

Media release

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Royal
Geographical
Society

with IBG

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● Bustling Banglatown: Free walk launched to showcase Bengali contribution to London's East End

The Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) has chosen London's Brick Lane area as the focus for a new self-guided walk that is free to access online via the Discovering Britain website, and ViewRanger walking app. Tracing British Bengali history back to its origins in the East End over 400 years ago, the walk passes through cultural, historical, social and culinary sites and explores the hidden geographies of the area now known affectionately as Banglatown.

The new walk's route and accompanying material has been produced in collaboration with the Swadhinata Trust, a London based secular Bengali community group that works to promote Bengali history and heritage. With over 500,000 Bengalis in the UK, the community is one of the fastest growing in the country and offers a significant contribution to contemporary Britain.

Brick Lane is an increasingly popular tourist hotspot and the walk highlights the ways in which Bengalis have shaped the area, shining a light on how certain parts are changing as well as looking back to past heritage. The route also touches on the contemporary challenges the Bengali community of Banglatown now face, from gentrification and rising rents to how best to publicly celebrate Bengali identities.

Caroline Millar, Project Manager for Discovering Britain, said:

"We are delighted to launch this new walk focusing on the Bengali community and in the geography of London's East End. We hope it will encourage people from all backgrounds to discover more about this fascinating part of London and the communities that live there."

Ansar Ahmed Ullah, Volunteer Director at the Swadhinata Trust said:

"British Bengalis are part and parcel of Britain. Therefore, their history and heritage are also part of Britain's history. Hopefully, this walk will inform the wider community of their presence."

The Banglatown walk is part of Discovering Britain, a Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) project that explores the stories behind the UK's built and natural landscapes through a series of self-led geographical walks.

More information:

- For more information about the walk visit: <https://www.discoveringbritain.org/activities/greater-london/walks/bengali-east-end.html>
- To view a PDF of the walk visit: <https://www.discoveringbritain.org/content/discoveringbritain/walk%20booklets/Bengali%20East%20End%20written%20guide.pdf>
- To view/download the walk on the ViewRanger app visit: <https://my.viewranger.com/route/details/MTk0MjQ4Mw>
- To visit the Discovering Britain website visit: <https://www.discoveringbritain.org/>



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Notes to editors

1. For further media enquiries, interview requests and photographs, please contact the RGS-IBG's Press Officer, Giulia Macgarr, at press@rgs.org or 020 7591 3019
2. Discovering Britain (www.discoveringbritain.org) is an exciting website featuring a series of self-led geographical walks that helps explain the stories behind the UK's built and natural landscapes. Each walk explores a particular landscape, finding out about the way in which the forces of nature, people, events and the economy have created and shaped the area. The Society's Discovering Britain website is constantly evolving and aims to bring our islands' geography and history alive.
3. The Swadhinata Trust is a non-partisan secular Bengali heritage organisation set up in 2000 by a group of community and youth workers to raise youth awareness about Bengali history, culture and heritage by establishing resources for British Bengali community and the general public in the field of education, research and the creative arts.
4. The Royal Geographical Society (with The Institute of British Geographers) is the learned society and professional body for geography. Formed in 1830, our Royal Charter of 1859 is for 'the advancement of geographical science'. Today, we deliver this objective through developing, supporting and promoting geographical research, expeditions and fieldwork, education, public engagement, and geography input to policy. We aim to foster an understanding and informed enjoyment of our world. We hold the world's largest private geographical collection and provide public access to it. We have a thriving Fellowship and membership and offer the professional accreditation 'Chartered Geographer'. www.rgs.org