Delta variant

As the variant replicates inside the human body faster and more times than the other variants, WHO regards it as the "fastest and fittest" variant.

Both vaccinated and unvaccinated people can be affected by it. But greater risk of transmission is seen among unvaccinated people.

Infection by the delta variant produces high virus load in both vaccinated and unvaccinated people, therefore fully vaccinated people can also get infected (called "breakthrough infection") and experience illness.

The good news is that vaccines were designed to protect against severe illness and they are still doing the job.

Recent data suggests that this variant grows more rapidly in nose and the respiratory tract of human body. The symptoms are just like common cold such as cough, headache, fever, and additionally, loss

The unvaccinated people may suffer from hypoxia and need immediate hospitalisation.

Some limitations noted are that, the vaccine's neutralising antibodies sometimes fail to bind with spike proteins. Additionally, helper T-cell may also be resistant.

Still, mass vaccination and ensuring health guidelines -- such as wearing masks and maintaining distancing are followed -- can curb the transmissions and sufferings.

The writer is a former Associate Professor, Pharmacology & Therapeutics, Shaheed Monsur Ali Medical College, Dhaka.

Bodies

FROM PAGE 12

Coast Guard officials. Bashir Uddin Khan, officer-in-charge of Sandwip Police Station, told The Daily Star that two floating bodies of Rohingya women were found in separate places of Sandwip around 11:30am yesterday and later those were recovered.

After completing legal procedures, the bodies were handed over to Coast Guard officials to be sent to Bhasan Char, said the OC.

The boat capsized 15km off Bhasan Char's east, said Coast Guard

Soon after the incident, Coast Guard East Zone Zonal Commander Captain Kazi Shah Alam had said, "More than 20 Rohingyas were

reportedly missing." In Chattogram, over 100 Rohingyas, including women and children, have been detained after they fled Bhasan Char on boats and reached Mirsarai and Sandwip upazilas on different times, said police source.

According to the police, the Rohingyas managed to flee the island with the help of local brokers.

Bhasan Char housing facilities in Noakhali's Hatiya has been built to relocate the Rohingyas from Cox's

3 killed as vehicle

around 3:00am yesterday when the

driver lost control over the vehicle. On information, police went to the spot, rescued the four and took them to Amtali Upazila Health Complex where doctors declared the two

Chinese nationals and Fakhrul dead. The driver, Md Musa Mridha, was undergoing treatment there.

Aminul Islam, a resident of the area, said locals rushed to the scene after hearing that a pickup truck fell into a ditch. But they could not rescue the passengers because it was dark at that time.

About half an hour later, police arrived there and rescued the four, he

Contacted, Md Jahangir Mallik, superintendent of police in Barguna, said the authorities of the power plant and the Chinese embassy in Dhaka initiated the process of sending the bodies of the two Chinese nationals to their homeland.

Death toll

FROM PAGE 12

the missing. "Thanks to God and also to my phone, I'm alive," said Marcel Francois, who was rescued from his collapsed two-story home in Les Cayes.

His younger brother Job Francois said a desperate-sounding Marcel had called to say, "'Come save me, I'm under the concrete'... He told me he couldn't breathe, that he was dying."

The neighbors and Job spent hours freeing him and his 10-year-old daughter from the heavy debris.

In the northwestern city of Jeremie, another badly hit area, doctors treated injured patients on hospital stretchers underneath trees and on mattresses by the side of the road, as healthcare centers have run out of space.

"We do have a serious issue," Jerry Chandler, the head of Haiti's Civil Protection Agency, told Reuters.

"There are very important facilities that are dysfunctional as we speak and those that are functional are receiving

an overflow of patients," he said. At least 1,297 people were killed in the 7.2-magnitude quake that struck Saturday about 100 miles (160 kilometers) to the west of the densely populated capital Port-au-Prince, which was devastated in a massive 2010 quake.

9 killed in road crashes in four districts

STAR REPORT

Six people died when a CNG-run autorickshaw was hit by a covered van in Habiganj's Shayestaganj upazila while three others were killed in separate road accidents in three other districts yesterday.

In the Habiganj accident, all the deceased -- four men and two women - were in the three-wheeler, said Ajay Chandra Deb, officer-in-charge of Shayestaganj Police Station.

