



CATTLE GALORE... sale of sacrificial animals at cattle markets in port city is gaining momentum. With high demand for local breeds, traders from all over the country are showcasing their cattle at the haats, abuzz with buyers. People selling cattle feeds are doing brisk business too. The photos were taken from Sagarika cattle market yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN



Cattle markets pick up in port city

AMIR HASAN SHAHRIAR, Ctg

With Eid-ul-Azha just days away, cattle markets in the port city are seeing impressive turnouts -- with sale of sacrificial animals reaching its peak.

Traders said though sales were not satisfactory at the beginning of the week, the vibe at the venues turned festive yesterday. Taking opportunity of the weekly holiday, people could spend more time at the haat (cattle markets).

In Chattogram, a total of eight -- including two permanent -- haats have been set up centring the Eid celebration. Sagarika and Bibir Haat being the permanent ones, other markets have been set up at Steel Mill, Saltgola, Patenga, Karnaphuli, Postarpar and Komol Mohajan Haat.

Jamshed Khan, leaseholder of Sagarika cattle market, informed that the demand for local cattle was high as usual and customers this year were more likely to have their expectations fulfilled.

"Cattle import was less this year and

more local breeders have brought their animals to the markets," he said, adding, every day over 9,000 cattle were being brought to the market.

Besides locals, traders from Chapainawabganj, Kushtia, Jashore, Rangpur, Panchagarh and Naogaon have brought their cattle to the haats in port city, informed Md Ariful Islam, leaseholder of Bibir Haat.

He said the price of a medium-sized cow started from Tk 60,000 while the asking price of big cows was at least one lakh. It may vary depending on the situation, he added.

"We are a little worried because of the rain, as the price of cattle tend to fall in such situations," he said.

Visiting the major cattle markets in the city yesterday morning, this correspondent saw the venues abuzz with buyers examining the animals, bargaining with the traders, and taking away animals they just purchased while yelling the price to

nearby visitors.

Shahjahan Khan, while walking his Tk 85,000 cow from Sagarika cattle market, told The Daily Star that though he might get the same cow at a lower price after a day, he preferred making an early purchase as an important part of Kurban (sacrifice) is taking care of the animal.

Another buyer, Ashraf Uddin Masud, said he just came to check the prices. He would buy his sacrificial animal the next day.

Meanwhile, it started to rain and traders got busy getting their cattle under a roof. Md Didar, a trader, expressed his apprehension, saying, "Things won't turn out good if this rain continues!"

Eventually, the rain did not last long and sale continued under a bright sky.

To ensure security, members of law enforcing agencies were seen roaming in the markets while counterfeit-currency detecting machines were provided from Bangladesh Bank.

Good times for seasonal butchers

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN, Ctg

This is butchers' time. During the three days of Eid-ul-Azha, this breed of professionals is poised to make more money than any other ancillary businesses that benefit from a seasonal boost.

Not just the skilled ones, semiskilled and seasonal butchers are also getting ready to do a brisk business by skinning sacrificial animals and processing their meat during the festival across the country.

In Chattogram, a number of people, mostly low-income groups from different upazilas, will turn into seasonal butchers during the time. Many from the south-east part of the country are also arriving in the port city to earn a quick buck.

Take rickshaw-puller Rafiqul Alam for example. The 35-year-old Noakhali resident arrived in the city yesterday morning.

"Usually, I pull rickshaw to support my three-member family in Noakhali. I came to the [port] city with three others before Eid to dress cattle and prepare meat. I get to earn some extra money this way," Rafiqul said.

He was speaking to this correspondent in Dewanhat area in the evening. He said he has been doing this for last three years.

Like Rafiqul, many part-time butchers can be seen in city's Dewanhat, Muradpur, New Market, Oxygen intersection and Bahaddarhat areas. Many

of them work in groups, once hired.

They said rate for dressing a cattle and preparing its meat for cooking varies on the size of animal and their skills. They usually charge Tk 3,000-5,000 per cattle.

"As hundreds of sacrificial animals will be slaughtered during Eid, this is a good opportunity for us to make some extra money," said Mohammad Yunus, a day labourer.

"Professional butchers charge hefty amount as they are in high demand whereas we [part-timers] charge reasonable fees," said the 22-year-old construction worker.

