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Down to Earth

The Vogue of Mobile Eateries in City

By A S M Nurunnabi

With the rapid development of the metropolis, rapid changes are also taking place in the habits and lifestyles of its citizens. In the fast pace of city life, people just don't have time for leisurely dining any more.

With changed office timings observed in government and non-government offices, there is no longer any scope for the office-goers to go home for lunch. Time is at a premium for the fast growing class of office executives and other white-collar workers who need to fortify themselves with food that is relatively inexpensive, nutritious and handy.

Although there has been such a demand for a pretty long time, it is only recently that facilities for meeting such demands have opened up. The concept of mobile restaurants has been given a boost in the city by some well-established restaurants like Sajna, Shehna, China Town, Yummy Yummy and American Fried Chicken. They started to sell meals on wheels. With a small kitchen set within their mobile vans which can warm food, they usually supply set meals with a price range from Tk 50/- to Tk 150/- for foods as club sandwiches, fried rice, chicken and French fries. In addition to such set meals, there is also a choice of usual fares like beef or chicken burgers, chops, cutlets and pizzas, besides soft drinks. One important thing to note here is that the staff of most of these mobile restaurants handle the foods hygienically by wearing gloves.

These mobile food restaurants have become increasingly popular in recent days. Convenience and hygienical handling of food are their major virtues for which the customers, apart from the better food quality of these establishments are willing to pay a little more. In view of the growing popularity of such mobile restaurants, fewer and fewer people now feel the need for carrying food from home in hot pots or tiffin boxes to the office.

Street food vending is definitely on the rise in the city. Though the hygiene aspect is open to question in many cases, the popularity of these mobile eateries is undeniable. Such trend is quite in line with similar practices on a larger scale in cities like Bangkok, Singapore and Manila.

Besides the select mobile restaurants operated by the well-known food establishments in the city, there are other mobile outlets in this line catering to the food needs of the office-goers. There are several popular spots like Sangsad Bhaban, Crescent Lake, the Dhaka University area, Ramna area and even Ashulia (during holidays). Such mobile food vans, several in number, are seen to operate regularly in these areas thronged by people in different times of the day.

Another form of mobile food is the one brought to the office or business establishments by small boys in tiffin carriers. Besides home service, the restaurant owners have an arrangement with the various offices and business establishments to provide food for the employees through these juvenile carriers. Though there is no network here like the 'dabba wallah' system in India's Mumbai city, this service is quite entrenched in the city, particularly among the employees of private business establishments.

There is another interesting feature of the city's mobile food catering. This refers to 'chat-patti' or 'phuchekha' wallahs. Their conspicuous presence is noticeable in city's parks, fairs, exhibition sites, near women's hostels and bazzars and anywhere where there are people.

The food items they supply are not strictly treated as meals but they go a long way in titillating the taste buds of the young people. The 'jhal muri' and the 'chanchur' vendors also serve us as local snacks as do the ice-cream vendors. They do brisk business in the city's parks and other public places in the afternoon.

During the evening we find temporary food stalls set up beside the TSC area buzzing with activity. Students come here to supplement their lunch and supper, as the quality of food served in the students' residential halls, are said to be atrocious.

A privately conducted survey has revealed that there are over 200 mobile restaurants and food stalls in the city with about 8000 food street vendors of different types.

The concept of mobile food as introduced by several leading restaurants of the city has now become widely popularized. Encouraged by this trend, more mobile restaurants are being introduced which serve quick-lunch, snacks and beverages. The vogue of mobile food is steadily on in this city now.

Koreas halt propaganda attacks after summit

SEOUL, June 16: North and South Korea ordered a halt to propaganda attacks against each other today, as the South's President Kim Dae-jung called a special cabinet meeting to act on their historic summit in Pyongyang, reports AFP.

The two sides have also scaled down rival events to mark the 50th anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War on June 25.

South Korea's Culture-Information Minister Park Jie-won told journalists the North's supreme leader Kim Jong-il had ordered an immediate halt to verbal attacks against the capitalist South.

He made the order after summoning his all-important National Defense Commission on Thursday morning.

Park said.

Official monitors here confirmed the North Korea's propaganda machine had stopped its insults against the rival South.

On Wednesday evening, Kim Jong-il and President Kim signed a landmark inter-Korean declaration pledging to work toward peaceful reunification and reconciliation.

South Korea's Defence Minister Cho Sung-tae told the cabinet meeting he had ordered a halt to "every form of insults against North Korea" through loudspeakers and billboards along the Demilitarized Zone.

He also ordered the military to "review" its plans for events marking the Korean War anniversary, as the

events "could have negative impact on implementing the inter-Korean declaration."

President Kim called the special cabinet meeting a day after returning from Pyongyang. On his triumphant return to Seoul late Thursday he declared that reunification between the Cold War enemies was now possible.

