



Politicians, academics, civil society members and others joined The Daily Star in celebrating its 35th anniversary in Barishal yesterday. Held at the Zilla Shilpakala Academy auditorium, the event featured a documentary and photo exhibition on the December 18, 2025 mob attack on the newspaper's Dhaka office. Similar programmes will next be held in Rajshahi, Sylhet, Rangpur and Mymensingh.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Expat shot dead in South Africa: family

Victim's body may reach Bangladesh on Tuesday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



A Bangladeshi businessman was shot dead by unidentified assailants in South Africa on Saturday afternoon, according to the victim's family.

The deceased, Sumon Miah, 34, was originally from Abhirampur Pashchim Para in Tangail's Mirzapur upazila, said Abdullah Al Mamun, officer-in-charge of Mirzapur Police Station.

According to the family, Sumon went to South Africa 14 years ago and had been doing business near Newcastle city.

Around 1:00pm on Saturday local time (5:00pm BST), unidentified assailants stopped his car and shot him dead. Police later recovered his body.

Speaking to reporters, Sumon's father said people known to him in South Africa immediately informed the family about the incident over the phone.

Sumon's body may reach Bangladesh on Tuesday, he said. The youngest of seven siblings, Sumon married three years ago and had a two-year-old son, his family said.

Over the past decade, hundreds of Bangladeshis have been murdered in South Africa over business and personal disputes.

Tk 33,474cr Padma barrage set for govt nod

FROM PAGE 1
The barrage will feature 78 spillways, 18 underslucic gates, two fish passes, a navigation lock, guide bunds, and approach embankments.

Hydropower plants will be set up at Padma barrage and Gorai off take, which is the crucial entry point of the Gorai-Madhumati river. The plants will generate 113 megawatts of electricity.

The first phase also includes the dredging and re-excavation of the 135.6km Gorai-Madhumati river and 246.46km Hisna river systems.

The other works include Gorai off take with 15 spillways, fish pass, navigation lock, and hydro-power plant (36.6 megawatt); Chandana off take (four spillways); Hisna off take (five spillways); and construction 180km alluvial bund.

The Hisna off take, often referred to in conjunction with the Hisna-Mathabhanga river system in Bangladesh, is a critical component in water management designed to restore flow from the Ganges river system.

The off take is part of wider efforts to combat silting and ensure water supply during the lean season, acting as a crucial channel for diverting water into regional rivers like the Hisna.

However, activities under the first phase will directly benefit 19 districts and 120 upazilas in four divisions: Khulna (Kushtia, Meherpur, Chuadanga, Jhenaidah, Magura, Jashore, Narail, Bagerhat, Khulna, Satkhira), Dhaka (Rajbari, Faridpur, Gopalganj), Rajshahi (Pabna, Rajshahi, Natore, Naogaon, Chapainawabganj) and Barishal (Barishal, Pirojpur).

The second phase includes construction of additional supportive infrastructure and restoration of Chandana Barasia, Baral and Ichhamati river systems.

Five river systems — Hisna-Mathabhanga, Gorai-Madhumati, Chandana Barasia, Baral and Ichhamati — would be revived.

The revived river flows will reduce salinity intrusion in the southwest, restore biodiversity in the Sundarbans,

and improve drainage and irrigation.

It would ensure water supply to the Ganges-Kobadak (GK) Irrigation Project, the North Rajshahi irrigation project, Godagari pump house, and Rooppur nuclear power plant.

The project would ensure irrigation for 2.88 million hectares of net cultivable land and boost the annual production of rice by 2.39 million tonnes and fish by 2.34 million tonnes.

The idea of a barrage on the Padma dates back decades.

Between 1960 and 2000, four studies were conducted to identify suitable sites. In 2005, a detailed feasibility study was launched, completed in 2013 by a consortium of local and foreign consultants.

The study highlighted dry-season water scarcity due to upstream withdrawals at India's Farakka Barrage, which has severely reduced flows in Bangladesh, drying up river systems and damaging agriculture, fisheries, navigation, and biodiversity.

