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DU in Media

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## The Bangladesh Today



The Faculty of Fine Arts at Dhaka University is preparing to organize a grand procession for Pahela Baishakh. Photo: Courtesy

## Govt takes programmes to celebrate Pahela Baishakh in inclusive manner

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DHAKA : The government has taken elaborate programmes to celebrate the Pahela Baishakh, the first day of Bangla New Year, this year in an inclusive manner involving people from all ethnic groups.

The programmes were finalized in an inter-ministerial meeting, held on March 23 at the conference room of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs at the Bangladesh Secretariat here, said an official handout yesterday.

Cultural Affairs Adviser Mostofa Sarwar Farooki chaired the meeting.

"For the first time, the government has taken an initiative to organize an inclusive festival at the national level to celebrate the Bangla New Year 1432 and the new years of other ethnic groups, including Chakma, Marma, Tripura and Garo," according to a handout of the cultural affairs ministry.

Concerned ministries, divisions, educational institutions, district and upazila administrations, metropolitan cities and municipalities as well as different cultural organizations will implement the programmes.

According to the programmes, special features will be published in newspapers highlighting the significance of the Pahela Baishakh this year instead of publishing special supplements.

Bangladesh Television, Bangladesh Betar and other print and electronic media will make illustrated reports putting emphasis on the occasion. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting will take the necessary measures in this regard.

The celebration of Bangla New Year 1432 will mandatorily begin with the performance of the national anthem and the song 'Esho He Boishakh, Esho Esho' in the morning of Pahela Baishakh.

As like the previous years, the Faculty of Fine Arts of Dhaka University will organize a grand procession and cultural programme on Pahela Baishakh.

This year, the procession will be held in an inclusive and universal manner, ensuring the participation of not only the Bangla community but also the Chakma, Marma, Tripura, Garo, Manipuri, and other ethnic groups as well as female footballers.

Each community will showcase their cultural identity through traditional music and instruments.

The Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy will coordinate the participation of cultural groups from the three hill districts and other ethnic communities in the procession.

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting will ensure the arrangement of broadcasting the procession on all government and private TV channels, radio stations, commercial radios, and community radios.

On the occasion, different cultural organizations, including the Department of Theatre and Performance Studies of Dhaka University, Shurer Dhara, Rishij Shilpigoshthi, Bulbul Lalitakala Academy, Bangladesh Nritya Shilpi Sangstha, Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation, Ganasangeet Samannay Parishad, Utsab Udjapan Parishad, Band-F Minor, Saimum Shilpigoshthi and Garo cultural organizations will organize various programmes.

The Chhayanaaut, a leading cultural organisation of the country, will organize a cultural event at Ramna Batamul at dawn to welcome the Pahela Baishakh.

Colorful processions and cultural programmes will be organized in every union, district and upazila on Pahela Baishakh, involving people from all ethnic groups. The processions will also be brought out at every union across the country.

On the occasion, all district and upazila administrations will organize essay competitions, cultural programmes, and traditional fairs on the first day of the Bangla calendar.





## The Daily Observer

# Free Palestine demonstration draws DU students, citizens

### DU Correspondent

A demonstration led by Dhaka University (DU) students under the banner of 'Palestine Unity' took place at the Raju Memorial Sculpture on Tuesday at 4:30 PM, protesting the ongoing genocide in Gaza. The protest attracted not only university students but also children and people from various backgrounds, all demanding an end to Israeli aggression and condemning the international community's silence on the humanitarian crisis.

With placards held high and chants resounding through the campus, demonstrators voiced their outrage at the Israeli military's actions. Unlike globally coordinated protests, this was a spontaneous movement driven by Bangladeshi youth angered by the escalating violence. Signs carried slogans such as "Save Gaza," "Freedom is a right, not a privilege," and "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free." Religious chants, including "Nar?yen Takbeer, Allahu Akbar" (Proclaim the Greatness, God is the

Greatest), merged spiritual solidarity with the call for justice.

A student leader from Palestine Unity declared, "We can no longer remain idle while Israeli forces continue to slaughter innocent Palestinians. The destruction of Israel is inevitable—they must be held accountable for the blood of those children." Other demonstrators carried messages such as "Azad Palestine," "You can't defeat a nation led by the Prophet," and "Up Up Palestine." One protester, draped in the Palestinian flag, stated, "This is no longer just a distant issue. Gaza's suffering is our suffering. The silence of world powers speaks volumes. If we don't take action now, when will we?"

In a symbolic act, protesters wrapped a fellow demonstrator in the Palestinian flag and laid him on the ground, representing a martyr from Gaza. This portrayal was meant to honour the innocent lives lost in Israeli airstrikes and ensure their suffering would not be forgotten. As tensions heightened, participants held up

images of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, U.S. President Donald Trump, and Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz, then struck them with shoes—a cultural sign of protest—while chanting, "Netanyahu's kopale, Juta maro tale tale!" (Strike Netanyahu on the forehead with your shoes in rhythm).

Interestingly, vendors capitalised on the event by selling flags and accessories around the protest site. Palestinian flags ranged in price from BDT 20 to 120, depending on size and material, while Bangladeshi flags were slightly cheaper, priced between BDT 80 and 100. Religious symbolic flags were sold for BDT 120, and branded headbands featuring monograms of student political groups like Shibir and Chhatra Dal were available for BDT 20. When asked about the price difference, a vendor explained with a grin, "Do you know the difference between Shimul cotton and fibre? I've been selling Bangladeshi flags all day and only sold one. But Palestinian flags? Everyone wants one—

that's why they cost more."

The rally included members of Dhaka Metropolitan North Chhatra Dal, university students, and even children, some holding hand-drawn signs illustrating destroyed buildings and grieving faces. Despite the emotionally charged atmosphere, there were no reports of violence or police intervention.

The Free Palestine demonstration took place as the world watched in horror at the unfolding crisis in Gaza. Bangladesh, long an outspoken supporter of Palestinian sovereignty, has witnessed a surge in grassroots activism in recent weeks. As world leaders deliberate, many believe that true action must start at the grassroots level—within communities and through the voices of young activists.

Summarising the protest's sentiment, one demonstrator said, "Remaining silent makes us complicit. Gaza's cries have reached Bangladesh. We don't have weapons, but we have voices. Today, we made sure they were heard."