

Book fair draws huge crowd despite hartal

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Amar Ekushey Book Fair drew a huge crowd on the sixth day yesterday despite countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal.

Although there were fewer crowds in the afternoon, the book lovers flocked to the Bangla Academy premises, the fair venue, in large numbers after the evening.

However, fewer new books came to the shelves at different stalls yesterday. The organisers said they brought fewer books to the fair fearing that hartal might hamper their business.

Forty-four new books were put on display yesterday. Publishers said they would showcase more new books today as they expected a rise in the sale.

The selling of children's books were at the top yesterday.

Less gathering was seen at the Writer's Chattar in the evening as popular writers were absent.

A large number of Dhaka University's residential students made up the bulk of the visitors as the university was closed due to hartal.

The demand for books by Dr Humayan Azad, Humayun Ahmed and Dr Muhammad Zafar Iqbal was higher, the organiers said

Majority of the female students asked for books by Humayun Ahmed, they added.

There was also a great demand for 'Bangladesh: Paribartaner Rekhachitra' by FBCCI President

Abdul Awal Mintu and 'Dharmanubhuti Upakatha O Onyanya' by Dr Humayun Azad.

'Sakaley Uthiya Ami Mone Mone Boli' by Amirul Islam, 'Bhoot' by Ahsan Habib, and 'Pakh-Pakhair Chhara' by Ali Imam were also sold in a large number.

The Annya Publications published four books while the Laboni Publication, the Sahitto Bilash, the Jagrity Publication published three new books each.

The Agami Publication, Bangladesh Press Institute, the Ahmad Publishing House, the Hasi Publication published two new books each.

At the Little Magazine Chattar, Saidur Rahman Bayati unveiled the cover of a new book titled 'Mangol Sandhya Series 2004'. New writers have contributed to this series.

A discussion on 'Centennial tributes: Practising of science and culture of Kazi Motaher Hossain' was held at the fair venue, followed by a cultural programme.

Shahida Rafique was the key speaker. Presided over by Muhammad Ibrahim, the discussion was addressed by Moyukh Chowdhury, Nashid Kamal and Syed Ziaul Haque.

The book fair will remain open from 2:00pm to 8:00pm daily and from 11:00am to 8:00pm on weekends, Bangla Academy sources said.

On February 21, the fair will remain open from 8:00am to 9:00pm.



A BCL activist tries to free himself from the grip of a policeman at Bangabandhu Avenue during hartal hours yesterday. Police resorted to baton charge to disperse the activists when they were marching in a procession along the street.

1312 more held

UNB, Dhaka

Police arrested 1,312 people, including five listed criminals, during their country-wide drive in the last 24 hours till 6am yesterday.

During the drive, they also recovered five firearms and eight bullets and filed five cases against 11 people under Arms Act, says a police headquarters press release.

Restore confidence of people in judiciary

Moudud tells judges

BSS, Dhaka

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Moudud Ahmed yesterday said the confidence of people in the judicial system has to be restored by ensuring justice without unnecessary delay.

"It is the constitutional right of the people of get justice within

the shortage possible time as well as the judges are constitutionally obligated to ensure justice accordingly," he said while he was addressing the inaugural function of a two-week training course for the assistant judges here.

The Judicial Administration Training Institute (JATI) organised the training at its auditorium.

Acting Director General of JATI Azizul Haque presided over the function participated by 30 assistant judges.

The law minister said the dignity of judiciary depends upon the judges and lawyers. If they fail to perform their duty the litigants will suffer and ultimately image of the whole judicial system will be affected, he added.

He said it takes year to settle a case in the court of law, and consequently the people get frustrated on judiciary.

The minister said to end such delays, Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) system has been introduced by amending the civil procedure code (CPC) for quick settlement of the disputes.

He said the aim of introducing new laws and amending old laws is to save litigant's money, time and to restore their confidence in the judicial system.

Moudud said the government has a strong political will to end

harassment of the litigants and sincerity of judges and lawyers is necessary to make the ADR system and other new laws effective.

Block supervisors' confce Mar 13

BSS, Dhaka

A day-long conference of block supervisors will be held on March 13 at the premises of Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institute in Gazipur.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia is expected to inaugurate the conference.

The aim of the conference is to make the importance of agriculture in our national economy clear before the people at grass-roots level.

A preparatory meeting was held yesterday with State Minister for Agriculture Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir in the chair at the ministry to make the conference a success.

Agriculture secretary A S M Abdul Halim, concerned officials of the ministry and agriculture related agencies were present.

Shun politics of hartal

Bhuiyan urges AL

BSS, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General and LGED and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday urged main opposition Awami League to shun politics of hartal and join and speak out in the Jatiya Sangsad.

"Hartal has no appeal in politics nowadays and it cannot offer anything other than causing miseries to people, disruption in production and severe loss to national life," he said in a statement coinciding with the Awami

League convened day-long general strike.

Particularly, he said, low-income people are the worst victims of hartal and "politicians have to understand their miseries."

"We need to realise it further that when the entire world including our neighbouring countries are progressing fast to attain prosperity and stability, calling of hartals is nothing but a suicidal act as it discourages local and foreign investments and belittles the country in the eyes of the world."

"We would also remind the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament of her pledge as prime minister not to call hartal even if her party goes to opposition," Bhuiyan added.

The BNP secretary general said the incumbent ruling party did not create any obstacle when the opposition lawmakers speak in parliament "following the Awami League footsteps."

"I therefore call upon them to come to the Jatiya Sangsad and speak out what they want to say," Bhuiyan said adding that with Awami League participation the parliamentary standing committees could have been more effective and contribute to the democratic institutionalisation.

"We think it is the demand of the day as well as of the people that both the ruling and the opposition parties will have to play their due role from their respective positions," he said.

Programme to rehabilitate acid victims

BSS, Dhaka

The government has taken steps for implementation of the rehabilitation programme for acid-burn women and disabled persons up to the upazila level.

Tk 25 crore were allocated for implementation of the programme in the current fiscal, Social Welfare Ministry sources said.

The sources said the government has taken up the project to make the acid-burn and disabled helpless persons self-dependent by providing them soft-term and interest-free loans.

The government has also taken steps to implement a three-year project at an estimated cost of Tk five crore for the welfare of burn victims.

Acid and chemical-burn victims will get treatment, rehabilitation, financial and technical facilities from the project.

