

Dhaka International Trade Fair (DITF) 2023: A must-have experience

Bangladeshi people love going to fairs, be it the Ekushey Book Fair, Baishakhi Mela, or the Dhaka International Trade fair taking place right at the peak of winter. Even record low temperatures this time around is no hindrance as people crowded the Bangabandhu Bangladesh-China Friendship Exhibition Centre at Purbachal and became part of the quintessential trade fair experience. So how is the fair going this year? Let us find out.

Stalls galore at the fair premises

Experience myriad offerings at this year's fair with a variety of brands, discounts, and unique stalls. A total of 331 stalls and 17 pavilions have been leased out to various companies, both local and international. At the fair, you can find stalls from well-known local brands like Walton and Vision, where you can get a glimpse of their latest products and gadgets. There are also



exclusive discounted prices from furniture brands like Hatil and Brothers Furniture.

The open area of the fair features some unique pavilions, like the double-storied stall from RFL, ice cream stalls from Igloo,



and Savoy with high ceilings and beautiful interior designs. There are also medium and small stalls selling everyday items and more. Foreign stalls can be found throughout the exhibition.

Foreign stalls offering unique products

This year's fair drew a lot of attention with participants from 10 countries, including India, Türkiye, South Korea, Pakistan, and Thailand. Women were particularly drawn to the beautiful dress collections from India and Pakistan, such as the kaftans, salwar kameezes, and Kashmiri shawls. Korean cosmetics were also a hit at the Korean stalls, as were electronics like blenders, juicers, and electric irons at the Thai stalls.

The most beautiful foreign stall, however,

was the one with all the Turkish mosaic lamps made out of stained glass, lit up from the top—a perfect Instagram-worthy moment.

Trademark trade fair things

Trade fairs offer unique shopping experiences that you cannot find anywhere else. From the 'Ruti maker' stall promising convenience by churning out rutis furiously, to the pickle stands with over 40 varieties to sample, you will find something to overwhelm your senses. You will also find great deals like 'Buy one oven and get 10 items free', but be sure to read the fine print before you make a purchase!

Prices were higher this year due to global instability, but savvy shoppers were able to

score discounts on many items. No matter what you are looking for, a trade fair is sure to have it and if you are willing to haggle, you can get it at a great price too!

Still overpriced food, but there are alternatives

The food at the trade fair is a source of contention every year; it has almost become a ritual to enter a restaurant after a day of shopping and roaming the fair, only to find out the biriyani you have ordered is double the usual rate! Unless you are really hungry, it is best to avoid these food stalls. However, that does not mean you cannot eat anything, as there are plenty of alternatives.

MGI Group's Fresh has a stall offering instant noodles that can be prepared with hot water. Mithai and Tasty Treat have khichuri and rice platters that will not break the bank. In addition, Jhotpot offers light snacks. So, when you are at the trade fair, make the smart choice!

Neat arrangement this time

The shift of the fair to Purbachal has been a welcome change, bringing with it a more neat and organised arrangement. Greeting visitors is a Metro Rail-inspired front gate that adds a touch of visual appeal. To make sure the children do not get too bored, a kid's zone has been added to provide a fun and safe place for them to play while their parents take a break. With this new, engaging setup, the fair has become a much more enjoyable experience for visitors.

By Feda Al Hossain
Photo: Rashed Sumon

Moner Bondhu launches mobile app

Tawhida Shiropa, Founder and C.E.O of Moner Bondhu is a brave young mind. She decided to stand apart from any taboo surrounding mental health in Bangladesh and extend a helping hand to whoever is in need. Moner Bondhu started its journey in January 2016 intending to provide accessible and affordable mental health and well-being services to the people of Bangladesh. Slowly this small initiative grew into something much larger, contributing to the lives of thousands of people.

On 10 January 2023, Moner Bondhu crossed another milestone with the official launch of its mobile app.

Honourable MP Zunaid Ahmed Palak, State Minister, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), was one of the distinguished guests in attendance at the event.

While sharing his thoughts on mental peace and happiness, he said "The key

to happiness is satisfaction. Once you're satisfied, you'll realize that you have also become happier."

Renowned Psychiatrist Dr Helal Uddin Ahmed stressed that keeping your mental health in check is essential for your overall well-being.

"Your heart and mind also need to be fed just like your body," he said, "Moner Bondhu is a safe place where you confide your fears and they give you the much-needed support."

Renowned Actress Aupee Karim added her thoughts saying, "A friend has no substitute, but it is not necessary that the friend be physically present in your life. Moner Bondhu is the friend we all need at some point in our lives."

Mental health is something that rarely gets focused among people of our country. In fact, we have witnessed a time when seeking professional help for problems like



anxiety or depression was frowned upon by many. Not being able to discuss certain traumatic or triggering events has had detrimental impacts on many lives.

Over the course of six years, Moner Bondhu has changed the lives of 800,000 individuals through online counselling on different platforms and another 100,000 through various offline events. They have worked with educational institutions

within and outside Dhaka, assisting more than 18,000 young minds. Their parenting workshops also helped raise awareness among parents on the importance of being more emotionally engaged with children.

Moner Bondhu is the first institution of its kind to reach out to the workers of RMG sector of Bangladesh. By partnering with BGMEA, Moner Bondhu provided counselling to more than 37,000 workers across 75 factories.

Moner Bondhu today is the result of endless hours of effort by a team of enthusiastic professionals who have always been huge advocates of mental health and well-being. With Moner Bondhu app, they are closer than ever to help anytime with whatever may be troubling you.

For more information, check out their website: monerbondhu.org

By Nusrath Jahan