

BOOKS

A 'REVISED AND ENLARGED' CROSSWORD BOOKSTORE ON ELGIN ROAD. PLUS WHO IS THE RAIL MAN?

There's more to explore at Crossword. As you walk into the Elgin Road bookstore through the glass doors, glance right and you'll come across rows and rows of popular titles with big, fat discounts. This is Boi Bazar, an ode to the discount-laden *boi para* of College Street.

As you take the stairs to the first floor, you can't miss the hanging lampshades sporting beautiful book jackets. Very bookish, very stylish!

On the first floor, one of the new additions is a shelf called "Kolkata Recommends", packed with books of, for and by Calcutta. It's possibly the only place where you'll find Mamata Banerjee rubbing shoulders with Karl Marx! The rack also has Tagore, Ramakrishna and the Pulitzer-winning cancer specialist, Siddhartha Mukherjee.

Also new is a shelf of Hindi books, which holds classics as well as translations — from Tagore and Saratchandra to Amitav Ghosh and Orhan Pamuk. The Bengali section has been expanded, with an impressive collection of classics and contemporary titles as well as compilations of stories serialised in *Anandabazar Patrika*.

Positioning itself more as a "leisure store" than just a bookstore, Crossword's new edition is high on merchandise — decor pieces, picture frames, office supplies, luxury stationery...

The second floor is a kiddie's delight with games, puzzles, dolls and what not, coupled with an Aqua Java outlet. There's also a play pen that takes care of your little ones, leaving you free to browse or enjoy a hot cuppa.

"Crossword is now safer and greener than before. We've followed safety guidelines closely and used environment-friendly material and equipment wherever possible, from ACs and light bulbs to cloth bags instead of plastic," said Sidharth Pansari, the franchise owner. The store will soon apply for a green certificate and may be earn some carbon credits too.

On December 21, the new and improved Crossword was relaunched by two winners of the Crossword Award — Shankar and Ashwin Sanghi.

Samhita Chakraborty

Pictures: Pabitra Das



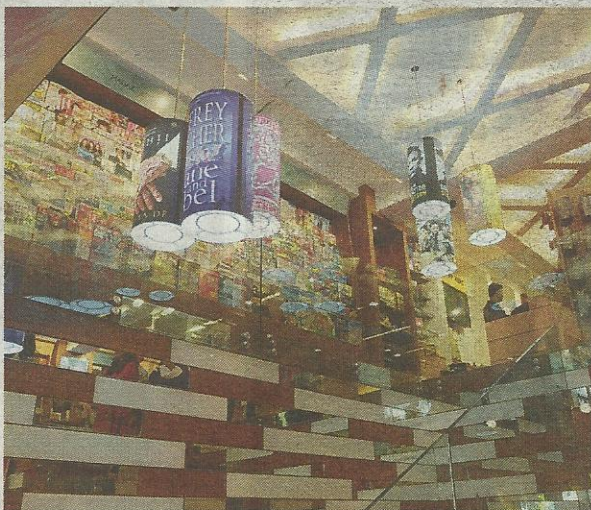
Shankar (right) and Ashwin Sanghi share a laugh at the relaunch of Crossword as Sidharth Pansari (far left) looks on

I am happy to be at the revised and enlarged Crossword, to borrow a publishing term. It's good to see that the Bengali section had been expanded. The only thing I'd add to this store is a small table in the corner for a writer to sit and write.

— **SHANKAR**
(winner of the 2007 Crossword Award for *Chowringhee*)

When I self-published *The Rozabal Line* in 2008, which has references to 21/12/12, it was Sidharth's advice on the marketing that helped me get my book to the readers. And here I am, speaking at Crossword on December 21, 2012! This store goes to show that there's so much more to Calcutta than

Tagore, *mishti doi* and *rosogolla!*
— **ASHWIN SANGHI** (winner of the 2010 Crossword Award for *Chanakya's Chant*)



Suspended lamps with bookcovers on the shades give the store a unique look



The Christmas tree at Crossword is a book lover's delight!

ALTER YOUR TASTE
WITH A NEW TIME!