

DOWN TO EARTH

Intractable Mosquito Menace in City

By A S M Nurunnabi

The mosquito menace in city has lately proved intractable in some areas it has assumed distressing proportions with no early relief in sight. In such a situation, the citizens ask helplessly if they have to resign themselves till the misery it causes comes to a natural end without apparent help from any agency.

The hope for natural end to the menace arises because mosquitoes are said to have a short life-span: about 30 days in all — 15 days in larva stage and 15 days at adult stage. November to February is their breeding season.

Unfortunately the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has an unsatisfactory past record in mosquito control. During the last couple of years, the DCC failed to initiate timely control programme on account of delay in mobilisation of necessary insecticides. Recently the city corporation sounded a more pessimistic note. Some months ago, the city father, in a press briefing, stated that the corporation was considering abandonment of its crore-taka mosquito eradication drive after months of apparently failed efforts to control the menace. For this, the negligence of a section of workers and non-cooperation by the residents were alleged.

Until 1977, the Mosquito Control Department had worked independently to eradicate mosquitoes. After that the responsibility was given to the city corporation but the department remained an independent body with some 400 workforce. It is alleged that their activities leave much to be desired. Often lack of

coordination between the two agencies and their dual authorities lead to lack of expeditious and timely action. It is alleged that the corporation cannot take any punitive action against the delinquent workers of the Mosquito Control Department as they belong to a separate department.

Another factor that poses a big challenge to the efforts of the city corporation is the existence of vast expanse of hyacinth-filled water areas in the city; for example on the east side of Motijheel and in the Rampura and Basabo neighbourhoods. Besides, there are thousands of ditches, derelict ponds, marshlands and networks of big drains and nullahs which are safe havens for mosquito breeding as most of them are beyond the reach of the insecticide spraying squads. Some of them are not even under the control of the city corporation.

Two kinds of insecticides are used: Sciflyox as adulticide and pyrofox as larvicide. The corporation source has claimed that the corporation has sufficient staff, equipment and insecticides, but the drive to control mosquitoes fail to be effective because the insecticides were not properly sprayed by the field workers. The unsatisfactory role of the field workers is partly due, it is felt, to the absence of sole control of the city corporation over the staff of the Mosquito Control Department. This aspect of the problem is understood to have received the attention of the higher authorities. It is, however, reported that lately better co-ordination has been taking place between

the two agencies through holding of weekly and monthly co-ordination meetings.

The strategy of aerial spraying as a means of mosquito control is understood to have been abandoned owing to its far-reaching adverse environmental impact. At present, the fighting tools largely consist of power and hand sprayers, vehicle mounted and fogger sprayers. The corporation sources, however, stress the important point that the corporation's programme for mosquito control can hope for success if it is supplemented with the efforts of citizens to keep their immediate neighbourhood clean. Sustained efforts are also necessary by those who may be owning the low-lying areas within the city limits and outside it. Otherwise, the efforts for eradication made in some areas are likely to be nullified by the existence of the vast areas of mosquito breeding grounds which are beyond the reach of the spraying squads. In this context, it may be remembered that an adult mosquito can fly nearly two kilometres against the wind.

In the recent past, it was claimed on behalf of the city corporation that if the responsibility for mosquito control was given fully to the city corporation, the budget for the purpose would be enhanced from the present one crore taka and a massive programme undertaken to check the mosquito menace. Let us hope that in greater public interest there will be a satisfactory solution soon to the existing problem of dual control of the agencies for mosquito control.



The ruling BNP's Dhaka City Corporation mayor candidate Mirza Abbas addressing a public meeting in front of the Nagar Bhaban yesterday. — Star photo

Unprecedented!

From Asiuazzaman

RAJSHAH, Jan 14: The Awami League mayoral candidate for Rajshahi began his election campaign from the house of his BNP rival in an unprecedented gesture of goodwill.

On January 5 Matin Khan accompanied by his supporters went to the house of Mizanur Rahman Minu and sought the blessings from the aged mother of Minu.

"I am like one of your sons contesting the election," Khan was quoted by a local vernacular weekly *Gana Khabar* as telling Minu's mother.

