

bihu xonkhya  
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P O S O O W A

Monthly Non-Resident Assamese (NRA) Magazine  
News & Events of the Assamese People Living Around the World  
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# Bihu in Sydney

*Atikoi senehor mugare mohura  
tatokoi senehor maku,  
tatokoi senehor bahagor bihuti  
nepati kenekoi thako.*

This year Rongali Bihu in Australia was celebrated with great enthusiasm and passion, particularly in Sydney and Melbourne. It is heartening to see the small Assamese community upholding the 'Axomia Xangskrity' (Assamese Culture) far away from the native land.

The evening in Sydney started with the welcome speech followed by a



series of solo and group performances much to the audience's delight. This year was marked by the incoming of a host of new performers showcasing their talents from dance to musical instruments to vocals. The evening was enriched with the group songs like 'Sreemayee Axomeer Xeetal Bukut Uthe', traditional and modern dances and solo song performances. The atmosphere was resplendent with the ladies in their 'Pat' and 'Muga' 'mekhala sadar' and the gents in their traditional 'Dhoti' and 'Panjabi'. The ladies also performed a modern mix with 'Dandia' with the colourful sticks sounding to a lovely beat. The parents' hearts were filled with joy and pride as the younger ones performed the most colorfully cute Bihu dance. This year's major attraction however, was the 'Husari'. First time in

Australia, 'Husari' was performed live with 'Dhol' and 'Taal' without the aid of CDs or iPods. Midway through the splendidly choreographed Husari



performance was the heart filling moment of six beautiful 'nasanee's (female dancers) entry in response to the lyrical welcoming invite by the 'Dhol-Taal-Sapari' playing male members. As the Husari proceeded with dance, song and the sound of 'Dhol' climaxed, some from the audience rose from their chairs to come forward and join the merriment!

The Bihu celebrations in Australia have never been limited to the Assamese community itself. Families and friends join in from

various Indian & other Australian communities and cultures. This year too a couple of Pakistani friends were among the guests who enjoyed the evening with the rest.

The celebrations ended with a sumptuous dinner and a 'Mukoli Bihu' where everyone present sang and danced to their heart's content. Needless to mention, it was a reinforcement of the belief and commitment in the traditional culture and a wonderfully brilliant effort to keep it alive in our hearts.



*Contributed by Bhaskar Chetia,  
Sydney, Australia*

# Colorado Rongali Bihu Celebration 2007

April 14, 2007, University Center  
University of Colorado at Colorado Springs

Rongali Bihu was celebrated in Colorado Springs, Colorado with the program given below.

## Program (In Room 303, except for the Cultural Program)

Participants arrive, set-up venue: **Noon – 1 PM**

- Deposit your gift items in designated spot

Games: **1 – 1:30 PM** (Conducted by Sachin Baishya, Bharat Barua and Paban Sarma)

- Koni Zooz (Egg breaking)
- Tekeli Bhonga
- Musical Chairs for children
- Musical Chairs for adults

Lunch: **1:30 PM – 2:30 PM** (catered by India Palace Restaurant)

Discussion on Assam's educational system. Personal experiences (during lunch, led by Konad Krori)



## Cultural Program (2:30 PM to 5 PM, in the Theater)

(MC: Nandini Bora Das and Jugal Kalita)

1. Srimoyi Oxomi (from cassette): 2 minutes
2. Bihu dance by Mary Brehm, Gayathri Chelvadurai and Lisa Townsend: 10 minutes

### Children's Program

3. Assamese story telling by Nandini Bora Das: 10 minutes
4. Rohan Baishya's Hindi song: 5 minutes
5. Jishu Das's Magic Show: 10 minutes
6. Kritika Krori's Rabindra Sangeet: 5 minutes
7. Rohan Baishya's Magic Show: 10 minutes
8. Anuska Sarma's Assamese song: 5 minutes

## Intermission, Everyone walks downstairs to the piano

- Jackie Bhuyan's piano performance of her own compositions: 15 minutes

## Everyone walks up to the Theater

### Adult Program

1. Paban Sarma's Flute and Guitar Show: 10 minutes
2. Chandan Das's Assamese songs: 10 minutes
3. Bharat Barua, Chandan Das and Paban Sarma's Bhupen Hazarikia songs: 10 minutes
4. Sachin Baishya's Assamese song: 5 minutes
5. Surekha Baishya's Hindi songs followed by Assamese songs: 20 minutes
6. Mukoli Bihu, led by Paban, Bharat and others: 20 minutes



- Gift Exchange (Facilitated by Bharat Barua, Reema Barua and Nandini Bora Das)

### Prize Distributio

- Vote of Thanks: Jugal Kalita
- O'Mor apoonar dex: 2 minutes

*Contributed by Jugal Kalita, Colorado Springs*

## Rongali Bihu Festival at Delhi

*Continued from page 7..*

face for experience sharing, and a publishing platform for poems, news, and other varieties of articles by established and amateur writers.