SC upholds Ivy's bail in 10 cases

FROM PAGE 1
The PM said the government wants to ensure the rule of law while upholding human rights, noting that enforced disappearances, abductions or extrajudicial activities are unacceptable under any circumstances.

There is no legal bar to Ivy's release from jail following the SC orders, Motaheer said.

A five-member bench of the Appellate Division led by Chief Justice Zubayer Rahman Chowdhury delivered the orders.

The Appellate Division also asked the HC to dispose of the rules issued on February 26, directing the state to explain why Ivy should not be granted permanent bail in five cases.

On May 9 last year, the former NCC mayor was arrested in connection with garment worker Minarul murder case and later she was shown arrested in nine other criminal cases.

The HC granted bail to Ivy, former senior vice-president of the Narayanganj district Awami League, whose political activities are banned, in all the 10 cases on November 9 last year and February 26 this year following her bail petitions.

Ivy was shown arrested in two other murder cases immediately after the HC granted her bail in five other cases on February 26 this year, said her lawyer Sazu.

He said the cases were filed with Siddhirganj Police Station in Narayanganj on charges of killings Selim Mondal and Abdus Salam during the July uprising in 2024.

On April 30, the HC granted interim bail to Ivy and also issued two separate rules asking the state to explain as to why she should not be granted permanent bail in the cases.

The state then filed two petitions with the Appellate Division seeking stay on the HC bail. The petitions are pending with the Appellate Division.

Measles death toll now 409 after revision

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hours to 8:00am yesterday.

Besides, the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) added 46 suspected deaths that were not recorded earlier, taking the overall tally to 409.

The directorate said it updated the figures following coordination with Mymensingh Medical College Hospital, Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital and Rangpur Medical College Hospital, as well as the respective civil surgeon offices.

The Daily Star on Thursday ran a report exposing a mismatch between the DGHS's central data and its divisional data.

The report said the actual number of measles deaths is likely higher than the central tally, as data from two divisional offices of the health directorate show at least 34 more suspected deaths than reflected in official figures.

Until Wednesday, no suspected deaths were reported from Mymensingh division in the central DGHS data. However, figures from the office of the DGHS director for Mymensingh division showed 25 suspected deaths.

On the other hand, central data showed 11 suspected and five confirmed deaths in Barishal division, while divisional data indicated 22 suspected and three confirmed deaths since March.

Several other newspapers reported on this mismatch over the last two days.

Among the 11 new deaths recorded yesterday, four were confirmed measles deaths and seven were suspected deaths.

With the four additional deaths, the total number of confirmed deaths rose to 65, while the seven suspected deaths took the total suspected measles deaths to 344, according to DGHS data.

Meanwhile, 205 confirmed cases were recorded yesterday, taking the total confirmed cases to 6,819. In addition, 1,503 suspected cases were recorded during this period, the highest in a single day, bringing the total suspected cases to 49,159.

'Won't stand extrajudicial activities'

FROM PAGE 1
The PM said the government wants to ensure the rule of law while upholding human rights, noting that enforced disappearances, abductions or extrajudicial activities are unacceptable under any circumstances.

He opined that a democratic government accountable to the people has been established through the people's vote, and public expectations from the government are therefore very high. "Such expectations must be reflected in the work of police."

"The fascist government placed the police force against the people for its political interests. After overcoming that dark period, the time has now come to move forward in a new way."

"I don't want to elaborate further on this issue. Let our pledge during Police Week-2026 be that Bangladesh will never return to fascist rule again."

Congratulating police personnel for their role during the February 12 election, he said, "You have proved that it is certainly possible for the police to perform their duties impartially."

Calling police officials "ambassadors" of the government at the field level, he said, "You are not just members of a law enforcement agency; you are the first gateway to maintaining law and order, ensuring public safety, and delivering justice."

