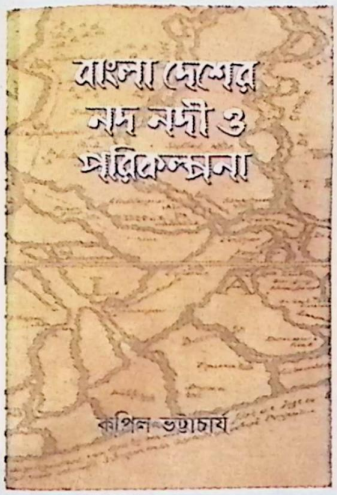
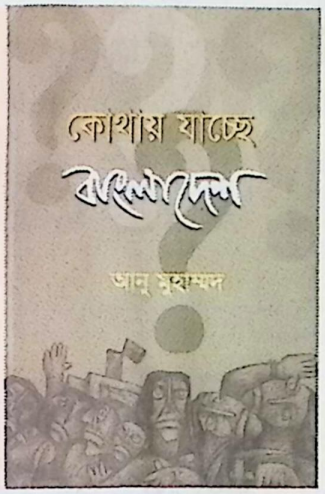
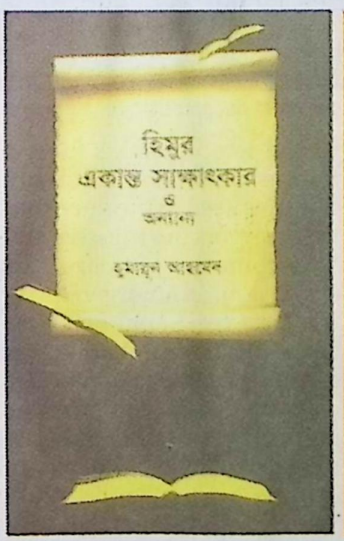


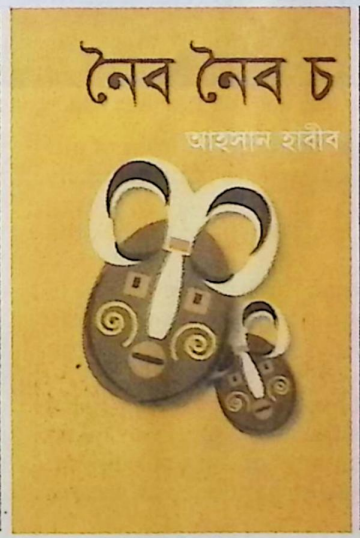


Covers: Amal Akaash

and radical ideas, this young publishing house could not manage to get a stall at the fair this year. Starting out in early 2007, according to executive officer of Samhati, Rana Raihan, the house had published not enough books to meet the number set by the academy. "According to the Bangla Academy, every publishing house has to publish at least 15 books to participate at the Boi Mela," he says. "We could not do so and could not apply for a stall this year. However, the books that we published this year are being sold by Jatiyo Shahityo Prokash, who have a stall at the fair." Even though, he adds, a good number of publishers did get to put up stalls at the fair this year, despite not meeting the number of published works set up by the authorities. "This is probably because of years of personal relations," says Raihan. Samhati has launched around 15 books this year at the *mela*. Some of the books that have gained a lot of popularity are "Kothay Geche Bangladesh" by Anu Mohammad, Azfar Hussain's "The Wor(l)d in Question: Essays in Political Economy and Cultural Politics" and "The Politics of Subjects, Sites, and Scenes: Micronarratives and Other Essays" and "Bangla Desher Nod Nodi O Porikolpona" by Kapil Bhattacharya who passed away in 1989.



Cover: Sabyasachi Hajra



Cover: Anik Khan



Cover: Mahbub Kamran

Onnesha Prokashok is another prominent name in the list of upcoming publishing houses in the last few years. Mohd. Shahdat Hussain has been running this house for the last four years and entered the Boi Mela arena three years ago. This year Hussain claims that sales have been a blast at the *mela*. "Right after Annyo Prokash, customers have been hounding my stall for Humayan Ahmed's "Himur Ekanto Shakkhatkar O Onnano"," he says. Amongst other popular books that have been sold from his stall, Kabir Chowdhury's "Goethe O Rabindranath Ebong Onnano Probondho", Ahsan Habib's "Noi Bo Noi Bo Cha", Humayan Ahmed's compilation of stories and Anik Khan's SMS poetry "Bhalobashay Doctorate" have been in demand from the very first day. Even though Onnesha has been doing a very good job publishing and selling books, the whole process has been very *mela* centred. "This year, we have sold at least 30 books at the mela," informs Hussain. "But for the rest of the eleven months, we have practically no activity. We have noticed that most of our books do well during not only the Ekushey Boi *Mela*, but other book fairs as well. This is probably because of lack of proper promotion and advertising. For instance, the newspapers usually give us an affordable rate during the *mela* times to promote and advertise our books. However, for the rest of the year, it is not possible to go for the normal advertisement rates in the print media. If our readers are not informed of the upcoming books, there is no point in publishing them either."

The Ekushey Boi Mela 2008 has come to an end, but thanks to these publishing houses, a wide range of writing and Bangladeshi writers have been introduced to readers. As Christopher Morley had once mentioned, "There is no mistaking a real book when one meets it. It is like falling in love." ■