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**NEWAGE**

## Ekushey book fair begins today

Arifur Rahman | Updated at 12:31am on February 01, 2019



People are busy with last-minute preparation of a stall in the Ekushey book fair ground a day before the fair begins today. — Indrajit Kumer Ghosh

Month-long Amar Ekushey Grantha Mela 2019 begins today as the Bangla Academy is all set to stage its yearly extravaganza, the biggest get-together of readers, writers and publishers in the country, on its premises and in Suhrawardy Udyan in the capital.

Prime minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to inaugurate the fair at 3:00pm, organised by the academy commemorating the Language Movement of 1952.

The academy director general, Habibullah Siraji, will deliver the welcome speech at the inaugural ceremony while state minister for cultural affairs KM Khalid will attend the programme as special guest.

The programme will be chaired by Bangla Academy president National Professor Anisuzzaman.

Veteran poet Sankha Ghosh and Egyptian writer Muhsin Al Arishi will attend the event as foreign guests.

The prime minister will unveil the second volume of 'Secret Document of Intelligence Branch on the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman' and a book on Hasina written by Muhsin Al Arishi.

Bangla Academy director general Habibullah Siraji said these while exchanging views with journalist on the academy premises.

Habibullah assured that they made all preparations for the month-long book fair which would be held on a vast section of Bangla Academy and Suhrawardy Udyan covering around five lakh square feet.

He also assured that foolproof security measures were taken to ward off any untoward incident during the fair.

Law enforcers are taking strict security measures in and around the fairground including bringing the whole area under the surveillance of CCTV camera, he informed.

The theme of this year's fair is 'Bijoy: 1952 to 1971 Ebong Naboporjay,' said Jalal Ahmed, member secretary of the fair organising committee.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner Asaduzzaman Mia assured foolproof security to all — writers and publishers and others — during the month-long event.

He said this while talking to the media at a pre-opening press briefing at Suhrawardy Udyan on Thursday.

The area from TSC to Doyel Chatter will remain off limits to traffic for the book fair.

People with motor vehicles entering from the side of Shahbagh can park at Malchattar. On the other hand, those who will enter from the side of High Court will have to park in Gymnasium area.

The prime minister will also hand over Bangla Academy Literary Awards 2018 to its recipients at the inaugural ceremony.

Four writers and researchers poet Kazi Rozi, Mohit Kamal, Syed Mohammad Shahed and Afsan Chowdhury will receive the award.

This year, around 770 units have been allocated to 499 publishing houses and organisations to sell and exhibit their books and publications.

Beside these, 24 pavilions have been also allocated to the publishing house and 155 stalls allocated to 180 little magazines.

The stalls for the mainstream publishing houses have been placed inside the Suhrawardy Udyan while government and Bangla Academy organisations would be inside the Bangla Academy compound like previous year.

The little magazine corner will be on the Bangla Academy part while the children's corner on the Suhrawardy part. There will be hours dedicated to children.

The fair will open at 3:00pm and continue till 8:30pm like last year.

On holidays, the fair will run from 11:00am to 8:30pm. On February 21, however, the fair will open at 8:00am and continue till 8:30pm.

Holding of the fair on the Bangla Academy premises began informally in 1972, but it became institutionalised in 1978. The fair was named then Amar Ekushey Grantha Mela and a guideline for it was formulated in 1984.



Editor: **Nurul Kabir**, Published by the Chairman, Editorial Board ASM Shahidullah Khan on behalf of Media New Age Ltd. 30 Tejgaon Industrial Area, Dhaka-1208 Phone: 880-2-8170450-56 (PABX), Fax: 880-2-8170457

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