Tarique said police must target drug suppliers and the roots of narcotics through strict enforcement of the law as there is public concern over drugs and online gambling. The government does not want to compromise on issue like drugs, terrorism, and corruption.

He said the government is committed to strengthening the institutional dignity, professionalism, and public confidence of the Bangladesh Police.

DEMANDS
Police personnel from different ranks also sought interest-free motorcycle loans for field-level investigations and increased allowances. Officers said investigators currently receive between Tk 2,000 and Tk 6,000, depending on the nature of cases.

The prime minister listened to the demands and assured police members that the government would consider these in line with the state's capacity and public interest.

Speaking at the event, Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed backed several

of the proposals, including overtime allowances and motorcycle loans for sub-inspectors and assistant sub-inspectors.

He also proposed honorary promotions at retirement, under which constables would become honorary ASIs and ASIs honorary sub-inspectors.

Constable Tushana Imran of Khulna Metropolitan Police said many officers retire in the same rank in which they joined the force and urged the government to introduce honorary promotions for lower-ranked police personnel.

Officer-in-Charge Kamrul Hasan Talukdar of Airport Police Station proposed motorcycles for ASIs and SIs to improve field operations.

The PM said the demands have "valid reasons" but raised concerns over the ethics of providing interest-free vehicle loans when farmers still receive loans with interest.

Mir Ashraf Ali, deputy inspector general of the Special Branch, called for a separate pay scale for police similar to those enjoyed by the judiciary and armed forces, citing the force's long working hours and specialised responsibilities. He added that police in many countries enjoy separate pay structures.

He also urged the government to lift restrictions on releasing funds for police infrastructure and resume stalled projects involving police stations, barracks, and outposts.

At the programme, Inspector General of Police Md Ali Hossain Fakir stressed the need to increase manpower, saying that the number of operational police personnel remains low compared with the country's population and international standards.

Salahuddin also proposed establishing two new police academies in Chattogram's Jungle Salimpur area following recent anti-crime operations there. Earlier, a Rab member was killed in an attack in the area.

Presenting several welfare recommendations to the prime minister, the home minister said introducing overtime allowances for duties beyond regular working hours is essential to boost morale. The initiative is expected to cover ranks from inspector down to constable.

On healthcare, he noted that the prime minister already approved the modernisation of central and divisional police hospitals.

Tehran sends

FROM PAGE 1
hit and damaged a freighter sailing towards a port in Qatar.

The United Arab Emirates accused Iran of being behind another attack that targeted its territory in what would be, if confirmed, only the second alleged strike on a Gulf country since the start of the month-old truce, reports AFP.

"We will never bow down to the enemy, and if there is talk of dialogue or negotiation, it does not mean surrender or retreat," Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said on X yesterday.

Tehran's military chief Ali Abdollahi, meanwhile, met the country's Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei and received "new directives and guidance for the continuation of operations to confront the enemy", according to Iranian state television.

Qatar's defence ministry said a freighter arriving in the country's waters from Abu Dhabi was hit by a drone yesterday off the port of Mesaieed.

The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations centre said the bulk carrier reported being struck by an unknown projectile.

"There was a small fire that has been extinguished, there are no casualties. There is no reported environmental impact," it said.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility, but Iran's Fars news agency reported that "the bulk carrier that was struck near the coast of Qatar was sailing under a US flag and belonged to the United States".

In a social media post yesterday, the spokesman for the Iranian parliament's national security commission warned the United States: "Our restraint is over as of today."

"Any attack on our vessels will trigger

a strong and decisive Iranian response against American ships and bases," Ebrahim Rezaei said.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards had threatened the day before to target US interests in the Middle East if its tankers came under fire — as they did on Friday when a US fighter jet fired on and disabled two Iran-flagged vessels in the Gulf of Oman.

The United Arab Emirates said that its territory had also come under drone attack, and called out Iran by name. Iran's neighbour Kuwait also reported an attempted attack.

"At dawn today, the armed forces detected a number of hostile drones in Kuwaiti airspace, which were dealt with in accordance with established procedures," the military posted.

