News
Bangladesh measles outbreak

A mother plays with her **measles**-infected child at the Children's Hospital in Dhaka, **Bangladesh**, May 8, 2026. **Catholic** Charity Caritas **Bangladesh** and Church-run health centers are building awareness among the rural people while the country grapples with a deadly outbreak of **measles** that has left more than 336 children dead since mid-March. (OSV News/Stephan Uttom Rozario)



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Caritas Bangladesh and church-run health centers are building infection prevention awareness while the country grapples with a deadly outbreak of measles that has left more than 330 children dead since mid-March.

As of May 8, 336 children have died from measles and measles-like symptoms across the country, according to the state-run Directorate General of Health

Services.

The health directorate said a total of 32,862 suspected measles patients have been admitted to hospitals nationwide since March 15.

Amid the outbreak, Catholic charities and health centers run by Catholic nuns are providing healthcare and health awareness in cities and remote areas.

Sister Mary Piusha from the Associates of Mary Queen of the Apostles Sisters has been overseeing St. Paul's Hospital of the Diocese of Khulna, and told OSV News that, when the country faces a serious measles problem, Catholic health centers can't remain silent.

"We provide our regular service in the hospital and always inform our patients about measles and its symptoms," Piusha said. "When some come here with the measles, we provide them quick treatment."

Families are feeling the crisis firsthand. Belal Hosain, a 35-year-old father, came to Bangladesh Shishu (Children) Hospital & Institute in Dhaka with his 12-month-old son, Safayet Hosain, from Tangail district, 93 miles away, after the child contracted measles.

"We are tired and too worried about my child. We have nothing left but the prayer to God," Hosain told OSV News.

The young father is terrified "when I see another child die in front of my eyes," he said. "I worry about my child, but there's nothing I can do."

The Catholic Church is playing a vital role in the health sector in Bangladesh, where Christians make up less than 1% of the country's 180 million population.

Amid the outbreak, Archbishop Kevin Randall, the apostolic nuncio, stressed during a Vatican nunciature event on May 6 that the Catholic Church is running five hospitals, 80 medical clinics, 12 maternity care centers and four nursing schools.

Caritas Bangladesh and the Holy Cross Sisters jointly organized several health awareness programs in different rural areas.

Bangladesh's The Daily Star said May 1 – following an April 30 report from science.org – that the measles epidemic was a consequence of the interim government's decision to halt vaccine procurement through the United Nations' children agency, UNICEF.

Reports say that in 2025, despite repeated warnings about possible disruptions in immunization services, Bangladesh's Health Ministry halted measles-rubella vaccine procurement through UNICEF, in favor of an open tender process – a competitive method used by governments and public health organizations to procure vaccines.

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