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Your Right to Know

## WANT FASTER GROWTH?

Equip youth with skills to seize demographic dividend: experts

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## ECO NO MORE

The Italian literary giant, best known for The Name of the Rose, dies at 84

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## FASTEST TEST TON!

Kiwi skipper McCullum makes the record in his last Test match

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# EDUCATION IN MOTHER LANGUAGE 40pc population denied globally

Says Unesco report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Though children should be taught in a language they speak or understand, as much as 40 percent of the global population does not have access to that kind of education.

The challenges are most prevalent in regions -- such as sub-Saharan Africa and Asia and the Pacific -- where linguistic diversity is the greatest, reveals a policy paper of the Unesco's Global Education Monitoring Report.

If children are taught in a language other than their own, it has a negative effect on learning, according to the paper styled "If you don't understand, how can you learn?" released on Friday, ahead of International Mother Language Day being observed worldwide today.

In Bangladesh, there are around 30 lakh people -- mainly indigenous -- whose mother tongues are not Bangla. Of them, some five lakh are children who have almost no access to education in their mother language, linguist Shourav Sikdar told The Daily Star.

Although the National Education Policy-2010 calls for steps to ensure education of the indigenous people in their mother tongues, the plan had not yet been implemented mainly due to bureaucratic tangles, said the professor of linguistics at Dhaka University.

Citing a 2012 survey, Mong Shano Chowdhury, a retired government college teacher in Rangamati, said the dropout rate among the indigenous children in the three hill districts was 65 percent.

"The main reason behind such a high dropout rate is they cannot pursue education in their mother language," he observed.

Prof Shourav, also a member of the government's Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education programme, said though some non-government organisations were working to provide education to indigenous children in their mother language, "it is very insufficient".

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President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina stand in solemn silence after placing wreaths at the Central Shaheed Minar after zero hour today on the occasion of International Mother Language Day, paying tributes to the language martyrs.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

## Nation salutes the language heroes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The nation is paying glowing tributes to the Language Movement martyrs, who laid down their lives for the recognition of Bangla as a state language on this day 64 years ago.

Humming "Amar Bhaiyer Rokte Rangano Ekushey February...", thousands of Bangalis thronged the Central Shaheed Minar in the capital and elsewhere in the early hours today to pay homage to the language heroes.

With Bangladesh, 193 countries across the globe are observing the day, as the Unesco on November 17, 1999, declared February 21 as the International Mother Language Day.

As the clock struck 12:00am, President Abdul Hamid led the nation in paying tributes by placing wreaths at the Central Shaheed Minar.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina followed him a few moments later.

The premier was followed by the Speaker and Deputy Speaker, the ruling

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## Uphold dignity of mother tongue

PM urges at Ekushey Padak ceremony

UNB, Dhaka

Stressing the importance of learning mother tongue first, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged all to uphold the dignity of Bangla.

"I call upon all to uphold the dignity of our mother language achieved in exchange for huge blood," she told a function at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the city.

The programme was organised to hand out Ekushey Padak 2016 to 16 eminent personalities for their outstanding contributions to various fields.

"Our children must learn other languages. It'll be the real education if they first learn mother tongue and then the others. Our society will have to be conscious in this regard," the PM said.

People will have to move ahead with self-confidence and thus further develop this country so that the Bangali nation has its due place on the global stage with its head held high, mentioned Hasina. "Ekushey February is not merely a day... it flourishes our spirit and teach us not to bow down to injustice."

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## Recruitment deal to stay unaffected

Says Malaysian minister after KL slaps suspension on foreign workers' hiring

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In yet another twist, Malaysia yesterday said the deal on labour recruitment signed with Bangladesh on Thursday would not be affected by Malaysia's decision to suspend recruitment of foreign workers.

"Further details on the decision to freeze foreign worker recruitment will be announced by the government," its Human Resources Minister Richard Riot said in a statement, reports Malaysian newspaper The Star.

Riot also welcomed his government's "positive" decision to provide employment opportunities to local people.

In another development, Malaysian immigration department has nabbed 971 "illegal expatriates", including six Bangladeshis, in an overnight nationwide

crackdown, Malaysian state-run news agency Bernama reported yesterday.

They were caught for not having identification documents, overstaying and holding unrecognised cards of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, said Sakib Kusmi, director general of the department.

"Those detained will be placed at immigration detention depots for investigation and follow-up action," the news agency quoted Kusmi as saying.

Identities of the detained Bangladeshis could not be known immediately.

Meanwhile, Begum Shamsunnahar, acting secretary of Bangladesh expatriates' welfare ministry, said the memorandum of understanding signed between Dhaka and Kuala Lumpur remained valid as Malaysia made no official communications with Bangladesh.

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## 'TREE MAN' First surgery successful

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

What looked like a tree trunk a day before took the shape of a human hand yesterday after doctors of Dhaka Medical College Hospital successfully conducted the first surgery on "Tree Man" Abul Bajandar's right hand.

Bajandar, 26, has been suffering from epidermodysplasia verruciformis, a rare skin disorder commonly known as the tree man illness, which covers limbs with warts, making it look like a tree branch.

With no use of his limbs, Bajandar, believed to be the fourth man in the world with tree man illness, got admitted at the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery of DMCH on January 30.

Yesterday, a nine-member team of doctors performed the three-hour-long surgery that started from 9:30am, and removed the warts from all five fingers of his right hand.

"We operated on Bajandar's right hand. After three weeks, we would decide on the next operation," Samanta



Abul Bajandar

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TOP! QUOTE

"We would like to say to Myanmar: Remove the yaba factories from bordering areas. We want friendly relations with you."

HOME MINISTER ASADUZZAMAN KHAN KAMAL IN CHITTAGONG YESTERDAY.



A fishing trawler gets beached on the Karnaphuli in Chittagong during the low tide yesterday. The accumulation of silt on the riverbed and lack of dredging of the river, its tributaries, and canals, inset, connected to it has left the river in this sorry state.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS



“হাটু আমার গলা ধরে প্রথমেই বলল, 'আব্বা, রাষ্ট্রভাষা বাংলা চাই, রাজবন্দিদের মুক্তি চাই।' ২১শে ফেব্রুয়ারি ওরা ঢাকায় ছিল, যা শুনেছে তাই বলে চলেছে।”

— বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান  
(অসমাপ্ত আত্মজীবনী হতে, পৃষ্ঠা ২০৭)

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