

Dhaka Day by Day

Moveable Feast

by Sabah Chowdhury

Isn't 'chatpatti' delicious? Of course. Isn't it a health hazard? There is no doubt about that. But as one can see temptation for the scrumptious and truly local variety of snacks has overcome caution. To hell with diarrhoea and please give me another plate!

Actually there are two kinds of stuff offered though they are more like a family of edibles which are mixed around to create variety. The core of the clan is the lentil (chick-pea) which is cooked with all the spices that the seller can afford but using mostly chillies. The 'chatpattiwala' has done more to burn stomachs than anyone else and some even feared that a government may even clamp down with 'hold your chillies' but then perhaps the officer thought the whole matter over.

over a plate of chatpatti and found such decisions a threat to public happiness. I am kidding but the facts about public loyalty to chatpatti are legendary. Using lentil as the base the 'concoct' adds sliced boiled eggs, small chunks of boiled potato, a few things nobody can figure out what and some crushed bits of crunchy 'fuchka' which brings us to the other offering.

While chatpatti is like a delicious mess served on a plate, the 'fuchka' is its more dandified brother of sorts. In the beginning of this is the brittle and crunchy container made of dough. A hole is made at the top through which is poured the stuff which goes into the chatpatti with the extra doses of chilli. But what makes this an extra favourite is the 'tamarind sauce'.

Till date nobody has been heard to ask what makes the sauce or juice so delicious out of sheer fear that once knowledge is gathered one may have to give it up. But whatever be its chemical formula it is an addictive concoction

and many have been known to gulp down jug in absolute joy. But usually the 'fuchkas' are drowned in the tamarind juice, sour and hot at the same time.

The cart which serves as the kitchen and the larder is a simple box like construction mounted on wheels. The eggs, potatoes, fuchka etc. are displayed in mounds and there is a particularly dingy tin basin which holds the water generally used to wash the plates. Those who have seen are not to be believed say the colour of the liquid is like tamarind juice.

There are two types of chatpatti vendors. One is the more upscale sort who set up makeshift restaurants in front of their shop on wheels. They are generally located in front of major points of public gathering, whether at the entertainment sort like the Ramna Park or the political types like Gullistan at meeting time.

The more common are the mobile purveyors who move through the neighbourhoods, who know the streets and what residents prefer. He knows the ones who succumb easier to temptation who need only few extra calls to bring them hurrying out to the tough ones who are won over by parking the shop at strategic places and then letting the atmosphere take over.

Hasan Ali in this trade for two years makes between 4-5000 a month after paying around Tk 50 per day to the 'Mahajan'. He pictures the popular notion that only women are crazy about his stuff. Men, women, children all like it. They like it with each other, without each other and all together. 'Many romances grow around chatpattis and fuchkas that I serve,' said Ali.

Perhaps the most interesting part of the chatpatti culture is that both can be home made. But all sagely shake their head and say that it would never taste the same unless mixed with dust, dirt and polluted air which adds the extra magic to it.

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'Life should not be reduced to jungle struggle'

President of Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue of the Vatican, Cardinal Francis Arrizze on Monday called for increased cooperation among different religious communities to maintain global peace and harmony.

He said peace and development of the people should be earned through promoting solidarity and better cooperation across religious frontiers.

The Cardinal, who arrived here Friday from Vatican city, Rome, was addressing a discussion meeting of Bangladesh Inter-religious Council for Peace and Justice (BICPAJ) Monday afternoon.

'Life should not be reduced to jungle struggle which would end with the survival of the fittest,' he said adding that people of the world could walk together despite their religious differences.

The discussion meeting, presided over by BICPAJ Chairman AHM Shamsud Doulah, was addressed by Prof. Shahina Khan, Rev Martin Adhikary, Ali Akbar, ASM Fazlur Rahman, Sister Cecilia Francis and Brother J. D. Souza.

Later, talking to UNB, the Cardinal expressed his happiness at the cessation of hostilities in the Gulf.

He regretted that the Gulf war had taken precious lives and said 'We have now to pray for the suffering humanity so that no war breaks out again'.

Scouts executive committee approved

A new programme for club scouts (age group between 6 and 10) was approved by the newly-elected executive committee of the Bangladesh Scouts in its first meeting held in Dhaka, a scout press release said, reports BSS.

The new programme envisages a reinvigorated method of the beginning about physical and mental development, discipline, mindedness, religious feelings and awareness of environment among the club scouts.

The meeting, presided over by the President of the committee Mr. M Mahubuzaman, also decided to hold camporee in five regions-Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna and the Railway region as a part of new measures to enrol more club scouts in the country.

A total of 36 National Commissioners and Deputy National Commissioners were also given certificates of warrant from the Chief Scout Justice Mr Shahabuddin Ahmed in the meeting, which was attended among others, by the Chief National Commissioner, Mr Manzoor Ul Karim, Vice President of the committee Mr A N M Yusuf, the Education Secretary, the release said.

