

JAKARTA BENGALI ASSOCIATION

Jakarta Bengali Association or JABA as it is popularly known is the heart throb of the expatriates from the state of Bengal, settled at Jakarta, capital of Indonesia. Although its a mere association, it is actually a big family to which all the Bengalis out here are affiliated. It is a family in the true sense with its share and care.

How JABA originated is still a mystery but its not difficult to assume that some enthusiastic Bengalis in their attempt to retain the cultural heritage of their state, went ahead and created the same. From there, its tradition and lineage has been carried forward by its members. Hailing from the land of great Rabindra Nath Tagore, we tag along our heritage and lineage wherever we go. But not everywhere we do have the atmosphere and opportunity to really display and develop the potentials. JABA provides the platform for all its members to display, develop and sometimes also acquire their potentials and live alongwith the cultures and traditions of their motherland.

A normal year at JABA begins with their Annual General Meeting where the Executive Committee comprising of President, Secretary, Treasurer and Co-ordinator is selected. Although informal, these individuals carry the torch of all activities for the whole year. Under the main body, several sub-committees are formed. Cultural Committee, Food Committee, Decoration committee, Souvenir Committee, Puja Committee and so on. Each of these committees have their assigned avenues of performances for the whole year.

JABA's new committee starts their term with celebration of **Indian Independence Day**. Although the same is celebrated by Indian Embassy, JABA felt that a detailed list of events involving kids will help in bonding them with their motherland and for others; it will serve to re-kindle the fire of patriotism.

Soon after this, the entire JABA starts preparing for the major event of the year – Durga Puja. The sincerity, dedication and devotion that go behind those five days are just unparalleled. The action starts with printing the invitation cards and collecting the list of requirements from the priest who is specially flown in from Kolkata for the occasion. Most of these activities involve numerous emails, phone calls and Star Buck Coffee shop meetings. Each committee starts listing and completing their assigned responsibilities. One cannot imagine the hectic schedules the members go through during this time but they make sure that none of the aspects are diluted – starting from puja details, food, entertainment, etc. Also worth mentioning is that we celebrate the Puja as per the “bengali tithi” and not at some convenient weekend. “Mayer bhog and pujor misti” – they are all prepared by the ladies at home. Given a choice, all JABA members like to celebrate puja at Jakarta than at Bengal – its become an integral part of family and life out here.

While we are recovering from the fatigue and depression that Durga Puja, “Bijoya Sammeloni” knocks at the door. One more round of hectic schedules, rehearsals and practices.... the participation in most cases involves the full family.

Kojagari Lakshmi puja follows the next and is celebrated with equal pomp.

Soon the New Year approaches and JABA also starts the same with new hopes and aspirations through some sort of external entertainment.

Sankranti brings with it the display of culinary skills of all the ladies around – yes, we have all the pithe and sweets that our mother used to prepare - right here. Thanks to all our didis and boudis.

Film festival is another in JABA's calendar, where we gather to enjoy old and new Bengali films. A convenient week-end gives members the taste of evergreen old and new Bangali movies. Children's also get the taste of Bengali movies through "Chotoder Chabi".

Saraswati Puja is another major event. Since it involves a complete participation of the children, sometimes it needs to be scheduled at convenient weekend. alongwith Puja and Puspanjali, its

really great to see the young members singing Tagore's songs, dancing, reciting, etc. This puja is however conducted by our in-house priest.

Month of March is picnic time for all JABA-ites. Boarding a bus or sometimes sharing the cars, all members set out for a fun-filled day. Lots of games, great food, song, dance just fills the air... a treat outside the regular realms of JABA.

Last event of the year is marked by the celebration of Rabindra Jayanti where we all gather to pay our homage to "Gurudev" – not a moment do we forget that we are descendants from this great man's land. This event is celebrated with great reverence, comprising of group and solo songs, drama, dances, dance drama, etc.

In th year 2007, JABA participated in ***International Ethnic Music festival*** at Solo, Indonesia . A group of 30 members set out to show the world how we stay UNITED amidst all diversities.

The open arms with which JABA welcomes new entrants is another important aspect with highlighting.

This year we are in 27th year of JABA. Many senior members commented, that life at JABA just whizzed away . Before one realised, we past 26 odd years. Although this organisation has seen a continuous in and outflow of its members, there have been some all time veterans who have maintained the foundation and have been the torch bearer.

This year JABA wants to make a difference by spreading SMILE among the unprivileged and unfortunate souls. A variety of charity programme have been enlisted and the implementation is in progress.

Its worth taking a pause and saying that social and cultural life is at boom here, with the main intention of retaining, maintaining the rich lineage that we have inherited and also to pass it on to the future generation and making sure the bondage with our motherland is not lost here amongst the 100 odd Bengali families at Jakarta Indonesia.



DURGA PUJO -2009



Picnic -2009