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**AMAR EKUSHEY-9**

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.

**Pak crackdown on Weekly Sangram**

AHMAD ISTIAK

The 1948 Language Movement had a more pronounced impact in Feni, then a part of Noakhali, compared to other areas within the district. According to Ahmed Rafiq's

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People walking on steel girders to cross over an unfinished canal at Bahaddarhat's Baraipara in Chattogram city yesterday. The project to construct this new 2.9km canal, which is supposed to lead to Karnaphuli river, was taken up in 2014 by the Chattogram City Corporation. Eleven years on, only 2km of earth has been excavated.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

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## DHAKA ELEVATED EXPRESSWAY Tk 2,500 fine for speeding from February 21

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police will begin filing video-based cases against speeding vehicles on the Dhaka Elevated Expressway from February 21 to prevent potential accidents, the expressway authorities said yesterday.

Vehicles exceeding 100 kilometres per hour (km/h) will be fined, said Hasib Hasan Khan, head of the Traffic Safety and Security Department at First Dhaka Elevated Expressway O&M Company, which oversees traffic-related issues on the expressway.

The fine for speeding is Tk 2,500 and will double if the offence is committed again.

If a vehicle is fined three times for exceeding the speed limit, it will be banned from the expressway.

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), however, said a case will be filed against any vehicle that exceeds the speed limit on the expressway. Currently, the speed limit on the Dhaka Elevated Expressway is set at 60 km/h.

However, the authorities have proposed increasing it to 80 km/h and are in discussions with the Bangladesh Bridge Authority regarding the change, Hasib said, adding that the issue will hopefully be settled by February 20.

The move to enforce the speed limit comes as many users are treating the expressway like a runway, with some driving at speeds over 190 km/h and many exceeding 150 km/h.

## 300-year-old rare violin sells for \$11.3m

AFP, New York

A rare Stradivarius violin, made over 300 years ago by Antonio Stradivari during his so-called golden period, fetched \$11.3 million at auction in New York on Friday, Sotheby's said.

"This extraordinary violin represents the pinnacle of craftsmanship and classical music history, its unparalleled sound and storied provenance captivating collectors and musicians alike," Sotheby's chair Mari-Claudia Jimenez said in a statement.

It said the buyer chose to remain anonymous.

Known for its extraordinary sound, the "Joachim-Ma Stradivarius," named after its distinguished former owners, became the third most-expensive musical instrument ever sold at auction.

The most-expensive record belongs to another Stradivarius, the "Lady Blunt," which sold was sold in 2011 for \$15.9 million.

"What sets the Joachim-Ma Stradivarius apart is its exceptional sound -- rich, complex, and full of depth," the auction house said.

The instrument belonged to the celebrated Chinese violinist and pedagogue Si-Hon Ma, who before his death in 2009 donated the violin to his alma mater, the New England Conservatory in Boston, on condition that some day it sell the violin to fund scholarships.

## Teen with disabilities raped in Patuakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A teenage girl with disabilities was allegedly raped and her mother and an aunt were assaulted in Patuakhali's Baulal upazila on Thursday afternoon.

According to a case filed with Baulal Police Station the next day, Hossain Howlader, aged around 30, took the girl to an abandoned hut in the village, promising her treats, and raped her.

Her mother, who was at a neighbour's house, heard her screams for help and rushed to the hut. Seeing her, Hossain ran away, says the complaint.

The mother and her cousin then went to Hossain's house to tell his parents what happened, but his father Selim Howlader and brother Hasan Howlader physically assaulted the women.

Her mother was seriously injured and had been admitted to a hospital.

After the girl's father, a labourer, filed the case on Friday night, police arrested Selim and Hasan, said Kamal Hossain, officer-in-charge of Baulal Police Station, adding that police are looking for the main suspect.

## Baltic nations decouple from Russia power grid

Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania to be connected with EU grid today

AFP, Vilnius

Three Baltic states yesterday cut ties with Russia's power grid to join the European Union's network, the culmination of a years-long process that gained urgency with Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania -- all former Soviet republics now in the European Union and NATO -- had wanted to block Russia's ability to geopolitically blackmail them via the electricity system.

"We have removed any theoretical possibility of Russia using energy (grid) control as a weapon," Lithuania's Energy Minister Zygimantas Vaiciunas told AFP yesterday.

EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas -- Estonia's former prime minister -- had on Friday hailed the grid switch as "a victory for freedom and European unity".

Vaiciunas said the Baltic states had completed the disconnection process at 9:09 local time (0709 GMT) yesterday.

"We have been waiting for this moment for a long time," he told reporters, after speaking with his Estonian and Latvian counterparts.

"The energy system of the Baltic states is finally in our own hands. We are in control," he added of the "historic" moment.

He said the Baltics were now operating in so-called "isolated mode", before they integrate with the European grid today.

Official celebrations are planned across the Baltics, and authorities were on guard for any potential cyber-attacks linked to the grid switch.

Latvia will physically cut a power line to Russia later Saturday and European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen is to attend



**"We have removed any theoretical possibility of Russia using energy (grid) control as a weapon."**

**ZYGMANTAS VAICIUNAS**  
Lithuania's Energy Minister

a ceremony with Baltic leaders in Vilnius on Sunday.

The Baltics have long prepared to integrate with the European grid but faced technological and financial issues.

The switch became more urgent after Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, spooking the Baltic states into thinking they could be targeted.

They stopped purchasing Russian gas and electricity after the invasion but their power grids remained connected to Russia and Belarus, controlled from Moscow.

This left them dependent on Moscow for a stable electricity flow, which is crucial for factories and facilities requiring a reliable power supply.

The Baltic states will operate in "isolated

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## PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION 25 cadres reject reform body's proposals

Term them 'anti-public'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Officials from 25 cadres of the Bangladesh Civil Service yesterday rejected the recommendations made by the public administration reform commission, terming them "anti-public".

Members of the Inter-Cadre Discrimination Elimination Council, comprising 25 cadres except for the BCS Administration cadre, also said no quotas will be accepted for promotion to the position of deputy secretary.

At a press conference in the Dhaka Reporter's Unity, Shawkat Hossain, coordinator of the council, said, "Our fears have come true. We reject the Public Administration Reform Commission's vague report and anti-public proposals.

"Although the commission replaced the word 'Cadre' with 'Service' for all cadres in its report, it retained the term 'Administrative Service' for the administration cadre, thereby attempting to make it more powerful. However, administrative positions exist across all cadres."

About the commission's recommendation regarding promotion to deputy secretary post, he alleged the commission has presented an absurd and illogical proposal for allocating a 50 percent

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## BJP returns to power in Delhi after 27 years

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Riding on the charisma of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the BJP yesterday returned to power in Delhi, marking its first victory in the assembly elections in the Indian capital in nearly 27 years, ending a decade-long rule of Arvind Kejriwal-led Aam Aadmi Party.

With the counting of votes almost over, the final picture is clear -- BJP has bagged 48 seats out of the total seats of 70, much above the majority of 36, while AAP's tally remained at 22. A formal announcement of the results by the Election Commission is expected later in the evening.

In the previous assembly polls in Delhi, AAP won 62 seats and BJP just eight.

Delhi, with 1.55 crore eligible voters, recorded a turnout of 60.54 percent in the February 5, 2025 election.

Compounding the woe of AAP, Kejriwal, former chief minister for a decade, trailed from the upscale New Delhi constituency and his ex-deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia conceded defeat in the Jangpura constituency. Both of them were in jail for several months in connection with multiple scams, including alleged money laundering, that severely dented their as well as AAP's image in the last three years.

While Kejriwal lost to BJP nominee Parvesh Verma by 4,089 votes in New Delhi while Sisodia was defeated by saffron party candidate Tarvinder Singh Marwah by over 649 votes, according to EC data.

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Workers sun drying recently harvested Aman paddy on a concrete surface in Khulna city's Gallamari. Sun drying is an eco-friendly and traditional drying method for reducing the moisture content of paddy. After drying, each worker gets Tk 10-12 per maund of paddy dried. They can process around 250-300 maunds at a time. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## 'JOE, YOU'RE FIRED' Trump revokes Biden's security clearance

AFP, Washington

President Donald Trump has revoked his predecessor Joe Biden's security clearance in a blizzard of new orders, while escalating his campaign to dismantle the US humanitarian agency charged with helping the world's poorest and extending American influence around the globe.

In a new series of rapid-fire power plays, the 78-year-old billionaire on Friday also froze aid to South Africa, where his top donor Elon Musk was born, and named himself head of one of Washington's premier cultural venues, the Kennedy Center.

"There is no need for Joe Biden to continue receiving access to classified information," Trump said on his Truth Social network, adding that he was "immediately" revoking the Democrat's security clearances

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