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Down to Earth Food Regimen Patterns of City Dwellers

Food intake patterns of Dhaka city dwellers follow no specific lines. Apart from some basic elements which are discernible, there are peculiarities, proclivities and idiosyncrasies which make the subject quite interesting. Urban food habits differ in many ways from rural ones which are essentially simple. As city denizens, by and large, are forced to pace themselves up for earning a living, their food habits undergo extraordinary changes. These changes mainly focus on how to prepare foods quickly and save time in enjoying those. This essential need is growing fast as the process of urbanisation is picking up. At the same time, city limits are rapidly expanding making commuting more time-consuming. Naturally, the commuters leave their homes early to be on duty on time. In so doing, they cannot afford to spare much time in preparing food at home. So, they carry their own food or depend on the fast food shops which may be at hand. It is only in the past few years that a proliferation of these fast food shops has been seen all over the city. The commercial and office neighbourhoods are where these shops are mostly concentrated. And here during lunch time, there is a heavy rush of customers. From this trend, it appears that a substantial change has taken place in the food habits of a large section of urban populace. No longer do they seem to depend on rice and curry to satisfy their appetite at mid-day. At these fast food shops, the urban customers have become acquainted with a large variety of food items which were previously alien to our gastronomic culture. Among the popular items are beef or chicken burgers, sandwiches, pizzas, hot dogs, salamis, pies, sasliks, etc. Different types of cakes and pastries are also available. Some of these shops offer very expensive foods. Since some of the customers belong to high income brackets, the high prices of the products do not stand in the way of steady business of many of the shops having good locations. Some popular brands of soft drinks also flow freely at these fast food shops. Thus a soft drink culture is already on the ascendancy in the urban areas. The young age group, by and large, constitutes the larger segment of patrons of these fast food shops. Another phenomenon worthy of notice is the large number of boys engaged in carrying food to the employees in different offices and business establishments from their homes on reasonable payments. This phenomenon is particularly noticeable at the shops in business areas. We all know how popular the so-called Chinese food is nowadays. The burgeoning growth of Chinese restaurants in the city is indicative of that popularity. A recent development is the operation of mobile restaurants in some selected localities of the city where educational and well-known business establishments are situated. A couple of these mobile restaurants are known for handling their food items hygienically. There are innumerable shops on sidewalks in the city where seasonal fruits are sold from mobile or makeshift stalls. The vendors are seen to do a brisk business particularly in areas where people gather in large numbers, such as railway stations, bus stations, steamer ghats, shopping areas, etc. To make their wares easily accessible to customers with small means, some of the fruits are cut into small pieces carrying low price tags. Something undesirable, however, can be found about this trade from the hygienic point of view. Most of the fruits offered for sale, are either peeled off in whole or cut to pieces, and are kept without any cover putting consumers health at great risk. Besides the fruit stalls, there are many spots on city thoroughfares where a variety of eatables are offered for sale. The fare mainly consists of rice, curry, dal and roti and different kinds of snacks and beverages. The locations of this business can be found mainly on the streets of Motijheel, Sadarghat, Tejgaon and other busy places like bus stops, railway stations, launch ghats, etc. Maintenance of hygiene and sanitary conditions preparing and handling the foods is lacking in most cases. A significant aspect of our Bengali culture is reflected in our fondness for sweets. This is quite evident from the growing number of sweetmeat shops all over the city. The sweets are of a large variety and are irresistible to the connoisseurs. Some of our citizens are fond of biriani, kebab, ice cream evident in the growing number of establishments catering these items.



UNDAUNTED CITY DWELLERS: Office-goers in Kadamtala area near Basabo avail every possible means of transport to make their way through flooded roads. — Star photo

Posts of JU Pro-VC, Treasurer lying vacant

By Staff Correspondent The government's delay in appointment of a new Pro-Vice Chancellor and a Treasurer of Jahangirnagar University (JU) is creating difficulties in day-to-day administrative activities, officials of the university said. Important files are getting piled up for disposal at the VC's office causing delay in decision-making. The VC, Prof Alauddin Ahmed, is now in Canada, attending a conference. The post of Pro-VC is vacant since July 18 after appointment of former Pro-VC Prof Alauddin Ahmed as VC. The university is running without a Treasurer since August 13 when the tenure of former Treasurer Prof Abdul Bayes ended on August 13. Meanwhile some senior teachers of the university are learnt to be lobbying for appointment as Pro-Vice Chancellor and Treasurer.

