

Ogrojatra : Past, Present and Future

Number of families with Bangladeshi origin has been growing in San Diego in the recent years. We wanted to start organizing activities to reach afore-mentioned goals. Over the last couple of years we have been holding the following events which let us meet the above mentioned goals collectively as a community.

Summary of Initiatives

Pathshala initiative: Bengali Language School

We initiated an effort called “Pathshala” which in Bengali language means “school”. Under this effort we organize lecture series open to all in the community. Through this initiative the primary target audiences are children of all ages where they can learn how to speak, read and write Bengali. We have extended our program to adults as well. Through this program they will also get exposed to geography of Bangladesh, its history, culture, and learn about the rich heritage of the region. This initiative has a structured curriculum which over the sessions progresses an attendee’s reading/spoken/writing ability in Bangla. We also organize field trips for the kids as a part of this initiative, where all the kids attending the sessions visit museums or parks and go through activities where they can apply their knowledge of Bengali language. Each session comprises of numerous lectures including field trips and a project presentation by attendees. In 2012 we conducted 1 session and in 2013 we conducted a total of 3 sessions. Our plan is to conduct 3 such sessions (fall, spring, summer) in each year. On an average about 20 kids enrolled in each of these sessions. We also create educational aids and lecture materials for the kids to take home so that they can practice learning the language on their own during the breaks.

More detail information and a log of activities for Pathshala can be found at

<https://www.facebook.com/#!/PathshalaSanDiegoBanglaSchool>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ogrojatra/>

We plan to continue the sessions in future. Our plan includes expansion of current activities to develop collection of Bengali books so that community members and kids can checkout, read and return books. In addition publish a yearly magazine which will provide students and other community members to author writings in Bangla.

Commemoration of International Mother Language Day (2012 and 2013)

USA is a melting pot of many different cultures and languages. As a celebration of diverse languages we organize a community event open to everyone commemorating International Mother Language day (US declared International Mother Language Day is 21st of February) on the last week on February each year.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Mother_Language_Day).

On 2012 it was organized on Feb 19th at Poway Auditorium which was attended by close to 200 adults and 40 children. Over 50 local San Diegans performed in this cultural event which included 31 children.

On 2013 we organized on February 9th at Poway Auditorium. The event was participated close to 250 individuals where approximately 50 individuals performed. Some pictures from the events can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ogrojatra/>

Sports Day (2012 and 2013)

In order to encourage healthy physical activities amongst kids and adult alike, we organize a day long sports day for the community. The day was filled with races, games and introduction to some of the traditional sports from Bangladesh. In 2012 it was held at Rancho Bernardo Community Park and on 2013 it was held at Poway Lake Park. On an average close to 100 people attended the Sports Days.

Bengali Cultural Night 2012

Ogrojatra organized a cultural gala for the community on June 3rd 2012. One of the main performance that was presented during the cultural show was a children's musical based on a folk fairy tale from Bangladesh. The musical was performed by children. The musical production was also presented in other events/forums in San Diego. In preparation of the musical all the kids got special coaching on Bangladeshi dance and songs. It was truly a fun way for the participants and audience to get exposed to Bangaldeshi culture. This event was conducted in Poway Auditorium. Some pictures from the events can be found at

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ogrojatra/>

Bengali New Year Celebration 2013

Celebrating Bengali New Year is one of the key festivals of Bangladesh. Keeping up with the culture and tradition in May 2013, we organized a day long celebration event in San Dieguito Park in Del Mar. It was filled with traditional Bengali dances and songs. We had a special dance musical performed by the children of Bangaldeshi and non-Bangladeshi origin. The event was complete with Kids parade and performances from the local performers. Some pictures from the events can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ogrojatra/>

Community Meet (2012 and 2013)

Each year we organize a reunion event, which is open to all and primarily attended by the local families of Bangladeshi origin. In 2012 we organized we organized the get-together in August and in 2013 we organized the get-together in October. During this event we introduce new comers to San Diego to the local community. Such event brings harmony and enhances relation between all memembers of this community.

Clothing Drive 2012

During 2012 we organized a clothing drive for the less fortunate. We collected lightly used clothes and shipped them to Boeing Corporation which carried the clothes to Bangladesh for free for distribution amongst poor. The timeframe of the clothing drive coincided with hurricane Sandy in New York. We also shipped part of our collected clothes to help the victims of Sandy. Some pictures from the events can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ogrojatra/>

Plan for 2014

We plan to continue with the following initiatives:

1. Series of Lecture on Bengali Language and Culture
2. Celebration of independence/language movement of Bangladesh
3. Celebration of Bengali New Year
4. Charitable and volunteering work such as volunteering at Food Bank or clothing drive
5. Annual Sports Day
6. Community Meet and Greet

-
7. Yearly publication of a magazine where authors (kids and adults) can submit articles written in Bangla.