

## **Ekushey Book Fair begins today**

Unb, Dhaka

Month-long Amar Ekushey Book Fair 2006, dedicated to the language martyrs who laid down their lives for the mother tongue in 1952, begins on the Bangla Academy premises in the city today.

The fair, organised every year by Bangla Academy, is one of the biggest annual festivals for book-lovers, scholars and publishers as they can buy and sell books on the occasion. Moreover, the publishers get a chance to know about the expectations of readers from on-the-spot interaction.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will inaugurate the book fair at 2.30pm and lay the foundation stone of the Bangla Academy Bhaban.

A total of 461 stalls of 305 organisations have been set up at the fair this year, with a unanimous decision of all the publishers, including the Bangla Academy, to sell books at 30 percent discount this time to attract more buyers.

Although the number of new books that are expected to hit the stalls during the fair by publishers were not available, but Bangla Academy will publish 23 new books during the knowledge festival.

Source: The Daily Star, Dhaka. Feb 01, 2006

- **Ekushey book fair opens today**
- By DU Correspondent  
Tue, 31 Jan 2006, 11:10:00
- The month-long Amar Ekushey Book Fair-2006 is going to kick off today at the Bangla Academy premises under heightened security following the present antagonistic political situation and the recent incidents of violence across the country.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia is expected to inaugurate the fair at 2:30pm.

The yearly book fair, commemorates the supreme sacrifice of Bengalis during the Language Movement on February 21 in 1952.

The Bangla Academy has been organising the fair for the last three decades.

Traditionally the annual fair also serves as the meeting ground of country's eminent novel and short story writers, poets, publishers, newspaper columnists, journalists and general readers and cultural activists.

The academy authorities are expecting a huge number of visitors at the fair this year, as they will get books on a 30 per cent commission, which was 25 per cent in the previous years.

There will be a total of 16 close circuit television cameras (CCTV) at different places inside the fair for continuous vigilance.

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- **Khaleda opens Ekushey Book**
- **Fair in city tomorrow**
- **STAFF REPORTER**
- With unprecedented security measures to be in place, the Amar Ekushey Book Fair, commemorating the martyrdom of scores of Bengalis during the Language Movement on 21 February 1952, will begin at the premises of the Bangla Academy in the city tomorrow (Wednesday).
- Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will inaugurate the month-long Ekushey Book Fair as chief guest at 2.30pm tomorrow.
- The authorities will deploy members of law enforcing agencies including police and RAB. They have already set up 12 CCTV cameras at the different parts of the fair venue, metal detectors while security agents will conduct body and baggage search of each visitor to the country's biggest annual book fair.
- Bangla Academy has brought out 23 new books marking this book fair. The academy prepared a budget of Tk 26,36,980 for this year's fair, while it was Tk 29 lakh last year. This year Bangla Academy and the publishing houses will sell books on 30 per cent commission.
- As many as 305 publishers will open 461 stalls at the fair with a wide array of books on various topics, mainly literature. Besides, a number public utility and volunteering institutions including Red Crescent, Fire Brigade, blood donation centres have been allocated space. The venue of the fair is divided into five parts after the names of Language Movement martyrs Salam, Rafiq, Jabbar, Barkat and Safiur this year in order to pay homage to their memories. ABC Digital Institute will publish new information about the new books through its website 'Bangla Academy Ekushey Mela.com' every day.
- On February 20 Bangla Academy Literary Award 2004 will be announced from the Amar Ekushey dais, a grand podium built for holding different programmes during the book fair. The awards will be given on February 22 from the same stage. Discussion meetings and cultural programmes will be held on this stage every day until the concluding day of the book fair.
- The book fair will remain open from 3 pm to 9 pm except Fridays. On Fridays the book fair will remain open from 11am to 9pm. On February 21, the Martyrs Day, the book fair will start at 8am and go on till 9 pm.
- The book fair gives exposure to Bangladeshi writers and publishers only. The participating publishers are allowed to sell only the original books, translated, edited and compiled ones by Bangladeshi writers published and printed in Bangladesh. The participating organisations are allowed to sell only the books published and distributed by their own organisations. No other items but books are allowed to be preserved, displayed or sold at the book fair.  
Books published in foreign countries, imported from foreign lands, the Bangladeshi editions of contemporary Bangla books published in other countries and pirated books are off-limits to the book fair.  
Any kind of books, magazines, cassettes or posters that will be considered disgraceful to the Amar Ekushey, the liberation of Bangladesh and the Liberation War will not be allowed to be sold, preserved or displayed at the book fair.  
Traditionally, the Ekushey Book fair also serves as the meeting ground of the country's eminent writers, literary critics, intellectuals, journalists, cultural activists and general readers.  
Bangla Academy has been organising the Ekushey Book Fair since 1972 thereby rendering a great service to the development of Bengali literature, especially in post-liberation Bangladesh.
- Ekushey Book Fair is one event that is very close to the heart of the people, and the occasion re-establishes the nation's faith in its own heritage and culture and the richness of Bengali language and literature. One of the indicators of a civilised nation is the number of books published and bought every year. Such fairs help sustain the reading habits and the publishing industry that works round the year to offer new books to the readers.  
The fair authorities have formed a 23-member committee to run the event, while they have also formed a monitoring committee to guide the publishers.
- All this was disclosed at a press conference at the Seminar Room of Bangla Academy in the city yesterday.
- Dr Abul Kalam Monzur Morshed, Director General of Bangla Academy, Fazlur Karim, member-secretary of Amar Ekushey Book Fair Committee, Mainul Islam, secretary of Bangla Academy, Morshed Uddin Anwar, deputy director and Enayet Karim, director of Textbook Division, Bangla Academy, addressed the press conference. Source: The Daily Independent, Dhaka

