

# Cattle-trapped

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National Institute of Ophthalmology and Hospital at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar.

The National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation (NITOR), Dhaka Shishu Hospital and National Institute of Neurosciences and Hospital are just a few yards off the market.

Also nearby are the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases, National Institute of Mental Health and Hospital and National Institute of Kidney Diseases and Urology.

Thousands of patients, including many with critical accident injuries, visit the hospitals every day.

A huge number of sacrificial animals are put on sale at the market, which draw numerous buyers. And there is hardly any space left on the adjacent roads for traffic, said an employee at NITOR.

A physician added: "Even ambulances carrying critical patients can't reach the hospital. Relatives get down from ambulances far away from the hospital and carry patients on their own."

To avoid any such troubles this time around, the health ministry on August 3 wrote to the LGRD ministry and the DNCC, requesting them not to set up any cattle market at Agargaon, but to no avail.

Traders have already started bringing cattle to the market. In a day or two, the sacrificial animals are likely to overflow the nearby streets.

"As our request went unheeded, we are now seeking home ministry's intervention to stop the cattle market. Let us see what happens," Mosharraf Hossain said.

The DNCC, along with the Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC), has given permission to successful bidders to set up 15 other makeshift cattle markets in the city. Besides, there is the permanent market at Gabtoli.

Contacted, B M Enamul Hoque, chief executive officer of DNCC, said they leased the field at Agargaon as there is no alternative venue at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar.

The city corporation has clearly defined the areas designated for the cattle markets and sent maps to police so that they can take action if any market expands beyond those areas, he added.

Abdul Matin, general secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon, said the authorities concerned must consider leasing land for makeshift cattle markets without disrupting people's access to hospitals.

As the land for the Agargaon cattle market has already been leased this year, the authorities must ensure that patients do not suffer, he insisted.

The city corporations should conduct a study for better management of cattle markets in the capital as the issue is significant from the public health perspective, observed the green activist.

**MARKETS ON ROADS**

Cattle markets in the city usually stretch beyond their designated areas. The picture is not different this year.

The lessee of Azampur cattle market in Uttara has already started setting up bamboos along the roads near the Azampur Primary School.

A resident of Uttara, Rashida Taher said she suffers hugely due to the market as it blocks the road in front of her house.

"Even the waste is not cleared properly. It becomes very difficult staying at home for bad odour," she added.

DSCC Executive Magistrate Kabir Mahmood said they will operate two mobile courts to discipline the cattle markets.

"We will also ensure that the lessees don't charge the buyers higher taxes than the rate fixed by the government," he mentioned.

The DSCC, said Kabir, yesterday removed an illegal cattle market at Hazaribagh.

# Poor show in DU

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A GPA-5 scorer means the student has obtained 80 percent marks in all subjects on an average.

The admission test results in the previous three academic years -- 2011-12 to 2013-14 -- also give a dismal picture with failure rates of 81 percent, 83 percent and 81 percent respectively.

DU sources said most of the admission seekers failed in Bangla and English. Only two out of 1,364 students qualified to be enrolled at the DU English department.

Expressing concern, noted educationists say the admission test results reflect the low quality of education at schools and colleges.

Contacted, Prof Emeritus of DU Serajul Islam Choudhury observed that teachers are failing to teach students properly at secondary and higher secondary levels, leading to deterioration of education quality.

Teachers, he said, are not being recruited on the basis of merit and they are not even getting proper training.

Rasheda K Choudhury, executive director of Campaign for Popular Education, said a rise in pass rates doesn't necessarily mean improved education.

Especially, she said, there are many questions about the quality of primary education.

"The weakness and lapses at the primary level is reflected in higher education too," she said and suggested finding out the problems through research and ending blame games.

Prof Nazrul Islam, former chairman of the University Grants Commission, said time has come to rethink the entire education system seriously.

"The quality of overall teaching and learning at secondary and higher secondary levels is on the wane. More students are passing but few of them are reaching expected level of competence," he said when contacted.

In the last three years, there was a steady rise in SSC pass rate. This year, the pass rate in SSC and equivalent exams hit a record high of 91.34 percent, which was 86.37 percent in 2012.

The number of GPA-5 achievers also increased in the last three years. This year, 1,42,276 students got GPA-5 as against 82,212 in 2012.

Only 76 examinees got GPA-5 when the grading system was introduced at SSC level in 2001.

