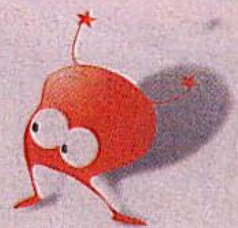




Centrefold

RISING STARS



A publication of The Daily Star

e-mail: dsrising@gononet.com

Thursday, January 20, 2005 Price-Tk.3

Qurbanir Eid (eh?)

By Lancer

IT'S that time of the year again. When the average mortal (read: you and me) who hasn't been reared on a farm (or some other domestic-beast-overrun haven) shows manifest enthusiasm in acquiring one or more sacrificial beasts of the type generally found in said places, and not just because they want beef. When local TV channels proceed with airing purportedly funny programming similarly centered around cows and such; when the average household refrigerator's prepped up for stocking with enough red meat to petrify most cardiac-doctors in their boots.

Yep, if you do excuse the wee pinch of irreverence on my part, I am talking about Qurbanir Eid.

Which is, in addition to all of the festivity and stuff, a rather wild time of the year. Almost wild enough to merit documentation on Wild Discovery. We'd like to present, for the readers' benefit (dubious or otherwise), several of the more visible species that merit your attention at the time.

<Title rolls, theme music plays and screen fades out. Some old, gruff voice narrates.>

The onset of the season is heralded by the arrival of huge herds of beef-parading Merchants, browsing at most empty spaces available which

they promptly claim for themselves as "haats". We recommend that these be approached with caution if one's pocket and/or backside are valued. Purveyors of quadruped meat lumps of all conceivable shapes and sizes, from goats to camels and anything in between. Negotiations with these creatures (the merchants, that is) generally involves loud yelling, much flapping of hands, and careful consideration of where to plant one's feet to be left unmaimed by animal horn, hoof or refuse. Risks of encounters include stepping into piles of fresh, slick and pungent dung.

Generally found in the vicinity of the above are the smaller fry, generally ranging between 4 and five feet tall. These "Pichhis" are apparently innocuous fellows who prowl around with heaps of foliage to ensure that your freshly acquired beast is kept adequately stuffed and you have even more of the now universally present dung to stock up on. Often accompanied by the less dominant of the beef-paraders (mostly mutton, actually) they wield hefty chunks of tree leaf to which apparently your cow/goat/camel/llama/whatever is drawn to like a shark to blood, which seems mildly portentous of things to come the next day.

The two species quoted engage in a frenzied

selling act whereby they proceed to disseminate immense volumes of their wares to the unsuspecting native populace. In the space of two-or-three days they manage to accomplish the Herculean feat of persuading (in a not-too-subtle manner, at that) just about everyone who's considering a sacrifice to purchase their very own eminently buyable cows-and-so-on at prices which range from a steal to just plain silly.

Nightfall sees these creatures vanish, and dawn accompanies the average mortal from waaaaay up in the beginning of this piece getting all dressed-up like for the festivities of the morn. Them celebrations out of the way, said mortals proceed to the vicinity of the cow, to encounter the new dominant predators of the day, the Moulavis.

While seeming extremely dangerous, being armed fit to slay beast, man and anything else, these creatures turn out to be the most benevolent of the lot; swiftly dispatching your cow, etc. to a merciful release, for some nominal some and the possible acquisition of the hide. Nevertheless, with their blood stained knives and garments, they paint a rather intimidating picture, and wouldn't be out of place in, ah, the scariest photos ever.

Which, of course, is why it's such a good thing western press doesn't try too hard to misunderstand them.

And there's the subsequent pack of Butchers, who proceed to rapidly hack and saw at your erstwhile beautiful cow and leave it in little bucket sized heaps for convenient management. A word of caution: when in the neighbourhood of these, beware of flying splinters of bone, and little drops of red stuff on one's clothing.

And finally, there lies in eager anticipation, in every household, the salivating gourmet mother contemplating the uber-spicy mouthwatering "Jhal Gosht" of the day. One must rely on the instincts of these creatures implicitly, and in this particular documenter's experience, that's never turned out to be a bad thing yet. (GO MOMS!)

