

NEWS IN

brief

ACC sues CPA official, wife

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed a case against a Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) official and his wife yesterday on charges of amassing Tk 1,09,53,377 beyond known sources of income.

Moreover, CPA Deputy Traffic Manager (Admin) Moshir Rahman Begh and his wife Nilufa Akhter allegedly concealed in their wealth statements Tk 73,28,356 they had in their possession.

ACC Chittagong Deputy Assistant Director Shahidul Alam Sarkar, who filed the case with Double Mooring Police Station, said they started their investigations after an allegation was filed with them in 2007.

Moshir, a former terminal manager of the port, pleaded guilty to corruption at the Truth Commission which was formed in the immediate past caretaker government regime.

Scouts' expedition to clinch award

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A four-member Rover Scout team of Chittagong City College will launch their hundred-mile expedition on foot from the college premises to Cox's Bazar.

The participants -- SM Akbar Hossain, Alauddin Akash, Mohammed Faruk and Ariful Islam-- will start the journey on April 22 for achieving the President's Rover Scout Award, the highest award for the scouts, says a press release.

In the expedition, the scouts will also provide people with the knowledge on scouting.

Their expedition will end on April 26.

2 jailed for selling dead chicken

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two people were arrested and jailed by a mobile court yesterday morning for collecting and selling dead chicken in the capital's Karwan Bazar. Some 131 dead chickens were seized from their possession.

Md Golam Hossen, 39, and Md Shah Alam, 28, would serve 18 months in Dhaka Central Jail, said Anwar Pasha, an executive magistrate of Dhaka district who led the court.

Rapid Action Battalion-2 assisted the drive at a wholesale chicken market near Tejgaon Railway Station, he said.

Swipe cards reveal new era of BRTC transport

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Revolutionising the country's passenger transport, Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) launched the use of a swipe card ticketing system, similar to that of London's Oyster card.

Instead of queuing up for tickets at every BRTC bus counter, passengers can now use a smartcard to swipe a reader before boarding and getting off the bus.

The fare will automatically be charged by the reader based on the distance travelled.

The minimum recharge amount for the smartcard is Tk 45 while the maximum is Tk 1,000.

To avail the smartcard, being provided for free by Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica), passengers will have to pay a token charge of Tk 50 and submit a photocopy of the national ID card, his/her name and address at BRTC ticket counters.

The launching of this system, part of a pilot project, was announced at a seminar, "Launching of ICT ticketing in BRTC bus services", jointly organised by BRTC and Jica, the project's technical partner, at a hotel in the capital yesterday.

The reader has been already installed in 30 BRTC buses plying the Uttara-Motijheel route, said BRTC General Manager (operations) Maj Firoj Khannun Faragi.

In the next two months, buses on the Mirpur 12-Motijheel and Mohammadpur-Badda routes will have the reader, he said.

Some 210 buses plying the three city

routes will have this system while 25,000 digital cards will be distributed to minimise passengers' sufferings and improve the fare collection system, added Firoj.

"Initially the project will continue till September but we hope to renew it if the project seems viable," he said.

Addressing the seminar as the chief guest, Communications Minister Obaidul Quader expressed his discontent with the present traffic condition in Dhaka's roads.

Despite several initiatives, the government has achieved "zero progress" in minimising traffic congestion in the city, he said.

