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Pet shops to be monitored

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Source ::: THE PENINSULA / BY SATISH KANADY

Doha: The Ministry of Municipal affairs and Urban Planning (MMAUP) will put a scanner on the pet shops; once it's newly-appointed Veterinary Consultant submit his proposals to formulate fresh guidelines on the protection of pets in the country.

Dr Safwat Ali Hassan, the Hamburg-based Veterinary expert told The Peninsula yesterday that he will be visiting some of the pet shops and the zoo to take stock of the situation. Dr Ali Hassan will also collect the feedback from some animal welfare associations and the pet lovers in Doha ahead of submitting the preliminary report to the Ministry.

Pet lovers have been complaining that many pet stores in the country are inflicted by contagious diseases; and sick animals are often sold without considering the safety of the animals and the public health safety. They also complain that many of the birds and animals kept for sale often show symptoms of flu and rash. The fur of some of them is lost after the purchase. Many of them have dermatophytal infection for want of proper vaccination.

A resident who visited a pet shop in Doha recently told this paper they were shocked to see dead and sick animals lay in cages, ignored by staff. "I visited the shop with my 12-year-old daughter. I was shocked by to see the way the pets were being treated by the shopkeeper. We saw a dead guinea pig left lying in a cage while others climbed over its body. A rabbit with a badly infected eye and three male cats were fighting viciously in a small bird cage", said Sarah Jenkins.

Jenkins said during her initial visit to the shop none of the animals had any food or water. "It's so horrendous that these animals were sick and died for want of proper attention. There need strict regulations on these pet shops", she said.

The ever-increasing number of abandoned animals on the streets and the over-crowding of pets in the animal shelters are another two issues to be considered by Dr. Ali Hassan.

The pet lovers hope that the new proposal will also recommend the government to introduce the Pet Travel Scheme, a system that allows people to avoid quarantine, when transporting their pets. As of now, only UAE and Bahrain are the only countries which have introduced this Scheme.

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