# Educational Excursion to the BMICH Colombo International Book Fair



As planned, on 29 September, a group of 40 scholarship children, accompanied by 10 parents, teachers, and resident monks, set off on an educational excursion to the BMICH Colombo International Book Fair. This annual trip was organized as part of our special programme to celebrate World Children's Day, providing the children with an opportunity to develop their reading habits while enjoying a memorable educational outing.

Since spending the entire day at the book fair was not necessary, we included visits to two important Buddhist religious sites along the journey, allowing the children to gain both spiritual and cultural experiences.

Our first destination was the Kande Viharaya Temple. We arrived there at around 9.30 a.m., when the temple was still peaceful and not crowded. The children first offered flowers to the Lord Buddha, observed religious practices, and paid their respects. Afterwards, they were given time to admire the beautiful surroundings of the temple and enjoy the calm atmosphere. The quiet environment allowed them to explore the temple premises freely and respectfully.

After leaving Kande Viharaya, we travelled to the Kalutara Bodhiya and the Kalutara Chaithya, where the children once again had the opportunity to worship and receive blessings. Following the religious observances, lunch was served in Kalutara before continuing our journey to Colombo. This arrangement also helped us manage our travel schedule

efficiently, as we were aware of the heavy traffic usually experienced on the way to the BMICH premises.

As expected, traffic was quite heavy, but we safely arrived at the BMICH Book Fair at around 2.30 p.m. Upon arrival, the children were gathered together and given the necessary instructions regarding safety and the programme. They were then divided into small groups, each under the supervision of a teacher, before entering the exhibition.

The BMICH Colombo International Book Fair is Sri Lanka's largest annual book exhibition, bringing together almost every major publisher and bookseller in the country. Well-known publishers such as Sarasavi, Godage, Vijitha Yapa, Samudra, Susara, and many others displayed thousands of books and educational materials under one roof.

For our children, this visit was one of the most eagerly anticipated events of the year. From the beginning of the school year, many of them had been looking forward to this opportunity. The exhibition enabled them to purchase school textbooks, exercise books, stationery, examination guides, model papers, educational reference books, novels, short story collections, children's literature and many other reading materials at special discounted prices.

It was heartwarming to witness the excitement and happiness of the children as they carefully selected the books they had been hoping to buy. Many of them proudly carried their new books, shared recommendations with their friends and discussed the stories and learning materials they had discovered. Their enthusiasm clearly reflected their love for reading and learning.

In addition to books and stationery, the exhibition also featured educational displays, food stalls and various attractions, allowing the children to enjoy a well-rounded and memorable experience throughout the afternoon.

This annual excursion has become one of the most significant programmes organized by our center to celebrate World Children's Day. Every year, it provides our scholarship children with an opportunity to broaden their knowledge, encourage their reading habits and experience one of Sri Lanka's largest educational exhibitions.

At around 6.00 p.m., all the children gathered once again, and we began our journey back to the center. During the return trip, the bus was filled with cheerful conversations as the children happily shared their newly purchased books with their teachers and friends. Their

smiling faces, excitement and appreciation made it evident that the excursion had been both educational and enjoyable.

The BMICH Book Fair excursion once again proved to be a valuable learning experience, inspiring our children to continue developing a lifelong love of reading while creating unforgettable memories with their friends, teachers and parents.

## Conclusion

The annual educational excursion to the BMICH Colombo International Book Fair was a truly meaningful and rewarding experience for our scholarship children. Throughout the day, the children not only gained access to a wide variety of books and educational resources but also enjoyed valuable cultural and spiritual experiences through the visits to Kande Viharaya and Kalutara Bodhiya.

The joy, excitement and enthusiasm reflected in the children's smiles, conversations and eagerness to share their newly purchased books clearly demonstrated how valuable this programme was to them. It reaffirmed that organizing this annual excursion is a worthwhile investment in the children's educational development and personal growth.

We sincerely express our heartfelt gratitude to our Ven.Thero for his continuous guidance, encouragement and unwavering support in making this programme possible. Our sincere appreciation also goes to all the monks, teachers, parents and volunteers whose dedication, careful planning and hard work ensured the success of the excursion.

The happiness we witnessed throughout the day reminded us that this excursion is far more than just a visit to a book exhibition—it is an unforgettable experience that motivates, inspires and enriches the lives of our children year after year.

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*Offering flowers and paying homage at Kande Viharaya Temple.*



*Children enjoying the peaceful surroundings of Kande Viharaya.*




*Arrival at the BMICH Colombo International Book Fair.*



*Children exploring the exhibition under the guidance of teachers.*





*Selecting books, educational materials and stationery from various publishers.*



*Children sharing their excitement and discussing their new books with friends and teachers.*



*Group photograph at the BMICH Colombo International Book Fair.*




*Returning home with unforgettable memories.*

- Tesheema Chammi -