Children's Boi Mela

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Book stalls exclusively showcasing children's books at the fair.

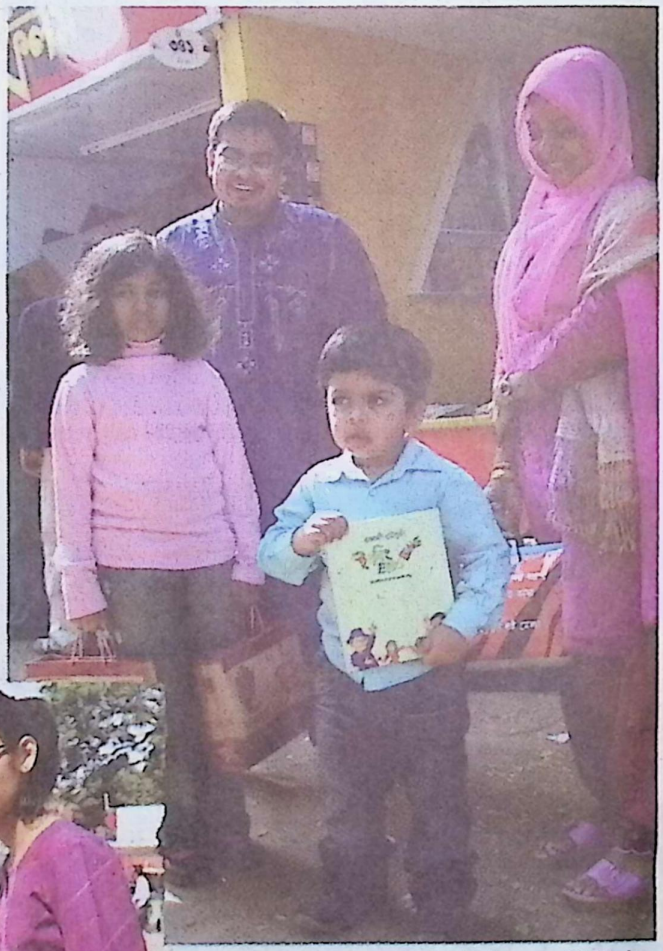
"I just received two of the same books," says 11-year-old Tasmia Rahman, talking about the prizes awarded to her at the poetry recitation competition at the Ekushey Boi Mela. "I am waiting for someone from the authorities to change one of them. It was probably a mistake," she adds. Studying in the sixth grade, at the Tejgaon Government School for Girls, Tasmia had participated in the poetry recitation competition held for children at the Ekushey Boi Mela on February 15. "I recited 'Swadesh' by Ahsan Habib," says Tasmia happily.

Earlier this month, the Bangla Academy had announced February 15 and February 22 as days dedicated to children, since this year the usual children's corners were not set up at the mela. As compared to the other days, this particular Friday morning was less crowded. Men were not allowed inside the mela unless accompanied by women and children. Many of the stalls were exclusively showcasing children's books attracting many young people of various ages.



Zaima and her older sister Ramisa check out some of the newly purchased books.

A small crowd of children were seen gathered around the Proshika stall. This year, the Proshika employees have written most of the books for children, says Shabnam looking after the stall. The books, meant mainly for children between 4-8 years old included catchy titles like 'Phutphute Projapoti' and 'Adibashi Rupkotha'.



Ramisa Rahman and Zahin Rahman with their parents Hameem Mohiuddin and Mukti Rahman.

Araf, studying in the third grade and Ahnaf, in KG II from Kids' Tutorial were seen accompanying their parents, carrying loads of books. While Araf tends to go for a little light reading, little Ahnaf prefers books on science. "He is always asking questions," says his father, Taifur Rahman. "We bought children's science fiction by Zafar Iqbal amongst others," he adds.

A huge crowd of children were seen buying pop-up