A Sylhet-bound covered-van hit the three-wheeler from behind on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway in Olipur around 7:45am, the OC said, adding that another person was critically injured in the accident.

The deceased were auto-rickshaw driver Ahad Miah, 30, his wife Honufa, 35, Sohag Miah, 28, Swapan Miah, 25, all residents of Fandail village; and Rahela, 30 and Alamgir

Miah, 28, residents of Sribaur village of Chunarughat upazila.

Rajia, 25, was injured in the accident and is undergoing treatment at Sylhet Osmani Medical College Hospital, the OC said.

Shayestaganj highway police and fire service officials recovered the bodies from the spot and sent them to Habiganj Sadar Modern Hospital morgue. Islam, manager

Shayestaganj Fire Service and Civil Defence, said the dead and the injured were workers of Alipore Pran Shayestaganj Highway OC Mainul

Islam said, due to the accident, vehicular movement on the highway was suspended for around two hours. Police seized the covered van and the CNG auto-rickshaw. The driver of the covered van fled the scene. A case was being filed with the Shayestaganj

Highway Police Station in this regard of the upazila. when this story was filed yesterday

In Satkhira, a bank official was killed when a bus hit his motorcycle around 7:00am yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Ajmir Hossain, 27, of Naopara village under the district's Ashashuni upazila. He was a field officer of Grameen

The accident took place in Chaighoria area on the Satkhira-Jashore road, said Delwar Hossain, officer-in-charge of Sathkhira Sadar

In Manirampur upazila of Jashore, a timber trader was killed and his younger brother seriously injured in a head-on collision between a motorbike and a passenger bus around noon yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Sahabuddin, 36, of Majhlauri village

The incident took place in front of the Sundalpur Dipra brick kiln on the Jashore-Chuknagar road.

A speeding bus hit their motorcycle leaving Sahabuddin dead on the spot, said Sikder Matiar Rahman, officer-incharge of Manirampur Police Station.

In Panchbibi upazila of Joypurhat, a man died after being run over by a speeding truck around noon yesterday.

The deceased was Masud Rana, 23, son of Maksudul Haque under Ulipur village in Dinajpur Sadar upazila.

Police in the upazila said Masud was heading to Joypurhat on his motorcycle. When he arrived at Bhimpur village in Panchbibi upazila on the Hili-Joypurhat road, his vehicle collided head-on with a speeding truck heading towards Dinajpur from Joypurhat.

He died on the spot, said police.

PHQ revamps recruitment process

Only a certain number of qualified candidates from a merit list -- which will be made using software on the basis of their SSC GPA, minimum required educational qualifications for the post, height and endurance test results -- will be called for the written examination.

There will be a written test of 45 marks and a viva-voce of 15 which will be taken by a committee headed by SPs. Earlier, the written test and viva were worth 40 and 20 marks respectively. Officers with good reputation from the PHQ will also be present during the viva.

The required height for female constable aspirants has been made 5 feet 4 inches from the earlier 5 feet 2 inches while the required height for male constable aspirants remains 5 feet 6 inches.

Before the shortlist is prepared, the district police administration will send reports to the PHQ after physically checking whether the height declared

on the online application is authentic, taking endurance tests and a short viva to assess the candidate's "smartness".

In the endurance test, male and female constable candidates will have to run 200 metres in 28 seconds and 34 seconds respectively, to qualify. Earlier, male and female constables had to run 1,600 metres in 6.5 minutes and 8.5 minutes

This system will definitely reduce the chances of corruption and bribery to a great extent as short-listed and fit candidates will qualify for the written test and their exam sheets will be evaluated by officers in the PHQ," said a PHQ official, requesting anonymity.

Senior officials led by Inspector General of Police (IGP) Benazir Ahmed have already held several meetings on the recruitment of the constables.

The IGP warned of severe punishment if any member of the force is found involved in any

irregularities and corruption in this constables in 2019 during the tenure recruitment, said a PHQ official. Before recruitment, the constables will also face a dope test.

An official at the concerned section of the PHQ said they are trying their best to issue the recruitment circular within this month. Asked how many constables will be recruited, he said there are now around 4,300 vacant posts. Another 600 posts may fall vacant in the next few months, so the number will be around 5,000, he

The PHQ will form a high-powered committee which will supervise the entire recruitment process. Police Internal Oversight, the counter intelligence unit of the force, will be on alert and even the cellphones of the SPs and those involved with the recruitment will be under surveillance, the officer said, requesting anonymity.

