

# Ekushey Boimela

**E**KUSHEY Boimela celebrates the only language that was fought for and won albeit at a price. Lives were lost to make Bangla the mother tongue. The efforts and sacrifices of Rafik, Jabbar, Barkat and Salam helped put Bangladesh on the world map. Now Bangla is the fourth international language.

Bangla Academy was formed in 1955 to preserve and enhance the language, its literature and its effect on culture. The first book fair took place in 1972. In 75, a few publishers opened up stalls near the gates of the academy. This informal fair continued till 1978 when it was given a formal status as a national occasion and the Bangla Academy was put in charge of directing it. The whole affair has continued in like manner ever since growing every year as the number of publishers increased.

The fair has grown to become a national cultural event where we may not find books by the best writers in the world but rather the best writers in Bangladesh. There is a wide treasure trove of local poetry, novels as well as material on culture, finance, cookery, religion, politics and a horde of other subjects. It's the only place where you get such a wide variety of books writ-

ten and published in Bangla.

Everyone who loves books awaits this day in anticipation. Rookie writers dream of their first publication released at this event while the veterans look forward to releasing their new work at this time. Publishers stay busy pounding away at their calculators.

Eminent writer, late Dr. Humayun Azad, said it best that books are the material form of a person's life, dreams and knowledge. In days past, books were considered the symbol of truth and sanctity. Of course, that age-old aura of books as sacred is no longer true. Honest to goodness work is hard to find now. Despite that, books still remain an indispensable tool. It has the power to do away with countless problems and anxieties.

Of course, not everyone holds books in such esteem. It requires a profound interest in knowledge and literature. Mainly book lovers go to this fair. They like to take in the scent of fresh new pages whether they buy books or not. Young people prefer to go for the storybooks and poetry with most of the visitors being female. Children bug



their parents until they fork over some money across the counter. Recently the turnout at the fair consisted of mainly young people. They go over and spend the whole day there sifting through the pages. Some go there to meet old friends.

One particular highlight of the fair is the meeting of the general public with the writers. Fans have a great time chatting with their favorite personalities. It only happens at the Ekushey Boi mela.

It is thought that the cyber culture is eroding the love for books. But when you see throngs of people perusing through the stalls, this statement bites the dust. The book fair brings old valuable books to the discerning public as well as create new readers.

By Sultana Yasmin  
Translated by Ehsanur Raza

## NEWS FLASH

### F1 auto show

**T**HE Gulshan 2 field behind Wonderland on February 11 reverberated with the sound of engines growling, rumbling, barking and in some cases sputtering and wheezing. It's the second such annual show dedicated to car lovers.

It contained mainly modified cars as well a few classics and some outrageously expensive new ones. The coolest cars seemed to be the late 60's Ford Mustang that was a bit disappointing up front, as it had shoddy bodywork. Better were the classic 60's Jag, Mercedes convertible and classic Corona all in bright spanking red. A line of VW Beetles worked as eye candy. What stole the show was a replica Ferrari F50 that was a bit too high but still nicely done. Of course this was nothing compared to the actual Ferrari 328 that was spotted nearby.

A lot of local talent turned up with their modified Corollas, Civics and other Japanese offerings. Although some of the cars should have kept their engine bays covered as these clearly showed a CNG conversion. CNG and performance do not go together when you think of a sub 2000cc car.

There were stalls all around offering accessories like wheels, lights, steering wheels, seats etc. One stall displayed their custom bodied cars. A late 90's white Nissan Sunny was slightly modified to look like an early BMW M3 with all the right bulging heel arches. Right beside it was parked a sparkling blue Honda Integra that had some 'before' pictures tacked on that were scary. The car was totaled in a crash and this was the repair job. This makes the car very unsafe right now but you have got to admire the

talent. Proton was there offering their new cars on sale and the prices were quite attractive. A bright red Wira with special wheels, interior and body kit would cost 8,40,000 taka. These are basically previous generation Mitsubishi restyled and slightly reengineered so reliability should be good.

A bit of variety compared to last year's was the performance test where drivers with a valid license could test their skills. They had to drive over a speed bump with a designated car. The catch was that a glass of water was placed up front and spilling or taking too long resulted in disqualification. Other tests included a zigzag and parallel parking. All this had a prize to it.

The event was great allowing car lovers to show off their pride and joy.