The Choir of the Association presented a "quorus"- "Ajak chorai uri uri jai...." supervised by Sri Chida Das and sung by the members of the Association. It brought back memories of some half a century to some senior members, as it was a popular chorus, then composed by Ajit Singha. Therafter a traditional huchori was presented by the guest and local members. The guest team 'Kalakunja' came all the way from Borholla, in the Jorhat district of Assam. Young girls of the Association rendered a Bihu dance sequence to show the continuum of the great cultural heritage in the national capital. The dance by Pakhi Saikia was mesmerizing and is already making rounds in the youtube.com with five star ratings. Mr. Robin Kalita sang a few soulful songs from Dr. Bhupen Hazarika's album and took the audience of a melodious odyssey; while Srimati Gitimoni Hatibaruah sang a few fast numbers to break the audience into impromptu bihu dance.

The guest artists presented a dance sequence on a song composed by Rupkonwar Jyotiprasad Agarwalla 'Jaaga Matri jaaga...' sung by Pulak Banerjee. Two young drummers Nabajyoti and Pranabjyoti Gogoi from Amguri, Assam presented the 'dholia ojha'. A Karbi dance was performed by the troupe sent by Karbi Anglong Autonomous District Council, CEM Mr. Mangal Singh Engti.



*Contributed by Manoj Kumar Das, General Secretary, Assam Association Delhi, New Delhi, India*

# Rongali Bihu 2007

Venue: St Andrews Church Hall, London N14 5PP

Date: Sunday, 6<sup>th</sup> May 2007

Time: 2.00 pm – 9.30 pm

Dear Friends,

The London Bihu Committee is organising a Rongali Bihu celebration on Sunday the 6<sup>th</sup> of May 2007. Your participation and enthusiastic support have always been our greatest encouragement.

We cordially invite you to come and join us in our Bihutoli and fill the occasion with music, laughter and fun.

Yours sincerely

THE LONDON BIHU COMMITTEE

Link to nearby hotels:

<http://a1tourism.com/uk/london-north.html>

Nearest London Underground:  
Southgate, Piccadilly line

## Programme

2.00 pm – 3.45 pm : Registration & *Jalpan*

3.45 pm – 4.00 pm : Welcome by President

4.00 pm – 6.00 pm : Cultural programme

6.00 pm – 6.10 pm : Vote of thanks by General Secretary

6.10 pm – 8.00 pm : General Bihu Dance

8.00 pm – 9.30 pm : Bihu *Bhoj*

Individuals wishing to participate in the cultural programme are requested to contact one of the Cultural Secretaries of the London Bihu Committee.

- Dr A Ahmed, Mrs G Borooh, Dr A & Mrs K Baruah,  
Mrs E Bora, Dr D Kakati, Dr K Lahon, Mrs G Sikdar,  
Mr R Singh

# ৰঙালী বিহু ২০০৭

শ্ৰদ্ধেয় ৰাইজ

“অতীকে চেনেহৰ মুগাবে মন্থা, তাতোকৈ চেনেহৰ মাকো  
তাতোকৈ চেনেহৰ বহাগৰ বিহাট নেপাতি কেনেকৈ থাকোঁ”

অহা ইং মে মাহৰ ৬ তাৰিখ দেওবাৰে লণ্ডন বিহু কৰ্মটিয়ে এটি বিহু অনুষ্ঠানৰ আয়োজন কৰিছে। আপোনালোকক সপৰিয়ালে সবান্ধবে আমাৰ বিহুতালিলৈ নিমন্ত্ৰণ জনাইছো। আহক আমি সকলোৱে মিলিজুলি বিহুগীত, বিহুনাচৰ, বিহুবৰীয়া মৰম ওলগৰ বাংঢালী মেলা পাতো আমাৰ বিহুতলীত।

