



PHOTO: MONON MUNTAKA

A Day at the Ekushey Boi Mela 2019

FAHIM IMTIAZ

Dressed in a black and white panjabi, I was excited to go to the Ekushey Boi Mela for the first time. I was prepared for the hustle and bustle that I was told would ensue, even a distance away from the venue. It was surprising to see however, that the streets were not too busy. The road leading to Bangla Academy was blocked off, and only a few groups of people were walking in. Making a mental note to return during the weekend, I walked into the venue.

The gates had just been opened around 3 pm in the afternoon and people were only beginning to crowd the place. It was like being in a gigantic outdoor library. The smell of fresh new pages wafted through the air. The stage near the entrance to Bangla Academy, then empty, is where puppet shows and other performances would be held during the week-ends. A smaller stage and a sitting area for the audience was designated for interactive sessions with guest speakers. Most people were crowding around the stalls, flipping through the pages, looking for books to buy. I browsed

through the stalls, looking through their collections. Many books were written by first-time young authors. I was looking to buy some English novels written by our local authors but unfortunately, there were not many of those. There were however, some Bangla translations of popular novels by internationally acclaimed writers such as Haruki Murakami and others.

Next, I slowly made my way to Suhrawardy Udyan. I found stalls owned by a plethora of different publication houses there, including Shomoy Prokashon, the publisher of many new authors each year, Anyaprokash, the pub-

lisher of several Humayun Ahmed and Muhammad Zafar Iqbal novels, Academic Press and Publishers Library and Borshadupur Books among several others. Some stalls were creatively decorated- one was fashioned into a small hut made of hay, another selling children's books had cartoons painted all over. Many were ornamented with fairy lights of different colours. A small area with Sisimpur cartoons drawn on the fences was enclosed around a tree where children ran around and played.

As the sunset turned into just a splash of

orange and pink across the horizon, visitors sat on the benches around the Shadhinota Stambha, admiring its spectacular hues. Once the winter evening began to set in, people wrapped their shawls around themselves, putting on their jackets and sweaters or just huddling a little closer to each other. The lights were turned on and the fountains came to life. The sounds of excited children filled the air as people brought out their cameras, capturing the beautiful moments. I would have taken a picture myself, but I don't think a digitally captured image could do justice to it all.

BYLC Career Fair Connecting new graduates to employers

SANJIDA CHOWDHURY

With the theme, 'Gateway to A Successful Career', the Office of Professional Development (OPD) of Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center (BYLC) hosted their third career fair on February 7, 2019. The fair brought together nearly 300 students and 26 national and international organisations under one roof with the support of the Aga Khan Foundation Bangladesh and the Rizwan Adatia Foundation.

The pursuit for skilled graduates seems to be a ceaseless quest for employers. The event created a platform where recruiters and job seekers interacted with each other and bridged the gap between the supply and demand sides of skills. Employers informed the students about different job posts, their future prospects, required skills for the jobs, and existing recruitment systems to take on graduates.

The State Minister of the Ministry of Power, Energy, and Mineral Resources, Nasrul Hamid was present as the chief guest at the inauguration. He said, "BYLC is doing a remarkable job of instilling



PHOTO: COURTESY

The chief guest, State Minister for the Ministry of Power, Energy, and Mineral Resources, Nasrul Hamid (3rd from right), with the BYLC team at the inauguration ceremony.

critical thinking and leadership skills in young people, and creating economic opportunities by facilitating important connections between employers and job-seekers." In addition, Ejaz Ahmad, President of BYLC, mentioned how the OPD works to improve the livelihoods of

the youth by providing professional skills development training, placement opportunities and online learning services.

More than 70 HR professionals were present at the venue to assess students. They took spot interviews to evaluate students' subjective knowledge, cognitive

and humane qualities, and professional skills. It also featured two panel discussion sessions where some of the market experts of the country talked about reducing youth unemployment rate and developing institutional capacity to produce a better labour force.