"We Koreans are at the start of a new era. When I was in Pyongyang I realised that Pyongyang is our land. The people of Pyongyang are our people," he said.

The two sides have proposed different formulas for reunification, but they have agreed to independently seek common ground.

The North wants an immediate federation, while the South has proposed a more gradual confederation.

Science and technology universities

Out of planned 12, foundation of only 3 laid in last 3 yrs

By Reaz Ahmad

Three years after a decision to set up 12 science and technology universities, foundations of only three have so far been laid in Dinajpur, Rangpur and Tangail.

The original plan was to set up the 12 universities by 2007 in districts where there is none.

But a stalemate began when the government deviated from it and attempted to upgrade Hajj Danesh Agriculture College at Dinajpur and Patuakhali Agriculture College into science and technology universities. Different quarters opposed the upgrade and demanded setting up of new institutions.

The government planned to upgrade these two and set up four other science and technology universities in Rangpur, Tangail, Gopalganj and Rangamati in the first phase by 2002.

Sites were selected and project directors appointed for the four. An amount of Tk 90 lakh was sanctioned for building initial infrastructures for the six. But no further progress has been made due to the government indecision over upgrade of the two. The sources said the whole project got stalled due to the indecision.

The two agricultural colleges at Dinajpur and Patuakhali were handed over to Education Ministry from the Agriculture Ministry in 1999. But in the face of protests, these were returned to the agriculture ministry after a couple of months.

After Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina laid the foundation of a science and technology university on the existing facilities at Hajj Danesh Agriculture College in Dinajpur, a group of leading agriculturists, academics and a former agriculture minister submitted a memorandum to her for upgrading the agricultural college into an agricultural university.

Since then, further progress in upgrading the colleges at Dinajpur and Patuakhali and setting up two others at Rangamati and Gopalganj remained stalled.

Meantime, the Prime Minister told a delegation of Bangladesh Association for the Advancement of Science (BAAS) on May 7 that two of the planned 12 would be built exclusively for agricultural studies.

However, officials concerned said that there has not been any change in the government plan that all the 12 would be science and technology universities. There will be separate faculties for agriculture when Hajj Danesh Agriculture College and Patuakhali Agriculture College will be upgraded, they said.

Education Secretary Kazi Rakiuddin Ahmad told The Daily Star that work to build infrastructures for three other universities at Patuakhali, Rangamati and Gopalganj would begin soon.

"We're selecting sites for six other universities at Noakhali, Comilla, Pabna, Bogra, Barisal and Jessore to be built under the second phase (2002-2007)," he said.

Prof Mesbahuddin Ahmed, Member (Science and Technology) of University Grants Commission (UGC), said that he had no knowledge of any policy change regarding conversion of agriculture colleges into science and technology universities.

Prof Ahmed, who coordinates the whole project for setting up the 12 science and technology universities asserted that the work was going on as per government plan.

Janakantha honours

From page 1

mad Atiqullah Khan Masud, Editor of Daily Janakantha, chaired the programme.

Each recipient of the 'Janakantha Gunjan O Protiva Sammanana 1999' received a cheque for Tk one lakh, a crest and a certificate. They will also receive a monthly stipend of Tk 5,000 each.

Last year, Janakantha gave awards to ten personalities for contributions in their respective fields.

Noted political scientist Prof Sardar Fazlul Karim was born in Barisal in 1952. "He books and translations have made him the conscience of the nation in the field of philosophy and politics," the citation of the award noted. Karim is also a recipient of the Ekushe Padak and the Bangla Academy Award.

Mahmudul Haque has authored a number of novels. Some of these -- Kalo Baraf, Jibon Amar Bon, Khelaghar and Nirapad Tandra -- are very popular among readers. Born in 1940, Mahmudul Haque received the Bangla Academy award in 1977.

Shova was born in a Hindu family in 1953 in Swarupkathi

in Pirozpur. After her husband Rajendranath Biswas was killed by the Pakistan Army in May 1971, Shova joined the Liberation and fought in Sector Nine under the command of Major Shahjahan Omar. In 1983, Shova married Shahjahan, a deed writer, and embraced Islam.

Each of the 15 members, the manager and the assistant manager of Bangladesh cricket team were awarded Tk one lakh. Vice-captain Khaled Mahmud and all-rounder Minhazul Abedin received Tk 50,000 each additionally for winning the man-of-the-match awards against Pakistan and Scotland respectively.

Besides, Janakantha also gave BCB Tk two lakh.

Sea coaster sinks in Karnaphuli

From Staff Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, June 16: A sea coaster sank in the river Karnaphuli yesterday while it was carrying lentil from a foreign ship, port sources said.

The accident occurred when hull of the coaster suddenly broke down at around 9:30 pm near jetty.

