

# Lack of slaughterhouse impedes meat export

## CITY CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh could not grip the chance of exporting meat to the international market, as the government did not allocate funds for proposed four modern slaughterhouses in last nine years.

"There is a huge demand in the international market, especially in the Muslim countries. But buyers turn away because of our unhygienic slaughtering system," said Dr Colonel Azizul Haque, Dhaka City Corporation's (DCC) chief health officer.

However, the chief health officer could not state what the actual volume of demand is.

With the knowledge that a demand for meat existed outside the country the DCC undertook a project of establishing four slaughterhouses as suggested by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) in 1997.

In the same year the slaughterhouse project papers were made ready with an estimated budget of Tk 151.8 crore.

The city authority finalised plans of establishing these modern slaughterhouses and cattle markets at Gabtoli in place of the present cattle market, at

Sayedabad, Khilgaon Taitola and Uttara Sector 13.

After eight long years of dilly dalling with the project had been enlisted in the Annual Development Project 2005-06 (ADP), but failed to pass through the pre-Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecneec).

Now DCC has started the process of establishing at least one slaughterhouse on pilot basis at Gabtoli at an approximate cost of around Tk 25 crore.

"We want to start the project with one slaughterhouse and in the meantime keep on looking for funds to establish the other three," said Mehedi Ali Khan, chief engineer, DCC.

The Gabtoli slaughterhouse is expected to have two individual plants -- one reserved for exporters and the other to cater to the local market.

According to the plan, the slaughterhouse at Gabtoli will have meat processing plants and cold storage inside for preservation up to a certain period and will be equipped with modern facilities for slaughtering under high hygienic standards in keeping with international requirements and standards.

"The plan also highlights facilities for medical tests before slaughtering and the houses are

expected to issue a certificate of standardisation for the meat," said the chief health officer.

There are at present six slaughterhouses in the city under the DCC, situated at Kaptanbazar, Mirpur sections 1 and 11, Gulshan, Hazaribagh and Mohammadpur, but the standards are far from satisfactory.

With the lack of strict enforcement of rules butchers avoid going to the specified places and slaughter cattle elsewhere

polluting the environment in the process.

The chief health officer said that after the setting up of the slaughterhouses, they would strictly ban slaughtering of cattle at any other place in the city.

"The meat available in the city is not always hygienic and of good standard. Meat from dead or ill cattle is also sold sometimes. If we can make the butchers come to the slaughterhouses it will also ensure consumer rights," said

Azizul Haque said.

Germany, Italy, Scotland, Canada, Denmark and Iran are very keen in investing in the project.

"Companies from these countries want to establish and operate the slaughterhouses on their own. We are negotiating with them and are hopeful that an agreement would be reached soon," said the chief health officer.



Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, the element of our pride, is one of the most attractive tourist attractions in the city for both the city dwellers and foreigners.

## Experiencing din

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I was doing some paper work in a corner of a room. The rest of the group went on a training session. Suddenly I heard the loudest singing in my life. All the guides were singing the Girl Guide song. There was not a single soul left who did not sing."

"It was a challenge to think of us training guides in the remote areas," said Sonya, recollecting the journey to Bhola. "When we first approached them the village-school girls were very quiet and nervous; but as time went by and we had to leave, they had turned into a loud enthusiastic bunch, waving good bye with tears brimming their eyes," said Katie. "It was wonderful and very touching," she said.

"The Girl Guide oath is the same throughout the world, but these village girls were surprised to know even that," said Rosemary, a social science student at Southampton University.

"We were greeted warmly everywhere we went," said Yvette, a mechanical engineer.

"This trip holds a very special memory, as this was the first training session done by me," said Charlotte, the team leader adding that the girls were very smart and enthusiastic at the prospect of being guides.

"We have an agreement with the UK girl guide for a trip once a year and this was the last one. They come here to bring in new ideas and learn whatever we could teach them," said Sabina Begum, public relations officer of Bangladesh Girl Guides Association.

When asked whether girls from this end have the opportunity to visit UK she said: "It is very expensive for us to send girls to UK from here. Those who came here raised their own funds. This is not possible for us," she said.

When asked if they faced any difficulties on this trip Katie said: "The only difficulty is that the trip was only three weeks. That's not enough. There is so much to see!"

The team will leave today.

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## Most city areas fall

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After twenty days of gazette notification of the new rules, the government in an order on June 4 this year said that the building construction plans submitted within June 30 would be considered under the construction rules of 1996.

The chance prompted opportunist builders, both commercial and private, to indulge in a rat race of 'plan-pass' exploiting the interim opportunity. In a similar order, the government further extended the effectiveness of the building rules of 1996 for six months until January next year.

"We decided to keep the building rules of 1996 effective until 31 January 2007 following request by the Rehab," said Public Works Secretary Iqbal Uddin Chowdhury.

With the withdrawal of six-storey height restriction from buildings in the city's planned residential areas, plot owners now will be able to build more floors beyond six but they have to spare open space at a certain proportion.

Only those will be allowed to raise buildings vertically, who will keep certain space of a plot open in proportion with FAR and will design the building as per new rules of 2006.

The bigger the plot is, the more space a builder has to keep open but will get more of more floors taking the building further higher proportionately.

Height of a building would be determined by the area of open space left, permitted ground coverage with construction, size of floor and permitted buildable area as per the FAR chart in the new building rules.

roads. A building owner may go to any height by increasing or decreasing the size of each floor area but has to remain limited within the permitted buildable area determined by FAR.

According to the rules, the open space is compulsory, undividable, non-sellable and non-developable and is a precondition to obtain approval of the building design.

Detail Area Plan (DAP) of Dhaka city is a crucial precondition to implement the new building rules and protect the open and designated public spaces, said architect Iqbal Habib of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa).

Vice-president of Bapa Prof Nazrul Islam said that the government must show transparency and ensure public participation in the process of drawing DAP.

Any builders must leave adequate open space in the construction work going vertically up as per FAR to let the aim of new rules come true, said city planners, commercial builders, engineers, architects, environmentalists and top bureaucrats at the discussion.

Rehab, Bapa, Institute of Planners, Institute of Architects and Institute of Engineers organised the discussion.

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