



Bulls are seen being fed at a cattle farm in Char Balarampur village in Pabna sadar upazila. With Covid-19 nearly a thing of the past, traders are preparing additional cattle for the sacrificial animal market centring the upcoming Eid-ul-Azha.

PHOTO: AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU

Cattle traders readying for Eid market

They expect good business this time as pandemic ebbs

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU

The alarming Covid-19 situation had badly hampered the sacrificial animal market for Eid-ul-Azha in the last couple of years but cattle farmers are anticipating good business this time around as the situation has greatly improved.

Approximately 1.21 crore sacrificial animals have been prepared this year, which is 33 per cent higher than last year's total sales, according to the Department of Livestock Services (DLS).

"Last year, traders sold a total of 90.83 lakh sacrificial animals for Eid-ul-Azha, including 40.53 lakh cows and buffalos, and 50.28 lakh goats and lambs, to get business worth Tk 46,000 crore amid the pandemic," Zinat Sultana, deputy director (farm) of the DLS, told The Daily Star.

"As the pandemic threat is ending, we are expecting much better festival sales and so, additional animals are being prepared," she said.

"More than 1 crore animals may be sold this year with traders expecting to get more than Tk 50,000 crore collectively from the festival market," Sultana added.

Of the 1.21 crore prepared for sacrifice, around 46.11 lakh are cows and buffalos while 75.11 lakh are goats and lambs.

The DLS deputy director went on to say that the Eid market is the biggest opportunity to do business for cattle farmers, who fatten up their herds ahead of the festival season each year.

"Buyers want to get good looking



animals for sacrificing in the festival so the fattened animal business hits its peak ahead of Eid," Sultana said.

Around 42.40 lakh of the 46.11 lakh cows and buffalos are fattened while 33.48 lakh of the 75.11 lakh goats and lambs have been similarly plumped.

"Local production will meet the demand this year as additional animals have been prepared," she added.

Of the country's total production, Pabna and Sirajganj are the biggest sources of fattened animals, as per DLS data.

"This year, a total of 172,729 cows, 111,325 of which are fattened, have been prepared for sale in the festival market," said Krishno Mohon Halder, district livestock officer of Pabna.

In total, 605,774 sacrificial animals

have prepared in the district, he added.

Similarly, a total of 3.91 lakh sacrificial animals have prepared in Sirajganj, of which 1.71 lakh are cattle, according to Gourango Kumar Talukder, the district livestock officer of Sirajganj.

Of the cattle prepared, around 1.21 lakh are fattened, he added.

Cattle fattening gets costly as feed prices soar.

Md Habib in Pabna's Balarampur village started cattle farming a couple of years ago as a hobby but now, it is one of his biggest businesses.

"This year, I have prepared 31 cows for sale with 22 of them weighting between 600 and 900 kilogrammes," he said.

Habib bought the cows after Eid-ul-Azha last year and followed a sufficiently organic nursing method to rear the

cattle.

"But now I am worried about getting the expected prices," said Habib, who bought each cow for Tk 1.2 lakh to Tk 1.5 lakh and spent a further Tk 70,000 to Tk 1.25 lakh on nursing each of them for the last 11 months.

The businessman said he used various nutritious food ingredients with timely medical care following the guidelines of veterinarians so that his cattle could grow up without disease.

Habib himself made mixed food powders comprised of wheat, peas, lentils and corn to ensure proper nutrition for his animals.

He also gave them straw and grass regularly.

"I need Tk 200 to Tk 225 for feed and labour costs of a middle-sized cow each day while it costs Tk 300 to Tk 325 for big cows as the price of dairy feed has been soaring rapidly in the last few months," Habib said.

Other than meeting their nutritional needs, he also gave the cattle various vitamin and vaccine shots so that they could stay healthy.

"But fattening costs have ballooned by 30 to 40 per cent this year due to soaring feed prices," he added.

Each bag of wheat bran is currently selling for Tk 1,900 to Tk 1,950, lentils Tk 1,800 to Tk 1,850, lentil bran Tk 1,300, pea bran Tk 2,000 and rice bran Tk 700.

"The price of all kinds of dairy feed has jumped by Tk 200 to Tk 400 in the last couple of months and so, fattening

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Stocks return to the black

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Dhaka Stock Exchange snapped a four-day decline yesterday, riding on ceramic, travel, leisure, services, and real estate stocks.

The DSEX, the benchmark index of the premier bourse in Bangladesh, added 13.12 points, or 0.20 per cent, to close at 6,374.

The DSES Index, which comprises the Shariah-based listed companies, was up 0.14 per cent at 1,389.59 and the DS30 Index, which represents the best-performing securities of the exchange, gained 0.04 per cent to 2,301.92.

Turnover stood at Tk 943 crore, up 7.89 per cent from Tk 874 crore a day ago. Of the securities traded on the day, 175 advanced, 161 declined and 46 remained unchanged.

