



Festivals of Bangladesh



Bangladesh Tourism Board
(National Tourism Organization)
Level 3, Building No 2, BSL Office Complex
(Hotel InterContinental), 1 Minto Road, Dhaka 1000
Web : www.tourismboard.gov.bd



Fairs & Festivals of Bangladesh

Fairs and festivals play significant role in the life of people of Bangladesh. These are the important sources of joys and entertainment. There are lots of fairs and festivals take place in different part of the country including capital city on the eve of different national, religious and cultural occasions. In Bangladesh, fairs and festivals are popular to all irrespective of cast and creed.



Shaheed Dibas

Shaheed Dibas or National Martyrs Day is observed on 21 February in every year. Now it is observed as **International mother language day** in all over the world. The day commemorates the sacred souls of the martyrs' of Language Movement of 1952. Blood was shed on this day at *Central Shahid Minar* near Dhaka Medical College Hospital area to establish Bangla as a state language of the erstwhile Pakistan. Subsequently, movements including struggle for independence owe their origin to the historic language movement. The day starts with morning procession wearing black badges and singing '*Amar vaier raktay rangano ekushay February*' (Meaning 21st February, the day stained with my brothers blood). People pay homage to the martyrs by placing floral wreaths at *Shahid Minar*.





Pahela Baishakh

The advent of *Bengali New Year* is observed with cheerful mood throughout the country. The Day (mid-April) is a public holiday. Most colorful gatherings are organized along with cultural programs and traditional foods. Different tournaments, boat races, debates etc. are held amidst great jubilation. Fairs are integral parts of the celebration. Traditional articles like bamboo flutes, clay dolls, clay pots, and home decor accessories are traded together with suitable present-day commodities.



Independence Day

March 26 is the Independence Day of Bangladesh. Celebration of Independence Day is one of the biggest state festivals. This day is observed befittingly and the country wears a festive look. It is a public holiday. A 31-gun salute at dawn marks the beginning of the day's celebrations. National flags are hoisted atop all government and semi government office buildings. Citizens including government officials and political leaders, freedom fighters and representatives of socio-political organizations place floral wreaths at the National Martyrs' Memorial, Savar. Government, academic institutions and socio-cultural organizations arrange cultural programs, discussion sessions and seminars. At night the main public buildings in the capital city are tastefully illuminated to give a dazzling look. National dailies publish special supplements highlighting the significance of the day. Special meals are served at hospitals, prisons, orphanages and other public and charity organizations.



Eid-ul-Fitr

This is the biggest Muslim festival observed all over the world. This is held on the first day after the month of *Ramadan* (the month of fasting). Big congregations are held at *Eidgah* or other designated places including mosques of the locality. Wearing new dresses and greetings are parts of the *Eid* celebration. People buy dresses not only for themselves but also for relatives and friends. Special feasts are arranged and guests are entertained.

Eid-ul-Azha

This is the second biggest festival of the Muslims. It is held on the 10th day of *Zilhaj* month of the Islamic calendar. Eid congregations are held throughout the country. Animals are sacrificed in reminiscence of Hazrat Ibrahim's (AM) preparedness for the supreme sacrifice of his beloved son to Allah. Meat of the sacrificed animals is distributed among the poor and the relatives. It is a public holiday.





Iftar

Ramadan is the month of fasting. Millions of Muslims around the world celebrate this month with intense prayer. Muslims abstain from having all kinds of food and drink from dawn to dusk in the month of Ramadan. After sunset they break fasting and have iftar with family and friends. In Bangladesh iftar is a social event. Fasting is for Muslims but iftar is for all.



Eid-e-Miladunnabi

is the birth day of Prophet Muhammad (s). He was born on 12th *Rabiul Awal* (Lunar Month). The day is national holiday. Special meals are served at hospitals, prisons, orphanages and also other public and charity organizations.



Deepabali

(Diwali) is a festival of lights. The Hindu community celebrates *Deepabali* by decorating their homes and temples with small clay lamps lit to signify the victory and ascendancy of good over evil. It is a great festival that comes once every year to lighten up the entire humanity. Diwali tries to resemble the inner light or consciousness of human beings enlightening their inner selves. In Bangladesh, rituals of *Deepabali* are for Hindus but the festivity is for all.



Muharram

Muharram procession is a ceremonial mournful procession of the Muslim community. A large procession is brought out from the *Hussaini Dalan Imambara* on the 10th day of *Muharram* in memory of the tragic martyrdom of *Imam Hussain (RA)* on this day at *Karbala* in Iraq.



Durga Puja

Durga Puja, the biggest festival of the Hindu community, continues for ten days, the last three days being culmination with the idol immersed in rivers. In every year, about 30,000 puja pandals are constructed in all over Bangladesh. In Dhaka big celebrations are held at *Dhakeswari Temple*, *Ram Krishna Mission*, *Jagannath Hall*, *Ramna Kali Mandir* and *Banani Puja Mandap*. Fairs and cultural programmes are also organized in many places.





Christmas

Christmas, popularly known as “*Bara Din* (Big Day)”, is celebrated with pomp in Dhaka and elsewhere in the country. Several day-long large gatherings are held at St. Mary’s Cathedral, Ramna; *Portuguese Church, Tejgaon*; Church of Bangladesh (Protestant) on Johnson Road and Bangladesh Baptist Sangha at Sadarghat Dhaka as well as in different part of the country. Functions include illumination of churches, decorating Christmas tree, exchange of gifts and prayers.



Rabindra & Nazrul Jayanti

The birth anniversary of the Nobel laureate *Rabindranath Tagore* is celebrated on 25th *Baishakh* (May) and that of the National Poet *Kazi Nazrul Islam* on 11th *Jaystha* (May). Tagore is also the composer of the national anthem of the country. Nazrul Islam is also called Rebel Poet. On the occasion, educational institutes and socio-cultural organizations take up various programs involving music, recitation, drama and discussion.





Buddha Purnima is observed by the Buddhist community to celebrate *Gautam Buddha's* birthday. *Gautam Buddha* was born on a full moon day. The day corresponds to a full moon day of April or May. Celebration starts with a morning procession and is followed by meditation, prayers and exchange of gifts. A large number of devotees attend the ceremony organized by Buddhist temples. At Dhaka tourists may attend the functions at *Dharmarajika Buddhist Vihara*, Kamalapur and *International Buddhist Monastery*, Badda.



Langalbandh Mela held at a place called Langalbandh near Sonargaon (about 27 km. from Dhaka) an attractive religious festival is organized every year on the last day of Bangla calendar (mid-April). Thousands of Hindu devotees gather and take religious bath in *Brahmaputra River* and participate in the fair.



Holi (*Doul Jatra*, *Basanta-Utsav*) is a popular ancient Hindu festival, originating from the Indian subcontinent. Holi is popularly known as the "festival of spring", the "festival of colors", or the "festival of love". The festival signifies the arrival of spring, the end of winter, the blossoming of love and for many a festive day to meet others, play and laugh, forget and forgive, and repair broken relationships. Though Holi is an ancient Hindu religious festival; it becomes popular with non-Hindus as well in many parts of South Asia, as well as people of other communities outside Asia.