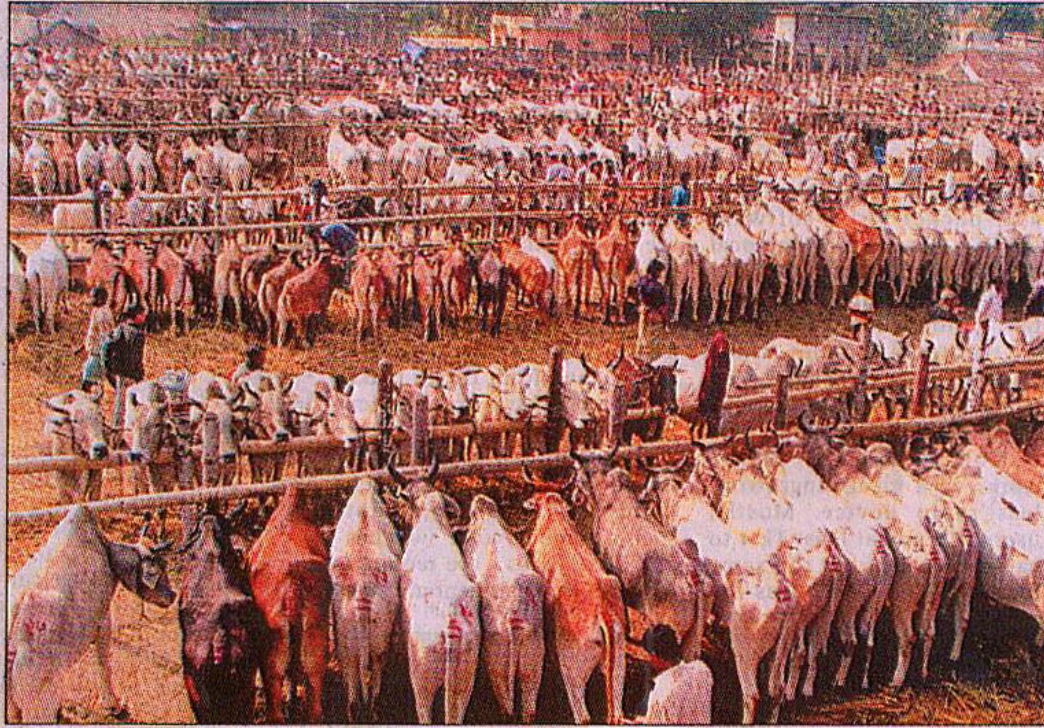


Trading in Eid cattle markets gets momentum

Rab presence makes traders and buyers feel secure

ABDULLAH-AL MAHMUD
Trading in the Eid cattle markets is gaining momentum with local and Indian cattle flooding the port city.
The cattle started flooding the markets since January 15.
In absence of boisterousness of extortionists so far, the price of sacrificial animals is comparatively cheap this year.
At the same time, presence of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and police at different cattle markets and transaction points makes both the buyers and traders feel a sense of security and relief.
Apart from the two major and permanent ones at Sagorika and Bibirhat, five temporary cattle markets were set up at the Karnaphuli Shah Amanat Bridge area, Kamal Mohazan hat, Steel Mills Bazar, Kathgarh Bazar and Saltgola Rail crossing in the city under Chittagong City Corpora-

tion (CCC).
Sagorika cattle market that usually sits on Monday and Wednesday will continue till the night before the Eid while Bibirhat will sit on its scheduled weekdays of Saturday and Tuesday, sources said.
CCC leased out seven cattle markets, including the permanent one, on January 13 for Tk 3.33 crore.
Of them, Sagorika and Bibirhat were leased out for Tk 1 crore and 72.57 lakh and Tk 1 crore 41.27 lakh respectively to continue throughout the year.
Besides, several cattle markets are also sitting at different points of Haliashahar BDR Camp area, Hathazari Nandirhat and Chowdhurirhat under private management.
A huge number of sacrificial animals already flooded the Sagorika and Bibirhat cattle markets.
The traders said that supply



