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Rongali Bihu celebration in Raleigh, North Carolina – April 30, 2011



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The Assamese community in Research Triangle Area of North Carolina USA (Raleigh-Durham-Cary-Morrisville) celebrated Rongali Bihu in Morrisville on April 30, 2011 in a familial atmosphere reminiscent of the bihu celebrations of the past in Assam. With spring birds filling the morning skies with their welcoming songs after a long winter, frolicking between the lush and verdant new leaves on trees all around, and colorful flowers providing welcoming playground to “bhomoras” and humming birds alike – this typical North Carolina spring day was a perfect backdrop for a Rongali Bihu celebration.



It was a day of coming together for this small community to celebrate “atikoi moromor bohagar bihuti” to connect their past heritage to the present - to celebrate the bond of kinship through the re-living of the traditions that live on in every Assamese heart.



Nasoni takuri ghura di ghure! Audience dancing to Bihu song Bihurenu Birina sung by the group in the background.

Surrounded by colorful gamochas,  jaapis and Xarais beautifully arranged by Namrata Chetia Borah and her team to create an authentic Assamese décor, the day began with a cultural program in which everyone joined in with great enthusiasm. The program started with an introduction by Pulakesh Barua and Rathin Dev Choudhury followed immediately by the sonorous and soulful sound of a devotional song by Rathin  and Meenakshi Dev Choudhury, professionally and reverently rendered with the accompaniment of harmonium by Rathin Dev Choudhury and Tabla by Dibyendu Goswami. It was followed by a children's program, a very sweet rendition of Lakri ki Kathi, a hindi song by 8 year old Vansh Gogoi and a delightful dance by Ayana Chakraborty, Tanisha Gogoi, Eesha Barua, Rohini Sharma that brought smiles to everyone's faces. Sudip Das's rendition of ever popular Bhupen Hazarika favorites Bristirna Parore and Mur Gaan Houk enthralled the audience with uncanny similarities to the originals in vocal range and sound. The popular Axomia song Nahar Phoole Nuxuai was sung in a chorus with the accompaniment of keyboard (Pulakesh Barua),  harmonium (Rathin Dev Choudhury) and Tabla (Dibyendu Goswami). A beautifully choreographed dance to a popular Bollywood number was performed by Namrata Chetia Borah, Sriparna Chakraborty, Geetanjali Sharma, Sarika Gogoi and Shrabanti Barua. The highlight of the program was the bihu song "Bihurenu Birina" led by Rathin Dev Choudhury, Sudip Das, Deboo Gogoi and Pulakesh Barua and joined in by the audience in zestful singing and dancing to truly bring out the spirit of the event. Impromptu Hindi songs by Namrata and Sriparna afterwards drew encores from the audience before the cultural program came to a close.



Besides the musical program the event also provided ample opportunities to learn and recall important aspects of Assamese culture and heritage. Fun filled trivia questions presented by Devraj Borah throughout the program kept everyone engaged, including the children, who also enjoyed a variety of special games and competitions organized by Sudip Das.



Namrata Chetia Borah, Sriparna Chakraborty, Geetanjali Sharma, Sarika Gogoi and Shrabanti Barua dancing to the tune of a Bollywood song.

The day's program came to an enjoyable closure with a delicious lunch that included mouth-watering delicacies cooked and catered by Babi Das and beautifully presented with lots of support from the volunteers. The menu included many authentic Assamese traditional dishes, such as doi, chiraa, boda sawol, mithai, kolor pitha, machor tenga, hahor (duck) mangsor aanja, matidalir tenga, kharor torkari, xukan machor chutney, and kathal sabji.

Chiranjit Deka

Communication Secy, Raleigh Bihu Committee NC

Photographs by: Prasenjit Khanikar



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Assam Times Staff. editor@assamtimes.org

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