A candidate will be deemed unfit if anyone lobbies for him or her, the official added.

The last recruitment of 9,680

of immediate past IGP Mohammad Jabed Patwari was largely fair, barring some irregularities, for which the Anti-Corruption Commission praised him.

100 policemen, additional constables to superintendents, were relieved of duties by the PHQ on charges of taking bribes from people seeking constable jobs in the last round of recruitment in 2019. Before that, there had been various irregularities in the recruitment of constables for a long

Mohd Mahfuzur Rahman Al-Mamun, assistant inspector general (recruitment and career planning-1) at the PHQ, said, "Recruitment in the force is being modernised, alongside ensuring transparency, accountability, and fairness.

Total members in the force now number over 2.13 lakh, including around 1.30 lakh constables. One policeman is providing security to 751 people, PHQ officials said.

JMB now banking on other groups

Besides, JMB operatives were also found joining with IS-inspired outfit "Neo JMB" and taking part in their activities.

Take Md Enayet, a member of mainstream JMB, for example.

He joined JMB in 2001 and was arrested in 2006 by Rab in an explosives case filed against him with Gazipur Police Station. He is now in Kashimpur jail.

Quoting internal sources, counterterrorism officials said Enayet has now gotten connected with "Neo JMB" and is working to spread the scourge of militancy inside the jail.

State (IS), said a senior official of the Crime (CTTC) unit, requesting anonymity.

Recently, another mainstream JMB operative -- Ruhulla -- joined Enayet in the jail, the official said.

The CTTC official claimed to have gotten the information following surveillance intelligence and interrogation of two militants who were arrested recently.

On August 17, 2005, banned terror outfit Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) almost simultaneously detonated 459 bombs in 63 out of 64 districts of the country. After the synchronised attacks, 159 cases were lodged across the country. Police have completed probing the

They submitted final reports in 17 cases and charge sheets in 142 others.

and activists were named as accused, according to data from the police headquarters.

Of the accused, around 1,023 militants were arrested. However, there is no updated data about how many of them are now behind bars. "Although most of the JMB

members lead a normal life after walking out of jail, some 20 to 30 old JMB operatives have gone into hiding and are trying to recruit new members," said an official of CTTC

CTTC chief Md Asaduzzaman said most of the JMB leaders were arrested Enayet was drawn to the world of and some of them were executed in militancy by the emergence of Islamic cases over the attacks. "The arrest and execution of the top leaders shattered Counter Terrorism and Transnational the strength of JMB. The outfit tried to recoup but failed due to drives by law enforcers," he said.

The outfit may have some supporters but its organisational strength is weak, said Asaduzzaman.

Asked, the CTTC chief said the JMB operatives who walked out of jail were under their surveillance.

On JMB members getting involved with other militant outfits, he said there was no official confirmation on it. "Some of the JMB operatives may joined Neo JMB due to reasons associated with ideology. But we treat all militants in the same manner. Due actions are taken against them," he added. JMB NOW HAS TWO THOUSAND

MEMBERS

According to intelligence sources, JMB, which was formed by Shaikh

In the charge sheets, 1,131 JMB leaders Abdur Rahman in 1998, has around 2,000 members now.

The outfit still has a strong base in some places in 12 districts --Mymensingh, Sherpur, Jamalpur, Rangpur, Dinajpur, Thakurgaon, Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari and Chapainawabganj, said CTTC officials.

Although Salehin is the ameer of the outfit, Rezaul Haque alias Tanvir Mahmud used to coordinate its operation in Bangladesh. Tanvir was arrested by CTTC in April this year and since then there has been no update on the outfit's present chief, said investigators.

"JMB may hold a strong position in some districts, but we are aware of their activities and conducting drives to arrest its absconding members," said Rahmat Ullah Chowdhury, additional deputy commissioner of

SOURCE OF FUND

The CTTC said JMB now completely depends on funding from local donations and conducting crimes like robbery, snatching and mugging to collect funds.