Bibirhat cattle market in the port city.

of cattle, both locally reared and imported, was available and the price was also reasonable.
"We expect a good profit this year as we did not have to pay any extortion or face attack by the criminals on the way to the markets in the city so far," said Jasim Uddin. He brought 14 cattle to Bibirhat market from Keranirhat at Satkania, some 40kms off the city.
Gias Uddin, a representative and *hasil* collector of Bibirhat, said that sacrificial animals, particularly bulls, were coming in plenty from southern districts of the country and neighbouring India.
The prices of animals are reasonable and comparatively better till now, he said. The market leassee collect 4 per cent against the price of every sold out-sacrificial animal as *hasil*, he added.
The cattle market sources said that a few of the bulls also

came from Nepal and Myanmar while camels arrived from Rajasthan in India, Saudi Arabia, Iran and other Middle East countries.
They expect that around 1.50 lakh cattle will be sold in the markets.
There were also a good supply of goats in the cattle markets, including the main goat market at Kadamtali Dhaniapara in the city.
With Chittagong people usually giving a special attention and magnitude to Eid-ul Azha, the cattle markets here got momentum a bit earlier and offered a brisk business for the cattle traders.
The traders from different parts of the country are duly paid back when they get a bit higher price here in the port city.
The buyers, however, said they require to be careful and go for a good bargaining offer-

ing at best 80 per cent of the asked price unless they wanted to be overplayed by the traders.
Meanwhile, to check extortion, forceful realisation of *hasil* and maintain law and order, a huge contingent of Rab was deployed in and around the cattle markets since January 16 in addition to police.
Rab sources said that as many as 20 teams of the elite force in official and plain clothes, would be in and around the cattle markets in the city while one team would be patrolling in the rural areas.
Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) also beefed up security measures with deployment of forces at every cattle market and important city points to ensure safety of the traders and the buyers. CMP was also conducting mobile courts since January 10 in the city, sources said.

Dry fish business faces crisis

NURUL ALAM
Dry fish business faces a crisis due to lack of storage facilities, traders said.
They said a huge quantity of dry fishes is damaged every year due to lack of proper storage facilities in the port city causing a huge loss to

the traders.
"We have to face serious problem if we maintain stock of large quantity of dry fish that are often attacked by insects. That is why, we are badly in need of cold storage here for proper preservation of dry fish in large quantity," said Abdul Munaf, general secretary of Asadganj Dry

Fish Traders Association.
"We don't have even a single cold storage at Asadganj and Chaktai, the main hub of dry fish business in the port city. The government should come forward immediately to set up such a cold storage to help us flourish our dry fish business," Munaf added. "The dry fish sector is yet to

get any help and support from the government though it has immense potentialities," he said.
"If the government provide us proper support, it will be easy to boost export of dry fish to many countries in large quantity to fetch huge foreign currency to strengthen our economy," he said. "Now small quantity of dry fish is exported to few Middle East countries, including Saudi Arabia, Dubai and Qatar," he said.
"The sector is almost an uncared for unit though it has vast potentialities to earn huge revenue," he said. Supply of dry fish from Chittagong to northern parts of the country suffered a setback following last year's flood, he said, adding that it caused a slump in dry fish business here.

Munaf said that production of dry fishes had dropped in recent years following the fall in catch of sea fish.
In reply to a question, he, however, said that insecticides were used at the field level to protect and preserve the dry fish from pest attacks.
Senior physician Dr. Kamrunnesa Runa said "Dry fish is good to take if preparation is fine. But it is risky for health if we eat dry fish coated with insecticide or preservative as it may cause diseases."
Dry fish, the most favourite and traditional dish to the Bangalees, are

prepared in a natural way under the open sky at the coastal areas of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Rangabali coast, traders said.
Bidhan Barua, also a dry fish trader at Asadganj, said "Dry fish business is almost dull now. In recent years the business is going down, he said.
Supply of dry fish has fallen as sea pollution caused by dumping of wastes from foreign vessels affected fish stock and catch in the deep sea."

