

With passion for books, they serve

MATHEWS CHIRAN

For Erin, the love for books began at an early age.

The university student is not just an avid reader, if given the opportunity, she would spend the entire day amid books.

And, it is the love that motivated her to participate in this year's Amar Ekushey Granthamela as a part-time salesperson.

"I was looking forward to engage myself in something that will help me gain experience and provide me financial support," said Erin Jahan, a third-year student at a college under National University. She works at the stall of Anya Prokash.

"It's a great opportunity. Various publishers hire students like me during the book fair. I not only get to learn about customer service while working, but also get to interact with booklovers," she told this correspondent yesterday.

The student from Natore lives at a hostel with other female students at Mirpur. "I get paid for the work as well. My parents also welcomed the opportunity."

She is also a member of a group called "Himur Paribahan", a fan club of Humayun Ahmed's writings.

"But most importantly, I'm an avid fan of Humayun Ahmed. We sell many of his timeless books here. I get to relive them..." she added.

Not just Erin, many university stu-



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Students, working as part-time salespersons, helping booklovers pick their favourites. The photo was taken at a stall at Suhrawardy Udyana yesterday.

dents are working at various publication houses. The Ekushey book fair provides them an opportunity to work part-time as a salesperson.

Mohasina Akter Sithy was helping a visitor choose a book at Gono Prokashon publication.

The student of East West University said, "This is the first time I'm working at the book fair. This is a great opportunity. I get to read books and interact with many."

"The honorarium helps too," she said smilingly. "I feel safe working here. The security is well maintained."

Dhaka University student, Mousumi Khatun, works at Kagoj Prokason. She said, "I work from 3:00pm to 9:00pm. Since my classes are in the morning, I have no trouble working. Many of my friends are working at other stalls. To us, the book fair is like a month-long 'adda'."

"Though the pressure increases during the holidays and weekends, it's fun to see so many booklovers at the fair..." said Saching Prue Marma, a student at Dhaka State College. Saching works at Prokriti publication.

The book fair is also an opportunity for them to meet their favourite authors.

National University student Nymul Haque would never forget the first time he met writers Muhammed Zafar Iqbal and Anisul Hoque.

"When they came to our stall, I did



A boatload of people, mostly students, is set to cross the Buriganga river from Sadarghat area. Putting their lives at risk, many students from Kamrangirchar and Keraniganj use this mode of transport to come to this side of the river to attend school every day. Moreover, these small boats make their way through the river dodging large passenger vessels, running the risk of getting hit anytime. The photo was taken yesterday.

33PC WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN POLITICAL PARTIES

Still a distant dream

UNB, Dhaka

The country's registered political parties are struggling to keep 33 percent of their committed positions reserved for women by 2020 in line with the conditions outlined during their registration with the Election Commission (EC).

This frustrating scenario came in the limelight when 37 political parties, out of 40, submitted their progress reports to the EC.

Among the major political parties, Awami League (AL) has so far filled 19 percent of all committee positions with women in the last nine years while BNP 15 percent and Jatiya Party 20 percent.

As per the Article 90B of the Representation of the People Order (RPO) 1972, a registered political party will have to fix the goal of reserving at least 33 percent of all committee positions for women, including the central committee, and successively achieving

this goal by 2020.

While being registered with the EC first in 2008 during the two-year caretaker government, the political parties promised to achieve the goal.

In June 2017, the EC first sent letters to 40 parties requesting them to place their progress reports. The EC has recently prepared a report compiling the information received from the political parties.

All the parties, except for Gono Forum, Oikyabodha Nagorik Andolan and Bangladesh Tarikat Federation, submitted their progress reports within the extended deadline that expired in last November.

Only Gono Front claimed that they have ensured 33 percent of the committee positions for women.

EC acting secretary Helaluddin Ahmed said they had received progress reports from 37 parties while the remaining others sought more time.

The Commission gathered the information from the political parties to know the latest condition of women representation in their committees as the deadline is almost near, he added.

As per the EC's compiled report, AL has 15 women in its 81-member central working committee. Besides, the party has 16 female lawmakers who were directly elected and 42 lawmakers from reserved seats for women in parliament.

BNP said the percentage of women in all committees is 15, but they did not elaborate further.

National People's Party has 20 percent women in its central committee, while Ganatantrik Party has 15 percent, Jatiya Ganatantrik Party (Jagpa) has 12 percent, Bangladesh Muslim League has six percent and Bangladesh Islami Front has one percent women.

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) said they did not get expected response

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Hajj pilgrimage airfare fixed at Tk 1.3 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The airfare for the hajj pilgrims this year has been fixed at US \$1,575 or around Tk 1.3 lakh each.

The government is also going to fix the lowest price of the total hajj package next week.

Civil aviation and tourism ministry approved the fare yesterday, said a circular issued by the ministry's Senior Assistant Secretary Md Abdur Rashid.

Based on the exchange rate of the US dollars during the issuance of ticket, the fare on Dhaka-Jeddah and Madina-Dhaka routes will be fixed in taka, according to the circular.

The airfare will be

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