



ILLUSTRATION: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

SPOTLIGHT

Conversations with young authors of Ekushey Boi Mela

SADIA TAHSIN & MAISHA ISLAM MONA-MEE

The Ekushey Boi Mela provides ample opportunities for young authors to showcase their talents. Star Youth, The Daily Star, caught up with seven such authors to find out about their aspirations, and more.

Yusuf Munna compiled a Bangla translation of authors Hector Garcia and Francesc Miralles' "Ikigai: The Japanese Secret to a Long and Happy Life" for this year's Boi Mela. "More often than not, publishers are curious to read manuscripts by young writers," he shared. Yusuf has been writing for blogs and daily newspapers for the past six years. Published by Adarsha, the translated book is priced at BDT 200.

"Jhahin Shyaola", a novel about gender roles and the struggles of marginalised communities living at refugee camps, is written by young author Owakila Tabassum Mumu. The book is told from the perspective of a woman. Mumu wants to do something to help marginalised communities, moving forward. "Jhahin

Shyaola", published by Chaitonno, is available at the Boi Mela for BDT 300.

The second volume of Antik Mahmud and Oishik Jawad's comic book, "Noman", was released this year. Both of them shared that seeing people accept their book with so much love is immensely rewarding. "Online classes gave me the time to work on this book, and since I have worked on quite a few comic books before, it was easy for me to keep a balance between my studies and writing," shares Oishik. Their comic book, published by Adarsha, is priced at BDT 240.

Artist sisters Shahnuruma Shantona and Shahrina Shantuma's comic book, "Agnijodhha", is an action drama about Augnila, daughter of a fire-fighter. "Agnijodhha" is their first ever serialised book. "The process was challenging amidst the pandemic, but our publisher and editor are very supportive," shared Shahnuruma. Backed by Panjeree Publications Ltd, "Agnijodhha" is available for BDT 120.

"The pandemic and the subsequent months of isolation provided me with plenty of time

to come up with new ideas, and reflect upon my plans," shared Pias Majid, whose books, "Hridoy Gallery" (Ananya Prokashoni, BDT 188), "Muhurmuhu Miu Miu" (Boibhob, BDT 188), "Rimjim Mangsobitan" (Onnopokash, BDT 188), "Amar Cinemaghor" (Oitijhya, BDT 225), and "Mirza Galib Street" (Oitijhya, BDT 105) were released this year.

"I love writing stories based on real life, memories and dreams," said Ruhul Amin, author of the books, "Moddhobitto" (Pencil Publications) and "Pita" (Onnopokash). "Appreciation from readers encourages writers to come up with new stories, and validates their hard work. Technological advancements are a great help for us in our writing process today." "Moddhobitto" and "Pita" are available for BDT 139 and BDT 225, respectively.

The authors are respectively: marketing student from North South University, sadiatahsin98@gmail.com; freelance journalist, mislammona-mee@gmail.com.

FYI: FOR YOUR INFORMATION

The Mercury crater named after Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin

RASHEEK TABASSUM MONDIRA

Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin is considered to be the founding father of Bangladeshi modern art.

In July 2009, a crater on the planet Mercury, was named 'Abedin', after him. It is 116 km in diameter. Photos of the crater were taken by the MESSENGER Spacecraft. MESSENGER was a NASA robotic space probe that orbited Mercury between 2011 and 2015, studying the planet's chemical composition, geology, and magnetic field.

"I was informed about the crater for the first time in 2015, then I looked into it and found several news on this," shares Mainul Abedin, youngest son of Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin. "In 2017, I made several banners to promote this historic event and distributed the banners in different districts and institutions across the country."

"Young generation doesn't know about the Abedin crater and I think everyone should be informed about this," expresses Mainul Abedin. "Not just us, but the whole of Bangladesh is proud of how a crater in Mercury bears the name of Shilpacharya, commemorating his life's works."



ILLUSTRATION: YAFIZ SIDDIQUI

Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin.

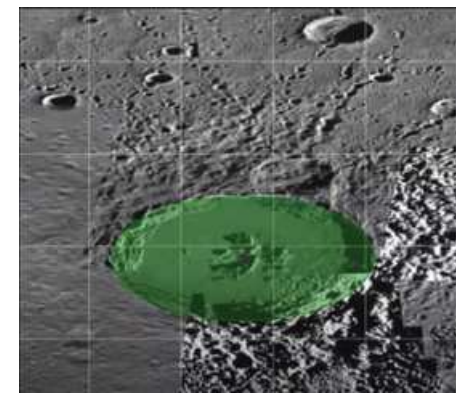


PHOTO: COLLECTED

Abedin crater on planet Mercury.

