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Bacteria cocktail in street foods

Study raises health risk alarm

PORIMOL PALMA

Over 40 percent of street food items and beverages sold in the capital have been found contaminated with coliform, a group of various bacteria, raising public health concerns of the urban people, according to a new study.

Thirty percent of the food items have been detected with more than 100 Escherichia coli, commonly known as E.coli, a part of the group of faecal coliforms, and 10 percent with less than 20 E.coli.

E.coli is a form of bacteria found in the human or animal intestinal tract, and may cause health hazards like diarrhoea, typhoid, and dysentery, health experts say.

"Even if one E.coli is found in food, it is not safe, but considering a high environmental contamination with human pathogens we tend to accept less than 20 E.coli in food acceptable," said Aliya Naheed, associate scientist at the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Diseases Research, Bangladesh (icddr,b), who led the study.

Only 59 percent of street food and beverage items have not been detected with an E.coli,

says the research conducted by the icddr,b.

The study tested food items of 115 street vendors in Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) between December 2013 and October 2014.

The food items included various cooked food like chotpoti, fuchka, sugarcane juice, fruit juice, bakery items, pre-cut fruits and vegetables (guava, cucumber), jhalmuri, chanchur, doi-chira etc.

"We have tested only E.coli, but there might be other germs in these food items," said Aliya, interim head of Chronic Non-Communicable Disease Unit, icddr,b.

Icddr,b conducted the study with support from the Grand Challenges Canada and in collaboration with the DSCC, Food and Agricultural Organization, RFL Plastics Ltd, and Bangladesh Consumers Association.

The study report "Behavioural Interventions of Street Food Vendors for Strengthening Street Food Safety in Dhaka City" is scheduled to be disseminated to the public today.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4



Schoolchildren having fuchka on their way back home from school at Manda in the capital. A study revealed that such food items sold in Dhaka have coliform which could cause diseases like diarrhoea, dysentery and typhoid. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

FROM Tk 280 TO 350 A KG

Blockade spikes beef prices

HELEMUL ALAM and WASIM BIN HABIB

The price of beef has shot up in the capital in last two weeks due to disruptions in supply caused by nationwide indefinite blockade.

A kilogramme of beef now sells at Tk 320 to Tk 350 at different kitchen markets and retail shops, up against Tk 280 to Tk 300 just two weeks ago.

Though the prices of most of the daily essentials remained stable, consumers in the city are disappointed with the increase in beef price.

"This would not have been a problem for us if the price [of beef] had

increased by Tk 10 to Tk 20 a kg. But a hike of Tk 50 all of a sudden is way too much," said Habibur Rahmam after buying two kgs of beef from Shukrabad kitchen market on Thursday.

Abdullah, a meat-seller at the market, said they had no other option but to increase the price.

"The transportation costs as well as the price of bulls have gone up. So we had to increase the price," he added.

Traders said the supplies of cattle have dropped drastically since the beginning of the non-stop blockade on January 6.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4



Price of beef soars in the capital as butchers blame poor supply during the blockade. The photo was taken at Kaptan Bazar.

PHOTO: STAR

President off to Riyadh

STAR REPORT

President Abdul Hamid yesterday went to Saudi Arabia as world leaders are gathering in Riyadh to pay last respect to late Saudi King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

King Abdullah, who had been king since 2005 and effectively in charge since his brother Fahd suffered a stroke in 1995, died on Friday at the age of 90.

The national flag was kept at half-mast at all government and private buildings yesterday as the country observed a day of mourning to pay homage to the deceased Saudi king. Special prayers were offered at mosques, seeking peace for the departed soul.

"President Abdul Hamid left Dhaka for SEE PAGE 10 COL 4



Apps trumps Hollywood in earning

MAIL ONLINE

Apps made as much money as Hollywood took in the US last year by raking in more than \$10 billion (£6.5 billion).

Games such as Angry Birds and the mobile version of Facebook earned the developers behind them more than the efforts of the film industry, even with hits like The Hunger Games.

Individual developers now earn more than some Hollywood stars and apps SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

ARSON ATTEMPT Shibir leader, two others beaten up

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Locals caught and beat up an Islami Chhatra Shibir leader and his two associates when the three were attempting to hurl petrol bombs on a passenger bus on Dhaka-Narayanganj road yesterday afternoon.

They later handed them over to police.

Police admitted the three -- Shihabuddin Shihab, 19, general secretary of Fatullah unit Shibir, SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

Obama to skip Taj Mahal

Arrives in India today but cuts short tour to attend Saudi king's funeral

AGENCIES

President Barack Obama departed for India yesterday, where he will focus on boosting cooperation between the regional powerhouses before traveling to Saudi Arabia to pay respects to the late King Abdullah.

Obama and First Lady Michelle left early morning for the trip to India, his second visit to the country -- unprecedented by a serving US president.

They are expected to land in New Delhi today, where the US leader will meet separately with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Pranab Mukherjee.

Obama was scheduled to go to

India's famed monument to love accompanied by First Lady at the end of a three-day visit to the country, during which he is to be chief guest at India's Republic Day celebrations, the first US president to do so.

Instead, the White House said Obama would travel to Riyadh from New Delhi on Tuesday morning to meet the new monarch after the death of Salman's half-brother King Abdullah on Friday.

"The president regrets that he will be unable to visit Agra during this trip," said White House press secretary Josh Earnest in a statement, referring to the town where the Taj Mahal is located.

Abdullah, a cautious reformer who

led the Gulf state through a turbulent decade in a region shaken by the Arab Spring uprisings and Islamic extremism, died aged about 90.

Saudi Arabia and the United States remained staunch allies during his nearly decade-long reign, which spanned the Arab Spring and multiple wars that roiled the Middle East.

Vice-President Joe Biden had been due to represent the United States in Riyadh, where dignitaries and leaders from around the world were arriving in Saudi Arabia yesterday to offer their condolences.

The White House said Biden would now remain in Washington. SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

Santal houses looted, torched

Bangalee villagers go on the rampage as clash over disputed land leaves 1 dead

STAR REPORT

At least six houses were set ablaze and several others looted in a Santal village by people from nearby villages after a clash over disputed land left one killed in Parbatipur upazila of Dinajpur yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Sohag Islam, 30, son of Zahurul Islam from Habibpur village. Police arrested 19 people of the Santal community in connection with the killing.

The clash ensued when Sohag and his father along with some labourers had moved to till a piece of land at Barodol Sarkar para, a Santal majority village. A few Santal families claim ownership of the land for over decades now, according to locals.

All males of Sarkar para village where 56 Santal families live have fled their homes to evade arrest. Those who have stayed back, especially women and children, are living in fear of further attacks.

Locals said Md Zahurul Islam was involved in a long-standing dispute over 18 acres of land with some Santal

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5



Firefighters dousing the fire at a Santal home in Parbatipur of Dinajpur yesterday following a clash between the Santals and Bangalees over the ownership of a piece of land. Inset, women in tears after Bangalees vandalised and looted their homes.

PHOTO: STAR



The Daily Star

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ONLINE POLL

Do you agree with SCBA President Khandker Mahub Hossain that the only way out of the ongoing crisis is to form a legitimate government by holding an inclusive and credible election endorsed by the people?

Yes (78%)

No (22%)

TOTAL VOTES: 252

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think the ongoing violence and political crisis will end soon as said by the Awami League leaders?

PLEASE CAST YOUR VOTE AT www.thedailystar.net

PRAYER TIMING January 25

	Azan	Jamaat
Fazr	5-35	6-10
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-15	4-30
Maghrib	5-46	5-50
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation