



As we approach yet another Pahela Baishakh celebration, the world around us is still reeling from the effects of a pandemic — a struggling health sector, a weakened economy, low morale and worries for loved ones all around. Although Bangladesh as a country has managed to survive the pandemic and its implications to a large extent, the so-called new normal is still not a constant, the uncertainties loom large as ever.

Although it remains the responsible way to stay socially isolated and keep gatherings to a minimal, limiting the number of people we interact with at a minimum, it does not imply that we cannot celebrate.

The economic slowdown since early 2020 has wreaked havoc on our fashion industry. This is thus a time for all of us to band together and choose all things local — from clothes to accessories to food and everything related to our modern lifestyles. The matter of pride is that now Bangladesh does locally produce practically every item needed for a smooth and modern life, and all we have to do is remain conscientious in our choices and ways of celebration.

I hope the new year brings with it the joy and felicitations we sing about every year, and the coming Baishakhi sun ushers in a dawn free of the pandemic, so we can all find a stable new normal, and get life back on track as usual.

Shubho Nababarsha!

— Mahfuz Anam

