



Some 2,000 counterfeit checks with a face value of 100,000 won are displayed on a table at the Ulsan Police Station, Kyongsang-nam-do, Saturday. The police found them while searching the house of Kim Il-chu, 43, arrested earlier on charges of counterfeiting. Yonhap

People Increasingly Use Call Taxis

By Hong Sun-hee
Staff Reporter

The number of people using "mobom" taxis (call luxury taxis) is growing in the Seoul area though most citizens do not know the service is available.

The Individual Taxi Drivers' Association introduced the call service March 1, with 1,360 drivers, slightly over one-fourth of its members, taking part. And 1,200 more drivers who are independent will join next month. For those wishing to use a mobom taxi, the association's phone number is 3451-5100.

Another 530 "mobom" taxis are affiliated with the private group Ullimo (665-6365), which went into service last year.

Everyday, about 1,100 people call the drivers' association, and far more, around 1,700 call Ullimo.

Those using the call taxis are a diverse group, but businessmen who have had a little too much to drink are the biggest customers. The taxis "rush hour" is 11 p.m.-1 a.m. Also many people living in Seoul's satellite cities of

Sanbon, Pundang and Ilsan are frequent users.

The most annoying type of customers, though, are people who call from the street using cell phones, and those who use another taxi without waiting for the arrival of the vehicle they requested.

"It's really frustrating to find no one around when I arrive after passing up other calls," said one mobom cabbie.

The next most unwelcome fares are intoxicated people, who pass out before giving their destination. "I have had so many of this type. I now get a home phone number first and call the family. However drunk they are, every man gets up upon hearing his wife's voice," said driver Lee Hyon-mi, 53.

Club hostesses are unwelcome, too because they ride only a short distance to a destination on narrow and winding roads.

The no-show rate is 10 percent or so. Calls should be made 10 minutes in advance if you want the taxi there right when you want to leave, said a staffer at the drivers' association.

Int'l Volunteer Meeting to Be Held April 9-13 at Sheraton Hotel

The Asia-Pacific regional congress of the International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE) will be held at the Sheraton Walker Hill April 9-13.

Seven hundred people will gather under the theme, "Volunteer Action for Enhancing Quality of Life" including 150 representatives from volunteer groups of 15 countries.

There will be nine speakers including president Lee Yoon-koo of World Vision Korea. There will also be discussions sessions for 18 different interest groups and eight country reports.

Papers to be presented will be "Passing on the Tradition and Value to the Future Generation" by Eichi Okamoto of Japan, "Volunteer Action for Partnership to Solve Serious Social Problems" by Richard Gordon of Subic Bay City, the Philippines, "Volunteer Action for Caring & Nurturing Our Community in Transition" by Gauri Gunasinha, IAVE national representative, Bangladesh, "Volunteer Action for the Disabled and Mentally & Physically Handicapped" by Rev. Oh Woong-jun, president of Kkotnongae, Korea.

"Volunteer Action for Preservation of the Environment" by Dr. Shin Eung-hai of Korea's Hanyang University, "Volunteer Action in Voluntary Organizations" by Margaret Bell, former world president of IAVE, "Volunteer Action in the Corporate World" by Namsoong Suk, president & CEO of Samsung SDS Co., Ltd. and "Government Policy for Promoting Volunteerism" by M.H. Khan, IAVE national representative of Fiji.

Since its foundation in 1970, IAVE has been working to build a global network of volunteer leaders, national volunteer resources, organizations and international service organizations. It has a consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

The Korea Council of Volunteer Organizations, the sponsoring body, will celebrate its third anniversary during the congress, headed by Kang Young-hoon of the Korea National Red Cross.

For further information, contact the KNRC at 755-6734, Miss Noh.

Koreans Injured in UK Road Accident

LONDON (AFP) — Ten Korean students were injured, three seriously, when their minibus crashed into the central barrier on a motorway in Surrey, southern England, police said.

The vehicle veered out of control and crashed near the town of Witley Common. The passengers were ejected in the crash. Some were thrown 10 metres (30 feet) by the force of the impact.

The minibus was carrying a group of Korean students, all aged about 20, who were travelling to a festival on the Isle of Wight, Surrey police said.

