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## Stalls allotted for Ekushey Book Fair

By Staff Correspondent

The *Ekushey Book Fair*, commemorating the martyrs of the Language Movement, begins on the Bangla Academy premises on Friday.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to inaugurate the book fair as chief guest in the morning. Eminent educationists and literateurs including Prof Kabir Chowdhury and Poet Shamsur Rahman will also attend the inaugural function.

The Bangla Academy yesterday allotted stalls to 200 publishers through lottery. Academy sources said.

See page 11

## Ekushey Book Fair

From Page 1

Organised by the Academy in association with Bangladesh Book Publishers' and Distributors' Association, the fair will continue till February 28.

The *Ekushey Book Fair* which has now become a national event, was first organised in 1972 as an expression of cultural renaissance.

But it was only in 1978 that the fair got official patronisation and since then the Bangla Academy has been organising the book fair on its premises in a grand way every year.

Bangla Academy authorities have taken some special measures this year to maintain discipline and keep the fair free from noise. "No stalls of food or cassette will be allowed inside the fair as they create an unbearable chaos with loud speakers to compete with each other for attracting customers," said an official of the Academy.

"Noise pollution inside the fair will be dealt with very strictly," he said.

"Action will be taken if any stall is found creating noise," he said adding that the authorities were planning to permit mobile food shops inside the Suhrawardy Park opposite the Bangla Academy.

"Arrangements will be made to keep the road in front of the Academy free of congestion. No stalls will be allowed there," he added.

Meanwhile, the participants in the fair have almost completed erecting their book stalls. Rent for a single unit stall has been fixed at Tk 3,500, double unit Tk 6,000 and triple unit at Tk 10,000 this year, the sources said.

For the first time this year, Bangla Academy will launch a web site, putting information and details of the fair on the Internet. A huge digital screen will also be set up in front of the Information Centre to keep vis-

itors informed of events, the sources said.

Bangla Academy Public Relations Officer Sarkar Amin said that special emphasis will be given on creative books this year. "We will keep vigil on the stalls so that obscene books are not sold. Stalls may be cancelled if such books are sold," Amin said.

Director General of the Academy Prof Syed Anwar Hosain told *The Daily Star* that they were determined to turn the fair from an ordinary one to a real book fair, manifesting the spirit of the Language Movement.

"The *Ekushey* spirit stands for rebellion and commitment. The rebellion is against evil forces and the commitment is for maintaining our originality," the DG explained.

The fair will remain open from 3 to 9 pm every day. On holidays, the timing will be from 11 am to 9 pm with a two-hour interval from 12 only on Fridays. It will remain open from 8 am on February 21.

Discussions on different topics will be held on the Academy premises every evening as part of the *Ekushey* programme.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Book Club (BBC), a private organisation, observed Book Day yesterday on the occasion of the *Ekushey*. A discussion was held at the Central Shaheed Minar.