

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES

DHAKA
H 28.9 L 26.6

CHITTAGONG
H 31.4 L 25.3

SYLHET
H 34.8 L 27.2

RAJSHAHI
H 36.0 L 28.4

KHULNA
H 30.5 L 26.0

BARISAL
H 29.4 L 27.0

RANGPUR
H 35.6 L 28.4

COX'S BAZAR
H 29.0 L 25.0

Light to moderate rain or thunder showers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at most places over Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and at many places over Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions with moderately heavy to heavy falls at places over the country till 6:00pm today. Day and night temperature may fall slightly over the country, said Met Office. The sun sets in the capital today at 05:58pm and rises tomorrow at 05:47am.

Hundreds scramble for train tickets

Special trains to run from Tuesday; additional buses, launches tomorrow

STAR REPORT

Hundreds thronged the capital's Kamalapur Railway Station marking the last day's sale of advance train tickets for September 24 yesterday with special trains to be run from Tuesday, while bus and launch companies plan on running additional trips from tomorrow.

Though home-goers have started to leave, transport officials believe the rush will begin tomorrow when the bulk of around 60 lakh Eid vacationers will start departing.

Meanwhile, some 1,700 of the 5,364 advance tickets, mostly of

routes to Chandpur and Dhaka, were left unsold at Chittagong Railway Station with officials claiming the demand was high for stations around midway to the four destinations for which tickets were available. However, tickets to Sylhet and Mymensingh, the remaining two destinations, were sold out by 11:30am.

One Mosharaf Hossain told The Daily Star at Kamalapur yesterday that he had to leave empty-handed after waiting five hours on Friday for tickets to Khulna. Having already stood in a queue for four hours yesterday, he said, "If I fail today, I

will try to get a bus ticket."

Of the tickets, 25 percent are kept for sale online, five percent for VIPs, five percent for railways staff and the rest sold at counters. Over 14,000 tickets are sold daily at Kamalapur, said railway officials. Many ticket-seekers expressed discontent over the quota system. "Because of such quota system, many people like me do not get tickets after waiting for hours," said one Hasanuzzaman, trying to reach Rangpur.

Privately-run buses' advance tickets have already been sold out. Hanif Paribahan Manager Mosharaf Hossain said they would run 1,200

trips in both directions from tomorrow.

State-run Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation will operate around 500 buses to different districts, said its chairman, Mizanur Rahman.

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Association Chairman Mahbub Uddin Ahmed said the number of launches operating from Sadarghat Launch Terminal to southern districts was increased from 60-65 to 110-120 for the Eid rush as usual. Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation will operate three steamers daily from Monday.

BNP chief sends Eid greetings to PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, who is now in London, greeted Sheikh Hasina, prime minister and Awami League president, on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha by sending an Eid card yesterday.

On behalf of the BNP chief, assistant office secretaries -- Abdul Latif Jony, Asadul Karim Shahin and Shamimur Rahman Shamim -- handed over the card to the AL president's Dhanmondi office around 11:15am.

Earlier on Thursday, Hasina greeted Khaleda by sending an Eid card.

Khaleda accuses govt of staging militancy

STAR REPORT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia on Friday night claimed that the recently reported militant activities in the country were staged by the government as it wants to gain political mileage by showing presence of militancy in Bangladesh.

Khaleda, who has been staying in London since September 15, was addressing a meeting of BNP leaders, UK chapter at Kingston in London.

BNP UK chapter's President MA Maleq and General Secretary Kaiser M Ahmed and BNP Senior Vice Chairman Tarique Rahman, among others, were present at the meeting.

Referring to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's recent interview in The Guardian, Khaleda said the AL-led government is trying to portray Bangladesh as a state of terrorism for their political interest, while there are many terrorists within the party.

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Genetic engineering undeniable need for growing food demand

Experts, officials tell int'l conference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Genetic modification and engineering of crops for high yield is an undeniable need for feeding the ever increasing population and against the backdrop of depleting arable land, said leading experts and high officials at an international conference in the capital yesterday.

Simultaneously, the foremost challenges are conserving biosafety and biodiversity and bringing confidence into the common man that crop engineering is safe for humans and the environment, said Prof Mesbahuddin Ahmad, president of Bangladesh Academy of Sciences (BAS). Such crops are "the only answer to meet the growing demand for food", he said.

South Asia Biosafety Program (SABP) in collaboration with BAS, the Department of Environment (DoE), Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC), Biotech Consortium India Ltd (BCIL), and National Academy of Agricultural Sciences (NAAS), India jointly organised the two-day 3rd Annual South Asia Biosafety Conference (SABC) at Brac Centre.

Any misgivings and apprehension in the public mind regarding the safety of engineered crops should be dispelled with the established scientific knowledge and research findings, said Dr Kamal Uddin Ahmed, secretary to the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

The demand for food in Bangladesh is expected to double in the next three decades, he said.

Bt Brinjal and Golden Rice with enhanced nutrition are two successes of engineered production in Bangladesh with potato in the pipeline, said Dr Abul Kalam Azad, executive

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