

**WEATHER FORECAST**

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES	DHAKA	MYMENSINGH	CHATTOGRAM	SYLHET	RAJSHAHI	RANGPUR	KHULNA	BARISHAL	COX'S BAZAR
	H 27.6 L 14.8	H 25.0 L 14.0	H 28.4 L 18.6	H 27.0 L 14.6	H 26.0 L 11.6	H 24.3 L 13.5	H 28.0 L 15.0	H 28.5 L 14.0	H 28.0 L 18.8

Light rain/thunder showers may occur at one or two places in Dhaka, Barishal & Chattogram divisions in next 24 hours till 6pm today, UNB said quoting the Met office. Light fog may occur at places over the country during late night to morning. The sun sets in the capital today at 5:56pm and rises tomorrow at 6:29am.

# DUCSU POLLS

## Leftist students besiege VC's office; independent aspirants to form alliance

DU CORRESPONDENT

Left-leaning student organisations yesterday besieged the Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor's office to press home their six-point demand, including setting up the polling centres at academic buildings, regarding the Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducusu) election, to be held on March 11.

Leaders and activists of two leftist alliances -- Pragatisheel Chhatra Jote and Samrajjobad Birodhi Chhatra Oikya -- started their demonstration around 1pm, following a procession brought out from Madhur Canteen.

Their other demands include scrapping the age limit for candidacy and giving an opportunity to contest to those who pay Ducsu and hall union fees, allowing the candidates to campaign inside classrooms, allotting seats in the dormitories based on merit and allowing former leaders of Ducsu to take part in electioneering.

Convener of Pragatisheel Chhatra Jote Iqbal Kabir said the DU administration has gone against most student organisations and decided to set up the polling centres at halls as per Chhatra League's demand.

At the same time, Awami League-backed BCL formed a human chain in front of DU Central Library, demanding the university authorities revamp the library and turn it into a multi-storied complex.

Like previous days, Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal went to Madhur Canteen yesterday where BCL men were also present. The entire canteen premises turned chaotic as both groups shouted slogan and centre-slogans.

Talking to reporters, JCD Central General Secretary Akramul Hasan said they are not collecting nomination forms right now, though the forms can be collected from today. They said they would wait till the "last" moment, in order to realise their demands, including political coexistence on campus and at dormitories.

"We hope that the authorities will fulfil our demands," said Akramul.

As per the election schedule announced on February 11, nomination forms can be collected from February 19 to February 25.

Meanwhile, Chhatra League (JSD-Ambia) yesterday also demanded to defer the polls by 15 days to ensure political coexistence of all organisations on campus.

They placed the demand at a press conference organised to declare their panel for the polls.

The student body declared a separate panel, diverging from the BCL-led alliance, Chhatra Sangram Parishad.

In their 25-member panel, the organisation's DU unit president Mahfuzur Rahman and general secretary Shahriar Rahman have been declared candidates for the vice president and general secretary posts respectively.

In another development, a group of DU students yesterday declared forming an independent panel to contest the Ducsu and hall union polls.

While reading out a statement at a press conference at TSC Cafeteria, Auroi Semonti Khan, one of the students, said they will contest the polls with a full-fledged panel under the banner of "Swatantra Jote" (Independent Alliance).

"We have heard that many students want to compete in the polls but are apprehensive of Chhatra League. We are urging all to reach out to us through this platform," said Auroi, a student of genetic engineering and biotechnology department.

She said they did not announce the full panel "for the sake of security" and would announce the names of panel members gradually.

"If we take position separately, it would be easier to stop us by threatening, intimidating or torturing us. But if we are united -- employing our courage, merit and skills -- no force can suppress us," she added.

The platform also said that they would not form any alliance with any student organisation that has a "parent political party" but would welcome the quota reformists for a "discussion" if they want.



Thousands of devotees camp out under a rainbow of canopies on the penultimate day of Biswa Ijtema 2019. The second akheri munajat is scheduled for today, on the bank of the Turag river in Tongi. This picture was taken yesterday morning.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## MOBILE COURT DRIVE

### 'Not-for-sale', adulterated drugs worth Tk 1 cr seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mobile court of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday seized "not-for-sale" medicines and adulterated cancer drugs worth around Tk 1 crore and sent two persons to jail in a drive at Dhaka's College Gate area.

The seized medicines are allocated by the government to be used for state-run hospitals -- National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopedic Rehabilitation and National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases -- and are not for sale, said Rab Executive Magistrate Sarwoer Alam, who led the drive.

"But those were being illegally sold at different pharmacies and they have been doing this for several years with the help of some syndicates at these hospitals," he added.

