

# Swine flu infects cells deep in lungs: Study

AFP, Paris

Swine flu can infect cells deeper in the lungs than seasonal flu, thus helping to boost the severity of the illness, a study released yesterday said.

The paper provides the first laboratory corroboration of reports from front-line doctors that some patients with A(H1N1) virus suffer worse symptoms compared to those with run-of-the-mill seasonal flu.

Influenza viruses penetrate cells by attaching themselves to molecules called receptors, located on the outside of the cell wall.

The virus' docking spike and the receptor are like a key and a lock. Some viruses only open a few cells, while others have something rather closer to a pass key, making it possible to infect a larger cell variety.

Once inside, the virus uses the cell's machinery to replicate, eventually bursting the cell and going on to attack others.

Seasonal strains attach themselves almost exclusively to cells found in the nose, throat and upper airway, producing a some of influenza's signature symptoms: runny nose, scratchy throat, a dry cough.

But the new research, published in the journal Nature Biotechnology, shows that the new swine flu -- by sticking to a greater range of receptors -- can also breach cells deep in the lungs.

Lab-dish experiments were carried out by Ten Feizi of Imperial College London and colleagues in which 86 different receptors were exposed to both

seasonal and pandemic flu.

The seasonal strains only locked onto the kind of receptors found in the upper respiratory tract.

But the swine flu virus was also able to latch onto receptors found deep inside the lungs, albeit more weakly. The adhesion results in a more severe lung infection.

Feizi spelt out the risk of what could happen if natural selection encourages viral strains that favour this deep-lung penetration.

"If the flu virus mutates in the future, it may attach to the receptors deep inside the lungs more strongly, and this could mean that more people would experience severe symptoms," said Feizi.

"We think scientists should be on the lookout for these kinds of changes in the virus so we can try to find ways to minimise the impact."

Using a statistical technique, epidemiologists sifting through data from other countries have found similarly disquieting patterns.

French epidemiologist Antoine Flahault has reported a 100-fold increase, compared to seasonal flu, in the number of swine flu deaths in Mauritius and New Caledonia attributed directly to the virus itself rather than secondary bacterial infections or underlying conditions.

Many of those deaths were caused by acute respiratory disease syndrome (ARDS), which requires intensive-care treatment for an average of three weeks. Only 50 percent of ARDS patients survive.

## Dhaka protests

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claims to the CLCS on the limit of the continental shelf by July 2011.

Bangladesh would have to submit its claims to the UN. CLCS over 150 nautical miles (277km) or more area beyond 200 nautical miles of the extended continental shelf in the Bay of Bengal by July 27, 2011.

The minister said the government has also been negotiating with the two neighbouring countries to resolve the maritime and other disputes through bilateral discussions.

In reply to another query of BNP lawmaker Harunur Rashid whether India has claimed 32,000 square km areas within the maritime boundary of Bangladesh to the UN, the minister said the CLCS will give final recommendations after justifying claims of India and Myanmar.

"So, there is no scope to say that India has claimed 32,000 square km within the maritime boundary of Bangladesh before the United Nations makes final recommendations on the issue," the minister said.

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni in scripted answers to lawmakers' queries informed the parliament that the government has moved to create a new post titled 'Inspector General of Missions' (IGM) to oversee the activities of foreign missions to protect country's interests.

In the scripted answer, the foreign minister said process is also underway to appoint necessary manpower for the office of IGM.

Besides, Dipu said steps

## Khaleda flies

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Shamser Mobin Chowdhury, her press secretary Maruf Kamal Khan Sohel, personal aide Shimul Biswas, among others, will accompany the BNP chairperson during her visit.

Khaleda, also the leader of the opposition in parliament, may go to London later to meet her ailing son Tarique but the source could not confirm it.

Khaleda earlier refused to leave the country for Saudi Arabia several times on what was billed as an exile during the tenure of the army-backed caretaker government. The interim government reportedly kept her under pressure to leave the country.

At one stage, the BNP chairperson agreed to leave the country on condition but the Saudi authorities did not issue visa, as they were not convinced whether Khaleda will leave for KSA on pressure or willingly.

Against this backdrop, the interim government arrested her on different charges including corruption on September 2, 2007 and later released on bail on September 11, 2008.

CYCLONE AILA

## Tk 6cr for rebuilding in 2 dists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has allocated Tk 6 crore for four upazilas in Khulna and Satkhira to repair the houses of people hard-hit by the cyclone Aila.

Dakop and Koira of Khulna, and Shyamnagar and Ashashuni of Satkhira, will get Tk 1.5 crore each, Food and Disaster Management Minister Abdur Razzaque said addressing a concluding session of a workshop as the chief guest in the city yesterday.

