

Mosquito making life miserable but DCC shrugs off complaints

ERSHAD KAMOL

Mosquito menace has taken an alarming turn in many parts of the city afflicting scores of people with dengue in this late monsoon, a perfect weather for mosquito breeding.

According to the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) sources, a total of 375 dengue cases were detected from July 1 to August 18 at different hospitals of the city.

People living in Jatrabari, Lalbagh, Dhanmondi, Mohammadpur, Gulshan, Moghbazar, Paltan, Rampura, Goran, Basabo, Manda, Mugda and Sayedabad are the worst sufferers.

Aedes mosquito, the carrier of dengue, grows in the freshwater and it becomes a threat in the

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monsoon every year. However, DCC officials said dengue situation this year is better than last year's as no death has been reported so far.

Last week Ibtida Rahman Chowdhury, a schoolboy from Gulshan-2, was diagnosed with dengue. His mother Nahida Rahman Mala said, "We are facing mosquito menace despite keeping our house neat and

clean." Nilufar Khan, a resident of Jatrabari, complained that this year they are facing mosquito problem more than the previous years. "Many people of this area have been afflicted by dengue this year. Mosquitoes are beyond my control," she said.

However, officials at DCC's Mosquito Control Department claimed that the situation is not

alarming. Dr Naseem Us Seraj, senior entomologist of DCC, said, "This year the number of dengue affected people is less than that of previous years. We believe we have successfully controlled mosquito this year."

Mentioning this year's Tk 15 crore mosquito control plan, he said, "We have extended our programmes considering the

upcoming Ramadan. Moreover, we have taken motivational programmes at school levels to grow awareness on dengue."

However, the comments of the city dwellers give a different picture. People living at the areas near Jirani canal are facing serious mosquito problem. The stagnant water of the canal has become an ideal ground for mosquito breeding.

Imamuddin Chowdhury, a resident of Madartek, said, "Almost every houses near Jirani canal at Madartek are full of mosquitoes. Sometimes we use smokes to get rid of mosquitoes. But, we don't see any initiatives from DCC."

Mosquito menace has become a big problem in areas especially near water bodies and open drains of DCC in the eastern part of the city.

"We use spray, mosquito coils and nets but cannot save ourselves. I'm worried about the health of our newborn baby," said Nusrat Jahan a resident of Basabo.

"It is not clear what the city corporation is doing to control mosquitoes. In the previous years the city corporation used fogger machines to kill the insects. But this year we don't see any initiative to control mosquito," she complained.

However, a few locals alleged that some people bribe DCC staffs to get mosquito control medicines. Owner of a dairy farm of the area on condition of anonymity said mosquito is not a problem for him, as he pays the DCC staffs for insecticides.

When contacted, Azad Abul Kalam, executive officer of Zone 4 of DCC, said drastic action will be taken if any such complaint is proved against any official of the zone.

