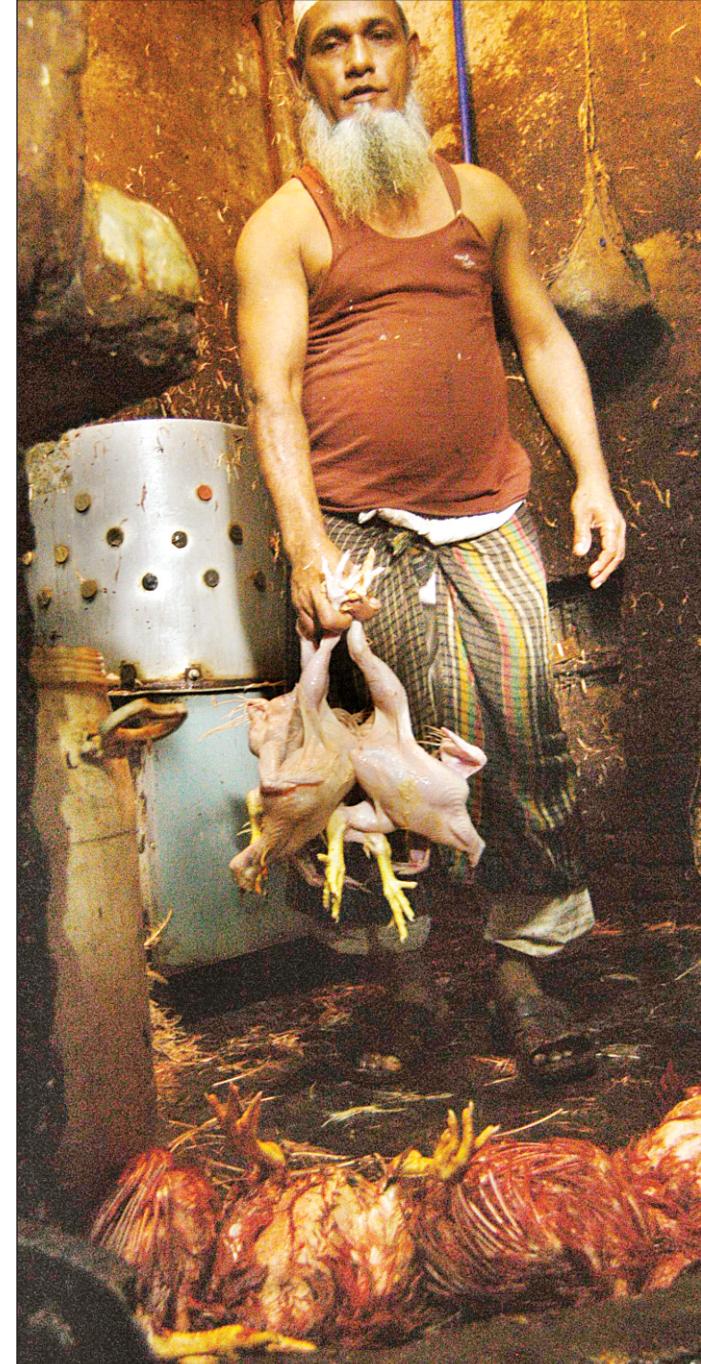


Mechanised chicken de-feathering may not be a favour for all



SHAHNAZ PARVEEN

Rasheda Khanom, a homemaker from Taj Mahal Road, Mohammadpur, bought eight chickens from the Karwan Bazar kitchen market and got them de-feathered mechanically to save her time. But consumers like her are totally unaware that along with the processed raw meat they may carry home pathogens that cause serious health hazards.

Mechanised de-feathering of chicken has become very popular among the city dwellers.

Dr Md Azmat Ali, veterinary officer of Dhaka City Corporation, said poultry birds have some bacteria underneath their feather in normal condition. During the unhygienic de-feathering process, the bacteria spread into the meat, he explained

Kitchen markets are providing the service for a very small charge but the whole process of semi-scalding and de-feathering of chickens is very unhygienic.

Dr Md Azmat Ali, veterinary officer of Dhaka City Corporation, said poultry birds have some bacteria underneath their feather in normal condition. During the unhygienic de-feathering process, the bacteria spread into the meat, he explained.

According to experts, *Staphylococcus Aureus*, *Salmonella*, *E Coli* are the most common bacteria, which spread

several diseases in humans. *Salmonella* can cause typhoid fever and diarrhoea. *E Coli* causes urinary tract infections (UTI) and intestinal diseases while *Staphylococcus* causes food poisoning.

These bacteria can survive if the meat is not properly cooked. Restaurants, kebab and grill stores very often sell half-done meat, which can cause health hazards. Those who take care of the live chickens or the processing are more vulnerable.

Right after slaughtering, dead chickens are piled up. Semi-

raw meat. Some toxic spores survive during the cooking process and are not completely destroyed which later causes diseases like diarrhoea.

"*C Perfringens* grow best in dead tissue in an oxygen-free condition," Dr Ali said.

Workers at chicken shops do not give the birds adequate time to bleed and cool down slowly. They instantly throw the bird for scalding and de-feathering. Meat is heated and reheated in the entire process, which increases the *C Perfringens*.

"The only way to identify contamination is to observe the colour of the meat. When contaminated with *C perfringens*, raw meat develops a light green colour," Dr Ali said.

He mentioned that packed raw meat sold in the department stores are often found to be contaminated with these bacteria.

During a visit to the city kitchen markets it appeared that all the sellers and workers are completely oblivious of the fact. Both sellers and customers said they were not aware of the danger. Lack of education is the main reason behind their ignorance.

Professor Mahmudur Rahman, director, Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR), said that poultry stores are now everywhere in the city and the unhygienic practice is going on with out any intervention.

