

Dry weather likely



WEATHER TODAY

Unb, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers is likely to occur at one or two places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions till 6pm today.
Weather may remain mainly dry with temporary partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country.

Met office said

Night and temperature may rise slightly and day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.
The sun sets in the capital at 5:10pm today and rises at 6:22am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 32.1 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Teknaf and lowest 12.8 degrees at Srimongal.
Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage			Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max:	Min:	Morning	Evening		Max:	Min:	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	29.0	17.7	65	72	Khulna	30.4	17.4	71	68
Chittagong	28.6	18.5	83	75	Barisal	29.4	16.4	81	86
Rajshahi	29.8	15.2	87	81	Sylhet	29.2	15.9	67	74
Rangpur	27.8	15.8	71	72	Cox's Bazar	31.5	21.3	78	79

UPCOMING POLL

Early deployment to mire army in controversy

Says SHUIAN Secretary Badiul Alam Majumdar; similar concern voiced by Bar Council leader and BNP chief's adviser Khandker Mahub Hossain

Expressing astonishment at the Election Commission's plan to deploy army way ahead of the 10th general poll, Shushashoner Jannoy Nagorik (SHUIAN) Secretary Badiul Alam Majumdar yesterday said it might create controversy over the force's impartiality.

"If a one-sided election is indeed held with deployment of army excluding the main opposition, they (army) may have to take a position, which may raise questions over their neutrality. We don't want army's image to be questioned in any way," he told reporters after inaugurating a programme at the capital's Bangladesh National Museum.

A similar reaction came from Bangladesh Bar Council Vice Chairman and BNP chairperson's adviser Khandker Mahub Hossain, who urged the government and the EC to refrain from any step that might embroil army in controversy.

"The EC is going to make the armed force controversial through its deployment for

People won't accept poll under partisan government

Says Dr Kamal; observes PM can solve current crisis in a minute

Gonoforum President Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday said the people would not accept any election under a partisan government and asked the interim administration to hold a neutral poll like the last one.

Referring to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, he also said, "If the prime minister wants, the ongoing political crisis will be gone in a minute."

"The people have given her power and she has enjoyed it. Now, there is a situation, and she should consider resignation," he told a press conference at his residence in the capital, demanding an acceptable poll and urging the ruling and opposition parties to shun negative attitudes.

"We don't want an election like the one in 2007, which was arranged (later cancelled) under a partisan election commission and administration. We want an election like that of 2008. We want a government, election commission, and administration similar to those of 2008," he said.

Asked whether he will take legal steps if the political crisis is not solved, the jurist said, "I will surely take legal measures. Writs (petitions) have been filed regarding the poll schedule, appointment of advisers, and RPO (Representation of the People Order). And more will follow."

ASK concerned over political violence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) yesterday expressed grave concern over the current political violence in the country which is jeopardising people's lives and security.

ASK in a statement signed by its Executive Director Sultana Kamal urged political parties to keep in mind that political programmes should not cause people's deaths or curb basic human rights.

The rights body also urged the government to take maximum precaution so that law enforcers do not take any undemocratic steps.

According to different news reports, 10 people including, law enforcers, died during the strike enforced by the opposition alliance on November 26, said the statement.

"Besides, attacks on law enforcing agencies which are supposed to ensure security, have escalated

CTG RAILWAY STATION

Passengers suffer for schedule collapse, cancellation of trips

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Hundreds of passengers suffered long waits at Chittagong Railway Station yesterday, as most trains ran behind schedules and some trips were cancelled due to broken rail tracks and violence during the opposition's country-wide blockade.

Till 6:00pm yesterday, trips of three Dhaka-bound intercity trains were cancelled due to delayed arrivals or on security grounds, said railway officials.

Because of this, the passengers of Karnaphuli Express, Suborno Express and Mohanagar Probbhati had to leave the station after hours of tiresome wait.

The trips of Suborno and Probbhati were cancelled, as they were stranded at different stations, said Chittagong Railway Station Manager AA Shamsul Alam.

Only Sagorika Express, one of the 13 mail, express and intercity trains which ply between Chittagong and other districts everyday, started off on time.

Talking to The Daily Star around 11:30am, Shah Alam, a passenger of Paharika Express, which was scheduled to leave at 8:30am, said he had been waiting since 7:30am.

"But till now, I don't know whether the train will depart the station or not," he said. The train finally left at 2:15pm, about six hours behind its schedule. Another inter-district train, Chattala Express, also left the station after six hours of delay.

Two local trains, which ply inside Chittagong district, and the Chittagong University shuttle train, however, operated without interruption.

An estimated 12,000 people leave for different destinations from Chittagong Railway Station daily.

DRUG PRICE HIKE BY NEARLY 50 PERCENT

Pharmaceuticals using political violence as diversion

Janashastha Sangram Parishad rally told

Taking advantage of the distraction created by the political violence, profiteering pharmaceutical companies have arbitrarily increased prices of many widely used lifesaving drugs significantly, hoping that it would go unnoticed, speakers told a protest rally yesterday.