The BNP candidate's mother reportedly blessed Matin Khan and wished him success in the polls.

This unusual beginning of campaign by Khan, who had spent 30 years in London until 1991, brought kudos for him from people irrespective of party affiliations and was much talked about in the city.

Israel doubts shift in Syrian stance

JERUSALEM, Jan 14: Israel today said it was skeptical that Sunday's summit between presidents Bill Clinton and Hafez Al-Assad will result in a significant shift in Syria's attitude at the peace talks.

"We don't have terribly high hopes about this meeting, which above all is a sign that Damascus wants to improve relations with the United States," said Gad Ben Ari, spokesman for Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

Israel hoped nevertheless that Assad would use the occasion to "explain what he means by peace," the spokesman told AFP.

Rabin himself told a Labour Party meeting on Thursday: "I don't expect Syria to soften its position and reduce the price it is demanding in exchange for peace."

"The best we can hope for

is that Syria is more flexible in its definition of peace, but even that's not certain," he said.

The Clinton-Assad encounter in Geneva is aimed at giving fresh impetus to the deadlocked talks between Israel and Syria, which are due to resume in Washington later this month or early in February.

The negotiations were suspended in September after the PLO signed a separate peace deal with the Jewish state.

Israel wants Syria to commit itself to a comprehensive peace, including an exchange of ambassadors, before discussing the extent of its withdrawal from the Golan Heights, which it captured in 1967 and annexed in 1981.

Syria on the other hand has demanded an Israeli commitment to a complete withdrawal from the heights before discussing the scope of their peace deal.

BGMEA concerned at strike of Ctg C & F Agents

By Staff Correspondent

Redwan Ahmed, MP, president of the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), yesterday called upon the striking Clearing and Forwarding (C&F) Agents to restore normalcy at the Chittagong port for the greater interest of the country.

Giving his reaction to The Daily Star over telephone, the BGMEA president pointed out that the on-going strike would seriously affect the economy of the country, particularly the garments exporters.

If the exporters failed to ship their products to the United States by January 31, the garments industry would miss their quotas and the country lose crores of dollars in foreign exchange, he said.

Ahmed also cautioned that if the strike was not withdrawn, the garments exporters would endorse any step taken by the government to bring back normalcy in the Chittagong port.

PAMS

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while the Australian Lt General Jhon Sanderson and Bangladesh Defence Secretary Hasinur Rahman will be the guest speakers on the opening day.

The US Army Pacific Commanding General Lt General Robert L Ord III and the Bangladesh Army Chief General Staff Major General Muhammad Abdus Salam will make the opening remarks.

"Training and Operations in Support of United Nations Peacekeeping Efforts" is the theme for PAMS XVIII.

The other programmes of the opening day include introduction to the participating countries, administrative messages, introduction to US Army Pacific Command (USARPAC), overview and syndicate formalisation.

