

Dhaka Day by Day

Zest and Zeal Usher in Peals of Laughter

by Fayza Haq

Although Drama Circle chose the tacky and path-eaten Guide House to stage its two plays, where the bucket seats punched any rheumatic back, yet the enthusiasm of the young actors was remarkable.

Admittedly many of the actors were facing the limelight for the first time, and so were visibly nervous, or failed to pitch their voices accurately. There were minor anachronisms such as the moccasins worn by the policeman. Yet the audience had an evening of laughter and delight.

The plays being presented were Bonophul's "Nobosanakaran" and "Kabayo" — which were in the verse form. The first play had the plot of how the daughter of a superintendent of police was missing. As a consequence the father broke open her secret boxes to find a number of love letters, the product of her classmates. This led to the incensed superintendent

to arrest all the colleagues, whereas the students had no idea about the girl's whereabouts. While the young men were being interrogated and harassed, the daughter appeared from nowhere, with a professor in tow, and declared herself married to the young man. The father was then forced to reconcile with the fact that the daughter had married a lower class Hindu. The superintendent's use of English and Hindi brought humour into the play, as much as the innocence and naivete of the girl's colleagues.

The second play was about the island of "Jambudeep" whose ruler Ambikesh Nandi decided to give his beautiful daughter's hand to the best poet in the island. But there were two conditions to this. The poetry had to be of excellent quality and each suitor had to pay Tk 10. In this fantasia, everybody in the island was a poet, had the required money, but could not write with the exception of a genuine poet. His disqualification was that he did not possess the necessary

Tk 10. Everyone on the island flocked to the poet to have their poem written in the best of style. Yet he was still short of Tk 5. This was rectified when the barber, grocer, the gardener and the modern poet — as the various characters entered and left the stage — came and paid extra to ruin the works of the others. As expected, the poet won the hand of the lovely "Chandramukhi."

While the setting left much to be desired, the rehearsals could have been much more intense, and the direction too could have been more subtle. Yet the young actors all did their bit, and had put their whole heart into the business of acting.

Khan Atiqur Rahman, who played the role of the superintendent's friend, and Ambikesh Nandi, has done plays like "Arms and The Man" and "Shajano Bagan". He said, "I preferred the second role as I found similarity with my own character in that. I have children of my own and I love to supervise their activities." He added that he had no difficulty with the lines and could recall entire plays. "I want to portray the various social problems of the country in the plays I act in", he remarked.

Teen-aged Farzana Ithroz Shumona was another experienced and confident hand. She has acted in the TV mini-series "Kono Ek Kulum" and two "Aye Shophaher Natok", "Faruah" and "Shobha Potir Bhaahon". She has been an announcer on TV and radio. She belongs to a family where the cousins are all involved in singing, dancing, recitation of poems, and have no objection to her acting.

Shumona preferred the second play about the exotic island "I found a great thrill in acting as a princess. You don't see much of royalty these days." She added, "The actor has to comprehend the role in all its details. He has to play many parts. When there is no similarity to his own personality this becomes difficult. One has also to comprehend the subtleties of complex characters."

Habil Uddin, 37, born in Rajshahi, who is a chemical engineer at the Shilpa Bank, in a managerial post, had the role of the modern poet in "Kabayo". He informed me that he had also been in charge of the set, music, costume and the production management.

"We have to collect donations, distribute souvenirs and spend money on travel to and from rehearsals. You certainly don't make a fortune with acting in Bangladesh. The cost for this production has come to Tk 4000." The money must have all gone in hiring the theatre for two days and for buying a few "dhoties." The girls had surely used their own clothes and jewelry. Something more could have been done than tacking two oddly shaped stunted palm trees and a set of worn out

"moras" in "Kabayo". Shamim Mazhar, born in Pabna in '64, studied in Rangpur as his father did business there. He played the role of the angry superintendent in the first play. He said he had the experience of at least ten plays, and had taken part in a drama workshop at Shilpakala Academy in '84. Shamim is a freelance advertising film maker and a photographer. As a pastime he reads Bengali novels specially those of Shankar.

The protagonist in "Kabayo" was Zahidur Rahim, 35, born in Faridpur. He has acted in plays like "Shajano Bagan" and "Chup, Adalat Chalchey". He works in Agrani Bank for a living, but is extremely proud of his acting. He has a two-year-old son Maugham and loves listening to singers like Hemanta, Shandha, and Asha Bhosley. He does not care for western music. "I just don't understand it," he declared. He finds Hindi video films too full of boisterous and violent actions.

