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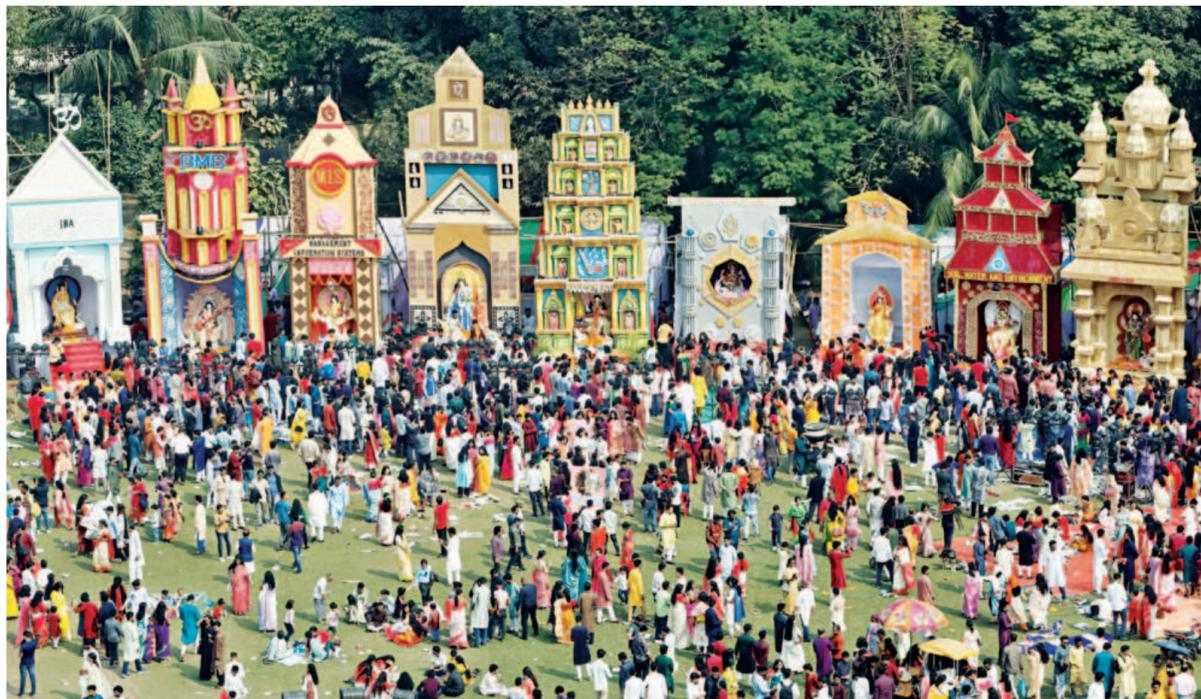
This year marks the 73rd anniversary of the 1952 Language Movement. Drawing on research based on various published books, this 21-part series tells the story of the historic struggle for our mother tongue.

**Language Movement in Pabna**

AHMAD ISTIAK

During the 1948-1952 Language Movement, the people of Pabna defied the authority's oppressive measures and fought to recognise their mother tongue.

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Devotees gather to perform religious rituals and visit the pandals around the playground of Dhaka University's Jagannath Hall, where the most decorative and gorgeous celebration of Saraswati Puja is usually held. Saraswati Puja, the worship of the goddess of knowledge, music, art, and culture, was celebrated across the country yesterday amid festivity and religious fervour.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

**Distributors of AL leaflets will be arrested**

Says CA's press secy; 'communal violence not behind deaths cited by minority rights group'

BSS, Dhaka

Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam has warned that anyone found distributing Awami League's leaflets will be arrested.

"The cohorts of the fallen fascist regime are trying to create issues and distributing leaflets. Our firm message to those who will distribute leaflets is that they will be arrested," he said at a press briefing yesterday.

They will face action because the leaflets contain text that is supposed to put law and order at risk, according to him.

