

## The youth ready to lead the world

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new world. They are ready to lead. Boys are ready, girls are ready”.

He said the country’s new generation wants to build a “new civilisation of their dreams” by breaking the shackles of a self-destructive civilisation.

The chief adviser said the main goal of their civilisation will be to ensure equal rights of every person to all the resources of the world, to ensure that all have opportunity to dream and realise it, to develop human life in such a way that the existence of the world and the living of all lives are not disturbed in any way.

Young generation ready to lead the world: CA

Congratulating the Ekushey Padak winners, he said the nation is particularly grateful to the recipients as they were the guides of the nation.

Recalling the contribution of the martyrs, who sacrificed their lives in the 1952 language movement, 1971 Liberation war and 2024 July uprising and the injured of the uprising, Prof Yunus said: “We got a new Bangladesh through the uprising of students-workers commoners on August 5 last year.”

Through this victory, he said, an opportunity has come before all to build a new Bangladesh.

About the significance of Amar Ekushey, the chief adviser said amid the changing circumstances in the country, this year’s Amar Ekushey has come before all with a new significance.

Terming the Ekushey February an everlasting record of Bangalees’ self-identity, he said in this February, 1952, the student community stood up against the unjust decision imposed by the then Pakistani rulers on the issue of the state language.

They established Bangla as the state language by pouring their blood on Dhaka streets, Prof Yunus said, adding that an incredible awakening of Bangalees’ sense of self-governance was created through the 1952 language movement.

Later, the chief adviser conferred the Ekushey Padak upon the winners.

Cultural Affairs Adviser Mostofa Sarwar Farooki, Cabinet Secretary Sheikh Abdur Roshid and Cultural Affairs Secretary (Routine Duties) Md Mofidur Rahman also spoke on the occasion.

A total of 13 eminent citizens, a four-member team of Avro keyboard, and Bangladesh Women’s National Football Team were awarded Ekushey Padak 2025, the country’s second highest civilian award, for their contribution to various fields.

## Former BB governor Atiur, 22 others sued

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entities under the AnonTex Group through fraudulent means, ACC director general (prevention) Akhter Hossain told the media.

Earlier, the ACC investigated the same incident of money embezzlement and closed the case in 2022, citing a lack of evidence against the accused.

The other accused are former BB deputy governor Abu Hena Mohammad Razi Hasan; former BB assistant director Ismat Ara Begum; former Janata managing director Abdus Salam Azad; former Janata directors Jamal Uddin Ahmed, Md Imdadul Haque, Nagibul Islam Dipu, RM Debnath, Md Abu Naser, Sangita Ahmed and Nitai Chandra Nath.

Janata’s former deputy general manager Azmul Haque, former assistant general manager Ajay Kumar Ghosh, former manager (Industrial Loan-4) of Janata Bhaban corporate branch Md Golam Azam, executive engineer (SME Department) Md Shahjahan, Md Emdadul Haque, former DGM Md Abdul Jabbar, former DMD Md Golam Faruk, and former deputy MD Omar Faruk are also accused.

Suprabh Spinning MD Md Anwar Hossain and director Md Abu Talha are among the accused.

According to the case statement, the duo took a Tk 297.38 crore loan from Janata through fraud and forgery, laundering the funds in collusion with the other 21 accused.

Despite no actual factory or structure existing on the mortgaged land, the duo overvalued the land and property at Tk 609.8 crore and with the assistance of other accused, obtained a loan of Tk 297.38 crore, which was subsequently embezzled.

AnonTex Group Chairman Younus Badal has been charged with embezzling Tk 50.5 crore out of a sanctioned loan of Tk 180 crore in favour of Suprabh Spinning by receiving the money in the accounts under his AnonTex Group.

Despite knowing about violations of rules, the Janata board approved the loan.

Atiur Rahman, Ismat Ara Begum and Abu Hena Mohammad Razi Hasan assisted the loan applicant by abusing power and violating banking rules despite the loan application being for a new and relatively unknown businessman.

## Reports of attacks on minorities exaggerated

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led government on August 5 last year.

Bangladesh has a 4,096 kilometre-long border with India.

