



## Deadliest day in measles outbreak

### 2 confirmed deaths, 15 die with symptoms

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The country logged its highest single-day death toll from measles and measles-like symptoms, with 17 child deaths reported in the 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday.

Previously, the highest single-day death toll was recorded on April 5, when 12 patients died.

Of the 17 deaths, two were confirmed measles cases while 15 were suspected, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Of these 15 suspected cases, two children died at Bangladesh Shishu Hospital and Institute in the 24 hours till 8:00am Sunday. As it was reported yesterday, the deaths were added to the latest toll, the DGHS clarified.

With these figures, the total number of deaths from measles and measles-like symptoms since March 15 has risen to 311.

**Health experts say measles, coupled with underlying illnesses and malnutrition, is causing the deaths of children.**

The country saw relatively fewer deaths from confirmed and suspected cases in the week after April 26, averaging between one and seven a day. The number then rose sharply to 10 on Sunday and 17 yesterday.

The grim development comes as a nationwide measles-rubella vaccination drive is on to curb the spread of the highly contagious disease, which has led to a surge in child deaths in recent weeks.

According to health experts, measles, coupled with underlying illnesses and

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Two-year-old Yamoni rests on her mother's shoulder as she receives breathing support through a nebuliser. The child has been undergoing treatment at the DNCC Covid-19 Dedicated Hospital in the capital's Mohakhali for the past four days after being diagnosed with measles.

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

## Tensions flare over Trump's Hormuz plan

### US, Iran claim targeting each other's warships; drone causes fire in UAE's Fujairah

AGENCIES

Tensions rose in the Strait of Hormuz yesterday as both the United States and Iran claimed attacks on vessels, with Donald Trump warning Iran that its forces would be "blown off the face of the earth" if they targeted US ships guiding vessels through the strait.

A top US admiral said the US shot down

multiple Iranian missiles and drones fired at US Navy and commercial vessels and destroyed six of Tehran's small boats.

US Apache and Seahawk helicopters hit "six Iranian small boats threatening commercial shipping," Admiral Brad Cooper, the head of US Central Command (CENTCOM), told journalists.

US forces also "effectively engaged" all

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## BJP sweeps West Bengal

### Modi hails 'blossoming of lotus'; Mamata loses seat to Suwendu, decries massive irregularities

Total seats 294 | Majority mark 148 | BJP 206 | TMC 80 (1 ahead)

AGENCIES

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's party yesterday secured a resounding election victory in West Bengal, expanding his unrivalled consolidation of power across the country.

It is the first time that the Bharatiya Janata Party has won assembly elections in West Bengal, a large and politically significant state in eastern India.

Over the past 15 years, the state has been ruled by Trinamool Congress, a key opposition party, under the leadership of Mamata Banerjee, the state's chief minister. Mamata had been one of the most outspoken critics of Modi and his religious nationalist agenda over his 12 years in power.

But in a result that will have significant implications for India's political landscape and

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## What caused TMC's rout

SUVOJIT BAGCHI, Kolkata

The BJP has finally swept West Bengal, a state that shares a long border, language and cultural ties with Bangladesh and has long stood apart from Narendra Modi's political advance.

The outcome raises several questions: why did the Trinamool Congress lose? How did the BJP secure a landslide? And who will be the next chief minister?

Analysts point to several factors. One is the Trinamool's heavy reliance on Muslim votes. In past elections, the party secured 75-80 percent of these votes and aimed for

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Villagers build a temporary earthen embankment in the Dahapara area of Singra upazila, Natore, to keep floodwaters out of their paddy fields. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF SAIFUL ISLAM

## Chalan Beel farmers rush to harvest as flood fears loom

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

Farmers of Chalan Beel in Singra upazila, Natore, are making their best effort to bring their crops home before monsoon waters submerge the marshland. In order to prevent water from entering the paddy fields in the event of a flood, the local agriculture office and villagers have put up temporary dams blocking the beel's canal network.

Farmer Saiful Islam, who cultivated 20 bighas of paddy, managed to harvest only five to six bighas last week before heavy rains forced him to stop.

Meanwhile, the swelling Atrai river has begun flooding into the Dahapara area, causing serious concern among local farmers.

In response, villagers have built temporary earthen embankments to block the rush of water. Saiful noted that if the weather remains stable for the next week or so, the entire wetland can be harvested.

"Every year, the monsoon water arrives after the harvest. However, early rains have caused the Atrai

river to swell just as the harvest began, and so farmers are now spending their days worrying about their hard-earned crops," Saiful said.

As the skies cleared on Sunday morning, Saiful and many others resumed harvesting, hoping for at least 10 days of dry weather to finish the job.

**Chalan Beel is the country's largest wetland in the lower Atrai basin, stretching across Sirajganj, Natore, and Pabna. In this key marshland for paddy cultivation, Singra upazila in Natore logs the highest yield among all upazilas.**

The crisis is not limited to Dahapara; the entire Chalan Beel marshland in Singra is under threat as the Atrai river pushes water into the beel's canal network.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Khandakar Farid, the Singra upazila agriculture officer, said that 36,610 hectares were brought under Boro cultivation this year, with

a production target of 2.78 lakh tonnes.

While this is one of the largest paddy-producing upazilas in the country, early rainfall is threatening smooth harvest.

"So far, 14,000 hectares have been harvested. However, continuous rain over the last three days has

hindered progress. The swelling Atrai river and the rising water levels in the canals have farmers worried that water will soon breach the fields," Farid said.

The local agriculture office has moved quickly to put up three temporary earthen embankments in Jormollika, Chougram, and

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