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Your Right to Know

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## Dying in SILENCE

14 languages disappearing for lack of preservation efforts

PINAKI ROY

The 14 languages declared endangered over two years ago remain in various stages of decline as the number of users diminish, with experts calling for extensive measures from the government to preserve these.

The state of some of these languages is so dire that only 10 to 12 elderly people in certain ethnic communities speak them.

According to Unesco, "A language disappears when its speakers disappear or when they shift to speaking another language -- most often, a larger language used by a more powerful group."

It also says, "Languages are threatened by external forces such as military, economic, religious, cultural or educational subjugation, or by internal forces such as a community's negative attitude towards its own language."

A linguistic survey conducted by the International Mother Language Institute (IMLI), which ended in 2018, listed the 14 endangered languages -- Kondo, Kharia, Koda, Soura, Mundari, Kole, Malto, Khumi, Pangkhua, Rengmitcha, Chak, Khyang, Lusai and Laleng (Patro).

They are mostly spoken in the north, Sylhet region, and the Chattogram Hill Tracts and among 41 ethnic languages spoken as mother tongues in the country.

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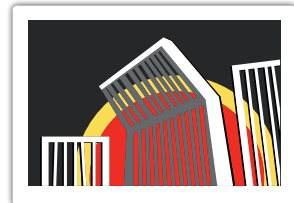
### ON THE VERGE OF EXTINCTION

Kondo, Kharia, Koda, Soura, Mundari, Kole, Malto, Khumi, Panakhua, Rengmitcha, Chak, Khyang, Lusai and Laleng (Patro)



An artist puts finishing touches to the graffiti depicting the martyrs killed by police in 1952 for demanding Bangla be made state language. The photo was taken on the Central Shaheed Minar premises on the eve of International Mother Language Day, when the nation commemorates the language movement heroes.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN



## Language Movement paved path for independence

Says PM

UNB, DHAKA

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the 1952 Language Movement had paved the path for achieving the independence of Bangladesh.

"In the history of the Bangalee's struggle for freedom, the Language Movement is very important. All our achievements came through this movement," she said while distributing the prestigious Ekushey Padak, the country's second highest civilian award, among the recipients.

The cultural affairs ministry organised the

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### EIGHT LANGUAGES

Bangla, Chakma, Marma, Tangchangya, Rakhaine, Mro, Monipuri and Ahmia have their own alphabets



Textbooks using Chakma and Marma alphabets were introduced in 2017 for students up to grade-III while Garo, Kokborok, Sadi language textbooks were printed using Roman alphabets

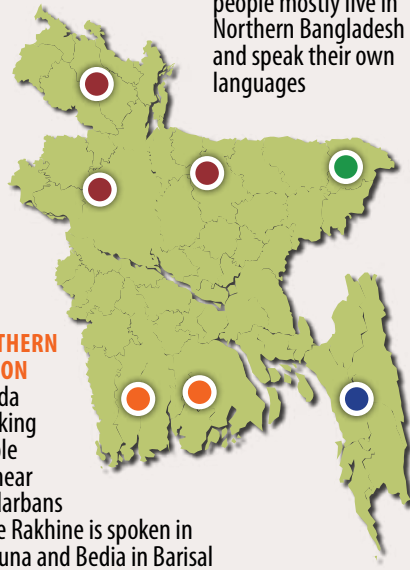
**MYMENSINGH AND NORTHERN REGIONS**  
Mandi (Garo), Hajong, Koch and Lingam speaking people live in Mymensingh region while Santal, Kole, Koda, Munda people mostly live in Northern Bangladesh and speak their own languages

**SYLHET REGION**  
Tea garden workers in Sylhet region speak Munda, Ahmia, Mahali, Kuruk, Kanpuri, Santal, Madrazi, Telegu, Uria, Kanpuri, Malto, Soura, Sadi Gurkha and Bhojuri while there are other people who speak Khasi, Monipuri (Meitei), Monipuri (Bhisupriya) and Lelang (Patro) languages

**CHT, COX'S BAZAR REGION**  
Bawm, Chak, Chakma, Marma, Khumi, Mro, Rengmitcha, Pangkhua, Khyang, Lusai, Tangchangya, Kokborok, Nepali (Gurkha) and Rakhine languages are spoken in CHT and Cox's Bazar region

SOURCE: IMLI, UNESCO

**SOUTHERN REGION**  
Munda speaking people live near Sundarbans while Rakhine is spoken in Barguna and Bedia in Barisal



## Drama over Quader Mirza 'suspension'

Journo injured in Friday night's clash dies; 50 hurt in fresh violence

OUR CORRESPONDENT, NOAKHALI

Noakhali Awami League leaders backtracked from their decision to relieve Abdul Quader Mirza of organisational activities within two hours of issuing the release statement yesterday.