This year's HSC exams saw 70,602 getting GPA-5; it was 61,162 in 2012. Only 20 students scored GPA-5 when the grading system was introduced for the HSC level in 2003.

The pass rate in HSC exams also rose from 76.50 percent in 2012 to 75.74.

In the wake of widespread criticism over the DU test results, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid on Sunday put the blame squarely on the test method.

Terming the admission test "faulty", he said the university authorities intentionally set harder questions so that only a few students could get through.

"Questions were so difficult that only two students passed the test [for enrolment in English department].

GPA-5 (SSC AND HSC)		
UNITS	PASS	FAIL
Ka	12,854	23,073
Kha	1,307	3,663
Ga	4,447	5,187
Gha	6,814	18,020
Cha	64	574

PASS RATE UNIT WISE	
UNITS	PASS RATE (%)
Ka	21.5
Kha	9.55
Ga	20.61
Gha	16.55
Cha	3.10

## Punish Ramu

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ended at the same place after encircling several areas of the upazila.

"We all want peace and harmony among all the religions. We don't want to see recurrence of such violence," said Rajat Barua, president of the organisation.

A meeting and a special prayer were also organised at Ramu Maitri Bihar at Shreekole village yesterday evening. A huge number of Buddhists lit candles there to mark the day.

Two years have passed since the attack on the Buddhists of Cox's Bazar, but none of the 19 cases filed over the incident has gone to trial.

Locals allege many perpetrators have been left out of the charge sheets while many innocent people made accused.

An investigation by The Daily Star had exposed a forged Facebook profile of a Buddhist youth was used to instigate the hate crimes. Besides, inaction of the local administration, intelligence and law enforcement agencies was blamed for the pre-planned attack.

## No hajj

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Some other victims from other groups also shared the same experience of being cheated.

Meanwhile, 480 others will also not be able to perform hajj as they did not get clearance from the immigration police on various grounds.

"With government assistance, we are arranging air tickets for those cheated pilgrims who have visas," said Nasir Uddin Ahmed, deputy secretary of Religious Affairs Ministry, adding that they have already sent 73 such pilgrims.

However, Officer-in-Charge of Khilkhet Police Station Nazrul Islam yesterday said police have arrested the manager of Al Nayeem agency on Sunday and seized 65 passports.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Assaduzzaman, Bangladesh hajj counsellor in Jeddah told The Daily Star over the phone on Sunday that they have received allegations from over 100 pilgrims that several hajj agencies are not arranging proper accommodation and food for them.

He said they will send reports on the allegations against the agencies to the ministry after completion of the hajj.

Out of 98,757 pilgrims, Biman Bangladesh Airlines has successfully completed flying 49,378 hajj pilgrims till Sunday, confirmed the hajj counsellor. Saudi Arabian Airlines will carry the rest.

Around 95,000 pilgrims went to Saudi Arabia to perform hajj till yesterday. There are around 2,000 pilgrims still staying in the hajj camp and Saudi Airlines will carry them today.

Biman will operate its post-hajj return flights from October 8 to November 8, while Saudi Airlines will operate return flights from October 9 to November 17.

# Durga Puja begins today

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brated on October 3. However, Puja organisers in Dhaka have decided to immerse the idols on October 4.

Around 28,600 altars have been set up in the country, including 221 in Dhaka. Compared to last year, the numbers have increased by around 800 and nine respectively.

Bangladesh Puja Udiapon Parishad stated that miscreants attacked and vandalised at least 23 altars in 14 districts although law enforcers had claimed that adequate security measures were in place.

"Five mandaps (altars) in Kishoreganj came under attack on September 18," the parishad President Kajal Devnath told The Daily Star.

Mohanagar Sarbojonin Puja Committee at a press conference yesterday demanded sufficient security measures, uninterrupted electricity

and water supply, colourful decorations on government buildings, including Gono Bhaban, Bangabhaban and Nagar Bhaban; adequate measures for the smooth immersion of idols and announcing a holiday at all educational institutions.

The central altar in the capital is at Dhakeshwari National Temple. Large ones have also been built at Jagannath Hall of Dhaka University, the Ramkrishna Mission, Ramna Kali Mondir, Tanti Bazar, Shankhari Bazar, Bangla Bazar, Banani and Dhanmondi.