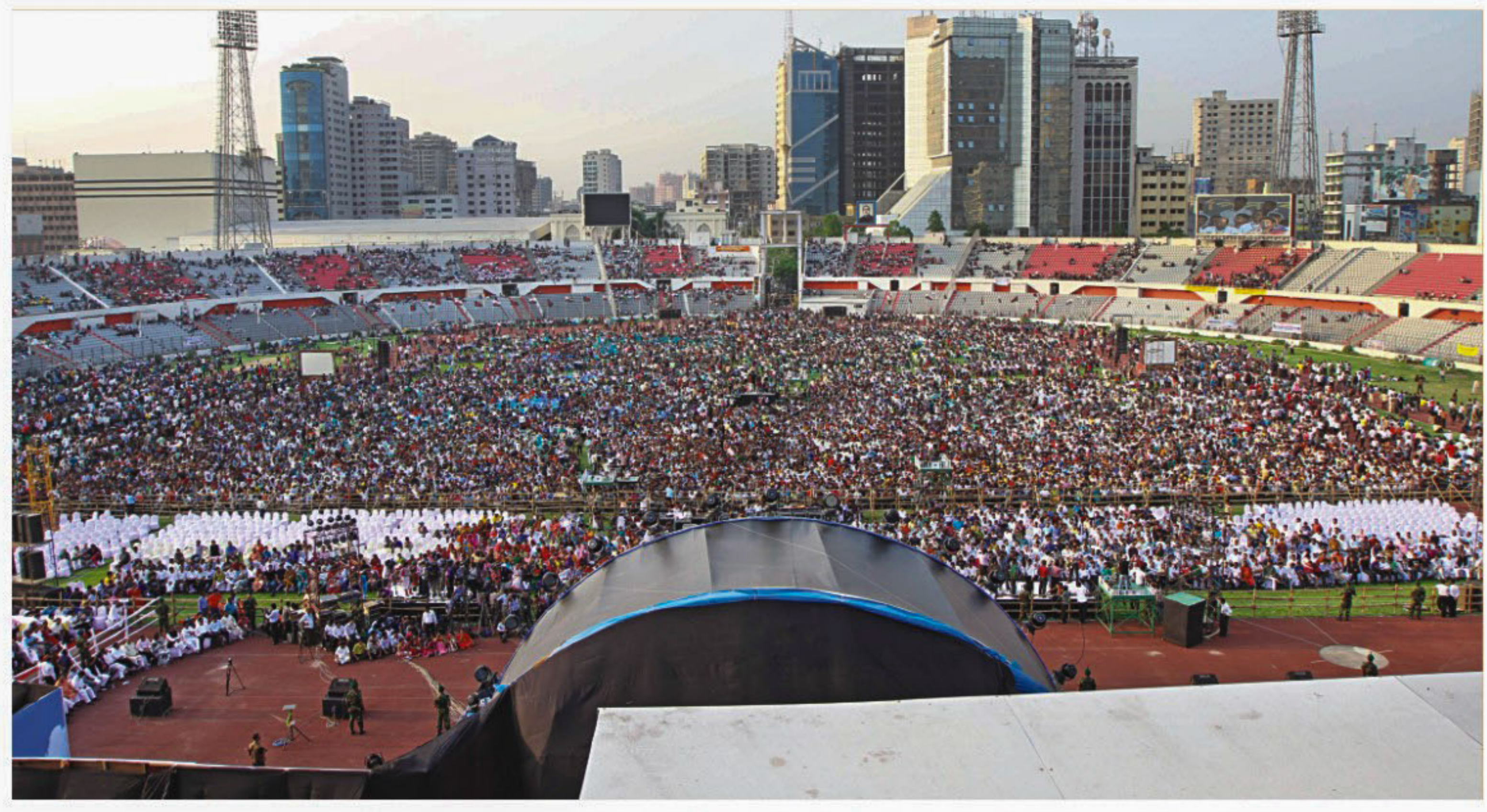
Observance of political programmes in the city is one of the major causes behind traffic jams while political archnways on highways hamper smooth movement of vehicles, he said.

If the smartcard system proved effective in practice, it will be introduced in all private passenger carrier vehicles in phases, he added.

BRTC will introduce 290 more buses soon, around 100 of which will be used to transport students of schools and colleges, he said.

The nagging traffic gridlock will be minimised once the three flyovers open in the city. "We will also take stern action against illegal parking," said the minister.

Communications Secretary MAN Siddique chaired the seminar while BRTC Chairman MM Iqbal and Jica Chief Representative in Bangladesh Dr Takao Toda also spoke at the function.



Thousands of people gather before the gigantic stage where Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was accorded a reception yesterday for the country's recent maritime victory over Myanmar. Jubo Sangram Parishad, a combine of seven youth organisations of the Awami League-led 14-party alliance, organised the grand reception programme at Bangabandhu Stadium in the capital. (Story on Page 20)

PHOTO: STAR

Filipino crew's body found

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The body of a Filipino, crew of the German flagged ship MV Stadt Hamburg who went missing after falling overboard into the outer anchorage of Chittagong port on April 16, was recovered yesterday.