S'pore to back

From Page 1 yesterday, Bangladesh sought support of Singapore for the two posts. Meanwhile, Singapore also sought Bangladesh's support for its candidature of the Security Council's non-permanent seat for the term 2001-2002. The talks were held on bilateral relations with special emphasis on trade and investment, manpower, education and human resources development. The two sides expressed satisfaction at the current level of relations and agreed to explore new areas of cooperation. While noting that two-way trade between the two countries was significant and registered remarkable growth in recent years, the two sides agreed to increase scope of Singaporean investment in Bangladesh. Sources added, The two-way trade during last fiscal year was one billion Singapore dollars (about 650 million US dollars) and Singapore so far invested 175 million Singapore dollar out of 400 million dollars registered with Board of Investment in Bangladesh.

Polls under AL govt

From Page 1 had struggled to establish the rights of the people, including their right to vote. "We've established a system where none can play with the voting right of the people," she said. The Prime Minister said the Opposition leader should read the Constitution to know how the polls will be held next in the country. "Her remarks about election are without any merit." She accused the opposition BNP of starting to issue unbalanced statements after losing its chance to plunder the relief. Hasina said while in power, BNP had exhausted the Prime Minister's Relief Fund through 'misappropriation'. They distributed Tk 25 lakh to each MP while there was no flood in the country. They had plundered the money, she alleged, saying the money will take account of this money. Referring to the flood situation, Hasina said while Awami League was in the opposition, it stood beside the people during their bad times. But now the opposition is busy criticising the government instead of helping the people. "You better help the people along with the government. This will benefit the people," she added. The Prime Minister, during her day-long visit to the flood-hit district, addressed several meetings at Shibchar, Rajoir and Madaripur town, and distributed relief among the flood victims. Forest and Environment Minister Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak, State Minister



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina hugs a flood victim at Shibchar in Madaripur. — PID photo

Biman

From Page 1 progress but negotiations with the others are proceeding positively, the officials added. A delegation from the Royal Jordanian Airlines would be coming to Dhaka soon to hold further talks on launching a joint-venture cargo operation with Biman, the official said. Biman is coming under increasing pressure from exporters, particularly those sending wet cargo such as fish and vegetables catering to the needs of the Bangladeshi immigrant community in Europe, the Gulf and North America. Exporters of readymade garments are also pressing Biman for more space to meet their shipment deadlines. They prefer airfreight to avoid delay in transfer by sea due to shortage of containers and traffic jam at the Chittagong Port.

JS body okays Code of Civil Procedure (Amend) Bill '97

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs yesterday endorsed in principle "The Code of Civil Procedure (Amendment) Bill 1997," reports UNB. The bill seeking to further amend "The Code of Civil Procedure Bill 1908" was earlier introduced in parliament and sent to the committee for scrutiny. The committee's endorsement came at a meeting at the Sangsad Bhaban. It had earlier sought opinions of judges and lawyers of higher and lower courts, said a press release of the Parliament Secretariat.

Airbus

From Page 1 "restoration" within the next two-three days after the probe committee completes its investigation. The committee will question the crew and others concerned. It has already talked to some passengers, sources added. Meanwhile, all flights to and from ZIA started operating on schedule yesterday. Thursday's incident had halted flight operation at ZIA for 12 hours from 7:30 am, leaving several hundred people stuck up at the airport's departure lounge due to rescheduling of flights.

