

**AMAR EKUSHEY BOOK FAIR**

# Many stalls closed on 1st day of restrictions

Tanzil Rahaman

MANY stalls at the Suhrawardy Udyan remained closed and a large number of stalls opened late on Monday at the ongoing Amar Ekushey Book Fair as it was the first day of the government-imposed restrictions on public movement and business operations for a week.

Several stalls were also being renovated as a sudden storm lashed the fairground on Sunday evening. The storm left some stalls damaged in its wake and many books were also damaged in the rain.

The visitor turnout and sales were poor compared with that of the other days.

In the first three hours on the nineteenth day, the fair venues wore a look of a desert as visitors were few and far between.

Many publishers and stall attendants said that it is totally illogical to continue the fair while a ban had been imposed on mass transports.

As a consequence, a large number of publishing houses could not even sell a single book on the day.

NEW ARRIVALS			
TITLE	AUTHOR	TYPE	PUBLISHING HOUSE
Loknatya Ghatugan	Aminur Rahaman Sultan	Folk theatre	Al-Gazi Publications
Dhusar Kalo Mayur	Supti Zaman	Collect ion of poems	Charulipi Prakashani
Balak Rabir Kirtikanda	Sanjida Khatun	Juvenile literature	Shikha Prakashani

They also said that on the day some visitors came to the fair with specific lists to buy some selected books.

Nasir Ahmed Selim, the publisher of Kakoli Prakashani, said, 'We do not even understand why the authorities concerned are continuing the fair while there is a ban on public transport. Many visitors will not be able to come to the fair as they do not have their own transport. I think that it is better to close the fair at this stage.'

Mohammad Rayhan, a stall in-charge of Prachalan Prakashani, said, 'We opened our stall at 12:00am. We could not sell a single book in the past four hours. We did not expect this kind of desolate fair. People are unable to come to the fair due to the ban

on public transport.'

Mohammad Salim, manager at publishing house Anupam Prakashani said, 'We came at the fair and opened our stalls as part of a formality. You can hardly see a visitor after a long interval. The newly scheduled time is not appropriate for visitors due to a ban on mass transport and the hot weather.

People who have their own transport came to visit the fair.

Sohel Mushfiq, an official at American life insurance company said, 'I came to the fair riding my motorbike. I have been collecting some specific books. I really enjoyed walking at the fair as the number of visitors is considerably low. I can visit the entire venue without any hassle now.'

Hedyaet Ullah, the as-

sistant registrar at Jagannath University, said, 'I came from Lalbagh by my own car. I usually buy a large number of books every year. I really miss the festivity this year.'

'I like to read offbeat books alongside books on history and good essays on the liberation war. I always prefer young writers with fresh ideas,' Hedayet added.

Earlier on Sunday, the cultural affairs ministry issued an official order signed by the ministry's senior assistant secretary Jesmin Nahar asking the authority to run the book fair from 12:00pm to 5:00pm maintaining the COVID-19 health safety guidelines.

A total of 28 new books were launched on Monday and the total number of new arrivals reached 2,189 so far.