Lokman Hakim, a tea vendor in Port market area, said, "Last year, I earned Tk 1,000 by cutting and preparing a cow and got around 2kg meat for my children from the owner."

Meanwhile, professional butchers are also upbeat.

Monir Hossain, a seasoned butcher from Bandar Natun Market area, said, "We usually do eight to 10 assignments on Eid day. It's true that seasonal butchers are not skilled like us, but we also hire them as helping hand."

Port city residents, on the other hand, know very well how hard it is to find a butcher, that too a skilled one, on time.

"It's hard to get professional butchers during Eid. I know a group of three seasonal butchers, who are day labourers by profession. Every Eid, they prepare our sacrificial animal by noon," Shazedul Islam, a banker, told The Daily Star.

Transfer order for Dr Rezaul Karim withdrawn

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare withdrew its transfer order for Dr AKM Rezaul Karim of Chattogram Medical College Hospital (CMCH) on Thursday.

The Daily Star obtained a copy of the withdrawal order.

On June 26, the ministry transferred Dr Karim, a child cancer specialist and professor of paediatric haematology and oncology department, to Rangamati Medical College Hospital following a comment on a Facebook public post criticising lawmaker Mashrafe Bin Mortaza.

In public interest, the health ministry later decided to reinstate Dr Karim -- one of only three such experts in the country, Health Minister Zahid Maleque had told The Daily Star.

Mashrafe, also captain of Bangladesh national cricket team, visited Narail Sadar Hospital on April 24, where he found four

doctors absent.

After video of his visit went viral on social media, a number of doctors questioned the language Mashrafe used while talking to one of the absentees over phone. Many took to social media to voice their displeasure.

On July 4, more than 100 cancer patients and their relatives formed a human chain in front of Chattogram Press Club demanding withdrawal of the transfer order for Karim, saying that it would hamper treatment of their children.

The Daily Star ran stories regarding the issue headlined "A Costly Warning" and "Comments on Mashrafe: Ministry decides to keep oncologist in Chattogram" on July 11 and August 4 respectively. The newspaper also published an editorial headlined "Unique way of 'warning' a doctor" on July 12.

Contacted, Dr Karim said he was grateful to all who extended support and cooperation to him.

Undertake awareness campaign on dengue

IGP directs all police units

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Inspector General of Police (IGP) Mohammad Javed Patwary yesterday directed all police units to undertake awareness programme on dengue fever.

"If we all remain alert and keep our homes and surroundings clean then Aedes mosquitoes will not be able to breed," said the police chief, while addressing officials via an emergency video-conference with all metropolitan commissioners, range DIGs

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Price of spices shoot up

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'PRICES HAVEN'T GONE DOWN SINCE RAMADAN IN PORT CITY'

Meanwhile, spice market remains volatile in Chattogram with price of several spices showing an upward trend both in the wholesale hub and kitchen markets for last couple of months, frustrating consumers ahead of Eid-ul-Azha.

Even yesterday, price of onion, garlic and ginger marked a Tk 3-30 rise per kilogramme at Khatunganj wholesale market.

According to wholesalers, delay in getting imported garlic and ginger from Chattogram port created a crisis, which caused the sudden hike. Wholesale price of most spices witnessed a gradual increase since Eid-ul-Fitr.

Price of cumin, cinnamon and cardamom marked a sharp rise around three weeks back as buyers started stockpiling those from Khatunganj and adjoining Asadganj -- country's major spice hub, imported through the port.

Import of spices increased in the recently concluded fiscal year. But wholesale and retail price of cardamom, cumin and cinnamon saw a Tk 50-400 rise per kg in a span of

one and a half month while price of cloves remained stable.

Higher price of spices in global market and delayed delivery from port due to vessel congestion are some of the reasons behind the hike, said market insiders. They also attributed it to the increase in demand and multiple selling of same goods ahead of Eid-ul-Azha.

Md Sekander, a trader who usually buys spices from importers and sell to a third party, said at Khatunganj, goods are sold several times from one party to another before buyers purchase it.

Import of cardamom, cinnamon, cumin and cloves through Chittagong port in fiscal 2018-19 was around 4.53 crore kg, which was 4.36 crore kg the year before.

