

WHAT'S ON

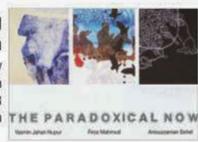
Amar Ekushey Book Fair 2015
 Venue: Bangla Academy Premises, Dhaka
 Date: February 1-28
 Time: 3-8pm & 11am-8pm (Fridays)



Documentary Screening
 Title: Living the Language
 Organiser: BDC
 Venue: Dhaka Art Centre
 Date: February 20
 Time: 5:30pm



Group Painting Exhibition
 Title: The Paradoxical Now
 Venue: Bengal Shilpalaya
 Date: Feb 10-23
 Time: 12pm-8pm



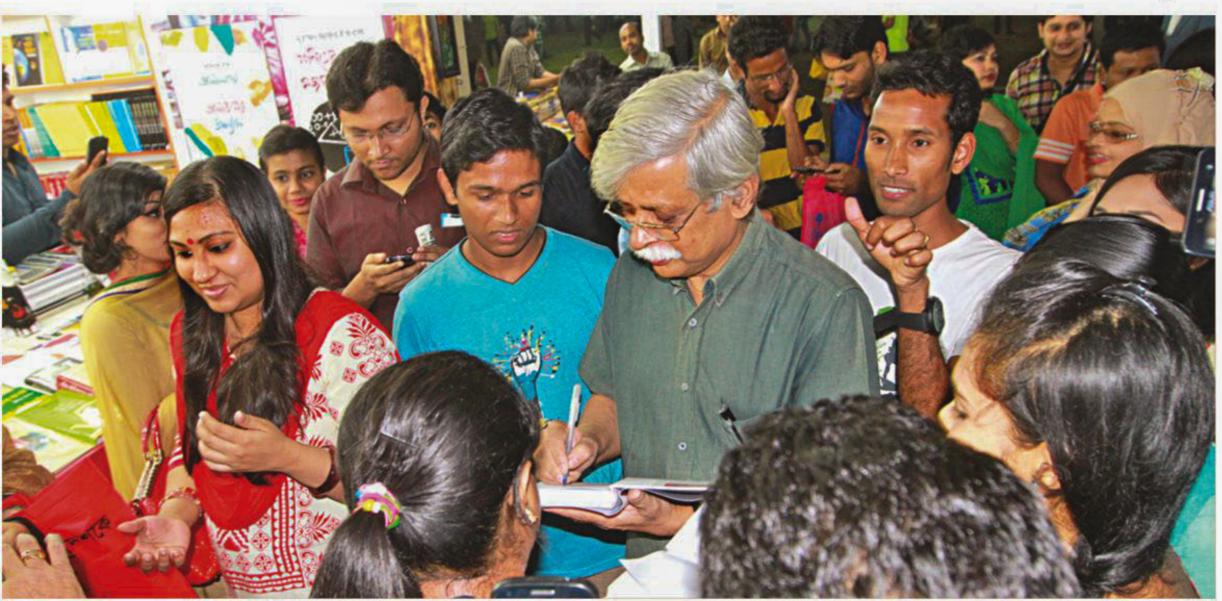
Group Painting Exhibition
 Title: Taste of Light and Darkness
 Venue: Alliance Francaise de Dhaka
 Time: 6pm
 Date: Feb 7-22



Kite Festival
 Ekusher Ghuri Utshab
 Organiser: Project Be
 Venue: Gulshan Youth Club
 Date: Feb 21
 Time: 3-6pm



"I feel a responsibility to write for children" ... Muhammed Zafar Iqbal



Fans surround the author at the fair for autographs.

SAURAV DEY

The ongoing Amar Ekushey Boi Mela is stepping into its third week. Every day, aside from the publishers and readers, writers are seen strolling through the fair grounds. On Wednesday evening, Professor Muhammed Zafar Iqbal was busy giving autographs to his readers and interacting with them. The Daily Star caught up with the writer for an interview while he was with his fans. Excerpts:

What does Ekush mean to you?
 Zafar Iqbal: I was born in 1952. I didn't see it through my eyes but Ekush, to me, is the Probat Feri

that later turned into an expression of protest against the Pakistan Government during the pre-liberation period. I can recall the February 21 of 1971. On that day, I, along with other students of Dhaka University marched barefoot towards Shaheed Minar. Nowadays, people join Probat Feri wearing shoes, but in the past everyone would walk barefoot.

How do you feel about this year's book fair?
 Zafar Iqbal: I have a soft corner for the fair. However, this time I think it's lacking the participation of people from outside Dhaka. They are not being able to join in and that's why I think it is a little

bit incomplete.

