



## DENGUE INFECTION

# DENV-2 strain likely the key culprit

Reveals govt study; death toll crosses 500-mark with 13 new deaths

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

DENV-2, the severest of all dengue virus types, is likely the key factor contributing to higher rates of dengue deaths and infections this year, says a government study.

The study findings were revealed at a time when the death toll from dengue has crossed the 500-mark this year, with another 13 new deaths reported in the last 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday.

Dengue infections are caused by four closely related viruses – DENV-1, DENV-2, DENV-3, and DENV-4. These are called serotypes because each of them has different interactions with the antibodies in human blood serum, according to Nature, a science journal.

To learn more about the most circulated dengue serotypes in Dhaka, virologists at the National Institute of Laboratory Medicine and Referral Centre (NILMRC) tested 200 samples recently.

In the study, the DENV-2 serotype was detected in 151 samples, DENV-3 in 37, and both DENV-2 and DenV-3 in 12 samples, according to a press release sent by the NILMRC yesterday.

Interpreting the findings, Dr Arifa Akram, assistant professor at the Department of Virology at NILMRC, told

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Nine-month-old Ayesha being comforted by her father in Dhaka Shishu Hospital's dengue ward, where she was admitted a week ago. As dengue cases continue to soar, the numbers of patients and fatalities have both reached a record-high in the country. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

MIGRANTS IN KSA  
They can take families for 3-month visits  
Saudia, Flynas flyers can now perform umrah on transit visa

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

From now on Bangladeshi citizens with transit visa will be able to stay four days in Saudi Arabia and perform umrah and migrants living there would be able to take their families to the kingdom for three months' stay.

The decisions were made during Saudi Arabia's Minister of Hajj and Umrah Affairs Tawfiq bin Fawzan Ar-Rabiah's meeting with State Minister for Religious Affairs Faridul Haque Khan at the Secretariat yesterday.

Tawfiq Al Rabiah arrived in Bangladesh on Tuesday night on a three-day visit.

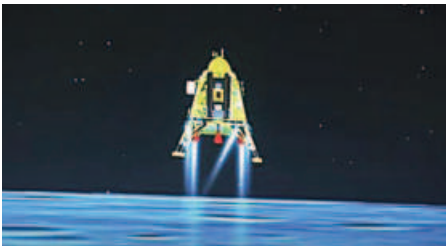
"Passengers will avail this [umrah on transit visa] benefit only if they use Saudi carriers, Saudia and Flynas. The transit visa will be valid for four days," Faridul said.

Meanwhile, the validity

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## MOON'S SOUTH POLE

# India becomes first nation to land craft near it



AFP, Bengaluru

India yesterday became the first nation to land a craft near the Moon's south pole, a historic triumph for the world's most populous nation and its ambitious, cut-price space programme.

The unmanned Chandrayaan-3, which means "Mooncraft" in Sanskrit, touched down at 6:04 pm India time (1234 GMT) as mission control technicians cheered wildly and embraced their colleagues.

Its landing comes days after a Russian probe crashed in the same region and four years since the previous Indian attempt failed at the last moment.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi smiled broadly and waved an Indian flag on a live broadcast to announce the mission's success as a triumph that extended beyond his country's borders.

"On this joyous occasion I would like to address the people of the world," said Modi from the sidelines of the BRICS diplomatic summit in South

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## FOREIGN OBSERVERS, JOURNOS

# EC to finalise changes to guidelines in September

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission will finalise the changes to the guidelines for foreign election observers and journalists by the first week of September.

At an inter-ministerial meeting at the EC office yesterday, the commission urged relevant ministries to place their proposals at the meeting next week.

Officials from the ministries of foreign affairs, home and information, and the National Board of Revenue were present.

Briefing journalists after the meeting, Ashok Kumar Debnath, additional secretary to the EC Secretariat, said they will finalise the draft incorporating the changes by the first week of September.

"We reviewed the current foreign election observer policy. No final decision has been made yet on the nature of changes to the policy ... We will sit again next week."

The move came after Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibur Awal and Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen met on August 10 and discussed updating the guidelines, EC officials said.