বিনয়ানত

লণ্ডন বিহু কৰ্মটি

## Subscription (per head)

	Discounted rate	Full rate
Payments Pre-paid by 16 <sup>th</sup> April 2007	On the day (6 <sup>th</sup> May 2007)	
ADULT	£22.50	£25.00
CHILD aged 6-18 yrs	£12.00	same as discounted rate
CHILD under 6 yrs	Free	Free

Cheques payable to “The London Bihu Committee” should be sent to : **Mrs I Ahmed, 14 Greenheys Drive, South Woodford, London E18 2HB. Tel : 020 8530 5949**

## Members of the London Bihu Committee

**President:** Dr J Borkakoti

**General Secretary:** Mrs M Sarmah

**Treasurer:** Mrs I Ahmed

**Correspondence Secretary:** Dr N Borkakoti

**Cultural Secretaries:** Mrs S Lahon (020 8813 0335),  
Mrs B Kakati (01708 456788), Mrs S A Zaman (020 8989 8340)

**Food and Drinks:** Dr A Sarmah

**Special Advisor:** Dr N Sikdar



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# Rongali Bihu, Minnesota, 2007

“When the winter’s brown and bare twigs give way to a glint of green, you know it’s the season we so happily call spring”. What better way to welcome the sweet fragrance of spring than our own Rongali Bihu, which celebrates the feelings of hope and joy in nature’s rebirth.

The Assamese community of Minneapolis and St. Paul celebrated Rongali Bihu with timeless traditions on the 14<sup>th</sup> April, '07, at the picturesque log cabin at Lions Park in Shakopee, Minnesota. The increasing number of Assamese families in the twin cities has made the celebrations very memorable.

Our friends from Rochester and Chicago joined us to make the celebrations even more special.

It was a day long celebration with traditional fun, food, games, music and dance. A highlight of the fun filled day was the outdoor *Mukoli Bihu* where we danced under the perfectly blue April sky and on the revived blades of grass. The park was also ideal for the outdoor games. The “tug-of-war”, “marble-in-a-spoon race” and “sack race” stirred lots of thrill and were enjoyed by the young and the old alike.

The cultural evening featured a “*xomabeto sangeet*” led by the melodious voices of Minti and Pranab. This was followed by “*husori*” by our energetic and talented team of men accompanied by the sounds of “*taal*” and “*toka*”. Another sweet highlight of the evening was the “*okonir bihu*” where the kids quite enthralled us with their beautiful Bihu performances. They also impressed us with their Bihu themed art work at the children’s art exhibition. Way to go Anurag, Ayan, Ashmita, Arnav, Nibir, Pooky and Riyah. Thanks to Joon who came up with this wonderful idea. The musical evening was pure entertainment with a “*jhumur*” dance by the ladies, Bihu dances by the lovely sisters



Meghna and Devika and by our ever so elegant Mili. A pulsating dance performance by the father-daughter duo of Pervez and Pooky energized the crowd. Lighter moments were provided by Anjan with his hilarious “*koutuks*”. Our talented friends captivated us with their melodious “*adhunik*” and “*Bihu-geet*”. We concluded our evening with the chorus “*O mur apunar dex*”, which truly evoked passion and nostalgia.

Thanks to all the ladies (Geeta, Geeti, Rinti, Ankita, Babli, Meenaksi, Namita, Parineeta, Monika, Barnali, Purabi, Joon, Mili, Minti, Rashmi, Reema and Sujata) for preparing the traditional Assamese dishes and Bihu treats like “*doi sira*”, “*pitha*” and “*laru*”. It was quite a treat to the taste buds. The dinner was a delightful feast of authentic Assamese food.

We take immense pride in celebrating a slice of the richness of our culture, home away from home. The eventful day came to an end with lots of fond memories to cherish marking a great start to another new year.

*Collage prepared by Geeti Das, Write-up by Sabina Zeenat*



## Assam Festival at New Delhi

A Karbi dance performance at the New Delhi on the Occasion of Assam Festival held on 21st & 22nd April 2007 which was organised by Journalists Association of Assam, Guwahati. Popular singer Zubeen also performed on the occasion.



# Assam 2007



Update on Assam 2007 Planning Meeting Minutes/Action Items of March 31st, 2007 at Prabin & Sangeeta Dutta's Residence:

1. Kedar B asked for an e-mail from JG confirming his intentions of performing at the event. Utpal to request JB for the E-mail. Received confirmation from JG.