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70 per cent rickshaws without valid licence

By Asiuzzaman

Almost half of the city's buses, minibuses and tempos are plying without fitness certificates while nearly 70 per cent of rickshaws have no valid licence.

Official sources said that lack of mechanised and non-mechanised vehicles and the failure to enforce traffic laws have put the traffic system into chaos.

'Actually, there is no traffic system in the city now, everything is going on haphazardly,' an official of the Deputy Commissioner (Traffic) office told the Daily Star on condition of anonymity.

A total of 23,200 cars, 3600 buses, 7800 trucks, 8950 mini and micro-buses, 3200 tempos, 5279 jeeps, 8949 auto-rickshaws, 1336 mishuk and 7900 motorcycles have been registered in Dhaka since 1972.

In addition, the city has an estimated three lakh rickshaws, though only 81,215 are licenced.

The Dhaka City Corporation cancelled 1,525 rickshaw licence last year.

Ninety-five per cent rickshaw pullers have no valid licence. City Corporation source said adding that only 30,000 pullers have valid licence but there are at least six lakh rickshaw pullers for three lakh rickshaws.

The authority has stopped issuing fresh rickshaw licences since 1987.

A large number of drivers of motorised vehicles also have no licences, sources said.

The city also has 7000 three-wheeler, 792 two-wheeled trawly 2586 push carts, seven horse-carts and two licenced bullock-carts.

The capital also has 2432 kilometres of roads out of which 800 km are pitch-carpeting and rest are semi-pucca and herring bone.

There are 873 traffic bits in the city of which 585 always remained unmanned due to shortage of traffic police.

Only 850 traffic police and 96 sergeants are engaged in maintaining traffic, the sources said.

The authorities spotted 18 points in the city vulnerable for traffic jam. To avoid the jam some of the roads were declared rickshaw-free but the order was being violated by the pullers after mass upsurge in December.

A planned multi-storied parking centre in Motijheel is yet to be constructed, the source said.

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A minor boy driving a rickshaw in city, without having a valid licence. — Star photo

To improve the traffic system, the Government bifurcated the transport authority in May last year.

The Bangladesh Road and Transport Authority has been given the charge of issuing licences and registration of vehicles.

The Traffic Police Department is empowered to maintain traffic by enforcing existing rules.

But the situation did not improve, rather it deteriorated from October last year when anti-Ershad movement began.

Since then the authority failed to conduct any mobile court

to check the fitness of the vehicle or fine the violators of traffic rules fearing fresh agitation against the authority.

'Roadside rallies, series of processions, frequent hartals and later the election campaigning had almost crippled the traffic system,' a source said adding 'We started checking of necessary papers now in a small scale.'

He hoped that the authority would be able to overcome the crisis soon after the establishment of a new government.

Dhaka's stand on Kuwaiti issue memorable'

The Ambassador of Kuwait, Mr Mohammed Ibrahim Al-Najran, called on the Acting President, Mr Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed at the Presidents Secretariat Monday morning, reports BSS.

The Kuwaiti Ambassador conveyed a message to the Acting President for the Ameer of Kuwait Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah expressing thanks and gratitude for Bangladesh's firm support to his country during the recent crisis.

Mr Najran termed the Bangladesh's support and stand on the Kuwaiti issue as 'memorable' he hoped that the brotherly cooperation between Kuwait and Bangladesh would continue.

'Concept of varsity college to develop'

Education Adviser Prof. Zillur Rahman Siddiqui laid emphasis on improvement of teaching methodology of economics at the college level for bringing about a qualitative change in higher education, reports BSS.

The Education Adviser was speaking as chief guest at the inaugural ceremony of a two-week training programme on teaching of economics at the college level held in Dhaka in Monday evening.

Presided over by Prof. Abu Mohammad, Director-General of National Institute of Educational Administration and Research (NIEAR), Dr Mahub Hossain, DG of BIDS and Dr. Mahmudul Alam also spoke on the occasion.

The Education Adviser said the concept of university colleges will develop in our country in the days ahead. He opined that economics as a practical science of everyday life will retain its importance as a major subject in higher education.

Jointly organised by NIEAR and BIDS the economics teachers of colleges are taking part in the two-week training programme on economic theory and research methodology.

'Poll an example for all of us'

A reception was given to Durab Patel, a member of the SAARC election observation team by the Supreme Court Bar Association on Monday, reports BSS.

Dr. Kamal Hossain was in the chair.

Durab Patel in his speech said that free and fair election recently held in Bangladesh had set an example for all of us in the sub-continent and South Asia. It is a great success for Bangladesh people. He thanked the members of the Supreme Court Bar for the reception.