With Mahalaya, marking the homecoming of Durga, having been observed a week ago, today's celebration will begin early morning with Bodhon or the invocation. Throughout the day devotees will pray for her appearance on earth again after a year and seek forgiveness.

Mahasaptami will be celebrated

tomorrow followed by Mahashtami on Thursday before Mohanabami and Bijoya Dashami are observed.

According to Hindu scriptures and the Bangla almanac, Durga Puja is observed in sync with the moon's movement. The five-day festivity and prayers begin on the sixth day of the full moon and ends on the tenth day or Bijoya Dashami.

Durga, the slayer of demon Mahishashur, is usually depicted on the back of a lion holding 10 weapons in her 10 hands.

At the invocation and supplication of the devotees, she descends on earth this year on a boat, stays for the next four days and leaves on a palanquin after slaying all evil forces and blessing the devotees.

Accompanying her are her children Ganesh, Kartik, Lakshmi and Saraswati.

# Turkish parliament to discuss joining Islamic State fight

AFP, Ankara

Turkey's government yesterday said it was likely to submit motions to parliament within 24 hours requesting extended mandates for military action in Iraq and Syria, so Ankara can join the coalition against Islamic State

militants.

"The motions have not yet been sent to parliament. They may come tomorrow," parliamentary speaker Cemil Cicek was quoted as saying by NTV television.

Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu has said the motions will be debated on Thursday.

Turkey refused to join a broad coalition led by the United States to defeat the jihadist fighters while dozens of its citizens including diplomats and children were being held by IS militants having been abducted from the Turkish consulate in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul.

# 'Inflated' results

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as a big success.

Every year, a huge number of students obtain GPA-5 in the two public exams. And every year, eminent academics have described it as "grade inflation" and warned of the falling quality of education.

But the government has paid no heed to the criticism. It has rather kept up its efforts to further enhance the results by allegedly instructing teachers to be liberal in giving marks.

And the results of such artificial grade inflation? Some 80 percent of the 3,00,000 students who took the admission tests in three units failed to obtain pass marks, let alone qualify for admission.

Shocking still is the students' English skills. Only two of the 1,364 applicants of "Kha" (B) unit have qualified for studying English in the DU this year. One had to score 35 out of 60 to qualify.

The English department will take 150 students for the new session. Of them, 125 are to come from among those who took the "Kha" unit test under the arts faculty. The rest would come from among those who sat for the "Gha" (D) unit exam on Friday.

But the university authorities have got only two students. How to find the 123 more students remains a major question.

The catastrophe did not happen overnight. Each of the four previous academic sessions also saw more than 50 percent students failing to secure pass marks (48 out of 120; but students have to obtain the required marks in English and Bangla as well) in the DU admission test. Most of them flunked in Bangla and English.

The education minister should have reacted long before and taken proactive measures to improve the

quality of education. But neither his government nor his ministry paid any attention.

This time, he could not remain silent as the DU entrance test has shaken the base of his government's success in the education sector.

But the way he has made the outburst is ridiculous. To defend the government, he accused the DU authorities of ruining the future of the students by intentionally setting harder questions for the test.

The allegation itself is very serious in nature. Is the DU, the highest echelon of academics in the country, conspiring to destroy the education system? Does the education minister have any proof? Will anybody believe that the DU authorities engage in such conspiracy? Or did the minister make the sweeping statement like our politicians always do whenever they face criticism for their failure to deliver?

His threat to amend the DU Order-1973 through which the university was given the autonomy to run its affairs is tantamount to a threat to the university's sovereignty.

He said the university authorities should correct the faulty system, otherwise the government would move to amend the law.

Section 46 (1) of the Order empowers the university academic council to determine the procedure for the entrance test. Does the government want to curtail this power by amending the law?

Any threat and trading blame will not yield positive results. The disaster in the admission test results may also be seen as an opportunity to reform the education sector by removing all the weaknesses, including the ones in the DU admission test system, if any. The government should act proactively.

# United Air sued

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Nargis Akter, a businesswoman; Mokbul Hossain, proprietor of a company; Sohanur Rahman Selim, owner of Selim Enterprise and Eureka Multipurpose Firm Ltd; and Rafiqul Islam, editor of Dhaka-based daily newspaper Bidyasagar.

The United Airways suspended its all flight operations on September 24 for an indefinite period, after the private airline's new board failed to come up with plans to keep the carrier afloat.

Some 2,300 to 2,400 inbound and outbound passengers got stranded.