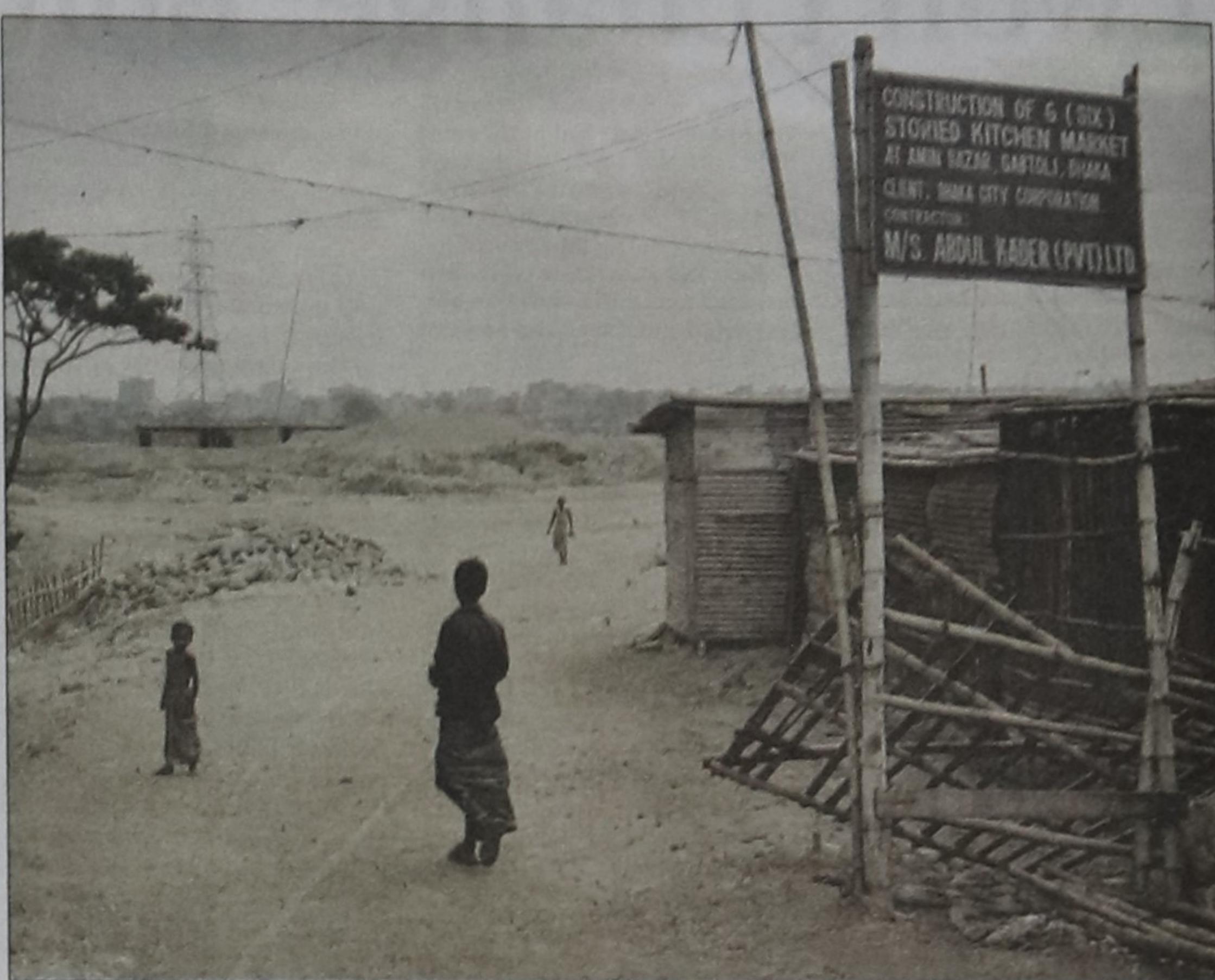
"We are using larvacide in the open drains and water bodies," he added.

When he was briefed on the complaints from locals, Azad claimed that the area at the edge of DCC borders might face a little mosquito problem as mosquitoes flying from the areas outside DCC can migrate to those areas.



STAR PHOTO

People living near water bodies in the city are facing serious mosquito menace. Photo shows a mosquito breeding ground in Uttara.



Development work for construction of Aminbazar wholesale kitchen market in progress.

Construction of wholesale markets faces setbacks

SHAHNAZ PARVEEN

Construction of the four wholesale kitchen markets by Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) is limping because of fresh setbacks.

Multiple dilemmas and difficulties are delaying the project scheduled to be completed by December 2010.

DCC Chief Engineer Colonel Md Ashfakul Islam informed Star City that land preparation work of the proposed Jatrabari and Lalbagh wholesale markets could not be started yet.

The work at Jatrabari saw little progress because of a writ petition in the high court regarding the ownership of part of the land allotted for the market, the official said.

Following the completion of the tender process, piling began but it all came to a halt because of the lawsuit.

Work at Lalbagh is also being delayed as the DCC still could not manage a land for the market. Complication in land acquisition process due to confusion over the land record is the main reason, sources at DCC said adding that tender will be invited after the matter is resolved.

Work at Mahakhalil is also faced trouble due to construction of a CNG filling station by a private company at the entrance to the under construction market.

"Construction of a CNG filling station would have made the entry point very congested, inviting tailbacks around the area. However, after formal request, the ministry of communication has cancelled the allotment for the CNG filling station," said the DCC chief engineer.

"Despite all, the land has been allotted to DCC. Paper work to hand over the space is in progress", he added.

So far the land development work at Aminbazar is going on smoothly. Around 85 percent piling work has been completed.

According to the project,

Mahakhalil market is being set up on 7 acres of land while the one at Aminbazar will be on 12 acres.

It was decided to build Lalbagh market on 9 acres and Jatrabari market on 5.27 acres.

In October 2006 the

Executive Committee of

National Economic Council (Ecnec) approved a Tk 206 crore

project to construct the four

markets in the city. The budget

was recently revised and

increased to Tk. 330 crore.