With a view to make information about employment opportunities more available to fresh graduates, the OPD of BYLC invited several leading organisations of the country. The participating organisations included Banglalink, Renata Limited, Shohoz, PRAN-RFL, JAAGO Foundation, Mutual Trust Bank Limited, Dhaka Bank Limited, Aamra Technologies Limited, Green Delta Insurance, BRAC, KAZI IT, ActionAid Bangladesh, Sajida Foundation, Grameenphone, Amann Bangladesh, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, The German Academic Exchange Service or DAAD, Goethe-Institute Bangladesh, Mohammadi Group, LankaBangla Finance, Cosmos Group, UNB, mPower Social Enterprises Limited and Reckitt Benckiser Bangladesh Limited.



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YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

Aga Khan Foundation International Scholarship 2019-20



The Aga Khan Foundation provides a limited number of scholarships each year for postgraduate studies to outstanding students from select developing countries who have no other means of financing their studies. Bangladeshi applicants must submit their pre-application forms by the deadline below.

DEADLINE: March 8, 2019 | Scholarship

Bangladesh Stockholm Junior Water Prize 2019

The Stockholm Junior Water Prize, Bangladesh (SJWPBD), is a national competition where the winning team represents Bangladesh at the Stockholm Junior Water Prize in Sweden. Participants from more than 30 countries compete in the international finals.

DEADLINE: March 10, 2019 | Competition

AnitaB.org scholarship awardees to attend Grace Hopper Celebration 2019

Grace Hopper Celebration is the world's largest gathering of women technologists. It is organised by AnitaB.org and presented in partnership with ACM. GHC scholarships cover registration, travel, hotel, and meal expenses for students and faculty members to attend the three-day celebration.

DEADLINE: March 6, 2019 | Scholarship

ASHLEY SHOPTORSHI SAMADDAR

Counter Foto – A Center for Visual Arts has organised a set of programmes to celebrate its 6th anniversary from February 10, 2019. The programmes include an exhibition titled 'PARK-in Place for Public' with photographs from senior students of the institution. The exhibition is curated by artist Wakilur Rahman and Mahmuda Tuli. 80 photographs, clicked by the students, are being exhibited at Counter Foto's Mirpur campus. The exhibition is open for all till March 10, 2019, from 11 am to 8 pm. A myriad of programmes including artist talks, panel discussions, workshops, portfolio reviews and cultural programmes were also scheduled.

The celebrations started off with the inauguration of 'PARK-in Place for Public', at Counter Foto's Mirpur campus. The exhibition was opened by the former chairman of the University Grants Commission, Professor Nazrul Islam. A number of renowned photographers from Bangladesh and abroad were present at the inauguration. Saiful Huq Omi, Principal, Counter Foto – A Center for Visual Arts, was also present.



PHOTO: PIYAS BISWAS

Professor Nazrul Islam examining the photographs on display.

"When such photographs are exhibited, it helps the government to learn which sectors need improvements," said Nazrul Islam. "I appreciate the focus on parks and request them to start something similar in the rural villages as the government plans to introduce

urban facilities in the countryside soon."

Photographers, activists and cultural personalities were also present at the artist talks and panel discussions each evening from 5 pm to 8 pm, running from February 10 to 13 at Bishwo Shahitto Kendro.

Significant among the events were the artist talks from Indian photographers Altaf Qadri and Arko Datto.

On the eve of the anniversary, the team organised two international master-class workshops and a portfolio review consisting of a panel of three international photographers for reviewing works of young and upcoming photographers. The reviewers were Arko Datto, Sumit Dayal and Altaf Qadri. A book show was also arranged at Counter Foto's Mirpur campus. A discussion and keynote speech by journalist Faruk Wasif titled 'Perilous water trail of refugees, the expendable lives and the gaze of the Rohingyas' on Saiful Huq Omi's book, 136: *I am Rohingya*, was also scheduled on that day. The celebrations conclude today with an evening of classical music at Counter Foto's Uttara campus.