

Culex surge worsens mosquito menace in Dhaka

HELEMUL ALAM

Saiful Alam, a resident of Mirpur-12, has been suffering from severe mosquito bites over the past month as the mosquito menace has sharply increased in the area.

Alam, who is paralysed and unable to walk, now burns mosquito coils most of the day to protect himself. "It is very tough, especially at night. Sometimes even mosquito repellents don't work," he said.

After a brief respite from mosquitoes and dengue, residents across Dhaka have again been facing a surge in Culex mosquitoes over the past month.

With both city corporations failing to adequately eliminate breeding grounds, many areas have been struggling with the problem since the onset of winter, and the situation has recently worsened.

Residents of Pallabi, Mirpur, Eskaton, Ramna, Gandaria, Mohammadpur, Razabazar, Tejuria, Uttara, Hazaribagh,

Kamrangirchar, Hatirpool, Moghbazar, parts of Old Dhaka, Manda, Dogair, Dania, Uttarkhan and Adabor are among the worst affected.

"I have been living in the Circuit House area for five years, but I have never seen such a high density of mosquitoes," said Rafiul Islam, a resident of Ramna. "It seems the city corporation did not do anything to eliminate them."

Sumi Aktar of West Razabazar said the number of mosquitoes is extremely high.

"Even after shutting all windows and doors, we cannot avoid the bites. We use mosquito nets, but we cannot stay inside them all evening," she said.

Entomologist Prof Kabirul Bashar of Jahangirnagar University said Culex mosquitoes typically increase during prolonged dry weather. However, the current density is about 40 percent higher than in December last year, which he described as unusual.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Female workers remove powdery residues from polythene previously used to store hazardous chemicals in the capital's Kamrangirchar area, risking their health while preparing the materials for reuse. Inset, workers wash the polythene with water from the Buriganga River, contributing to pollution that threatens aquatic life and people who come into direct contact with the water. The photos were taken recently.

PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA



'No more running after doctors'

Says Health Minister Sakhawat

UNB, Narsingdi

Health and Family Welfare Minister Sardar Md Sakhawat Hossain



yesterday said people will no longer have to run after doctors as the government aims to ensure that doctors reach out to patients at their doorsteps.

"We will develop the health ministry into a completely corruption- and syndicate-free institution," he said during a civic reception accorded to him at his ancestral home at Hafizpur village in Narsingdi's Monohardi upazila.

The minister said healthcare services would be made easily accessible. "We are moving forward with the mindset of delivering medical services

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

'Revolutionary' shift in the stock market Pledges finance minister

UNB, Chattogram

Finance and Planning Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury



yesterday pledged sweeping changes to the country's economy and capital markets, vowing that a "revolutionary transformation" is on the way.

Talking to reporters at Shah Amanat International Airport when he landed in Chattogram after assuming office, Khosru said the government would move away from patronage-based politics and pursue reforms aimed at restoring confidence in the economy and the stock market.

"In the coming days, there will be a revolutionary change in the country's stock market and economy," he said.

The upcoming national budget would not be a conventional one, signalling a break from past approaches, the minister said.

Khosru said the government has worked out multiple plans to recover funds siphoned off abroad and would prioritise economic uplift.

Employment generation would remain at the centre of policy efforts, as job creation is currently the country's "biggest problem", he said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Unread and untaught

Indigenous-language books reach Sylhet classrooms, but teacher shortage stalls learning

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

In classrooms across Sylhet, mother-tongue textbooks for indigenous children are meant to be opened, spoken aloud and lived through. Too often, they remain closed and unused.

Years after the government began distributing these materials, the promise of inclusive education is still struggling to take shape, largely because the system has not put teachers, planning or coordination in place to make the books usable.

According to the Department of Primary Education Office in Sylhet, the initiative began in 2017 to prevent dropouts among indigenous children by including the curriculum in indigenous mother tongues.

In its third year, textbooks written in the mother tongue of indigenous groups were handed over to students. The curriculum was later upgraded from pre-primary to classes one, two and three in 2020.