Three days after the suspension of flight operations, the airliner resumed all flights on Saturday.

In their complaint, the plaintiffs said all of them went to Shahjalal International Airport on September 24 so that they could go to Malaysia and sign an agreement to form a joint venture company that would run its business on 500 acres of land in Malaysia.

They said a memorandum of understanding was supposed to be signed at the Putra World Trade Centre around 5:00pm on September 25. Malaysian state minister for fisheries and livestock Narayan Chandra Chanda was scheduled to attend the signing ceremony.

But they failed to go to Malaysia due to the flight cancellation. They had even tried to get in touch with United to urge them to take initiatives to get them to Malaysia but failed.

As they could not reach Malaysia, the Malaysia-based company lost confidence in them and backed off from the joint venture deal, the plainiffs added.

In case of flight cancellation a passenger gets compensation as per International Air Transport Association (IATA) rules, said Kamrul Islam, deputy general manager of marketing support and public relations of the United Airways.

"The airlines will compensate the passengers as per IATA rules, if they claim damages," he said.

# Ashraful's ban

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to return to cricket on August 13, 2016, provided he obtains a certificate of "good conduct from the ICC" to get the benefit of the revised "last two years" suspended sentence. Ashraful will turn 32 by then.

"I'm extremely happy. I can return to the game a lot sooner now. It is true that I deserved the punishment but this will be good for my future," Ashraful said as an immediate reaction after his appeal verdict yesterday.

Ashraful, who was found guilty of fixing games during the 2013 Bangladesh Premier League, had appealed to the disciplinary panel chief in July this year, asking that the ban be received a month earlier be reduced.

However, the disciplinary panel chief upheld the fine of Taka 10 lakh slapped on Ashraful by the Anti-Corruption Tribunal (ACT).

The disciplinary panel chief also upheld the 10-year (3-year suspended) ban on Shihab Chowdhury, the managing director of Dhaka Gladiators, for his involvement in fixing. However, a fine of Taka 20 lakh has been with-

drawn.

The disciplinary chief also imposed a 10-year ban on Selim Chowdhury, one of the owners of Dhaka Gladiators, following a joint appeal by the BCB and ACSU. Selim Chowdhury, the father of Shihab, was earlier acquitted of fixing charges along with six others due to insufficient evidence.

The ACT conducted a trail of nine individuals including seven players following an expensive probe conducted by the Anti-Corruption and Security Unit (ACSU) of International Cricket Council. It convicted Ashraful and Shihab for their involvement in match-fixing. Two other players -- Sri Lankan Kaushal Lokuarachi and New Zealander Lou Vincent -- were found guilty of failing to report an approach and were handed 18-months and three years ban respectively.

The ACT in its verdict in June this year also observed that the ACSU had not only failed to produce credible evidence and strong witnesses but also committed an offence by allowing a fixed-game to be played during the 2013 BPL.

# Probe body questions

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secretary to the public administration ministry.

Shahjahan also said the probe body sought the Rab chief's suggestion on how such incidents can be avoided in future.

Shahjahan made the comments after the two-hour questioning of Rab Director General Mukhlesur Rahman at the secretariat in the capital.

Asked whether the Rab headquarters had any knowledge of the murders, Shahjahan replied that it will be addressed in the investigation report which, he added, will be submitted very soon.

Following widespread allegations of Rab members' involvement in the killings, nine Rab men have so far been arrested in connection with the case.

"As I am the DG of Rab, it is proper to question me in this connection," said Mukhlesur after emerging from the questioning.

"I answered everything that the probe body wanted to know," he said

while leaving the secretariat premises hurriedly.

Formed on May 7 upon a High Court order, the probe body so far questioned around 400 people in connection with the case, including Col Ziaul Ahsan, additional director general of Rab, Awami League lawmaker Shamim Osman and Mayor Selina Hayat Ivy of Narayanganj City Corporation.

Replying to a query about Nur Hossain, Shjahan said the government is very keen on bringing him back from India.

Nur, the prime accused in the case, had fled the country two days after the murders and is now in prison in India.

Shahjahan also said the trial process will not halt if a witness remains traceless, or dies.

On April 27, seven people -- Narayanganj City Corporation panel mayor Nazrul Islam, his four associates, senior lawyer Chandan Sarker and his driver -- were kidnapped in Narayanganj. Later, their bodies were found floating in the Shitalakkhya river.