The Abedin crater, with a center Latitude of 61.7° and a center Longitude of 349.3° E, is one of its kind, just like the maestro. The crater floor is covered with once-molten rock melted by the impact event that formed it. The shallow depression that lies amidst the central peaks of the crater, may be volcanic in origin. Color imaging shows that this depression is surrounded by reddish material, as seen at other sites of explosive volcanism across Mercury. The Abedin crater exhibits a complex

crater structure with a smooth floor, wall terraces, and a central peak complex. The chains of smaller craters surrounding Abedin are secondary craters formed by ejecta from the initial impact.

In 2009, The International Astronomical Union (IAU) approved a proposal from the MESSENGER Science Team to confer names on 16 impact craters on Mercury. All of the craters were discovered during the flyby in October 2008, which is also when MESSENGER snapped several images. The newly discovered craters were named after famous personalities.

"Exploring new landforms on Mercury is a special experience that should be shared by everyone on our planet," MESSENGER Principal Investigator Sean Solomon of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, had said to American media in 2009. "It is highly appropriate that the naming of such features similarly acknowledges the contributions that individuals from all cultures have made to mankind's advances."

The Abedin crater is a matter of pride for every Bangladeshi across the globe.

The author is a freelance journalist, and a night owl who likes binge-watching, reading, and writing. Write to her at rasheetmondira@gmail.com.

YOUNG ACHIEVER

Delivering reliable healthcare information in Bangla

SADIA TAHSIN

Tasnim Jara is an emergency medicine doctor at National Health Service, England, and a master's student of Evidence-based Healthcare at the University of Oxford. She co-founded Shohay, a start-up that aims to provide reliable healthcare information in Bangla.

"When the pandemic began, there was a lot of misinformation on social media, regarding certain medications, food items, and practices for curing Covid-19. None of them were scientifically backed. I was worried that it might dissuade people from adopting measures that will actually protect them from the virus," shares Tasnim. "As I am

studying Evidence-based Healthcare at Oxford, I have the skills to judge the reliability of these claims. I wanted to use my skills to fight misinformation, and so, I started making short videos about Covid-19, in easy Bangla."

Soon, people took it upon themselves to spread Tasnim's messages, and arranged for her videos to be played on roadside billboards, rural healthcare centres, and local government offices. So far, her videos have been viewed for more than 160 million minutes on social media. Her YouTube channel currently has over 40 videos.

"I realised that people are looking for reliable information in Bangla not only about Covid-19, but also about other health issues such as heart disease and diabetes. There is a dearth of information in Bangla on managing chronic conditions, lifestyle changes and non-pharmacological measures, among other matters," asserts Tasnim. "So, I formed a team of doctors and engineers to provide reliable health information in Bangla, in written and video formats."

Shohay started out on Facebook with around 2,000 followers, most of whom were Tasnim's friends and family members. Less than a year on, about 1.5 million people follow the start-up on social media.

The author is a marketing student from North South University. Write to her at sadiatahsin98@gmail.com.



WBSB team members at their Biotechnology Summer Camp, before the pandemic hit.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF WBSB.

YOUTH IN ACTION

Creating a better world through science

LABIBA KABIR

White Board Science Club (WBSB) began their journey in 2018, to encourage young students who are interested in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields.

"As a nation, we have yet to reach the height of scientific thinking. Our enthusiasm and passion for science led us to launch this venture. We aim to create a platform that can reach the heights of modern science and mold the

young minds of Bangladesh," shared Rocktim Barua, Director, WBSB.

The youth-based club organises weekly and monthly workshops both online and offline, to assist students on skill development. They also have CVASU Lab tours and biotechnology camps.

WBSB arranged their first Biotechnology Summer Camp in Chattogram in 2019. More recently, they started their weekly Robotics School and Programming School. They plan to start a weekly Life

Science School from April 2021.

At their event, "Sci-Circus", the club members arrange science projects, public speech contests, art and origami contests, poster competitions, open seminars, and research proposal writing workshops, among other things. However, "Sci-Circus" was not held last year, due to the Covid-19 outbreak. Instead, WBSB organised an E-Sci Circus workshop online.

The club also hosts theme-oriented events every year that reflect generational demands. Soon,

WBSB plans to organise Science and Math Olympiads as well.

The club has 10 core members and 25 general members, including advisors and researchers. Currently, 1,000 students from 42 institutions across Bangladesh are involved with them. WBSB has a meritorious senior panel with students from BUET, DU, CUET, KUET, and CU.

The author is a freelance journalist. Write to her at labibakabir99@gmail.com.



PHOTO: COURTESY OF TASNIM JARA