They held the discussion as some foreign observers, especially of the European Union, want to bring in vehicle trackers, cameras, Broadband

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## Wagner chief presumed dead in plane crash

Biden says 'not surprised'; Ukraine says event a message from Putin to Russian elites

AGENCIES

Russian mercenary chief Yevgeny Prigozhin was listed as a passenger on a private jet which crashed yesterday evening north of Moscow with no survivors, the Russian authorities said.

There was no confirmation that Prigozhin was physically on board, according to Reuters and AFP.

Prigozhin, 62, spearheaded a mutiny against Russia's top army brass on June 23-24 which President Vladimir Putin said could have tipped Russia into civil war.

Since the rebellion – seen as the biggest challenge to Russian Putin's authority since he came to power – uncertainty has surrounded the fate of the Wagner group and of its controversial chief Yevgeny Prigozhin.

Russia's emergency situations ministry said in a statement that the aircraft travelling from Moscow to St. Petersburg had crashed near the village of Kuzhenkino in the Tver Region.

"There were 10 people on board,

including 3 crew members. According to preliminary information, all those on board died," the ministry said.

Russian news agencies later reported Prigozhin on the list of passengers of the plane.

"The plane that crashed in the Tver Region listed Yevgeny Prigozhin among its passengers, (Russia's aviation agency) Rosaviatsia said," TASS news agency reported, with RIA Novosti and Interfax

issuing similar reports.

Videos on Telegram channels linked to Wagner posted footage – that AFP could not independently confirm – showing the wreckage of the plane burning in a field.

In an official statement, Rosaviatsia said it set up a special commission to investigate the crash of the Embraer – 135 (EBM-135BJ).

The bodies of eight people have been found so far at the site of the crash, RIA Novosti said citing the emergency services.

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## Criminals rape girl, 'sedating' family members

### Case filed; family suspects ex-UP member's link

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

A case was filed on Tuesday against three unidentified people on charges of raping a 13-year-old after tying her up and gagging her in Savar's Luterchar area the day before.

The incident took place in the victim's house, where she lives with her brother, homemaker mother, and father, who is a driver for a private bank.

Family members claimed the miscreants also looted cash, gold and electronics from the house.

They also alleged that a former local union parishad member, who has been in a long-standing land dispute with the family, might have been involved in the incident.

The victim's elder brother said, "We believe someone might have broken into our house earlier and mixed sedative with our food. After dinner, we all went to our respective rooms and soon lapsed into a deep sleep. Me or my parents could not hear whatever was going on in the house.

"The next morning, we woke up when some relatives came to our house. As we went to my sister's room,

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## JCD leader arrested in capital

Detectives say they seized pistol, crude bombs from him

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detectives arrested Abul Hasan Chowdhury, vice-president of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal central committee, from the capital's Hatirpool on Tuesday night and claimed that they recovered a pistol, two bullets, and three crude bombs from his possession.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Motijheel zone of DMP's Detective Branch raided the area around 9:45pm and arrested Abul in front of Joy Salon, according to the case statement filed over the arrest and recovery.

DB Sub-inspector Swapan Mia lodged the case with Kalabagan Police Station yesterday.

Sensing presence of the law enforcers, the arrestee tried to flee. But

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A long tailback on the southbound lane of Airport Road near Kakoli intersection in the capital yesterday. Many hope that once the Dhaka elevated expressway, on the left, is inaugurated on September 2, congestion will significantly reduce in the area.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## INDIA'S MIZORAM

# 26 killed as under construction bridge collapses

2 hurt; authorities open probe

REUTERS, Guwahati

A railway bridge being built in India collapsed yesterday killing at least 26 workers and injuring two, police said, as the state-run railway authority opened an investigation.

The accident happened in Sairang town in the northeastern state of Mizoram, its chief minister, Zoramthanga, said on messaging platform X, formerly known as Twitter.

Media reported that up to 40 workers were at the site when the bridge collapsed but police said 28 workers were present.

"Rescue workers have been able to recover 13 bodies so far. Efforts are on to recover the remaining bodies," said a state police official who declined to be identified.

The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) said in a statement on the messaging platform X that the mishap occurred during work on the Bhaibri Sairang New Line Railway Project.

The NFR said on its website the project will connect Mizoram to the rest of the country, boosting "tourism and socio-economic development".

A "high level enquiry committee" had been set up to investigate, the NFR said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in a statement "all possible assistance" was being given to those affected.

India's extensive railway system is used by many millions of people every day.