

Acute mosquito menace in Rajshahi city

RU CORRESPONDENT

Rajshahi city dwellers have been experiencing acute mosquito menace for the last one month.

The menace turned unbearable as the drive against mosquito by Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) has remained suspended for the past several months.

The RCC authorities said the fogger machines could not be run for fuel crisis.

Sources said mosquito menace has increased during the summer season and it turned unbearable. The nuisance increases after sunset.

Farhana, housewife of Belderpara said her school-going children are the worst sufferer of mosquito. They cannot concentrate on study seriously for mosquito, although their examination

is knocking at the door.

No mosquito killing fogger machine is run here for past two months, she alleged.

Mansur Alam, a residential student of Motiher hall of Rajshahi University alleged that it is almost impossible to stay in the room without hanging a mosquito net.

Mosquito coils were seen burning at different wards, including baby ward of Rajshahi Medical College Hospital. The patient who cannot afford mosquito coil expenses, were seen lying hanging mosquito nets in the hospital and private clinics beds.

Sources said a separate division deals with mosquito issues in the RCC. More than 2,000 master role basis workers are deployed here for mosquito management. All the year round they spray pesticide on the drains and low-lying areas to

prevent breeding of mosquitos.

The RCC health department sources said they had 51 foreign fogger machines of which 25 have gone out of order. A good number of spray machines also remained inoperative for years for lack of maintenance.

Maniruzzaman Sharif, chief of the mosquito management sub-committee of RCC, told reporters that they buy larvicide's two times a year. The diesel and patrol run fogger machines could not be run for want of fuel for machines.

RCC Chief Health Officer Dr Rezvi Sultan admitting the rise of mosquito menace to reporters said the killing operation of flying mosquito has been hampered for fund crisis.

The RCC spends Tk 1.25 crore for mosquito management every year.

Pak rape victim resigns from aid centre

AFP, Multan

Pakistan's internationally known gang-rape victim Mukhtar Mai said yesterday she has resigned as head of a government centre for women in distress.

Mai told AFP that her decision was in protest at a move to replace her with a woman from the ruling party at the crisis centre in her village of Mirwala in Punjab province.

"The entire administration of the centre was changed when I was visiting the United States early this month," said Mai, adding she has sent her resignation to President Pervez Musharraf, Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and the ministry.

She alleged the move was carried out to embezzle millions of rupees deposited at the centre.

A local official dismissed the allegations, saying Mai was nearing the end of her one-year term and had to be replaced.

Mai was raped on the orders of a tribal council in Pakistan in 2002 as punishment for her brother's alleged affair with a woman from another tribe.

But rather than accept the ruling, as normally happens in Pakistan, she launched a legal battle in a conventional court which convicted six men involved.

Mai used her compensation money to build the first of two schools in her village and now campaigns for women's rights around the world.

Two Indian soldiers killed in Kashmir

AFP, Jammu

Two Indian soldiers were killed and one wounded yesterday in separate attacks in Indian-held Kashmir along the heavily militarised border with Pakistan, security officials said.

One soldier died in a gunfight between troops and Islamic rebels near the ceasefire Line of Control in Poonch district in southwest Indian-administered Kashmir, some 225 kilometres (140 miles) from the state's winter capital Jammu.

"Indian troops opened fire when a group of militants tried to sneak into Poonch sector from across the Line-of-Control," defence ministry spokesman Colonel SD Goswami told AFP in Jammu.

Goswami added in a statement that one soldier died in the exchange.

Another soldier was killed and one seriously wounded died in a mine explosion along the Line of Control in northern Kupwara district, army spokesman A.K. Mathur told AFP in the summer capital Srinagar.

India and Pakistan have fought two of their three wars over the region since 1947.

India alleges that an Islamic separatist revolt in the part of Kashmir it administers is being fomented by militants infiltrating from Pakistan.

Islamabad denies charges of arming and funding the rebels, insisting it is doing what it can to prevent militants crossing over to sustain the insurgency launched against Indian rule in 1989.

The unrest has claimed more than 42,000 lives by official count, although human rights groups put the number at 70,000.



Dr Rita Afsar speaks at a seminar on 'Informal economy and urban poverty' in the city yesterday. On her left are Zakir Hossain of Nagorik Uddog, Khushi Kabir of Nijera Kori, labour leader Nurul Islam and Lutfur Rahman.

Akihito starts Lithuania visit

AFP, Vilnius

Japanese Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko arrived in Lithuania yesterday, on the penultimate stop of a European tour, which has taken the Japanese royals into former Soviet territory for the first time.

The emperor's visit showed that "one of the most unique and modern countries in the world pays sincere attention to and recognises Lithuania, a small country which recently regained its independence," Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus said on the eve of the royal couple's arrival.

Heavy rains leave 43 dead in China

AFP, Beijing

Heavy rains in southwest China have left at least 43 people dead in the past week, state media reported yesterday.

