

### CONFIRMED MEASLES DEATHS

## Half the children were too young for shots

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Almost half of the 60 children who died from confirmed measles were below nine months of age, government data showed, meaning they were not yet eligible for routine vaccination.

The government administers the first dose of the measles-rubella vaccine to children at nine months and the second at 15 months.

A total of 29 children died before reaching nine months of age, with 15 of them being six months or younger. The remaining children died at nine months of age or older, according to data collected by the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) of 60 confirmed measles deaths from 21 districts.

The youngest child was three months old, and

the oldest was nine years old.

Earlier, before the launch of an emergency vaccination drive last month, the National Immunisation Technical Advisory Group had recommended lowering the age for receiving the measles vaccine to six months, as one-third of the children recently infected with measles are under nine months.

Children aged between six months and under five years are now being vaccinated under the special immunisation drive to control the outbreak. However, the timing for the routine vaccination remained the same.

Asked about the possible reasons behind the high number of deaths among children under nine months, Fazole Rabbi Chowdhury, associate

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## Migration politics may hurt thaw in Dhaka-Delhi ties

PORIMOL PALMA

Irregular migration may become the key sticking point in efforts to further improve Dhaka-Delhi ties, which were under severe strain during the Yunus-led interim government rule.

The issue, which was the central theme of BJP's campaign in the recent elections in West Bengal and Assam, continues to dominate public discourse in the Indian states neighbouring Bangladesh.

The BJP has won the elections by a landslide.

Bangladesh High Commissioner to India Riaz Hamidullah flew to Dhaka yesterday to consult the political leadership on how to engage with the Indian government on the issue, foreign ministry officials said.

"Irregular migration is a sensitive issue. So, it is important to get direction from the political leadership on such matters," a foreign ministry official, requesting anonymity due to the sensitive nature of the topic, told this correspondent yesterday.

Bangladesh-India ties soured badly in the aftermath of the fall of the Awami League regime in August 2024. India's sharp reduction in visas for Bangladeshis, trade restrictions, media rhetoric and political statements – all pointed to that shift.

Under the interim government, the number of push-ins also increased.

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## POLICE WEEK 2026 Cops seek more 999 staff, better forensic labs

TOUSIF KAUM

Police officials last night placed a series of demands before Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed, including increasing the number of emergency hotline 999 call-takers, modernising forensic laboratories, and procuring new vehicles for the force.

The demands were raised during a conference between senior police officials and the minister at the Rajarbagh Police Lines auditorium in the capital, organised as part of Police Week 2026.

Several senior police officials who attended the closed-door meeting confirmed the matter to The Daily Star.

A deputy commissioner of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police, requesting anonymity, said the force currently receives around 25,000 calls daily through the national emergency service hotline 999, while only about 100 personnel are assigned to take the calls.

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### FROM INTELLIGENCE OFFICE TO WESTIN

## How S Alam took over SIBL in a day

MD MEHEDI HASAN

The neighborhood was quiet, the streets still washed in the pale early-morning light. Just after the Fajr prayers on October 30, 2017, Abdur Rahman stepped out of the Baridhara DOHS mosque for his usual morning walk.

As he walked along the familiar route in his pajamas and T-shirt, a white microbus pulled up a few feet from him. It had no number plate.

Two men climbed out of the vehicle and began following him. Before Rahman could react, two more men emerged from the same microbus, almost blocking his path. The group, all of them powerfully built, ordered him to get into the car.

When Rahman, then an independent director at the now-defunct Social Islami Bank Ltd (SIBL), refused, the four men

closed in, grabbed him, and forced him into the microbus.

Around the same time, roughly 10 kilometers away, a black car stopped outside Humayun Kabir's home in Uttara. Kabir, then the board secretary of SIBL, was in the shower when he heard urgent knocking.

"People from the administration are downstairs, looking for you," his wife called through the bathroom door.

Kabir came down to find four to five men in plainclothes. They identified themselves as members of an intelligence agency.

He recalled that when they told him to come with them, his wife protested. The men brushed her aside, and after issuing

veiled threats, forced him into their car.

Meanwhile, inside the moving vehicle, Abdur Rahman soon realised where he was: this was a car belonging to an intelligence agency. After a short drive, the men escorted him into a large office compound in Kachukhet, inside the Dhaka Cantonment. It was the office of the Directorate of Forces Intelligence (DGFI).

"That was the worst experience of my life," Rahman told The Daily Star. "I had no mobile phone, I couldn't call my family. My wife and daughters went from hospital to hospital and police stations."

