

**WEATHER FORECAST**

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES

<b>DHAKA</b> H 24.8   L 17.9	<b>MYMENSINGH</b> H 26.0   L 16.6	<b>CHATTOGRAM</b> H --   L 22.0	<b>SYLHET</b> H 24.8   L 14.6	<b>RAJSHAHI</b> H 29.0   L 16.5	<b>RANGPUR</b> H 28.0   L 16.4	<b>KHULNA</b> H 22.0   L 17.4	<b>BARISHAL</b> H 21.1   L 16.7	<b>COX'S BAZAR</b> H 28.8   L 22.5
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Rain/thunder showers with gusty wind may occur at many places over Dhaka, Mymensingh, Khulna, Barishal & Sylhet divisions and at a few places over Rajshahi, Rangpur & Chattogram divisions with isolated hails at places in the next 24 hours till 6pm today, UNB said quoting the Met office. The sun sets in the capital today at 5:59pm and rises tomorrow at 6:24am.



Rickshaw puller Sahabuddin's infant waits with his mother in front of Dhaka Medical College morgue yesterday, holding a copy of his father's national ID and photo. They were there for a DNA test as Sahabuddin went missing after the Chawkbazar fire. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

# Environmental activists raise concern over Golden Rice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Environmental activists yesterday called upon the government to not release genetically modified Golden Rice in the country.

The release of genetically modified (GM) crop BT Brinjal did not yield expected result, and farmers were not benefitted, they said at a press conference.

Development organisation Ubinig along with Naya Krishi Andolon and Narigrantha Prabantana arranged the press conference on "Transgenic Seed: Bangladesh's Danger" at the capital's Jatiya Press Club.

The speakers also demanded that concerned government authority release a report on whether environment ministry's clauses for approving BT Brinjal have been maintained properly.

Reading out a written statement, Ubinig Executive Director Farida Akhter said some claims were made during the release of BT Brinjal, including it would be insect-proof. But those claims were proven wrong.

BT Brinjal got environment ministry's approval for farmer-level cultivation in October 2013 and distribution of its saplings among farmers started in January

2014, she said.

On the other hand, Ubinig conducted a field-level survey from December 2018 to January 2019 among 48 BT Brinjal farmers who cultivated the crop in 2014-15 in 19 districts.

Only 13 of the farmers continued its cultivation in 2015-16. Five of them continued it in 2016-17, and three in 2017.

Farmers alleged that the crop did not yield as much as expected, while some crops also rotted in the field during cultivation, Farida said, referring to the survey report.

Besides, no assessment was made in the areas on whether GM crop cultivation caused any harm to local environment and soil, she added.

Approval for field-level cultivation of Golden Rice has been sought in such situation, she said.

Referring to findings of two organisations from Philippines - Health Alliance for Democracy and UP Manila College of Medicine, Farida said "It is yet to be proven that Golden Rice is safe outside the laboratory."

If Golden Rice gets approval for field-level cultivation, it may pose a threat to local rice varieties and their cultivation, she further said.

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## 5-storey building tilts at Kamrangirchar

Residents evacuated

BSS, Dhaka

A five-storey residential building at Kamrangirchar in Old Dhaka tilted to its north yesterday.

"All residents of the building and its adjoining establishments have been evacuated," said Director (Training) Lt Col Siddique Mohammad Julfikur Rahman of Fire Service and Civil Defence.

Connections of electricity and gas to the building have been cut off, he added.

Shahin Fakir, officer-in-charge of Kamrangirchar Police Station, told the news agency that the five-storey building was built in the area six months ago, and one Samad Mia bought it from the previous owner Shaheen in January.

The firefighting unit members said the building was built without doing the piling work properly.

## Ensure punishment for corruption to earn trust of people

Noted personalities tell ACC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent personalities yesterday called upon the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to ensure punishment for the corrupt to earn the trust of common people.

They also underscored the need for quick disposal of corruption cases.

They said this at a views-exchange meeting organised at ACC's headquarters at Segunbagicha in Dhaka.

ACC organised the meeting to gather opinions of civil society members on its strategy paper for 2019, says

a press release.

Professor Abdullah Abu Sayeed, founder of Bishwo Shahitto Kendro, said, "ACC could not earn the trust of people... So ACC must do something visible. They have done some work but to earn the trust of public, they need to commit and convey the message that offenders will be punished," he said.

Former Bangladesh Bank governor Mohammed Farashuddin suggested that ACC give attention to health and education sectors.

Center for Policy Dialogue's (CPD)

Distinguished Fellow Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya said it is not possible to curb corruption as long as empowerment of corrupt people in politics is visible.

CPD's former executive director economist Mustafizur Rahman said prevention of corruption should be taken into consideration from development perspective.

