

# Ekushey book fair to begin on Feb 1, PM to open physically

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**The Daily Morning Voice Online Desk:** The month-long “Amar Ekushey Grantha Mela 2023”, the country’s largest book fair, is going to begin on its traditional date of the first day of February this year after three years interval. “Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is likely to open the fair in person this year at 3pm on February 1,” Member Secretary of the Amar Ekushey Book Fair Committee Dr KM Muzahidul Islam told BSS on Monday. In 2020, the traditional book fair began on February 2 due to elections to the two Dhaka city corporations while the fair was differed till March 18 in 2021 and February 15 in 2022 due to the global coronavirus pandemic.

Muzahidul, also Bangla Academy director (administration, human resources and planning division), said about 80 percent of the preparatory work has already been completed on Bangla Academy and Suhrawardy Udyan premises.

While visiting the book fair venue, it was observed that preparations for the book fair are going on in full-swing on Bangla Academy and Suhrawardy Udyan premises since the fair management committee hoped that the preparation would be completed before the stipulated time. State Minister for Cultural Affairs K M Khalid today visited the fair premises and inspected the progress of the preparation.

The theme of this year’s book fair has been fixed “Paro Bai, Garo Desh: Bangabandhur Bangladesh (Read Book build country: Bangabandhu’s Bangladesh)”, Muzahidul said, adding that led by Bangla Academy Director General Mohammad Nurul Huda, a 31-member committee has been formed for proper management of the fair. The month-long fair will remain open for all from 3pm to 8:30pm everyday, he said. Noting that some changes have been brought to this year’s fair, he said that the main stage of the fair will be on the Bangla Academy premises while book unwrapping and Lekhak Bolchi stages will be set up on Suhrawardy Udyan premises.

There will be 470 stalls, including 367 general stalls, 69 stalls on children yard and 64 pavilions, on the Suhrawardy Udyan while there will 103 general stalls and 147 pavilions in the Bangla Academy premises. A total 704 stalls except the pavilions will take part in this year’s book fair. Besides, 182 stalls and 11 pavilions adjacent to the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh have relocated in the center of the Suhrawardy Udyan due to the Metrorail while that spot has been allocated to food court and other service provider institutions.

Temple gate of the Suhrawardy Udyan just opposite to the Bangla Academy will be the main gate for entering the book fair while the visitors could find their required stalls through digital board and placards. The children yard will be near the main gate, which will entertain the children with different events including Sisimpur. Apart from food courts, the fair premises will have place for prayers and sufficient numbers of toilets. Close circuit television cameras have been installed around the fair premises while sufficient number of law enforcement agency members will be deployed to ensure security centering the book fair.

At the end of this year’s book fair, four awards will be given under different categories. Of them, ‘Chittaranjan Saha Smriti Award’ will be given for the highest number of books published in 2022, considering the content and quality of the book. ‘Munir Chowdhury Smriti Award’ will be given for the best book, considering the art of the book while ‘Rokanuzzaman Khan Dadabhai Smriti Award’ will be given to the best book written based on children. ‘Artist Qayyum Chowdhury Smriti Award’ will be given to a stall from those, which will take part in this year’s book fair, considering the best decoration.