Ittefaq employee

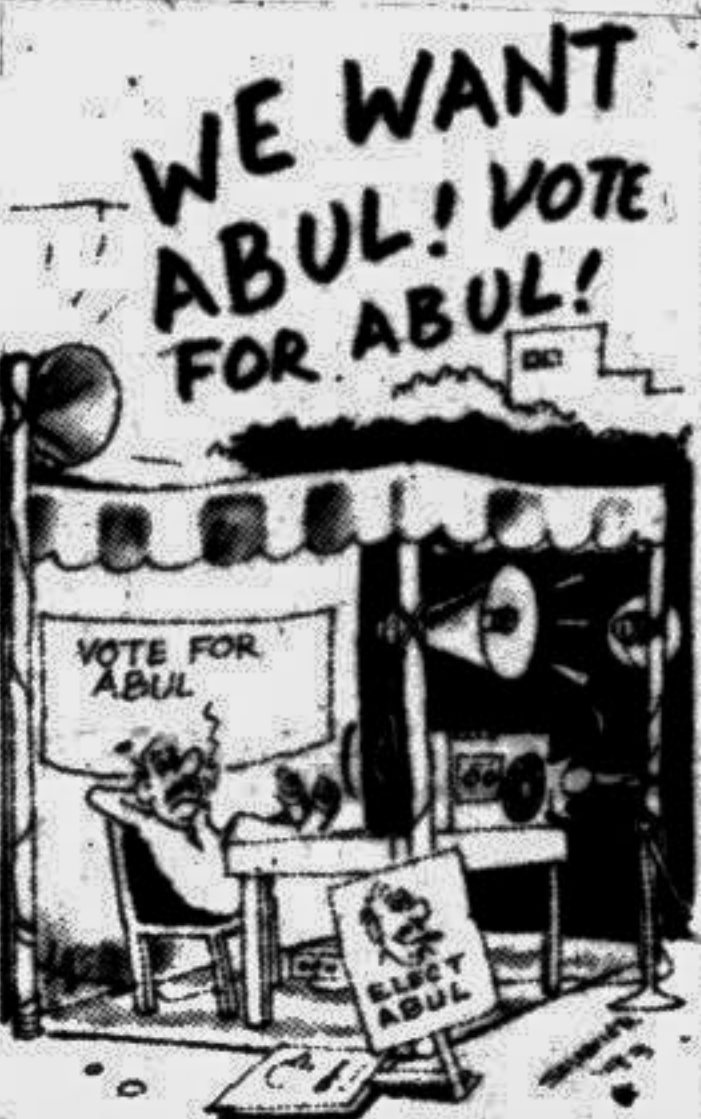
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Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) and the Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) yesterday expressed concern at the incident at the Daily Ittefaq late Thursday night in which one worker died.

In a statement, Gias Kamal Chowdhury, president and Amanullah Kabir, secretary general of the BFUJ, and Zahirul Huq, president and Ruhul Amin Gazi, general secretary of the DUJ, said the Daily-Ittefaq which remained closed for a long time started its publication from yesterday only.

But, they observed, due to a conflict among the owners, the working journalists, workers and employees of the daily have been suffering from a sense of insecurity.

The BFUJ and the DUJ leaders condemned Thursday night's incident and demanded an amicable end to the situation immediately.



DCC polls diary

By Staff Correspondent

For the candidates in the January 30 Dhaka City Corporation polls, yesterday was a busier day than the weekdays preceding.

Realising that prospective voters would be more likely to stay home on the weekly holiday the candidates, accompanied by their campaign workers, went from house to house in their respective neighbourhoods or ward constituencies, soliciting support.

The city mosques, too, appeared more crowded yesterday, than the usual Ju'na congregations. Everyone wanted to be seen at the Friday prayers.

Interestingly, in the Gopibagh area of the city, three rival commissioner candidates turned up at a *milad*. Obviously, none of them wanted to pass up a chance to canvass their prospective voters.

Although the Election Commission and the leading political parties agreed Thursday night that all makeshift election camps on the roads and pavements must be removed, yet most remained intact until yesterday.

Decorated with banners, posters and furnished with rented chairs, many of these camps or stalls blared taped slogans in favour of their candidates from loudspeakers. A cheaper alternative to hiring youngsters to strain their vocal chords.

The EC on Thursday also decided that all graffiti on the walls of public and private buildings would have to be erased or else the candidate concerned would be liable to prosecution.

Quick to take the cue, some campaign workers in the posh Eskaton area readily discovered a way round the prohibition: Late last night they were seen pasting posters and writing slogans on the road itself. No one said that was not permitted.

40 killed in Bihar bus accident

NEW DELHI, Jan 14: All 40 holiday-makers packed into a small bus were killed when the vehicle plunged into a dry river bed, reports AP.

The Midnight File

22 killed in Algerian accident

ALGIERS, Jan 14: Twenty-two people were killed in Algeria today when a train smashed into a bus, the official news agency APS reported. The crash, near the town of Mouzaia about 50 km (30 miles) southwest of Algiers, injured 39 people, some critically, it added, reports Reuter.

