

EXCLUSIVELY PLAYWRIGHTS

How many of us have contemplated on pages from Shakespeare while we were growing up? His character Shylock almost seemed to burst out of the pages and into our lives. How many of us have been afflicted by his tragic characters? So much can be said about this genius, but what about our own writers?

We have had a set of geniuses in the field as well and it is important that we look for their valued work at the Book Fair every year. The names you ask? – Michael Madhusudan Dutta, Munier Chowdhury, Nurul Momen, Selim Al Deen, Syed Waliullah, Anisul Hoque and Imdadul Haq Milon.

NOVELLAS BY HUMAYUN AHMED



If you are looking for a magical evening with an easy read that is also thought provoking, you are probably asking for a lot of things. But when it comes to Bengali literature, we are proud to have a writer who has given us all the above for many long years and that is none other than Humayun Ahmed. He is renowned for being able to grip his readers from the

beginning till the end. There is probably not a single person of the 90s generation who has not been mesmerised by his fictional characters like Himu, Misir Ali, and Shuvro.

TRAVELOGUES BY SYED MUJTABA ALI

Ali is a trail-blazer of a unique category of Bengali writing – travelogues. Ramya Rachana in the Bengali language, an anecdotal story-telling, often based on real-life experiences, became immensely popular, mostly because of the attractive writing style of Ali. Deshe Bideshe, the story of his journey to Kabul is one of Ali's best works and must be included in the 'must read' section.

SCIENCE FICTION BY MUHAMMAD ZAFAR IQBAL

Bengali science fiction is considered to have reached a new levels of literary sophistication with the contributions of Muhammed Zafar Iqbal. Iqbal wrote a story named 'Copotronic Sukh Dukkho' when he was a student of Dhaka University. This collection of science fiction stories gained immense popularity and the new trend of science fiction emerged among Bengali writers and readers. After his first compilation of short stories, Zafar Iqbal transformed his own science fiction cartoon strip Mohakashe Mohatras into a novel. All told, Muhammed Zafar Iqbal has written the greatest number of science fiction works in the canon of Bengali fiction.

COMPILATIONS BY ZAHIR RAIHAN

In addition to being a popular Bangladeshi novelist, writer and filmmaker, Zahir Raihan is possibly best known for his documentary 'Stop Genocide' made during the Bangladesh Liberation War. He was an active participant of the Language Movement of 1952; in 1971 he joined in the Liberation War of Bangladesh and created documentary films on those days. Few of his works of fiction are Hajar Bochor Dhore, Borof Gola Nodi, Shesh Bikel er Meye, Ekushey February, etc.

THE GREAT TAGORE

As Dr Rashid Askari once stated, "A complete and undivided Tagore is made up of the

combination of Calcutta and East Bengal, now Bangladesh." Having noted the point, Rabindranath Tagore is as grand a writer for us Bangladeshis as he is for West Bengal. Tagore's work has fortunately been highlighted by both the East and the West and as such his legacy strongly reverberates much after his death.

Each of his productions is a work of art and one just needs to get a head start in order to get engrossed in a good read.

THE BEST OF WEST BENGAL

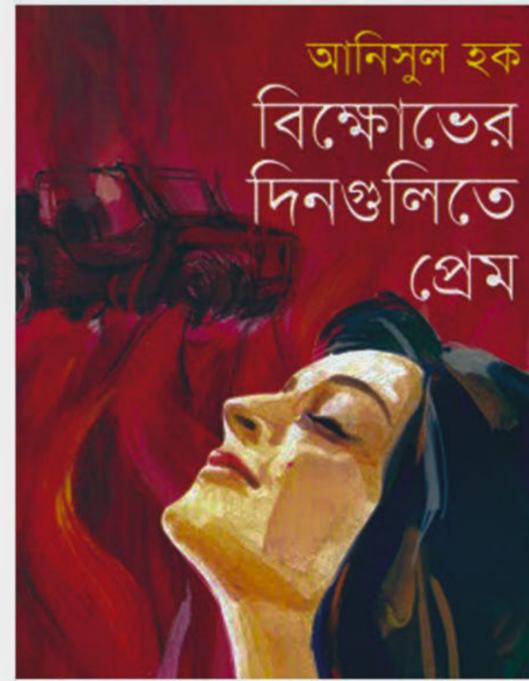
After Tagore there was a wide emptiness in the literary world which was ultimately filled by the shy and introvert poet and novelist Jibanananda Das.

While not particularly recognised initially, today Das is acknowledged as 'the premier poet of the post-Tagore era in India'.

It was only after his death that it was discovered that he also wrote novels. The findings are still going on and the publication still in progress.

Sarat Chandra Chatterjee was a prominent Bengali novelist and short story writer of the early 20th century. Most of his work deals with the lifestyle, tragedy, struggle of the villagers and the contemporary social practices that prevailed in Bengal.

Sensitive and daring, his novels captivated the hearts and minds of innumerable



readers both in Bengal and in the rest of India. His best known novels include Srikanta, Devdas, Srikanta, Parineeta, etc. Other noteworthy West Bengal writers are Bibhutibhusan Bandopadhyay, Shirshendu Mukhopadhyay, Buddhadeb Guha, Samaresh Majumdar, Buddhadeb Basu and Sunil Gangopadhyay.

WOMEN WRITERS

So have the women fallen behind in the literary scene? Not exactly, as we are glad to know that there are many in the thought provoking field that have us inspired indefinitely. Few names in this category are Begum Rokeya, Anwara Syed Haq, Jahanara Imam, Selina Hossain, Nilima Ibrahim and others.

A remarkable writer like Shahaduz Zaman, once pointed out, "Not many countries in the world hold book fairs so diligently year after year. It only happens in our beautiful Bangladesh but ironically the other countries have been producing noteworthy writers every year. Compared to them, how many have we been able to?"

Pondering on questions like this, let us hope to read more, understand more and write more ourselves – thought provoking pieces that would create a whole new generation of deep-rooted and well-rounded individuals.

By Mehrin Mubdi Chowdhury

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