

## 71pc food items adulterated in city, 55pc across country

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 71 percent of food samples collected from different shops and restaurants in the capital are adulterated while it is true for 55 percent samples across the country, sanitary inspectors said yesterday.

Test results of around 2000 sample food items collected by sanitary inspectors of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) show that 70 to 71 percent collected food items are adulterated, leaders of Bangladesh Sanitarians' Association (BSA) said at a press conference at the National Press Club.

Sanitary inspectors of district and upazila levels collect around 3000 sample food items across the country in every month and send them to the Institute of Public Health (IPH) at Mohakhali in the capital where 55 percent of the collected items have been found to be lacking standard quality, they said.

Stern action against the adulterators can not be taken due to the absence of appropriate laws and lack of manpower, they added.

They urged the government to amend the outdated laws and enforce them strictly to save the lives of the people.

"We have been dealing with some laws including the decades old 'Pure Food Ordinance-1959'. But none of them is effective enough to punish the big fish," said MA Rakib Chowdhury, president of the BSA.

Government should begin the special training programme for the food traders, he said.

There are 609 inspectors at district and upazila levels while the

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## ACC to take control of Bac cases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday announced that the commission itself will take control of about 5,500 under-trial corruption cases of now-defunct Bureau of Anti-Corruption (BAC) as the government has so far not given any explanation in this regard.

"There is no specific direction in the law whether the ACC would be responsible for conducting the pending cases of the bureau and so we asked for explanation from the law ministry," ACC Chairman Justice Sultan Hossain Khan told the BBC Bangla Service last night.

Now the ACC, out of its own responsibility, has decided to take control of the 5,500 corruption cases as the law ministry has so far not

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Prayer Timing		
August 13		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	4-25	5-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-41	6-44
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

## FOOD ADULTERATION

# Textile dyes, urea invite cancer, kidney diseases



PINAKI ROY

Textile dyes and urea fertiliser illegally used in food may cause grave illnesses like cancer and kidney failure, experts warn.

The court also seized a huge amount of ammonia to be used to produce bread and biscuits from two factories in Old Dhaka on August 10.

The court first raided Titas Bread and Biscuit factory on Rajnarayan Road in Lalbagh and found a pile of ammonia, an ingredient of urea fertiliser. It also raided the factory of Master Food on the same road and found similar chemicals.

BSTI authorities permit using colouring agents only in jam, jelly, juice and sauce, but they do not know whether those food colours are available in the market or not. They also do not know what kind of colour food producers are using as manpower for scrutinising the situation is limited.

"We do not permit any colour for confectionery and sweetmeat items. But we have only 11 people to monitor these things in the whole country, which is simply an impossible situation," said a BSTI director asking not to be named.

Experts say consumption of such harmful chemicals could lead to a host of health problems, including skin reactions like dermatitis, allergies, asthma, breathing problems, stomach upsets, peptic ulcers, bone marrow depression leading to leu

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Atmanirbhar Bangladesh, a social organisation, stages a rally with the participants' mouths covered in black cloth near the High Court yesterday demanding capital punishment to those responsible for food adulteration.

PHOTO: STAR

## REVENUE FROM ADVERTISERS IN LAST 2 FISCAL YEARS

# DCC gets only Tk 70 lakh of its targeted Tk 30 cr

## Legal battles, corruption by officials blamed

ABDUL KADER

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) in the last two fiscal years has collected only Tk 70 lakh of its target of about Tk 30 crore from the advertisement sector due to its legal battle with some advertising firms as well as alleged corruption of its officials.

Sources said the corrupt officials of the DCC revenue section and its zonal offices have pocketed at least Tk 10 crore in the last two years by taking hefty payment from the advertising firms and illegally allowing them to carry on their business, depriving the DCC of the revenue.

Although the tax on advertisement was increased in five phases in the last two fiscal years and the number of advertisements has also notably increased, the DCC revenue has

witnessed a steep descent.

Meanwhile, taking advantage of the legal battle between the DCC and 30 major ad firms, unauthorised advertising installations have mushroomed throughout the city in the last two years.

In FY2003-04, the DCC earned Tk 60 lakh against a target of Tk 9.62 crore from the advertising sector while in FY2004-05 it earned only Tk 10 lakh out of the targeted Tk 20 crore.

The advertisement section has been recently brought under the Estate Department of the DCC from the Revenue Department, forming a new committee headed by DCC Secretary Alamgir Hossain, aiming to improve the situation.