One of the three most seriously hurt was in critical condition Friday night, police said. Five other students were in hospital. Police were unable to say whether the students were from South or North Korea.

Beijing Seeks to Predict Quakes

BEIJING (AFP) — China has established 21 research stations in an effort to predict deadly earthquakes in 10 regions where seismic activity is heavy, the official Xinhua news agency said Saturday.

It is estimated that 60 percent of the earthquakes in China are likely to occur in these regions over the next 10 years, said Zhang Guoping, deputy director and researcher in the State Seismology Bureau.

Earthquake predictions, especially precise ones, are very difficult, but not completely impossible, bureau vice director He Yongnian was quoted as saying.

Three regions have been designated for heavy surveillance: the northwest, part of Yunnan province, central and western sections of Sichuan province, and the southwest of Xinjiang region, the news agency said.

Inter-Korean Aviation Talks Deadlocked

By Oh Young-jin
Staff Reporter

South and North Korea failed to make progress in their second round of negotiations in Bangkok aimed at opening the latter's air space to all commercial airlines. The next round of inter-Korean aviation meetings is expected to be in late May at the earliest.

A spokesman at the Construction Transportation Ministry said yesterday. The meeting broke up without an agreement due to the failure to narrow differences on the mode of communication to be used by air traffic controllers when a flight passes from the South's flight information region to the North's and vice versa.

The South wanted to use a hot line maintained between the Red Cross societies of the two Koreas as the main mode of communication and a satellite link as an auxiliary means.

The North wanted to use satellite phones both as primary and secondary means of communication.

The ministry spokesman said that the two sides didn't budge from their original positions, thwarting an agreement.

"I believe that we have made a maximum concession by accepting a satellite phone as a means of secondary communication," he said, explaining that the North insisted on using Asiasat, operated by China, as the primary communication link and Inter-sat as the secondary one.

The reason that we wanted to use the land line is pure and simple economics, he said. Because many flights including those of Korean carriers will use the new route passing through North Korean air space, it would cost a lot to use satellites.

However, a source at the ministry said that the South proposed the next round of meetings late in May but the North neither agreed nor disagreed to it, which leaves the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to shuttle between the two sides and come up with a date.

The ICAO will continue its role as mediator of the meetings, he said.

The two Koreas agreed on everything

except for the communication mode. Aviation officials of the two countries completed the text of their memorandum of understanding (MOU) for signing. The MOU contains guarantees for the safe flights of all airlines, the joint rescue operations for aircraft in distress and others.

The mode of communication is one clause included in the air traffic control agreement that specifies how the controllers take over flights when they enter and leave the air space of South and North Korea. Once North Korean air space is opened to international flights, flights that depart Seoul and are bound for U.S. destinations or vice versa will save travel time and thus cut down on fuel costs.

The attempt to open up the communist country's air space was initiated through a secret meeting between the North and the IATA, an organization of airlines, last year. The North accepted the overtures by the IATA in return for a promise by the IATA to pay for the upgrading of the North's air traffic control facilities.

Prosecutors Suspect Hanbo Money as '96 Election Fund

State prosecutors have been trying to confirm whether a huge amount of money failed Hanbo Group owner Chung Tai-soo had withdrawn from his stock account just prior to the April 11, 1996 general elections was paid out to politicians.

Amid the emergence of new evidence, public attention is focused on the second session of the trial for Chung, who is on trial for graft charges, scheduled for tomorrow. There is a possibility that the Hanbo owner and eight other defendants may make an explosive revelation about what is known as "Chung Tai-soo's list," which contains names of politicians and bureaucrats on his payroll.

A source at the Supreme Public Prosecutor's Office (SPP) said that Chung withdrew a total of 24.9 billion won from stock and bank accounts belonging to himself, and his third son and group chairman Bo-keun, just before last year's National Assembly elections.

Although Chung has a good memory, having told prosecutors how millions were used, he continues to keep mum on the money from that withdrawal, he said. "We believe that the money in question was used to support certain candidates in the elections."

Thus, once the senior Chung opens

his mouth, politicians who relied on his payroll will inevitably be brought in, he said.

