



SPECIAL FEATURE

An extravaganza of book stalls

You are not supposed to judge a book by its cover, you should definitely not judge one by the bookstore or book stall either. But they are indeed marketing tools that help draw attention to the readers. This year, one thing that is in vogue at Amar Ekushey Grantha Mela is the innovative designs of bookstalls.

Gone are the days where there would be a series of mundane booths. A handful of publishers have stepped up to create some unique and novel structures.

Books inside books

University Press Limited (UPL), in celebration of



completing 40 years, features the history of UPL (pictorial and in words) on one of its walls. Another side pays a tribute, through pictures and short descriptions, to the legendary intellectuals and authors of our country.

Two other sides visually portray an enlarged 3D version - made possible by using materials like plastic, wood, card board, etc. - of books stacked, just like it is in a bookshelf, with the names of books and authors on the binds.

Platform360 and Domus created the outlet. Nelyo I Hossain, Creative Head of Platform360, who have been involved in designing UPL's stalls for some years now, said, "Since Bangla Academy has extended the premises further, it is now possible to have a bigger space and play around with different ideas."

Nelyo also informed that the structure is a free-standing one: not fitted to the ground and



portable.

Upclose and personal

You would normally have to stand outside the stalls and see the books displayed. But a new trend is slowly making its mark: you could walk into the stall, much like you would do in permanent bookstores. The spacious outlets, such as those of UPL and Pathak Shamabesh, allow readers to walk inside and browse books. They also have a sitting arrangement in one corner.

A digital stall

Stalls have become more interactive. Journeyman Books, founded by Tariq Sujat, has aimed at making their outlet digital, in sync with the dream of Digital Bangladesh. Two kiosks stand in a corner, where you can browse for books, read an e-book and listen to audio books.

Meanwhile, a digital ticker tape signage labels the outlet. Another signage, in the form of a TV monitor, runs a slideshow of the books brought out by this publication. The books are on subjects like architecture, interior decor,



liberation war and genocide, etc.

Journeyman Books published the first ever book in Bangladesh to entail QR Code, named MCCI: A Journey, which is about the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The use of white in the interiors is apparent. Nazneen Haque Mimi, Interior Consultant, Journeyman, explains. "White represents purity and clarity. Books make people pure and enlightened at heart."

The use of windows is a basic theme of the outlet. There is an open window at the top, and the counter is also designed to resemble a window, complete with window grill. "Books are the window to a world of knowledge and joy," Mimi explained.

Out of the book

Fictional characters have made the time to visit

Boi Mela this year. The booth of Sisimpur features its merry muppet characters. Ribit, a science fiction hero, stands at the stall of Anindya Prokash.

Babu, Basic Ali and other graphic novel characters are at the rooftop of Panjeree Publications. It has also built a large, open comic book. The market for graphic novel is relatively small, but it is growing. "We want to instil a reading habit among children. The idea is to get kids interested," Kawser Hassan, Chairman, Panjeree Publications Ltd., explained.

Humayun Ahmed standing by the door



Anyaproakash has published numerous books written by the late Humayun Ahmed, one of the most read Bangladeshi authors of all time. Its stall pays tribute to the writer, featuring enlarged versions of pages from manuscripts, in his own handwriting.

There is an instalment of the author standing by the door. "Humayun Ahmed is looking at the Boi Mela," Mazharul Islam, CEO, Anyaproakash said about the artwork. "He was very enthusiastic about this fair. He had big ideas and dreams about it," says Islam, as he walks down memory lane.

Boi Mela is now held at bigger premises. And the innovation of book stalls is also one step forward.

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Photo: Shahrear Kabir Heemel