US missile attack

From Page 1 given." Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz told the Senate (upper house) today. The attack on Afghanistan was a serious matter, he said adding that the people of Pakistan were justifiably outraged over the loss of innocent lives, which was a cause of serious concern. The US also launched missiles at a chemical weapons-related factory in Sudan. Both attacks were in retaliation for the bombings at US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania which killed 257 people on August 7. US military officials said that cruise missiles were fired from US navy ships in the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea Thursday. A Washington report says, missile strikes against targets in Afghanistan and Sudan signalled what President Bill Clinton said would be a lengthy war on "terrorists." Calling Thursday's strike a pre-emptive measure, US officials nevertheless warned that the military action almost certainly would provoke a terrorist response. Some US airports tightened security immediately, and the CIA told senior Clinton administration officials that the prospect of retaliation against Americans overseas was "very, very high." The State Department issued warnings to US citizens travelling or residing abroad. The FBI issued a nationwide alert to US law enforcement officials to watch for signs of terrorists action. Unidentified gunmen seriously injured two UN workers in the Afghan capital of Kabul today, a day after Washington's missile attack. The United Nations confirmed two men, Italian and a French man, were shot as they drove in Kabul. No other details were available. Interrupting his vacation on Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts, Clinton jolted the press corps and the nation from the scandal over his relationship with a former White House intern with the surprise announcement of the strikes, which took place at 1:30 pm EDT (1730 GMT). US ships in the Red and Arabian seas fired 75 to 80 Tomahawk cruise missiles at a suspected chemical weapons plant in Khartoum, Sudan, and a suspected Islamic militant base in eastern Afghanistan near the Pakistani border. Smoke, flame and smoldering ruins signalled the destruction of the suspected chemical plant in Sudan. Pentagon officials said it might take days to assess the damage caused by strikes in Afghanistan at the sprawling complex, which encompassed six separate targets in remote, arid countryside. Sudanese hospital officials said at least 10 people were injured in the attack there. Sudanese President Omar el-Bashir said his country "reserves the right to respond to the American attack using all necessary measures." Egypt's Middle East News Agency reported today. "This is not simply a response to some specific act," said Army Gen. Henry Shelton, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "but a concerted effort to defend US interests." At United Nations headquarters in New York, Ambassador Bill Richardson informed the Security Council that the United States acted in self-defense, in accord with the UN charter. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, who led the push within the administration to strike, said the action demonstrates "there will be no safe haven for terrorists." America's allies mostly reacted favourably to the US attacks, although many Arab nations condemned them. The Russian Interfax news agency quoted President Boris Yeltsin as saying he was "indignant and I condemn these bombings," although his spokesman later said Yeltsin mainly was upset at not being informed in advance of the strikes. The US action sparked widespread backlash from the Muslim world.

AL labour front office ransacked in Mymensingh

MYMENSINGH, Aug 21: A group of miscreants ransacked a Sramik League office and 12 under construction shops at a market in the town today, reports UNB. They also burned the portraits of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the Sramik League office. Witnesses said the miscreants numbering about 50 attacked the Agriculture Mechanics' Sramik League office at Gansingpar Hawkers Market with lethal weapons. Local people said the attackers belong to opposition BNP but the cause of the attack could not be known immediately. A tense situation was prevailing in the town. Police were deployed there.

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BNP Secy-Gen asks PM Quit at once or face agitation

BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday asked Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to step down at once and hand over the power to a caretaker government for holding mid-term polls. "If the government does not concede to our demand, we will go for agitation," he said. In an interview with the UNB at 29 Minto Road in the city, Bhuiyan pointed the failures of the government in political, economic and administrative affairs to substantiate the demand for mid-term elections. He said depositing the resignation letters of BNP MPs with the party chairperson is a first step towards final resignation from parliament. "We earnestly want to make parliament working, but it is the party in power that unfortunately turned parliament into a house of Awami League," he said. Mannan Bhuiyan said: "If the government does not change its attitude and make the House effective, our depositing the resignation letters may lead to the final resignation." He denied that the decision of submission of resignation letters to Begum Khaleda Zia is a "patch-up formula" to cover up the reported conflict between moderates and hardliners in BNP. The decision is "not a manifestation of any confusion, contradiction or misunderstanding within BNP," the BNP general secretary said. Rather, he added, the decision was taken after the government party had made parliament non-functioning, the Speaker lost his neutrality and BNP MPs were debarred from discussing important issues. See page 11

300 phone lines in Dhanmondi go out of order

By Staff Correspondent Some 300 telephone lines at Road No 4, 5, 6 and 7 and at government quarters in the city's Dhanmondi residential area went out of order yesterday following complete damages to two telephone cabinets at Dhanmondi Road 6, says a BTB press release. The Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board release said the roadside telephone cabinets were damaged completely after being hit by a bus. It regretted the inconvenience to the subscribers assuring that steps have been taken to restore the phone links.

BNP calls hartal in Kishoreganj tomorrow

KISHOREGANJ, Aug 21: The BNP has called a half-day hartal in the district on Sunday demanding immediate release of its leaders and withdrawal of cases filed against them, reports UNB. It was decided at a meeting of the local BNP with Maj (Rtd) Aktaruzzaman MP in the chair yesterday. Police arrested party leaders Abdul Jalil and Masud Helali in a case filed against them last year when they appeared before a special tribunal yesterday. GR police had filed cases against four BNP leaders, including Helali and Jalil, on charge of ransacking a railway station during a hartal in 1997.

Jewellery shops Attack on BNP

From Page 1 Chhatra Shibir activist but he defected recently and joined the student front of another political party. "Police officials said, activists of a political faction backed by a 'godfather' were allegedly involved in the incident. They also said that residence of a Jubo League leader Mamunur Rashid Mamun, was raided at 12:30 am last night to nab him. But he escaped sensing presence of police.

