages under Sadar and Kalkini upazilas, this correspondent saw that members of the Pal community were putting finishing touches to the colourful clay items like toys, decoration pieces and animals. Around 40 families of the Pal community live at Palpara village under Ghatmaji union of Sadar upazila but only 10 are involved with their ancestral profession. The once-popular trade has dwindled over the years, but the artisans' passion and love for the craft have not, which continue to reflect in their art form.

"I have been making these earthen items since I was a boy. I learnt the craft the same way I learned my mother tongue -- from my elders," said Bishwajit Pal, 65, of the village. He said he makes the items for Pahela Baishakh and rest of the year he farms for living. Rina Pal, 45, a potter at Thana Mor Palpara village of Kalkini upazila, said these items are only in demand during Baishakh fairs. Potters Minara Rani, 35, and Sunil Kumar Pal, 55, echoed her. The potters said a major reason behind giving up their ancestral profession is that, with increasing population, available land is shrinking, and hence clay, the main raw material of this cottage industry, has become scarce and too expensive. Wahidul Islam, deputy commissioner of Madaripur, said pottery is an age-old tradition and they will try their best to help the potters.

**S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat**  
Dozens of craftsmen were busy making various masks and replicas of animals, birds and flowers with "sholapith" (referred to as shola and Indian cork) in Lalmonirhat yesterday, ahead of Pahela Baishakh. They are happy as they have got more orders than last year's. The cork craftsmen along with their family members were working together round the clock to deliver orders on time. Ramanus Chandra Barmon, 46, a craftsman in Sadhuti village of Sadar upazila, said he got 15 orders at Tk 70,000 but the figure was 12 last year. The craftsman said he took help from his wife and daughter for quick delivery. Basona Rani, a cork craftswoman in the same village, said, "I have been busy for the last two weeks making various masks, replicas and toys."

Selling such cork accessories is their seasonal business. Mohan Kumar Mohanta, 48, another craftsman in Khojabari village, said, "We spend less on production but we need to work hard." Shafiqul Islam, 21, a student of Lalmonirhat Government College, told The Daily Star that they will celebrate Pahela Baishakh with more enthusiasm this year. "We have ordered 300 pieces of items," he said. Taherul Islam, 20, another student of the college, said, "We will bring out a colourful procession and enjoy the day." "We will wear masks, dance, eat and exchange sweets," said Suzata Dutta, 19, a student of Adarsha Degree College in Lalmonirhat town. Tight security measures will be taken during Pahela Baishakh to avert any untoward incident, said SM Rashidul Haque, superintendent of police in Lalmonirhat.

# An inclusive Baishakhi

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about conditions such as ADHD and dyslexia. "Many students have these 'invisible' disabilities. As a result, they may be victims of discrimination and bullying," he said. "We hope to create a culture where it's okay to talk about these conditions and make people aware." The final part of the event revolved around a pertinent issue: the terms we use to refer to the intellectually disabled. "If we hide the shame of being this way by using euphemisms like 'gifted' or 'differently abled', we're not helping to eradicate the negative stereotypes and images, what we're doing is hiding their identities by saying they're special," Labib said. "Language shapes a society's attitude, so we need to accept that people have disabilities and it's nothing to be ashamed of." "I definitely don't think the intentions are wrong, but by using overly positive terms, we won't be able to address their many problems and find solutions. We can only aim to represent them the best way possible and let them express their troubles," he added.

# Baishakh ushers

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He urged the government to take steps to revive the once prominent industry. However, potter Kajol Kumar Das of city's Sagarpara has not lost hope yet. "One has to work with patience and devotion. Most people cannot sustain in this profession," he said. Das fetches a monthly income of Tk 35,000, supplying terracotta items to various showrooms. He said his sales almost double during festivals.

# Madrasa principal

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Darda called him and said his son had died by suicide and his body was found hanging inside the mosque. Talking to The Daily Star, Anisur said, "My son got admitted to the residential madrasa a year ago. My eldest son is also a student there." He alleged that Tarekur used to beat Asif regularly. "Asif came to the house three days ago, we had to send him back to the madrasa." "There is no reason for my boy to take his own life. He was murdered," alleged the bereaved father. Asif's body was handed over to the family after an autopsy, informed police.