2. Kedar B to re-send the artist list to Utpal B.

3. Utpal mentioned that he will need between 400-500 dollars for a DJ on June 29. He was requested to try a young individual from the Assamese community who may be interested being the DJ for the night. Prabin is going to look into it.

4. Utpal mentioned that he talked with the director of Sonam-a good movie with English sub-title. The movie can be shown at no cost. However, the director would like to get a written response from the Chairman of the organizing committee.

5. Prabin D. to check with Rabin Goswami for 1) organizing small children and youth for singing of the Star-Spangled Banner-American national anthem, b) find out if we can find a local youth for the DJ, c) Microphones, d) Lighting.

6. Niraj B will a) arrange for the O Moor Apoonar Desh, and b) call and arrange for a Bihu dance.

7. Kedar B to contact Raju Bhuyan for a 10 min Bhauna.

8. Probal mentioned that the total cost printing & mailing the Flyer would be about ~\$350 dollars. The flyer looks really good and it was also discussed not to mail the flyers to the members of the organizing committee to save cost. Prabin to scan the flyer into a PDF file & give it to Rajib to post on the web site [www.assam2007.com](http://www.assam2007.com).

9. ASA wrote a check for \$500 dollars sponsoring the souvenir--gamoshas (~100 pieces). Check was given by Kedar B to Dhruva D. Dhruva will give the check to Kabita Sharma. She will arrange to pay the Mahila Samiti in Assam for the gamoshas. Utpal ordered as many gamoshas he can get for \$500 dollars (~90 some).

10. Utpal to order also 10 Bihu dance shirts ~\$7 per shirt.

11. Niraj brought up a good point that since there is lot of cost associated even before the weekend of Assam2007, it would be nice if the organizing members register as soon as possible & start sending the registration fees. We need to encourage people to do that, some have signed up already.

12. Dhruva suggested since we will be spending so much money for this get-together, it will be really worthwhile to sponsor or support, as a charity, one volunteer group in Assam. The group agreed but it will be done outside fund raised for the get together. Dhruva will ask for suggestions from others & follow it up. Probal suggested we should do this every year if the future organizing members agree. Dhruva had a discussion with Mukul Chowdhary & Utpal.

## Assam2007: A Community Get-together of Assamese Abroad

*Assam 2007* is part of an ongoing effort to bring together the scattered Assamese Diaspora in North America for a celebration of the rich and diverse heritage and culture of Assam and the Assamese people. In the past, similar events were held in Boulder, CO (*Assam 2002*) and St. Louis, MO (*Assam 2003*). Continuing on the past tradition, *Assam 2007* will embody the celebration of Assamese heritage and culture, and is organized by the Assamese community of North America. This year's event will be held at the RAMADA Inn, Laurel, Maryland, US, from June 29<sup>th</sup> – July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007. The City of Laurel (<http://www.laurel.md.us/>) is just few minutes away from Washington D.C., the Nation's capital. People of Assam and the Northeast origin are cordially invited to attend *Assam2007* not only to enjoy the event itself but also to experience the sites and sounds of the Nation's capital and its surrounding areas which boasts several world renowned academic and medical institutions, such as the Johns Hopkins University in nearby Baltimore, Maryland.

*Assam 2007* will provide a great opportunity to the grater Assamese Diaspora to spend some fun-filled and quality time with family and friends, and also meet other Assamese people, some even from your home town in Assam! In addition to individuals, all the Assamese social groups in North America are invited to participate in this community organized event. We expect people from all over the USA and Canada to join this event and celebrate their common heritage rooted in Assam and the Northeast. It is needless to say that anyone with his/her roots in Assam and the Northeast are also welcome to join the fun and festivities.

We want to make it a memorable event filled with excellent food, fun, and entertainment. For instance, there will Assamese foods galore, including our favorite pitha, laroo, etc. which will be prepared by the local community volunteers. In terms of cultural programs, in addition to showcasing the creative talents of the Assamese artists in North America, there will be sparkling performances by a few renowned artists from Assam. For instance, we have invited several famous singers from Assam, including the very popular Zubeen Garg! Among the local artists in North America showcasing their talents will include Rabin Goswami, Abhranil Barua (son of the late Rudra Barua), and Sankumani Sharma to name a few. Apart from the performances by renowned singer(s) from Assam and North America, there will be Bihu dances, Huchari, Bhawna, Bollywood songs/dances, Fashion Show of Assamese dresses, Quiz competition on Assam, and organizational meetings by several Assamese associations based in North America. We also expect to host the U.S. screening of one or more Assamese films.