<Closing Credits, and similar theme song.>

And here the impertinently silly ends, and we go back to how Eid ul Adha IS about sacrifice and remembering our places as Muslims, and to the celebration of the brotherhood of all of the same. So. This Eid. While you stuff yourself with spicy beef and the like, let's not forget the spirit of Eid and all, aye?

Eid mubarak, everyone!



HERO BECOMES 'SHAHEED' HERO AFTER LIFTING MOOOOOIE STAR HEROINE



ROCKING COW SMOKES 'GRASS' TO GET IN THE MOOOOOOOOD!



EVERY ELECTION YOU HEAR THE SAME PROMISES FROM THESE POLITICIANS - MOO AND MORE MOO. THAT'S JUST SO MUCH BULL!

Buying the cow

By Solitary Sniper

WITH Qurbanir Eid just around the corner, buying the cow/ goat/ camel will soon become a must for almost everyone. Markets of cows will spring up in all parts of the city. For the next few days, there will be more cows than cars in the city. Although in recent years, the camel has been rather popular among some buyers, and the high price of cows sometimes makes goats a feasible choice, the moo-bile milk factories (or their male counterparts rather) still reign supreme in the Qurbanir market. People still prefer to be able to get a cow that they can sacrifice for the sake of pleasing God, and then proceed to gobble it up right down to the last piece of bone. Keeping that in mind, we will try and take a look at how people of different professions go about buying their cow.

Doctors first, they set up an appointment with the salesman. During this meeting, they ask for some "crucial" background information about the cow's past medical history, to be attested by a specific vet. Failure to provide the documents or

getting them attested by some other vet results in not buying the cow from the insolent salesman.

Lawyers they sue the entire cow market, stating how the fact that they sell black cows is tantamount to contempt of court, since all lawyers have to wear coats of that same color. Just when the newspapers are getting all worked up about the impending trial, the lawyers settle out of court, for one cow to each lawyer involved in the lawsuit.

Teachers they pay a junior teacher to buy the cow, make a student do all the work and then sit down to enjoy the meal.

Politicians politicians in the Government claim that their party, and their party alone, was responsible for bringing cows in this country, and as such, no one has more rights to cows than they do. However, most have enough dough to get camels, and even when they do buy cows, the said animal is too pampered to look anything like a cow. Then again, not that these politicians look much like the regular people of this country, either.

Politicians of the opposition protest against the unjust system, and refrain from buying cows to

express their outrage. Secretly, they get the same variety that the Government politicians do.

Aatels they speak extensively on the socio-economic effect of celebrating Eid every year, and how this makes the cows of the country feel undue pressure, and how the real spirit of Eid is in celebrating it with cows, instead of at the expense of the cows. Deep down, they know they will not be able to bear the sight of the cows being slaughtered.

Engineers they make several charts, depicting the average number of cows sold over the last five years, the average price of the cows, and stats about what type of cows are more popular in which parts of the country. After extensive scrutiny, they decide whether or not to buy the cow, which district to buy it from, and what would be the ideal price to pay for it.

Computer Programmers they write a software that connects to the internet, does not find any information about the cow markets, and hence returns garbage data. Somebody needs to tell these geeks that www.cow.buy.bd is not a valid

website address.

Economists first they compare the demand of cows to the price at which they are being sold. If the figures do not match, they organize seminars on how the system is being compromised by certain businessmen. In the end, it solves nothing, except that people who could not buy cows get something to do over the holidays, attending these seminars.

And now, to pack it up, how some of our RS staff would buy cows:

TGND she runs a poll on which color and build of cows are most popular, and from which market. Of course, if the reader response is slim, that means no cow this year.

Niloy finds and downloads a trial version of a cow, uses it for a few days. Goes for the real thing only if he is satisfied by the trial version.

Ronny gets his dog Bhola to pick a cow...and we all know how Bhola does it.

Solitary Sniper too lazy to go and buy a cow, spends his time writing silly stuff about how people buy cows.