By Ronny

### SGO launch

**S**TAINED Glass Overlay (SGO), producer of decorative glass and an International Franchise company based in the United States, has recently made its launch on Thursday, February 10th in Gulshan. Judith Chammas, Deputy Chief of U.S Mission in Dhaka was

also present for the launching ceremony. SGO is being represented by 'Reflections', a local branch of the company. Michael Cassidy, President of SGO and Sabrina Islam, founder of 'Reflections' were also present at the launching ceremony. SGO, a worldwide franchise as mentioned above

is represented in 32 countries. The company designs beautiful decorative glass works for homes, offices, schools, and different commercial and institutional locations.

By Rubaiyat Khan

### Pitha mela at Prabartana

**F**ROM February 10 to 12 Prabartana arranged 'Roshor gur and pitha mela' like they do every year. Going on an assignment and writing a story was just an excuse, the word pitha was tempting enough for this writer to be there. The word obviously spread out very fast. Enthusiastic crowd overflowed the little space, tasting the mouth watering delicacies and bagging them home for sharing with the family members.

Pithas like hridoy horon, moog pakon, bibi khan, shundori pakon, ilish chitoy, bhapa, narkel shondesh and many more was displayed on baskets, the sound of which brings water in to ones mouth. Each one having its unique recipe and splendid

design it was impossible to resist the temptation while browsing through and taking notes for the story.

Along with these delicacies, winter also presents us rosher gur, one of the major ingredients essential for making delicious pitha. The making of this traditional sweetening ingredient from date juice and sugarcane is now on the verge on extinction. One the major objecting of arranging the mela was to help revive the tradition and reintroduce it as an income source. Organisers brought gur from various districts. Muchi gur from Faridpur, nali gur from Ishwardi, taler hajara and narkel patali from Jessore and other type of gur was displayed in the mela reminding the

visitors about the once rich culture of Bangladesh.

What made the mela even more exciting was the presentation of various stories, songs and jokes by the gur makers themselves. Gur makers from Jessore and Faridpur were present during the mela to share their insight on this tradition.

Winter is about to bid farewell. One of the wonderful experiences of winter is relishing pitha with the ones we love. City life being very hectic, this tradition of making mouth-watering winter delicacies is fading away. For all the visitors at the mela it was definitely an opportunity to delight the taste buds.

By Shahnaz Parveen

### Ekush events

**G**ET ready for a hectic week as Ekush is nearing. If you wish to join in the bandwagon then DU campus is the right place to be. Cultural programmes already started there. Of course the first event that comes in to mind is the boi mela. Amidst tight security the boi mela is going on in full swing. It is a whole new experience this year with the presence of crime fighting force like Rapid Action Battalion.

Visitors this year are waiting in lines to get inside the mela premise. Also check out the cultural show arranged by the Bangla Academy. The stage, as usual is situated inside the mela premise beside the Bardhaman house.

But folks what ever you do, avoid Fridays to visit the mela. Last Friday the queue reached almost Shahbag signal. However, enthusiastic visitors waited eagerly to have a look at what's new this. The mela was crammed with visitor of all age.

Shommilito Shangskritik Jote started their programme at the Shahid Minar on February 8 and will continue till 19th. The show starts everyday at 4pm and continues till 10. From February 15 to 21 at Dhanmondi Rabindra Shorobor there is another programme by Jote.

Starting from February 12, there is a film festival at the TSC auditorium of DU arranged by Dhaka University Film Society. The festival titled "Dui Bangla Cholochitro Shommilon" will exhibit films made both in Bangladesh and West Bengal. The festival will continue till February 20.

If you wish to avoid the crowd, a photography exhibition might interest you. Photographer Abdullah-al-Masum's month long solo exhibition started on February 11. The exhibition titled "Chitrokkabbiyo" is going on at BPS Gallery, 63/2, Science Laboratory Road.

Good news for youngsters, a concert titled METALTER Episode ~ 2 : A tribute to Darrel Dimebag is going to take place on February 18, 2005 (Friday) at the Fu-wang bowling club. Gate opens at 1.30, and the show starts on the dot at 2.00 pm. Tickets are priced at Tk. 170 and will be available at the venue - Fuwang bowling club.

### K Kraft's Ekushey

To observe Ekushey with style visit K Kraft. Their Ekushey collection highlights Khadi and cotton as the fabric in white, red, orange and black.

There is fatua and t-shirt for both men and women embellished with block print, embroidery, screen print, and hand stitch. Calligraphy and geometrical motifs added extra charm to the collection.

To grab one of these elegant attire visit K Kraft's outlets at Sobhanbag, Baily Road, Malibag, Kemal Ataturk Road, Rifles Square, Anam Rangs Plaza and Plaza A.R.

By Shahnaz Parveen

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