The coaster was carrying 900 tons of imported lentil after unloading from another vessel. However, the accident was not hampering movement of ships at Chittagong port as it took place outside the channel.

BNP rally at Mirpur today

By Staff Correspondent
Mirpur, Pallabi and Kofrul Thana units of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) will hold a joint public rally today on Mirpur stadium premises to protest filing of 'false cases' against their leaders and activists under Public Safety Acts (PSA).

Leader of the opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia will address the rally as chief guest, said a press release.

Windies 289/6

Sports Reporter

West Indies were 289 for six, a lead of 110, one hour after the tea on the second day of the first Test against England at Edgbaston yesterday. Captain Jimmy Adams was not out on 56 while Curtly Ambrose was at the other end with 22.



Enforcing the 'one-way' at Kudrat-e-Khuda (New Elephant) Road, a police officer directs traffic from the east to the west yesterday. DMP traffic division enforced the decision without any public notification earlier. — Star photo

2nd MOU on child labour elimination signed

GENEVA, June 16: The Second Memorandum of Understanding (MOU-II) on elimination of child labour from garment industry in Bangladesh was signed between BGMEA, ILO and UNICEF here today, a press release said, reports BSS.

The second MOU is aimed at contributing elimination of child labour and preventing recruitment of new child labour in the garment industry in Bangladesh through monitoring, verification and awareness raising.

It will also contribute to the economic progress of the country by facilitating export of garments as well as to social progress by providing children with education and training.

Anisur Rahman Sinha, president of BGMEA, Ms Janet Nelson of UNICEF and Kari Tapiola, Executive Director of ILO signed the MOU on behalf of their respective organisations. Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh in Geneva and Sirajul Islam, Secretary of Labour and Employment were also present at the signing ceremony.

In 1995, BGMEA, ILO and UNICEF signed the first MOU. The second phase of the MOU will strengthen informal education programme for children and vocational training to facilitate transition to skilled workers for potential gainful jobs.

One-way traffic

From page 1

dent which resulted in agitation by the shopkeepers already unhappy with the decision yesterday afternoon.

Police backed by gunmen without uniforms swooped on the agitating shopkeepers to restore order. But they made no attempt to clear the chaos at Science Laboratory and Katabon, or Nilkhet crossings or in front of the Nur Mansion on old Elephant Road, created by the haphazardly parked cars, buses, rickshaws and auto-rickshaws.

Police deployed wreckers to lift some vehicles parked under the footbridge near Gausia Market on Mirpur Road which had been made a one-way road from March 17. But the move failed to deter Friday shoppers crowding the market, leaving their vehicles parked in the area marked as no parking area. Police failed to do anything about this either.

DC Traffic Sirajul Islam admitted that there was no public notification on introduction of the one way traffic on New Elephant Road. But he said that it was done on experimental basis to relief the people of the traffic on the road.

He said those who travel eastwards from Science Laboratory crossing should use the Mirpur Road via New Market and Nilkhet crossing. There will be some inconvenience until a new road being prepared at Paribagh on the box culvert is ready and traffic is disciplined on the one way roads, he added.

The DC further said that he is going to have a meeting with the shopkeepers of New Elephant Road today to discuss the one way issue.

6 killed as trucks collide at Mirersharai

From Staff Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, June 16: At least six persons were killed in a road accident on Dhaka-Chittagong highway at Mirersharai in the early hours of Thursday.

Police said the accident occurred when three speeding trucks collided suddenly, killing their assistants and drivers of the vehicles on the spot.

The identity of the dead could not be known, police said. The three trucks were badly damaged in the accident, police added.

Sanjay Dutt allowed to visit abroad

MUMBAI, June 16: A designated Tada Court has on certain conditions allowed Sanjay Dutt, film star and accused in the serial blast trial, to proceed abroad for three weeks to shoot for two films and meet his daughter based in USA, reports PTI.

The order was delivered yesterday by the designated Judge Pramod Kode on an application moved by Dutt's lawyer Farhana Shah.

