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## Down to Earth

# Snack breaks for city's rickshawpullers

By ASM Nurunnabi

The metropolis teams with rickshaws. This naturally leads to a profusion of snack stalls set up to cater to their needs at every convenient spot on city roads. These snack stalls are patronised by a cross-section of city dwellers. Its main components comprising the rickshawpullers and other low-income groups. These road-side stalls have the advantage of ready movement from one place to another, whenever necessity dictates. Such necessity may arise whenever the law enforcing authorities decide to clear a crowded area on account of congestion created by such snack-catering vans. In most cases, such mobile establishments are set up without proper licence from the City Corporation.

The ubiquitous presence of the snack stalls all over the city is supported by the high demand for the food items supplied by them for the low-income groups of city dwellers.

By and large, such snack stalls are located at busy road inter-sections where bus and rickshaw traffic predominate. Their presence is also noticeable at sites of on-going constructions of many building projects in the city. If such locations enjoy the cool of shady trees, this constitutes an added attraction for concentration of rickshaws. This is particularly true in summer time. In the light of such natural advantage, concentration of a large number of rickshaws can be seen, for examples, at places near the Jigatola bus stand, by the side of the Topkhana Road, opposite the Press Club, in the shade of the tall buildings in the Motijheel C.A. Such concentration of rickshaws at those locations means brisk business for those mobile snack stalls.

It has been observed that the main items of snacks catered by these stalls consist of small loaves of bread and banana supplemented by large consumption of tea. Soft drinks are not much preferred, because they cost comparatively more. On the other hand, a couple of small bread loaves added with some bananas and tea are more stomach-filling at a lesser cost. The secret of greater consumption of these items of food lies here, because, beside their role in tackling the pangs of

hunger, they are more healthy foods without unhygienic contamination. The evidence of such favouritism for such snacks is abundantly clear at every stall catering to the food needs of the rickshawpullers.

In summer time, the seasonal fruits also occupy an important place in the business of the road-side stalls. Though most of our people at the lower economic strata are pressed not to spend extra money beyond their essential needs, they seem to harbour a definite craving for the native seasonal fruits. Various types of fruits according to our seasons are sold from mobile snack stalls. To make their wares easily accessible to customers of small means, the fruits with some size, such as pineapple, water melons, papaya, cucumber, etc are cut into small pieces and sold at low price tags.

A cursory view of this business carried on in some areas suggests, depending on the seasons, that the favourite fruit items are cucumber, water melons, pineapples, papaya, green coconut, etc. When the temperature rises in summer, the items mainly offered are sugarcane juice, water melons and iced sherbet, ice cream, green coconut, black berries and sweet plums (amra), etc.

As in the case of the mainly bread and banana selling stalls, the fruit selling mobile stalls operate from one side of Baitul Mukarram, for instance, to the old railway station across Gullistan and Stadium areas, besides numerous other areas across the city. The hospitals in the city also provide suitable locations for such fruit stalls. In the old part of the city, the Sadarghat area, the Moulvibazar area and the District Court area play dominant role in the city's fruit business.

It is a stark reality of urban consumption of a food, that when considered against the background of the vast segment of the city population, there is hardly any place for fruits of any kind in the menu of the well-off. The preference of the city's rickshawpullers for consumption of bread and banana with tea to stave off hunger seems to be a reflection of their good food habit in as much as it saves them from taking as otherwise harmful foods.

## Special envoy of Myanmar PM in city

Deputy Foreign Minister of Myanmar Khin Maung Win arrived in Dhaka yesterday on a two-day visit to Bangladesh as a special envoy of Myanmar Prime Minister Than Shwe, reports BSS.

Acting Foreign Secretary Dr Toulik Ali received him at the Zia International Airport.

Foreign Office sources said Win would hold talks with Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad and hand over a letter from the Myanmar prime minister during the visit.

Win will leave Dhaka on October 22.

## Satkhira flood

From page 1

The flood has completely damaged standing crops on 76,481 acres, 308 educational institutions, 91 mosques, 23 shrines, 280 bridges and culverts, 90,586 dwelling houses, 73.50 km cross dam, 172.91 km pucca roads and 2161.62 km kutcha roads of the district.

Our Satkhira Correspondent reports: Flood situation in the town and four upazilas remained unchanged due to slow recession of water.

The road link with Bomra land port in Satkhira remained closed, suspending cross-border trade.

Activities at the district Judge's Court and Collectorate Building could not be restored till today as the premises of the town buildings are still under knee-deep water.

## Seven Star

From page 1

Pirgali in Shantinagar area at about 7:30 pm. Sensing police presence, the gang members fired at them.

Police returned the fire and at one stage arrested the five. Ripon is a leader of the 'Seven Star' group and is involved in several murders in the city. The other leaders of the group are Sagar, Tikka, Joy, Subrata Bain, Molla Masud and John, police said.

## PBCP

From page 1

Rob, Kalidas Boral of Bagerhat, UP chairman Abul Kashem Molla of Phulata and Mir Elias Hossain Dillip of Jhenidah.