Besides, Tk 4 crore has been allocated for other affected upazilas of the coastal districts, the minister said, adding that the government has already asked the deputy commissioners concerned to prepare a comprehensive plan on the needs of the affected districts for the next four months.

Bangladesh Disaster Preparedness Centre (BDPC) organised the workshop on 'Community's voice for change adaptation and disaster risk reduction' at BRAC Centre Inn.

Razzaque said people affected by Aila are still living under the sky and the government will start employment generation scheme for these people soon.

BDPC Director Sayedur Rahman chaired the session, also addressed by Swiss Ambassador to Dhaka Dr Dora Rapold.

## Sugar

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Added to this, many of the retailers and other traders were also in the run for procuring additional quantity of sugar to bag extra profit from possible price hike in the coming days, especially on the occasion of Eid.

In the morning hours yesterday, sugar sold at Tk 55-56 a kg at retail level in different city markets. Sugar price rose to as high as Tk 58-60 a kg as wholesale price shot up to about Tk 2,750 per 50 kg at Moulvibazar, and more than Tk 2,900 at Karwan Bazar -- two major markets in the city.

In the past couple of weeks, price of the import-oriented commodity has been on a gradual surge on the domestic market, influenced by rise in its price on the international market due to supply shortfall on account of draught in India and slow harvest in Brazil, two biggest sugar producing nations.

Industry sources said Bangladesh has fallen into the global price rise as it meets more than 90 percent of its annual sugar demand of over 12 lakh tonnes through import.

In the past week, global price of sugar however plunged. Raw sugar, which local refiners import mainly, fell for five straight sessions through Monday amid speculation the highest rates in 28 years will curb demand, according to a Bloomberg report.

To cushion consumers from the price shock of international market, the government withdrew import duty on unrefined sugar and reduced duty on refined sugar last month.

Refiners also promised to sell the sweetener at Tk 39 per kg after duty cut.

But the price, after registering a dip for a few days, rebounded.

"There is a shortage of refined sugar on the wholesale market compared with the demand which causes rise in price," said Abul Hashem, vice-president of Bangladesh Wholesale Sugar Merchants Association, claiming that demand for sugar has increased during Ramadan.

Refiners however turned down the argument of rise in demand for sugar, and said they are supplying about 4,000 tonnes a day, a portion of which is going to Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) for open market operation.

"It's mainly because of panic and rush buying," said Fazlur Rahman, chairman of City Group of Industries, the leading sugar refiner.

Golam Mostafa, general secretary of Bangladesh Sugar Refiners Association, also attributed panic buying among retailers behind the rise in sugar price.

Mostafa suggested fixing the supply chain to check unusual rise in prices. "It requires introducing distributorship to curb unusual price rise and ensure accountability in supply chain," he said.

## SC against trial

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have sent the court's opinion to the law ministry by a special messenger," added the Bangabhaban secretary.

The SC observed that its opinion made under article 106 of the constitution is no law or judgment, and it has no binding effect on future litigation.

The president is not bound by the opinion, but the advisory opinion is entitled to due weight and it may have great persuasive force, it continued.

According to the sources, the court also said its opinion is not a "law declared" and is therefore not binding on the High Court division or subordinate courts. However, it is usually expected to be followed.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Rifles authorities who had suggested the home ministry arrange for a presidential reference to be sent to the SC on the mode of trial would not pursue the government anymore for holding the trial under the army act, said BDR sources.

Some BDR sources said

they believe it would not be wise to hold trial under the army act now that the SC has expressed its opinion against the idea.

"If the government still decides to try the mutineers under the army act, it will face numerous writ petitions and run the risk of having the trial proceedings canceled," said a BDR source.

Against this backdrop, the BDR authorities may request the home ministry to have some mutineers tried under the BDR act and others who committed more grievous offences under the civil law, said a BDR official.

They would however keep asking the government to complete the trial as quick as possible.

"We would suggest a speedy trial tribunal for trying the mutineers. We would also request the government amend the BDR and other existing laws so the trial can be completed as soon as possible," said the official.

The mode of trial became a much-talked about issue as BDR and the army, which lost

its 57 top and mid-ranking officers in the mutiny, wanted the offenders to be tried under the army act.

Besides, the national and army probe committees on the bloody mutiny suggested the government hold the trial under the army act.

But different sections in the society strongly opposed the idea of trying BDR mutineers under the army act.

President Zillur Rahman on August 17 sent a reference to the SC seeking its opinion on whether the people charged with mutiny and massacre at the BDR headquarters can be tried under the military law.

