

## Re-creating a Reading Culture in Sri Lanka in 2020

Nearly 5 months after Sri Lanka's schools and universities were closed to protect the young from covid-19, students are resuming formal education in stages. The past months have been challenging for our children and youth, as well as for parents and teachers.

Whilst schools, universities and other local academic institutions shifted their lessons and lectures online, it highlighted the digital divide that exists in our society. Despite the wide use of smart phones, technical issues such as faulty signals created obstacles for rural pupils. The inability to access public libraries was also a huge challenge; not just for students studying for exams but also for keen readers.

Therefore, we highlight with great pride in this issue, the initiatives taken by both IBBY Sri Lanka and its members, to help children and youth to overcome those challenges. **Ranging from providing mobile IT courses, internet and library facilities, to an online book fair, we have collectively proven that where there is a will, there is a way.**


As Sri Lanka's annual State Literary Month approaches, IBBY Sri Lanka is preparing to hold several special events at national and provincial level. From honouring the best 100 local books published for young people during the last decade, to literary festivals, we will be bringing the magic of books and reading closer to our children and youth.

## Whenever you go out these days, remember this advice:

**මුඛ වැස්මක් පලඳින්න!**  
**බඩගේ ඕනෑම දවසක!**

**முகக்கவசம் அணிந்திருங்கள்!**  
**உங்கள் நண்பர்களை காத்திருங்கள்!**

**Wear a mask!**  
**Protect your friends!**



**iBBY** INTERNATIONAL  
BOARD ON  
BOOKS FOR  
YOUNG PEOPLE  
**Sri Lanka**  
Section

Printed by IBBY Sri Lanka Section

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## Newsletter August 2020

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The first-ever online book fair in the Asian region, Fair Plus, was held from 24 -26 July, organised by the Read Plus Consortium, a member of IBBY Sri Lanka Section...

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## .. Asia's first online book fair

Several publishers in the Asian region were invited for the launch. Whilst invitees from China sent congratulatory messages, two prominent personalities of the Indian book publishing industry graced the occasion. They were S.K. Ghai, Chairman of Sterling Publishers (P) Ltd. and Chairman of the Institute of Publishing—India, and Kaushal Goyal, Chairman of GBD Books—India.

Addressing the online participants, Mr. Ghai proposed to conduct a similar online book fair, by publishers from the 8 South Asian nations of the SAARC organisation, namely Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. His proposal was warmly welcomed by all who attended the event. The IBBY Sri Lanka Section intends to do its utmost to make such a book fair a reality.

Thirteen Sri Lankan book publishers and vendors participated in the inaugural Fair Plus Book Fair. A second online fair was held from 21- 25 August.

## ... Teaching covid-19 prevention



The programme was based on a booklet published by IBBY Sri Lanka. Two children dramatised the contents, whilst the Chief Librarian of the Colombo Public Library, Varuni Gangabadaarachchi moderated. The Colombo Public Library is a member of IBBY Sri Lanka.

## Exciting up-coming events

**September 18 –27:**  
Colombo International Book Fair  
at the BMICH premises.

**October 9 and 10:**  
International Children's Day  
Programme  
at the Public Sports Ground,  
Anuradhapura.

**October weekends:**  
Storytelling training for  
the teachers of preschools  
affiliated to public libraries  
in Colombo, Kandy, Ampara,  
Jaffna and Matara at the  
public libraries.

## IBBY Sri Lanka in the spotlight...

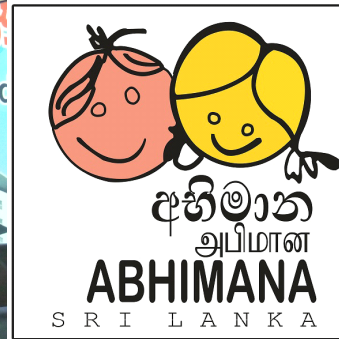


IBBY Sri Lanka Section's President, Dinesh Kulatunga participated in a discussion on Social Responsibility conducted by SIYATHA TV on 8 June 2020.

On 24 June 2020, he made an online presentation on *Rich Reading Culture in Middle Part of 20th Century, Its Decline and Way Forward*, at *The Bibliosphere. Book In The New Reality* international scientific seminar in Moscow.

## Taking books and IT to rural kids and youth

The Mobile Library and Career Guidance & IT Unit of the Abhimana Community Development Association, has been busy supporting the educational and reading needs of children and youth in the Hambanthota and Monaragala Districts.



**The library, career guidance and IT unit located inside a new, customised bus, can accommodate up to 10 persons. The library contains 5,000 books and learning aide kits for slow learners, whilst the IT unit is equipped with 10 laptops. A projector and internet connectivity enhance the learning experience.**

Children of school-going age are assisted in their studies by the mobile unit after school hours. These sessions are held inside the bus, at the premises of Child Resource Centres operated by the Abhimana Community Development Association in the Hambanthota, Tangalle, Suriyawewa, Thissamaharama and Katharagama Divisional Secretariat regions.

The mobile unit also serves school leavers and unemployed youths by providing career guidance, aptitude tests and short-term certificate courses in information technology. Regardless of age, all are permitted to use the library facilities as well. Abhimana is an organisational member of IBBY Sri Lanka.



## New books to be launched for use by Story Nest partner preschools

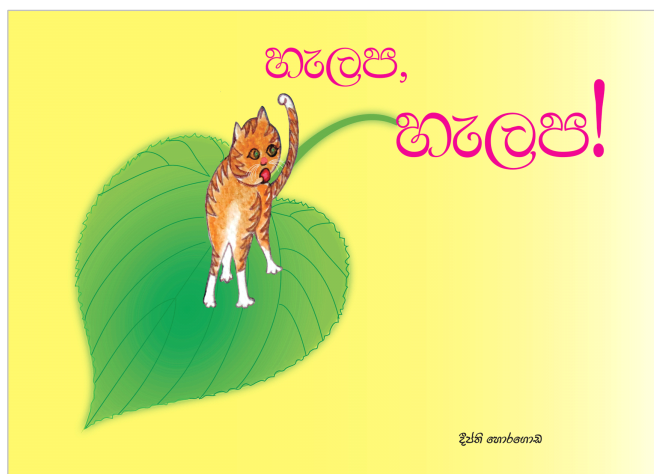
Four books created especially for the Story Nest project to bring the joys of listening to stories, and carrying out activities based on the stories will be published next month. The books will be displayed at the Colombo International Book Fair from 18–27 September at the BMICH premises.



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**Author:** Beeta Rajapaksha **Publisher:** Star Publications



**Author:** Deepthi Horagoda **Publisher:** Star Publications



**Author:** Ken Spillman **Publisher:** Neptune Publications

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