Shafiqul said the AL activists were also spreading disinformation online, and they too would be brought to justice.

Quoting Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, he said extortion must stop so that the prices of essentials remain stable during the upcoming Ramadan and none can

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**Enam Ahmed Chowdhury passes away**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Former chairman of the Privatization Commission and retired secretary Enam Ahmed Chowdhury passed away at his residence in Dhaka yesterday afternoon. He was 88.

He was suffering from old-age complications and suddenly fall sick, said his son Nadeem Chowdhury.

"Critically ill, he was rushed to a nearby hospital around 4:30pm where the doctors declared him dead," he said.

Chowdhury's namaz-e-janaza will be held after his daughter reaches Bangladesh from abroad on February 5.

He will be laid to rest at Azimpur Graveyard, Nadeem added.

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**No radiotherapy at lone cancer hospital for 44 days**

A new machine likely to be put into operation today

AHMED DEEPTO

All six radiotherapy machines of the National Institute of Cancer Research & Hospital (NICRH) have been out of order for the last 44 days, depriving more than 10,000 cancer patients of their scheduled therapy.

Amid this sorry state of radiotherapy at the country's lone full-fledged cancer treatment facility, Bangladesh is set to observe World Cancer Day today.

The exact number of people suffering from cancer in Bangladesh is hard to get as there is no official data.

However, according to the population-based cancer registry by the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU)'s Department of Public Health and Informatics, the prevalence of cancer in Bangladesh is 106 cases per 100,000 population.

A recent study by the BSMMU revealed that 53 new cases are reported per 100,000 people every year and cancer is responsible for 11.9 percent of all deaths in Bangladesh annually.

During a visit to the NICRH yesterday morning, cleaners and staff were seen cleaning floors and doing paint touch-ups ahead of the cancer day event.

A notice was seen in the radiotherapy department announcing that the machines were out of order. There was no mention of when they might be operational and patients were told they would be contacted later when the machines start working again.

Of the six, two medical Linear Accelerators (LINACs), the device most commonly used for external beam radiation treatments for cancer patients, became non-

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**LIBYA BOAT CAPSIZE**

**Families search for bodies of loved ones**

ZYMA ISLAM

As the Bangladeshi embassy in Libya struggles to identify the bodies of the 23 migrants who have washed ashore in the northern part of the country, families back home are desperately searching for their missing loved ones.

Some of the families have identified the bodies from photos that have been circulating among Libya-based migrant worker support groups.

For example, Palash Miah's body was identified by his family from a photo that was posted. The man from Narshingdi's Shibpur was about 20 years old.

SM Robin Islam, a family friend of Palash, spoke to The Daily Star by phone to describe the last few minutes before the boat capsized last week.

Robin and Palash's brothers are both migrants living in Saudi Arabia, and both have been following the events closely.

"There were three survivors aboard the boat. One of them spoke to my roommate [Palash's brother] when he was searching for Palash. He said that when the boat was sinking, the boatman urged them all to jump into the sea. Most of the migrants stayed back on the boat while three jumped and began swimming towards the shore," said Robin.

Two of the men got ahead of the other and made it to shore. They swam for about eight hours. They are now in hiding and waiting to be smuggled from Libya into Europe via the Mediterranean Sea, he said.

"The one who fell behind was rescued and is hospitalised," said Robin.

The Bangladeshi embassy in Libya said two men are in hospital.

Almost all of the family members The Daily Star spoke to said there were 43 migrants on the boat, but the Bangladeshi embassy in Libya said in a statement yesterday that there were 56 people onboard.

**"To our knowledge, there were 22 Bangladeshi nationals on board and some other nationalities."**  
-An NGO spokesperson

The families also said two boats left the shores of northern Libya at the same time in the early hours of January 25. One capsized, and the bodies of 23 of those on board have washed ashore, while the rest remain missing.

Some of the families said that the other boat reached Europe.

The other boat, presumably, was rescued off the coast of Malta by the NGO Alarm Phone on January 29, according to posts made on X (formerly Twitter) by the NGO.

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**Capacity payment terms must be renegotiated**

Proposes task force on power sector

REJAU KARIM BYRON and ASIFUR RAHMAN

The interim government must suspend the inefficient and costly power plants and renegotiate the capacity payment terms with the private power producers as the structure incentivises inefficiency, according to the report of the task force.

"The current capacity payment structures incentivise inefficiency and impose unnecessary costs on the government," said the task force report on re-strategising the economy and mobilising resources for equitable and sustainable development.

Revising the terms will align payments with actual energy production, ensuring better value for public spending, it said.

Over the years, maximum power generation has consistently fallen short of installed capacity.

Surplus capacity reached 11,680 megawatts (MW) in fiscal 2023-24. Nearly 43.5 percent of the power plants' capacity remained underutilised last fiscal year compared to the installed capacity of 26,844 MW.

As a result of capacity payments, irregularities and various inefficiencies, the Bangladesh Power Development Board's operating losses surged to Tk 44,291 crore last fiscal year. In fiscal 2017-18, PDB's losses stood at Tk 6,208 crore.

This fiscal year, capacity charges would take up about 80 percent of the Tk 40,000 crore subsidy allocation for the power sector, the report said.

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**Due to capacity payments, irregularities and various inefficiencies, the BPDB's operating losses surged to Tk 44,291 crore last fiscal year.**

**Barishal bully Chittagong, Khulna knock out Rangpur**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Defending champions Fortune Barishal upstaged Chittagong Kings by nine wickets in the first qualifier in Mirpur yesterday to ensure their berth in the final of Bangladesh Premier League (BPL).

Shamim Hossain's valiant 47-ball 82 went in vain as Chittagong could not put the finishing touch after asked to bat at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, losing wickets in a flurry and managing 38 runs in the last six overs.

Mohammad Ali then bagged four in the 19th over as Chittagong were restricted to 149-9.

In reply, Tamim Iqbal and Hridoy looked for stability as they put together a 55-run stand to calm the nerves. But with the required rate going up, Tamim departed for

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Fortune Barishal opener Towhid Hridoy's first half-century in the ongoing edition of the Bangladesh Premier League helped his side to a nine-wicket win over Chittagong Kings in Qualifier 1 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. The right-handed batter started slow but picked up the pace deeper into the innings as Barishal made light work of the 149-run target, courtesy of Hridoy's 56-ball 82, to cement their spot in the final.

PHOTO: STAR

**Ethnic cleansing going on in West Bank**

Says Palestinian presidency, urges US to intervene

AFP, Ramallah

The office of Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas denounced an Israeli operation in the occupied West Bank as ethnic cleansing yesterday, urging the United States to intervene.

In a statement, spokesman Nabil Abu Rudeineh said the presidency "condemned the occupation authorities' expansion of their comprehensive war on our Palestinian people in the West Bank to implement their plans aimed at displacing citizens and ethnic cleansing".

Iran also condemned US President Donald Trump's proposal to relocate Palestinians from the Gaza Strip, warning it would amount to "ethnic cleansing".

Foreign ministry spokesman Esmacel Baqaei said yesterday the international community should help Palestinians "secure their right to self-determination... rather than pushing for other ideas that would be tantamount to ethnic cleansing".

The Israeli military said Sunday that it had killed "at least 50 militants" during more than two weeks of operations in the occupied West Bank, earlier levelling buildings in Jenin refugee camp in the territory.

"As part of the operation to thwart terrorism... the IDF (military) recently destroyed several buildings in Jenin," the military said in a statement, adding that they "were used as terrorist infrastructure".

The Palestinian health ministry, however, said yesterday that Israeli forces had killed 70 people in the occupied West Bank since the start of 2025.

Meanwhile, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was due to begin talks on a second phase of the ceasefire with Hamas as he visits the new Trump administration in Washington.