



# Magic within ink and paper

Carl Sagan once said that books are proof that humans are capable of working magic. Dhaka city offers that magic for one whole month at the Ekushey Boi Mela. It is a major hub for readers of all ages in search of books that reflect such magic. Be it the latest novel by Muhammad Zafar Iqbal or the timeless poems of Rabindranath Tagore, this is where all readers leave with a stack of books in their hands and an air of self-satisfaction from discovering their favourite titles.

The Ekushey Boi Mela was inaugurated on February 1 at 6pm for the public. Due to the tragic occurrences last year, there is now the addition of police control rooms in every corner and stringent security at both the entrance and exit. However, any irritability from tight security has been more than compensated by the versatility of books that each stall had to offer.

Near the entrance, 'Roop Prokash' is the first stall that catches the eye. It is made from an array of bamboos and adorned in red and black colours. The stall consists of books such as 'Shushtho Heart Er Jonno' by Professor Shubhagoto Chowdhury to 'Adhunik Rupchorcha' by Moushumi Shaj, followed by various other books related to health and beauty.

Delving further in to the fair, one finds 'Nobojug Prokashoni' -- a large stall with a simple but spacious décor. They showcase an impressive collection of novels by Samarash Majumdar and the autobiography of the legendary actress Suchitra Sen by Ranjon Bongopadhyay.

University Press Limited has a unique

décor, a stall that resembles a stack of books kept together with a large entrance in the front. It is also one of the few stores that offer books in English.

'Banker to the poor' by Professor Muhammad Yunus is one of the many that is displayed along with other books regarding history and political affairs. The stall has large paper lanterns hanging from the top that provides an ethereal experience to the large crowd that teems inside.

For all those who enjoy light reading in their leisure and opt for humor, Panjeri Publication Limited is the store for them. This particular stall has an attractive design that includes animation of all its popular comics. There are large windows on each side that displayed an exclusive collection of comics that are in vogue. At each corner is the mascot of animated characters that catches the eyes of children, who tug their

parents' sleeves to take them to Panjeri.

'Nalonda' -- located at one end of the book fair -- is an expansive stall with a diverse collection of titles for adult readers, varying from novels to biographies. At the top, right next to the name of the stall, is a model version of all the recent books from the publication house.

A beautiful craftwork that is pleasing to the eyes, making a visit to their stall extremely worthwhile, 'Modhoma-Chetonay Jege Otha' is a small yet beautiful wooden store on the same row that features books regarding the 1971 Liberation War.

At the centre of the fair is a large banyan tree decorated with red fairy lights and underneath it, a fenced area for children to play. On its right is a stall that offers books of all renowned writers such as Anisul Hoque, Shumonta Islam and even the musi-

cal books of legendary Shonkor Roy. A beautiful image of timeless writer Humayan Ahmed followed by the quote 'Noyon amare paye na dekhite, royeche noyone noyone' is displayed on top as decoration.

Sisimpur carries out their decoration beautifully with a balcony on top displaying the characters from its famous show that has entertained children for years followed by a horde of anxious readers teeming outside the stall.

Like every year, Ekushey Boi Mela is a haven for avid readers throughout the country. Be it history or music, the innumerable stalls will not fail to provide the title that you are looking for. All you need is a few hours at hand and the thirst to venture in a quest to unearth the magic hidden among these very books.

By Mayesha Raidah  
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