Pahela Baishakh during COVID-19 Pandemic

April 14, a little over a month since the first cases of COVID-19 were identified in Bangladesh, is one of the most celebrated days of Bengali culture. It marks the first day of Bengali new year known as Pahela Baishakh. The nationwide lockdown for the COVID-19 pandemic has changed lives of people from all around the globe. Needless to say, celebrating the day was no longer an option. Baishakh is a good earning source for many. “My friends and I, usually set up a stall of panta and ilsha fish beside the main road to Islampur where Baishakhi fair is arranged. we made good profits in the past couple of year but this year it wasn’t possible due to the lockdown” shared Sirajul, a youth from Islampur, Jamalpur. Nipa, a young girl from Belkuchi, Sirajganj said “Every year girls like me can earn a good amount sewing clothes for Pahela Baishkh and Eid. However, this year there was no new order rather the existing order got canceled.”

SHOUHARDO III Working to Fight COVID 19

As a part of COVID-19 response, SHOUHARDO III is working to raise awareness in the community through the local radio stations and voice messages sent via mobile phones. SHOUHARDO III will also distribute BDT 12000 (USD 142) as cash transfer to vulnerable households within July. The program is planning to provide thermal scanner, chlorine, bleaching powder and liquid soap to Upazila Health Complex, Union Health Family Welfare Centre, and Community Clinic. The equipment have been procured and will be distributed distributed in the coming days. Furthermore, 122 handwashing stations are set to be installed in the medical facilities of SHOUHARDO working areas. About 32 of these have been installed.

Community Response for Distributing Masks

The Village Development Committee (VDC) of Shimulbari Union, Phulbari Upazila in Kurigram mobilized the community and managed contributory fund of BDT 6,000 (USD 71) to purchase the raw materials, including cloth, elastic, and thread for making 1,200 masks. Four youths who received training from SHOUHARDO III on tailoring made them voluntarily. Those masks were distributed in 10 nearby villages.