

Ekushey Book Fair gets bigger each year

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THE Ekushey Book Fair has been getting bigger in terms of the number of participating publishing houses for five years.

The participation of publishers in the month-long book fair is increasing, said fair committee member

secretary Jalal Ahmed, also Bangla Academy director.

He said that they would hold a lottery on Thursday for the placements of the allocated stalls at the fair to begin on February 1.

According to Bangla Academy, this year the authorities have allotted 650 stalls to 450 publishing

houses and organisations on Bangla Academy and Suhrawardy Udyan premises.

There were 650 stalls of 401 organisations in 2016, 565 stalls of 353 organisations in 2015 and 517 stalls of 299 organisations in 2014 and 460 stalls of 274 organisations.

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The fair venue has been extended to Suhrawardy Udyan since 2013 to accommodate more participants as well as to have more breathing space for book lovers.

Academy officials and publishers said that book fair was the biggest congregation of publishers, readers, writers, poets and readers.

Publishers of creative books prefer to have a stall in the book fair, they said, adding that major portion of business of creative books selling took place in the book fair.

As the book fair is popular to readers, each year pub-

lishers launch almost all of their new books in the fair, they added.

Every publisher wants a stall in the book fair and it is the biggest platform of interaction with readers, said Academic and Creative Publishers Association of Bangladesh president Majharul Islam, also the Anya Prakash proprietor.

About 70 per cent of sales of creative books take place in the month-long book fair, he said adding that all publishers waited for and made special plans for the book fair.

According to estimates of the book fair committees,

sale in the book fair was also on the rise in the past four years. The combined sale in the book fair was about Tk 40.50 crore in 2016, Tk 21.95 crore in 2015, Tk 16.50 crore in 2014 and Tk 10.15 crore in 2013.

The fair on Bangla Academy premises began informally in 1972, but it became institutionalised in 1978. The fair was named then 'Amar Ekushey Granthamela' and a guideline was formulated in 1984.

The book fair would open at 2:30pm and continue till 8:30pm in February.

Prime minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to inau-

gurate the fair on February 1.

The authorities are also planning to hold an international poetry festival during first four days of the fair, said Jalal Ahmed.

'We would divide Suhrawardy Udyan part of the book fair into several zones, each having at least a pavilion and other book stalls with open space, he said.

Literary figures from different countries, including India, Japan, China, Austria, Argentina and England, others are expected to attend the four-day International Literary Festival to discuss world literature, said fair committee members.