

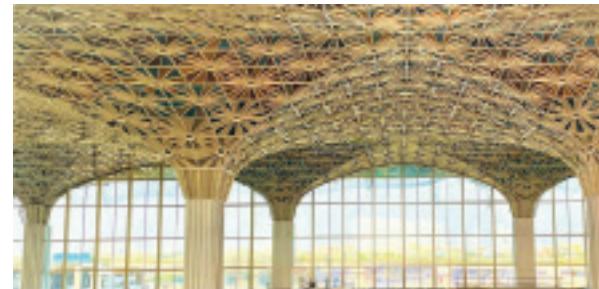


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Not much being done to stop dengue outbreak

City corporations yet to properly start surveillance despite record deaths last year

HELEMUL ALAM

Despite a record-breaking outbreak last year, with more than 1,705 deaths, the authorities concerned are yet to establish a comprehensive surveillance system to track and control the Aedes mosquitoes, the carrier of the deadly dengue virus.

Experts and public health officials, who have been calling for an effective surveillance system in place, are worried about a potential resurgence of the dengue during the upcoming monsoon season, a time generally sees a spike in dengue cases.

They said it is not possible to control Aedes mosquitoes without a round the year-surveillance system to find hotspots



of the mosquitoes and knowing the trend and serotypes of the virus.

Most of the 980 dengue deaths last year were recorded in Dhaka, yet the action taken by the two city corporations, responsible for controlling Aedes mosquitoes, has hardly been seen.

Only this month, Dhaka North City Corporation started surveillance on a small scale by setting up three types of traps at 20 points in DNCC areas. There was no such move from the Dhaka South City Corporation as of now.

"Aedes mosquitoes should be controlled through scientific and systematic ways, but that is still absent," entomologist GM Saifur Rahman told The Daily Star.

He said both the city corporations

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China shows off robot 'dogs of war'

AFP, Kampong Chhnang

China's military yesterday showed off its machine gun equipped robot battle "dogs" at the start of its biggest ever drills with Cambodian forces, as the United States frets about Beijing's growing influence in the Southeast Asian country.

The 15 day exercise, dubbed Golden Dragon, also involves 14 warships -- three from China -- two helicopters and 69 armoured vehicles and tanks, and includes live fire, anti-terrorism and humanitarian rescue drills.

The hardware on show included the so-called "robot dogs" -- remote-controlled four-legged robots with automatic rifles mounted on their backs.

Handlers kept the dogs of war on the leash, demonstrating only their walking capabilities to watching journalists and top brass -- not their shooting skills.

Opening the exercises, Cambodian armed forces commander-in-chief Vong Pisen said they would "enhance the capabilities" of the two armies in the fight against terrorism.

Vong Pisen insisted Cambodia would never allow a foreign military base on its territory, echoing previous assertions by Cambodian leaders.



Harassment writ large

Couple arrested by Rab, sent to jail, and now given clean chit by ATU

EMRUL HASAN BAPPI and
MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Mosharraf Hossain, 48, has been a reconditioned car seller for 30 years and has never been arrested or accused in any criminal case.

Around 3:22am on March 13, 2022, a team from the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab-4) knocked on Mosharraf's home in Mirpur.

Without giving any explanations, the Rab team, led by Inspector Anwar Hossain and Sub-inspector Riaz Uddin, arrested Mosharraf, who owns a car showroom in Diabari of Mirpur.

When asked why he was being arrested, the Rab personnel said that their "senior officers will be able to tell".

Around 4:20am, the Rab team conducted another raid at Mosharraf's other home in the same neighbourhood and apprehended his wife Asma Khatun, 42.

Both were later handed over to Savar Police Station. It was only after the arrest that the couple learned they were accused in a case under Anti-Terrorism Act.

The first information report (FIR) stated that the accused were members of Ansar Al Islam and were planning a

"We [Mosharraf and his wife] were arrested, framed, and then released on bail after languishing in jail for around three and a half months. But we still do not know why we were accused."

Mosharraf Hossain,
who was accused in a case under
Anti-Terrorism Act

sabotage ahead of March 26 that year.

Mosharraf was sent to jail on March 13 and granted bail on June 28 and his wife the next day.

About two months prior, the case was transferred to the Anti-Terrorism Unit (ATU).

After over a year, the investigating officer of the case, ATU Sub-Inspector

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Smooth sailing for
hajj pilgrims
leaving Dhaka

Immigration
process for KSA
being done here

RASHIDUL HASAN

Hajj pilgrims departing for Saudi Arabia from Dhaka this year have a smoother journey ahead. For the first time, all 82,000 pilgrims can now complete key immigration formalities, which were previously necessary upon arrival in Saudi Arabia, right from Dhaka airport before boarding their flights.

Although this facility has been around since 2019, its scope has been largely limited. Now that the scope of this initiative has been expanded, both officials and hajj pilgrims concerned believe it will significantly reduce the hassle with formalities, including electronic visa issuance and biometric data collection, allowing for a smoother experience through Saudi immigration.

However, this facility is

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

**Xi, Putin condemn US
Pledge closer ties as Russia
advances in Ukraine**

REUTERS, Beijing

Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday condemned what they cast as increasingly aggressive US behaviour and pledged to deepen their countries' already close defence and military ties.

In a clear snub to Washington, whose top diplomat flew into China last month to try to persuade Beijing to scale back its relationship with Moscow, Xi signalled Beijing and Moscow saw eye to eye on a range of important issues, including on Ukraine, and would resist Western pressure to downgrade their ties.



"The China-Russia relationship today is hard-earned, and the two sides need to cherish and nurture it," Xi told Putin. "China is willing to ... jointly achieve the development and rejuvenation of our respective countries, and work together to uphold fairness and justice in the world."

A joint statement spoke of concerns about what were described as US efforts to violate the strategic nuclear balance, about global US missile defence that threatened Russia and China, and about US plans for high precision non-nuclear weapons.

Putin, on his first overseas trip since being inaugurated this month for a new presidential term, described Moscow and Beijing's co-operation in world affairs as one of the main stabilising factors in the international arena.



THE 'ORIGINAL' CHICKEN

A male red junglefowl shows off its shiny, colourful plumage at the Hazarikhil Wildlife Sanctuary in Chattogram's Fatickchhari. Red junglefowls, locally known as "bon morog" and which range across Southeast and South Asia, may seem just like another "chicken", or to some, as a delicacy. But did you know that the common chicken was created when red junglefowls were domesticated for human use around 8,000 years ago? They were once found in almost all forested areas of Bangladesh and now occurs only in the forests of Sylhet, Chittagong, Chittagong Hill Tracts and the Sundarbans. They were also one of three main animals, along with domesticated pigs and dogs, brought by Austronesian people from Maritime Southeast Asia in their voyages to the islands of Oceania, starting around 5,000 years ago. Today, their modern descendants are found throughout the world. While the red junglefowl is common in its range and is listed as "Least Concern" by the IUCN, its populations are still threatened due to deforestation, especially in the hill tracts, and its popularity as a delicacy.

PHOTO: KAMOL DAS



Looking out
for the strays



Hezbollah launches
rocket barrage at
Israeli positions

P3



What constitutes
hurting religious
sentiments?

P8

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