- **Khaleda to inaugurate Ekushey Book Fair begins today**
- **Varsity Correspondent**
- The month long Eksuehy Book Fair will begin today (Wednesday) at Bangla Academy premises with strict security. Prime Minsiter Begum Khaleda Zia will inaugurate the fair in the evening. She will also lay the foundation stone of Ekushey Bhaban. Considering the recent incidents of violence across the country, the Bangla Academy authorities will take strict security measurers.
- The academy authorities are expecting larger crowds at the fair this year as they will get books on a 30 per cent commission which was 25 per cent in the previous years.
- The Bangla Academy will bring 25 new titles during the fair. The academy has also taken a project to prepare text-books and Tk 2.8 crore funds have been allocated for the five-year project, Manzur Morshed said.
- The fair this year will run between 3:00pm and 9:00pm on weekdays and between 11:00am and 9:00pm, with a two-hour break for the jumma prayers from noon to 2:00 pm at the weekends.
- The fair will open at 8:00am on February 21, Ekushey February, and will close at 9:00pm, said Morshed.
- The book fair, organised by the Bangla Academy and the Bangladesh Book Publishers and Sellers' Association, marking the Language Movement, will run during the whole month of February.
- The fair will house 461 stalls of 305 organisations on its 12 acres of land of the academy this year.
- 'We have to remain a bit more alert and the fair will be under layers of security initiatives to ensure the visitors' safety with deployment of sufficient police and members of other law enforcing agencies,' the Academy Director General, Abul Kalam Manzur Morshed, told the newsmen.
- There will be 16 closed circuit television cameras at different places inside the fair for continuous vigilance, he said, adding that the recorded cassettes will also be reviewed everyday to find out the disturbing elements. The authorities will set up three entrances for the visitors and one for the newsmen, publishers, fair officials and celebrities. Everyone will be scanned at the entry-points. Plainclothes and uniformed law enforcers will be deployed at strategic points and mobile teams of the Rapid Action Battalion will roam around the adjacent areas of the fair venue.
- Two observatory towers have been set up at the fair venue to follow the visitors' movement.
- No publisher will be allowed to sell books of other publishers in this year's fair, said the Academy Director General but kept mum on queries about the academy's failure to implement the decision in the past year.
- 'The academy is serious to carry out the fair regulations and guidelines but it is the publishers who hampers the implementation to the letters,' he said.
- No pirated books will be allowed in the fair and the fair committee have decided to evacuate the violators of the guidelines this year, he said. But, the academy has lost the list of those who violated the guidelines in the past fair, he added.
- The Director General said an inquiry committee has been formed in this regard and it will also inquire the publishers who did not deposit the stall-fare of the 2005 fair.
- Only books written, edited or translated by Bangladeshi writers will be allowed in the stalls.
- The fair ground will be divided into four zones for commercial publishing houses, children's books, publications of socio-cultural organisations and NGOs and other organisations, Manzur Morshed said.
- The Nazrul Institute will set up its stall along the academy's permanent pavilion, he said, adding that the first-time and amateur publishers will be promoted so that they can emerge as big publishing houses in future, he said.
- There will be discussions and cultural programmes focusing on the thinkers of the 20th century at the main stage every day. The academy will set up a writers' corner.
- The 2005 fair featured 318 publishers across 464 stalls. The number of stalls in 2004 was 457 and 312 organisations took part in the fair. The highest number of participants, 653, was in 1994 fair that spread outside the Bangla Academy premises.
- The budget for this year's fair is Tk 26.36 lakh and it was Tk 29.40 lakh in 2005. Explaining the reduction on the fair budget, the director general said the academy got a sponsor which would carry out the major decorations.
- Holding of the fair on the academy premises began informally in 1972. It took the shape of a full-fledged fair in 1978. The fair is being organised in association with the publishers and sellers' association since 1979.
- The fair was named Amar Ekushey Granthamela in 1984 and a guideline for fair was formulated in the year.
- The academy has published 46 titles on the occasion and has eight more titles to hit the book fair.
- Source; The Daily Observer, Dhaka

- Ekushey book fair begins today**  
**STAFF CORRESPONDENT** The Amar Ekushey Book Fair 2006 begins in the Bangla Academy premises today with heavy security in and around the venue on the Dhaka University campus.

The prime minister, Khaleda Zia, will raise the curtain of the month-long fair, organised by the Bangla Academy and the Bangladesh Book Publishers and Sellers' Association, at 3:30pm.