"Live chickens are kept in a very unhygienic condition in the kitchen markets. Faeces, feathers, blood and other wastes remain at the markets in a scattered manner. These are all major condition for spreading germs," he said.

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thecitythatwas

In old days, the present Shahidullah Hall area of Dhaka University was known as "Baag-e-Musa Kha". According to Hakim Habibur Rahman, the area was a garden and was famous as garden of Muslims. It was named after Musa Kha, who was the son of Isa Kha, one of the famous Baro Bhuiyan. Musa Kha was captured when he lost a war with Subader Islam Kha. However, Subader Islam Kha was very kind to him.

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SYED ZAFIR HOSSAIN

These birds were being sold at a shop at Kaptanbazar yesterday. Purple Moorhen is considered as an endangered species. The shop also sells rare birds including Hill Myna violating rules.

Community care brings Gulshan's Tank Park to life again

TAWFIQUE ALI

Gulshan Society looks after Lake Park, the DCC and local community jointly maintain the Tank Park.

Local ward commissioner AFM Abdul Alim Naki, who has actively been involved with maintenance of Tank Park, said the public parks, playgrounds and open spaces in the capital can be better maintained with direct involvement of the local community.

"Participation of the local community is crucial for proper maintenance of the parks and playgrounds," he said. "Locals develop a bonding with and concern for a park when they get directly involved and take care of it."

Joint General Secretary of Gulshan Society Shirin Shila said Naki's involvement and commitment to maintenance facilitated development works of the park.

But the problem with such community-managed parks, as

in case of Tank Park, is that they are designed mainly for exclusive use of the local community and remain limited to the general public access, said a Gulshan resident.

Each of the DCC zone offices is responsible for proper maintenance of the public parks and playgrounds at their respective locality.

Chief Estate Officer of DCC Kamruzzaman Chowdhury said there should be a policy decision on community management of all the parks.

Public parks and playgrounds are in deplorable state due to total failure of governance. Most of the public parks exist only on paper while some children's parks are in abandoned condition, according to different surveys.

The DCC officials concerned

could not say how many parks are under community management in the city. There are conflicting information. According to the DCC information guide, it has 47 public parks while its estate department records say DCC has 41 parks. According to a survey in June by DCC, it has 61 parks.

Noted educationist and head of a high-level advisory committee of DCC on the city's park development and beautification, Prof Serajul Islam Choudhury, said that the people have to make the DCC accountable for its duty.

Residents of every neighbourhood, in their own interest, have to mount pressure on the local ward commissioners to keep the public spaces in proper shape, he said.

Public Works Ministry handed over 42 parks to the DCC in the 1980s for maintenance. These include Taltala (South) Park and Central (Wonderland) Park in Gulshan.

An unspecified number of city parks and playgrounds are still in possession of different organisations that use them exclusively and commercially with approbation of DCC.

The irony is that the public parks or playgrounds in many cases are occupied and abused to serve commercial ends denying the public access. Findings of surveys conducted by Bangladesh Paribesh Andolok (Bapa) and the DCC too reflect similar scenario.

While the DCC allowed a 25-year illegal occupancy of Taltala Park by its 416 sweeper families, it dubiously leased out a portion of Gulshan central park in 1990.

Prof Serajul Islam Choudhury said that DCC has obviously failed miserably to live up to its

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A serene view of Tank Park in Gulshan, looked after by both DCC and local community.

100 fair-price outlets on to arrest price hike

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Eighty more fair-price outlets opened in the capital on Monday under the supervision of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) in a bid to arrest price hike of essentials ahead of Ramadan.

Under the banner of 'Operation Daal Bhaat 2007', the BDR launched the new fair price shops in addition to the existing 20 in the city. The officials also confirmed launching of three wholesale markets soon to smoothen supply of essentials and feed the retailers.

"Some 100 fair price shops are now operating across the city," said Colonel Mojibul Hoque, coordinator of BDR's marketing scheme.

According to sources in the BDR, both the retail outlets and wholesale markets will sell different essentials with priorities on beef, vegetables and rice. More than 25 commodities

would be sold in these markets including pulse, flour, oil, gram, potato, chilli, garlic, ginger, onion, milk, sugar, salt and spices.

BDR officials said that they would set the price chart of commodities in both retail and wholesale shops suggesting that the prices of products sold in BDR outlets would be Tk 3 to Tk 4 lower than that in other markets.

"Although we are selling products at a cheaper price, none of our discount outlets opened earlier incurred any loss," said Colonel Mojibul Hoque.

Enthusiastic consumers, especially belonging to low-income group, were crowding the shops in different areas in the city yesterday.

According to BDR sources, prices of some of the commodities being sold at the new outlets are: rice (coarse) Tk 19 per kg, flour Tk 29, lentil (local) Tk 63, lentil (coarse-Turkey) Tk 58, onion Tk 25, garlic Tk

42, ginger Tk 38, date Tk 80, potato Tk 18, salt (one packet) Tk 10 and soybean oil Tk 73 a litre.

The 100 fair price outlets have been set near the Airport rail station, Hajee camp, Uttara, civil aviation staff quarters, Kawla, Jane Alam School and College, Kurmitola High School, Sher-e-Bangla High School, Kuril, New Light High School along with Joar Sahara, Coca Cola bus stand, Wapda Bazar near Rampura TV station and Mugdapara Community Centre.

More outlets are located at Khilgaon Jora Pukur, Taltala market, Sipahibagh, Bashabo Jubo Sangha ground, Madarset A. Aziz High School and College, near Kadamtala Sangsad ground, in front of Malibagh rail gate, Bangladesh Bank Colony Samaj Sangstha, near Kamalapur rail station and over bridge along with

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People queue up for essentials at a fair price shop at English Road.