

**English translation:**

Other than that, “*Boishakhi mela*” [fairs] are arranged during *Pohela Boishakh*. Things made from terracotta, wood, cane, etc. are sold in these fairs. Utensils made from brass and steel...all sorts of things are sold here. Most of these things are brought from the villages. Then different types of snacks are sold here such as *muri*,<sup>1</sup> *murki*,<sup>2</sup> *khoi*,<sup>3</sup> other food items made out of *khoi*, sweets, fruit... then... fruit... like this... seasonal fruit... various types of food are sold that make these fairs unique and attractive. The month of *Boishakh* is a wonderful time for fruits... the fairs are flooded with sweet mangoes, lychees, and *jaam*. Swings, rides, live singing, poetry recitals, puppet shows, etc....these attractions also liven up the fairs. In the big cities such as Dhaka, Chittagong and Rajshahi, besides the *Boishakhi mela* book fairs are also arranged. Besides, these days many art exhibitions and handicrafts exhibitions are held in Dhaka and other cities. These handicrafts exhibitions usually display work done by village people. The celebrations for *Pohela Boishakh* in the villages are a bit different. In Chittagong, there is a traditional form of wrestling exhibition arranged from the first until the eighth day of *Boishakh*. This is known as “*boli khela*.” In Cox’s Bazar, Bandarban and Khagrachari... in these areas, the *biyu* or *biju* festivals are also celebrated during *Pohela Boishakh* celebrations. In Rajshahi they have live singing sessions and poetry recitals on the village greens. A traditional food eaten on *Pohela Boishakh* is *panta bhat*.<sup>4</sup>

Every country has their own set of traditions and culture. Every Bengali, regardless of their religion, celebrates *Pohela Boishakh*. That is why this has so much cultural importance and respect. The Bengali New Year is an important event in our lives, because this is when we erase all our sadness and begin the New Year with a fresh start.

**About CultureTalk:** CultureTalk is produced by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and housed on the LangMedia Website. The project provides students of language and culture with samples of people talking about their lives in the languages they use everyday. The participants in CultureTalk interviews and discussions are of many different ages and walks of life. They are free to express themselves as they wish. The ideas and opinions presented here are those of the participants. Inclusion in CultureTalk does not represent endorsement of these ideas or opinions by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages, Five Colleges, Incorporated, or any of its member institutions: Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

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<sup>1</sup> Puffed rice.

<sup>2</sup> Puffed whole rice sweetened with molasses.

<sup>3</sup> Popped rice.

<sup>4</sup> Rice soaked in water the night before and eaten with onions and chilies.