The unaccounted for 24.9 billion won was noticed during a joint inspection by state auditors, bank officials and prosecutors into how the bank loans Hanbo had received for its Tangjin steel mill were used.

Meanwhile, the prosecutors launched a team of special investigators in order to ferret out any additional assets the Chung family may have stashed away. This move was followed by the government's decision to confiscate all assets belonging to the conglomerate for its back and unpaid taxes.

The opinion of the prosecutors working on the Hanbo case is that Hanbo owner Chung hid an enormous amount of money in anticipation of a possible seizure of his assets, a theory strongly supported by the fact that Hanbo made several attempts to divert its money prior to the bankruptcy of its flagship business, Hanbo Steel Co. in January.

In another development, the second session of trial for the senior Chung is set for tomorrow, with some court observers anticipating new revelations from the nine people accused after the three-week investigation into Hanbo.

Five Alternative Schools for Dropouts to Open in '98

Five privately-run schools will open next academic year exclusively for dropouts wanting to return to school. The Education Ministry has set aside 6 billion won to fund the construction and operation of the five envisioned schools and the already existing Songji High School in Yongsan, Cholla-nam-do.

It is a follow-up to the ministry's measure last December, which simplified the procedure for dropouts to go back to school, making it easier for

them to return to their former schools or transfer to new ones.

The measure was designed to reduce the number of misdemeanors committed by teenagers. While an exact figure on the back-to-school rate has yet to be calculated, many former students have been found to be reluctant to return for fear that classmates and teachers will not treat them as ordinary students.

All the returning students will stay in dormitories at the alternative schools

which are mostly housed in old shut-down schools in rural or mountainous areas.

The alternative schools will shift from an academic performance-oriented uniform curriculum to instruction in physical labor and cooperative work combined with regular subjects so that students can grow as more complete human beings.

Each class will have 20 a maximum. After attending the special school for two semesters, the students will be allowed to move on to normal schools if they are deemed capable of adjusting themselves to the normal school system. Also, counselors and therapists will be stationed on the premises to help students deal with their problems.

Among the six schools to receive extensive support from the ministry are Kangwon-do's Ture School, planned by Christian pastor Kim Chin-hong, one which will be built near Pusan, another in the Kyongsang-pukto area organized by the Won Buddhism foundation, a school to be opened in the Kyonggi-do area under the direction of a former high school teacher and the Yangsoo High School to be run by the Catholic Church's Chongju, ChungChong-pukto diocese.

Songji High School in Yongsan, Cholla-nam-do, will expand its dormitory with funding from the ministry. The literal meaning of the school's name is the sacred ground, as it is located at the birth place of the founder of Won Buddhism. For over 10 years, it has been established as the prototype of a Korean alternative school for problem children to receive a conventional education that concentrates on preparation for the college entrance examination.



Dignitaries cut the ribbon during a ceremony to open the Chungchong-namdo New York office at the Empire State Building in New York City, Friday. Chungchong-namdo is a province located in the middle of South Korea.

College Grads Face Bleak Job Prospects

The number of unemployed college graduates is increasing rapidly. The major factor cited for the bleak job prospects for the college grads is a cut-back in hirings by the nation's leading business groups, due to the continuing business slump.

Last year the top 50 conglomerates recruited 15 percent less new workers than the previous year. And the number of recruits to be hired by the business groups this year is expected to be further reduced by as much 50 percent over that of last year.

The scarcity of jobs is forcing a large number of graduates to wait for the next recruiting season. This in turn is pushing up the competition for work even higher.

The situation is even more difficult for female graduates. A growing number of them are taking classes at private job schools on subjects that have

nothing to do with their major.

According to the Labor Ministry, the number of those hired by the 50 top business groups in 1996 was 32,888, a drop of 14.3 percent from 1995's 38,372.

In 1992 hirings by the groups decreased 1.8 percent, but in 1993 and the two years after, the number of new recruits employed by the groups grew by an average of 20 percent. But the situation began to change last year due to the economic slowdown, a ministry spokesman said.

The job market for college graduates worsened, especially in the last three months of 1996 as business conditions became more aggravated, he said.

