

## 2,000+ dengue hospitalisations this month alone

Yesterday adds 218 to tally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In only nine days of August, the number of dengue-infected hospitalisations have crossed the 2,000 mark across the country.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), a total of 4,753 patients have been diagnosed with dengue this year. Of the total infected, 199 are from outside Dhaka.

However, of the total, 2,095 were diagnosed since the start of August till yesterday morning, indicating how fast dengue cases are rising at the moment.

At least 218 people were admitted to hospitals with dengue fever during the 24 hours till 8am yesterday. Of them, only 29 are from outside Dhaka.

Meanwhile, at least 2,286 people were hospitalised across the country in July, which was 272 in June and 43 in May.

Though most hospitalised patients have been released, 931 are still undergoing treatment as of yesterday, DGHS data shows.

In light of all this, Dhaka North City Corporation mayor Md Atiqul Islam said they will continue to take stern action against anyone who does not take care of possible breeding sources at their residence and establishments.

The DNCC mayor made the remarks while addressing an awareness programme at city's Gabtoli area.

"We will impose fines and take other legal actions if we find Aedes mosquito larvae at any government, semi government, autonomous, or private buildings," he said.

Mayor Atique said all officials, employees, and ward

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A conservancy worker sorts through medical waste at a dumping point on the capital's Green Road. Even though dumping medical waste in such a manner is strictly prohibited, healthcare facilities ignore the rules from time to time. This negligence, however, can lead to someone's death, due to people coming in contact with pathogens through the contaminated garbage. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## Liberation War Award launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has introduced the "Liberation War Award" to honour the significant contribution and glorious role of individuals and organisations or institutions in the country's Liberation War.

The Ministry of Liberation War Affairs yesterday issued a notification detailing the Liberation War Award Policy-2021.

The award will be given in seven categories, and will be handed over to the recipients on December 15 every year.

Each recipient will be awarded with a gold medal, a replica of the medal and Tk 2 lakh.

For non-government organisations to be considered, it must be known by all or recognised by the Bangladesh government.

That organisation must play key role in implementing spirit of the Liberation War.

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A seemingly never-ending tailback was witnessed at the capital's College Gate area yesterday, possibly indicating that city dwellers have already decided that the lockdown is over.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## 'As if it's already been lifted'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The "strict lockdown" is set to end tomorrow. However, judging by the significant rise in public and vehicular movement in the capital yesterday, one could say it has already been lifted.

Huge number of vehicles, except public transport, occupied the city streets. There were traffic congestions in many major intersections. Many shops remained open, and people were seen roaming around in droves.

Long queues of vehicles were seen at different roads and areas including Mirpur Road, Airport Road, Farmgate, Karwan Bazar, Kakrail and Malibagh.

Private cars and rickshaws dominated the roads. Many pedestrians were seen without masks, while many wore theirs on their chin.

In the morning, office-goers were seen rushing to work. Those who did not have cars had to rely on rickshaws and rickshaws. They complained that they were being charged extra, and finding no other option, many had to resort to walking.

City dwellers were seen coming out of residences without much reservation yesterday. Some were going to get vaccine jabs, as a mass inoculation programme started in the country on Saturday.

"There are more cars on the road now, and you have to wait at the traffic signal for

a long time," said Abul Hasan, a rickshaw-puller, at Shahbagh.

Visiting different parts of the capital, including Shahbagh, Uttara, Mohakhali, Mirpur, Kalabagan, Bijoy Sarani, Badda, Farmgate, Shyamoli, Karwan Bazar, Bangla Motor, and Malibagh, correspondents of the newspaper saw Dhaka almost returning to normal, with increased number of vehicles and people.

Saniyat Hossain, an employee of a private organisation, who was going to his office at Banani from Mohammadpur, said he saw more traffic yesterday compared to previous days.

"But there is also lax monitoring today [yesterday]," he said. "It almost feels like a regular workday in the capital. The way people and vehicles are crowding the streets, it seems as if the lockdown has already been lifted."

Presence of law enforcers was smaller compared to previous days. No traffic police were seen at many check-posts.

A traffic sergeant on Airport Road said, "There are still check-posts. However, the pressure of vehicles increased a lot today [yesterday]."

Like previous days, many were seen returning to the capital through the entry points of the city, including Abdullahpur, Babu Bazar bridge, Postogola bridge and Gabtoli, on foot.

## 28 AXLE LOAD CONTROL CENTRES RHD inks deal with two companies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Roads and Highways Department (RHD) yesterday signed contracts with two companies for installing 28 axle load control centres across the country to prevent overloaded vehicles plying the highways.

The axle load of a vehicle refers to the total weight being borne on the roadway through all wheels connected to a given axle.

Under two packages, two local companies will build necessary infrastructure and facilities for installing control centres in the next one year at a cost of Tk 489.7 crore.

As per the contract, National Development Engineers Ltd will work for 17 stations in East Zone -- Dhaka, Mymensingh, Chattogram and Cumilla road zones -- at a cost of Tk 301.35 crore.

Spectra Engineers Ltd will work for 11 stations in the West Zone -- Gopalganj, Khulna, Rangpur and Rajshahi zones -- at a cost of Tk 188.35 crore.

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## Abul Mansur Chowdhury passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Abul Mansur Chowdhury, a freedom fighter and former chief assistant editor of The Daily Star died of Covid-19 early yesterday. He was 66.

He breathed his last while undergoing treatment at a city hospital at 1:20am.

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## Selling rented cars to unsuspecting buyers

CID arrests seven scammers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

He first rented cars and SUVs from rent-a-car services.