Barrister Istiaque Ahmed also spoke on the occasion.

BSP demands payment of outstanding bills

Bangladesh Sangbadpatri Parishad on Monday demanded immediate payment of the outstanding bills amounting to Taka 14 crore against advertisements of government and semi-government organisations, reports BSS.

Terminating the statement of the Information Ministry that the Wage Board award would be announced by March 10 as 'very shocking'.

The Parishad said the Wage Board award had been given with '100 per cent increase of salaries and allowances' by the then Ershad regime in connivance with the Information Ministry without paying any heed to the newspapers owners.

The BSP said it had expected a review of the award by the government before its announcement. The newspaper industry is facing acute monetary crisis and many newspapers could not pay regular salaries to the journalists and employees, it mentioned.

One caught in Dhaka varsity while stealing

A thief was caught red-handed while stealing three vanity bags along with Taka 200 from the Science Library of the Dhaka University Monday at 12.30 noon.

Kazi Altamas Pasha, the alleged thief was handed over to the Ramna Thana police.

It was alleged that the same person was caught on January 15 this year while scaling a bag belonging to Dr. A.K.M. Abdur Rashid, Medical Officer of Dhaka University, from the Central Library.

He was handed over to his elder brother Kamal Assalan as he begged pardon and vowed not to commit any theft further.

Greetings for Kuwaiti Emir

By Staff Correspondent

Kuwait Repatriates Bangladesh Society has congratulated Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah and Sheikh Samad Al-Abdallah, (Emir and Crown Prince respectively of Kuwait on Sunday.

Ramzan Ali Bhuiya and Lutful Hossain, President and Vice President respectively of the society in a press release felicitated the Kuwaiti leaders for freeing motherland from Iraqi occupation.

Ershad's release demanded

By Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Mar 4: Bangladesh Railway Jatiya Sramik Party (JSP) here today demanded release of all Jatiya Party leaders including former President Ershad, a JSP Press release said, reports BSS.

The meeting presided over by Central Committee Vice-President of JSP Mr Din Muhammad was addressed by Central General Secretary Mr Mahubur Rahman, Messrs. Ali Ashraf, Nurul Amin, Abu Taher and Zakir Hussain-all party leaders.

Tribals' call for early repatriation

By Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Mar 4: Chittagong Hill Tracts Hill People's Council Monday congratulated BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia and all others elected to the Jatiya Sangsad in February 27 election, council press release said, reports BSS.

The Council expressed its satisfaction over the free and fair elections and thanked the interim government



Aly Zaker of Sammelito Sangskritik Jote (Combined Cultural Alliance) addressing a Press conference on the occasion of the Year of Girl Child at the National Press Club on Monday. Asaduzzaman Noor, a TV personality (left) is also seen. — Star photo

Colourful programmes to mark Girl Child Yr

By Staff Correspondent

A six-day cultural functions will be held at the Shilpakala Academy from March 6 to grow awareness among the people about the rights of the girl children.

Three voluntary organisations - UNICEF, We Are For Children and BRAC jointly organised the programmes in cooperation with the Shilpakala Academy to uphold the spirit of the girl child year 1990 in the SAARC countries.

Food and Cultural Affairs Adviser Prof Iazuddin Ahmed will inaugurate the function on March 6 at 5.30 pm.

Organisers at a press conference at the National Press Club Monday announced the programmes schedule.

Mr Ali Zaker and Asaduzzaman Noor of the 'We Are For Children' said the programmes

include staging dramas and operas, holding doll-dance and art exhibition.

Earlier, similar programmes were held at different places of the country and three short films were made on the theme of the children's rights specially that of the girls, they added.

Political parties urged to accept polls results

By Staff Correspondent

Dr Aleem-Al-Razee memorial council on Sunday urged the government to prepare new voter list as many people could not practice their voting rights, says a press release.

'Corruption to be uprooted under BNP rule'

Lawyers Committee for Protection of Human and Fundamental Rights, Monday congratulated Begum Khaleda Zia on her victory in the parliament election, reports UNB.

In a statement to the press Dr. Tarq M.R. Chowdhury, Chairman of the Committee hoped that under her leadership the fundamental rights of the people would be protected duly.

'Corruption and nepotism would be uprooted and process of development in all sectors of national life would be initiated' the statement said.

'Terminating the elections free and fair Dr. Tarq said that the people through exercise their franchise expressed their desire for establishment of rule of law, democracy and economic development.'

Huge arms recovered: 5 held in city

By Staff Correspondent

Police recovered huge arms and ammunition and arrested five persons from different places of the city

BDR asked to break all past records in curbing smuggling

The Director General of Bangladesh Rifles, Major General Mohammad Abdul Latif, Monday congratulated the BDR personnel for showing exemplary patriotism by maintaining law and order during the Jatiya Sangsad