
ENVIRONMENT NEWSLETTER

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This issue of the Environment Newsletter includes the following items:

- 1) Happy Bangla New Year, 1426!
- 2) Protect Abu Sina Hall
- 3) Initiatives to avoid plastic!

1. Happy “Pohela Baishakh,” the beginning of the Bangla New Year!



গুজরার রাঙামাটিতে বৈসাবী উৎসবের প্রথম দিন নদীতে ফুল ভাসিয়ে ফুল বিজু উদযাপন করেন আদিবাসী তরুণীরা

সমকাল

Bangladesh Environment Network (BEN) wishes Happy Bangla New Year, 1426, to all. Pohela Baishakh, the beginning of the Bangla New Year is the most unifying social festival of the country. It brings together the rich and the poor; urban and rural, hilly and plainland, and people of all religions and ethnicities. The hilly people celebrate the day as part of their Biju festival (see the picture above).

This year, “Pohela Baishakh” – the first day of the new Bangla year – is celebrated in the backdrop of the sacrifice made by Nusrat Jahan Rafi, the brave student of the Sonagaji Islamia Fazil Madrasa of Feni. Her death unified all sane people of the country to fight and eliminate the greedy and immoral folks who are hiding behind the mask of religion and have converted the religious

schools (Madrasahs) into places of rape, sodomy, and violation. BEN hopes that people will not falter in achieving the above goal.

BEN has always drawn attention between celebration of Pohela Baishakh and the struggle protection of Bangladesh environment. The Bangla calendar is intimately connected with the nature and seasons of the country. BEN is happy to see that the fervor to celebrate Pohela Baisakh is getting stronger and more widespread each year. BEN hopes that this fervor will spread to the task of protecting the environment of the country too.

2. BAPA urges authorities to protect the historic Abu Sina Students' Hall in Sylhet



বৃহস্পতিবার ঢাকা রিপোর্টার্স ইউনিটিতে বাংলাদেশ পরিবেশ আন্দোলন-বাপা আয়োজিত সংবাদ সম্মেলনে বক্তব্য দেন তত্ত্বাবধায়ক সরকারের সাবেক উপদেষ্টা রাশেদা কে চৌধুরী ▶▶ সমকাল

Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (BAPA) urged the authorities to discard the plan to demolish the historic Abu Sina Students' hostel of Sylhet Medical College. BAPA voiced this demand at a press conference held on April 11 at Dhaka Reporters Unity hall. Presided over by Rasheda K. Chowdhury, the press conference was addressed by C.M. Tofael Sami, Sharif Jamil, Abdul Karim Kim, and others (see the second picture above).

Built between 1850 and 1860, Abu Sina Hall remains as the witness of many important events of history, including that of the Liberation War of 1971. Shaheed Dr. Shamsuddin Ahmed and many others were killed by the occupation Pakistan Army in this hostel. Also, this building is an important relic reminding of the archeological style of the mid-nineteenth century (see the first picture above). There are not too many buildings and structures of that period existing now. Preservation of Abu Sina Hall is therefore important for preserving the country's archeological heritage.

BEN lends its full support to BAPA's demand. It is easy to construct the proposed new hostel at another place, saving the historic Abu Sina Hall. BEN hopes that the government will heed to the demand by BAPA and conscious citizens of Sylhet.

3. People's initiatives to avoid plastic



Saplings in coconuts



Vegetables wrapped with banyan leaves

The fight against plastic is getting momentum. In a historic development, the New York State Assembly approved legislature banning plastic items intended for one-time use, such as plastic bags and utensils. These steps “from above” are of course essential for confronting the plastic threat. However, initiatives “from below” are also necessary. Further, even government steps from above cannot be successful unless people support them through their own actions.

In this regard, it is encouraging that people are also taking their own initiatives. The two pictures above provide examples of such initiatives. The top picture shows saplings grown inside coconuts, instead of plastic containers, as has been the practice so far. The bottom picture shows vegetables presented for sale, wrapped by banyan leaves instead of plastic. BEN hopes that more people will follow these examples and come forward with creative initiatives, and working together, we will be able to put an end to the plastic menace.

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