

2011 Asian Festival

Weeklong Activities

Dragon Boat // May 21st

Genoa Park // Scioto River Downtown

Culinary Activities // May 22nd // 24th

Franklin Park // Community Gardens

Asian Art Exhibit // May 18th - May 30th

COSI // W Broad Street

Asian Festival // May 28th // 29th

Franklin Park // E Broad Street



Seventeenth Annual Festival

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Positive

BANGLADESH



Contributed by
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Bangladesh is a country in Southeast Asia at the tip of the bay of Bengal. It is surrounded mostly by India except for the southwest side, where it borders with Burma. The name "Bangladesh" came from its national language, Bangla. Bengalis fought for Bangla to be the national language and the United Nations recognizes February 21st as the International Mother Language Day in honor of their endeavors.

The government of Bangladesh puts great importance on improving its education. It has particularly improved the opportunities for female students; the government offers free education for the lower-income families. Also, there are non-profitable organizations who host math and science competitions nationwide. These competitions motivate students to receive recognition that can help them to apply for scholarships. The most emphasis on improvement is for primary schools, which only about 76% of kids complete. The ratio of students to teachers is 60 to 1, meaning there are many schools but not enough teachers to teach. Also, the average school day is only about 2.5 hours, which is a very short period of time compared to an average school day in most countries around the world. However, there is also an increase in the number of universities to accommodate more students.

The Nobel laureate of Bangladesh, Dr. Muhammad Yunus, is considered the father of the microfinance system. He introduced it through

the Grameen Bank, through which the poor, especially the women, can get a loan to start a new business and eventually become financially independent. His theory has been implemented in over 40 countries worldwide and has recently been introduced in the United States.

Over the last few years, there have been more tourists in Bangladesh. There is a program, Parjatan, available on tourism. Tourists come to visit relatives and friends and to take vacations. The country has lots of farming areas and the village side is stunning. Many Muslims worldwide are attracted to Bangladesh for its religious Toblig event of Bishwa Estima. After performing Hajj, millions of people go to the Estima every year in Tongi.

Transportation in Bangladesh is rapidly improving. Bangladesh is always making new roads and bridges. In fact, Bangladesh is proud to have one of the world's longest bridges, the Jamuna, which is over three miles long. It is built over the Jamuna River and on the Asian Highway and allows for trade throughout Bangladesh.

Technology is growing rapidly as well. Many civilians carry cell phones with them because it is cost-effective. The latest software and media are available in open stores. The Internet is becoming increasingly more available in the cities and many people in Bangladesh now communicate through social networking websites.

Even though Bangladesh is damaged annually from flooding, the climate, and insanitation, the government is taking extra steps to protect Bangladesh by building walls and high-rise shelters. The flooding has one benefit: it brings a lot of silt, which deposits on the riverbed and side lands. This brings fertility to the soil and raises the land slightly, helping to fight against the gradual sinking of Bangladesh into the Bay of Bengal.

The art and culture are expanding with a higher standard. Bangladesh holds an annual Book Fair in February where many new books on various subjects are available. National and international poets gather during Book Fair. There are also cultural activities such as singing, traditional dancing, and art exhibits. There is great diversity and acceptance in the different cultures that reside in the country. Bangladesh cherishes all religions and still observes all of their holidays.

Cricket is the most popular sport in Bangladesh. This year, 2011, Bangladesh co-hosted the 2011 Cricket World Cup for its first time. The inauguration ceremony was held in Dhaka. Bangladesh even ranked 10th out of 14 teams that moved to the final tournament.

I have elaborated on the positive aspects of Bangladesh; however, there is a lot of room for improvement. There were advances in daily life and great innovations. Bangladesh is improving in terms of its economy, technology, education, sports, and government. However, it is a small country compared to a large population and there are many basic needs yet to be fulfilled.