This year, in Sylhet division, students in 35 schools from three languages -- Tripura, Garo and Sadri -- have been distributed books in their mother tongue. But in classrooms, the absence of instruction in those languages has blunted the impact.

Deepak Ranjan Sharma, headteacher of Ishachhara Government Primary School, said, "I have been in this school since 2019. The education of the ethnolinguistic language has not had much impact on the local community. We get a few books every year. For example, I got the ethnolinguistic book 10 days ago."

He said there were no teachers in the first place, and as a result the importance of the books has also decreased. "Because children do not recognise the letters. Many children

look at the books and put them back," he added.

Fencila Rema, a class two student in Ishachhara Government Primary School in Kulaura, said, "I got new Garo language books. But the teacher can't teach us in our language. On the other hand, my mother can't help me out with the words from the books as she is uneducated. It's not only me. All my friends are facing the

Sayon's father, Mithun Debbarma, echoed him.

Jonok Tripura, president of Bangladesh Adibashi forum in Moulvibazar, said students have received textbooks in the Tripura language, but there is no teacher required to teach it.

Nereus Buam, president of the Niralapunjee Government Primary School management committee



same problems."

Sayon Debbarma, a student of Daluchhara Government Primary School in Sreemangal, said, "We are happy to receive books in our Kokborok language, but a book becomes alive only when someone can guide us through it. When our teachers teach in Bangla, and our parents cannot read, the books stay closed."

in Sreemangal, said, "We wrote to the higher authorities about the problem more than once but got no positive response yet."

Muhammad Rolequal Islam Talukder, divisional deputy director of Department of Primary Education Office in Sylhet division, said, "We published four ethnic language books from 2018 and distributed

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Ex-Kuet VC accused of fund misuse, illegal appointments

Alleges govt probe report

ARAFAT RAHAMAN

Former vice-chancellor Prof Mohammad Masud misused funds from a German-backed research project, made irregular appointments and withdrew salary after his removal from office at Khulna University of Engineering and Technology (Kuet), according to a government-formed investigation report.

The report described the acts as a "breach of trust" and cited recruitment irregularities, tender manipulation, and unauthorised salary withdrawals during Masud's tenure.

Contacted, Masud rejected the findings as "totally biased" and "fabricated", claiming the report was prepared to justify the interim government's decision to remove him.

The Daily Star obtained a copy of the report, submitted to the education ministry in December last year.

The probe followed violence on February 18 that left over 150 students injured, paralysed academic activities for five months and worsened the session jam.

The investigation focused on the "SCIP Plastics Project," funded by Germany's Federal Ministry of the Environment and led by Bauhaus University Weimar.

According to the report, Masud removed

project director Dr Rafizul on December 1, 2024, and assumed charge despite lacking the required expertise.

The committee alleged he pressured the German lead partner, Prof Eckhard Kraft, and threatened to halt work unless he was made project lead. Kraft later agreed to avoid disruption, the report said.

The probe found that funds meant for research materials were used to buy soil to fill low-lying land allegedly owned by Masud and an associate, Nur Alam.

It said Nur Alam was listed as a project employee but appeared to manage Masud's personal assets.

The report also flagged a cash withdrawal of Tk 13 lakh from the project account on January 27, 2025, by financial coordinator Md Asib Adnan Redoy.

Although described as "meeting expenses", the committee rejected the explanation, saying foreign-funded projects require strict documentation.

It cited cheque-related irregularities as well, noting payments were made to "M/S M Islam Trading" while the work was recorded as done by "M/S Rouza Enterprise".

The report said the controversy damaged Kuet's ties with its German

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



অমর একুশে

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Prevent corruption within your own party

TIB calls on PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) yesterday urged the prime minister to address problems "within his own party" to prevent the spread of corruption.

TIB expressed deep concern and condemned the road transport and bridges minister's description of road extortion as a "transaction based on mutual understanding", calling it an attempt to legitimise a serious crime.

In a statement issued yesterday, TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman said, "If road extortion is accepted under the guise of

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

শ্রদ্ধাঞ্জলি

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