Landslides, lightning strikes, fast-running torrents and building collapses claimed the lives in Sichuan province and Chongqing municipality, Xinhua news agency said.

Twelve people were killed when mud and rocks crashed into a village in western Sichuan, while

nine died when a landslide knocked a bus off a highway.

Other victims included seven children killed when lightning struck their Chongqing schoolroom and a man buried by his collapsing home.

Xinhua said Chongqing was hit by a 32-hour downpour on Thursday and Friday, forcing the evacuation of 112,300 people and causing direct economic losses of about 573 million yuan (73.5 million dollars).

Chinese military equipment for Philippines

AFP, Manila

China is to give 1.2 million dollars in military engineering equipment to the Philippines in its third such donation since 2006, a defence official said yesterday.

The equipment, including bulldozers and land-graders, will arrive in the coming months, Defence Undersecretary Antonio Santos said.

The donation, which follows similar pledges on May 1 and last year, was announced on Friday during the two countries' annual defence dialogue, he said.



Bijoy Richil speaks at a press conference protesting the heinous acts of a manpower agent who cheated 45 indigenous people out of a huge amount of money in the name of sending them to Singapore for jobs. The press conference was held at Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium yesterday.

China, Russia embolden Myanmar to snub pressure: Analysts

UNB, Bangkok

Economic and diplomatic support from China and Russia is allowing military-run Myanmar to rebuff international calls for the release of democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, experts said yesterday.

The junta on Friday extended the house arrest of the 61-year-old Nobel peace laureate for another year, ignoring global appeals for the freedom of the woman who has been detained for most of the past 17 years.

The extension was widely expected, with observers saying the

regime views the Nobel peace prize-winner's immense popularity as a threat to its rule.

The junta's decision drew international condemnation, but analysts said silence from China and Russia has emboldened Myanmar.

"Thanks to support from China and Russia, the military regime can ignore international pressure and keep Aung San Suu Kyi under detention," said Aung Naing Oo, a Myanmar analyst based in neighboring Thailand.

"Geopolitical conditions are favourable to the regime," he said.

China, Myanmar's staunchest ally and a main trading partner, has always refused to become involved in the "internal affairs" of the Southeast Asian nation, formerly known as Burma.

In January, China and Russia, both permanent members of the powerful UN Security Council, vetoed a UN draft resolution urging Myanmar to free all political detainees.

The rare double veto came despite attempts by the United States, a vocal critic of Myanmar, to water down the draft's language.

US to reject climate deal: Activists

AP, London

The United States is preparing to reject new targets on climate change at a Group of Eight summit next month, dashing German and British hopes for a new global pact on carbon emissions, according to a document released by environmentalists.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, holding the rotating presidency of both the G-8 bloc of industrialised nations and the European Union, wants the June meeting to agree targets for cuts in greenhouse gas output and a timetable for a major agreement on emissions reduction to succeed the Kyoto Protocol.

But unattributed comments written on a draft summit communique, which Greenpeace said were written by US officials and handed to the group by an undisclosed third party, suggest the White House has major reservations.

"The US still has serious, fundamental concerns about this draft statement," the notes on the document read. "The treatment of climate change runs counter to our overall position and crosses multiple 'red lines' in terms of what we simply cannot agree to."

The 27 EU members have agreed to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 20 percent by 2020 -- building on Kyoto, which runs through 2012 -- and by 30 percent if a broader international agreement can be reached.

Though Merkel and outgoing British leader Tony Blair -- who made climate change a key priority for his final weeks in office -- have pressed President Bush to back a new agreement, the document claimed the White House is "fundamentally opposed" to many of the European objectives.

The US, the world's biggest polluter, did not ratify the Kyoto agreement through which developed countries agreed to cut emissions by 5 percent below their 1990 level by 2012.

First lung transplant on HIV-positive patient in Italy

AFP, Rome

An Italian hospital has carried out the first ever transplant of two lungs into a patient with HIV, who is doing well after the operation, a spokeswoman said.

The patient, an adult man whose life was in danger from respiratory illness, "was operated on at the start of the week and his post-operation diagnosis is good," said Serena Pizzo, spokeswoman for the Mediterranean Institute for Transplantation and Advanced Specialised Therapies (ISMETT) in Palermo.

Liver, kidney and pancreas transplants for HIV-positive patients have previously been performed successfully, but the operation in Italy was the first involving lungs, she said.

"The possibility of carrying out transplants on HIV-positive patients has been made possible by a new range of treatments that are very effective against HIV," said Paolo Grossi, a specialist in infectious diseases in charge of monitoring the patient's post-operative condition.

Pizzo said one of the main difficulties in performing transplants on HIV-positive patients is that they must be submitted to treatments that lower their immune systems while they are already immune-deficient.

ISMETT, a public institution, partners with the University of Pittsburgh Medical Centre in the United States.

Alessandro Nanni Costa, director of the national transplantation centre, called the operation "an important event for progress in the transplantation world."