Coast guard personnel recovered the body of Ricardo Galen from the Alpha area.

BDR CARNAGE CASE

DAD Touhid kept aloof fearing attack on him

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Deputy assistant director (DAD) of erstwhile Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) Touhidul Alam, who proclaimed himself as BDR director general, was kept aloof yesterday fearing possible attack on him by some accused.

Since the trial began, more than 800 accused of the case were kept together in the dock. But DAD Touhid, also the prime accused of the Pilkhana carnage case, was kept alone between dock and Ejlash from the beginning of the court proceedings yesterday.

Quoting the prosecution, a defence counsel wishing to be unnamed told The Daily Star that some BDR jawans, who were found aggrieved over DAD Touhid, might kill him.

The soldiers became angry as

DAD Touhid did not return with a gazetted copy of general amnesty after negotiation with the government during the BDR mutiny. If such gazette was published on the day they would not have to face the trial, he added.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina announced a general amnesty to the mutineers of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) on February 25, 2009 to end the mutiny at BDR headquarters.

The announcement came after two hours of negotiations between a 14-member BDR delegation led by DAD Touhid and the prime minister-led government side at the prime minister's residence Jamuna.

Prosecutor Mosharraf Hossain Kajol said he heard about it but did not know in detail.

He, however, admitted that the security measures were tightened at the court.

An on-duty police officer said he got instruction from the high-ups to beef up the security measures and kept DAD Touhid separate from other accused.

Mohammad Ramjan Khan, a counsel of DAD Touhid, said his client and DAD Jalil are kept separate in a cell of the jail.

Seven witnesses yesterday gave depositions at the Metropolitan Session Judge's Court and were cross-examined by the defence lawyers.

A total of 74 people, including 57 army officers, were killed in the mutiny at the BDR (now Border Guard Bangladesh-BGB) headquarters in Pilkhana on February 25-26, 2009.



Mutual Trust Bank (MTB) Ltd Managing Director and CEO Anis A Khan, Director MA Malek and Vice Chairman Rashed A Chowdhury and Managing Director of Kallol Group Ghulam Mostafa pose with Salma Sultana, the widow of late Hazrat Ali, his son Md Tanvir Hassan Prince and daughter Cynthia Anjum Preeti after giving them Tk 2 lakh, a memorial certificate and a plaque at MTB centre in the capital on April 15. Ali who served as a manager in Kallol Group died while trying to save two female pedestrians from muggers in Mirpur on April 6.

PHOTO: MUTUAL TRUST BANK LTD

Concern over disappearance of Ilias Ali

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different organisations yesterday protested the mysterious disappearance of former lawmaker and BNP Organising Secretary (Sylhet Division) M Ilias Ali and his driver Ansar.

Expressing deep concern, Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal President Abul Kashem Chowdhury and General Secretary Muhammad Jafrul Hasan, in a statement, urged the government and law enforcement agencies to find the duo.

Jamaat-e-Islami acting secretary general Shafiqur Rahman said the incumbent government completely failed to maintain law and order as proven with the rise in the number of killings, disappearances and kidnappings.

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) brought out a procession in the capital's Naya Paltan protesting the disappearance.

Meanwhile, BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir condemned the arrest of Srimongal Municipal Mayor Alamgir Hossain while local BNP leaders and activists were agitating following the disappearance.



Namaz-e-janaza of Selim Hafizur Rahman today

METRO DESK

Namaz-e-janaza of former banker Selim Hafizur Rahman will be held at Gulshan Azad Mosque in the capital after Asr prayers today (Thursday).

He will then be laid to rest at Banani Graveyard. The body will arrive by a Biman flight from London this morning.

Selim, son of former tax commissioner Habibur Rahman and Viqarunnisa Noon School & College teacher Nihar Rahman, passed away in London on April 14 at the age of 63 due to prolonged illness.

He left behind his wife, two daughters and one brother to mourn his demise.

His Qulkhwani will be held at Gulshan Azad Mosque after Asr prayers tomorrow (Friday) in the capital, says a press release.

Relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to attend the namaz-e-janaza and Qulkhwani and pray for salvation of the departed soul.

