

Ekushey Book Fair opens

Many stalls not yet ready

Arifur Rahman

AMAR Ekushey Book Fair 2017 began on Bangla Academy premises and at Suhrawardy Udyan on Wednesday.

Low turnout of visitors marked the inaugural day of the country's biggest book fair.

Besides, many publishing houses were yet to put books on display at their stalls because of delay by the organiser in allocating the space.

At least one fourth of 409 publishing houses could not open their stalls to the visitors till 6:00pm.

Prime minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the fair and a four-day international literature conference which

was attended by prominent litterateurs from Austria, Germany, Puerto Rico, Malaysia, Russia, China and India.

The premier also distributed prizes among the winners of 'Bangla Academy Sahitya Puroshkar 2016'.

'Ocean of Sorrow', translation of noted Bengali novelist Mir Mosharraf Hossain's famous novel 'Bishad Sindhya' and 'Hundred poems from Bangladesh', published from Germany were handed over to the premier at the function.

A total of 409 publishing houses would showcase their books and publications in the fair throughout the month.

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Like previous year, the mainstream publishing houses have been given stalls at Suhrawardy Udyan while the stalls of government organisations and Bangla Academy are on the academy premises.

The fair remains open from 3:00pm to 8:30pm while on holidays between 11:00am and 8:30pm.

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

On the first day, the visitors faced no major security checking as police were yet to deploy adequate forces.

Police said they could not deploy adequate forces at the fair because of the special security for the prime minister.

Visitors found many stalls still under construc-

tion with decoration materials littering the venue that hindered the movement of visitors.

Sanghati Prakash chief executive Dipok Roy said that they would need more time to make ready their stalls although it would be a violation of guidelines.

He also blamed the organiser for the delay.

At least 100 publishing houses including government and autonomous institutions such as National Museum, Bangladesh Shishu Academy and Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy did not open their stalls till 5:30pm.

The fair organisers failed to provide any list of the day's arrivals as the information centre was yet to be set up.

A fair committee official admitted that the lapses on

the opening day would be minimised gradually.

In 1972, the fair began at Bangla Academy, but it took permanent shape in 1978. The fair was renamed Amar Ekushey Granthamela.