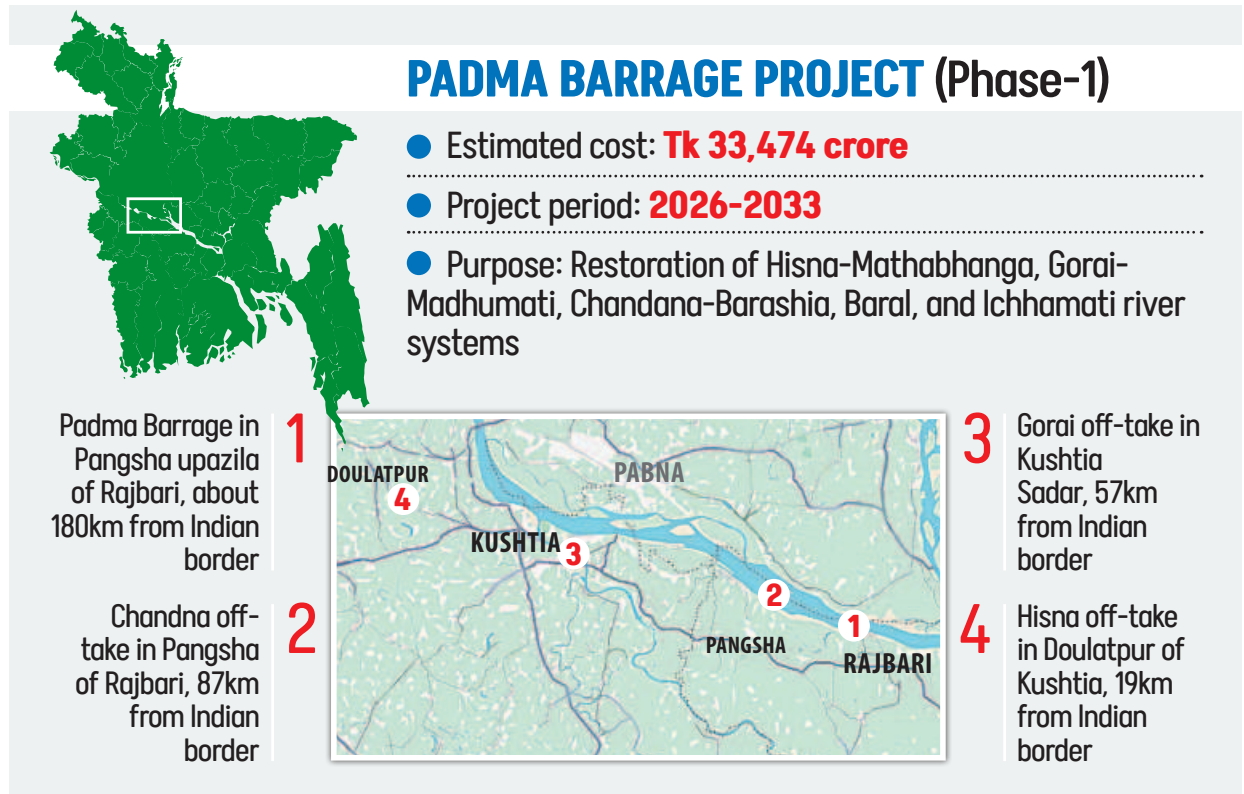
In Seoul, defence ministry spokesman Park Il told reporters that a South Korean cargo vessel had been hit on Monday and was damaged by fire before making its way to port in Dubai.

The world has lost about 1 billion barrels of oil over the past two months and energy markets will take time to stabilise even if flows resume, Saudi Aramco's CEO said yesterday.

"Our objective is simple: keep energy flowing, even when the system is under strain," Amin Nasser told Reuters in a statement after Aramco reported a 25 percent jump in net profit in its first-quarter.

Iran has choked off the Strait of Hormuz — a vital route out of the Gulf for oil, gas and fertiliser, seeking to wield economic leverage over the United States and its allies.