We have also invited several dignitaries from Assam and the USA, including the Hon. Chief Minister of Assam and the Ambassador of India to the US. In addition, several well known personalities from Assam are also invited as guest speakers on development, economy and the Assamese culture.

For more details, please visit the *Assam 2007* web site at <http://www.assam2007.com>, or contact the Host Committee Chairman, Mr. Niranjan Brahma at (302) 838-1785, or at [nbrahma@yahoo.com](mailto:nbrahma@yahoo.com).

## Assam Association Gurgaon Celebrates Rongali Bihu

Assam Association Gurgaon celebrated 'Rongali Bihu' at Community Hall, Sector-46 in the Millennium city of Gurgaon on 15<sup>th</sup> of April with a Cultural Evening followed by a sumptuous assamese dinner. The celebration started with lighting of lamps by senior members of the association, Srimati Amala Sharma & Srimati Ratna Nath. The Souvenir named 'Samannay', published on the eve of 'Rongali Bihu' was inaugurated by Vice President of Assam Association, Delhi, Group Captain Sri Atul Baruah. A chorus 'Srimoyee oxomir...', sung by Karabi, Ashalata, Mimun, Smrita & Shilpi started the cultural evening. The highlights of the cultural evening were the melodious songs, sung by renowned Assamese singer Srimati Namita Bhattacharya. The audience indulged in impromptu bihu dances, once the Bihu songs started.



Other programmes of the Cultural Evening includes songs, rendered by Srimati Eepsita Hazarika, Sri Robin Kalita, Sri Debojit Das, Sri Hemanta Saikia, Dance on Modern Song by Srimati Geetanjali Bhuyan, Bihu dances by Srimati Pakhi Saikia & Srimati Akankshya Bhuyan, Bihu Group dance by Srimati Smrita Barua, Srimati Shilpi Goswami & Srimati Geetanjali Bhuyan and above all Bihu Hunsori by a group of young assamese employees of Hero Honda. The Vote of Thanks was presented by President of the association Sri Mridul Bhuyan.

*Contributed by Mridul Bhyna, Gurgaon, Haryana, India*

## Assam Association, Delhi Celebrated Rongali Bihu Festival



Assam Association Delhi has celebrated Rongali Bihu Festival on April 22, 2007 at Samaj Sadan, Laxmibai Nagar, New Delhi 110023 in the presence of a huge audience in the excess of 2000, in traditional fervour. The attendance was the largest in Delhi. A huge backdrop of the 'Rong-ghar'- the oldest sports pavilion in Asia, erected by the then Ahom King Swargadeo Pramatta Singha in 1746 was recreated to get the feeling of the legendary 'Raronghoror Bakori'-the complex of Rong-ghar.



At the beginning of the function Mr. Bikash Chandra Bora, President of the Association welcomed the members and guests present on the occasion. Thereafter Hon'ble Justice Mukumda Kam Sharma, Chief Justice of Delhi High Court inaugurated the bihu celebrations by lighting the ceremonial lamp in the presence of Sri Dulal Roy, the noted theatre personality, who was in the capital to receive the prestigious 'Chamanlal Award'.

The function followed with the release of the special issue of "Samayik"- the magazine of the Association by Sri Dulal Roy. The magazine is edited by Smt. Protima Thakuria and the cover was tastefully done in a Bihu motif by the noted painter Col Jiten Nath Hazarika. The magazine is an inter-

*continued to page 3..*

# Rongaali Bihu Celebrated in Dubai

Rongaali Bihu was celebrated by the Assamese Community of UAE on 13th April last at the Coconut UG premises of Karama Hotel, located in the heart of Dubai.

The program was attended this year by about 150 persons from the Emirates of Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah and Ajman. The program was also attended by a few guests from Assam, who were visiting their relatives and friends in the Emirates.

The cultural program of the evening started appropriately with the traditional 'Husori' led by local 'Dhulia's Dayananda Gogoi and Siba Borah. The damsels who participated in the 'Husori' were Dimple Bhagawati, Momy Duara and guest artiste Garima Saikia Garg (from Mumbai), while the male participants were Aswini Borkotoky, Dayananda Gogoi, Sumon Bordoloi, Dr. Utpal Katakya, Iswar

arranger, also enthralled the audience with his music.