IMPORT UNDER FALSE DECLARATION

Contraband liquor worth Tk 10cr seized in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Customs officials yesterday found huge quantity of contraband liquor after opening the second container under the same import consignment that was seized in Chittagong port on Tuesday.

From the two containers, the officials recovered 2,983 cartons of foreign liquor of different brands with each carton containing 12 to 24 bottles of liquor.

The officials also found 98 cartons of Benson & Hedges cigarette, 40 cartons of Easy brand cigarette and five 70" LCD televisions of Sharp brand in the two containers imported under the declaration of capital machinery.

Deputy Commissioner of Chittagong Customs House claimed the price of only the seized liquor could be worth Tk 10 crore.

He said liquor could not be imported without license.

Customs authority is preparing to start taking legal steps against the importer through sending show cause notice to it, he said.

Customs officials seized the two containers, each 40-foot equivalent unit, on Tuesday and found the illegal items imported under false declaration.

The customs officials identified the consignment for doing physical examination two weeks ago as they became suspicious finding an unknown name as importer of the consignment in the import document, said Omar Faruk, superintendent of Audit Investigation and Revenue (AIR) branch of Chittagong Customs.

One PIM MFG & Co with an address as Polashpur, Rajabari, Keraniganj, Dhaka was the importer of the consignment, according to Chittagong Customs House sources.

The consignment was imported over a month back while the importer declared to import 8 units of capital machineries, the sources said.

The officials opened the first container on Tuesday to find foreign liquor, cigarette and four televisions in it while they opened the other container yesterday.

INT'L FORUM FOR SECULAR BANGLADESH

Pakistan chapter launched to promote peace

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pakistan's civil society members yesterday launched the Pakistan chapter of International Forum for Secular Bangladesh & Trial of War Criminals of 1971, aiming to promote peace and resist terrorism in the name of religion.

The chapter's 31-member executive committee will comprise Pakistan's human and social rights activists, journalists and academics and be led by Pakistan's former attorney general and federal minister Barrister Sayed Iqbal Haider.

"The initiative will help promote better understanding between the people of our two countries (Bangladesh and Pakistan) as well as create a positive image of Pakistan abroad," said journalist Shahriar Kabir, executive president of the forum's central committee.

Addressing a press conference at Karachi Press Club, he said secular humanists of the world should come forward and unite to resist terrorism in the name of religion to ensure peace, justice and humane values.

Syed Iqbal lauded Bangladesh's funda-

mental reforms towards secular and democratic values, says a press statement of the forum.

"Like a vast majority of the Muslim countries, the prefix 'Islamic' was omitted from the name of Bangladesh," he said, adding that such policies created religious harmony and saved all sects of Muslims from being branded as "Kafir".

A senior journalist of Pakistan, Munazza Siddiqui, also the chapter's general secretary, said while militant and Islamic extremist forces around the world are connected to each other, secular forces remain unaware of each other's presence and activities.

The chapter wants to build links with secular humanist movements worldwide to support the Pakistan government in creating awareness on social tolerance, improve Pakistan's global image and fight militancy by reviving the traditional Sufi culture, he said.

Kazi Mukul, secretary of the forum's central committee in Dhaka, said the forum now has 14 chapters across the globe and this new chapter will add value to its movement.

WEATHER TODAY

Rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at one or two places over Rangpur, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Comilla and Noakhali in next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain mainly dry with temporary partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country, Met office said.

Mild to moderate heat wave is sweeping over Rajshahi, Rangpur and Khulna divisions and the regions of Tangail and Faridpur and it may continue.

Day and night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The highest temperature is likely to be 38-39 degrees Celsius and lowest temperature may be 20-21 degrees Celsius.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:22pm today and rises at 5:33am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 38.8 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and lowest 19.8 degrees Celsius at Sylhet.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius	Humidity in percentage
	Max: Min:	Morning Evening
Dhaka	35.4 26.8	75 67
Chittagong	31.4 24.8	73 83
Rajshahi	38.8 25.2	69 45
Rangpur	35.2 23.0	86 60
Khulna	37.6 27.2	80 60
Barisal	35.5 26.0	84 75
Sylhet	31.4 19.8	93 76
Cox's Bazar	32.8 25.8	66 76