"The offences of killing, attempts to murder, arson and looting that took place during the mutiny at the BDR headquarters, cannot be tried under the BDR Act. But, questions have been raised on whether the trial of the perpetrators can be held directly under the Army Act 1952 or the same law by issuing a notification per Section 5 of the act," the reference said.

The highest punishment under the BDR law is seven years' imprisonment while it's death penalty under the military law, it mentioned.

The SC appointed ten eminent lawyers as amicus curiae (friend of the court) to give their opinions on the issue.

Of them, seven opposed the idea of trying BDR mutineers under the Army Act, two were in favour of the idea and one refrained from giving any opinion.

The seven amici curiae opposing trial under the Army Act are -- Dr Kamal Hossain, advocate TH Khan, barrister M Ameer Ul Islam, advocate Mahmudul Islam, advocate AF Hassan Ariff, barrister Ajmalul Hossain and advocate AF Mesbahuddin.

Barrister Rafique-Ul Huq, advocate Khandaker Mahbubuddin Ahmed backed the idea of holding trial under the Army Act.

Barrister Rokonuddin Mahmud did not give any opinion but suggested returning the reference to the government.

The SC had been holding hearing on the reference since August 25 and completed it on September 3.

However, State Minister for Law Qamrul Islam yesterday said he was unaware of the SC's opinion on the reference.

He told journalists that everyone should respect the apex court's opinion on trial of the perpetrators of massacre at the BDR headquarters.

Replying to a query, the state minister said, if the SC is of the opinion that the trial cannot be held under the Army Act, the government will decide whether it can be held under the existing laws.

"But the decision will be made after holding a meeting with the BDR and army officials and also the chief prosecutor of the case and others concerned," the state minister said.

The government will complete the trial within a short time, he added.

## Plan to set up

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Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed, UNESCO Dhaka Office Representative Kiichi Oyasu and Director General of Bangladesh Academy Shamsuzzaman Khan also spoke on the occasion with Education Secretary Syed Ataur Rahman in the chair.

## Discovery faces debris on way back to Earth

AFP, Houston, Texas

Astronauts on board the space shuttle Discovery were yesterday preparing to maneuver the craft away from a piece of debris, ahead of a bid to return to Earth which may be thwarted by bad weather.

The unidentified piece of debris apparently drifted away from the shuttle during a spacewalk outside the space station on Saturday.

An evasive maneuver was planned for 1602 GMT to prevent the shuttle astronauts from speeding too close to the debris, mission control said.

The "mystery object" was on a course that would bring it close to the shuttle over 11 consecutive orbits of the Earth.

Although stormy weather was forecast at the Florida landing site, two touchdown chances had been earmarked at 2205 GMT and 2342 GMT at NASA's Kennedy Space Center.

## NY pays 9/11

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destruction of the Twin Towers in Manhattan.

They will also mourn those who died in the attacks just hours later on the Pentagon outside Washington and on a fourth plane, which crashed in Pennsylvania after the passengers overpowered the hijackers.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg and other officials will attend the now annual ritual at Ground Zero, when every name is read out and moments of silence mark key events, such as the impact of the two hijacked planes, and the collapse of the towers.

Powerful lights will send beams skyward from the site at nightfall.

Despite a deep desire to properly remember the tragedy, constant financial and legal wrangling has slowed work on replacing the enormous Twin Towers to a snail's pace.

The financial crisis and downturn in the real estate market have made speedy renewal of the neighbourhood even less likely and frustration is rising.

"It has become increasingly clear that New Yorkers should be embarrassed by the debacle that is represented by the failure of government officials to have successfully rebuilt Ground Zero," Barry LePatner, a construction attorney, said.

## 2 more killed

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shootout and sent it to Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

They arrested Abid Hossain Saikat, 30, an accomplice of Bappi, Rab sources said.

Rab personnel ASI Rukan Uddin sustained bullet injury in the incident.

A revolver, a shot gun and three bullets were recovered from the spot.

Officer in-charge of Rampura Police Station Ali Ahmed Hashmi said Bappi was accused in 10 cases filed with different police stations in the city.

In Kushtia, Tukur, a regional leader of Janajuddho faction of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party, was killed at Khalishakundi village in Daulatpur upazila.

On information, a joint team of Daulatpur police and Rab-12 raided Khalishakundi bazaar at around 4:00am. The outlaws were holding a meeting there. Sensing the presence of law enforcers, the criminals opened fire on them triggering a gunfight.

Tukur was found dead after his accomplices managed to flee the scene.