The guest artistes from Mumbai were honoured with mementos by Dr. Utpal Katakya and Dilip Borah, on behalf of Axam Xamaj.



The audience, to their pleasant surprise, did not have to wait for long for the star attraction, as Zubeen appeared on stage in no time. Zubeen, in his typical melodious voice, enthralled the audience with his popular songs from both Hindi and Assamese films e.g. 'Ya Ali', 'Lal Lal', 'Mayabini', 'Nabau O, Maya' to name a few.

Next performance by Dimple Bhagawati, with the traditional attire for the 'Krishna Nritya' was really a treat to watch.

Sumanto Dutta of Abu Dhabi delighted the audience with his melodious rendering of songs of yesteryears in his guitar. He was accompanied Padma Neel Lahkar on the keyboard.



Prasanna Das, Tandeep Bhagawati, Dipak Tumung and last but not the least, Siba Borah.

Aswini Borkotoky, a senior member of the Xamaj delivered a spirited welcome address to the 'Bihu boliya raj' and the stage was set for an entertaining evening on the day of the Bihu.

The main attraction of the evening was performance by Zubeen Garg, the famous Assamese Singer-cum-music director and currently one of the top rank singers in the Hindi Film Industry. Partha Pratim Goswami, who has also been able to carve out a niche position for himself in the Film and TV industry in Mumbai, primarily as a music



and Sumon Bordoloi on Taal. The rhythmic Bihu songs had the entire audience on their toes on the dance floor and at times spilling over to the stage, making the atmosphere completely 'Bihugenic'

The gifts for the artistes were sponsored by the Axam Xamaj besides Ajmal Perfumes, Iswar Prasanna Das did an excellent job in stage decoration, supported by the team members. Compeering for the program was very well handled by the first timer Ipshita Kaushik, in her own imitable style.

This was the ninth year in succession since 1999, when Bihu has been organized in UAE as a community function. The success of the Bihu celebrations in UAE over the years did also prompt the growing Assamese community of Oman to celebrate Bihu in a similar manner, which they did very successfully in presence of Zubeen.

*Report by D K Borah, Dubai  
On behalf of Axam Xamaj, Dubai  
[www.assamdubai.org](http://www.assamdubai.org)*

## Rongali Bihu, 2007 Celebrated in Mumbai

Rongali Bihu was celebrated in “Assam Bhawan” on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2007 with overwhelming response of Assam people residing in Mumbai and local Journalists, media personnel, which was organized by The Assam Association, Mumbai.

The cultural program was organized on the newly inaugurated stage made in the name of first Assamese film actress Late Aidau Handique by renown music directors Jitu-Tapan. It was followed by lighting of lamp. The welcome speech was given by the general secretary Deepen Rajkonwar.

The programme was i) Chorus by ladies; ii) Solo songs by Sanghamitra Bharali, Bandana Baruah, Shobna Gogoi, S.S.



The anchor for the evening was TV actress and model Ms. Piku Sarma. “Mukali Biui” along with sweet sounds of *Dhol*, *Pepa*, *Gagana*, *Taal* filled the Assam Bhawan with vibrant colors and joyous mood of Rongali Bihu – the soul of Assam people. The programme

come to an end with the chief guest and guest moving towards the dinner (“Priti-Bhoj”). The current general secretary was again selected through the election during the programme. The cultural night was concluded with the selection of executive committee comprise of President – Paban Kumar Katakya, Vice Presidents – Bhupen N. Goswami & Nazrul Islam, Joint Secretary – Deepankar Borgohain & Malin



Keut and Gakul Puri; iii) Light music (Violin) by Manas Samua; iv) modern dance performed by children of ONGC, Panval colony and group dance (Bihu) by young girls; v) sole dance (modern) by Sony TV “Boogie-Boogie” artist Sunaina Borgohain. Speech of few words was delivered by the chief guest, film director Sanjib Sabhobhapandit and also few bihu were performed by him.

Lahkar and Treasurer – Rajen Chetia and few executive members of Assam Association, Mumbai for the year 2007-09.

*Contributed by Deepankar Borgohain, Mumbai.*



## Rongali Bihu Celebration at Assam Bhawan, New Delhi

Kirtan Sangha’s Rongali Bihu Celebration was held on 15th April 2007 at Assam Bhawan, New Delhi.

