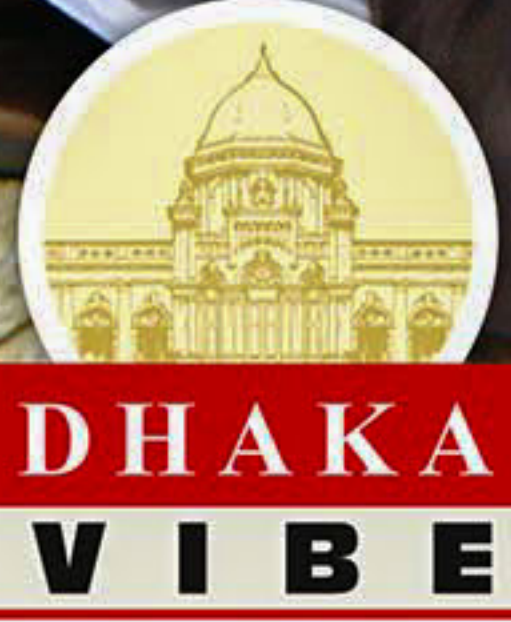


THE MOSQUITO HANDLER OF LALBAGH

|| MATHEWS CHIRAN ||



Sheikh Chunnu pulls out mosquitoes from a cage with the help of a plastic pipe, using his mouth as a suction pump. Below, Culex mosquitoes that Chunnu himself has bred. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

As the two city corporations grapple with the dengue outbreak in the capital, the need to use effective insecticides has made the headlines over the last few weeks. However, finding the right mosquitoicide requires testing, and field-testing requires standardised samples of mosquitoes.

As it turns out, collecting hundreds of alive mosquitoes grouped evenly in 10 separate containers to be tested for insecticide efficacy is not a task a lot of people would be up for.

In fact, as far as the city corporation authorities and researchers are aware, there is only one man doing it.

On a visit to the Nagar Bhaban of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) on Tuesday, this correspondent came across that man, Sheikh Chunnu -- walking in with a mosquito net fitted on a metal frame, buzzing with the pesky pests.

DSCC officials had entrusted Chunnu with the job, for field-testing its insecticide samples to see which one is most effective, as they have done over the last 20 years.

A fogging machine mechanic for Mosquito Control Department, the 55-year-old

Chunnu is somewhat of a self-taught mosquito breeder and handler.

Not just officials of the city corporations, but researchers and entomologists also often call upon his rather unique service.

This correspondent couldn't



help but sit down with Chunnu for a cup of tea at a roadside stall to hear his story.

"I am the sole person providing mosquitoes to the city corporations," said Chunnu -- in an inimitable Dhakaiya accent and with just a hint of humblebragging.

THE ART AND SCIENCE OF MOSQUITO-BREEDING AND HANDLING

"You won't want to go to the place where I collect mosquitoes from. I collect larvae from garbage-filled canals or waterlogged pits in Kamrangirchar. You have to be

very careful while collecting larvae, because if they sense your presence, they dive into the water," said Chunnu, a long-time resident of Lalbagh.

The larvae are collected in a bucket, and put in different pots. The pots are placed under mosquito-net cages at his office.

After a couple of days, the larvae grow into mosquitoes.

A piece of cotton soaked with glucose is put on the net, where the mosquitoes feed from.

But that is just the first part of his job.

He then needs to put the mosquitoes in other cages, counting them as per requirement of testers.

"This is the part where it gets hard. Through a transparent plastic pipe, I have to suction the mosquitoes using my mouth, and put them into other mosquito nets by blowing into the pipe. Inside the pipe is a net to prevent the mosquitoes from entering his mouth.

City corporation employees were running field tests on some 10 to 12 cages to test the newly-arrived insecticide samples. Exactly 50 mosquitoes are required to be put in each cage.

This correspondent saw Chunnu doing the painstaking procedure without a break for more than two hours.

"When the suction pipe's width is bigger, it becomes difficult to suck mosquitoes in the pipe, and now it's causing me breathing problems," said Chunnu.

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5 lakh Rohingya refugees get identity cards

UN says these will serve as proof of their right to return to Myanmar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As of Wednesday, more than 500,000 Rohingya refugees from Myanmar have been jointly registered by the Bangladesh authorities and UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency.

For most of these refugees, it is the first time they have a proof of their identity, a secure identity card. The biometric, fraud-proof cards are being issued to all verified refugees over 12, UNHCR said in a press release yesterday.

This comprehensive registration -- being simultaneously carried out in all refugee settlements in Cox's Bazar -- is meant to ensure the accuracy of data on refugees in Bangladesh, giving national authorities and humanitarian partners a better understanding of the population and their needs.

Accurate data will help agencies in their programme planning and be able to target assistance where it is needed the most, particularly for people with specific needs, such as women and children taking care of their families and people with disabilities.

Last week, using the biometric data collected during this registration exercise, UNHCR launched the Global Distribution Tool (GDT) in a refugee settlement in Cox's Bazar.

Through verification of fingerprints or iris scans, this tool speeds up distributions, is fraud proof, and can be used by partners to ensure that there is no overlap in assistance. It continues to be rolled out in more settlements in the coming weeks.

The new registration cards indicate that Myanmar is the country of origin, a critical element in establishing and safeguarding the right of Rohingya refugees to return to

their homes in Myanmar.

