



PHOTOS: ORCHID CHAKMA



# New hub for book lovers



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Are you bored of hanging out at overpriced restaurants and dingy cafes? Are you tired of judgmental gazes of the shopkeepers everytime you linger around in a bookstore? I surely am. As a bookworm, I have always dreamt of a place with shelves after shelves where I could just grab a book, a steaming cup of coffee and forget about the rest of the world.

Bengal Boi is possibly everything our bibliophile hearts ever wanted.

Unlike the conventional bookstores, Bengal Boi offers an overwhelming experience the moment you step into the two-storied bookstore. The spacious outlet hosts two separate sections for adults and kids. Each of the two sections has its own dedicated floor with apt themes and floor designs. The adult section has a wide assortment of novels - from classics to contemporary, from fiction to journals. The richness of the gargantuan collection is truly worth being excited about. While it offers more variety of Bengali literature over English, for apparent reasons, I must say that I found several English hardbacks and rare books/journals that I could not find elsewhere. So it is definitely worth the visit.

But the best part about Bengal Boi, for me, is the library-esque reading space. Unlike other major bookstores, Bengal Boi gives its readers the option of selecting a book and reading it there without having to purchase it or becoming a member. They even have a small barista serving coffee right next to the balcony so that you can sip coffee in a scenic environment and immerse into your favourite book. So I can easily see myself and other avid readers like me spending countless hours in the solitude of books or biding time here while waiting for others.

The most unique feature of this contemporary bookstore has to be the kids' section. The sprawling floor is brightly painted and beautifully decorated to intrigue children.

The ambience is super fun and children-friendly. There are textbooks, storybooks and novels for both preschool and school-going kids of all ages. The genres range from simple nursery rhymes for younger children to humour and horror for relatively older readers.

Educational cartoon and animated videos on Bangla alphabets, rhymes, simple mathematics etc. are constantly playing on multiple projectors. There are amusing sitting arrangements like circular wall cut-outs with resting pillows (which have instead become a trending Instagram material) or colourful mattresses toys so that parents can bring in their children for a fun yet educational day out.



Bengal Boi provides Dhakaites with a pleasant much-needed getaway from the hustle and bustle of the urban life. This extraordinary initiative gives parents a place where they can take their children to foster a reading habit in them from early on. It can easily become the hub of booklovers who can come together and share their ideas, have stimulating conversation or just talk about their interests.

Bengal Boi is certainly a whiff of fresh air for this generation of bookworms and the ones to come.

*Nafis Intiaz Onish believes grinning is the answer to everything and avidly loves art, astronomy & all things nerdy. Send him Carl Sagan fan art at nafisintiaz17@gmail.com*