Three pharmacies -- Royal Medical Pharma, Narsingdi Pharma and Hamida Pharmacy, a house, and three warehouses were sealed off during the drive.

Mahmud, manager of Hamida Pharmacy, was sentenced to two years in jail and Rafikul, owner of Royal Medical Pharma, was given one year in jail. Two others were on the run, the executive magistrate said.

During the drive, adulterated cancer drugs were also recovered from Narsingdi Pharma.

The drive led by Bangladesh Drug Administration and Rab-2, started at 11am and was still going on till filing of this report at 10:30pm.

## DNCC BY-POLLS

### CEC instructs law enforcers to remain neutral

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) KM Nurul Huda yesterday instructed law enforcers to remain neutral during Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) mayoral by-polls, and councillor elections in 36 new wards under both Dhaka city corporations.

"Act neutrally while discharging duties during the election so that no one can raise questions about the polls," Nurul Huda said while addressing a meeting with law enforcers at Nirbachan Bhaban.

"Last parliamentary election was exemplary in terms of freedom and fairness," he said. "We expect the same atmosphere in city polls."

DNCC mayoral by-polls will be held on February 28. Election to councillor posts in the 36 new wards -- 18 under DNCC and 18 under Dhaka South City Corporation -- will be held on the same day.

The DNCC mayoral post fell vacant following the death of Anisul Huq on November 30, 2017. He was elected mayor on April 28, 2015.

At the meeting, CEC Huda instructed law enforcement agencies to provide security to voters and agents of different political parties during the voting process.

CEC also praised the role of police force in curbing untoward situation during the national election and instructed the same vigilance in the upcoming elections.

Reflecting on major parties like BNP boycotting the upazila parishad polls, he said, "We can't do anything if all parties do not participate. Still we hope the election will be competitive."

Top officials of armed forces division, police, Rab, and Border Guard Bangladesh attended the meeting alongside high-ups of intelligence units.

### EVMs TO BE USED

After the meeting, EC Secretary Helal Uddin Ahmed said that electronic voting machines will be used from the third phase of upazila parishad election.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

