



HOMeward BOUND

Clockwise from left, people through the Sadarghat launch terminal to travel to the southern districts for the Eid holidays yesterday afternoon. Meanwhile, the Kamalapur Railway Station has been a hive of activity with people heading towards their hometowns. Many even had to take drastic measures like boarding a train through windows. Besides, desperate to get home, people tried to get on bus in the middle of the road in Shanir Akhra area.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS, PALASH KHAN, RASHED SHUMON

Cattle sales yet to gain momentum



HELEMUL ALAM and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Despite Eid-ul-Azha being just two days away, the cattle markets of Dhaka city have not yet gained momentum due to a lack of customers. Till yesterday evening, a good number of sacrificial animals, especially bulls, were present at all 16 cattle markets in Dhaka, but customer turnout was notably low until 5:00pm.

During visits to the Kamalapur and Kachukhet cattle markets, contrasting situations were

Government data shows 1.29 crore sacrificial animals are available this year, an increase of 4,44,034 from last year, with an excess of 22.8 lakh cattle compared to the demand.

observed. Kachukhet was flooded with bulls, while Kamalapur had 20-30 percent fewer bulls, according to traders and customers.

One thing common though was a thin presence of buyers, despite yesterday being a holiday.

Government data shows 1.29 crore sacrificial animals are available this year, an increase of 4,44,034 from last year, with an excess of 22.8 lakh cattle compared to the demand.

This year, around 52 lakh cows, 1.60 lakh buffaloes, 68 lakh goats, 7,67,743 sheep, and 1,850 other animals are up for sale.

Sentu Bepary, a cattle trader from Meherpur, said, "Seven of us cattle traders brought 37 bulls to the Kamalapur cattle market four days ago, but have only sold one so far due to the low presence of customers."

Mannan Bepary, who brought 12 bulls from Sirajganj to Kamalapur, disagreed with the government

statistics. "In our area, many cattle farmers did not raise bulls this year due to the high price of cattle feed and last year's losses," he said.

He noted that the number of bulls at the Kamalapur market is 30 percent less compared to last year's.

"We hope the sales will peak on the last day before Eid. However, last year's experience was very bad with many bulls remaining unsold or being sold at low prices on the last day," Mannan added.

Ismail Hossain, another trader, blamed the high prices of cattle this year on the expensive cattle feed. Others echoed him.



Shamshul Islam, a trader at Kachukhet who brought six bulls from Kishoreganj, expressed fear of incurring losses like last year. "I faced a loss of Tk 30,000 last year and hoped for a profit this year, but the market's situation doesn't look promising," he said.

Nurul Islam, a customer from Bhasantek, said the current prices are similar to last year's.

Dhaka's unused slaughterhouses

Designated spots lie idle, city corporations blame indifference of residents

HELEMUL ALAM

Unsafe and unsanitary animal slaughter practices often mar the Eid-ul-Azha celebrations in Dhaka.

With sacrificial animals being slaughtered in thousands on Dhaka streets, blood and other waste accumulate on them, which takes hours, if not days, to be removed. The situation further worsens if it rains during the day.

Though both Dhaka city corporations built four permanent slaughterhouses to address these issues, they remain largely unused due to residents' preference for traditional neighbourhood slaughtering and the logistical shortcomings of the designated facilities.

For the last four years, Dhaka South City Corporation has not provided logistical support for transporting animals to slaughterhouses on Eid day. Dhaka North City Corporation did not provide this service last Eid.

A VISIT TO SLAUGHTERHOUSES

During a recent visit to the DNCC slaughterhouses at Mirpur II and Mohammadpur Krishi Market, this correspondent found slaughter animals without any health checkups.

Meanwhile, the DSCC slaughterhouses at Kaptan Bazar and Hazaribagh, alongside the Mohakhali slaughterhouse of DNCC, were all found shut.

Construction of the Kaptan Bazar slaughterhouse, which began in 2018 and was supposed to be completed in 2019, is still ongoing.

Despite completing construction in September 2022, DSCC has failed to start operations at the Hazaribagh slaughterhouse. The project cost was Tk 79.71 crore.

The Mohakhali slaughterhouse, built around seven years ago, remains locked with no initiatives to make it functional.