# ISB keen on partnerships with local institutions

**Visiting team conducts masterclass in Dhaka**  
DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT  
A five-member team of Indian School of Business (ISB) paid a two-day visit to Dhaka, aiming to develop partnership with business and academic institutions. During their visit, Dean of ISB, Prof Rajendra Srivastava and (Visiting) Professor of Practice, Strategy and Marketing, Prof Nandu Nandkishore, conducted a masterclass in Dhaka on Thursday, in which about 180 senior executives from 50 industries and corporate houses participated. Kedar Lele, managing director and CEO of Unilever Bangladesh, who studied in the ISB in 2004, hosted the session under the aegis of Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), Bangladesh. Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Prof Srivastava said they connected with important personalities in Bangladesh and discussed areas in which ISB can partner with local businesses, academic institutions and the government. "ISB believes in working closely with our neighbours and towards that goal, we were in Dhaka to explore areas of cooperation... There are many things India and Bangladesh can learn from each other. ISB is keen to bridge this relationship," said Srivastava.

# Bangladesh received

FROM PAGE 3  
In March 2019, six state-owned commercial banks -- Agrani, Janata, Rupali, Sonali, BASIC and DBBL -- received \$0.33 billion while state-owned specialised bank, Bangladesh Krishi Bank, received \$0.018 billion. Of the state-owned banks, Agrani Bank received \$0.13 billion; Janata Bank \$0.075 billion; Rupali Bank \$0.019 billion; Sonali Bank \$0.10 billion and BASIC Bank \$0.00008 billion. Besides, the expatriates have sent \$1.10 billion through private commercial banks. Among the private ones, Islami Bank Bangladesh Limited (IBBL) received the highest amount of \$0.28 billion where as Dutch-Bangla Bank (DBBL) received \$0.12 billion.