Dissolution of Italian parliament discussed

ROME, Jan 14: President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro met the Speaker of the Senate (upper house) today to discuss the dissolution of Italy's discredited parliament and a date for landmark elections, a Senate spokeswoman said. The talks with Senate Speaker Giovanni Spadolini were to be followed at five pm (600 gm) by a meeting between Scalfaro and Chamber of Deputies (lower house) Speaker Giorgio Napolitano, reports Reuter.

Khaleda, Hasina

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those who voted for the BNP candidates in the 1991 general elections, the Prime Minister said. "We want to turn Dhaka into a city befitting a developed nation." She called upon her partymen present to work relentlessly to that end.

State Minister for Environment Goyeshwar Roy, Nurul Huda MP, the Prime Minister's Personal Assistant M A Jaill, and party leaders including A K M Nazrul Islam and M Sanwar Hossain were present.

From Shahjahanpur, Begum Zia rushed to the older part of the city where she toured several areas and talked to the people.

Earlier, Begum Zia visited Shahjahanpur on Tuesday, and the Jatrabari and Jurain areas on Thursday as part of her election tour of the city.

Meanwhile, the Opposition leader and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina visited Dhanmondi, Kalabagan, Sobhanbagh, Kuthabgan, Green Road and Sukrabad areas and spoke with the people of those localities, urging them to vote for the AL nominee for mayorship in Dhaka, Mohammad Hanif. Hasina's door-to-door campaign yesterday started from the Bangabandhu Bhaban at Dhanmondi at 3:45 in the afternoon.

AL central leaders accompanied Hasina during the visit.

Earlier on Tuesday, the Opposition leader also visited several parts of older Dhaka and campaigned for Mohammad Hanif.

Mirza Abbas and his main contender in the mayoral

Hossain Ali

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of Ali's contribution during the time," Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Abdus Samad Azad said.

The function organised by the Pabna Welfare Trust, was chaired by its president Anisul Islam while Chief Election Commissioner Abdur Rouf was present as chief guest.

It was also addressed by former Foreign Secretary Fakhruddin Ahmed, Habibullah Habib, A K M Shaikatul Islam, Mannan Sarkar, Amir Ali Chowdhury, Dr T Hossain, Dr Mazharul Islam, Shaiful Alam, Anwar Hossain Chowdhury and others.

After the war broke out in Bangladesh in March 25, 1971, the first diplomats to leave the Pakistani side were K M Shehabuddin and Amjad Hossain in New Delhi and M Hossain Ali and others in Calcutta, which enabled the newly born Bangladesh to campaign for the country around the world and build up international support for the freedom fighters, the speakers said.

"Many were hesitant to defect from the Pakistani side," Amir Ali Chowdhury, who was among the 65 other diplomats in Calcutta on April 18, said and added, "But the determination of M Hossain Ali enabled us to decide correctly that day."

"But most of us who actively participated in the war, had been deprived of due respect and honour," Dr T Hossain said. "Many were suppressed politically and nationally."

The speakers urged all to remember the heroes of the war with due respect and uphold their spirit by uniting the pro-Liberation people and establishing democracy in the society.

BSF firing

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reportedly bringing fruits from across the border.

A Feni report adds: BSF opened fire towards Muhurichar in Parshuram thana three times today only a day after the issue of cross-border fire was settled at a meeting between the two countries in New Delhi on Wednesday.

However, nobody was injured in today's firings by the BSF without any provocation, according to BDR sources.

They said the BSF also put sand bags on the Indian side of the road connecting the Belonia Customs Check Post without informing the Bangladesh authorities here.

Bangladesh citizens are, however, not using the route since the November 27 incident in which one Bangladeshi was killed and another injured.

Biswa Ijtema

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foreign participants.

Five parking lots have been earmarked on either side of the Ijtema venue for vehicles. About 600 tubewells, two deep tubewells and four shallow tubewells have also been installed.

The Tongi Municipality, the Islamic Foundation, the Red Crescent Society, the Hamard Foundation and other social organisations have set up temporary hospitals and first-aid camps.

The Bangladesh Railway has arranged special services from Thursday last. These trains will continue till January 18.