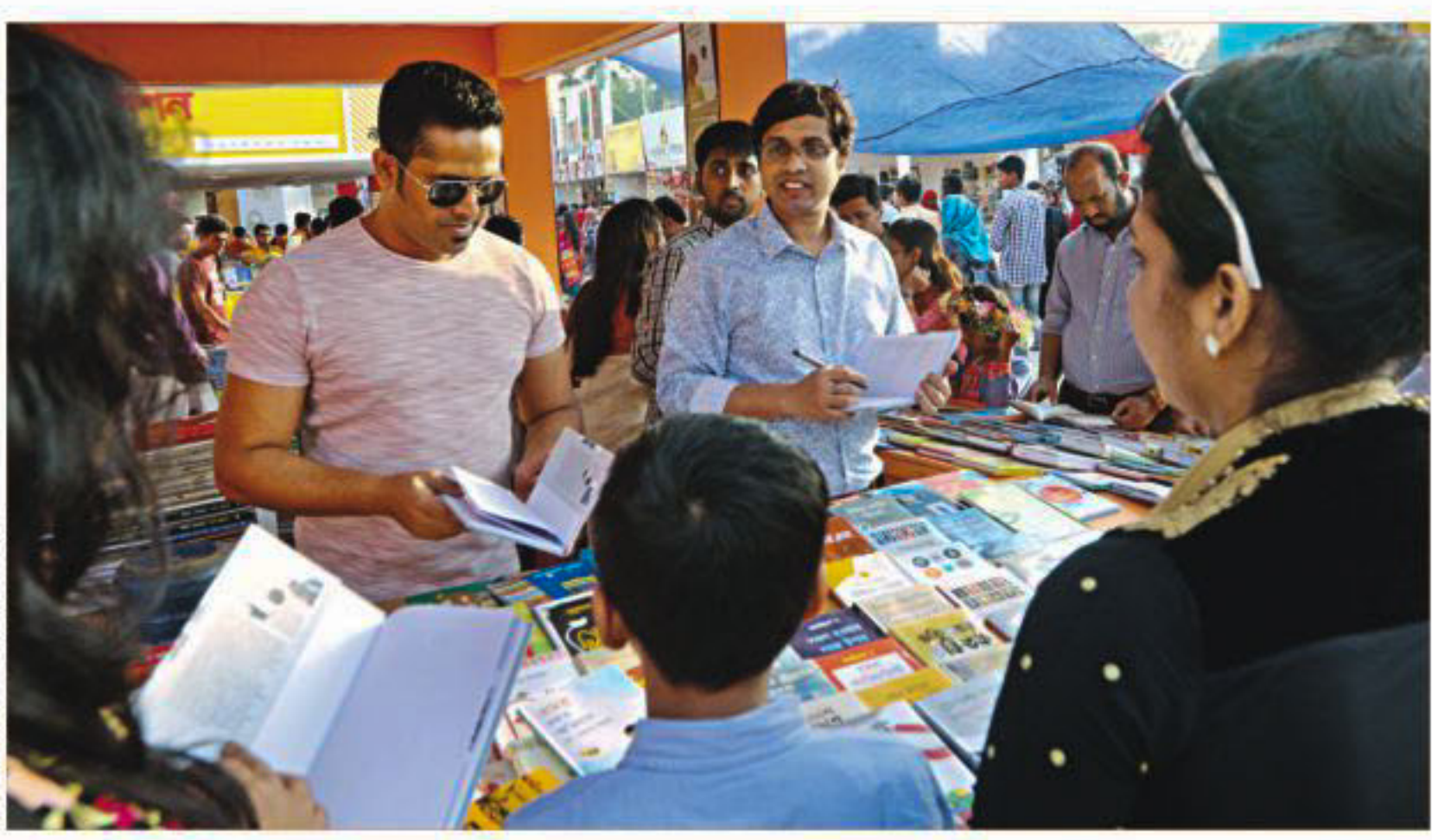
# Young writers find eager publishers

SAYYED MOHMUD ULLAH

There was a time when young, aspiring writers had to struggle to get their work published but things have changed for the better. Publishers are now showing interest in young writers which was evident at the month-long Ekushey book fair.

"I'm getting good response from readers and that's why we have published at least 25 books of young writers, including work by Mehedi Ullah, who I believe will enrich contemporary Bangla literature," said Arifur Rahman Naem, owner of Oitijhya Publication.

Arif said at least 250 writers had their debut through his publishing house since 2001, and this year Mehedi's romantic book, titled "Unomeyo Ushna Onorag" is seeing



Writer Shantanu Chowdhury, right, at Ittadi Grantha Prakash stall yesterday.

good sales. Talking to The Daily Star, Mehedi said the book includes some stories on tragic breakups and their consequences.

Mehedi won Gemcon Young Literary Award 2013 and is a teacher at Folklore department at the Jatiya Kabi

Kazi Nazrul Islam University. Onnesha has published two novels titled "Bibiana" and "Hridoyer Dokhin Duar" written by Kingkor Ahsan and Abdullah Al Imran respectively.

Kingkor said the word "Bibiana" refers to opulent life and his novel

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

# 12hr gas outage in areas including Bangabhaban, Gono Bhaban today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gas supply in a vast area of the capital, that include important government establishments such as Bangabhaban, Gono Bhaban and Jatiya Sangsad, will remain suspended for 12 hours from this evening.

Supply will be disrupted from 6pm today till 6am Wednesday, as concerned authorities will shift pipelines to facilitate the construction work of metro rail project, said a press release of Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Ltd yesterday.

The areas of Dhaka where there will be no gas supply are: Mirpur, Shyamoli, Monipuripara, Agargaon, Dhanmondi, Mohammadpur, Bangabhaban, Gono Bhaban, Jatiya Sangsad, Kalabagan, Hazaribagh, Dhaka University, Buet, Shahbagh, Green Road, all areas of Old Dhaka, Rampura, Banasree, Nandipara,

Moghbar, Siddheswari, Segunbagicha, Minto Road, Tejgaon, Khilgaon, Basabo, Motijheel and Kamalapur.

Gas supply will remain suspended in residential, commercial, and industrial establishments, as well as CNG filling stations, said the press release.

Titas Gas sought apology from its clients for the temporary inconvenience.

Earlier on Saturday, gas supply in tens of thousands of households, factories and other establishments in the capital and its adjoining areas came to a complete or partial halt, because of a technical glitch at Ashulia Gas Station of the state-run Gas Transmission Company Ltd (GTCL), which carries natural gas to national grid.

The sudden outage of gas inflicted untold sufferings on city dwellers, as there was no prior announcement from the state-run utility company.

## 'Militant' jumps off building to escape interrogation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A suspected militant sustained injury after jumping off the fourth floor of a building on Dhaka's Minto Road yesterday, to escape interrogation while on remand.

Sheikh Golam Hossain alias Milad, a "Neo JMB" activist, was being interrogated in a room of CTC Bhaban, said Monirul Islam, chief of Counter Terrorists and Transnational Crime (CTC) unit.

Being allowed to use the washroom, Milad jumped through a window, said Monirul.

The accused was given primary treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

**জহুরুল ইসলাম সিটি (আফতাবনগর) প্রজেক্টে কিছু সংখ্যক রেডি প্লট কিস্তিতে বরাদ্দ চলছে**

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