The construction plan was

taken up in 2004 during the

BNP-led government.

The DCC took the initiative to build the four wholesale kitchen markets with a view to modernising the marketing system and ensuring free flow of essentials in the capital city.

To speed up supply of agro products and reduce the gap in prices of items in kitchen markets, it was also planned to introduce a monitoring system.

The DCC hopes to house 2,500 shops in the four wholesale markets.

According to the plan, the largest market at Aminbazar to have 1100 shops while the other three markets at Jatrabari, Mohakhalil and Lalbagh to build around 450 shops each. There will be multi-storied buildings in the markets. Floors of these buildings will be distributed after categorising the merchandise.

It was also decided in November last year that the wholesalers and retailers of Karwan Bazar, the largest wholesale market in the country, will be relocated to these markets.

Currently, there is a total number of 1,782 shops at Karwan Bazar. The authorities are planning to rehabilitate all of them in the four new kitchen markets at nominal charges.

Money transferring through post offices sees a good start

RIZANUZZAMAN LASKAR

The postal department saw a good response from clients in the first one month of working as the principal agent of Western Union -- an internationally renowned money transfer service provider - in Bangladesh.

The department started the service from July 13 this year. It is now operating special counters in 12 post offices in the city and 438 others throughout the country so that people can easily collect remittances sent from abroad.

The post offices that are operating as Western Union points in the capital are Dhaka General Post Office (GPO) and post offices at Sadarghat, New Market, Mohammadpur, Gulshan, Banani, Basabo, Tejgaon, Shantinagar, Khilgaon and Uttara.

According to GPO sources, they are receiving around 5 to 10 clients of Western Union in their counter every day. "The number of recipients is increasing," said an official at GPO's Epost department, which is operating the money transfer agency.

When the postal department announced its collaboration with Western Union in January, a good number of people expressed scepticism about the department's ability to maintain the quality of service of such an internationally renowned organisation.

However, clients are satisfied with the service. "I am happy with the quality of the service. There seems to be some amount of mismanagement in the pro-

cess but that is insignificant as the service is still new," said Nusrat Zannat, who was seen leaving Dhaka GPO with the money sent by her husband working in Malaysia.

"I have no complaints," said Faisal Hossain who came to GPO to collect money sent by his elder brother living in London. "I filled in a form and waited for around 10-12 minutes before they gave me the transfer amount. It is quite smooth."

An official at the New Market post office said they did not receive that many recipients in the first week or so but the num-

ber is increasing. They are receiving 4/5 clients daily.

Officials at the Banani post office also said they have been receiving around the same number of money recipients every day.

"It is helpful for us to collect money from the local post office," said Masudur Rahman, a resident of Banani who has a son working in Canada. "I had to go to a bank in the past to collect the money which was time consuming," he said.

"I believe this service is useful particularly for the people living in rural areas. They are now able

to collect remittance without much delays or hassle," he added.

According to sources at the GPO, the postal department is currently operating 450 Western Union money-receiving points in its post offices throughout the country.

"Some of these counters are operating with computers while others are working with fax machines as Internet connection was not feasible," explained an official at GPO. "Things are of course much easier for the staff at counters with computers as they have direct access to the

server and can directly get the money receipt for the recipient," she said.

"This is undoubtedly a good decision of the postal department. A lot of people like me will surely benefit from it," said Masudur Rahman, a resident of Tongi who has a son working in a mid-eastern country.

Masud used to travel all the way from Tongi to Dhaka to receive the money sent by his son. "It is now really convenient that I can collect the money from the local post office."

The postal department signed an agreement in January with the Western Union to deliver money transferred by the global money transferring company as part of a reform programme to help the financially ailing department reach break-even point by 2009.

"It has been barely a month since we started the money-transferring operations. But the response we received from the general people has been really positive," said Jasmin Akter, deputy postmaster general of the Foreign Post Office department.

The designated postal offices will run the special money transferring desks for the next 5 years. Usual fees are collected by the Western Union while the postal department receives 25 percent commission from the money-transferring organisation.

Western Union's electronic money transfer system allows a person to collect money sent from any part of the globe within 10 minutes. The recipients do not require having any bank account or so to collect the amount.



A Western Union point at the New Market post office.



Although now well-known as a harmful tree, Eucalyptus is still being planted widely in many areas because of its magic growth. The picture was taken from Airport Road near Banani in the city yesterday.

ZAKIR HOSSAIN