



MEASLES OUTBREAK

Parents keep vigil thru restless nights

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Sonia Akhter was trying to cool down her nine-month-old daughter, Tasnia, who seemed restless with measles and fever at the dedicated measles ward of Bangladesh Shishu Hospital and Institute in the capital.

With a cannula in her hand, Tasnia lay as a doctor inquired about her condition.

While Sonia, in her late 30s, was taking care of Tasnia, she was also worrying about her other daughter, who remains admitted to a private hospital in the capital with measles and pneumonia. Her brother-in-law and his wife are looking after her 11-year-old daughter, Sumaiya, at the hospital.

"I heard that her [Sumaiya's] condition has improved slightly,

In the 24 hours to 8:00am yesterday, 10 more children died of suspected measles, taking the total number of suspected measles deaths to 128 since March 15, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

but I cannot see her," Sonia told this correspondent yesterday.

Like Sonia, many parents and relatives are going through difficult times with their children at Shishu Hospital and other medical facilities, as the country is witnessing a growing number of measles cases.

Apart from Shishu Hospital, this correspondent visited DNCC Dedicated Covid-19 Hospital and Infectious Diseases Hospital in the capital's Mohakhali area and found

a similar scenario.

Children with measles and related complications -- such as pneumonia, diarrhoea and infections affecting the brain and respiratory system -- were fighting for their lives.

Many were in intensive care units, while others were on oxygen support. Many of them have been staying in hospitals for many days.

A total of 61 measles patients were admitted to the specialised

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Six-month-old Risa's body being carried home by her mother from Bangladesh Shishu Hospital in the capital yesterday. Admitted with measles symptoms last Wednesday, Risa's condition became critical a few days ago, after which she was put on life support. However, doctors could not save her and declared her dead yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

Families must be told within 12 hours of arrest

JS amends CrPC, passes 13 other bills

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Parliament yesterday passed 14 bills, including the Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2026, which makes it mandatory to inform the family within 12 hours of arresting a person.

The bills converted ordinances issued during the interim government into law. With no amendment proposals placed, they were passed directly through voice vote without discussion.

Two other bills were also tabled with changes from the ordinances. They are the National Freedom Fighters' Council (Amendment) Bill and the Smoking and Tobacco Products Usage (Control) Bill.

The opposition had submitted dissent notes on these in the special committee that scrutinised the ordinances. The two bills will be discussed later.

Among the bills passed, the Haor and Wetlands Conservation Bill was introduced by Water Resources Minister Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anee.

Law Minister Md Asaduzzaman separately placed the CrPC amendment, the Civil Courts (Amendment) Bill, the International Crimes (Tribunals) (Amendment) Bill, and the Registration (Amendment) Bill.

While moving the International Crimes Tribunal bill, Asaduzzaman said it now includes enforced disappearance within the definition of crimes against humanity.

He also said those who claim that the current administration does not intend to criminalise enforced disappearances should read the bill carefully, as it reflects the government's determination to prosecute such cases.

After the bill was passed, Opposition Leader Shafiqur Rahman raised a point of order, saying the minister's remarks were unnecessary and should have been avoided. He added that the opposition would speak on the matter at the appropriate time.

In reply, Asaduzzaman said questions had been raised outside parliament about the government's sincerity about prosecuting those accused in cases of enforced disappearances, which was why he

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Astronauts head back home after lunar flyby

AFP, Houston

The Artemis II astronauts wrapped up their lunar flyby as they continued their journey back to Earth yesterday, bringing with them rich celestial observations, including little-known lunar craters, a solar eclipse and meteor strikes that scientists hope will open doors to new understandings.

Their eyes glued to the spacecraft windows for nearly seven hours, the team of four who spent their day breaking records and making history were treated



PHOTO: NASA

Partial far side of the moon.

to a view of the Moon unlike any other.

"Humans probably have not evolved to see what we're seeing," said Victor Glover. "It is truly hard to describe. It is amazing."

The crew reported in vivid detail features of the lunar surface and later witnessed a solar eclipse, when the Moon passed in front of the Sun.

They also described flashes of light -- meteor strikes -- on the Moon's surface.