WHAT AUTHORITIES SAY

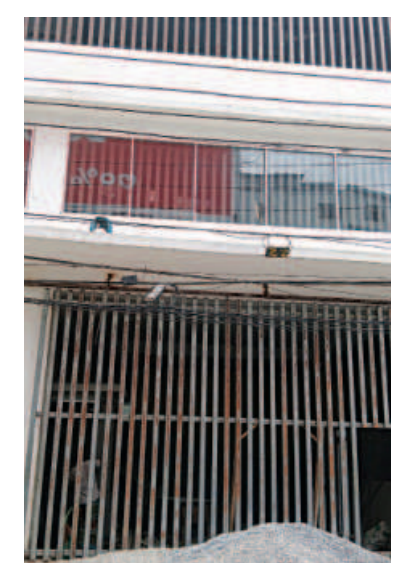
The DSCC slaughterhouses are equipped with semi-mechanical equipment, according to a DSCC

official. The upgraded design will enhance sanitary conditions and increase daily slaughtering capacity nearly fourfold compared to conventional slaughterhouses.

Hazaribagh will handle up to 1,200 cattle daily, while Kaptan

"We are waiting to revise and lower the rate to attract bids for its operation and are preparing for another tender," Monir said.

Another DSCC official said while many organisations show interest, they lack prior experience



The slaughterhouse in Mohakhali remains unused while the one at Kaptan Bazar (right) lies incomplete. Meanwhile, Hazaribagh slaughterhouse is still unopened.

PHOTO: STAR

Bazar's capacity will be around 600 cattle a day, he said.

The capacity for goats at each facility is about twice that of cattle.

Another DSCC official said 98 percent of the work on the Kaptan Bazar slaughterhouse has been completed, and they aim to complete the project by June 25.

The total project cost is around Tk 36.50 crore.

Meanwhile, the Hazaribagh slaughterhouse remains non-operational as DSCC failed to receive satisfactory bids, said DSCC state officer Md Moniruzzaman.

DSCC invited two tenders, with lease prices set at Tk 8.56 crore initially and Tk 6.15 crore later, but no offers were received.

in large-scale meat production and management.

DNCC Mayor Md Atiqul Islam said the Mohakhali kitchen market, near the Mohakhali slaughterhouse, was converted into a Covid-19 hospital during the pandemic. He noted that the slaughterhouse has not been used since then.

"People are not interested in bringing their animals to slaughterhouses. However, I recognise the need for a modern slaughterhouse. We are holding stakeholder meetings in this regard," he said.

He said poor response during previous Eids is the reason why the service of designated slaughterhouses was not provided last Eid.

Blacksmiths busy ahead of Eid

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN

Blacksmiths in Chattogram city are passing a busy time ahead of the Eid-ul-Azha, making and sharpening tools for sacrificial animals.

Visiting several blacksmith shops in the port city's Tin Pooler Matha, Riazuddin Bazar, Lal Dighi's Jail Road, Muradpur, Choumuhuny, Bakalia-Kalama Bazar, Halishahar-Boropol, and EPZ areas, this correspondent observed the local blacksmiths working for long hours to meet the demand.

People are visiting the shops in numbers to buy or sharpen machetes, choppers, cleavers, and butcher's knives of different sizes for a hassle-free Eid.

Additionally, the demand for tools for making kebabs and steaks, including skewers, is also on the rise, said traders.

This year, the price of these



iron tools is comparatively higher than last year due to the ongoing market situation, they added.

"We have been preparing for Eid-ul-Azha since May 1. The demand for these tools usually rises five days before Eid. Price

and quality depend on customers' demands and materials," said Pravat Karmakar, a blacksmith in Sagorika of Pahartali area.

"The price of knives starts from Tk 150 to Tk 850 per piece, depending on the size, while

cleavers are priced between Tk 450 and Tk 1,200 depending on quality of iron," he added.

"We are selling some ready-made items as most people use these tools for a single day. We also have some tools prepared based on the customers' designs. From six-inch knives to 24-inch knives, you can buy all varieties from us," said Ajoy Karmakar, 60, whose shop is in Nayabazar area.

Rashed Islam, a seller at Golam Rasul Market, said alongside traditional iron tools, the demand for imported knives is also notable.

Ready-made sharp tools are also being sold by hawkers on the roadsides or on vans, while some vendors are going from door to door to sharpen knives and other tools.

"The knife sharpening business will continue round the clock till Eid day. We earn Tk 800-1,000 daily during this time," said Aziz Mia, 65.