



COCKATOOS for sale. — Photos by Azhar Jafri

A bird market

By Muhammad Asghar

LAHORE, July 7: Beautiful birds of foreign and local origin and several varieties of colourful ornamental fish are being offered for sale at the Dharampura bird market.

Situated adjacent to the railway line between the Dharampura canal bridge and the overhead railway bridge, the bird market consists of around 30 shops built by the defunct Metropolitan Corporation of Lahore. Besides birds and the fish, cages and aquariums are also available here.

Foreign origin birds being offered for sale at the market include African grey parrots, South African cockatoos, Indonesian mynah and electrus, Australian lovebirds, suncanores,

brown lauries and the Prince of Wales. Local birds include peacocks, doves, parrots, turkey and the hens of different kinds.

Colourful electrus and grey parrots are being sold for Rs12,000 per pair, cockatoos for Rs10,000 per pair and mynah for Rs8,000. Suncanores and Prince of Wales can be purchased for Rs1,500 and Rs1,000 per pair, respectively. Imported doves cost Rs800 per pair, Australian lovebirds for Rs600 per pair and brown laurie for Rs500 per pair.

Peacocks are the costliest among the indigenous birds available at the market. A pair can be bought up to Rs5,000. A turkey of Mianwali costs Rs500 whereas ordinary parrots can be bought for Rs50 per bird.

Indigenous hens and cocks can be bought for a few hundred rupees per pair.

A shopkeeper said the birds of foreign origin were being imported as most of them did not breed in cages. "Any kind of birds can be imported on order if the customer is willing to pay the required price," he said. He said the birds of indigenous and foreign origin were easy to maintain as they did not require any special kind of feed. The birds mostly eat millet and maize and some of these accepted even fruits and vegetable. Feed of different kinds is also available in the market.

Ornamental fish available in the market include goldfish, sword tail, lionhead, gloss fish,

blueline shark, silverline shark, catfish, Koi carp, guppy, redcap lionhead, tetra, black molly, white molly and leopard molly.

The owner of a fish and aquarium shop said all varieties of ornamental fish were being imported from Bangkok. Some fish could be bought for a mere Rs50 per pair whereas others were offered for Rs10,000 per pair. Small aquariums made from 5mm glass measuring up to four cubic feet were fabricated on payment of Rs1,000 per cubic foot. The aquariums made from 8mm glass cost Rs2,000 per cubic foot. The scenery, oxygen pump and shingles were included in the price. Fish meal of Rs50 was enough to maintain eight to 10 fish for two to three months.



A VIEW of the Dharampura bird market.



A FISH aquarium on display.