

ADULTERATED FOOD

# Consumers demand continuous drive

FAIZUL KHAN TANIM

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"Food shops called a strike on August 3-4. We will call strike on August 5-6. Don't buy anything on these two days. Please pass this message to at least 10 people to protect us all from food contamination." This SMS (short messaging service) was a part of the campaign initiated by the common people against adulterated food.  
About 99 percent city residents from all walks warmly greeted the 'safe foods' drive. The Star City surveyed the reaction of people from different walks of life. Their ideas were that such drives should continue at intervals.  
A CNG driven auto rickshaw driver said that at least he could have hygienic food with his hard-earned money, as the

government could not promise jobs and security.  
But people like rickshaw-pullers were unaware of the nature of the drive which may not make a difference to them.  
"It is all the same for me. I have to depend on cheap cooking oil and food. And even if bread has a lizard tail inside I have to still consume it," said Kuddus, a rickshaw puller. "The cry for bread of high quality is beyond my reach," he added.  
Some students of North South University (NSU) expressed that the drive has brought in positive results. "We are compelled to have food from either the canteen or nearby eateries and end up with bad stomachs," said Ashfaq Ali.  
Businessmen from Gulshan and Banani said they were dependent on outside food and this drive has somewhat relieved them. Syed Afsar

Khandaker, a garment liaison office director said that hotel owners would think twice before serving dead chicken and stale food.  
Shop owners said they did not want attractive looking food, but they want quality. Ibrahim Khalil and Harun Rashid from Karwan Bazaar were of the opinion that such drives must be continuous. "We have been having adulterated foods for a long time and now I can boldly say NO", said Iman Ali also from the same place.  
When asked Shaida Akhter, a housewife from Tejgaon what she thought of the drive, she was happy that such a drive was on. But she also said that prior to the drive, canisters of Chanachur and biscuits were never empty. "Now no one touches them," she said adding that this drive has created awareness among the common

people.  
Doctors around the city, too, welcomed the drive and said it should be a continuation process. "The criteria for quality food must be laid down and maintained by all eateries, said Dr. Oniza from Uttara.  
Another doctor said that course for food-handling should be introduced and use of gloves should be introduced immediately. "Not only the big restaurants, but the street side shops and eating houses too should be monitored regularly," he added.  
Sharmeen Neelia, an executive from an advertisement firm in Gulshan said that it was a good idea, as long the law enforcers did not encourage corruption in the process.  
"Magistrates," she said, "should not bypass any particular shop and recognise the

shops that are already maintaining quality."  
But a journalist said that he didn't see anything new about the law under which the drive was taking place. "According to 1974 special powers act, capital punishment and lifetime jail were laws against adulterated food. That means, the law existed but was never implemented," he said.  
"The problem lies at grass-roots levels and emphasis should be given at the production level," he added.  
A consumer said adulteration of food is a slow poisoning mechanism and the punishments imposed are not severe. He said that letting the wrong doers off the hook after fines is not a solution to the problem. "More stern measures must be imposed," he said.



Children and adults alike formed a human chain protesting sales of adulterated food.

## Nagar Jadughar craves for visitors

SYED TASHFIN CHOWDHURY

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Despite having a rare collection of artifacts, photographs and items of bygone eras, the Nagar Jadughar (City Museum) has failed to attract visitors.  
Concerned officials blame the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) for not doing enough to drum up interest in the museum.  
"We get around seven to nine visitors every day," said Bhupendra Nath, the lone official of the museum.  
The museum remains open from 9 am to 3.30 pm from Saturday to Wednesday and from 9 am to 2.45 pm on Thursdays. An entry ticket is a mere Tk 2.00 a person.  
"Most city-dwellers are not aware of the existence of this museum," said Nath, when asked the reason behind the



A deserted City Museum.

low turnout. Talking to people of different areas of the capital, it was found that Nath had a valid point.  
Some who have visited the museum also pointed out that the location was possibly another reason for such a low

number of visitors.  
"Residents from areas like Dhanmondi, Sobhanbagh, Mohakhali and Uttara do not want to visit the museum as it is crowded Gulistan," said Hasan Imam, a Dhaka University student.

