

## Ekushey book fair

*A milieu for all to mingle*

**T**HE book fair in February, commonly known as *Ekushey Boi Mela*, began with characteristic fervour on the premises of Bangla Academy early this month. The yearly event is organised to commemorate the sacrifices and achievements of the people of Bangladesh through a relentless struggle to uphold their mother tongue Bangla against stunning odds. This saga is known as 'Language Movement' of 1952, which laid the foundation of our historic War of Liberation in 1971. Since then the book fair has become a coveted feature in our cultural calendar.

The fair usually turns into a festive occasion for book-lovers to get a splendid opportunity to browse through thousands of quality publications offered by prominent publishers of the country in one place. Publications range from storybooks for children to serious novels and research books authored by eminent writers and litterateurs at home and abroad. The volume of sale in the book fair begins to climb upward as the closing day approaches thereby making its mark on the economic aspect of the event. The fair also creates a milieu for writers, poets, critics, buyers and visitors to mingle, exchange pleasantries and interact.

We understand the *boi mela* this year demanded more space because of wider participation by eager book publishers and sellers. As a result, structures had to be erected on the road in front of Bangla Academy to accommodate as many as 500 stalls. This feature only emphasises how popular the fair has become over the years among the people of the country.

Notably, writers and visitors also come from the neighbouring states of India in search of quality publications. The appeal of the fair and the good name of the organisers, therefore, go beyond the borders of the country. As such, we believe the standard of printing and content of the books must meet the demands of the present day readers who would not settle for anything substandard. This reality should make the writers more attentive in maintaining quality of their creative works and aspire them to strive for international recognition.

We wish all success for *Ekushey Boi Mela*.