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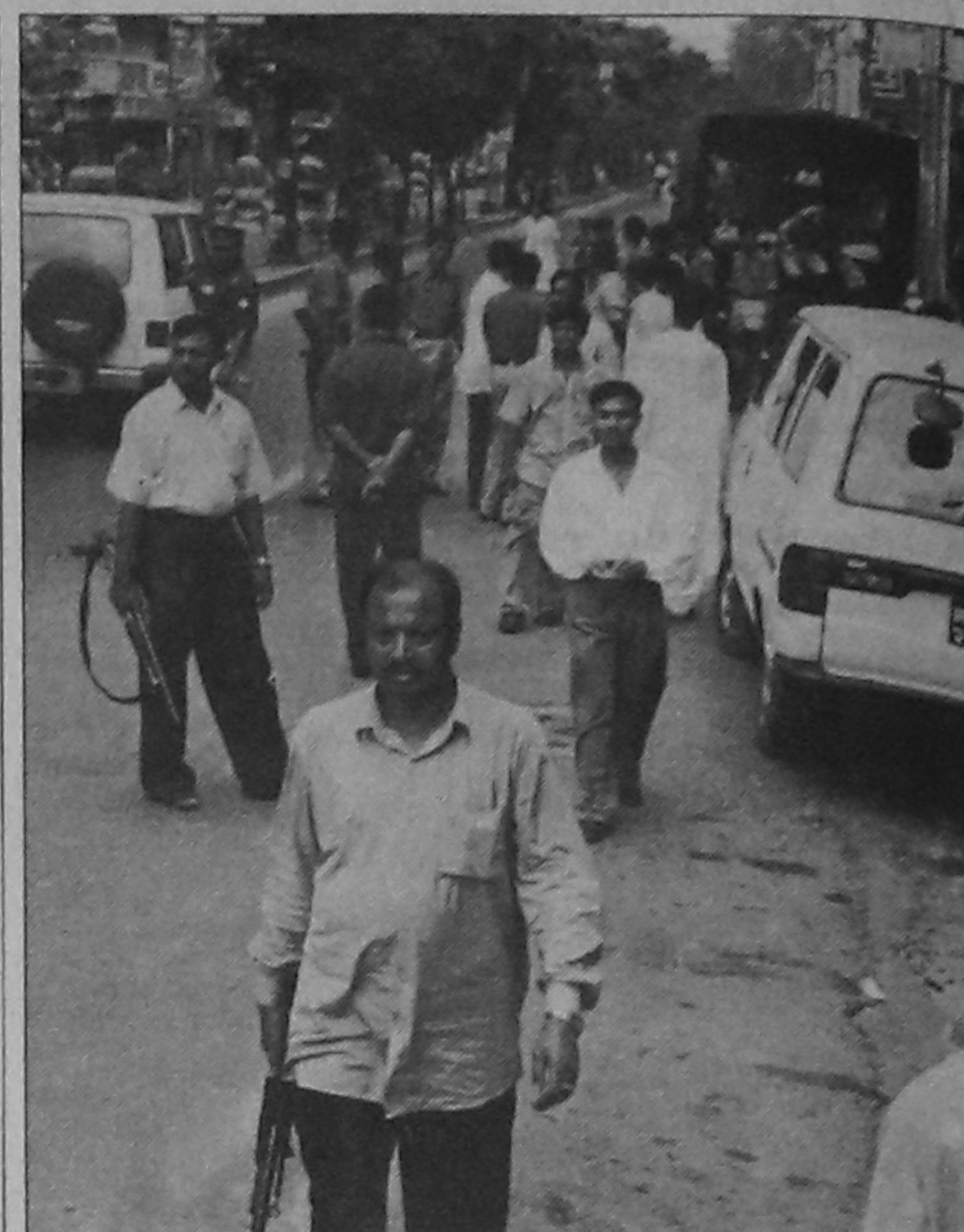
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Some civilians with lathis and guns joined riot police to restore order on Kudrat-e-Khuda (New Elephant) Road yesterday after an accident which prompted local shopkeepers to hurl stones at vehicles. Police said the gunmen were their colleagues. But it is against rules that they moved without any police badge. —Star photo

6 held for dacoity at Korean factory at CEPZ

By Staff Correspondent

Police have so far arrested six people, including a woman in connection with the dacoity at a Korean owned garments factory at Chittagong EPZ on June 7, Chittagong police said in a press release yesterday.

The incident took place when officials and employees of Lino's (BD) Ltd, the Korean factory, were drawing their salary. Getting inside the factory premises with a micro bus, dacoits, numbering about 12, held some people including security-men of the factory hostage and took away Tk 16 lakh.

The arrested people were identified as Nurul Islam, 28, Abdul Aziz, 26, Yasmin Akter, 24, Moinal Hossain, 26 and Habib Ullah, 25, police said. They also recovered three firearms with ammunition and Tk about 1.19 lakh of the robbed money from the possession of the arrested persons.

Following Habib's statement, two firearms and ammunition were recovered from an under-construction building of Kalsidighirpar, the press release added.

A special team of Chittagong Detective Branch arrested Nurul, Aziz, Yasmin and Moinal during separate raids in K Block and Agrabad, Halishahar in the early hours of Tuesday. Following statement of the arrested, police recovered the microbus, which was used during the dacoity, and Tk 69,630 from their possession, said the press release.

Later, Habib Ullah was arrested in the early morning of Thursday. Habib admitted to the police that he got a share of Tk 60 thousand from the robbed money. Fifty thousand of the amount was kept in his sister's account, the release said.

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