"On the other hand, due to short-fall in supply, price of dry fish marked a rise. The pomfret that was sold at Tk 300 to 400 per kilogram one year back now sells at Tk 700 per kg. The latia dry fish is selling at over Tk 100 per kg. Acting principal officer of state owned Merchantile Marine Department Habibur Rahman said "whenever we get reports, we take action against the vessels responsible for dumping waste in our territorial water in the sea. But beyond our jurisdiction it is difficult to check or identify dumping of wastes from vessels at the outer sea," he said.
Export Promotion Bureau Assistant Director Tofazzal Hossain said "our dry fish has a good demand at the export market. But it is not being exported in large scale due to various problems in shipment," he added.



A trader is busy drying fish on the bank of river Karnaphuli.



US ambassador Harry K Thomas visits the American Corner-Chittagong recently.

American Corner gains popularity

The American Corner Chittagong, situated at the Independent University of Bangladesh's Chittagong Campus, is an information resource centre of the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy and is gaining popularity among the city dwellers, says a press release.
The first of its kind in South Asia, the centre was inaugurated on January 22, 2003.
The American Corner-Chittagong has an impressive collection of books, encyclopedias, newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, videos and CD-ROMs that focus on the constitution, politics, culture, literature, history, politics, economics and other social issues of the

United States. Besides, students interested in studying in the US will also find an index of all American colleges and universities along with extensive information on each institution. Information regarding TOEFL, SAT and GRE are also available.
The centre also provides high-speed broadband internet connection and photocopying services. It is open to anyone over 16 years of age but its amenities are only accessible to the members. Membership charge is Tk. 200 for the general public and Tk 150 for IUB students for a period of one year.
The Corner is open from Sunday to Thursday from 10:30 am to 4:30 pm, except on government holidays.

the week that was

Assistance for fire victims

Anwara Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Quamrul Amin distributed over 300 sweaters, Tk 3,200 and 32 blankets among the 32 families of fire victims of village Talchhara at a function here on Tuesday.
Quamrul assured them of more assistance in future. He urged the affluent section of the society to come forward to extend their cooperation to the victim families.
Paroikora Union Chairman Akhtar Jamal Chowdhury, UP members and local dignitaries were present at the function.

Workers Council election held at CEPZ

Omar Faruque was elected convenor of the Lrms. Bangladesh Limited Workers Welfare Council on Saturday.
The election was held at the industry in Chittagong Export Processing Zone (CEPZ) area.
Other members are: Masud Karim, Rasheedul Karim, Nuruzzaman, Rupashree Day and Parvin Begum.
Lt Col Joyal Abedin, election commissioner appointed by the CEPZ authorities, conducted the election.
The election was held following the

demand by the US government to arrange election of the workers organisations in EPZs.

Help destitute children

Speakers at a discussion on a survey urged all to help the destitute and unprivileged children of the society to establish their lawful rights.
"Children are the most neglected class in our country. They must be given proper care, basic education, good environment and all rights to bring about a balance in the society," they said.
The discussion was held at the commissioner's office at West Bakalia Ward on Wednesday. Bright Bangladesh Forum, an associate organisation of UCEP Bangladesh, organised the meeting.
A survey on the unprivileged children of West Bakalia Ward was released at the meeting. The survey was carried out under the Forum's 'Let Children Speak' project.
Bureau in-Charge of The Daily Star in Chittagong Nurul Alam, former lawmaker M Kafiuddin, Divisional Coordinator of UCEP Bangladesh Chittagong Abdul Bashar, women activist Jasmine Sultana Paru, Bright Chief Executive Utpal Barua, Regional Manager of NGO Forum in Chittagong Abdullahil Mamun and UCEP schoolteacher Hosne Ara Begum Mina spoke. Ward Commissioner Shahidul Alam presided.

