

# Top five book stores in Dhaka

No matter how convenient tablets and e-readers are, for most bookworms the feel of a real book, the aroma of the new pages, and the touch and feel of a "real" book is unbeatable. To help those of you specifically - the reader - along the way, here are the best book stores in the city the touchscreen cannot replace.

## PATHAK SHAMABESH

This 30-year-old gem of a store is a must-visit for every book lover. With an outstanding collection of classics and latest titles (both in English and Bengali), Pathak Shamabesh maintains the best possible offerings.

Aside from the stores in Gulshan and Aziz Super Market in Shahbag, the Pathak Shamabesh Centre in the annex building of the National Museum is a welcome sight for readers. The Centre is often visited by acclaimed writers and poets, which is an added plus!

## ZENAT BOOK SUPPLIES LTD

One of the oldest on this list, this quaint little bookstore in New Market is one of the landmarks for book lovers. Established way back in the 60s, Zenat Book Supplies has not fallen behind times in offering the latest titles. It also takes orders from loyal customers in case a title is not in stock. For classic titles to sought after best sellers, Zenat delivers with quality.

## GYANKOSH

Considering book prices, Gyankosh can be seen as the middle ground where book lovers can keep up reading without breaking their budget. Placed in Sobhanbagh Masjid Market as well as beside the Dhanmondi Alliance Française, this store offers titles both in Bengali and English as well as magazines, text books, children's activity books and toys.

For casual (and serious) visitors one tip is to always go through their 'On Discount' selections - you never know what treasure can hide in there!

## BOOKWORM

A sought after store by the young people, Bookworm is typically identified as the store 'Next to the Mig-21 before reaching Jahangir Gate.' Armed with much adored 'Young Adult' titles, best in self-help and inspirational books, and with a varied classic English selection - Bookworm is here to take care of all reading needs.

For new visitors, do not let the outside store size fool you! The ever helpful and friendly staff are a notable mention for this store.

## NILKHET

Second-hand, used books haven - no one can leave out Nilkhet from their list of places to visit for books. Nilkhet comprises a multitude of stores, which have catered to the students from kindergarten to post graduates to people prepping for GMAT or TOEFL.

Even foreign language titles in their original version are available with a bit of searching. It's not just the stores and the maze like structure of the place the book sellers on the foot path also have their own set of wares for the bargain hunters. Fair bit of warning though - this is not the best place for first time buyers.

Standing in the moment that we are in, it's easier to connect with the sellers and suppliers like never before. So picking out your next favourite book store may only be a matter of clicking the right link!

By Iris Farina



## SPECIAL FEATURE

# Art spaces in Dhanmondi

When asked about the purpose of art, Pablo Picasso was perhaps the one who said it best - Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life.

As time goes by, the status of art in our lives takes on a new importance - it is a way of communicating the incommunicable. An artist provides through their work, a glimpse of a radically different thought process from the observer and they allow one to step outside of oneself and experience ideas, thoughts and viewpoints which are alien.

Thus, in a city like Dhaka, where one is forced to contend against the grinding frustrations of the day to day, one must often seek respite in art and through it find catharsis.



Thankfully, there are now more and more places than ever before devoted to showcasing art and culture and some of the best in the city can be found in Dhanmondi. Acting as a hub for creative individuals from all over the city, Dhanmondi hides within its tree-lined promenades, theatres for photography, painting, sculpture as well as other cultural institutions.

Fazle Rabbi Sakil, an aspiring photographer of Dhaka, shares his thoughts: The cultural scene of Dhanmondi has evolved quite a lot in recent years. Thanks to the exhibition halls and galleries who have been patronising local and international independent artists. A new way of cre-

ative revolution has begun and a lot of young amateur artists are joining the movement breaking the circle. This is so inspiring to see that city dwellers are getting more exposed to arts in all forms and connecting with the creators.

Chhayanaut has long been considered one of the foremost institutions for the teaching of classical music in Dhaka. Located on Satmasjid Road, Chhayanaut offers classes in Rabindra Sangeet, Lalon Geeti and Nazrul Sangeet. Aside from classes, the renowned institute often hosts a variety of plays and soirees.

Recently, a new contender on the Dhanmondi cultural scene is the premises of MIB. Located in Dhanmondi

10/A, the offices of MIB host a fair for online businesses every quarter. Titled spring, summer, fall and winter meet-ups, these events have become the talk of the town and are eagerly anticipated by the denizens of Dhanmondi.

One cannot write an article about cultural spaces in Dhanmondi without mentioning Drik Gallery. Situated opposite to Nando's at Dhanmondi Road #27, Drik Gallery hosts numerous events throughout the year, most centred on the exhibition of photography.

A strong and widely influential network of photographers has formed around Drik Gallery and seeing their work will certainly leave you with a new per-

spective. Aside from photography exhibitions, Drik Gallery, as well as the other art galleries in Dhanmondi, such as Bengal Art Lounge, Chitrak and Gallery 21, all host a variety of exhibitions from poetry and literary events to painting and even numerous fairs throughout the year.

The EMK Centre is located just up the road from Rapa Plaza and hosts a number of cultural events throughout the year. They host exhibitions, workshops, plays as well as concerts for people to enjoy almost every day. Notably, they offer a number of classes to help Bangladeshi students study abroad and if you have a dream like that, then you should not hesitate to apply.

Different embassies throughout Dhanmondi offer us a glimpse into the world. The Russian Centre of Science and Culture in Dhaka has events going on throughout the year. They offer classes in Karate, with professional trainers and they offer courses even for absolute beginners.

Alliance Française has long been a place where French culture is promoted and they often have events showcasing movies, music and photography. They offer classes in French, as well as for a number of classical instruments including piano and guitar.

Goethe-Institut, named after Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, serves a similar role, broadcasting the depth and beauty of Germany and its history. They offer classes in German as well as the opportunity to take exams to test your fluency in the language.

Art is one of the most important facets of being human and it allows us a greater grasp of the lives and minds of others. These art spaces perform an important role in the lives of the people of Dhaka, and especially the people of Dhanmondi, allowing us to imbibe the qualities and richness of the past so that we can create a brighter future.

By Mormee Mahtab  
Photo courtesy: MIB