



A FESTIVAL OF BOOK LOVERS

THE paper lamps adorned with Bangla letters, hanging from the branches of the old banyan tree on the Bangla Academy premise, is not merely a reminder of our love for our mother tongue. The lamps also symbolise how the Amar Ekushey Granthamela (February Book Fair), organised by the academy every year, continue to shine light on the darkness surrounding us in the form of political violence, terrorism, fundamentalism and other regressive elements of the society. Despite the risk of bomb attacks on the streets, people visit the fair everyday. Many even bring their children along. The book fair provides a respite from the routine chaos and worries in the city. People find refuge in books and in the wide open area of the Suhrawardy Udyan where a portion of the fair has been extended over the last two years. The Swadhinota Stombho, overlooking the fair at the Udyan, stands tall and proud reminding us of our heritage and of our language movement to protect our Bangalee identity. Though sales at the fair this year appear bleak so far compared to previous years, publishers have not given up hope yet. In fact, many are counting on the weekends for higher turnover. The sacrifice by the martyrs of the language movement in 1952, that ultimately paved the way for our independence in 1971, will not go in vain.