When the DCC sought applications from the ad firms for renewal of

registration within July this year, a total of 216 firms submitted about 450 applications, said DCC Chief Estate Officer Abu Taleb, also member secretary of the advertisement affairs committee. But the firms applied for registration renewal for 2004 and 2005, leaving out 2003 although they had run their business in that year too, he added.

The DCC officials said there were around 7,566 hoardings, neon signs and other advertisement installations of 160 advertising firms in the capital when the contracts with the firms expired on June 30, 2003. By now, however, the number of advertisement installations by 250 ad firms has increased to at least 20,000.

The legal battle between the DCC

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## Wildcat strikes force BA to cancel flights

73,000 stranded at Heathrow

REUTERS, London

Wildcat strikes forced British Airways to cancel its flights at London's Heathrow airport for a second day yesterday, grounding over 73,000 passengers during the peak summer holiday season.

BA said it had canceled all flights using Britain's biggest airport until at least 8 p.m. (1900 GMT), extending a previous suspension by two hours.

In the first sign of possible breakthrough, BA said around two-thirds of the 1,000 staff who walked out Thursday in support of workers sacked at a catering supplier were returning to work.

"What we can't say yet is what that is going to mean for our operation," a spokeswoman for the airline told Reuters.

"We have got 1,000 staff and 100 aircraft currently out of place so we still need to make a decision on our operation and will provide an update in the next couple of hours," she said.

Arbitrator ACAS said it would hold talks on Friday with the union and the catering supplier, Gate Gourmet.

BA Chief Executive Rod Eddington said it was "regrettable in the extreme" that the cancellations had to be extended.

"This is not our dispute. Our customers come first and everyone involved in creating this unofficial situation must come to their

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PHOTO: AFP

A stranded scout sleeps on the floor of Heathrow terminal 1, London, as British Airways baggage handlers walked out in support of staff sacked by flight caterer Gate Gourmet, leaving over 73000 stranded at the airport yesterday.

## Oil prices go up further

REUTERS, Singapore

Oil prices hit a fifth consecutive record high yesterday, topping \$66 a barrel as robust U.S. economic growth keeps refiners straining to meet demand and friction over Iran's nuclear program jangles nerves.

U.S. light sweet crude for September delivery charged to an all-time high of \$66.13 a barrel, up 33 cents in early European trade.

London Brent crude also set another record at \$65.88.

"Demand is outstripping supply and this is the bullet point of the problem. The U.S. refinery snags are adding fuel to the flames. Certainly, in the long term, prices will head higher," said John Brady, energy broker at ABN AMRO in New York.

U.S. gasoline supplies have been threatened by a series of refinery troubles, the latest being the shutdown of several units for inspections at BP's giant 460,000 barrel-per-day (bpd) refinery in Texas City, the third largest in the United States.

ConocoPhillips was also forced to shut some units at a 306,000-bpd refinery in Illinois due to a power loss.

The string of shutdowns have compounded worries raised by a steady decline in gasoline stockpiles, which are now nearly 4 percent lower than a year ago with several weeks of peak summer demand still to go, according to U.S. government data.

Record-high pump prices appear to have had little impact on demand, which is up an average 1.4 percent over the last four weeks, the data showed, helping send U.S. September gasoline contract to a record-high \$1.9630 a gallon on Friday.

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## Bakri banned from returning to UK

Lebanon frees him after brief detention

REUTERS, AFP, London

Britain barred hardline Muslim cleric Omar Bakri Mohammed yesterday from returning to the country, part of a government crackdown on Islamic preachers it fears inspire bombers such as those who attacked London in July.

Syrian-born Bakri, 46, left Britain for Lebanon on Saturday, saying he was going on holiday, after British Prime Minister Tony Blair pledged to silence Islamists who glorify violence.

The radical cleric Bakri was freed by Lebanese authorities yesterday a day after being arrested, a judicial source told AFP.

Attorney general Said Mirza ordered his unconditional release as no charges had been pressed against him, the source said.

Bakri, who holds a Lebanese passport, sparked outrage in Britain in the wake of last month's London bombings for saying he would not hand over to police Muslims planning to launch attacks.

He was detained on Thursday as he left a television studio near the Beirut seafarmer where he was interviewed for a local news programme.

A police statement said he was



Omar Bakri

detained in order to "clarify the situation and take necessary measures."

During his interview with Future TV, which was broadcast that evening, Bakri condemned the "massacre" of innocent people in the attacks and denied any links to the al-Qaeda terror network.