Meanwhile, consumers are bearing the brunt of the price surge.

Yesterday morning, while visiting Karnaphuli CDA Market, a housewife was seen arguing with a retailer as he was charging Tk 260 for 100 grammes of cardamom, a Tk 30 hike for the same quantity she bought a few weeks back.

"With Eid approaching, they will probably charge more. Prices haven't

gone down since Ramadan," she told this correspondent.

Mohammad Suman, the retailer, said he bought "average quality" cardamom at Tk 2,350 a kg from Khatunganj two weeks ago and was selling it at Tk 2,600 per kg. "It was Tk 1,900 a kg one month back," he said.

Regarding such hike in wholesale market, Faruk Ahmed, proprietor of Khatunganj-based Faruk Trading International, said their import cost went up due to various calamities in many countries such as India and Guatemala.

Like cardamom, cinnamon also was imported in last 12 months till June. Retailers were found selling the spice at Tk 500 a kg, a Tk 100 hike. Import of cumin dropped a bit while its price rose by Tk 50 in last two months.

Price of cloves, imported from Indonesia, Madagascar and Brazil, remained stable.

Meanwhile, yesterday's sudden hike in wholesale price of onion, ginger and garlic prompted retailers to raise the rate. Jahangir Alam, a rickshaw puller, said he bought one kg garlic at Tk 160 in the morning but found that price reached Tk 190 in the evening.

Road accidents kill six, injure nine

STAR REPORT

At least six people were killed and nine injured in road accidents across the country yesterday, according to reports from our correspondents and news agencies.

In Tangail, three people, including a child, were killed and two were injured in three separate accidents on Dhaka-Tangail highway.

Police and witnesses said the first accident occurred at Gorai in Mirzapur around 6:30am when a truck ran over a motorcycle, leaving rider Nazmul Hossain, 27, dead on the spot.

The second accident occurred at Kodim Dhalla area around 10:30am when a bus ran over a motorcycle, leaving the pillion passenger Samia, 10, dead. The rider, her uncle, Shahim Miah, 35, was seriously injured.

The third accident happened at Kaliakair around 10am when a bus ran over Sufia Begum, 45, after she fell off a motorcycle. Sufia died on the spot. The rider, Sufia's son Shohag, 25,

was seriously injured.

After the accidents, police recovered the bodies, said Ryazul Islam, OC of Gorai Highway Police Station. Nazmul's body was sent to Tangail General Hospital morgue and the other two were kept at the police station.

In Chattogram, an RMG worker was killed and five were injured as a pick-up van hit them while they were crossing the road at Kalirhat area on Chattogram-Dhaka highway.

Locals rescued and rushed them to Chattogram Medical College Hospital (CMCH) where the on-duty physician declared Parvin Akhtar, 28, from Cumilla, dead. The five injured were undergoing treatment at the hospital, police said.

Police seized the pick-up van but the driver managed to flee.

In Bogura, a motorcyclist was killed when a BRTC bus hit his vehicle at Tinmatha area in Bogura Sadar upazila around 9am, said police, quoting witnesses.

The deceased is Rabiul Islam, 36, from Badalgachhi upazila of Naogaon

district.

Locals rushed him to Bogura Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital where the on-duty doctor pronounced him dead, they said.

Police seized the bus and motorcycle, but the driver and his helper managed to flee. The body was sent to the hospital's morgue, police added.

In Natore, a motorcyclist was killed and two, including his wife, were injured as the vehicle collided with another motorcycle in Lalpur upazila of the district.

The deceased is Mehedi Hassan, 28, from Jashore district. He died on the spot.

Police said the accident occurred around 9am at Godra area on Natore-Pabna highway while Mehedi was returning home along with his wife from his workplace in Tangail.

Mehedi's body was sent to Natore Sadar Hospital, and his wife Roksana was admitted there as well. The other injured motorcyclist was admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.



A man buying a piece of tree trunk, used for chopping meat, from a vendor in Barishal's Nazirmahalla area yesterday. With Eid-ul-Azha just a few days away, such items including sharp tools for slaughtering sacrificial animals, bamboo mats and bags for cattle waste are in high demand. The vendor is selling the trunks at Tk 150-300, depending on size.

PHOTO: TITU DAS