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# The Pilgrimage

*Jukti Kalita*



*Jukti Kalita, a marketing professional with a Ph.D. from Columbia university has written several short-stories and translated several Assamese stories to English.*

*First and second parts of this story were published in February and March 2007 issues.*

(3)

Both Mr. and Mrs. Nachnani's parents had migrated to India at the wake of the bloodletting when the British colonial rulers decided to partition India into two nations in 1947. It was their way of saying 'thank you' to Gandhi who led the freedom struggle against the mighty empire and whom they hated to the core of their guts. The British lion was wounded badly during the Second World War by the German fighting machine and barely stood ground. Many an Indian would have been glad to see Britain trampled and overrun. Despite the viciousness of the Great War and the wanton massacres that Germans committed, and, the ruthlessness of their own subjugation at the hands of the British, the irony was not lost on them – the biggest colonizer in the world was on the brink of being run over and would have definitely fallen had the Americans not intervened so forcefully and valiantly.

The port city of Karachi, and indeed the entire western half of the Sind province with its majority Hindu population was awarded to Pakistan. It was on the banks of the river Sind that the Hindu civilization had taken roots - the Vedas were written on the banks of this very river by the *rishis* and *munis*.

Mrs. Nachnani was several years younger than Mr. Nachnani. Mohan Nachnani's and Radha Gokani's parents knew each other for a long time. They grew up in the same part of Karachi. Mohan Nachnani was fifteen years old and Radha was only ten when their parents were forced out of the city that they loved dearly and were flourishing in. First, each family stayed with their relatives in various parts of northern India. Finally, after several years of trials homeless wanderings in cramped, overcrowded refugee camps, they moved on to Ulhasnagar in the outskirts of Bombay. This was an area where a large number of Sindi speakers from Pakistan had ultimately settled - it is said that Ulhasnagar is like a state within a state for the Sindhis in India.

The Indian government provided them with some money, but mostly the refugees were on their own. Mr. Nachnani's parents were in the garment business in Karachi and started a small clothing store in Ulhasnagar. Radha Gokani's parents started a grocery business. They worked hard like millions of refugees who had to move from Pakistan to India and the other way around just because of their religions.

Their parents recounted to them the horrors of being evicted. They said that Muslims murdered thousands of Hindus after torching their homes. In many cases they threw out the Hindu families from their homes with nothing but the clothes on their bodies. Later on, Madhuri learnt that Hindus and Sikhs on the Indian side Punjab evicted and killed many Muslims – however, the rest of the country was calm under Gandhi's leadership. In fact, the vast majority of Indian Muslims stayed back in India while that did not happen with Hindu's in Pakistan.

Mohan Nachnani had five siblings with two brothers and two sisters. He was the youngest of all. Radha Gokani's parents had four children – three boys and one girl. She was the youngest.

Mohan received good education in the free public schools, ultimately going to the Bombay University for masters in

Chemistry. Radha earned a bachelor's degree in Political Science from the same university. They had an arranged marriage and stayed with Mohan's parents for a while as a part of a joint family. They had cramped quarters, just a room for themselves.

In 1968, a daughter was born to the couple. Soon after that Mohan who was working in Bombay applied to the US Consulate for a green card. US were, for the first time, seeking educated immigrants from the Indian subcontinent to make up for the thousands who were sent to Vietnam. Mohan came to the US alone, soon got a job at a pharmaceutical company and sent for Radha and Madhuri. Their son followed in 1972 – they named him Gautam.

They stayed in Queens initially and ultimately settled in Edison in New Jersey. He has been working at a large pharmaceutical company for over twenty five years in its research department. He did not rise through the ranks of the company - which he knew was common among immigrants. But the pay was adequate, they lived in a decent house, took vacations in India every two or three years.

They developed friendship with several Indian families in New York and New Jersey. There was a sprinkling of Pakistani families as well in their circle of friends. Though the Pakistani families were Muslims, there was a similarity in language and also in food habits, except that as Hindus Nachnani's did not eat beef. They used to go to movies in New York's Columbia University where Hindi films were screened during the weekends.

The kids did well in school. But though they were evicted from Sind because of their religion, they did not push religion on their kids. They would go to the Hindu temple in Bridgewater in New Jersey and the Queens in New York during Diwali and on a couple of other occasions during the year and take their kids with them. However, Mohan and Radha prayed regularly in the morning in front of the small statue of *Shiva* that they had placed in their family room.