Around Tk seven to eight lakh was collected during Ramadan. Of the funding, Tk three to four lakh came from places of the northern part of the country, Tk three lakh came from Mymensingh region, Tk 20 to 25 thousand from Gazipur and Tk 15 to 20 thousand from

Sources said that a man named Abdullah from Narayanganj was a financer. He was an expatriate in

South Africa. But recently he died and funds have stopped coming from him. The outfit is providing financial

support to families of their arrested members, said sources. They pay around Tk two thousand to Tk five thousand monthly to some 60 such

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) also thinks that the JMB's strength has

weakened organisationally.

Talking with The Daily Star Commander yesterday, Wing Khandaker Al Moni, director of Rab's legal and media wing, said, "The outfit's strength is weak but we are not conducting drives whenever we get information.'

Rab has so far arrested some 1,373 JMB men since 2004

'REHABILITATION' Md Mahfuzul Islam, deputy commissioner of CTTC unit, said they were providing social and financial support to militant leaders and supporters coming out of jail under a rehabilitation programme.

"So far, we have approached around 24 militants, who came out of jail, for social integration. But only eight of them take financial support from us and most of them were from mainstream JMB," he

Mahfuzul said they are also working to ensure a de-radicalisation programme inside the prisons.

"We are expecting that we will be able to start the de-radicalisation programme in prison in this running fiscal year," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Kosygin warns Yahya

decided to defy even gunfire to help the people of Bangladesh overcome the prospect of famine. They refused to recognise legitimacy of a boundary "which attempts to separate those in pain from those who can help".

"Human beings do not need permission to aid those threatened with death," said a spokesperson of the operation.

Petrapole today in two white Land Rovers carrying food and medicine for the starving people of Bangladesh. However, Pakistani troops stopped

the volunteers within minutes after they had crossed the Indian border outpost.

After a day of negotiations with the army, the Omega teams decided to sleep in their cars and attempt to continue with their missions the following morning. At 9:20pm, both teams were arrested by Pakistani forces and taken to Jessore.

The next morning both teams were They crossed the Indian border at returned to the Indian border and told not to return to East Pakistan, or they would face arrest and prosecution. NEW PAKISTAN BID TO INTERNATIONALISE

BANGLADESH ISSUE

Pakistan today made a proposal for what it called "defusing the present tension" along the Indo-Pakistan border. In a letter to the president of the security council, Pakistan's permanent representative at the UN suggested that a committee, comprising members of the security council should visit the "areas of tension" along the border.

AUSTRALIAN CONCERN OVER TRIAL

The Australian government informed Pakistan of its concern over the trial of Bangabandhu, Foreign Affairs

Minister Nigel Bowen told Australian Federal Parliament today.

'We have noted with concern that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman whose party, the Awami League, captured a clear majority at the recent elections, has been

brought to trial for treason," he said. Australian expressed through a personal message from the Prime Minister William McMahon to Yahya their anxieties in this matter, shared the Australian foreign minister.

Shamsuddoza Sajen is a journalist and researcher. He can be contacted at sajen1986@gmail.com

BR wants its own

projects, of which six are for carrying out feasibility studies to improve the services of the state-run transport

to hire foreign and local consultants for carrying out feasibility studies, drawing detailed designs, getting construction supervision works and others, all of which are expensive

In this situation, the BR is now considering forming a body like RITES in Indian Railway and IIFC in Bangladesh, they said.

Established in 1974 under the aegis of Indian Railway, RITES is a multidisciplinary consultancy organisation in the fields of transport, infrastructure and related technologies.

But, for most projects, the BR has as a leading consultant with operational experience in more than 55 countries, according to its website. On the other hand,

> Company (IIFC) is a Bangladesh government advisory body that works under the finance ministry. The organisation provides different types of services, including carrying

> out surveys, baseline study, impact

financial analysis, carrying out and reviewing feasibility studies.

by the Director-General Office of BR through an order on June 13. Monjur-Ul-Alam Chowdhury,

additional director general (rolling stock), will lead the technical advisory committee. The ADGs for infrastructure, operations, and marketing and corporate planning and joint director general (mechanical) will be members of the committee.

