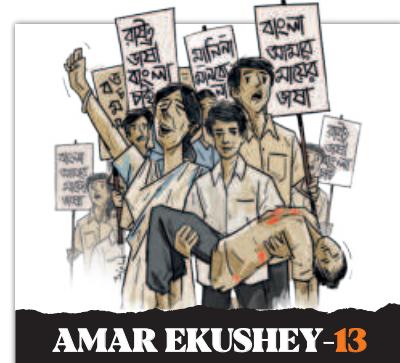


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This year marks the 73rd anniversary of the 1952 Language Movement. Drawing on research based on various published books, this 21-part series tells the story of the historic struggle for our mother tongue.

**Grit amid resistance from Muslim League**

AHMAD ISTIAK

Despite the petition by opposing groups demanding Urdu as the state language, the intense wave of the Language Movement swept through Kishoreganj in 1948.

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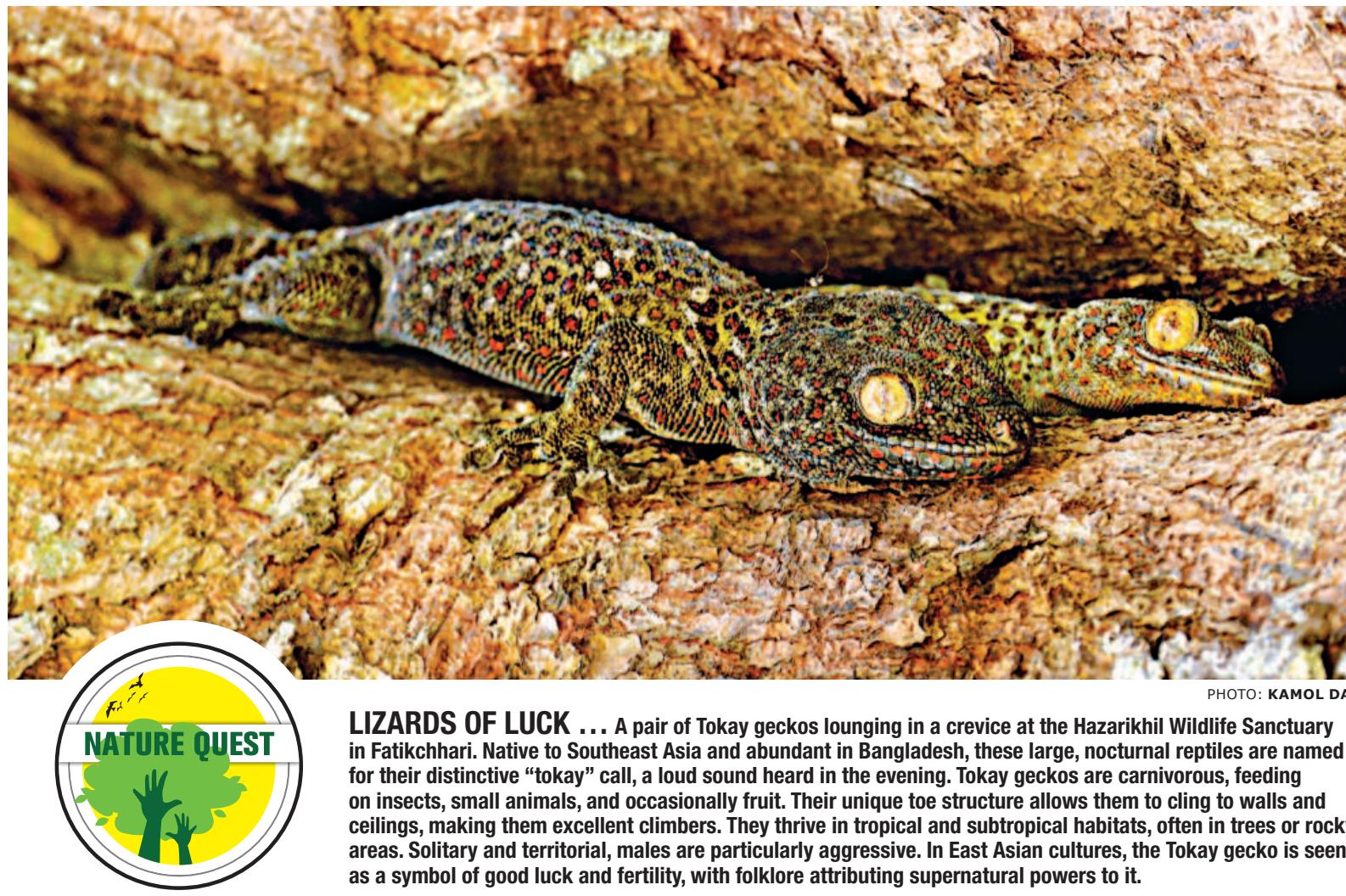