From Staff Correspondent adds: President Abdur Rahman Biswas, in a message on the eve of the Biswa Ijtema, called for following the ideals and teachings of Islam to ensure peace and progress of the society discarding all disputes and conflicts. "Let this be our prayer in the Ijtema," he said.

President Biswas said the Biswa Ijtema plays a significant role in strengthening the integration of the Islamic brotherhood.

"Our Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SM) has inspired

us to build our lives in the light of truth and justice. We have put in our efforts to attain social peace and progress by following the teachings of the Holy Quran," he said.

President Biswas conveyed his greetings to the participants of the grand congregation and wished them peace and happiness and the Ijtema a success.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, in a message, underscored the need for forging greater unity, solidarity and fraternity among the Muslim Ummah to establish world peace and restore the lost glory of the Muslims by felling all intrigues against Islam.

The Prime Minister expressed her sincere greetings to the Muslim devotees who have converged from home and abroad at the Biswa Ijtema.

President of the Awami League and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina, in her message, hoped that the Ijtema could play an effective role in eradicating hunger and violence from the world by consolidating mutual cooperation and fraternal relations among the nations.

US against India's entry into UN Council as permanent member

WASHINGTON, Jan 14: The US has indicated it would like to include Japan and Germany as permanent members of the Security Council but not countries like India, reports PTI.

The US representative to the UN, Madeleine Albright, told German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel yesterday that the US wants permanent seats for Germany and Japan, according to press reports from Germany.

But this would be difficult to achieve without giving "some form of permanent membership to populous developing countries as well," Albright said.

The US is toying with the idea of two classes of permanent membership — first class membership for the present "INS" and a second class, non-veto permanent membership for new permanent members.

In his election campaign, President Clinton said he thought Germany and Japan should be given permanent Security Council seats in recognition of their economic strength and the contribution they make to the UN budget, which is bigger than those of Britain, France or China.

He made no mention of the world's largest democracy, India, Latin America's largest nation, Brazil, or Africa's largest country, Nigeria.

Kanchan launches 'secure road campaign' in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Jan 24: Film actor Ilias Kanchan launched his 'secure road campaign' with a street march from Railway pologround to Laldighi Maidan here today, reports BSS.

Hundreds of socio-cultural activists and his fans took part in the street march, second of its kind in the country.

He took personal initiative to hold the campaign to seek safety in the roads and create social awareness about the increased road accidents.

Jamaat criticises BNP's 'meek' foreign policy

SIRAJGANJ, Jan 14: Jamaat-e-Islami leader Abbas Ali Khan today reprimanded the BNP government for its 'meek' foreign policy and failure to resolve the Farakka problem with India, reports UNB.

Ribkin elected Speaker

MOSCOW, Jan 14: Pro-communist Agrarian Party deputy Ivan Ribkin was today elected Speaker of the Russian parliament's lower house, the State Duma, the electoral commission said, reports AFP.

Ribkin won 223 votes for with 111 deputies voting against, giving him the minimum number of votes required to win the Speaker's chair in the 450-seat chamber.

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Tk 5.5 lakh raised at charity for orphans

By Staff Correspondent

Dupont reigned on the second day of the charity auction, fetching Tk 20,000 for one of its gold-coated pens and Tk 17,100 for a red-and-gold lighter.

On the last day of biddings at the Gulshan residence of the French Ambassador, around Tk three lakh was taken in yesterday. With this the total sum raised for the aid of Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity orphanage at Tejgaon stands at around Tk 5.5 lakh.

The highest bidder, Aziz Mohammad Bhai, a businessman, offered Tk 20,000 for the Dupont pen, which also earned him a silver trophy from the French Ambassador Jean-Michel Lacombe.

The Ambassador and his wife Myriam, worked for the past seven months to bring top-of-the-line, French perfumes and jewellery for the novel sale in aid of the orphans.

Tim Bridges, who works at the ICCDRB as a consultant, smartly conducted the auction, successfully coaxing and cajoling the bidders to clear off 154 items yesterday. On Thursday



A section of the tribal participants of a long-march from the Chittagong Hill Tracts seen near the National Press Club in the city yesterday. — Star photo