Police said the arrested outlaws knowing and out of all conspiracies for killing AL leader Kalidas Boral of Bagerhat.

They have been placed on a five-day remand for interrogation, police said.



Palestinian protesters with stones and Molotov cocktails in hand duck during Israeli gunfire in the West Bank town of Ramallah. Two Palestinian teenagers were shot dead by Israeli soldiers during clashes yesterday.

## Violence flares in West Bank, Gaza ahead of deadline

JERUSALEM, Oct 20: Marching from mosques to Israeli checkpoints in the West Bank and Gaza Strip today, hundreds of Palestinians hurled stones and firebombs at soldiers from behind makeshift barricades of burned out cars. Groups of rioters overturned the wrecks again and again, using them as cover to approach the Israeli positions. Thick smoke from burning cars rose into the air, and at one point a Palestinian policeman tried to douse the flames with a hose.

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In a moment of lull, a young rioter crouched behind one of the wrecks to adjust his green headband which signals support for the Islamic militant group Hamas.

In the West Bank town Hebron, demonstrators carried a mock coffin with the words 'Sharm el-Sheikh' written on it. 'We don't care about the deadline,' said Teissir Nathe, 17, one of the stone throwers. 'We just want a Palestinian state, with Jerusalem as its capital.'

In the West Bank town of Salbit, a 14-year-old Palestinian boy was killed by Israeli fire, doctors at a

nearby clinic said. Palestinian security officials confirmed the death, which brought to 105 the number of people killed in three days of clashes. The vast majority of those killed were Palestinians.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak has said that if the Palestinians do not stop the riots, he will see this as a decision by Arafat to halt peace negotiations.

In a phone call late Thursday, Barak told US President Bill Clinton that in that case, Israel will have to 'take a time-out and reassess the entire peace process,' said Barak aide Gilead Sher.

Palestinians charged that Israel is not keeping the understandings and demanded that Israel withdraw tanks from the outskirts of West Bank cities.

Reuters adds: Clinton called Ehud Barak and Yasser Arafat on Thursday, appealing to them to halt the violence that threatens to derail a US-brokered ceasefire agreement, White House officials in Washington said.

'There have been incidents today and we just need to encourage them to stop,' said Clinton.

## Declare flood affected region as disaster area, demands Khaleda

Opposition Leader Khaleda Zia has demanded that the flood-affected southwestern region be declared a 'disaster area,' reports UNB.

In a statement yesterday she also criticised the government for supplying 'inadequate relief' to the flood-hit areas and plundering of relief goods by the ruling party.

Khaleda said crores of flood-hit people in the southwestern region were passing their days without food and medicine.

The BNP chairperson said the government neither sent adequate relief goods, nor made any appeal to other political parties, professional and non-government organisations, and institutions and individuals willing to extend assistance.

Rather, she alleged, they obstructed relief activities of the opposition parties in different affected areas.

The opposition leader said the government was so callous about the plight of the flood victims that it could not provide any information about the losses and the need of the flood-hit people before appealing for assistance to the foreigners.

'Donors have expressed dissatisfaction over this,' she said.

'There is no food, pure drinking water, medicine and security in the flood affected areas. There is virtually no relief activity of the government,' she alleged.

Khaleda called upon the affluent section of the society and non-government organisations and institutions to come forward in aid of the flood victims.

She also asked the leaders and workers of BNP and its front organizations to strengthen the relief operation in the affected areas.

## Fire at Mexico City disco kills 19

MEXICO CITY, Oct 20: A fire ripped through one of Mexico City's largest nightclubs today, killing at least 19 people, official said, reports AP.

The city attorney general's office said 19 bodies had been recovered from the Lohomomo nightclub and at least 24 people were injured.

The fire broke out after 5 am. The cause was not immediately known, but firefighters said witnesses reported hearing several explosions. The blaze was extinguished before dawn.

Police and firefighters blocked off traffic on the busy Insurgentes avenue in both directions in front of the nightclub, which is located near the intersection with another major thoroughfare, the Paseo de la Reforma.

The club, with a large, mirrored facade, was one of the city's best-known nightclubs and was sometimes rented for parties by celebrities.

While the club normally closes at 4 am, local radio stations said some clients were just leaving as the fire broke out.

Maria Inez Munoz, spokeswoman for the Cuauhtemoc borough in which the nightclub is located, said city officials had repeatedly clashed in the courts with the club's owner.

She said that earlier this year officials ordered the club closed because it lacked a permit for table dancing, but that the owner had obtained a federal court injunction to remain open.

## 3 unidentified bodies found in city

By Staff Correspondent  
Bodies of three unidentified people were recovered from different areas in the city yesterday.

Uttara police recovered a partially decomposed body floating in a river at Doar under Uttara thana.

Hands and legs of the man, aged about 40, were tied up with rope, police said, adding that miscreants might have killed him.

