

Cow dot com

Back in the 2000s, there was one bit of conversation that always happened on repeat when Eid ul Adha drew near. This conversation, between a father and his reclusive, lazy son would go like "Son, let's go to the 'haat' to buy the cow. It is your duty as a man of the house" followed by "No thanks. I prefer my feet not sink in all that gunk, stench, and other unmentionables that fill the streets of the cattle market." One of two things would always happen; either dragged out by force or giving up on the lazy brat.

Of course, it is not hard to sympathise with the situation. Qurbani 'haats' do not exactly rank among the highest in cleanliness, quietness, or hygiene. Back then, the dream was to sit in your air conditioned room, listening to your favourite tunes while doing frivolous things like shopping, or even buying cattle from the Internet.

Sure it seemed like science fiction, but in 2016, the dream of shopping for just about anything can be done through not just your PC, but even through your daily companion – the smartphones. And guess what? Buying animals for Qurbani has also made it into the list of things one is able to buy online.

Sure, this means that the lazy boy dreams of old have finally been realised, but is it truly just a triumph for the lazy man? Take a look at the other end of the spectrum, and you will soon see that this online move has been a godsend for those who are genuinely in a bind. Still can you not see it? Well here's a scenario; Son working overseas cannot seem to make it to Eid ul Adha on time, and has elderly parents at home and are not fit for the 'haat' madness. Thanks to the online cattle market scene, he can simply purchase the animal online, via credit card and have it delivered to your house without any hassle.

This online 'haat' business idea is not



exactly a fresh off the oven deal. The idea was initiated by amardesheshop.com, the online urban market place of Future Solution of Business (FSB) under their Amar Desh Amar Gram (ADAG) project way back in 2012. Simply, type amardesheshop.com/qurbani and you are set. Now, tons of online portals have popped up to cash in on this lucrative busi-

ness, including some of the heavy weights such as Ekhanei.com, Bikroy.com, etc.

Do not think Facebook is out of this list as it is obviously a big place to sell stuff is it not? We end up buying more from Facebook pages then we do chatting or liking pictures, so obviously this place is one heck of a cash cow that no one will want to miss out on.

There are lots of advantages to this new dimension of the 'haat' business other than the sumptuous comfort of not having to leave your room and chair. For one thing, you can rest assured that you will not end up losing anything to theft or plain carelessness. Stories of losing wallets full of cash or your shiny new phone are aplenty. Also, it's not like you are shopping blind when online as there is plenty of detailed information regarding the sacrificial animals, as well as enough pictures to drown out the most 'selfie' crazed person on your friend list. Plus, the benefits of paying through bank cards or mobile banking services serves as another nice incentive.

Some online retailers will also provide you with butchers to take care of the sacrifice and the meat and its distribution if you really do not want much to do on Eid day.

Sure, if you are not careful, you may end up in an internet scam that will leave you both penniless and cattle-less, but rest assured that this is a worst case scenario. So, can the pros of online 'haats' really manage to sway those who actually like going to the real thing? To understand that, you need to understand what they see in it. To them, going to the haat is not just any activity; it's a tradition harking back to the days of their parents and their parents before that. The raw and visceral environment there serves as a bit of an adrenaline rush. The ability to check the animal hands-on and having the scope to haggle to get a better price are also great reasons to go to physical 'haats'.

And so, with Eid ul Adha fast approaching, it's time for you to decide; get those plastic wellingtons and a pair of drab clothes and venture into the smelly, crowded, gunk filled 'haat', or be the man(or woman) of the time and do it the smart way. You choose.

By Intisab Shahriyar

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