

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES

DHAKA H 29.7 L 18.6	MYMENSINGH H 29.0 L 15.7	CHITTAGONG H 31.2 L 18.5	SYLHET H 30.6 L 16.0	RAJSHAHI H 29.2 L 16.0	RANGPUR H 28.6 L 12.4	KHULNA H 29.3 L 16.5	BARISAL H 30.0 L 15.5	COX'S BAZAR H 31.5 L 19.5
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Weather may remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country till 6:00pm today, reports UNB. bb Night temperature may fall slightly and day temperature may remain nearly unchanged, says Met Office. The sun sets in the capital today at 5:53pm and rises tomorrow at 6:32am. Country's highest temperature 31.8 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday in Sitakunda and lowest 10.5 in Rajshahi.

THE COLOURS OF SPRING



Spring is here again, with all its colours and festivities. As in the past years, people of all ages came outdoors, women in saris and men in punjabis, to welcome the new season and celebrate the occasion through music, dance, and revelry, on the first day of Falgun when spring starts. The photos were taken on the premises of the fine arts faculty of Dhaka University and DC Hill area of Chittagong city yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS AND ANURUP KANTI DAS

Meat traders' strike sends chicken prices soaring

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chicken prices saw an increase across the capital yesterday after meat traders started a six-day strike, protesting "overcharging" of fees on cattle purchase by the lessee of Gabtoli cattle market.

Butchers kept their shops closed in different parts of the city, and threatened to enforce an indefinite strike if their demand was not met.

Prices of each kilogram of broiler chicken rose by Tk 5 to Tk 145-Tk 155 yesterday from Tk 140-Tk 150 the previous day, according to the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh.

Some traders raised the price to as high as Tk 160 per kg, while local chicken prices shot up by Tk 10-Tk 20 from Tk 330-Tk 360 a kg.

Mohammad Abul Kalam, owner of Zorina Broiler House at Segunbagicha

Multipurpose Complex, said broiler chicken prices went up by Tk 10 compared to the previous day.

An inadequate supply and increase in demand caused the prices of chicken to rise at the wholesale market, he said.

Demand for chicken usually remains low on Mondays, he said. "But today we see the demand has gone up since the morning. The meat traders' strike may be the reason of the increased demand."

Mohammad Khokon Mia, a wholesaler at Kaptan Bazar, one of the main broiler chicken selling markets, said they saw a low supply of chicken, weighing between 1kg and 1.5kg, from poultry farming regions.

He said the actual impact of the butchers' strike would be clear if shutdown continued for a couple of days.

In Kaptan Bazar, the slaughter houses, where each day about 50 cows are slaugh-

tered, remained shut yesterday due to the strike, said Mojibor, a representative of the meat traders.

Talking about the strike, meat trader Asgar Ali said despite having a valid trade licence, the lessee of the Gabtoli market, the only permanent cattle market in Dhaka, charged more than the city corporation-fixed fee if the price of a cow exceeded Tk 50,000.

The traders have been paying between Tk 200 and Tk 5,000 as charge for buying each animal over the last nine months, said meat traders, while the fixed rate is Tk 50 for a cow, Tk 70 for a buffalo, and Tk 15 for a goat.

The Gabtoli cattle market authorities denied the allegations.

MEAT AT RESTAURANTS

Restaurant operators said they would have to cut off beef and mutton from their menu if the strike continued.

This correspondent visited some restau-

rants yesterday and found that beef was still on their menu for lunch.

"We prepared the dish from the stock we had. But it will be difficult to offer beef and mutton from tomorrow (today)," said Kazi Zahirul Haque, manager of Chittagong Restaurant at Segunbagicha.

Md Aminur Rahman, owner of Café Mirpur Hotel and Restaurant, said the strike would not impact business of the restaurants much.

"Anyone who enters a restaurant usually does not leave if certain dishes are not available," he said. "We will have to offer alternatives such as fish, vegetables, and chicken and explain the reasons of unavailability of beef and mutton."

Golam Mourtaza, president of Bangladesh Meat Merchants' Association, said they would continue the shutdown until their demand was met.

Falgun brings spark to book fair

MAHDI AL MUHTASIM

The Amar Ekushey Granthamela wore a joyful look yesterday as visitors wearing traditional yellow clothes, in celebration of the Pahela Falgun, thronged the fairground.

A large number of them were young couples who came to the book fair to look for romantic books for their significant others just a day ahead of the Valentine's Day.

Many of these couples, girls in saris with garlands of flower in their hair and boys in punjabis, were seen enjoying the company of each other while shopping for books from stall to stall at the Suhrawardy Udyan and Bangla Academy premises.

With fresh leaves in trees and birds chirping, many of them were seen enjoying the weather on the first day of spring while taking a few snaps on their phones or cameras to preserve memories of the day.

Love was in the air all throughout the fair ground and the surrounding areas including the TSC area.

Azad, a researcher at BCSIR, bought romance novel "Lilaboti" by Humayun Ahmed for Mowrin.

"Nothing is more pleasing than getting a favourite book by a favourite author from the dear one. I expect more such gifts on the Valentine's Day [today]," Mowrin, a senior at Dhaka University, said with chuckles.

"She also bought two poetry books for me, but she didn't tell me the names yet," Azad said smiling.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Students learn leadership skills at Sylhet bootcamps

CITY DESK

The graduation ceremony of fourth Youth Leadership Bootcamp, a national residential leadership development programme of Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center (BYLC), was held on Sunday in Sreemangal of Sylhet.

A total of 200 university students, selected from over 1,600 applications from all over Bangladesh, participated in the two four-day bootcamps to develop leadership and career development skills.

BYLC organised this year's

bootcamps in collaboration with the U.S. Embassy in Dhaka.

Marcia Bernicat, the U.S. Ambassador to Bangladesh, in her keynote address at the graduation ceremony said, "We at the U.S. Embassy take great pride in the fact that we have been BYLC's partner since the organization's beginning, motivated by an abiding belief in its approach to leadership development and its emphasis on instilling the values of tolerance and pluralism."

Akhter Matin Chaudhury, chairperson of BYLC; Ejaj Ahmad, president of

BYLC; Manzoor Hasan OBE, board member of BYLC; Sonia Kabir, managing director of Microsoft Bangladesh; Fahim Mashroor, CEO of AjkerDeal; Nazim Farhan Choudhury, managing director of Adcomm; and Tofaeal Islam, deputy commissioner of Moulvibazar, also spoke among others.

A bootcamp participant, Ahmad Saraf Tuba, a third year student of environmental science at Asian University for Women, said, "My most profound realization at the Bootcamp was that introverts can also be leaders because leadership is more about moving the work forward and improving the human condition and less so about being the most dominant and visible person in the group."

Final year English literature student Nafisa Haque of Rajshahi University said, "Having worked closely with students coming from different parts of Bangladesh and with different viewpoints, I have come to appreciate the need for bringing diverse people with different opinions together to exercise leadership."

Using a combination of large class discussions, peer consultations, case studies and experiential role play, the Bootcamp curriculum -- developed and delivered by a trained team of BYLC faculty and facilitators -- is aimed at developing self-awareness, critical thinking, problem solving, communications, and teamwork skills of the participants.



The graduation ceremony of fourth Youth Leadership Bootcamp of Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center in a Sreemangal hotel of Sylhet on Sunday.

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