PHOTO: KAMOL DAS

**LIZARDS OF LUCK** ... A pair of Tokay geckos lounging in a crevice at the Hazarikhil Wildlife Sanctuary in Fatikchhari. Native to Southeast Asia and abundant in Bangladesh, these large, nocturnal reptiles are named for their distinctive "tokay" call, a loud sound heard in the evening. Tokay geckos are carnivorous, feeding on insects, small animals, and occasionally fruit. Their unique toe structure allows them to cling to walls and ceilings, making them excellent climbers. They thrive in tropical and subtropical habitats, often in trees or rocky areas. Solitary and territorial, males are particularly aggressive. In East Asian cultures, the Tokay gecko is seen as a symbol of good luck and fertility, with folklore attributing supernatural powers to it.

**Send Hasina back for trial**  
Fakhrul urges India, says party happy with UN report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP has expressed satisfaction with the fact-finding report by the Office of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on the July uprising and urged India to extradite ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina for trial over mass killings.

The party also opposed the proportional representation system and the holding of local elections before the national polls.

It added that it is up to the people to decide which political parties should exist or participate in election.

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir made the remarks during a press briefing at BNP chairperson's Gulshan office yesterday morning. Earlier in the day, he held a meeting with British Deputy High Commissioner James Goldman.

"We are satisfied with the published report. The truth has been revealed. When the UN says something, people believe it. When political parties like ours say the same thing, many are reluctant to believe it. Anyway, I want to thank the UN team for coming here and presenting the report."

He opined that the report rightly said all the killings and massacres were carried out under the directives of ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

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**2nd phase of Biswa Ijtema begins today**

STAR REPORT

Thousands of devotees yesterday began gathering on the bank of the Turag River in Tongi for the 2nd phase of Biswa Ijtema.

The congregation of mostly Maulana Saad Kandhalvi followers begins today and ends with Akheri Munajat on Sunday.

The first phase of Biswa Ijtema, attended by the followers of Maulana Zubair Ahmed, took place from January 31 to February 5.

Organisers yesterday said people from different countries had arrived and all preparations had been made.

Sayem, media coordinator of Tabligh, said, "For the first time in history, Shab e Barat coincides with the Ijtema. Lakhs of devotees will offer Shab e Barat prayers together."

**TRAFFIC DIRECTIVES**

Dhaka Metropolitan Police issued a set of traffic directives for February 16, reports UNB.

All vehicles, except those carrying Uttara residents, air passengers, airline crew, fire services, law enforcement, and ambulances, must avoid the Airport Road. Instead,

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**Trump-Putin call 'not a betrayal' of Ukraine**

Says US defence secretary; Europe warns Trump against Ukraine deal 'behind our backs'

AFP, Brussels

Donald Trump's defence chief yesterday denied that the US president was betraying Ukraine by opening talks with Russia's Vladimir Putin, as blindsided European powers insisted they and Kyiv must have a seat at the table.

Trump on Wednesday stunned European allies by agreeing to launch negotiations with Moscow on ending the nearly three-year Ukraine war, in his first publicly announced phone call with Putin since returning to power.

The US president revealed he expected to meet Putin in Saudi Arabia for Ukraine peace talks, in an extraordinary thaw in relations that sparked fears Kyiv would be frozen out.

That came after his administration poured cold water on Ukraine's goals of reclaiming all its territory and pushing to join Nato's protective umbrella.

"There is no betrayal there. There is a recognition that the whole world and the United States is invested and interested in peace," US Secretary of Defence Pete Hegseth said ahead of a meeting with his Nato counterparts in Brussels. "That will require both sides recognising things they don't want to."

