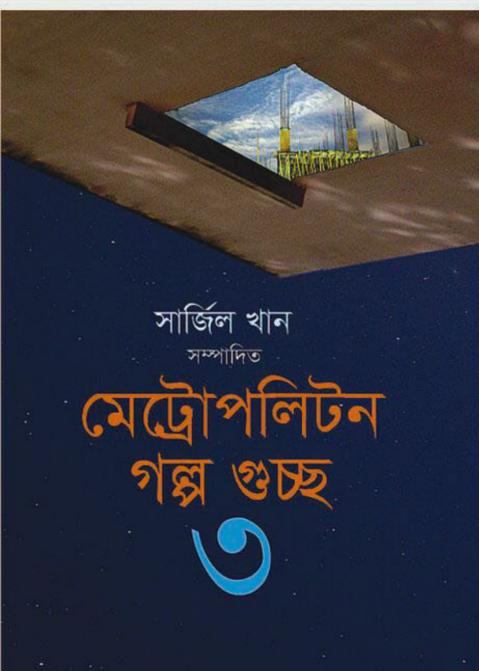


হাজি প্রকাশনী
৩৪ নর্থব্রুক স্ট্রিট, ঢাকা-১১০০



As the season comes to an end, of mouthwatering pithas, games of badminton and winter fashion wear, February brings to us books, language and love. What better gifts would one offer a loved one but books, on the first day of Phalgun and Valentine's Day? A visit to the Ekushey Boi Mela, happening right now at Bangla Academy and conversations with young writers, add to the cheerfulness of the weekend celebration.

PHOTO: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO, COURTESY



Metropolitan golpo guchcho - 3&4

ANIKA HOSSAIN

Among the many promising books featured in this year's Ekushey Boi Mela, the third and fourth books from the 'Metropolitan Golpo Guchcho,' series, compiled by writer Sharjil Khan, are quite popular. This year, the short stories that make up the series, were selected from the works of young previously unpublished writers who submitted their stories for a competition advertised in Somewhereinblog.net. "We chose the best out of the stories we received and the writers were given awards along with being published," says Sharjil Khan. "Among them was Zeeshan Mahmud who received the award for the best story. The books have no particular theme and incorporate stories from all genres- horror, science fiction, romance etc," he elaborates. "Books 3 and 4 that have come out in this year's Ekushey Boi Mela have been published by Borshadupur Publication."



Sharjil Khan has been a published author since 2013 and this year his horror novel 'Otrishsho' has been featured in the Boi Mela among a few others. "I have been looking forward to a few books by my fellow authors this year, A.P. Mahmud's 'Dhongsho,' Maruf Rahman's 'Laboni,' and Asif Mehedi's 'Maya,' are some of them," he informs us.

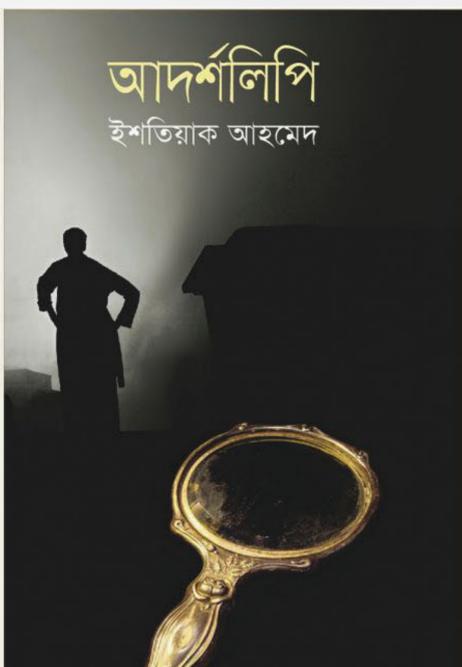
Adorsholipi

NAZIBA BASHER

Isteaque Ahmed is an author who has had his books published at the Ekushey Boi Mela for 7 years now. Starting from 2009, he has had one book published each year- 'Hotel Bonolota,' 'Nail Cutter' and 'Death Certificate' to name a few. This year, Isteaque's new book is 'Adorsholipi,' published by 'Jagriti Prokashoni.'



"Most of my books are about everyday life stories. I observe and listen a lot. Things I see, stories I hear, my own experiences-- these are what influences the stories in my books," says Isteaque. Isteaque would always look forward to books by the great Humayun Ahmed, every year during the Ekushey Boi Mela. Unfortunately, this year, he cannot look forward to new works from the late Maestro. "Since I don't have Humayun Ahmed's books, there aren't any particular new books that I'm looking forward to. But as an avid reader, I'm always excited about any new book," he says. "Every year, there is an abundance of new writers publishing their works in the Boi Mela as their debut, and it's always exciting to see so many new writers emerge and gather a readership."