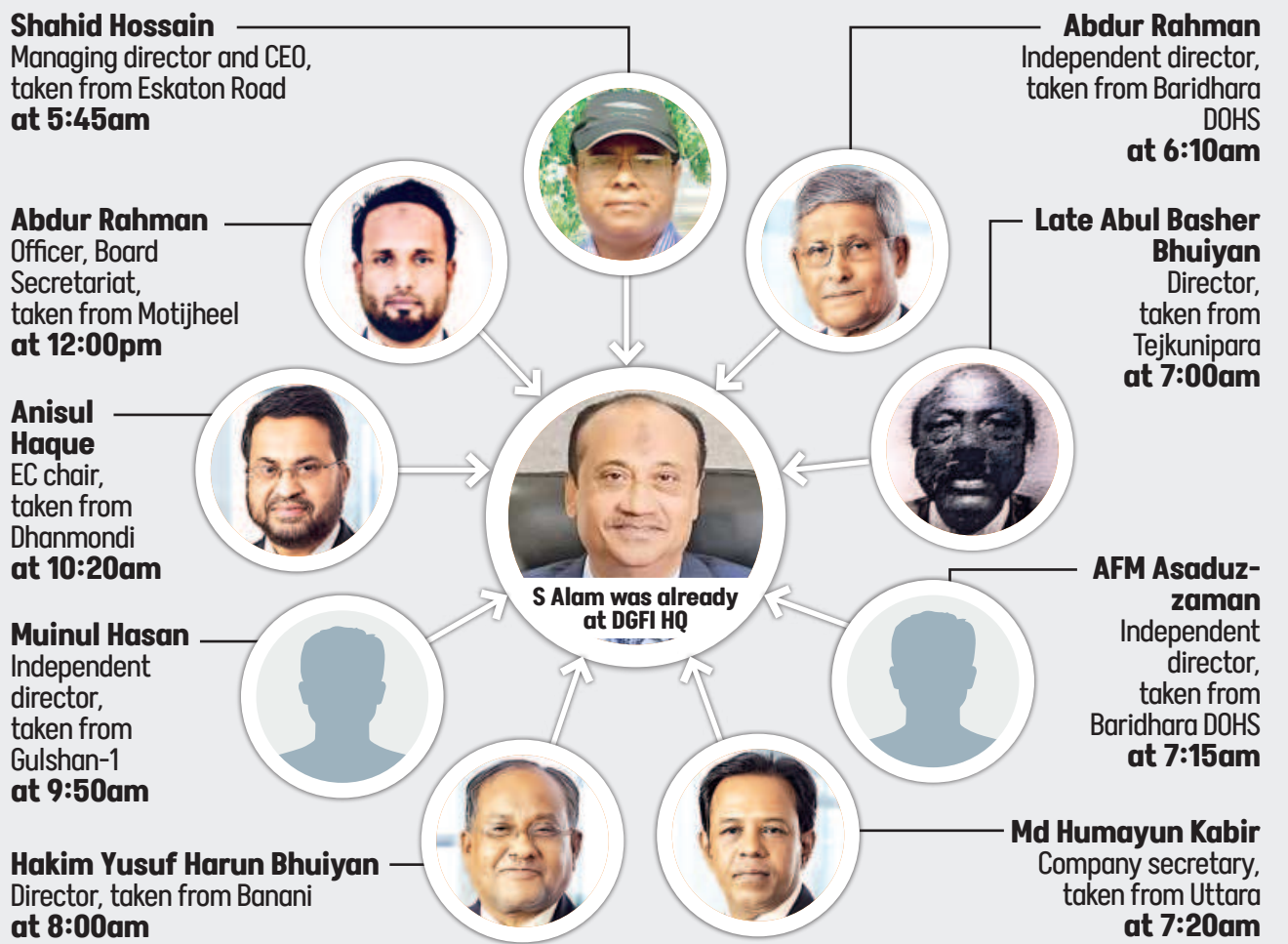
Like Rahman, Humayun Kabir was also taken to the same intelligence office. But

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### A BANK HELD HOSTAGE

On October 30, 2017, 9 SIBL directors and officials were taken to the DGFI HQ. Some were forced to resign and replaced by directors linked to S Alam Group – all before a 30-minute board meeting at the Westin Hotel. By 2024, over Tk 7,600 crore had been funneled from SIBL to S Alam-linked companies.



In a desperate attempt to salvage their harvest, farmers waded through chest-deep water on a field full of golden-ripe paddy that has been submerged due to excessive rainfall in the haor region of Kishoreganj. The photo was taken yesterday afternoon in Mithamain upazila.

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

## US-Iran ceasefire on 'life support'

Warns Trump; UN says world weeks away from humanitarian crisis

Iran vows to 'teach US a lesson' if attacked

Oil price rises on fear of prolonged blockade

Israel says war 'not over,' uranium must be removed

AGENCIES

President Donald Trump yesterday warned the ceasefire in the Middle East war was on "life support" after rejecting the latest counteroffer from Iran, which said its military stood ready to respond to any act of aggression.

The president's angry reaction to Iran's position – delivered in response to a US proposal – sent oil prices soaring and dashed hopes that a deal could be quickly negotiated to reopen the Strait of Hormuz to commercial shipping.

After slamming the reply as "TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE", Trump insisted the United States would see a "complete victory" over Iran, adding that the truce which has largely halted fighting in the Gulf for over a month, was on its last legs.

"The ceasefire is on massive life support, where the doctor walks in and says, 'Sir, your loved one has approximately a one percent chance of living,'" he told reporters yesterday.

Iranian parliamentary speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, who served as chief negotiator in previous talks with Washington, said shortly afterwards that his country was prepared "for any eventuality".

"Our armed forces are ready to respond and to teach a lesson for any aggression," he wrote on X. "A bad strategy and bad decisions always lead to bad results – the world already understands this."

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