How do you revel in the incredible popularity you have among the youth?
 Zafar Iqbal: Sometimes I cannot figure out why the readers, especially children, love me so much. They love me, but in return I cannot give them anything other than my books. And for this reason, I always try to cater to their needs. Also I feel an urge and responsibility to do something for the children. As a writer and as a human being, it is my commitment that I will never do anything that lets my readers down.

How many books of yours were

launched at this fair?
 Zafar Iqbal: I wrote four books for this year's fair. A compilation of my columns also came out. I also wrote "Gram er Naam Kakondubi", a book depicting the torture that was inflicted on women during the Liberation War. It is like "Amar Bondhu Rashed", but is set in a village. Since it's a children's book, I had to be careful about a lot of things. Another book is a sci-fi named "Serina" and the other one is "Aro Tuntuni O Aro Chotachhu", which is a sequel. I never wrote a sequel before, but demands of readers made me write it.

"I forget everything when I sit down to write" ... Anisul Hoque

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Anisul Hoque is a noted litterateur, journalist and playwright. His books have earned him major awards, including the Bangla Academy Award. Some of his books have been published at this year's Ekushey Book Fair. The Daily Star recently interviewed the wordsmith.

How many of your novels are being published at the fair?
 Anisul Hoque: A novel "Prem" based on the love story of BUET students and anti-autocracy movement of the '80s. Publication house Prothoma is bringing it out. Besides, "Mayer Kache Fera", narrating the touching life of a mother will be published by Somoy. It is basically a humanistic story.

What are the new storybooks readers are getting from you this fair?
 Anisul Hoque: I have penned one named "Coffee-chumu", published by Pearl Publication. Some other write-ups on cartoon and columns are also in the pipeline.

Are you bringing out any special books marking your 50th birthday?
 Anisul Hoque: My 50th birthday will be celebrated in March this year. On the occasion, Somoy Prokashoni will bring out a book named "Priyo Panchash Naam", featuring some of my stories and novels, edited by Mostofa Sarwar Farooki.

What are your expectations from this fair?
 Anisul Hoque: Although the sale of the books is not booming due to the country's political situation, I hope that a good number of readers will throng the fair to browse books.

How do you view Suhrawardy Udyan as a venue for the fair?
 Anisul Hoque: I want to see all the book stalls at this ground, while meetings,

seminars and symposiums should be held on the Bangla Academy premises, so that the readers and publishers can get together.

Do you plan to visit the fair everyday?
 Anisul Hoque: I have been addicted to the fair for years. But this time I cannot visit the fair after February 18, as I will travel to



Canada and USA to attend book fairs there.

What do you want most as a writer?
 Anisul Hoque: Time is the only thing I need in abundance, to be honest, and it is really very tough to manage that in real life. I forget everything when I sit down to write.



TV WATCH

AMAR EKUSH on Maasranga

A scene from the TV play.

Staff Correspondent

While the new generation is forgetting our heritage and culture, one elderly man, Barkat, initiates a competition among his grandchildren ahead of Ekushey February, so that they revisit their language, glorious history and opulent culture. But while his grandchildren disappoint him, the young son of their domestic help, Russel, brings about a sense of accomplishment to him. And thus the story of "Amar Ekush", a special TV play surrounding Ekushey February, unravels.

Written by Anamika Mandal and directed by Tuhin Hossain, the play casts Syed Hasan Imam, Bijori Barkatullah, Intekhab Dinar, Saira, Sadaf, Prottoy and others. The drama will air at two minutes past midnight tonight on Maasranga Television.



Actress-director Tropa Mazumder – along with her family -- visits the stall of Ananya, one of the major publishing houses of the country, at the Amar Ekushey Boi Mela, where eminent novelist Imdadul Haq Milon signs a book. The fair is seeing a growing number of attendees everyday, including noted personalities from various fields of arts and literature.

IT'S TRUE!



Although the most iconic song of our Language Movement is Abdul Gaffer Chowdhury's "Amar Bhai'er Rokte Rangano Ekushey February", it was not the first song written on the historic incident. The first song was written and composed by Mosharraf Uddin Ahmed on February 24, 1952, and was titled "Mrrityu Ke Jara Tuchcho Korilo Bhasha Bachabar Torey".

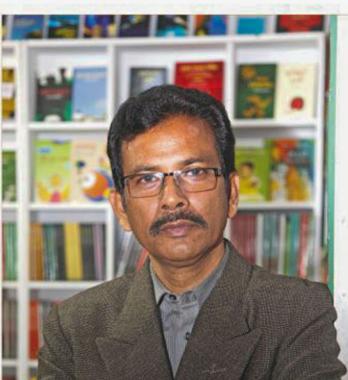
"More books on Ekushey should be penned" ... Farid Ahmed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Somoy is one of the prominent publication houses in the country. Former Executive Director of Bangladesh Gyan and Srijonshil Prokashak Samiti (an organisation of publishers), Farid Ahmed is the proprietor of the publication house. He earned immense fame as a publisher of creative books. Farid recently spoke to The Daily Star about Ekushey Boi Mela.