"We cannot support the massacre of innocents. We are against killing innocent people whether in New York, Spain or London, but we are also against the massacre of

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## PAKISTAN SAYS No free trade with India until Kashmir row resolved

AP, Hong Kong

Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz said yesterday his country won't trade freely with India until the Kashmir issue is resolved.

"With India, free trade and investment ... Has to move in tandem with progress on overall relations with the two countries, and the main issue is ... Kashmir," Aziz said during an official visit to Hong Kong.

"Progress on free trade and investment will be lined to progress on the issue," he said.

But Aziz said once the dispute is resolved, there is good potential for trade ties between the neighbours.

One possible move is to allow banks in each country to open branches in the other, he said.

"State Bank of Pakistan is very keen and we want to do it in parallel (with India), so the moment we get a green signal that the Reserve Bank (of India) is ready to trot we will," Aziz said.

Aziz said the proposal would start out in the Pakistani financial centre of Karachi and its Indian counterpart Mumbai.

# Polluters rule Patenga beach

MORSHED ALI KHAN, Ctg

Patenga sea beach at the scenic confluence of the Bay of Bengal and the river Karnaphuli is now under the grip of illegal shop owners who have set up hundreds of shops obstructing the natural views and causing severe pollution to the beach with litter and other wastes.

The entire area of Patenga sea beach with an embankment-cum-promenade made of large boulders is now virtually inaccessible to visitors who come to enjoy the scenic beauty. Tourists are confronted with hundreds of over-enthusiastic shop workers who often use physical obstructions to force the visitors to buy their products on sale.

The sandy beach along Patenga, 15 kilometres from the Chittagong city centre, looks dirty with litter all around. Local people said that most wastes—produced in the 500 illegal shops and by thousands of visitors—end up in the sea and often washed ashore. The beach also wears a telltale sign of oil sleek caused by the



PHOTO: STAR

Illegal shop owners occupy most of the Patenga sea beach, obstructing natural views and causing severe pollution.

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## Ctg transport strike called off

CU CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Chittagong District Sarak Paribahan Malik-Sramik Oikya Parishad has called off its planned 48-hour strike on all the 17 routes in Chittagong (South) district from today.

The parishad announced withdrawal of the strike following a meeting with Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) Thursday afternoon.

Held at the BRTA office in the city's Aman Bazar area, the meeting was attended, among others, by parishad leaders Abul Kalam Azad, Danesh Ahmed Chowdhury, Md Yunus, Oli Ahmed, Shamsul Alam and Azizul Haq. BRTA Assistant Director Engineer Mujibur Rahman presided.

The parishad had earlier called for the strike demanding a halt to "illegal" plying of vehicles on Patiya, Anowara and Banskhali routes.

The BRTA assured the parishad leaders of meeting their demand.

## EXPERTS ON GAS EXPLORATION

# 'Protect domestic interest while signing deals'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will have to be cautious about using mineral resources and must protect the country's interest while signing gas exploration deals with foreign companies to ensure energy security, experts told a roundtable yesterday.

Energy security can be ensured through using gas for development instead of making plans for export of gas, they said.

They also cautioned Bangladesh might face a situation like in Nigeria if gas is exported.

Samaj Rupantar Adhyayan Kendra, a civil society think tank, organised the roundtable on "Energy security of Bangladesh" at the Jatiya Press Club.

Presenting the keynote paper, Nuruddin Mahmud Kamal, former chairman of Power Development Board (PDB), said energy is the key to a country's development.

"There is a strong correlation between per capita energy use and economic development. But Bangladesh is at a lower ebb in terms of energy use compared to many developing countries," he added.

About 13.3 crore people in the country do not have access to gas connection and they even do not have the opportunity to use kerosene, he said.

The former PDB chairman said a vested quarter in association with foreign oil companies has been spreading false information about gas reserve in Bangladesh.

Presenting the current dismal scenario in the energy sector, he said, "Due to gas and electricity crisis, economic and social development of the country was interrupted in last one decade."

"Production in the industrial sector could be increased by 10 percent if the electricity supply was uninterrupted," Kamal observed.

He also said load shedding and low voltage have landed the industries in energy insecurity.

He suggested that gas exploration must be expedited as the current reserve of natural gas can meet the country's 15 years' demand.

Addressing the roundtable, Prof Badrul Imam of Dhaka University's geology department said energy use must be increased if Bangladesh wants to enhance industrial production.

"In terms of commercial energy use, the country is 70 percent dependent on natural gas. We have to be careful about gas resources as no other country depends on gas for energy like Bangladesh does," Prof Imam said.

He said a handful of people are damaging the country's interest while dealing with foreign oil companies.

"It's very unfortunate that our

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