An estimated 900,000 Rohingya refugees live in crowded settlements in Cox's Bazar, with over 740,000 thought to have fled from Myanmar since August 2017.

The registration exercise, currently underway, began in June 2018. On average, some 5,000 refugees are being registered daily at seven different sites within the settlements.

More than 550 local staff have been recruited to work on the exercise with a goal to complete the registration process during the last quarter of 2019.

UNHCR's Biometric Identity Management System (BIMS) captures biometric data, including fingerprints and iris scans, which secure each refugee's unique identity as well as other important information such as family links.

Both UNHCR and the Bangladeshi authorities meet regularly with the refugee community, including elected community representatives, imams, elders and teachers, to explain the benefits of registration and respond to questions and concerns.

Outreach teams composed of refugee volunteers also go into the community to explain the registration process and encourage people to register.

Rohingya refugees live in an environmentally fragile part of Bangladesh that is prone to natural disasters.

UNHCR is appealing to the international community to continue to support Rohingya refugees and Bangladesh. At the end of July, UNHCR and partners working on the joint refugee response in Bangladesh have received US \$318 million, just over a third of the total US \$920 million needed in 2019.

ROHINGYA REPATRIATION

Bangladesh wants Asean support

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has sought stronger support and cooperation from Asean nations for safe and sustainable return of Rohingyas to Myanmar and reintegration with their society.

"Bangladesh is keen to resolve this problem peacefully and with good neighbourly spirit. If left unresolved, the crisis has the potential to destabilise the entire region," said MP Nurul Majid Mahmud Humayun, while addressing Asean Day celebration at the Thai embassy in Dhaka yesterday.

The forum's Dhaka committee organised the Asean flag raising ceremony followed by a food festival on the occasion.

Nurul Majid said the 1.1 million Rohingya living in Bangladesh created various challenges for the country's economy, ecology, and society.

"So, we solicit support and cooperation from Asean friends and partners for solving the crisis," the minister said.

He also mentioned other issues including degradation of marine environment, trafficking of illicit drugs and arms, robbery in the sea, illegal fishing, cyber crimes, and human trafficking.

"We call upon the Asean community to increase cooperation in responding to these emerging threats," Nurul Majid said, addressing as chief guest.

He said Bangladesh would continue its efforts in coordination with Asean countries to mobilise domestic and international resources for addressing climate change.

He said Bangladesh desires to become a "sectoral dialogue partner" of Asean.

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President seeks France's help

Bss, Dhaka

President Abdul Hamid yesterday sought cooperation from France in resolving the Rohingya crisis and their safe repatriation.

He said this when French Ambassador to Bangladesh Jean-Marie Schuh presented his credentials to him at Bangabhaban, President's Press Secretary Joyal Abedin told the news agency.

The president, during the meeting, said bilateral relations between Bangladesh and France are strong and the existing ties would expand gradually.

Mentioning Bangladesh's liberal investment policy, President Hamid sought more French investment.

The French ambassador said trade and investment relations between Dhaka and Paris are increasing and hoped that it would be strengthened further.

Secretaries concerned to the president and high officials of the foreign ministry were present at the meeting.

Police were never used politically: DMP chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Outgoing Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner Asaduzzaman Mia yesterday said police were never used politically.

"The claim that police were used politically is not backed by evidence, and those who say this have ill motives," said the DMP chief while talking to journalists.

Asaduzzaman said police take lawful and strict actions against people blocking roads, setting public transports on fire and damaging public property.

"If anyone terms this lawful action as politically motivated, that's unjust," he said, adding that the aim of to tarnish the image of the force.

Referring to the 2018 national election,

Asaduzzaman said, "We tried our best to ease the panic. We have successfully ensured maximum security during the election."

He was addressing reporters at a "meet the press" programme in DMP media center, marking the end of his tenure. He joined as DMP commissioner on January 7, 2015 and is going on retirement on August 13.

Regarding taking action against dishonest officials, Asaduzzaman said there is corruption in every sector and they have tried their best to serve the public -- initiating several steps.

"During my tenure, arrest without warrant was almost zero and no public

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DHAKA TODAY

PROCESSION

Raising awareness on dengue
Organiser: Left Democratic Alliance
Venue: Mukti Bhaban, Paltan
Time: 10am

CULTURAL EVENT

Celebrating indigenous day
Organiser: Bangladesh Adivasi Chatra Sangram Parishad
Venue: Faculty of Arts, University of Dhaka
Time: 3pm

HUMAN CHAIN

Demanding speedy trial of Bangabandhu's killers
Organiser: Bangabandhu Shangskritik Jote
Venue: Jaitya Press Club, Topkhana Road
Time: 11am

WORKSHOP

On script writing
Venue: Prachyanat Elephant Road
Time: 11am

48 boys sent to correction centre

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mobile court of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab-2) yesterday sent 48 boys to the Juvenile Correction Centre in Tongi for six months each for their alleged involvement in various crimes.

The boys -- aged between 10 to 18 -- were arrested from Dhaka's Karwan Bazar, Farmgate, Asad Gate,

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PHOTO OF THE DAY

RASHED SHUMON



Incessant downpour couldn't stop these three -- huddled under a plastic sheet -- from reaching Kamalapur Railway Station for their train home before Eid. The photo was taken yesterday.