

Mutant bird flu 'less lethal'

LONDON: The author of a paper on a mutant bird flu strain said on Monday that experts agreed to publish it only after he explained that the virus was "much less lethal" than previously feared. Professor Ron Fouchier of the Erasmus Medical Centre in Rotterdam, author of one of the papers, told journalists in London that his revised version addressed fears that the paper's findings could be used by bioterrorists. US experts had previously opposed publishing the research — which showed how an engineered H5N1 flu virus could pass easily in the air between ferrets — over fears it could end up in the wrong hands and result in a deadly man-made flu pandemic. — AFP