Unicef plans edn for child workers

From Page 1 increased from 15 per cent to 50 per cent. Now, we are offering a package of hygiene education which will result in a decline in diarrhoea rate and reduction in malnutrition. All schools will have hygiene education about how to keep their latrines clean and how to keep themselves clean. It will first start in a small scale and then be launched in a bigger way. In the next five to ten years, these and other direct programmes like weighing children and giving temporary food supplement to under-weight children will bring malnutrition rate from as high as 93 per cent to 45 per cent, he said. The World Bank has already committed 700 million US dollars for malnutrition control which will help us to reduce malnutrition. "Carriere views that the presence of arsenic in groundwater is now posing a new challenge for Unicef to ensure safe drinking water. "We still do not know the cause of arsenic contamination. We are now providing kits to test water throughout the country and marking contaminated tubewells. This calls for a continued surveillance because the tubewell which is free of arsenic today, may become contaminated the next day," said Carriere. Talking about Unicef's role in education of the children, he said, the organisation is involved in an 'ideal project' that aims to teach children to learn in a different way. A child has seven intelligence - ability to read and write, ability to imagine, musical talent, interpersonal intelligence which is his or her ability to communicate with others, intra-personal intelligence which is the ability to assess oneself and emotional intelligence by which a child is able to feel and express his or her feelings. "For development of a child, these faculties of a child need to be developed. We are now training the teachers of the government schools so that they can help the children to develop these intelligence," said Carriere. "During my tenure, I received enormous cooperation from the government, and NGOs," he said. "There had been a dramatic improvement in the lives of children because of this." But the bad news is there are much, much to be done and more resources to be made available to invest in children, he noted. "If we invest in 0 to 18-year group for health, education, nutrition, and their rights, you would have a better Bangladesh. You need children who are alive, aware and empowered to participate in the democratic process. The Government of Bangladesh has realised the importance of children and kept them above politics. It is important that children do not become political footballs," said Carriere.

Khaleida to visit Narsingdi today

BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia will visit the flood-affected areas in Narsingdi district today, reports UNB. She will distribute relief materials among the flood victims at Nalbata, Battali, Monipura, Atsali, Haripur, Charnodhura, Mirzachar, Bashgari, Kalikapur, Paratali and Aigi.

Rubel murder

From Page 1 to submit its report on August 10. The time was extended till August 25. The commission is likely to record the statement of Mukuli Begum today, the sources added. Jahanara Begum, mother of Rubel, in her statements to the CID and the judicial commission earlier said that she had rushed to Mukuli Begum for help soon after getting the information about her son's arrest on July 23. Mukuli Begum, a local leader of the ruling party and a neighbour of Rubel, also gave her statement to the CID on Thursday.

Pakistan

From Page 1 But hours later, a Foreign Ministry statement said Altaf's comments were based on "inaccurate information". "No casualty has occurred inside Pakistani territory as believed earlier," the statement said. No damage either has been caused on the Pakistan side. Before Altaf's announcement, Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz told the Pakistani senate: "Irrespective of the motives of these strikes, the act of violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of these Islamic countries cannot but be a matter of grave concern to the people of Pakistan who justifiably feel outraged." Demonstrators burned US flags, threw stones at consulates and chanted angry slogans today across Pakistan.

Floods

From Page 1 Aricha, Old Brahmaputra at Jamalpur and Mymensingh, Buriganga at Dhaka, Shitalakha at Narayanganj, Turag at Mirpur and Tongi, Kaliganga at Taraghat, Dharla at Kurigram, Padma at Pankha, Rajshahi, Hardinge Bridge, Goalanda and Bhagyakul, Mahananda at Chapainawabganj, Surma at Kanaighat and Sunamganj and Meghna at Bharabazar. Meanwhile, rainfall recorded during the last 24 hours till 9 am yesterday were 38 mm at Sylhet, 35 mm at Sunamganj, 24.7 mm at Kushtia, 23 mm at Panachagarah and 23.5 mm at Dewanganj and Gaibandha.

Model PSC

From Page 1 be charged for filing important documents with Petrobangla, regarding the cost of Sangu project about a year after the scheduled time because the PSC did not specify the time limit in defining 'immediately'. The PSC only said that certain documents should be submitted to Petrobangla immediately. "But there is nothing regarding these things in the proposal to modify the PSC," said a source.