

Editor (The Daily Star)

Mahtuz Anam

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Staff Writers

Md Shahnawaz Khan Chandan

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Apurba Jahangir

Columnist

Osama Rahman

Staff Photographers

Prabir Das

Kazi Tahsin Agaz Apurbo

Graphics & Illustrations

Manan Morshed

Make-up

Md Saiful Islam

General Manager, Production

Selim S H Chowdhury

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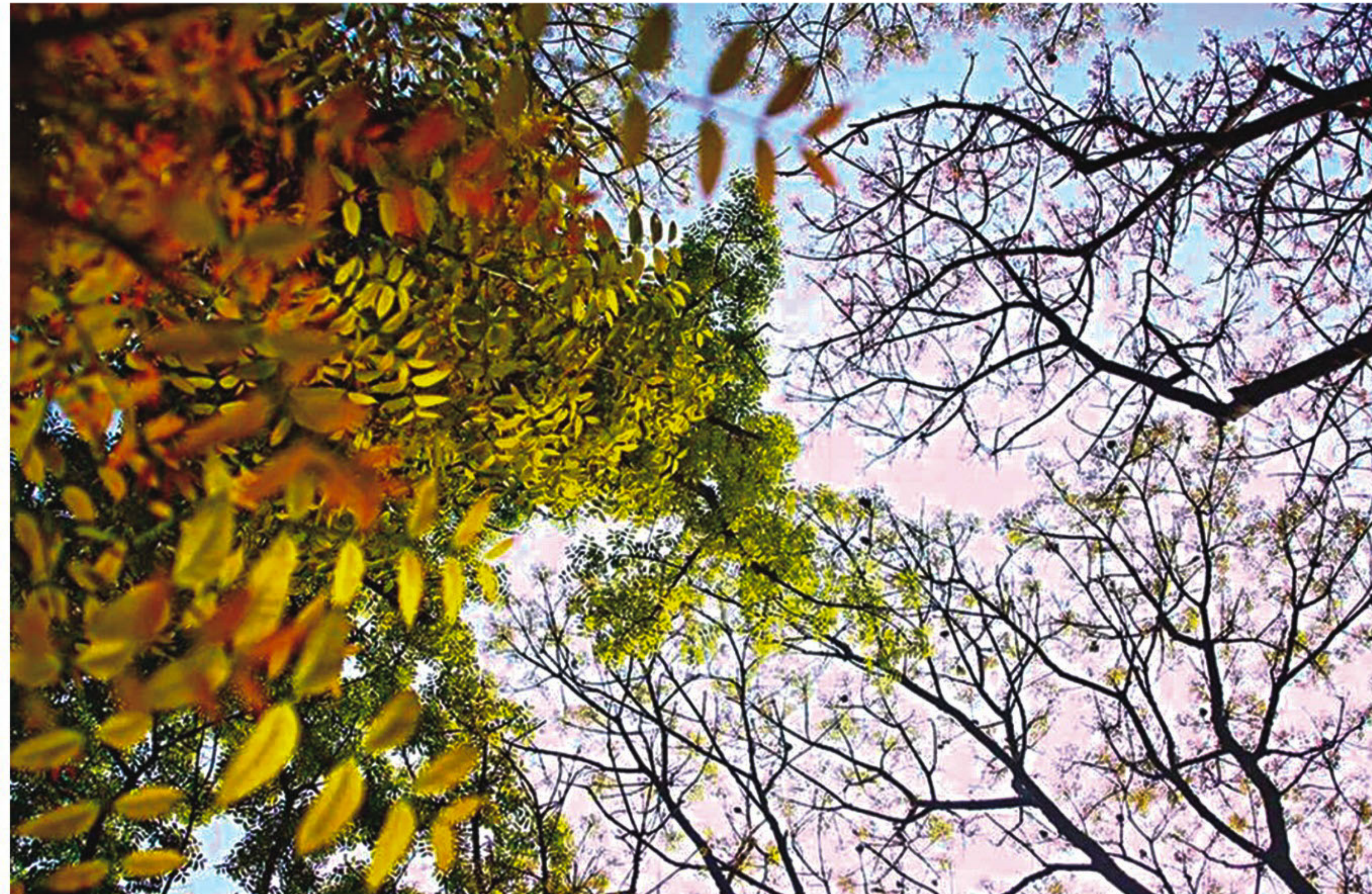


PHOTO: KAZI TAH SIN AGAZ APURBO

“You can cut all the flowers but you cannot keep Spring from coming.” – Pablo Neruda

SNAPSHOT

MAILBOX

thestarmagazine@gmail.com



PHOTO: KAZI TAH SIN AGAZ APURBO

Threading New Paths for South Asian Art

Bangladeshis, as a nation, should be proud of its cultural legacy. Diverse ethnic communities, rich folk culture and harmonious intermingling of different cultures have evolved some of the world's greatest cultural heritage in Bangladesh. However, it is unfortunate that Bangladesh could not take any considerable step to preserve its rich cultural resources. Dhaka Art Summit, in this regard, has become a pioneer of promoting and preserving not only the rich art and culture of Bangladesh but also the entire sub-continent. I would like to convey my gratitude to the Star Weekend for publishing an informative article on this auspicious festival.

Ikrum Hossain Rony
IER, University of Dhaka

The plight of the Non Government Teachers

There are many government controlled secondary level schools and colleges in Bangladesh. But this sector of education is mainly ruled by the renowned non-government schools, colleges and madrasas. Only a few government schools and cadet colleges still maintain quality educational services. However, the reality is that the teachers of these secondary level non government institutions are the victim of utter negligence and discrimination. For instance, while teachers of the government schools and colleges get 50 percent of their salary as house rent, the teachers of non government institutions get only 500 Tk allowance for this purpose. Still these non government schools can maintain quality because some of them have sufficient funds and resources; however, many institutions are not that fortunate. The government should help these educational institutions according to their needs; not on the basis of their connection with the government.