The US Navy, meanwhile, is blockading Iran's ports, at times disabling or diverting ships heading to and from them.



Care gaps push patients to crowd Dhaka hospitals

FROM PAGE 1
The authorities and the parents had no other choice but to arrange the place for the baby on the floor as the 100-bed specialised facility had already been overwhelmed with a surge of paediatric measles patients from across the country.

"There was no vacant seat, so we had to make the bed on the floor," Tariqul's mother Takmina Begum said quietly. Eight-month-old Yasin's journey was no easier. Doctors at Gazipur Sadar Hospital referred him to Dhaka after he received treatment for three days there.

His family tried three hospitals in the capital, including Bangladesh Shishu Hospital and Institute, before finally finding space on a mattress near the fifth floor staircase of the Infectious Disease Hospital on Saturday.

"We tried everywhere, but there was no seat," said his grandmother Rehana Begum.

Doctors said many children like Tariqul and Yasin are being brought to Dhaka, often in critical condition, after days of treatment at upazila or district hospitals.

The long journeys worsen their health, while the capital's hospitals buckle under the pressure, recording higher numbers of admissions and deaths.

The numbers tell the scale. Across the nation, 409 patients died from measles or measles-like symptoms, mostly among children, between March 15 and yesterday. Not all the patients' diagnoses could be confirmed due to a lack of testing kits.

Just three major facilities in the capital reported at least 91 of these

deaths. The Infectious Diseases Hospital alone saw 42, the Shishu Hospital 28 and the DNCC Dedicated Covid-19 Hospital recorded 21 other deaths.

These were among the 179, or 44 percent of the total, in Dhaka division.

The Infectious Diseases Hospital was treating 57 measles patients yesterday. The rest of the beds were being used to treat patients suffering from other diseases, particularly from chicken pox and HIV/AIDS.

"Most of the children we receive now come from outside Dhaka, often after treatment at multiple hospitals. They arrive in critical condition, making our task difficult," said the hospital's Superintendent FA Asma Khan.

The DNCC Dedicated Covid-19 Hospital admitted 132 measles patients in the 24 hours to 9:00am yesterday.

Seventy three percent of them were from outside the city, according to the hospital's Administrative Officer Asif Haider.

"Dhaka's vaccination campaign began on April 12, earlier than the rest of the country, which may explain why fewer city children are arriving," he said.

The Shishu Hospital had never before faced such a situation surrounding the highly infectious disease, said Prof Mirza Md Ziaul Islam, head of paediatric infectious diseases at the facility. It had 85 measles patients yesterday.

Disruptions in regular and special vaccination drives caused by the interim government's decision to change vaccine purchase systems are being blamed for the situation. The current government is conducting emergency vaccination drives to tackle the situation.

Prof Mirza said some patients

are arriving with very severe and complicated conditions from the peripheral-level hospitals. Many of these facilities are referring the patients to Dhaka because they are not adequately prepared to manage such complications, Prof Mirza said.

"Doctors at these facilities need to be provided with necessary training quickly and on a mass scale to cope up with the situation," he added.

An official at the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) said many upazila- and district-level hospitals do not have the necessary number of specialists to treat critical patients, so these facilities refer such patients to Dhaka.

The official, on condition of anonymity, added that in fear of possible repercussions in case of deaths, many doctors prefer to refer patients to Dhaka hospitals even when their condition does not warrant transfer.

Moreover, none of the upazila health complexes have ICU facilities. Even the government hospitals in around 20 districts do not have any ICUs, leaving little scope for doctors to manage critical cases, the official added.

Contacted, Abu Hussain Md Moinul Ahsan, director (hospital) of DGHS, said many parents are also taking their children to Dhaka hospitals due to panic over the situation.

Replying to a question, he said a meeting will be held today with all directors and heads of paediatric departments of government medical college hospitals to discuss relevant issues, including referrals and training.

"Some new decisions may be taken there," he told The Daily Star.