"The bargain-hunters showed their buying interest in sector-specific stocks at lucrative prices as the market lost 119 points since the budget for the next fiscal year was unveiled. Some of the stocks got investors' attention due to the budgetary incentives," said International Leasing Securities Ltd in its daily market review.

Ceramic, travel, leisure, services and real estate stocks largely rose, whereas general insurance, jute and food shares declined.

Among the individual companies, Meghna Insurance and RAK Ceramics jointly topped the gainers' list with a 10 per cent gain.

Hakkani Pulp and Paper Mills, KDS Accessories, Legacy Footwear, Fu-Wang Ceramic Industries, and Coppertech Industries also posted significant gains.

Bangladesh Industrial Finance Company suffered the highest fall at 5.88 per cent. Bangladesh General Insurance Company lost 5.48 per cent and Purabi General Insurance Company gave up 5.33 per cent.

Beximco Ltd was the most-traded stock on the day with its shares worth Tk 65 crore transacted. RAK Ceramics, Shinepukur Ceramics, MI Hospital Requisite Manufacturing, IPDC Finance, and Bangladesh Shipping Corporation also witnessed heavy trading.

The Chittagong Stock Exchange also rose.

The CASPI, the main index of the bourse in the port city, jumped 61.97 points, or 0.33 per cent, to close the day at 18,772.

Of the issues, 131 advanced, 128 declined and 39 did not see any price movement.

Turnover, however, fell more than 23 per cent to Tk 42.6 crore. It was Tk 55.54 crore on Tuesday.

UK axes subsidy for electric plug-in cars

AFP, London

Britain on Tuesday axed its 1,500 (\$1,800) subsidy for buyers of new plug-in cars as it focuses on other types of electric vehicles, but the news drew anger from the auto sector.

"The government is today closing the plug-in car grant scheme to new orders after successfully kickstarting the UK's electric car revolution," the Department for Transport (DfT) said in a statement. The grant was launched in 2011 to help encourage Britons to ditch high-polluting diesel and petrol cars.

It has since supported the sale of almost half a million electric cars, the DfT added, stressing that the subsidy was always a "temporary" policy.

Sales of fully electric cars rocketed from less than 1,000 in 2011 to almost 100,000 vehicles in the first five months of this year alone.

However, the government is now switching its focus to offer subsidies on sales of new plug-in electric taxis, motorcycles, vans, trucks and wheelchair-accessible vehicles.

Britain plans to ban new sales of diesel and petrol cars in the UK from 2030, as part of its goal to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Tuesday's announcement drew stark criticism from industry body the Society of Motor Manufacturers & Traders (SMMT).

Fed ponders huge rate hike to fight inflation

AFP, Washington

The US Federal Reserve is poised to raise borrowing costs Wednesday amid the troubling acceleration of inflation, with the only question being whether officials will opt for the biggest hike in nearly three decades or a smaller step up.

The central bank seemed set to increase the benchmark interest rate again by 0.5 percentage points, but a resurgence of consumer and producer prices in May has fueled growing speculation of a 75-basis-point hike.

While some economists continue to argue that such an aggressive step would indicate rising panic among policymakers who are usually reluctant to surprise financial markets, others argue that the Fed is behind the curve and needs to react strongly to prove its resolve to combat inflation. "It is possible that by Wednesday the only way for the Fed to surprise markets would be to raise rates by 50 bp," Harvard economist and former White House advisor Jason Furman tweeted.

If policymakers decide on a giant step, it would be the first 75-basis-point increase since November 1994.

The policy-setting Federal Open Market Committee is due to announce the rate decision at 1800 GMT at the conclusion of two days of deliberations. Fed Chair Jerome Powell will hold a press conference after the meeting to provide more details on the central bank's plans.

President Joe Biden has fully endorsed the Fed's battle against the steepest rise in prices in more than 40 years, as he watches inflation erode his popularity and deflect attention from other milestones, including a rapid recovery of the world's largest economy and record job growth.

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An employee of Uniper Energy Storage inspects the above-ground facilities of a natural gas storage unit in Bierwang, southern Germany.

PHOTO: AFP/FILE

Germany races to stockpile gas before winter

AFP, Unterreit

Germany's race to wean itself off Russian energy and stockpile enough gas before winter is playing out largely hidden from view, some 1,600 metres (one mile) below ground in the foothills of the Bavarian Alps.

Surrounded by rolling farmland near the banks of the river Inn, the former Bierwang natural gas field in Unterreit serves as one of Germany's largest underground gas storage facilities.

Run by German operator Uniper, Bierwang can hold more than 800 million cubic metres of gas – enough to power the nearby city of Munich for eight months.

Like other storage sites, Bierwang replenishes its stocks between winters, to keep homes heated and Germany's energy-hungry industry humming during the cold months when demand is highest.

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