The unemployment rate among college graduates or those with higher educational backgrounds currently stands at 2.5 percent, higher than the national average of 1.8 percent.

The number of "repeaters," which means those who failed to get a job the same year they graduated, and have waited for a year or more for another chance, are said to be increasing. Among those employed last year, repeaters accounted for 40 percent of the total.

Job opportunities for this year are expected to be even more limited, according to Korea Recruit, a job market magazine.

The company said the nation's top four business groups of Hyundai, LG, Daewoo and Samsung, will reduce hirings by 10 percent from that of last year.

In the case of the smaller business groups, the situation is more bleak as they are expected to cut recruitments by 24 percent, it predicted.

Due to the difficulties in finding work, a large number of college grads are entering graduate schools.

Korea Ranks at Bottom in English Listening Skills

Despite a profusion of institutes and programs to teach students English, Koreans have some of the worst listening comprehension skills in Asia.

That's the word from the Education Testing Service (ETS), which administers the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) to students around the world. According to ETS's records between July 1995 and June 1996, when it tested 730,000 students in 153 countries, Koreans ranked 19th in listening comprehension, among 25 Asian countries. It shared that ranking with North Korea, Japan, Macau and

Burma.

Topping listening comprehension test scores were students in Singapore. The Philippines and Brunei tied for second. Britain was fourth and Sri Lanka ranked fifth.

Korean TOEFL scores overall, taking into account listening comprehension, grammar and reading comprehension, ranked 11th in Asia. Again, Singapore, the Philippines and Sri Lanka led the pack.

China, which has only recently started English education, beat Korean scores in all three testing categories.

Mercury to Plummet Below Freezing Point This Morning

Scattered clouds will dominate the skies across the country today, accompanied by strong winds.

The mercury will dip down to between -5 to 3 degrees C (23 to 37 degrees F) in early morning hours and midday highs will range 5 to 12 degrees C (41 to 54 degrees F).

Alerts against gusty winds were posted at the Incheon and Southern West Sea yesterday and there will be high waves of 3 to 4 meters today, the weathermen said.

This morning's lowest temperatures will be -3 degrees C (27 degrees F) in Seoul and -5 degrees C (23 degrees F) in inland places in Kangwon-do.

The cold front will subside tomorrow afternoon in time to welcome the arrival of April's Doves.

In the coming week, the temperature will be similar or lower than that of the previous year's average, according to the forecast of the Korea Meteorological Administration.

Weather Forecast

TODAY

Scattered clouds and strong wind, across the country. Cool. Lows will be -5 to 3°C (23-37°F), highs, 5 to 12°C (41-54°F).

Sunrise: 6:21 a.m.
Sunset: 6:53 p.m.

Seoul: Clear
-3°C (27°F) / 8°C (46°F)
Pusan: Clear
3°C (37°F) / 12°C (54°F)
Taegu: Clear
1°C (34°F) / 11°C (52°F)
Kwangju: Clear
1°C (37°F) / 12°C (54°F)
Taejeon: Clear
-3°C (27°F) / 10°C (50°F)
Chuncheon: Clear
-4°C (25°F) / 7°C (45°F)
Kangnung: Clear
3°C (37°F) / 14°C (57°F)
Cheju: Clear
6°C (43°F) / 10°C (50°F)

TOMORROW

Clear skies are expected across the country. Lows will be -3 to 5°C (27-41°F), highs, 11 to 17°C (52-63°F).

Sunrise: 6:20 a.m.
Sunset: 6:54 p.m.

Seoul: Clear
0°C (32°F) / 12°C (54°F)
Pusan: Clear
2°C (36°F) / 15°C (59°F)
Taegu: Clear
1°C (34°F) / 15°C (59°F)
Kwangju: Clear
-1°C (30°F) / 15°C (59°F)
Taejeon: Clear
-3°C (27°F) / 13°C (55°F)
Chuncheon: Clear
-2°C (28°F) / 11°C (52°F)
Kangnung: Clear
5°C (41°F) / 17°C (63°F)
Cheju: Clear
5°C (41°F) / 11°C (52°F)

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