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## Down to Earth

### Growing Fast Food Culture In City

By A S M Nurunnabi

All over the city centre, fast food shops have become a characteristic feature. There is a steady trend of growth of this phenomenon. In this connection, it may be recalled that soon after independence, there was only a handful of bakeries in the city which used to make fast foods. From those centres, fast foods were supplied to some selected food outlets in city. Initially, such so-called fast foods consisted of only a few items like cakes, pastries and potatochops. Nowadays, the city's fast food shops cater to a wide variety of food items. The wide range of products in the field of cuisine includes, as gathered from a few fast food joints, such items as fried chicken, chicken suslik, chicken patties, club sandwich, chicken ball, chicken burger, sami kabab, vegetable samucha, pizza, beef burger, vegetable roll, potato chop, kabab roll, hot dog, pastries, etc.

In the metropolis, there are a good number of fast food shops enjoying reputation of good qualities in areas like Gulshan, Banani, Baily Road, Kalabagan, Dhamondi, New Market, New Elephant Road. The atmosphere there is generally considered pleasant what with the air-conditioned coolness of those places, amiable service of their employees, and soft music permeating the places, we may tend to feel that there is no sorrow, suffering or want in the world. This illusion is an attractive element in creating popularity of these select food joints.

In the fast pace of life in the developed countries of the west and the east, the fast foods serve a helpful purpose in meeting the food needs of the working people at lunch time. With the progress of urbanisation, our food habits and ethos are changing. In the past, working

people used to carry their food for lunch with them. Nowadays many of such working people, instead of carrying their food for tiffin or lunch, use to go to nearby fast food shops to meet their lunch time needs. Of course, such fast foods are a little costly, which can be afforded by people of comparatively easy financial means. For them, which include young men and women, visits to such fast food shops are considered as signs of smartness and fashion.

There are some bright aspects in the growing fast food culture. One of them relates to the increasing association of many students with the running and management of some fast shops in the city. Even some college and university students work part-time in fast food shops in some posh areas of the city. We have lately observed the enterprise of some university students in running mobile fast shops in university areas. The items of food these mobile vans provide may be limited in number but their initiative and earnestness in standing on their feet economically are praiseworthy. Similar initiatives are also discerned among many housewives and other womenfolk of the city in earning additional income by preparing fast food items at home and selling them through some fast food network of shops in the city.

There is a contrasting picture of fast foods available in many areas of the city. There are many spots on city thoroughfares where a variety of eatables are offered for sale from mobile and makeshift stalls. Besides seasonal fruits, 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 in the streets of Motijheel, Dilkusha,

Sadarghat, Tejgaon and many other busy places like bus stops, railway stations, launch ghats, etc. Maintenance of hygiene and sanitary condition in matters of food preparation and handling is lacking in most cases. There is no check-up by the municipal authorities of the standard of foods offered for sale. The raw materials used for the preparation of these foods are mostly sub-standard to make them cheaper.

Such fast foods available at city corners represent an important economic activity in view of their necessity and importance in the day-to-day life of certain socio-economic strata. The ramifications of such fast foods enterprise constitute a vast industry that involves thousands of people. It provides employment to a large segment of the urban population who might otherwise remain unemployed including women and city migrants. The issue of such foods which are called street foods has assumed such importance in the fast growing urban economies in the developing countries that the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) take interest in their quality and safety questions as well as considerations of valuable food and nutrition aspects. The ways the fast foods business in the streets are conducted at present need to be changed with firm guidance so that unhygienic and sub-standard items of food are not offered for sale in the interest of public health. In this respect, the health authorities have a great responsibility. In this connection, it may be noted that in several countries of South East Asia, such as Bangkok and Singapore, such last food retailing system operates in a more hygienic and organised manner.

Arround 30 policemen from Rajarbagh police lines in a requisitioned truck were going to their duty spot near the crossing when they met the accident at about 1:30 pm.

### 15 policemen hurt as trucks collide

By Staff Correspondent

At least 15 policemen were injured when two trucks, one carrying the police personnel, collided head on at Dainik Bangla crossing in the city yesterday afternoon.

Eight of the injured policemen were admitted to the Police Hospital while the others were released after first aid, police said.

Around 30 policemen from Rajarbagh police lines in a requisitioned truck were going to their duty spot near the crossing when they met the accident at about 1:30 pm.

### Ramadan

From Page 1

Allah has glorified this month by sending the first revelations of the Holy Quran in this month.

Justice Shahabuddin said this month is important for arduous practice for achieving restraints and self-purification to have welfare, here and the life after.

The President said we have to strive to establish peace, amity and brotherhood in society by uprooting disharmony, hate and greed from it.

He said everyone should be sincere in the efforts to uphold the dignity and holiness of this month.

"I believe that the attitude of benevolence and fraternity towards each other will strengthen our spirit of national solidarity," the President said.

Sheikh Hasina has called upon the people to discharge their moral and religious duties properly in maintaining the sanctity of the holy Ramadan.

She congratulated the people of the country and Muslims of the world and said "the holy Ramadan has appeared before us with the message of forgiveness and emancipation."

She said the practice of 'sawm' on this holy month purifies soul and health of a person.

BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday urged for praying to Almighty Allah in the holy month of Ramadan for the protection of country's independence and sovereignty, and people's life and property in this critical hour of the nation.

In a message the Leader of the Opposition greeted the Muslims and wished continued progress and prosperity of the country and peace and happiness of the people.

Begum Zia also called upon the people to maintain the sanctity of the holy Ramadan.

The Green Panel was backed by Pro-Jamaat and a faction of Pro-BNP teachers. Prof Sobhrabuddin Ahmed read out the statement at the press conference. Prof M Aminul Islam, Prof M Nazrul Islam, Dr Shamshul Alam Sarker, and Amzad Hussain were also present.

On January 8, the RUTA at an emergency meeting took a resolution that they would refrain from all academic and administrative activities until the RV Vice-Chancellor Prof M Youssuf Ali was removed. They took the decision following a violent incident at the VC office.

The Green Panel teachers termed the RUTA decision unconstitutional and against the interest of teachers and students. They also blamed the teachers of Yellow Panel for the incident at VC office.

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