Bipul K Debnath
Dhaka College, Dhaka

Innovation of a 'Hybrid Car'

The article about 'Hybrid Car' (published on February 12, 2015) was a great read as it has revealed an environment friendly innovation that can make a huge impact to save our mother earth. The team

named 'Motomist' did quite an astonishing job by inventing such car that can save our environment from intense environmental pollution as it is a multi-fuel efficient and eco friendly vehicle. A great accolade goes to the team for coming up with the concept of this unique car. Moreover this car is imperative for the whole world as we are opting to achieve the sustainable developments goals, recently adopted by the United Nations general assembly. Thank you Star Weekend for letting us know about this wonderful innovation of 'hybrid car'.

Samiul Raijul
London, United Kingdom



PHOTO: COURTESY

The opinions expressed in these letters do not necessarily represent the views of the Star Weekend.

EPIDEMIC



THE PLAGUE IN THE OFFING

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

PHOTOS: AFP

Even a few months ago most of us did not know the word Zika. Shockingly, this microscopic virus of only 40 nanometres in diameter (1 nanometre is a length equal to 1/100,000,000th of a metre) has proven itself as one of the deadliest threats of the current world. According to World Health Organisation, this virus of Flavivirus genus will infect at least 4 million people all over the world in the next couple of months. Within a few weeks of its outbreak in South America, patients carrying Zika virus were detected in the USA, Polynesian islands, Australia and as far as China. Evidently, Bangladesh is also at risk of this mosquito borne menace.

Named after an African Forest in Uganda, this virus was first discovered in a species of rhesus macaque in 1947. Its primary vector is a daytime active mosquito called *Aedes Aegypti*. Unlike other deadly diseases borne by this particular species of mosquito such as Dengue, Chikungunya and Yellow Fever, Zika fever is not at all life threatening. Common symptoms of Zika fever are not that serious which include; fever, rash, mild headache, conjunctivitis and joint pain which cure automatically within two to seven days of infection.

However, although Zika fever itself is not fatal, complications created by this disease is frightening. It has been found that pregnant mothers infected by Zika virus in Brazil have given birth to babies with microcephaly, a potentially fatal neurological disorder characterised by babies born with small skulls and underdeveloped brains.

Immune response in human body stimulated by Zika fever is also quite abnormal. It has been found that after being attacked by this virus, the human



immune system mistakenly attacks the nervous cells causing rapid muscle weakness and damage to the peripheral nervous system. In the acute phase, this syndrome can be life threatening respiratory muscles get also weakened by this self destructive process. Another alarming discovery is this virus can also be transmitted through sexual intercourse and respiratory droplets.

This is why the whole world is fighting to develop a sustainable preventive

measure before it turns pandemic. However, there is still no glimmer of hope. There is no vaccine available to cure this disease. French medicine manufacturer Sanofi Aventis says that they have started research to develop a vaccine but it may take at least 2 years to get results.

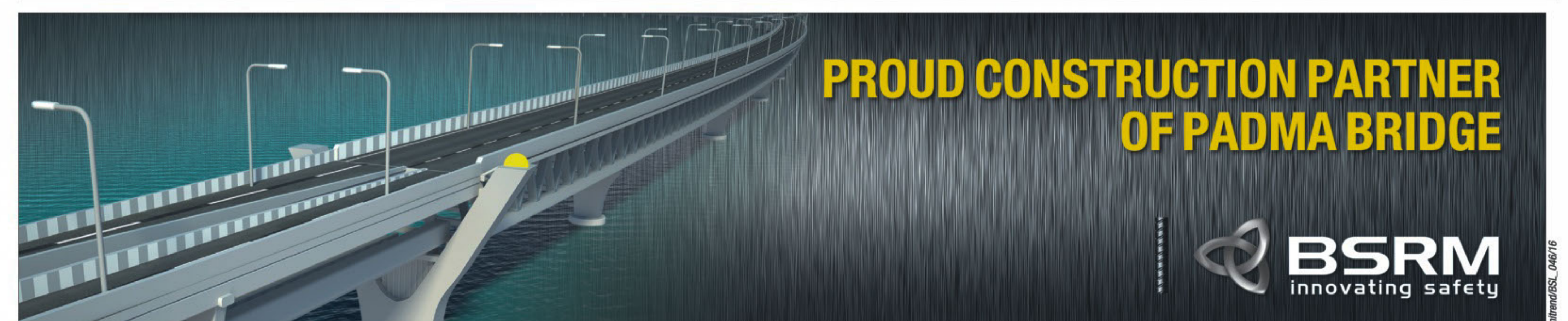
Another effort to control the virus has been identified as a probable cause of the fever's sudden rapid outbreak. A British biotechnology company called Oxitec

released genetically modified male *Aedes Aegypti* mosquitoes three years ago in Brazil. These mosquitoes were supposed to produce offspring that would die before it could breed. However, some scientists are questioning the success of this hastily done project as sudden rise of Zika infection has been detected in the places where those mosquitoes were released.

Professor Mahmudur Rahman, Director, Institute of Epidemiology and Disease Control says, “Since there is no vaccine and specific preventive measure, there is alternative to mosquito control. In Bangladesh, *Aedis Aegypti* spreads during the rainy season. We are taking precautionary steps to check the breeding of this mosquito.”

Although our Health Minister Mohammad Nasim has denied the fact

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