Britain's defence secretary, John Healey, echoed that message, warning "there can be no negotiation about Ukraine without Ukraine, and Ukraine's voice must be at the heart of any talks."

Rutte insisted that any potential peace deal had to be "enduring", pointing to similar comments made earlier by Hegseth.

- Trump, Putin set to meet in Saudi Arabia
- Kyiv must be part of peace talks: UK
- Zelensky is set to meet US VP JD Vance in Munich

**National consensus panel formed**

It'll adopt six reform commissions' suggestions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday formed a seven-member National Consensus Commission to review and adopt the recommendations submitted by the six key reform commissions.

The Cabinet Division announced the formation of the commission in a notification. Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus had earlier said he would lead this commission.

The members of the new commission are Prof Ali Riaz, head of the Constitutional Reform Commission; Abdul Muyeed Chowdhury, head of Public Administration Reform Commission; Safar Raj Hossain, head of Police Reform Commission; Badiul Alam Majumder, head of Election Reform Commission; Justice Emdadul Haque, head of Judiciary Reform Commission; and Dr Iftekharuzzaman, head of Anti-Corruption Reform Commission.

The commission will operate for six months

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**Modi brings tariff 'gift' to Trump talks**

Holds one-one meet with Musk

AGENCIES

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will come bearing gifts when he meets Donald Trump, hoping concessions on tariffs, fresh business deals, and the prospect of cooperation on China would win the US president's favour.



Ahead of his White House meeting yesterday afternoon, Modi has readied promises including increased liquefied natural gas, combat vehicle and jet engine purchases, according to Indian government officials who declined to be named.

Indian officials are also looking at trade negotiations, possible deals on US agriculture exports to India and investment in nuclear energy, along with tariff cuts in at least a dozen sectors, including electronics, medical and surgical equipment, and chemicals.

Those are areas Trump's team believes India needs to make improvements, according to another person familiar with their thinking. It's a "gift" for Trump, said one of the sources, who declined to be named as they previewed a private meeting.

For his part, Modi wants help with the case of billionaire Gautam Adani, an ally of his who was indicted by the Justice Department in November over an alleged bribery scheme. Adani denies wrongdoing.

Another thorny issue will be in the background: the alleged Indian intelligence plot to assassinate a Sikh activist in the United States during the

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**10 CU students punished for assaulting teacher**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Chattogram University yesterday punished 10 female students, expelling one of them and suspending the others for two years, for physically assaulting an assistant proctor and journalists.

Another female student and a male pupil were also suspended on allegations of hurting religious sentiments.

The decisions were taken at a meeting of the university's Board of Residence, Health, and Discipline Committee at the vice chancellor's office.

The committee also recommended cancelling the certificates of the student who was expelled for assaulting the assistant proctor, said Mohammad Saiful Islam, acting register of the institution.

"We will send the recommendation to the university syndicate for further action," he said.

The assault by students residing at Sheikh Hasina Hall occurred around 11:30pm on February 5 over the vandalism of a boat-shaped sitting structure in

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Tents have been set up on the Biswa Ijtema ground on the bank of the Turag in Tongi as devotees from home and abroad start gathering there to join the second phase of three-day Biswa Ijtema, one of the largest congregations of Muslims, that begins today. The photo was taken around 4:00pm yesterday.

PHOTO: MONJURUL HAQUE

**Yunus, Musk discuss bringing Starlink to Bangladesh**

STAR REPORT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus had an extensive discussion with Elon Musk to explore future collaboration and to make further progress in introducing Starlink satellite internet service in Bangladesh.

The founder of SpaceX and chief adviser talked about the potential transformational impact of Starlink's satellite communications, particularly for Bangladesh's enterprising youth, rural and vulnerable women, and remote communities, says a press release of the chief adviser's press wing.

On the Bangladesh side, Khalilur Rahman, high representative for the Rohingya crisis and priority issues, and Lamiya Morshed, principal coordinator of SDGs, attended the virtual meeting.

On the SpaceX side, the company's Vice President Lauren Dreyer, and Global Engagement Adviser Richard Griffiths were present.

Prof Yunus and Musk discussed

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