

SPOTLIGHT

Qurbani Eid during COVID-19: Your questions answered

Due to the pandemic, the upcoming Eid-ul-Azha has thrown a gamut of new challenges to us all, pushing families and households into a sea of concerns, choices, and dilemmas, with a plethora of questions in mind.

This week, Star Lifestyle addresses the issues and questions, to aid you in arriving at an informed resolution.

Its decision time now!

Off to the haat?

For most of us, in the previous years, going to a cattle market to buy sacrificial animals was the obvious choice, one which a lot of people generally look forward to.

But this year, for obvious reasons, things are different, and many customers are looking for ways to avoid cattle markets.

Meanwhile, the two Dhaka city corporations are working with concerned authorities to ensure that health safety standards are maintained in the haats.

To illustrate, Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) mayor Atiqul Islam has informed that the leaseholders of the cattle markets have been given terms, conditions, and guidelines relating to health safety, further stating that he has cancelled a number of haats this year considering the public health situation.

In an interview over the phone last week, the mayor told Star Lifestyle that there will be magistrates in the cattle markets for strict

monitoring.

The DNCC mayor has also recommended that the elderly, the sick, and children not visit cattle markets.

A concern for some people may be that while it is good that the number of haats has been reduced, what if the density of people in those haats increases, given that there are relatively fewer haats, making the reduction counterproductive?

Addressing this issue, the mayor replied, "We have recently launched a digital cattle market. So, there is that alternative, and buyers need not necessarily come to the traditional markets. But for those who want to physically visit a haat, we expect them to have in mind the basic health measures such as wearing a mask and maintaining social distancing and so on."

Meanwhile, the Joint Commissioner (Operation) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), Md Monir Hossain, said, "We will be monitoring the cattle markets and make buyers and sellers aware through various means — so that people don't end up eventually harming themselves in celebration of the festival."

On the other hand, the very idea of setting up any haat at all has also been challenged.

"As a virologist, I cannot

support this, given the current stage of the pandemic in Bangladesh. The risk of infection and spreading of the virus from the cattle markets is there," said Dr Jahidur Rahman, Assistant Professor, Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College.

He added that the risk can extend to the whole country because haats draw in traders and various stakeholders from all over Bangladesh.

The closest alternative to traditional haats

So, now you know about the health measures taken and also the possible risks of physically going to a haat. It is up to you to balance out and decide whether you want to visit a cattle market or opt to buy online.

But if you are torn between the two, there is actually a middle ground you may consider.

How about visiting a farm in Dhaka?

Mohammed Imran Hossain, owner of the renowned Sadeeq Agro said, "This year, many customers are preferring going to a farm and buying directly from there. Our farm also has a seating

arrangement for the comfort of the visitors."

Meanwhile, another reputed organisation, GME Ranch — which has its farm outside the capital — has set up a 'display centre' in Mohammadpur.

"The display centre has been arranged keeping the COVID-19 crisis in mind. Chances of any gathering are minimal and we have taken measures to ensure the safety of our visitors," informed Kazi Moshir Rahman, the head of GME Ranch. "You can see the cows, choose, and we will deliver it to your home."

The point is, with it a farm or display centre, you may likely avoid the typical hassles of a haat, and may even feel relatively safer, especially if you trust the particular brand, since it is the individual company which is monitoring the arrangement.

Just go online!

But why even go outdoors if you can order a cow or goat online, from the comfort and safety of your home? It's just a few clicks away! And this year, you have not just one or two, but several online platforms to choose from.

Services offered are varied and customisable. So, if you just seek to make the purchase online and have the living animal delivered to your home, it is possible.

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