"Unless corruption is prevented, it will be difficult to turn the country into a developed one by 2041," he said.

Former adviser to a caretaker government

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## Domestic help dies in fire

UNB, Dhaka

A domestic worker was burnt to death as a fire broke out in an apartment of a building in Dakshin Bishil area under Darussalam in Dhaka yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Liza Akhter, 17, daughter of Nazrul Islam, hailing from Barguna district.

She used to work on the fourth floor of the seven-storey "Johura Garden" building, said Ishrafil Hossain, sub-inspector of Darussalam Police Station.

Police said that the fire originated from an air-conditioner in the apartment around 10:30am and Liza suffered burn injuries.

She was rescued and rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared her dead on arrival, said the SI.

Liza's employer and his wife were not home when the accident occurred.

## A good part-time job opportunity

SAYYED MOHMUD ULLAH

The month-long Ekushey book fair provides a number of young people with the opportunity to earn some money and have an amicable experience of interacting with visitors while working as stall attendants.

Of the 499 publishing houses participating this year, most stalls and pavilions have students working as stall attendants, according to the fair sources.

They consider it a good part-time job that does not hamper their studies and enables them to make some extra money while presenting the opportunity to meet and spend time with writers, publishers and book lovers.

"Working as a stall attendant at the book fair gives me a chance to develop my communication skills through dealing with the customers," said Roluahpuii Panykhua Mary, a student of Eden Mohila College.

Mary, who was working at the Sabyasachi publication stall, said she helps with bring-

ing in and selling books; opening, closing and maintaining the stall; and looks after delivering daily information of new books from the stall.

Besides gathering valuable experience, each young attendant earns between Tk 5,000 and Tk 10,000 from the fair.

"It's a decent opportunity for these students who are always on the lookout for part-time jobs," said Mahubur Rahman, a student of Dhaka University.

Mahub, who was working at the Tamralipi stall, said the publishing house will pay him Tk 8,000 for his month-long service.

Another staff, Sraboni Akter Tisha, a student of Eden Mohila College, said that one of her friends asked her to submit CV to join as a stall attendant.

"I'm a little down as the fair only has three more days to go, but the thought of getting paid by the publisher makes me excited. I will buy some books for me and toys for my younger brother," she said.

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## HC orders govt to grant 10th grade scale to 45 headmasters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday asked the government to grant 10th grade scale to 45 headmasters of government primary schools.

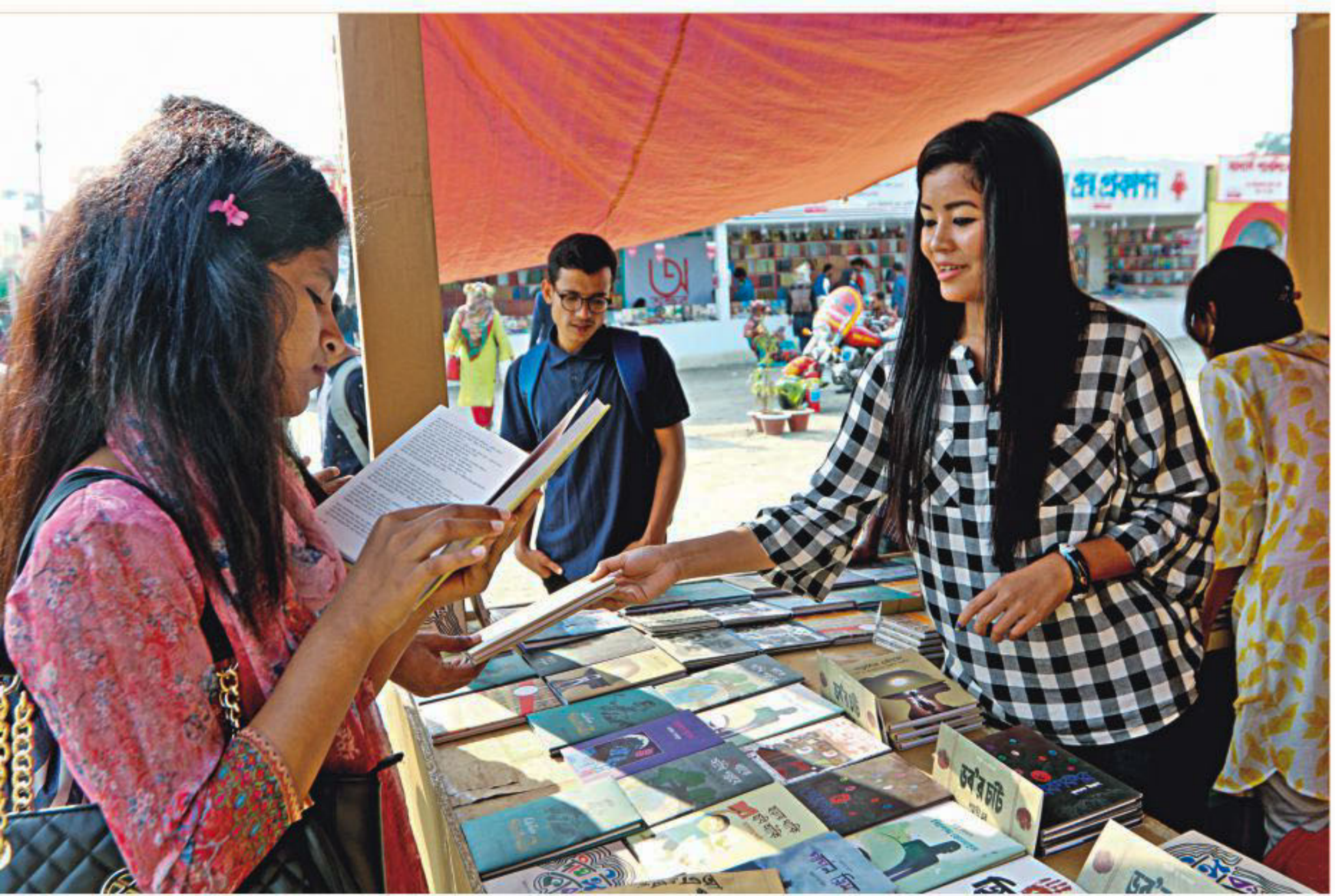
The court also ordered the government to notify their names in the official gazette as class-two gazetted officer-headmasters of government primary schools since March 9, 2014.