A top leader of the district AL claimed the statement was issued "mistakenly".

It was signed by the district AL President AHM Khairul Anam Chowdhury and its General Secretary Mohammad Ekramul Karim Chowdhury and was issued around 4:00pm yesterday.

The statement said Quader Mirza has been released from all types of the party's organisational functions on charge of delivering indecent speech that went against the party and threatened some party men.

Besides, the district AL president and secretary also recommended in the

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## RED CRESCENT VOLUNTEERS

# A vital cog in vaccination

MOUJUD AHMED SUJAN

"Have you brought the vaccination card, sir?" Rubina Akter asks a middle-aged man who just arrived at a Covid-19 inoculation centre at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital.

Once the man gives her the card, she takes him to a desk and helps him fill out a few forms. She then shows him the waiting room, saying, "You will be called soon."

Rubina, a graduate student, is one of the 4,200 volunteers aged between 18 and 30 of Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS). They are lending a hand in the government's vaccination programme.

They have been working at over 1,000 vaccination centres across the country since February 7 when the campaign launched. They only receive a meal and transport costs for the work.

"We enjoy giving back to the community," said a smiling Rubina at a DMCH vaccination centre on Thursday.

The positive attitude can be seen among volunteers at many vaccination centres across the country. They help people at the reception desks and assist them in every step of the process.

With academic activities limited to online classes, many students like Rubina have been able to find the time to engage in voluntary work.

At some centres, this correspondent saw the volunteers helping the elderly in wheelchairs. It is the volunteers who watch for side-effects in vaccine recipients for 30 minutes after they get the shot.

Shanto Hossain Rabby, an accounting student, said the voluntary work was a blessing for him.

"Many people do not get such opportunities to help others. I consider myself lucky," said Rabby, the chief of the youth section of BDRCS in Dhaka.

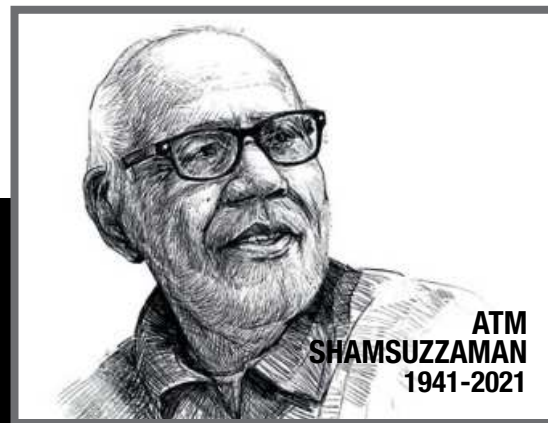
For Afia Ulpha, who is in her third year at Mirpur Institute of Science, Trade and Technology, voluntary work is a source of immense happiness.

"The smiling faces of people after they get inoculated give me peace," Afia told this correspondent at booth-8 in Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital.

Halimur Rahman, a resident of Pallabi, was extremely grateful to the volunteers.

"I got my shot within just 10 minutes. The management is efficient. The health workers and volunteers are caring people," he said.

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ATM SHAMSUZZAMAN 1941-2021

## An actor etched in collective mind

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Ekushey Padak and National Film Award winning actor ATM Shamsuzzaman passed away at 9:00pm yesterday at his Sutrapur residence.

He was 79 years old.

The news was confirmed by SA Haque Olik, general secretary, Bangladesh Directors' Guild.

Shamsuzzaman was hospitalised after suffering from breathing problems.

He was taken to Asgar Ali Hospital in Gendaria on February 17 for some tests before being admitted to the ICU. He had tested negative for Covid-19 and returned home from hospital on Friday.

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মা তোমাকে ভালবাসি

শব্দ নয়, অনুভূতি হোক ভাষার প্রাণ

From the house of KDS

MORE NEWS

The last of the Kharia speakers PAGE 2

Nasa's rover beams back spectacular new images PAGE 6

History hidden in plain sight PAGE 3

Somela Rahman: an unsung language hero PAGE 3

Transatlantic alliance is 'back' PAGE 6

ভাষা দিবসে ব্যাংক এশিয়া নিয়ে এলো বাংলা কিউআর

BANGLA QR

এখন যাবতীয় কেনাকাটার পেমেন্ট হবে আরও সহজে ও নিরাপদে ডিসা ব্যাংক এশিয়া বাংলা কিউআর এর মাধ্যমে

বিস্তারিত জানতে কল করুনঃ ৯৬২০৫ (২৪/৭)

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