With this, the death toll of the operatives of different outlawed parties in the district from "crossfire" reaches 18 in last 15 days.

## Senakunja

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prime minister, state ministers, lawmakers, leaders of different political parties, foreign diplomats, senior civil and military officials were also present.

About the prime minister's call to the opposition leader, Speaker Abdul Hamid told reporters that he hoped that Khaleda Zia would join the House after Eid-ul-Fitr.

He said that there was a cordial environment when the two leaders were exchanging views. "I feel really good when I see them together in programmes like this," the speakers said.

The speaker was seen helping the leader of the opposition in taking iftar items with a big smile on his face.

Khaleda, also the BNP chairperson, along with few BNP lawmakers and leaders reached the venue at around 6:55pm while Hasina arrived at 7:00pm.

Army Chief Gen Mubeen, Chief of Naval Staff Rear Admiral ZU Ahmed, Air Force Chief Air Marshal SM Ziaur Rahman and Principal Staff Officer Maj Gen Abdul Wadud received the prime minister at the programme.

Entering the venue the Hasina exchanged pleasantries with the invited guests. At about 7:10 she went on to the stage and greeted Khaleda.

Then the two leaders shared pleasantries for around a minute, which created a jubilant environment there. Last year both the leaders also shared some moments together at the Armed Forces Day Ceremony.

In recent times, Khaleda visited Hasina's home to offer condolences on the death of the prime minister's husband Dr M Wazed Miah in May this year.

A special prayer was offered for the development of armed forces and continued peace, advancement and prosperity of the country at the after party.

"Unfortunately, the only conclusion that can be drawn from a careful study of their actions at this important site is an attitude that the public be damned."

In theory, five new skyscrapers are planned, with a park and memorial in the middle, and a transport hub. But many now think that there is no market for all five towers.

For now, the site strikes casual observers as merely a large hole, although work on foundations of several key elements is well underway and the frame for the future Freedom Tower is rising.

A poll last week by Quinnipiac University found that two thirds of New Yorkers think even the memorial will not be ready in time for the 10th anniversary in 2011.

"They don't expect to have any part of Ground Zero ready by the tenth anniversary," Maurice Carroll, director of the university's polling institute said.

"We're getting fed up with the continual lack of progress at Ground Zero. And we think it's important that there be some signs of movement this year," Carroll added.

According to the poll, 25 percent of New Yorkers said the slow pace made them "ashamed," the highest number to give that answer since it was first asked in 2006.

Police recovered one LG, five bullets and a sword from the spot.

He was accused in six cases including four for murder filed with Daulatpur and Mirpur police stations.

A total of 683 "crossfire" incidents took place in 10 southwestern districts since 2004.

Kushtia tops the list with 239 incidents alone.

## GOVT TO GO TOUGH ON OUTLAWS

State Minister for Home Shamsul Haque Tuku yesterday said the government would go tough against the outlaws in the southwest if they don't return to normal life.

"They should grab the opportunity of the present democratic system. If not, the government will intensify the ongoing crackdown in the region to capture them," Tuku added.

He said this while talking to reporters at his secretariat office after a meeting with US Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia Michael S Owen.

Tuku said they had a discussion on a wide range of issues. The US official offered training and technical assistance to the police and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), he added.

Owen also met Food and Disaster Management Minister Abdur Razzaque at his office at the secretariat and discussed how to combat the impacts of climate change in Bangladesh and build food security.

Owen, who came to Dhaka on Wednesday on a two-day visit, concluded his visit to Bangladesh yesterday.

## Swine flu

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Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) in Dhaka for laboratory confirmation.

While talking to The Daily Star Nurunnabi said Nasreen bore the telltale sign of swine flu apart from high fever and cough.

"Upazila health workers are taking care of the family and if any of them, by the time, contracted the disease they would take them to nearby health centres," he added.

Prof Mahmudur Rahman of IEDCR also said he was yet to receive the sample of the swab as of 6:00pm yesterday.

Director General of the Directorate General of Health Services Prof Shah Monir Hossain said, "We are yet to confirm whether she died of swine flu."

When asked about the slack awareness campaign that prevented her from seeking treatment in the public health care centres, the DG said the pace of campaign is a bit slower in countryside as the swine flu cases are still low outside Dhaka.

"But we are trying to boost up the campaign outside Dhaka. Even during this Eid season we would display posters and leaflets on buses, launches and at different terminals," he said.

He also said that the number of H1N1-affected people had already come down.

On the issue of marketing the anti-viral drug he said the Drug Administration was preparing a list of pharmacies where the drug would be made available.

"The list might be finalised by Sunday," he added.