MAYANAGAR chourasta

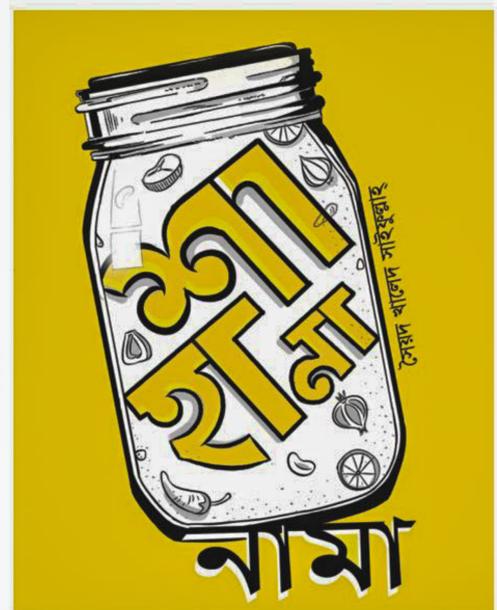
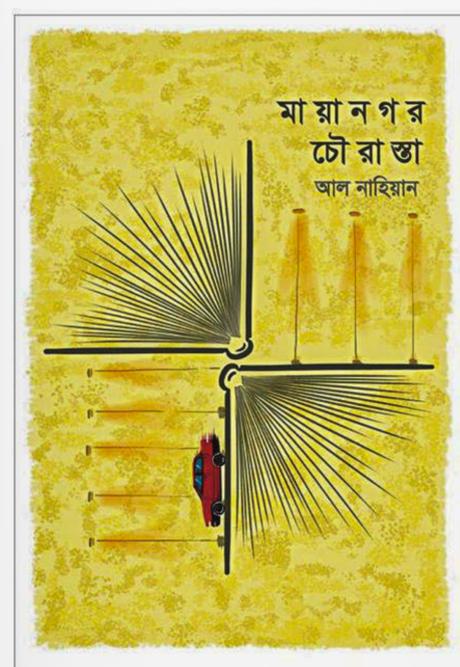
APURBA JAHANGIR

This year Ekushey Boi Mela featured many young writers. One of them, who is already being talked about widely is writer Al Nahian, for his third book 'Mayanogor Chourasta.' His previous books were a compilation of his short stories named 'Silent Call' and 'Nil Nidra Enterprise' which were well received by the readers.



Though 'Mayanogor Chourasta' is not his first publication, this is Al Nahian's first novel. "The novel is inspired by our everyday lifestyle, tiny details we live through which effects our individuality," says Al Nahian. "The plot is based on a boy and a family that he gets close to. The characters face different emotional hiccups which cause them to fall apart eventually." The cover of his book was designed by a young artist, Morshed Mishu.

As a reader Al Nahian is looking forward the new books emerging in the market. "Though a lot of my favourite writers are coming out with new books this year, I am particularly excited about the book 'Adarsha Lipi' by Isteaque Ahmed and 'Drihomukhi Boiraggyer Golpo' by Anik Khan," says Al Nahian.



Shahana-nama

ELITA KARIM

Syed Khaled Saifullah, might not be a name well known amongst Bangladeshi authors and writers, but his first published book 'Shahana-nama' has managed to catch readers' attention. Published by Barshadupur and launched at the Ekushey Boimela this year, 'Shahana-Nama' is a reflection of contemporary Bangladesh. "The story begins at a remote village where Shahana, a young local girl cooks for her houseguest," says Saifullah. "The guest is a progressive young man from Dhaka and as the story develops they end up having burgers at a fast-food street cart in Dhaka."



A perfect gift for Pehela Phalgun or Valentine's Day for a loved one, the theme of this love story would probably confuse readers, adds Saifullah. "Readers would probably try to figure out if the story is about love for food or the girl!" he says.

'Shahana-nama' has mouthwatering details of the food that the couple has on their routine dates and also captures the ambience of falling in love for the very first time -- illustrating the preparation, smells, presentation, taste of the food and of course the dozen red bangles worn by the young village beauty!

Clearly, 'Shahana-nama' will be a happy read for book-lovers, food-lovers, "and also for those who would like to read about love between two people," says Saifullah.

An avid reader, Saifullah also looks forward books at the Boimela this year, namely 'Adorsholipi' by Isteaque Ahmed, 'Unmade ek Jug' by Mehedi Haque and 'Ashok: grihomukhi boiraggyer golpo' by Anik Khan.