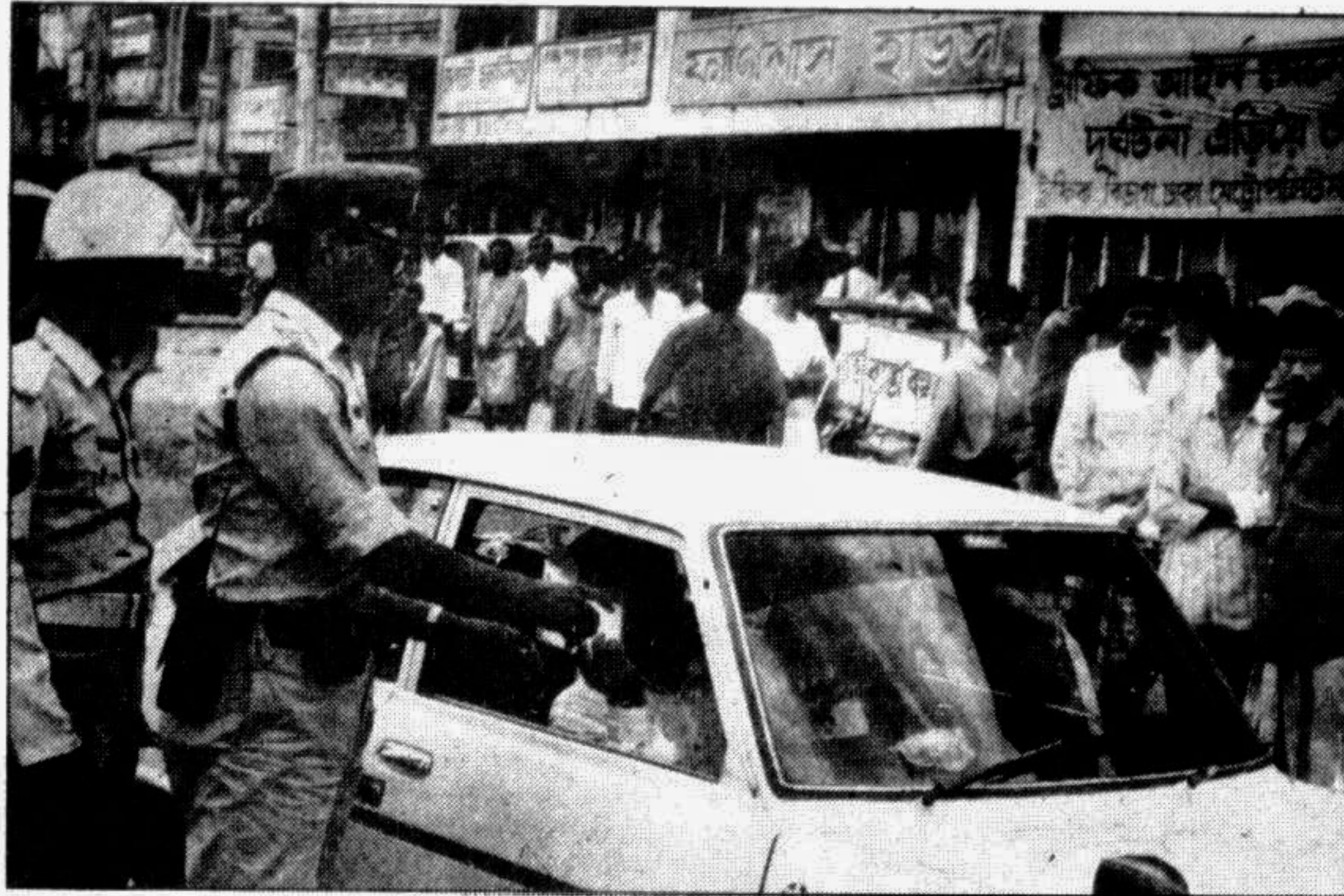
As a parting remark Zahid said, "Like most other actors, I wish to portray social problems on the stage. It is up to the government to rectify them."

To sum up their effort Masud Ali Khan, the General Secretary of the Drama Circle declared, "We act for pure pleasure. We have no ulterior motives behind our plays. After '86 many of the members have gone abroad or have, at least, drifted from Dhaka. The only old hand that we can boast of is Tawfiq Aziz Khan. So far we have produced ten plays."

The play was staged to collect funds for the deaf for Dhaka Bodhir Shingha at Bijoygar.