"Besides, compared to the National and Liberation War Museums, the collection is rather poor. The space is also limited," added Imam.  
The museum currently has detailed history, sketches, photographs of the city's ancient Panchayat (local assembly) system and the items belonging to various Sardars (chiefs).  
There are other attractions like 18th century coins, used during the British rule, one of the earliest printing machines, 18th century waistbands, jewellery, vanity bags and illustrations of different historical sites of Dhaka and adjoining areas. Rare photographs, newspaper clippings, one of Bangladesh's first flags, and items used by Freedom Fighters during the glorious Liberation War are also available.  
"The under utilisation of the budget allocated for the

museum and overall slackness of the museum's advisory committee are the major reasons behind its current state," said Nurul Alam, social welfare and cultural officer of DCC.  
According to Alam, the despite receiving Tk 20 lakh from last year's budget, the museum authorities had failed to enrich its collection.  
"The same amount has been allocated for the current fiscal and we hope to use it efficiently this time," said Alam, who felt a curator was an immediate necessity for the museum.  
A board of trustees consisting of specialists used to take vital decisions before the museum was re-located to Nagar Bhaban from its previous site in the old quarters of the city. The board was reformed into the advisory committee after the relocation.

## Robbery on the rise as new gangs appear in scene



Robbers ransack houses in the city destroying valuables in the process.

SULTANA RAHMAN

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Burglars and low-profile criminals are now forming gangs to commit robbery in the city which is on the rise despite recent tightening of law enforcement to curb crime.  
Sources said the new faces have appeared in the scene as most of the top listed criminals have gone into hiding in the wake of anticrime drive of Rab (Rapid Action Battalion).  
According to police records, more than 1,000 teenage robbers are now active in the city operating small groups in different areas, especially the peripheries where the anticrime drives are less frequent.  
These low-profile robbers who are not on the police list prefer Mirpur, Kafrul, Pallabi, Mohammadpur, Shyampur and Demra areas.  
"We have found that most of the recent robberies have taken place in these areas," said SM Mizanur Rahman, commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP).  
He said the robbers have chosen these areas as they

can escape arrest and hide in the narrow lanes after committing crime. Police cannot reach the spot on time due to poor condition of roads.  
Police records show 40 incidents of robbery took place in the city from January to June this year against 29 during the same period last year. Around 200 robbers were arrested in the last six months.  
"Robbery has increased due to a vigorous drive against drug business in the city. Those who were earlier involved in drug peddling have now chosen robbery," said the DMP commissioner.  
"We are gathering information about these young criminals and making a new list. It will help us curb robbery," Rahman said. The robbers who were already arrested are disclosing few names of these new faces.  
A gang of robbers on July 14 looted cash and valuables from the house of a businessman at Lalbagh. Police said the robbers entered the house of Shahnoor Islam Swapan, confined the inmates to a room and took away Tk 50,000, gold ornaments and other valu-

ables.  
Police could not yet arrest any of the robbers. Lalbagh police said they do not have any clue. They suspect that a gang of non-listed criminals might have committed the robbery.  
An officer at Lalbagh Police Station said they earlier maintained a list of criminals and when any incident took place, they used to follow the list while investigating the crime.  
In the wake of rising robbery, DMP is going to step up motorbike patrolling, deploy additional police teams and make a new list of criminals involved in such crimes.  
DMP, meanwhile, issued letters to banks, financial institutions, shopping complexes and business organisations in the city to install closed circuit televisions to help check crimes.  
"We are planning to form separate teams headed by sub-inspectors to investigate the robbery cases only. It will develop expertise in investigating robberies," the DMP commissioner said.



Lotkon and kambranga (star fruit) two fruits in the monsoon season flood the markets.

AKM MOHSIN