Police sent the body to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

Sabujbagh police recovered the body of a four-day-old baby from the east end of a lane at Bashaboo yesterday morning.

Police recovered the body at about 7:30 am and sent it to the DMCH for autopsy.

Railway police recovered the body of a young boy from the roof of a Dhaka-Sylhet inter-city train.

The body bore marks of injuries, police said.

## Over 200 'discarded' tractors imported in last 3 years

By Reaz Ahmad

A section of traders are importing old tractors used for up to 30 years, violating rules and cheating the users.

The import policy for 1997-2002 does not allow import of reconditioned vehicles and tractors used for more than five years.

The unscrupulous traders are importing old tractors from the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, most of which are discarded in those countries after 20-30 years' use. But the importers are showing those as 'not used for more than five years'.

Over 200 such tractors were imported in the last three years, sources in the agro-machinery business said.

One such discarded tractor is imported at a price

as low as Tk 1,35,000 but sold at between Tk four and five lakh.

The users in the country are cheated because such a tractor can be used for a very short period and its service is also very poor.

New tractors are on sale in Bangladesh at prices between Tk. nine lakh and Tk 10 lakh each.

'In fact tractors discarded in those countries are being dumped in the country', said one source.

Most of these are Massey Ferguson (MF) tractors, imported from the Netherlands, where tractors need no registration. So the year of manufacture and the years of use there can not be determined, the sources said.

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## Double-Murder Sutrapur residents demand trial of killers

By Staff Correspondent

Several hundred people brought out a procession at Sutrapur in the city yesterday demanding trial of the culprits involved in double-murder there on September 16.

Two teenaged boys were murdered by miscreants at the Rifles Club at Loharpool under Sutrapur police station on September 16. Mutilated bodies of the two were recovered from a manhole the following day.

The deceased were identified as Mohsin, 18, son of M Amin Mian and Saem, 19, son of Mahatabuddin of SK Das Lane under Sutrapur thana.

Police arrested nine people including four FIRnamed accused in this connection.

The murder case was handed over to the Detective Branch of police. Police carried out several drives in the city, Comilla and Narasingdi but failed to arrest the main accused in the case.

## Operation Tiger 2175 arrested from 16 districts of Rajshahi Divn

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Oct 20: A total of 2175 alleged criminals were arrested in last five days from 16 districts of Rajshahi division.

Police started 'Operation Tiger' from October 15 to nab the criminals.

Official sources said, of the total arrested, 1979 were wanted in various criminal cases.

Police also recovered two country-made pistols, one Indian revolver, one air gun, three pipeguns, one shutter gun and three short guns.

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Residents of Sutrapur in the city took out a procession yesterday demanding immediate arrest and trial of the killers of two teenaged boys of the area.

## Indian Muslims are not ISI agents: Bukhari

NEW DELHI, Oct 20: India's top Muslim cleric today attacked the Hindu nationalist government for treating the country's 125 million Muslims as agents of arch-rival Pakistan.

Syed Ahmed Bukhari, in his first public address since succeeding his father Abdullah Bukhari last weekend, said Indian Muslims were being targeted because of government propaganda.

'The government machinery and the media are playing an important role in spreading such lies and this is intolerable,' Bukhari said at the Friday congregation at Jama Masjid, India's largest mosque.

The Imam said Muslims were not on the payroll of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), which is blamed for growing separatist violence in Kashmir and elsewhere in India.

'The ISI is in the news everyday in our country and an impression is being created that all Muslims here are ISI agents and hatred is being spread against them.'

'I say with great assertion that Indian Muslims have nothing to do with the ISI. Mosques and madrassas (in India) are seats of education and I see no logic in

viewing them as hubs of ISI activity,' Bukhari said.

As spiritual head of the world's second largest Muslim population, Bukhari carries significant political clout in India, and the ruling Hindu nationalist BJP party recently launched a drive to woo Muslim voters into the party fold.

Bukhari told a gathering of 7,000 of his followers that he was willing to meet Pakistani military messengers that the ISI's role in Kashmir had a negative bearing on Indian Muslims.

India, which as fought three wars with Pakistan since 1947, accuses the ISI of arming and training the Islamic guerillas in disputed Kashmir.

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## Garment workers hold rally to press demands

By Staff Correspondent

With their mouths covered with black cloths, garments workers yesterday held a rally at Mukhtangan in the city to press their demands for weekly holiday, safe working condition at factories, release of detained workers of Acolade Garments and compensation to families of the workers killed at Globe Knitting Factory.

The rally was organised by the Bangladesh Garments Sramik Karmachari Federation.

Addressing the rally, Md. Rafiq, president of the Federation reiterated its demand for not engaging women workers after 8 pm.

Shabnam Hafiz, Convenor of Garments Sramik Mukti Andolan, a unit of the Federation, said weekly holiday is a basic right of a worker. By denying this,

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Garments employees brought out a procession in the city yesterday demanding weekly holiday and safe working condition at factories.

-Star photo