How many books are you bringing out this year?
 Farid: Around 60-70. Of them, the novel named "Bidhobadher Kotha" by Hasan Azizul Haque and science fiction "Serina" by acclaimed author Dr Muhammed Zafar Iqbal were published. Other books penned by Prof Muntasir Mamun, Shamsuzzaman Khan (Director General of Bangla Academy), Anisul Hoque, Communications Minister Obaidul Quader, Cultural Affairs Minister Asaduzzaman Noor and Finance Minister AMA Muhith, were brought out at this year's Ekushey Book Fair.

What does the book fair signify to you?
 Farid: It is like the lungs of publishers and readers. Publishers and readers cannot live without it. I think the fair is a fantastic congregation of authors, readers and publishers. This is the first time publishers were allowed to put up pavilions. What do you think of that?



Farid: It is definitely good news for publishers. Due to this, readers can easily browse their favourite books. Besides, the area allocated for stalls has been extended. We publishers are very happy with this arrangement.

It is titled Ekushey Boi Mela but why the books on Ekushey are rarely seen at the fair?
 Farid: I think it's because many of the writers who could write great books on Ekushey February have passed away, and maybe that's why such books are rarely published any more. But I think more books on Ekushey February should be written.

"Novels are selling most in the fair" ... Hasan Zayed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

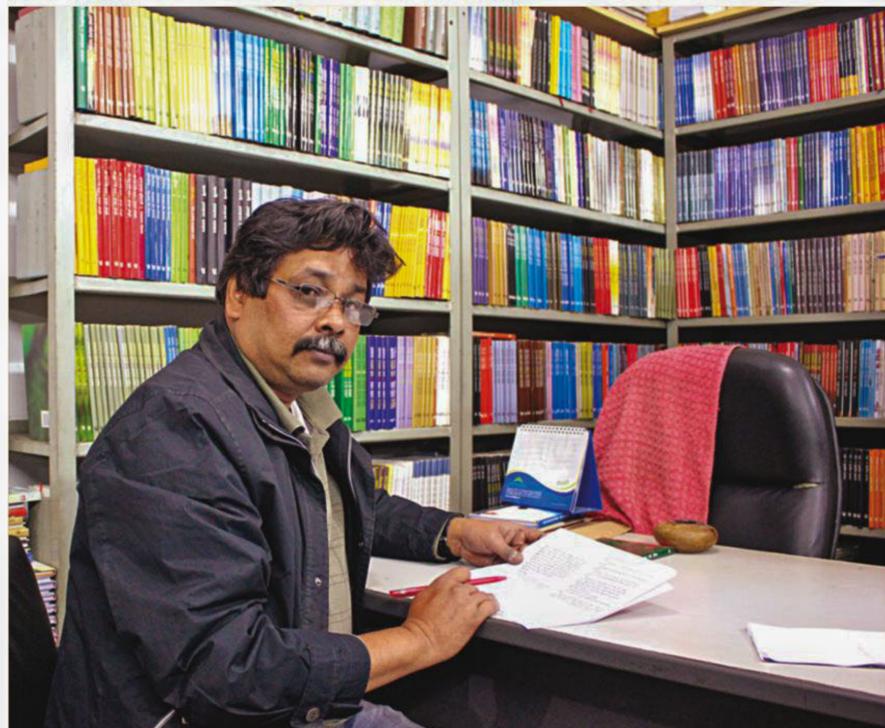
Starting from the first day of February, the month-long Amar Ekushey Book Fair is nearing its peak in the third week. Every day, people of all ages and of different tastes gather at the fair to buy books. About the book selling scenario of the fair, the correspondent spoke to Hasan Zayed, Publisher of Pearl Publications.

Excerpts:

How is the book fair running?
 Hasan Zayed: It is running well. Though it has not reached its peak yet a good number of crowd is coming every day. Many publishers are thinking that the fair is not running well while some others think it is on the right track. But I think its relative. Publishers with good books are doing well.

What kind of books sells most in the fair?
 Hasan Zayed: Novels are at the top of the list. Most readers prefer novels because of the lucidity and interesting plot. And, in comparison to novels, short stories are lagging behind, while poetry is incomprehensible to majority of readers.

People of which age group buy the most books?
 Hasan Zayed: People of late thirties buy the most books. Also, there are teenagers who buy lots



of books, mostly novels. Teenage novels are the bestselling books in this fair.

What are the major books from your publication house?
 Hasan Zayed: We are selling all types of books. Muhammed Zafar Iqbal's "Aro Tunatuni O Aro Chhotachhu" and Anisul Hoque's "Coffee Chumu" are the bestselling books of my publication.