

Your next favourite title now delivered at your door!

To a bookworm, the home is a fortress where every book is treated like blocks building up an armoury of reading materials! But to maintain this 'armoury', the book worm will inevitably have to leave the 'fortress', which at times can become quite a troublesome task.

One blessing of online shopping, in this case, is that now it extends into quality book shopping as well. The entire process of arriving at the book store, browsing through the shelves, selecting a title (or titles) and paying is now condensed within some keystrokes and a couple of clicks!

The urbanites of Bangladesh are no strangers to online shopping anymore. So it comes as no surprise that within the arc of the recent years, avid readers in Bangladesh found their silver lining with Rokomari.com.

Founded in 2012, this online book selling site is changing the scene of book shopping. An enviable assortment of local and foreign books is offered for sale, paired with monthly eye-catching discounts and offers alongside easy payment and return options - this site is out to ensure quality reading for all customers. Not only that, members can request for books which are not offered and the customer care will go the extra length in case something goes wrong.

Then of course we cannot forget the social network frontier, namely Facebook. Special exchange groups and a handful of sellers exist to cater to the reading needs of the masses. PaperTree, an almost one-year-old online Facebook-based book seller, is making quite a splash in the virtual book-buying scenario. Offering the latest foreign titles and now including stationery, this site is out to make a difference for the bookworms.

Fictions and best sellers aside, students and academics can look to rubibook.com for their text-book and reference needs. This site takes it one step further into including requests from sites like amazon.com. The delivery fees are steeper than the other sites mentioned but it promises the best possible service.

Online book buying and selling has yet go a long way in Bangladesh. Sellers still lack in variety and efficiency of service, to cope with this they try their utmost, with sincerity. Still it is an uphill battle. Who knows, Amazon.com --the holy grail of all things-- may not be that far away from appearing on the horizon! Bookworm, one of the most famous bookstores in Dhaka, also provides home delivery through their Facebook page. Their delivery is smooth and their collection of original books is one of the very best.

The 'Ekushe Boi Mela' has already begun and book lovers across Bangladesh are prepping for their annual trek.

Still, the clock only has 24 hours in a day and weekends pass so quickly. Worried you might miss your next new book from the Boi Mela, or troubled by the crowds of people? Or just simply not prepared to face the clogged roads? Your much coveted treasures bound in paper are waiting just on the other side of your screen. You are simply a few keystrokes away (or swipes) from your book related needs!

By Iris Farina



My language is the sweetest

I heard that I would hear people speak Bengali in its shops, restaurants, roads and alleys. I was told that I would see women shopping in sari and shalwar kameez, and men discussing international politics over shingara and steaming cups of tea. How many Bangladeshi expats would let go of a chance to experience Bangladesh away from it? I would never!

It was the summer of 2013, it was my first time in Jamaica, a neighbourhood in Queens, one of the five boroughs of New York City. I had heard so much about it from friends and relatives that I was convinced a summer vacation in NYC was incomplete without one trip to this diverse neighbourhood.

So on one scorching afternoon of May 2013, my family and I embarked on our exploration of Jamaica. As we left the subway station and began walking along its Hillside Avenue with our then nine-month-old daughter, I turned my head to see anyone who spoke Bengali. No language ever sounded sweeter than my mother language!

I spotted a group of young men standing on the pavement, chatting loudly in colloquial Bengali. I assumed that they hailed from different districts of Bangladesh, for they spoke in varied dialects. Their Bengali was not refined, but it did not bother me. It was the fact that they spoke my native language which lifted my spirits; their accent was an inconsequential matter altogether.

I did not care whether I understood anything that they said among each other; it was not my business either. Those hardworking young men's first language was also my first language - this was all that mattered.

One thing I have realised over my last eight years in the USA: it is often a source of delight when you meet someone who shares your mother tongue.

Whenever I hear Bengali in a public place, I look around to catch a glimpse of the person or people speaking it. I do not necessarily go up to the speakers and strike a conversation with them, but it gives me a feeling of contentment to hear my native language in an English-speaking country.

I also bond easily with people who speak my first language, which is also the reason why I have a large number of friends who have their roots in India's West Bengal. I cannot imagine anything that can be more satisfying than being able to express one's thoughts, feelings and opinions freely in one's own language.

No matter how much I speak or write in English, it is

always Bengali that I use to pour my heart out. I taught my daughter, who was born in America, to speak Bengali first. I strongly believed that it would be unfair not to expose my child to the world's sweetest language.

My child struggled during her first two years in pre-school. But I was not worried, because I knew nobody and nothing could stop her from learning English if she grew up in this country. I think there will come a day when she will thank me for teaching her the

language, the only language on earth that was secured through blood and struggle.

My Bengali-speaking American daughter learned to speak English when she was nearly four.

With its rich vocabulary and the richness of emotional expressions that it offers its speakers, Bengali is the sweetest of all languages. If you do not speak Bengali then you might think that I am being extremely biased, but I bet you will change your mind, if you ever learn to speak it!

By Wara Karim

Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed

