



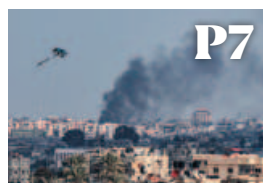
"The situation is extremely difficult in several parts of the front line, where Russian troops have concentrated maximum reserves."
Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky



B1 Pharma sector's raw materials import rises



P6 I want to stay here for the rest of my life



P7 US vetoes UNSC push for Gaza ceasefire



P11 Morsalin to miss Palestine matches

BFIU ANNUAL REPORT

Suspicious transaction, activity reports up 65pc

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There were 14,106 reports of suspicious financial activities and transactions in the 2022-23 fiscal year, a 65 percent rise from the previous year, according to Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit.

The anti-money laundering agency received the reports from banks, non-bank financial institutions, capital market intermediaries, remitters, and other sources.

Of the total, 9,769 are suspicious transaction reports (STR) and 4,337 are suspicious activity reports (SAR), says the annual report of Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) released yesterday.

Addressing a press conference at Bangladesh Bank office, BFIU chief Masud Biswas said the number of reports increased because of

awareness and improvement of skills of officials at the reporting agencies, the changing nature of crime, and the BFIU's strong position to combat money laundering and financing of terrorism.

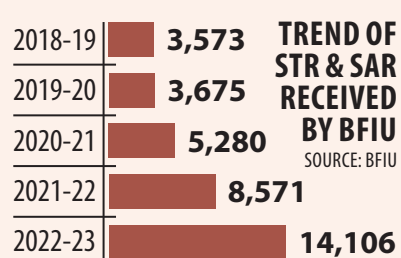
Preventive measures are important in curbing money laundering because it is very difficult to bring back laundered money, he added.

"We recommended that the government enter the Mutual Legal Assistance Agreements with Canada, the US, the UK and seven other countries to bring back laundered money," he said.

The government is working on it, he said.

In the last fiscal year, 91 percent of the incidents were reported by banks and 6.38 percent by money remitters, says the annual report.

From July 2018 to June 2023, the BFIU received



INTERNATIONAL MOTHER LANGUAGE DAY



Three first-graders from Tripura community pore over a textbook in their mother tongue Kokborok on their own without a teacher to guide them. The photo was taken on the eve of the Int'l Mother Language Day yesterday at Doluchhora Govt Primary School in Sreemangal upazila of Moulvibazar.

PHOTO: MINTU DESHWARA

Three new apps to enhance digital experience in Bangla Software to be launched today

MAHMUDUL HASAN

The government has developed three AI-based software promoting the Bengali language in the digital space, enabling users to convert Bengali text to speech and speech to text and extract text from images.

The Bangladesh Computer Council, under the "Enrichment of Bengali Language in Information Technology through Research and Development" (EBLICIT) project, will release the software for users tomorrow on the occasion of the International Mother Language Day.

There will also be a font opened for users that day, digitally representing the Bengali characters, symbols and glyphs.

"These tools are unique in Bangladesh," said Mahub Karim, project director of EBILICIT.

Each of the components in the software is developed using artificial intelligence and developed by the local engineers.

Although Google has similar software, these are not free, he said, adding that they have plans to make these software feasible, sustainable and resourceful in future.

The Bengali text-to-speech software, named Uccharon, will convert text into spoken words. As the application reads text from documents, websites and screen windows, it will highly benefit visually impaired people too.

Developed with both male and female voices, the software is accessible at read.bangla.gov.bd from today.

The Bengali speech-to-text software is named "Kotha". Accessible via voice.bangla.gov.bd, it transforms clear

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President, PM lead nation in honouring language heroes

UNB, Dhaka

President Mohammed Shahabuddin and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid rich tributes to the martyrs of Language Movement early today by placing wreaths at the Central Shaheed Minar marking the Amar Ekushey and the International Mother Language Day.

They laid floral wreaths at one-minute past midnight.

Hasina arrived nine minutes before the clock struck 12. Dhaka University Vice-chancellor Prof ASM Maksud Kamal received her.

The PM and the VC later received the president when he arrived seven minutes before the zero hour.

The president and the premier proceeded to the altar of the Shaheed Minar together as the immortal song on Amar Ekushey - "Amar Bhaiyer Rakte Rangano Ekushey February" - was playing.

The president was the first to lay the wreath. Just after him, the PM did it.

They stood in solemn silence for a while as a mark of profound respect to the memories of the language heroes.

Ministers, PM's advisers, MPs,

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Languages we may lose soon

14 ethnic languages endangered; govt doing little to preserve them

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and TAHIRA SHAMSI UTSA

Mang Pru Marma, 78, from Kranchipara of Bandarban's Alikadam upazila, is among the last seven speakers, all of whom are elderly, of Rengmitcha language.

Mang Pru's son Singrao Mro, 49, however, only knows a few words in Rengmitcha, which, he said, is spoken only in a few families in their community.

With the deaths of these few remaining speakers, the death of the entire language seems inevitable.

Sisters Veronica and Christina Kerketa, aged 70 and 65, are the last two women who can fluently speak the Kharia language.

A resident of a remote village in Moulvibazar's Sreemangal upazila, Veronica said, "Once we are gone, no one will speak this language. I tried to teach the younger people of our community our language, but they show no interest. No one in our own family even speaks Kharia anymore. We need to communicate in Sadri [spoken by a majority of tea-worker in Sylhet division] of Bangla with them."

According to latest Population and Housing Census 2022, there are



- 41 languages in Bangladesh
- Two-thirds of them have no letters
- 14 languages are endangered
- Primary textbooks in 5 indigenous languages
- Govt has no plan to add any new indigenous language in nat'l curriculum

16,50,478 people from 50 ethnic minorities in the country. The census by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics has also listed some other unidentified minorities.

According to the International Mother Language Institute, there are 41 languages, including ethnic ones,

spoken across Bangladesh.

Of them, 14 - Rengmitcha, Kharia, Kondo, Koda, Soura, Mundari, Kole, Malto, Khumi, Pangkhua, Chak, Khyang, Lusai, and Laleng (Patro) - have been recognised as "endangered" - are disappearing.

In its "Ethno-Linguistic Survey of Bangladesh", which ended in 2018, it said the population size of the ethnic communities who speak these 14 languages range from 1,000 to 40,000 - mostly in the north, the Sylhet region, and the Chattogram Hill Tracts.

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."

As the nation today observes "Amar Ekushey" - Language Martyr's Day - and International Mother Language Day, one question remains - are we doing enough to preserve and protect all our languages?

WHY ARE SOME LANGUAGES DYING?

Prof Shourav Sikder, a researcher of the survey and linguistics professor at Dhaka University, said, "When a language is lost, a culture is lost. A whole people get lost from history."


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President Mohammed Shahabuddin and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina stand in silence after placing floral wreaths at the Central Shaheed Minar as the clock struck 12:01am today to pay respect to the memories of language heroes. Afterwards, many organisations and individuals, left, paid their homage.

PHOTO: BSS/PRABIR DAS





আমার বাঙলা ভাষা



শ্রদ্ধা ও ভালবাসায় অটুট থাকুক আমার মায়ের ভাষা, বাংলা ভাষা।

From the house of KDS

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