

## Book fair opens new chapters in joy of reading

BY SHAMILA JAMALUDDIN

THE joys of reading and exploring new worlds are still high among adults as well as the younger generation.

A survey by The Gulf Today among a cross section of visitors and participating members of the ongoing Capital Book Fair revealed that the joy of reading remains strong among people in spite of the onslaught and distractions of digital media and technology.

The week-long 19th Abu Dhabi International Book Fair (ADIBF) which kicked off on Tuesday at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre (ADNEC) is expected to be attended by 400,000 visitors.

The number of countries represented this year had increased to 53 with 637 exhibitors from 52 countries from across five continents and was inaugurated by Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

Moreover, with growth in space, new venues for events and a large range of services to exhibitors and visitors the ADIBF is organised by KITAB, a joint venture between the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage (ADACH) and the Frankfurt Book Fair.

Kitab meaning "book" in Arabic and based in the capital has been established to encourage reading

in Arabic and based in the capital has been established to encourage reading and improve literacy in the region.

### Earth unveiled

Earth, the 20-kg world atlas of the Millennium House's masterpiece publication and its newest edition Earth Concise, was unveiled at the exhibition.

The participation of the never-to-be-repeated world atlas marked its final public appearance in the capital.

Gordon Cheers, managing director of Millennium House and the brain behind the creation of Earth who believes that every

child should grow up with an atlas at home, said that its increasing global demand will soon take it to the exclusivity of collectors' shelves.

The hand-bound "time capsule" of Planet Earth is exhibited in Hall 4, Stand B - 18 of the Book Fair along with Earth Concise and some of the other high quality, exclusive reference books that Millennium House publishes.

Earth Concise has become very popular as an educational tool, the reason that Millennium House decided to launch it at the fair to enable schools and families own copies of this award winning publication.

Returning to the UAE for a second time, Earth's participation in the Abu Dhabi Book Fair has evoked great anticipation among book lovers, collectors and leading libraries in the region.

"We are fascinated by the interest Earth has created here," he said.

"This makes ADIBF all the more important for us and the ideal platform to introduce Earth Concise to the region," Cheers added.

Earth Concise won the International Map Trade Award (IMTA) for Best Book in 2008, while EARTH won global acclaim for its excellent de-

Book in 2008, while EARTH won global acclaim for its excellent designer quality and incomparable content value.

Moreover, created for an exclusive group and priced accordingly, the atlas is a one-stop print destination for almost every possible detail of Planet Earth with 355 maps in it covering 170 countries.

The interest with which it was received in this region has also encouraged the publisher to produce it in Arabic.

Millennium House introduced Earth in the UAE for the first time in 2008 at the Sharjah World Book Fair.

The ADIBF, running till March 22, will include new features from the popular Children's Corner and Cookbooks on Show to the first-ever Antiquarian Book Fair in the Arab World.

A display of rare, valuable first editions will be showcased for the first time ever in the region at the Antiquarian Book Fair, in-



cluding old and rare books in the Arab World, and that of Oriental, Asian and Western cultures.

Claudia Kaiser, General Manager of Kitab, said that the book fair is an oppor-

General Manager of Kitab, said that the book fair is an opportunity for readers of all ages to rediscover reading and interact with their favourite authors - and discover new ones.

Designed to appeal to the young and the young at heart, the popular Children's Corner boasts a range of activities throughout the duration of the fair, from author readings and book signings to interactive workshops, such as "how to become an author" and "the secret to creating animations."

Moreover, these are complemented by an Emirati heritage puppet show, a giant snakes-and-lad-

ders game and a reading room furnished with colourful bean bags.

ADIBF hosts Cookbooks on Show for those with a love of cooking, or the desire to learn with international recipes and cookbooks featuring live demonstrations by internationally renowned celebrity chefs as Chef Wan, Chef Fatema Hal, Chef Chakali, Vidhu Mittal and Yvan Cadiou.

In addition, sev-

eral, Adach, speaking on the tremendous progress the fair has made in 19 years said the number of participating countries was less than 25 in 2006.

The current session of 2009, is the largest in its history.

"It just shows what progress we have made with the international publishers rising by 32 per cent from the previous session, with foreign publishing houses now representing more than 35 per cent of the total number of publishers and an increase of 50 per cent in the reserved area within the Fair," Al Mazrouei added.

Adach has made a quantum leap in the organisation of the ADIBF by making it an international exhibition by all standards and characteristics.

"This rooted development has not been achieved in the fair as a sudden or singular manner, but it was consistent with other cultural projects launched by Abu Dhabi that has contributed to the creation of a solid base in the face of the development of the publishing and distribution industry and trade, and over-

distribution industry and trade, and overcome all obstacles to the book movement," he said.

The Sheikh Zayed Book Award in its nine branches, the prize for Arabic novels, the Kalima translation project in its first year has surpassed its mark of translating 100 books into Arabic from various languages of the world.

Moreover, Adach's National Library has witnessed a triple increase at the level of its publications with the Poetry Academy in Abu Dhabi having its own distinct publications with Adach adding more

than 300 books a year, to the Arabic library.

### Dolphin energy

Demonstrating its commitment to support cultural programmes in Abu Dhabi, Dolphin Energy's participation as platinum sponsor of the Abu Dhabi International Book Fair enables visitors to view two important publications that it commissioned.

Located at AT36 in the Atrium area of the conference hall, the first is titled *Dolphin* and comprises more than 150 unique colour photographs of dolphins - taken all over the world - feeding, playing, whistling and jumping. There are also many classic shots of Dolphins from the Arabian Gulf.

*Dolphin* was published to commemorate the occasion of Dolphin Energy's first gas production and supply to the UAE in July 2007 - as well as to celebrate the "Year of the Dolphin" which was declared by the United Nations in the same year.

The second book entitled *Coral* describes a pioneering three year investigation of regional coral habitats and status growths. The book reviews the extensive range of coral reefs lying in Abu Dhabi and eastern Qatari waters.

Both books illustrate Dolphin's commitment towards the furthering awareness on the need for

Dolphin's commitment towards the furthering awareness on the need for environmental protection and the conservation of marine life.

### Activities

The educational forum focuses on the importance of education and how to prepare students to meet the challenges of the 21st century through interactive workshops, involving international experts in professional development.

This is in addition to organising an international symposium to mark the World Heritage Day on March 18-19, entitled "Heritage."