

EDITOR'S NOTE

HAY Festival is coming to Bangladesh for the second time and The Daily Star is privileged to be the title sponsor of this most important literary event. We are also delighted that Bangla Academy is hosting it at its beautiful and historic premises.

We have witnessed with considerable satisfaction and pride the steady but significant rise in Bangladesh of literary activities in English. Some of our writers are receiving global awards and many are being published abroad. There is new enthusiasm and vigour among our new writers and the growing confidence is becoming obvious.

Holding the Hay Festival in Dhaka now will greatly add to this process. It will also help the English speaking world to know more about Bangladeshi literature and writers. We are delighted that some World famous writers are attending this festival whose interactions with our local writers will, no doubt, help further the growth of literary activities here.

As Bangladesh moves forward in the world so must our literature. We and Hay Festival, working together, can make that happen.

Mahfuz Anam
Editor-Publisher
The Daily Star

What is Hay? Why does it matter?

SOMETIMES big ideas are born in ordinary places. The Hay Festival was one of them. Founded by Peter Florence's father around a kitchen table in the small Welsh town of Hay-on-Wye, the Hay festival, now 25 years old, is the pre-eminent global festival of literature and ideas.

Hay Festivals now take place all over the world. There are annual festivals in Colombia, Mexico, Spain, Lebanon, and many other locations. When the festival decided to come to Dhaka—on the suggestion of the former director of the British Council—we weren't sure what sort of audience we would get, or even if there was a hunger for a bilingual festival celebrating the diversity of Bangladeshi literature.

As it turns out, we were overwhelmed with the response. Not only did the audience enjoy listening to and interacting with the writers who came from afar, but they were also to interact with Bangla writers they had long been fans of. We realized that such a forum—a place where writers could speak frankly, even intimately, with an audience, answering questions about their work, their writing lives, and the things that inspire them—was an exciting new format for a Bangladeshi audience. The audience's enthusiasm led Hay Festival Director, Peter Florence, to declare the Dhaka festival "one of the most exciting debuts we've ever had."

We in Bangladesh are proud of our literary heritage. Literature is a central part of our identity, and we celebrate our literary heroes—Nazrul and Tagore in particular—with

This felt like an extraordinary moment and focus for the English language writers in Bangladesh. We've never had such a thrilling debut anywhere. I think we've all fallen for the city, and were captivated by the robust intellectual energy and joy of the audiences. At a stroke, it's leapt up the list of our international priorities and aspirations for development.

Peter Florence
Director Hay Festivals

devotion and enthusiasm. Our Annual Ekushay Boi Mela is one of the biggest book fairs in the world. But we rarely celebrate the rich diversity of the literature that is emerging from our shores today, and this is where the Hay Festival comes in. Over the course of our three-day festival, we will be showcasing over 60 Bangladeshi poets, playwrights, and short story writers. We will be holding panel discussions on translation, on fiction that breaks taboos, on Shakespeare, Nazrul, Tagore, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, and Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain. Our featured participants range from the very established—such as Syed Shamsul Haque—to those who are just starting on their journey as writers. Our own beloved authors will be joined by literary stars from all over the world—Vikram Seth, Kamila Shamsie, Mohammad Hanif, and Philip Hensher, among others. We hope to demonstrate to ourselves, and to the rest of the world, that Bangladesh doesn't just have a rich literary tradition, but a vibrant and living literary culture. Please join us on Friday and Saturday (16-17 November 2012) for our bi-lingual, cross-cultural, inter-generational celebration of literature and ideas.

Sadaf Saaz Siddiqi & Tahmima Anam, co-producers, Hay Festival Dhaka

WELCOME TO BANGLA ACADEMY

WE are delighted to host Hay Festival Dhaka 2012. The Bangla Academy's annual Ekushay Boimela, book fairs across the country, and book fairs held in London and New York, bring readers and writers together. A global literary event provides opportunities for everyone involved: writers, literary agents, publishers, translators, researchers and booklovers.

Most of us would never have the chance to meet Vikram Seth or Kamila Shamsie but Hay Festival makes it possible to share a stage with literary greats. More importantly, with the festival located at Bangla Academy it means greater exchange of ideas and the creation of brand new literary perspectives. It means greater cooperation and increased exposure for Bangladeshi writers. Bangla Academy is willing to host it permanently.

I am convinced Hay Festival Dhaka would equal Ekushay Boimela in importance.

Shamsuzzaman Khan
Director General
Bangla Academy



Snapshots from last year's Hay Festival Dhaka

PHOTOS: HAY FESTIVALS

Hay Festival Programme Highlights

We have a cornucopia of exciting events for you to sample. Expect to rub shoulders with legendary authors, poets and publishers. **Vikram Seth** and **David Davidar** share centre stage, **Kaiser Haq** brings his valuable expertise, **Shehan Karunatilaka**, **Kamila Shamsie**, and **Sandip Roy** explore the mysteries of cricket, veteran **Kuldip Nayar** leads by example, and the power couple of Bengali literature, **Syed Shamsul Haq** and **Anwara Syed Haq** join forces with **Hasan Azizul Haque**, **Shaheen Akhtar**, **Selina Hussein**, **Muhammed Zafar Iqbal**, and **Audity Falguni** along with **Farah Ghuznavi** and **Mahmud Rahman**, raise Bangladesh's profile in the literary world. **Nandita Das** and **Catherine Masud** find common cause, **Philip Hensher** and **Anisul Haque** bring their perspectives on war and its consequences. Poets **Gillian Clarke**, **Ruby Rahman** and **Arundhati Subramaniam** revel in powerful verses. **Mohammed Hanif** and **K. Anis Ahmed** are co-conspirators. Be inspired by Bangladesh on Seven Summits' **Wasfia Nazreen**, and Jaago's **Korvi Rakhshand**. **Debesh Ray** brings poetry and perspectives from across the border. Discover trends in the publishing world with **Diya Kar Hazra**, **Shruti Debi**, and **VK Karthika**. These are just some of the leading names who are part of the three-day long packed programme.



Beyond Hay

Nandita Das in her play 'Between The Lines' 7 pm, 13 November Radisson Blu, New Airport Road

Vikram Seth speaks about his book 'Two Lives' 11 pm, 18 November IUB Campus Bashundhara