(4)

They went on honeymoon to France and Spain. In France they walked along the broad boulevard of ... and along the Seine. They absorbed the spirit of the Eiffel Tower. In Spain they visited the relics of the Moorish culture in the grand structure of Alhambra.

Zeenat and Imran initially moved into Imran's palatial home in suburban Washington DC. Soon she found a job with a firm in the downtown area and they moved again - this time to their own apartment. They led a normal life - just like any recently married American couple. They visited the museums in the city and basked themselves in the ...during that summer.

Zeenat's relationship with her own parents remained strained for quite some time. Imran's sister and mom took her to the big mosque in Fairfax unfailing during the weekend.

Within a year of the marriage, Zeenat and Imran had a baby boy. They named him Altaf after Imran's grandfather. Zeenat's parents forgot all the anger when they saw the baby – his face was so pure and beautiful to their eyes. The baby was the soothing palliative that was needed to heal the psychological and emotional wounds. The relationship with their daughter that had completely been severed for over a year started thawing and became normal again. In fact it was Zeenat who called her mom to inform her about the baby's birth. Her mother loved kids so much that she could not keep the news away from her.

The baby was promptly circumcised under the observant eyes of a *maulavi*.

A year later, a baby daughter was born to the young couple.

*(to be concluded in the next issue)*

# Sanchayita Sharma Joins as a Posoowa Editor

Sanchayita was six when she discovered that people paid to watch movies. Since her family was involved in the film business, watching films was not just a regular event, but film business was dinner table conversation. Sholay was the first film to hit her emotional cord. Maybe because the terror was psychological or that she thought Sanjeev Kumar was her father's look-alike, it caused her pain every time she watched it. For her, Gabbar was the epitome of his filmy villain and the "distributor" word she often heard at home represented the real live Gabbars. She had fun doing a TV show during her school and college days. During that period, she became close to the theater as an actress and later had a cameo role in an Assamese feature film. But, she was looking for something more. The business part of filmmaking was more appealing to her. To be honest, she never had the nerve to direct until she saw Satyajit Ray's Apu Trilogy. Ray's and Kristov Kieslowski's treatments made her look at films from a different angle and gave her the confidence to direct one later in life.

Sanchayita Sharma was born and brought up in Guwahati before moving to London in the later part of the year 2000. She holds a degree in business from Jesus and Mary College, Delhi University. Her television career started in 1995 when she hosted two pilot episodes for a song based television program called *Your Request*, a personal favor she did for her brother Chinmoy Sharma's production house Sangeeta Advertising Agency. Her brother and his then partner Mridul Borman along with the workers and officials in Doordarshan liked her style; it got her in front of the camera. She thought, how hard can it be?, it was a show interviewing celebrities and playing songs on request. This show was the first in North-East (NE) India to complete 100 episodes. It was on air for more than seven years (later called *From London with Love*) and was



on top of the TRP ratings for more than 54 weeks on Doordarshan (NE).

Theatre was her first love. She also ventured into the theatre world acting in plays like *Romeo and Juliet*, *Street Car named Desire*, *P o r o x u r a m*, *Kongseng* and participated in the

*Nandikar International Theatre Festival* with *Seagull*, a well known theatre group from Assam led by *Baharal and Bhagirathi Islam* (multi-award winners and NFD Graduates). After being exposed to European films during her days in London, she ventured to make her short film *The Passage* which was screened in the Cannes Film Festival (2005). This endeavor ultimately led her into the world of cinema. Several of her projects at the moment (feature film, music videos, documentaries) are in various stages of development. She just completed a twenty minute piece for Al Jazeera International, the new English channel based in London. This documentary is part of her full-length feature on the conflict in Assam.

Open to the idea of doing Hindi and English movies, Sanchayita continues to explore the realities of life and the emotions of the common people in contemporary Assam - a theme which is very close to her heart. Her aim is to contribute in providing focus and to bring Assam to a world audience. She says, "*To the world, Assam is synonymous with tea, but there is more to it. I want to show that amidst all the beauty and stories of unrest, somehow, the people of Assam find inner strength in themselves and life goes on ...and that, for me is admirable.*"

You can find more about her at <http://.enazoree.blogspot.com>.

Where will you be during the July 4th weekend?  
Come and Join Assam 2007 in Washington, DC  
Celebrate Assamese heritage  
Listen to Zubin Garg!!  
Visit <http://www.assam2007.com>

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