The HC bench of Justice Naima Haider and Justice Khizir Ahmed Choudhury came up with the verdict following a writ petition filed by 45 headmasters including Reaz Parvez, president of Bangladesh Government Primary Headmasters Association.

According to the HC order, the headmasters will get Tk 16,000 basic salary per month instead of Tk 12,000, which is under the 11th grade, Reaz told The Daily Star.

Petitioners' lawyer Advocate Salahuddin Dolon told The Daily Star that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on March 9, 2014 directed the authorities concerned to upgrade the status of head teachers of government primary schools to second-class, and the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education issued a gazette notification to this effect on the same day.

According to the gazette notification, head teachers of government primary schools were supposed to get salary at 10th grade. But the ministry strategically fixed the salary scale of government primary school headmasters at 11th grade which is contradictory to the 2014 gazette notification.



Working as stall attendants at the book fair is a good part-time job opportunity for students.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

BARAPUKURIA GRAFT CASE

## Finish trial in six months: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday directed the lower court concerned to finish the trial of Barapukuria coal mine corruption case within six months.

The bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice KM Hafizul Alam passed the order after hearing a petition filed by former BNP minister Aminul Haque, an accused in the case, seeking cancellation of the proceedings.

The bench yesterday also rejected the petition and withdrew the stay order issued in 2008 on the proceedings of the graft case.

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed the case in February 2008 accusing 16 persons including BNP chief Khaleda Zia and 10 of her cabinet colleagues




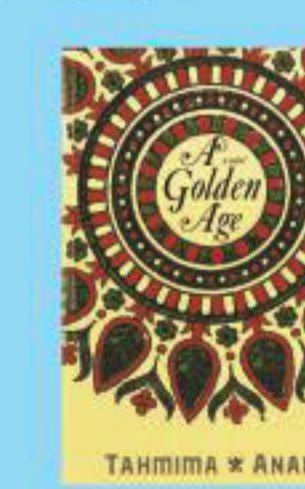










A school student sticks out his torso from a bus on Bijoy Sarani. While this may seem like a fun activity to children, it is extremely risky. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

**২০১৯ অমর একুশে গ্রন্থমেলায় স্টার বুকস এর প্রকাশনা**

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বাঙালি মুসলমানের বুদ্ধিবৃত্তিক বিক্রম ও বিখ্যাসহীনতা সৈয়দ আবুল মকসুদ	আবুল মনসুর আহমদের জীবনদর্শন ও সৃজনশীলতা ড. মো. চৌধুরী খান	সোনারবা দিন তাহমিনা আনাম	A Golden Age Tahmima Anam
			
কালের পরীক্ষা ও আমার জীবনের দিনগুলি তমিজউদ্দিন খান	সংগ্রামী নারী ৫২ ও ৭১ বাহার খান	শ্রেষ্ঠ উপন্যাস রকিব হাসান	কিশোর মুক্তিযোদ্ধা সমগ্র মোস্তাফা হোসেন
			
১৯৭১ তারাপাচার বন্দোবস্তাব্যয়	শুন হে বাণিন্দর শওকত আলী	নিব্বাচিত গল্প আবুল হায়াত	আবুল মনসুর আহমদের শ্রেষ্ঠগল্প