The recent hike, nearly 50 percent, affected anti-ulcerants, antibiotics, muscle relaxants and bronchodilators but the government could not care less about the burden of overpriced drugs on people because it is busy preparing itself for the one-sided election, they said.


The rally was organised by Janashastha Sangram Parishad (JSP), a citizens' forum to protect health rights, before the capital's Jatiya Press Club.

People are being held hostage to the whims of the syndicate of a few pharmaceutical companies while the government bodies tasked with reining in the prices are doing nothing, they said.

The Directorate General of Drug Administration, the government body to control prices and quality of drugs, claims that they have no control over the matter, said JSP Convener Dr Faizul Alam Lala.

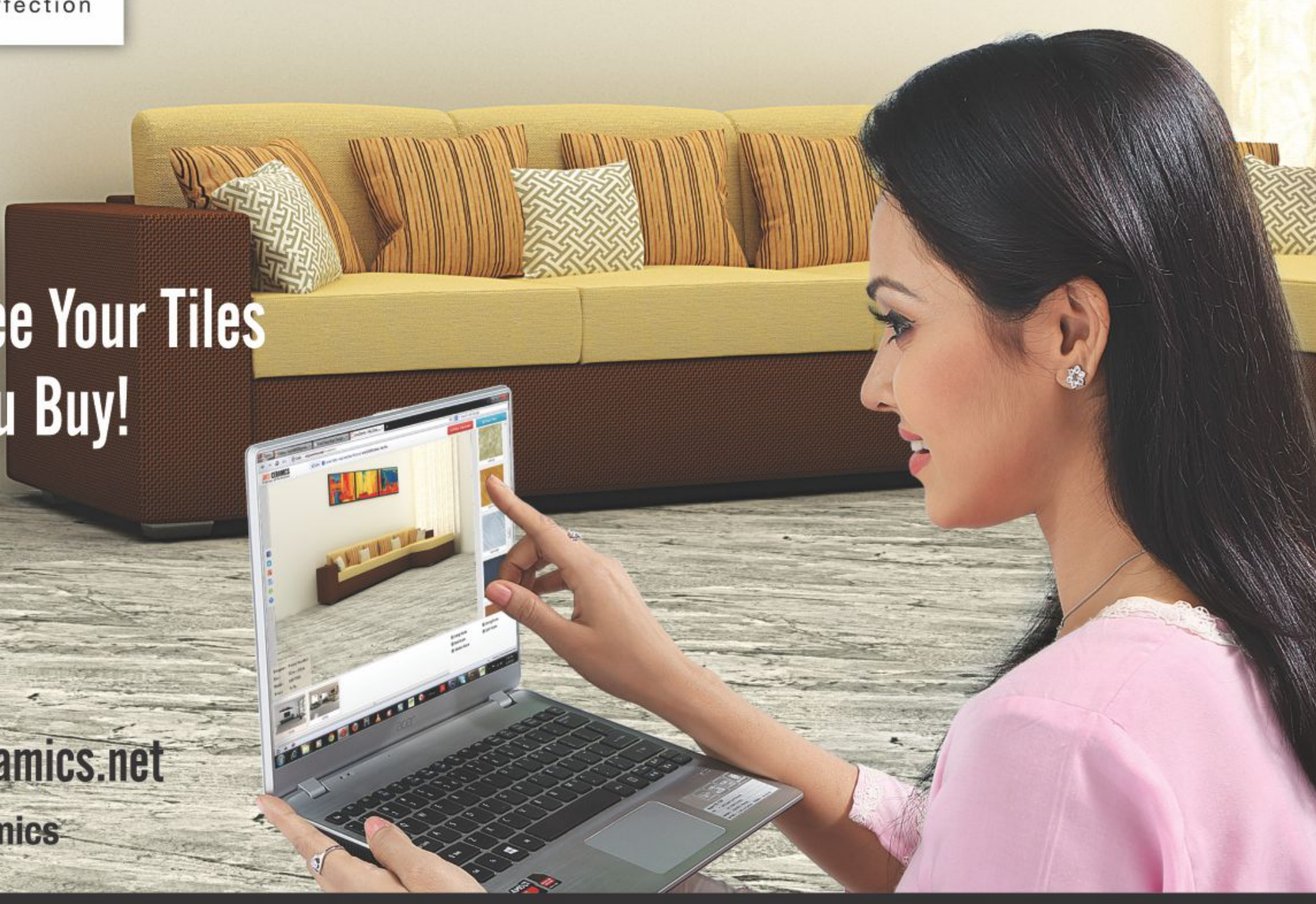
"The people will soon control the prices through organising a mass movement," he said.

"Although the two parties disagree with each other on most issues, they seem to be on the same boat regarding the prices of medication," said Razekuzzaman Ratan, central




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SSC exams begin Feb 9

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and equivalent examinations 2014 will begin on February 9 next year.

The education ministry approved the exam schedule yesterday.

The exams, which usually begin in the first week of February, will commence eight days later this time due to Biswa Ijtema, said an official. Last year, the exams began on February 3.



Bengal Foundation



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