Then 32-year-old Abul Kaium alias Ishtiaq alias Mehedi used to sell those to unsuspecting buyers for cheap. And he made around Tk 4 crore through fraudulence.

Criminal Investigation Department (CID) came to know about it after arresting Kaium and his associates from Dhaka and nearby areas on Sunday.

The arrestees are Ali Mizia alias Abdul Hai (46), Nazmul Hasan (19), Sani Rahman (20), Alamgir Sheikh (48), Sajratul Yeakin Rana (33), and Md Selim (27).

CID also seized seven cars from their possessions. Addressing a briefing yesterday, Mukta Dhar, special superintendent of CID, said Kaium used to work for an NGO in Cox's Bazar but he lost the job for fraud.

Kaium then came to Dhaka and rented the second and third floors of a four-storey building in Gazipur and started a garment factory -- "AK Fashion", she said.

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## Gold bars worth Tk 2.9cr recovered from Rohingya man

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) yesterday recovered 33 gold bars from a Rohingya man during a raid at TV Tower area, adjacent to the Kutupalong Rohingya camp, in Ukhiya upazila of Cox's Bazar.

Joynal Abedin (65), a resident of a Rohingya camp located in Bandarban's Naikhongchhari upazila, was detained by BGB members with the gold bars. The raid was carried out at 8:30am, after a tip-off.

Lt Col Ali Haider Azad Ahmed, commander of Cox's Bazar 34 Battalion of BGB, told The Daily Star that Joynal was handed over to Ukhiya Police Station.

BGB has filed a case against him, said the commander, adding that the market value of the gold is approximately Tk 2,91,40,000.

The bars have been deposited in the government's treasury, he added.

ARUN BIKASH DEY, CTG

Another fungus (Mucormycosis) patient has been identified in Chattogram and is being treated at Chattogram Medical College Hospital (CMCH) since Friday.

This patient, unlike the previous one, did not test positive for Covid-19 but had contact with a coronavirus patient, said CMCH doctors.

The 45-year-old man has had diabetes for years, according to them.

Prof Dr Sujat Paul, head of the medicine department at CMCH, said the patient was diagnosed with Mucormycosis on August 5 and was admitted to the hospital the next day.

"After a thorough investigation, it was confirmed that he has been infected with Mucormycosis, a type of fungal infection commonly known as black fungus," he said, adding that the patient felt toothache and his face was swollen.

"Only Covid-19 patients are not necessarily vulnerable to Mucormycosis infection," Dr Paul said when asked why the patient was infected despite not being tested positive for coronavirus.

## Another black fungus case detected in Ctg

"This fungus is found all around us in nature, but it cannot infect healthy people's immune system," he explained.

"People with weakened immune system due to diseases such as cancer, renal failure, HIV, and diabetes are vulnerable to Mucormycosis," Dr Paul added.

"Covid-19 patients who have to take steroid for a long time and patients who receive long-term treatment in ICU are also vulnerable," Dr Paul said.

Contacted, Prof Dr AQM Serajul Islam Chowdhury, former head of dermatology at CMCH, said Mucormycosis is not contagious and healthy people should not be too worried about it.

He, however, urged everyone to maintain personal hygiene and follow health rules.

Earlier on July 26, a 60-year-old Covid-19 survivor was detected with Mucormycosis in Chattogram.

Her family has still been struggling to manage

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## GUARD OF HONOUR JS body scraps proposal to bar women officials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In face of huge criticism, the parliamentary body on Liberation War Affairs Ministry has dropped its recommendation that had called for barring female officials from attending guard of honour to freedom fighters.

The parliamentary watchdog on Sunday removed its earlier recommendation from the minutes of the June 13 meeting when it was tabled, meeting sources said.

The district or upazila administration honour late freedom fighters on behalf of the state following their demise.

According to state honour regulations, government officials such as deputy commissioners (DCs) or upazila nirbahari officers (UNOs) place flowers on the coffin.

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In an unwanted break from the norm, load-workers at Chattogram's Evergreen Ghat now come to the dock and spend their time playing games like ludo on their phones, chit-chatting, and waiting for that rare call of duty. Since July 21, they've only got to work four full days. This photo was taken from Majhir Ghat area.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

## TALIBAN RESURGENCE IN AFGHANISTAN Bangladesh needs to be cautious: experts

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The civil war in Afghanistan, where the Taliban are capturing large territories, may destabilise the neighbouring South and Central Asian countries and inspire militants, said international relations analysts yesterday.

They said authorities in Bangladesh need to be extremely cautious to ensure that the youths do not fall prey to the draws of the Taliban as was the case earlier.

The recommendation came at a webinar titled "Current Afghan situation and Bangladesh" organised by the South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG) of North South University yesterday.

Violence has escalated across Afghanistan after US and other international forces began to withdraw their troops from the country, following 20 years of military operations.

Taliban militants have made rapid advances in recent weeks. Having captured large swathes of the countryside, they are now targeting key towns and cities. They have already seized five provinces. Heavy fighting has also been reported in Herat in the west, and in the southern cities of Kandahar and Lashkar Gah, reports BBC.

"Afghanistan is already in a civil war. One third of the Afghans are now displaced. There are deaths, starvation and helplessness growing every day," said Md Shahidul Haque, professorial fellow at the SIPG, NSU.

"Is there an endgame? I would say no," he said, adding that ethnic and sectarian conflicts within Afghanistan suggests a united Afghan people is unlikely in the near future.

Shahidul Haque, former foreign secretary of Bangladesh, said the neighbouring countries have various interests in

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