A scene from Drama Circle production 'Kabayo'



Police verifying the car documents on the first day of three-day traffic campaign in the city Monday. — Star photo

Transport owners threaten to go on strike from Aug 25

Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Samity Monday threatened to stop road transport operation from August 25 if fuel price is not reduced to the pre-Gulf War rate, reports UNB.

In a statement issued by BPS President AK Jainal Abedin and Secretary General Ashraf Khan and other leaders said the fuel price, increased during the Gulf crisis, had hit hard the transport sector.

Repeated appeal made to the concerned ministry for reducing the fuel price had gone unheeded, it said.

If fuel price is not slashed to pre-Gulf crisis rate of Tk 6.90 per litre by August 24, vehicular movement by the BPS will not be possible," said the bus owners.

BPS also extended support to the demands of launch,

coaster and truck owners' associations, which are also planning strike simultaneously.

Our Staff Correspondent adds: Bangladesh Truck Owners Association will start an indefinite strike from August 25 if its 14-point demands including reduction of fuel prices and measures against toll collectors are not met by that date.

In a press conference at the National Press Club Monday the association leaders said that the rise in fuel prices during Gulf war had adversely affected the truck industry and other related sectors.

President of the association Christopher Gomez and General Secretary Rustam Ali Khan were present among other leaders including B. Rahman, Shahidullah and Sheikh Sirajul

Islam.

The leaders said that after the Gulf war oil prices in the international market tumbled and many oil exporting countries reduced their oil prices.

They demanded reduction of the price to Taka 6.90 per litre from the present rate of Taka 14 per litre.

They said that an owner of a truck had to pay toll of Taka 3,000 on an average per month to the 'mastans' across the country.

They alleged that men hired by the police also extorted money from every truck driver.

The leaders said that some 15,000 owners of over 35,000 trucks are also suffering from a sense of insecurity regarding their trucks and drivers because of inter-district dacoits.

The association's other demands include construction of truck terminals, improvement of traffic rules and creation of awareness about them among the people, repair of damaged roads and highways and issuance of driving licence after proper verification.

Repeal of Indemnity Ordinance urged

By Staff Correspondent

Human Rights International (Bangladesh) has demanded repeal of Indemnity Ordinance to pave the way for trial of the killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Ten prominent persons on behalf of the organisation in a statement on Monday said keeping the trial of the killers out of the court's jurisdiction was clear violation of internationally accepted charter of human rights. They demanded immediate and impartial trial of the killers in the highest court.

The signatories to the statement were: Justice K M Sobhan, Chairman, Dr Mohammad Selim, member and International Coordinator, Abul Hassan Chowdhury, Member-Secretary General, members Prof Kabir Chowdhury, Prof Anisuzzaman, Dr Durgadas Bhattacharya, Dr S A Malek, Barrister K S Nabi, A K Fazlul Haq, Dr A K Azad Chowdhury.

2 killed in road mishaps

Our DMCH Correspondent

Two persons including a teenage girl were killed in different road mishaps in the city during the past two days.

Nastima (17), daughter of Shiraj Mia, died on the spot when a mini bus knocked her at Noon on Monday while she was crossing road.

Salam Hawliader (40), a baby-taxi driver was killed when his taxi turned turtle at 12-15 am on Sunday near Mogh Bazar.

TV Tuesday

- 5.00 Opening announcement, Al-Quran programme summary
- 5.15 Recitation from the Geeta
- 5.20 News in Bengali
- 5.30 Cartoon Film: Adventure of the Galaxy Rangers
- 5.55 Education programme
- 6.30 Janamat
- 7.05 Nazrul Songs
- 8.00 News in Bengali
- 8.30 Drama serial: Granthikgonkohe
- 10.00 News in English
- 10.30 Film: War and Remembrance
- 11.30 Khabar/The News
- 11.40 a) Wednesday's programme b) Verses from Al-Quran c) National Flag and National Anthem
- 11.45 Close down.

JCD opposes BCU strike call in BUET

By BUET Correspondent

Tension is prevailing on the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) campus over the issue of inviting the Education Minister as the chief guest at the installation ceremony of the Bangladesh University Central Students' Union (EUCSU).

The situation aggravated when Communist Party-backed Chhatra Union resented the decision. The union alleged that the "representative EUCSU is working in favour of a particular organisation". Previously there was no instance of such decision, it said.