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REFORM STALEMATE BNP, Jamaat in 'back-channel dialogue'

BAHARAM KHAN AND SAJJAD HOSSAIN

While treasury and opposition lawmakers clash on the parliament floor over the July charter implementation order, the two sides are also holding back-channel talks outside the assembly hall to end the stalemate.

Several insiders said government and opposition representatives have met privately to seek an understanding on key contentious issues, including the ordinance to prevent enforced disappearances.

The July National Charter (Constitutional Reform) Implementation Order, 2025, issued by the president on November 13, 2025, outlines a framework for adopting reforms proposed in the July charter.

During the talks, the opposition warned it will step up street protests if the government fails to show visible progress or take practical steps within a reasonable timeframe, the insiders said.

The sources added that the BNP leadership is taking these signals seriously and monitoring the situation closely, but has not yet made any final decision on how to proceed. The government is, however, willing to ease its stance on the Enforced Disappearance Prevention and Redress Ordinance.

According to top BNP leaders, the timing of the standoff is critical, as the government is already grappling with several national and international challenges, including the energy crisis and the measles outbreak. They said an opposition movement at this juncture could create instability and further strain the state's capacity.

They added that opposition parties may also use the issue during the upcoming local polls, accusing the ruling party of betraying the "spirit" of the July uprising, which could affect the BNP's public support and influence election results.

Meanwhile, sources within the opposition said putting pressure on the BNP is part of a broader political strategy aimed at ensuring their demands are met.

While the main opposition Jamaat-e-Islami held talks with the ruling party inside parliament yesterday, its II-party alliance

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Dhaka to push for stronger ties with Delhi

Foreign ministry DG outlines focus of Khalilur's visit

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will emphasise stability and continuous development of bilateral relations based on dignity, mutual trust, and shared interests during Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman's visit to India, the foreign ministry said yesterday.

"It is hoped that this visit will lay an important foundation for elevating cooperation between Bangladesh and India to a more fruitful and sustainable level," Mahbubul Alam, director general of the foreign ministry's Public Diplomacy Wing, told reporters at the ministry yesterday.

Khalilur Rahman reached New Delhi yesterday on a "goodwill visit" to participate in the Indian Ocean Conference scheduled for April 10-12, 2026.

He is accompanied by Prime Minister's Foreign Affairs Adviser Humaiun Kobir, highlighting the importance Dhaka attaches to the visit.

Last night, a diplomatic source said Khalilur met with National Security

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PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

A long line of cargo trucks and trailers clogging a busy intersection at the Naya Bazar Biswa Road area in Chattogram city yesterday. Due to the ongoing fuel crisis, the vehicles have to spend hours in queues, causing delays in goods transport and widespread suffering.

Cox's Bazar hills going by truckloads

MOKAMMEL SHUVO, Cox's Bazar

In blatant disregard of a High Court directive, the hills of Cox's Bazar continue to be stripped bare and the soil sold off by the truckload to brick kilns and construction sites.

Under cover of night and amid lax monitoring by authorities concerned, excavators roar across Ramu, Pekua, Ukhiya and Sadar upazilas, flattening landscapes that have stood for centuries.

If unchecked, environmentalists warn that the district's hilly terrain may vanish altogether, leaving fragile ecosystems destroyed and those who live beneath these slopes increasingly vulnerable to landslides and floods.

During the Eid-ul-Fitr holidays, a 200-foot hill spanning around 10 acres was flattened in the Ghonarpara area of Purba Lamapara under Kauarkhop union, about 10 kilometres from Ramu upazila town.

Local sources report that hill grabbers operated excavators daily from 7:00pm to 6:00am, stripping soil and selling it to brick kilns and supplying development projects through unregistered dump trucks.

They further said at least eight hills have already been razed in Kauarkhop and South Mithachhari unions under the

Ramu upazila. Rampant hill cutting has also been reported in the Lama Para and Ukhiyarghona areas.

According to Musaub Ibne Rahman, inspector at the Cox's Bazar Department of Environment (DoE), a drive was conducted on March 30 in Lama Para, Ghonar Para



PHOTO: COLLECTED

"Asmaner Khuti" in Pekua, Cox's Bazar.

and School Para under Kauarkhop union of Ramu by the upazila administration and the local DoE.

Officials found evidence of hill cutting at eight to nine locations without government approval, with around 90,000 cubic feet of soil already extracted and sold.

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