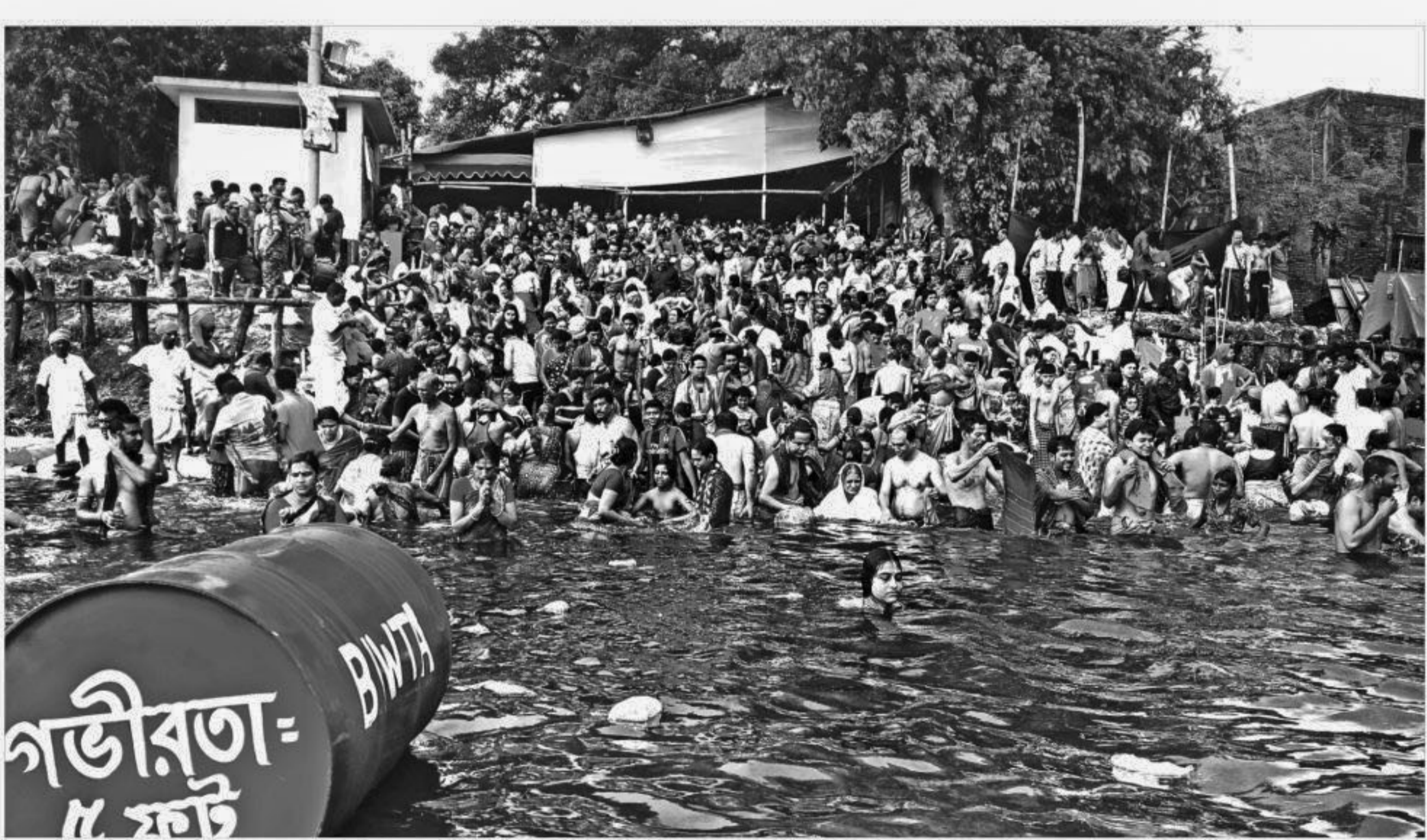
# Not a solution

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There is a rush of passengers during peak hours in the morning and evening. "But there is no fear of harassment by men," she said. Each Dolonchapa bus has 36 seats with nine reserved for physically challenged and pregnant women. It is also equipped with four CCTV cameras, a fire extinguisher and a first-aid box. "Women are responding to this service very positively and they demand more buses on different routes," said Sohana Rouf Chowdhury, managing director of Rangs Motors. Moreover, this is the first public bus service with a mobile app that can help commuters avail emergency security, fire and ambulance services. They can also find out real-time location of a bus with the help of a vehicle tracking system. When 54 percent of Dhaka's population are women and increasingly more of them are joining the workforce, it is imperative that the government take some measures to facilitate their safe journey. Sohana, however, said, "Women-only bus is not the solution to rampant sexual harassment of women in public transports." The writer is an intern at The Daily Star.

# Five martyred of a family to be recalled



**CITY DESK**  
The 48th martyrdom anniversary of five members of a family will be observed on April 15, says a press release. On the occasion, Qurankhwani will be held and food will be distributed among the destitute. The martyred are Engineer Fazlur Rahman, his wife Hosne Akhter, son Mostafizur Rahman Moznu, Hasinur Rahman Hiron and Azizur Rahman Babu. Of them, Hosne Akhter was an NGO trainer, Moznu a college student, and Hiron and Babu were high school students. On that day in 1971, they were brutally killed by the Pakistani occupation army and its collaborators in Saidpur of Nilphamari for their involvement in the Liberation War. "My mother [Hosne Akhter] was buried alive after she had been charged with bayonet..." said Saidur Rahman, who narrowly escaped the brutality. Many innocent Bangalees were killed by the Pakistani troops with the help of their collaborators in Saidpur before and after the incident, according to the press release.



Hindu devotees take a dip in Durga Sagor Dighi in Barishal yesterday, on the occasion of Astami Snan. PHOTO: STAR

# Astami Snan begins in Barishal

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal**  
Thousands of Hindus started observing Astami Snan (holy bath), a religious ritual, yesterday with due respect and solemnity in historic "Durga Sagor Dighi" at Madhavpasha in Babuganj upazila of Barishal. The main ritual started with worshipping the rising sun. It will end this morning. On the occasion, a traditional village fair has also been arranged on the Madavpasha School ground adjacent to the dihi (large pond). Police personnel, volunteers and Rab members have been deployed to maintain law and order situation. Besides, facilities of health camp and sanitation have been arranged for the worshippers.

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