It also called a general strike in support of its protest. The members of the union brought out a procession on the campus Monday in which the speakers accused the Education Ministry for unexpected closure of 84 educational institutions and urged

3-day traffic campaign begins

By Staff Correspondent

The three-day traffic campaign organised by Dhaka Metropolitan Police started on Monday in the city with a view to increasing people's awareness about traffic system.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner ASM Shahjahan inaugurated the traffic campaign at the traffic office at 9 am Monday.

The traffic police launched publicity campaign at the important intersections

Pak Assoc in HK collects Tk 4.88 lakh for cyclone victims

The Pakistani Association of Hong Kong has collected 13,528 US dollars (equivalent Taka 488,900) for the cyclone and tidal surge affected people of Bangladesh, according to information received in Dhaka, reports BSS.

Mushtaque Ahmed, President of the Association, handed over a draft for the amount to the Commissioner for Bangladesh in Hong Kong, Sheikh Ahmed Jalal recently.

In addition to this donation, the Pakistanis in Hong Kong also contributed 5,481 US dollars (Tk 198,080) to the sponsors of aid Bangladesh Six-a-Side Cricket Tournament which was held in Hong Kong on May 12 last.

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Mostafiz to attend confce next month NAM credibility to be examined

Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman will lead the Bangladesh delegation to the 10th Non-Aligned Foreign Ministers' Conference to be held in Accra, Ghana from September 2 to 7, official sources said in Dhaka Monday.

The five-member delegation includes, among others, Ambassador Mahbubul Haq, Bangladesh Ambassador to Algeria and M Ruhul Amin, Director-General (International organisations), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dhaka.

This year's Foreign Ministers' conference will be held in the backdrop of profound changes with far reaching consequences in international relations particularly in the relations between the two super powers, with deep rooted impact on the Third World Countries in political and economic fields. The gap between the developed and

developing countries has also widened in recent years.

The main thrust of the conference will be to examine the role, rationale and credibility of the Non-Aligned Movement to meet the changed circumstances. Crucial to this process will be concentration on substantive issues of global and regional peace and security, disarmament, the cause of economic and social development and the formulation of appropriate strategies for international economic cooperation as well as South-South cooperation and the strengthening of multilateralism and the role of the United Nations, the sources said.

Scientists asked to help change people's lot

Minister for Education, Science and Technology and Cultural Affairs Prof. Badruddoza Chowdhury Monday asked scientists to evolve appropriate technology for changing the lot of the people and overall development of the country, reports UNB.

He was addressing a gathering of scientists at the Bangladesh Council of Science and Industrial Research (BCSIR) in Dhaka. The Minister said the present government would patronise scientists for flourishing of science and technology

Report on question leakage of Comilla Board submitted

The Enquiry Committee on leakage of question papers of SSC examination under Comilla Board submitted its report to the government on Monday, an official handout said, reports BSS.

Chairman of the Committee Justice Abdul Matin Khan Chowdhury handed over the copy of the report to the Minister for Education and Cultural Affairs Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury. Education Secretary ANM Eusuf and concerned officials were present.

The Minister said CID will investigate into the leakage of question papers and offer of Taka one lakh for information leading to the arrest of the culprits will stand.

He pointed out some persons have been arrested for alleged involvement with the incident and they will remain under police custody.

Prof Chowdhury said all measures have been taken to ensure security of question papers and maintain law and order in all the examination centres under Comilla Board where fresh SSC examination will be held from August 22. Police both in uniform and plain clothes will be deployed at the examination centres, he added.

The Minister said the Education Ministry has already finalised proposals for amendment of the Public Examination Offences Act, 1980 providing severe penalties for various offences under this Act. For the offence of leakage of question papers the minimum of penalty will be ten years rigorous imprisonment



ERD Secretary and National Board of Revenue Chairman Nurul Hossain Khan addressing the inaugural session of the seminar on "detection of drugs and recovery" Monday.

Weather

Thundershower likely

By Staff Correspondent

Rain/thundershower is likely to occur at a few places over the country. Day temperature is likely to remain nearly unchanged. The highest temperature on Monday was 34.5 degree Celsius at Rangamati and the lowest of 24.2 degree was recorded at Sylhet.

The temperature and humidity of some towns and cities on Monday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	32.5	27.4	89	73
Chittagong	33.0	26.0	76	81
Rajshahi	33.6	25.8	92	79
Khulna	32.6	27.5	76	97
Cox's Bazar	32.0	25.8	78	78
Sylhet	31.6	24.2	97	85
Rangpur	33.9	26.8	83	80
Barisal	32.4	25.4	86	70
Srimangal	34.0	26.6	93	82