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Rongali Bihu 2010 festivities in London



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The London Bihu Committee (LBC) held their annual Rongali Bihu celebration on Sunday, the 2nd May 2010 in dreadful weather conditions, that were typically British. Still, few people let that stand in their way from attending the event, which surpassed even last year's grand success. The festival was particularly notable for its success in attracting a new wave of Assamese diaspora as well as the regulars who have been attending for years.

The event remained at the same venue as last year in Hornchurch, East London. The hall is bigger and the facilities superior than any used in recent years. For the second consecutive year, the Committee were delighted that the venue was packed to the rafters at the peak of the celebrations.

The hall was decorated with ample festive Xorais, japis and gamosas, and all guests were warmly received at reception by Meenakhi Borooah and Bornali Bahia with a welcome pack. Once again, the ladies of the LBC did themselves and everyone else proud by making a range of home made Assamese jolpan, Sira-doi-gur (Suravi Lahon), Narikol laroo (Bhabani Kakati, Geeta Borooah and Neera Borkakoti), Ghila pitha (Geeta Borooah and Samima Zaman), Tilor laroo (Neera Borkakoti). These were complimented with a variety of cakes (Shamim Ahmed) , children's snacks (Krishna Baruah) and young peoples meals (Geeta Sikdar) were all hungrily devoured by the eager crowd.

After a warm welcoming speech by Neera Borkakoti, the LBC President, the cultural show featured its usual array of talent plus some new performers.

The cultural show, presented by Jayanta Borkakoti and Rita Kakati, was opened with gusto by the classic Husori. With naked flames being banned from the premises, we had to make do with unlit lanterns, but judging by the audience's enthusiastic response, they were lit in spirit.

The show featured modern Assamese songs by Gita Sarmah and Bhabani Kakati, a Lokageet by Gitika Saikia and a most energetic Bihu dance by Suravi Lahon.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, a last minute stand in (thanks to the persuasive skills of stage runner Sumi Baruah) for one of the items was a Bihu dance by Jilmil Baruah and Gyandeep Saikia. They gave a performance which conjured up imagery of an Assamese Torvill and Dean (less the ice of course, however one could be forgiven the Winter sport analogy given the weather conditions!)

Back by popular demand was the latest generation of Assamese talent on show – a children's dance by Kuhi Goswami, Navina Arora and Rengoni Bhuyan.

The final piece de resistance, was songs from Kumud Sharma, the Elvis Presley of the British Assamese community. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed his rendition of songs by Bhupen Hazarika.

Following the Cultural Show was the vote of thanks, which this year was given by the new LBC General Secretary, Rishi Kakati. In the tradition of this speech, it was given in good humour and was well received by the attentive audience. This was followed by Rishi bringing joy to various Bihu guests by announcing the much anticipated results of the raffle amidst much merriment and a Vice-President speech by Geeta Borooah. Proceeds from the raffle are to be donated to Cancer Research UK.

This year, it is fair to say that London Rongali Bihu broke their own records set last year in terms of attendance and popularity. The hundreds of revellers present, including many of the young first generation recently arrived from Assam, enthusiastically enjoyed the time set aside for Bihu and Bollywood dancing. This helped to create a tremendous atmosphere and energy in the hall.

The finale of the evening was the Bihu Bhoj with tender chicken, delicious dahl ,melt in the mouth lamb and Rou mass , amongst a plethora of other dishes. Great fun had by all, as evidenced from the Feedback Forms. Next year, let's hope for bhal botor to crown the event.



editor

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