Workshop on gender issue

A workshop on 'gender, reproductive health and HIV/Aids' was held at village Mafizabad of Rashid Nagar Union under Ramu Upazila in Cox's Bazar district on Friday.
Agrajatra, a non-government organisation in Chittagong, organised the workshop where poor people and representatives from different professional groups participated.
Agrajatra President Nilima Akhtar Chowdhury chaired the function. Deputy Director of Youth Development Directorate AKM Mahmudur Rahman, Assistant

Director Mohammad Jinnah, Rezaul Kairim Bhuiyan, NGO Forum official Mashur Rahman and journalist Pradip Kumar Shil addressed the workshop. Later, some sanitation materials, children's books and winter clothes were distributed among the poor.

Drishy children's festival

The day-long children's festival arranged by Drishy, a cultural organisation, was held amid enthusiasm and fanfare on the Shishu Academy premises on Friday.
Children from Universal Grammar

School, Maron Sun School and College, Summer Fields School and College, City Model School and College, Child Heaven School, Nrityam Dance Academy and Sun Shine Grammar School presented colourful cultural programmes.
Noted writer and poet Shishir Datta inaugurated the festival. Managing editor of Daily Purboone Jasimuddin Chowdhury was present as chief guest and Chittagong Government Girls High School Headmistress Jahanara Begum special guest.
Festival Committee Chairman Shafia Rahman chaired the function. Committee Secretary General Masud Bakul, Drishy General Secretary Saif Chowdhury and Debate Secretary Adnan Mannan also spoke.

Arrest of extortionists demanded

People of Chaktai, traditional business hub in the city, at a rally demanded immediate arrest of extortionists and criminals.
The local people under the banner of Greater Chaktai Welfare and Guard Managing Committee organised the rally on the Bhangapole premises on Saturday with its president SM Harunur Rashid in the chair.
Hajee Nurul Akhbar Sowdagar, Nurul Alam Chowdhury, Absaruddin, Ali Abbas,

Hajee Omar Ajar, Hajee Jamal Hossain and Hajee Mostemuddin addressed the rally.
The speakers at the rally said that the criminal gang has long been kept the locals hostage with their unabated criminal activities.

"Kittankhola" screened

The two-day screening of "Kittankhola", a national award winning short film, at the Agrabad Government Employees Welfare Centre auditorium ended on Friday.
Theatre and Arts for Less Fortunate (TALF) organised the festival of Kittankhola, a short film based on a drama of Salim Al Deen directed by Abu Sayeed.
The festival was a part of the regular monthly presentation of TALF that aims to encourage making of fair films.

T&T staff stage agitation

T & T employees and workers staged a demonstration at their office at Agrabad for five hours on Sunday protesting a move to privatise T & T and introduction of mobile phone service.
They under the banner of T&T Rakma Committee also held a rally with Abdul Kader in the chair.

Garments' workers demand bonus before Eid

Bangladesh Garments Sramik Trade Union Kendra, Chittagong here on Sunday demanded payment of arrears and festival bonus before the Eid-ul Azha.
The leaders of the organisation in a statement said that the owners were paying salaries without following any specific pay-scale structure and the salaries also remained pending for months in some garments factories.
The signatories to the statement are Rahat Ullah Zahid, Md. Ruhul Amin and Chayan Kanti Das.

CCC gets larvicides

The Urban Primary Healthcare Project, an ADB-financed project of Chittagong City Corporation (CCC), gave some 3,000 litres of larvicides to CCC to help the mosquito crash programme.
The larvicides were handed over to CCC Chief Medical Officer Dr. Sarfaraz Khan at a simple ceremony.
Acting CCC mayor M. Zahurul Alam Dohash, Chief Conservancy Officer Saifuddin Mahmud Katobi, Health Officer Dr. Salim Akter Chowdhury, Zonal Medical Officer Dr. Mohammad Ali and Dr. Md. Hossain were present.



Chittagong Local Initiatives Foundation (CLIF) and Chittagong Society for Disabled (CSD) jointly form a human chain in front of Shilpakala Academy demanding that two visually impaired girls be allowed to sit for the upcoming SSC examinations. The two students of Forest Research High School, from left -- Umme Taslima Chowdhury and Umme Salima Chowdhury -- also joined the demonstration.