



PHOTO: PAHN CHAKMA

"The shadow escapes from the body like an animal we had been sheltering."
— Gilles Deleuze

SNAPSHOT

OPINION |

Dhola Babu was the most prized possession of cattle farmer Abdus Sabur. At only two-and-a-half years, Dhola Babu, the Friesian bull had gained a staggering 1200 kilograms of muscle. His huge 11-feet body, with delicate reddish-white skin, had to be washed two times a day to avoid overheating and infection from parasites. Abdus Sabur, the owner of Dhola Babu, says, "Dhola's mother Selina produces 30-40 litres of milk per day. But after Dhola's birth, I did not milk Selina for two years—Dhola used to consume

was about to be released from the truck, Sabur noticed that his bull was limping abnormally and suddenly fell to the ground. The veterinary surgeon on duty at Gabtoli cattle market found untreatable fractures in all four legs and declared Dhola unfit for sacrifice. It was a mortal blow for Sabur. With a heavy heart, Sabur had to sell crippled Dhola Babu to a butcher only for BDT 1.5 lakh.

The tale of Sabur and Dhola is not unique. Hundreds of sacrificial cows die every year from suffocation and

The only mode of transportation to carry this huge number of cattle is cargo trucks. Originally designed for carrying goods, these trucks are not at all suitable for transporting livestock. In the open carriage of the truck, all the cattle are placed in such a congested manner that the poor creatures hardly find any space to breathe. When they try to move around, the transport workers whip them brutally to keep them in line and to keep the vehicle stable.

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CRUELTY BEFORE SACRIFICE

Are the inhumane conditions under which cattle are transported and kept compatible with the teachings of Islam?



PHOTO: STAR FILE

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

all the milk. Besides, he would eat 7-8 kilograms of grass, corn and molasses." Sabur also bought two fans to keep Dhola cool during hot, humid days.

All of his efforts were aimed towards this year's Eid-ul-Azha. He had thought that hard work and sacrifice over the last two years would pay off when he would sell Dhola for at least BDT 8 lakh. On August 26, Sabur took Dhola to a cattle market in Kushtia town. Buyers quoted up to BDT 4 lakh for Dhola and finally advised Sabur to take Dhola to Dhaka where Sabur could get his expected price.

In a hired shared truck, Sabur boarded Dhola with 16 other cattle, and among them, Dhola was the biggest. There was no room for the cattle to sit, feed or stretch their legs. They could only eat some dry straw and sip a little water. Besides, they were also tied up with tough nylon ropes to keep them lined up properly. In the farm, a pen of 50 square feet was allotted for Dhola and now in the truck, 16 bulls were crammed into a 36 square feet carriage.

It took 17 hours to reach Gabtoli from Kushtia due to long tailbacks in the highways. Dhola's feet could not support the weight of his massive body. When Dhola

exhaustion in the congested cattle trucks. Many of the cattle develop major injuries that make them unfit for sacrifice. And the farmers, who invest all their belongings to rear these cattle, suffer from irreparable economic loss. Last year, when three of Saiful Islam's bulls died from suffocation, Saiful could not accept such loss. While burying his cattle, he suffered a heart attack, breathing his last on the way to the hospital.

Before every Eid-ul-Azha, millions of cattle are transported from all corners of Bangladesh. Around three million cattle are brought to Dhaka to be sold for sacrifice. This year, according to the Department of Livestock Services 11,557,000 cattle will be sold all over the country.

MAILBOX

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Rohingya crisis

Thanks to Nazmul Ahasan for his article "If Rohingyas were Hindu" published on August 18, 2017 in the *Star Weekend*. This article showed us the discriminatory rule of the Indian government about Rohingya Muslims, one of the world's most persecuted minorities. The Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, and his ruling party BJP seem to support only Hindu migrants. There are many undocumented migrants who live in India but it appears that the policy of the Indian government is: "Keep the Hindus, deport the Muslims". They are ready to accept Hindu refugees but don't want to provide shelter to Rohingya Muslims. This is unfortunate because India could have played an important role in ending the Rohingya crisis. However, it looks like the RSS and BJP believe that "Hindustan is for Hindus only". Therefore, they have no concerns regarding the plight of the Rohingya. It is quite clear that if Rohingyas were Hindu, Modi would take the necessary steps to solve this crisis.

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PHOTO: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

Science on the decline

It's no wonder that enrolment in science has been on the decline over the decades in such a "demotivating" education system which is prevailing in Bangladesh. At the age of 13, an eighth grader has to decide whether s/he will study science, humanities or business studies. In some cases, the school decides the fate of students considering their previous academic results. Students' choice of study also often reflects their parents' preferences. The stereotyped belief that studying science means becoming doctors or engineers demotivates a large number of students from taking pure science subjects for higher education, for example mathematics or theoretical physics. Moreover, graduates with bachelor's and master's degrees in pure

science disciplines struggle to find a job in comparison with their counterparts who hold a BBA or MBA degree as there is less opportunities available for the former. Therefore, most private universities don't have a pure science department; rather they expand popular courses of study.

In order to overcome these challenges, the government should make science and technology education a priority in its broad national development strategy. Also needed to enhance science education is public pressure to encourage more students to study science.

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Reviving the golden era of student politics

Student politics can be an arm for retaining the democratic rights of people and ensuring peace in a country. But in our country, 'student politics' lost its true meaning and glory under the influence of party politics in public universities over the past three decades. The active participation of students was seen in the language movement of 1952 and the democracy restoring movement of 1990. However, present-day student politics is an extension of ruling party politics which employ students in a game of exercising power unnecessarily and working for the sake of the political party alone.

It is time to revive the golden era of student politics. Democratic bodies must be established in different educational institutions so that students can represent themselves and establish their rights. Students must be inspired to join politics and grow leadership skills in order to become conscious citizens of the country.

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The opinions expressed in these letters do not necessarily represent the views of the *Star Weekend*.



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