This will be the 34th book fair since the country's pioneer publisher, Chittaranjan Saha, started it in 1972 in the academy premises. Later the academy alone began organising the fair until the publishers' association joined hands with it in 1984. The fair is meant to commemorate the 1952 Language Movement heroes who embraced martyrdom. All preparations by the organisers have been completed and the security personnel and bomb disposal unit have searched every square inch of the ground with sniffer dogs. The members of the Rapid Action Battalion scanned the fairground with mine-sweepers on Wednesday.

The law enforcers in riot gear kept the venue cordoned off and were interrogating people who were moving around the stalls. Mobile teams of the RAB roamed around the Dhaka University campus to prevent any unwanted situation. The deputy commissioner (south) of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police, Md Mazharul Hoque, told New Age that the number of lawmen deployed at entry-points has been increased this year.

Everyone will be scanned at the entrance and the entire fair will be under continuous vigilance through closed circuit television cameras, he said. Besides, there will be plainclothesmen in the fair and key-points outside the venue.

Though the organising committee of the fair asked the publishers to complete construction and decoration of the stalls by Tuesday, many of the stalls were still unfinished. The member secretary of the committee, Fazlur Rahim, hoped that construction work would be completed by this morning.

'Almost 90 per cent work at the publishers' end has been completed the day before the fair this year. Things are much better than those of the previous years,' he said. A dress rehearsal of the inaugural function was also held on Monday.

Bangladesh Television has set up an outside broadcast van to telecast the inaugural function live. The academy authorities have asked all the inaugural function's guests to take their seats by 2:30pm, half an hour before the function.

The prime minister will also lay the foundation stone of the Eksuhey Bhaban and visit the fairground after inaugurating it.

A private IT firm has taken the initiative to put the book fair on the internet. The firm, ABC, will provide information through the website, [www.ekusheymela.com](http://www.ekusheymela.com), which will be updated everyday. The publishers are requested to contact stall no 429 at the fair to have their books listed.

Meanwhile, seven Language Movement veterans in a joint statement demanded declaration of the martyrs of Ekushey February as Birshreshtha, taking initiatives to make Bangla an official language of the United Nations, introducing Bangla calendars at all levels, preserving the sites and artefacts that are connected with the Language Movement, formulating a curriculum for the foreigners to learn Bangla and using Bangla language in computer and satellite technologies.

Kazi Golam Mahbub, Gaziul Huq, Abdul Matin, Mirza Mazharul Islam, Halima Khatun, Rawshan Ara Bachchu signed the statement.
- Sorry tale of Mother Language Institute**  
*'Unnecessary at this moment,' says education minister*  
**SIDDIQUR RAHMAN KHAN** The government has reduced the allotment for construction of the International Mother Language Institute as it has decided to construct a 3-storey building instead of a 12-storey one.

It has also reduced manpower and the most important components including the museum archive of the institute, due to fund constraints, sources in the education ministry told New Age.

Construction of the building, which was inaugurated by education minister M Osman Farruk in April 1, 2003, has remained suspended since October 1 that year.

The work came to a halt after an education ministry review meeting held on September 28, 2003 that decided to stop funding the project.

The ministry took up the project after UNESCO in 1999 declared Ekushey February to be the International Mother Language Day.

The UN's secretary-general, Kofi Annan, laid the foundation stone of the institute on 1.03 acres of land at Segun Bagicha in March 2000.

The cost of the project was estimated at Tk 19.49 crore, of which Tk 15.46 crore was allocated for construction of the building.

According to the project proposal, a 12-storey building with 6,972 square metres of floor-space was to be constructed and would have a lounge, reception space, four meeting rooms, a 500-seat hall room with a balcony and two green rooms, research cells, a computer lab, a canteen, a library, a classroom, a language lab and a museum archive.

A September 25, 2005 meeting of the project evaluation committee held in the Planning Commission decided that only a 3-storey building would be constructed and other components, including manpower, would be cut or reduced.

The main objectives of the institute are to carry out research to develop, preserve and harmonise the languages of the world, including Bangla, and to help formulate the language policy.

Since its inception in December 2000, as much as Tk 4.76 crore has been spent, but only 22 per cent of the work has been completed. The government has reduced the cost of the project from Tk 19.49 crore to Tk 18.52 crore, said sources in the education ministry.

An education ministry official told New Age that almost all the components of the project have been cut and it will be an International Mother Language Institute in name merely. 'There are only eight personnel in the institute now, though there were 21 since December 2000,' he added.

The minister for education, M Osman Farruk, told New Age that it is a huge project which is 'unnecessary at this moment'.

He said the project was designed to be implemented by state funding in 1999 'without considering its viability and the need for foreign assistance'.

The government on January 15 donated Tk 5,30,000, equivalent to 12,573.78 Australian dollars, for building an International Mother Language Monument in the Australian city of Sydney.

The Bangladesh high commissioner to Australia, Ashraf-ud-Doula, handed over the prime minister's donation to the Ekushey Academy Australia Inc at a simple ceremony on Sunday.
- Source: The Daily New Age

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