On the other hand, Abu Jafar Miah, director (engineering), was assigned as convener of the working committee.

evaluation, research, economic and The directors for mechanical, procurement, traffic and the deputy chief planning officers will be the

> A BR official said currently they have to hire a consultant firm for carrying out feasibility studies, detail design and construction supervision. And to hire a firm. they have to go through a lengthy

> If BR has its own agency for such consultancy services, it would take them less time to select the projects, help in implementation and save public money, he said wishing not to

Officials were

upon his direction, the then management embezzled money, said an ACC investigator on condition of anonymity

On August 8, the ACC summoned 34 people, including the former managing director and directors of FAS Finance, to quiz over the embezzlement.

A four-member team led by ACC's Deputy Director Gulshan Anowar Prodhan are quizzing them. They are scheduled to quiz another 12 persons

Recently, investigators have found the involvement of Halder, a former managing director of NRB Global Bank and Reliance Finance, and 74 others in the embezzlement of about Tk 2,000 core from the NBFIs International Leasing and Financial Services Limited (ILFSL) and FAS Finance between 2014 and 2019.

The money was misappropriated through fake loans by 20 fictitious business organisations, according to the ACC's investigation.

example Take the misappropriation of about Tk 45 crore by one Konika Enterprize.

Ram Prashad Roy, the proprietor of Konika Enterprize, applied for a working capital loan on November 30, 2017 to FAS against 200 decimal land worth about Tk 25.6 crore as collateral.

FAS in its 194th meeting of the board of directors approved the Tk 45 crore short-term loan on December 13, 2017.

In the enquiry, the ACC found that Halder was the owner of the land. Though no money was repaid, the FAS board renewed the loan on December 24, 2018. During the enquiry, the balance of the loan was found to be about Tk 49.18 crore.

The money was supposed to be used by Konika to purchase capital machinery but the ACC found that of the Tk 45 crore, about Tk 11.32 crore was used to repay a loan of seven companies with ILFSL.

About Tk 4 crore was used to adjust MTB Marine's loan with FAS Finance, while Tk 5 crore was transferred to One Bank's Chattogram Branch's client JK Trade International's account and Tk 2 crore to Mercantile Bank's Mohakhali Branch's client Fashion Plus's account.

About Tk 18 crore was deposited t Konika Enterprize's account with Bank Asia. Established in 1997, FAS Finance

became mired in irregularities in recent times and is under the scanner of the Bangladesh Bank. On June 6, the BB refused to allow

FAS Finance's former MD Pritish

Kumar Sarker to travel to the US. The anti-graft watchdog filed 15 cases against 70 persons for misappropriating about Tk 1,132 crore of ILFSL. In these cases, Halder

has been made the prime accused. Halder put his men at the helm of the financial institutions so that he could easily take loans from those and

misappropriate the funds. He took loans from non-existent institutions against companies created by him. In some cases, he used part of the funds to repay instalments of loans taken

1995 McLaren

against his several fictitious firms.

literally unique and one of just three that have been driven less than 1,000 miles.

The price was far above the \$15 million pre-auction estimate and beat the model's previous high of \$19,805,000 paid for a similarly rare F1 LM-Specification at Monterey in The McLaren F1 was the undisputed

star of the week, and collectors and

auction houses were watching its sale

price closely as a barometer for the market. The F1 is considered one of the first modern super cars and is credited with reviving the McLaren racing and car brand. McLaren only made about 100 F1s, so they rarely come up for auction and collectors around the world wait anxiously for

Indonesia volcano erupts, blankets villages in ash

AFP, Jakarta

their sale.

Indonesia's most active volcano Mount Merapi erupted yesterday, belching a cloud of ash into the air as red lava flowed down its crater.

The early morning explosions spewed clouds as far as 3.5 kilometres (2 miles) from the rumbling volcano, blanketing local communities in grey

There were no evacuation orders or reports of casualties. Merapi, close to Indonesia's

cultural capital Yogyakarta on Java island, has been particularly active in recent months and authorities raised its danger level late last year. Residents were told to avoid the area within a five-kilometre radius

of the rumbling volcano, Indonesia's geological agency said. "Residents should avoid volcanic

ash and they've been warned about potential lava flows in the area surrounding Merapi," it added.

Currently, the BR is implementing 37

exercises, according to BR officials.

RITES is internationally recognised

Infrastructure Investment Facilitation

The two committees were formed

members of the committee.

tendering process.