

## Pahela Baishakh retail sales recovered after two years

- A Monitor Report

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Dhaka : Retailers across Bangladesh reported a rebound in sales ahead of Pahela Baishakh, the Bengali New Year and the country's second-largest shopping season after Eid, following two consecutive years of subdued performance.

Industry participants said demand for clothing, footwear, and sweetmeats improved this year compared to recent seasons, which were affected by overlapping festivals, economic uncertainty, and political instability. Several fashion brands noted a noticeable rise in customer turnout and market activity, supported by improved consumer confidence and more stable conditions.

According to retailers, the gap between Eid al-Fitr and Pahela Baishakh allowed businesses sufficient time to restock and prepare new festive collections, contributing to better availability and stronger sales momentum. Some fashion houses described this year's performance as a

return toward more typical shopping behaviour, although overall sales still remained below pre-pandemic levels.

Market players from leading fashion and lifestyle brands, including Rang Bangladesh, Kay Kraft, Anjan's, and SaRa Lifestyle, reported moderate to encouraging growth in footfall and demand for traditional Baishakh-themed clothing and lifestyle products. However, many also pointed out that performance has not fully returned to earlier benchmarks due to constrained production volumes and shorter retail hours.

In the food and confectionery segment, Mithai and Premium Sweets observed mixed outcomes. While corporate and bulk pre-orders increased in some cases-reportedly rising by around 30 percent year-on-year-overall retail footfall remained uneven, with some businesses describing demand as weaker than expected.

Footwear retailers, including Apex Footwear, said consumer enthusiasm was comparatively lower this season, citing early festival timing after Eid and restricted shopping hours as key limiting factors. Some businesses estimate significant daily sales losses due to reduced operating time.



Across the sector, traders have repeatedly highlighted early shop closures-currently around 7:00 pm-as a major constraint on revenue. Many retailers said evening hours traditionally account for peak customer traffic, especially as shoppers prefer visiting markets after work. Some estimate that extending business hours by even a few hours could lead to noticeable sales growth.

In addition to operating restrictions, some retailers also pointed to external pressures such as transport disruptions and broader global economic uncertainties, which they believe have influenced consumer spending patterns.

Despite these challenges, businesses remain cautiously optimistic, noting that Pahela Baishakh continues to serve as a vital cultural and

commercial event that drives strong seasonal demand for traditional goods and festive shopping across the country.