

Ekushey Book Fair begins today

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Workers set up bamboo frames for stalls as part of preparations for the Amar Ekushey Book Fair-2026, set to begin today, at Suhrawardy Udyan in Dhaka on Wednesday. | Sony Ramani

The Amar Ekushey Book Fair 2026 will begin on the Bangla Academy premises and at Suhrawardy Udyan in the capital Dhaka today, with stall preparations yet to be finished.

This year's fair will last 18 days, while the month-long fair is usually held throughout February.

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The Bangla Academy organises the country's largest book fair, commemorating the historic Language Movement of 1952. This year's fair under the theme 'Pluralistic Bangladesh' will run until March 15.

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Prime minister Tarique Rahman will remain present as chief guest at the inaugural ceremony and inaugurate the fair. Tarique will also hand over the Bangla Academy Literary Award 2025 at the inaugural ceremony.

This year the Bangla Academy Literary Award recipients are Syed Azizul Huq for essay, Mohon Raihan for poetry, Nasima Anis for fiction, Hasan Hafiz for children's literature, Mustafa Majid and Israil Khan for research, Farseem Mannan Mohammady for science, Ali

Ahmad for translation and Moidul Hasan for the Liberation War.

Bangla Academy director general Mohammad Azam will deliver the welcome speech at the book fair inaugural ceremony while cultural affairs minister Nitai Roy Chowdhury and state minister Ali Newaz Mahmud Khaiyam will attend the ceremony as special guests while the session will be presided over by Bangla Academy president Abul Kashem Fazlul Haq.

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Addressing a press conference at Suhrawardy Udyan on Wednesday, Dhaka Metropolitan Police additional commissioner (admin) Md Sarwar said that police members in uniform and plain clothes would ensure security at the fair during its whole period.

'The police control room is set at the fair ground which will remain open 24 hours to ensure security and special force will be deployed in public holidays,' he said, adding that the fair ground and entry points would be under closed circuit camera surveillance.

With archways and metal dictators at the entry points, the police will also check manually while a roaming police patrol team will be deployed at the fair ground, he said.

In the case of any crisis, the Detective Branch, the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime unit, the Bomb Disposal Unit, the SWAT and the K-9 Unit will be deployed at the fair ground, he added.

The additional police commissioner-traffic of the DMP, Md Anisur Rahman, urged to follow traffic rules and parking guidelines for a peaceful entry-exit at the fair.

The fair premises will also remain free from street hawkers and visitors will not be allowed to enter the fair premises with large bags and flammable substances.

One day before the opening, preparations of almost 80 per cent of the stalls were incomplete while almost 200 stalls were under construction at the fair ground.

Jakir Ali, an employee at a makeshift hardware shop at the fair ground, said that although the fair management committee notified them to remove the shop before the fair opening, but they did not do so as most of the stalls needed construction materials from them.

Apart from about 240 stalls previously built, about 200 stalls were newly built at the Suhrawardy Udyan as a number of publishers got stall allocations later ending their boycott, Bangla Academy director general Mohammad Azam said, adding that hopefully the construction works would be finished before the opening.

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This year, 549 publishing houses and organisations are participating in the fair which faced several rescheduling due to the February 12 national elections and a boycott by a section of publishers under the banner of Prokashak Oikya demanding a deferral of the fair. The section of publishers later agreed to take part in the book fair.

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