Responding to a question, the BGB chief said there was no discussion on revising the India-Bangladesh border treaty, which was agreed upon in 1975. “This issue was not within the purview of this meeting,” he said.

He also said the Bangladeshi delegation raised objections to fencing in certain areas along the border and expressed optimism that these issues would be resolved in the future.

When asked about reports of attacks on minorities in Bangladesh following the student-led mass uprising against the Sheikh Hasina regime, Maj Gen Siddiqui dismissed them as “exaggerated.” He assured that authorities had taken steps to protect minority communities.

“Reports of attacks on minorities in Bangladesh are exaggerated. We received several requests from minority groups who were afraid, but the BGB assured them of support,” he said.

Meanwhile, BSF DG Daljit Singh

Chaudhary said infiltration along the international border has significantly declined since the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government on August 5, 2024.

At the biannual meeting in New Delhi, the BGB raised concerns over border killings.

According to a BSF press release issued yesterday, both sides emphasised the need for coordinated efforts to uphold human rights and reduce border violence. They agreed to enhance joint patrolling, increase vigilance, intensify public awareness campaigns, implement socio-economic development programmes, and share real-time intelligence to ensure effective border management to stop casualties along the border.

“The BSF is already following a non-lethal policy along the border,” the press release stated.

Addressing attacks on BSF personnel by transborder criminals based in Bangladesh, the release mentioned that both forces agreed to work together to minimise such incidents. Measures include increasing coordinated patrols, particularly during late-night and

early-morning hours in vulnerable areas, and educating border communities on the sanctity of the international boundary.

The two sides reaffirmed their commitment to implementing the Coordinated Border Management Plan (CBMP) to curb cross-border crimes, human trafficking, and illegal crossings. They pledged to share real-time intelligence and reports on traffickers and to remain extra vigilant against such crimes, aiming for a crime-free India-Bangladesh border.

Both countries also agreed to support victims of human trafficking by facilitating their rescue and ensuring their swift rehabilitation in accordance with the law.

The delegations acknowledged the progress made in strengthening bilateral cooperation. They expressed satisfaction with the outcome of the conference and reaffirmed their commitment to maintaining peace and stability along the border.

As per a provisional agreement, the next DG-level conference will be held in Dhaka in July this year at a mutually suitable time.

class send their children to English medium schools. Because we have not been able to maintain the standard of education in Bangla medium schools. Take the case of Dhaka University. How much research is done there every year? Even with the little money that is given, no research is done. Teachers are promoted without any research. No government has agreed to accept Bangla at all levels because they think it will make it difficult for them to plunder. There is no second example of how we have failed to accept Bangla as the language of all levels despite being 98 percent Bangalees in an independent country.

**TDS:** You and others in your generation practised mindfulness in Bangla for a longtime. Why the current generations could not continue that?

**Umar:** The practice of Bangla that existed in the 60s has largely ended. By practice, I mean research, exploration of the language. The practice of knowledge has disappeared in this country. And the practice of education has been lost. The people of this country have no idea what higher education, high standards of education are. They think that the quality of education will increase if colleges are converted into universities! Another thing is that no one can ever reach the top by being separated from their own language and forgetting their own history.

**TDS:** Where do we actually stand in practising Bangla in literature now? Do you see any crisis here?

**Umar:** Those who do literary work in our country now are like mediocres. That’s why no big-name writers are produced here. There is a book fair in the country, where thousands of books are published. But out of these thousands of books, maybe a maximum of 100-150 books are worth reading. The rest are not worth reading. The publishers themselves told me that garbage is being published in the name of books. This is how it is going on. Many people are writing. But just writing won’t do; you have to see what they are writing. All the books are being published with colourful covers. Everyone now buys books just by looking at the cover, there is nothing inside. Yet to protect the publishing industry, the government has banned the sale of books from other countries. The government has limited the book fair to only Bangladeshi writers and publishers, condoning stupidity and the low quality of literature. If it had been opened to the world, books from other countries, quality books of world literature, could have come here. Bangla literature would have benefited from this. But the country’s intellectuals, writers and publishers consider it a threat. That is why there is never a demand to free the book fair.

However, in Europe, people learn more than one language besides their own. And they also practise literature in that language. When there is an exchange between languages and cultures, each language prospers. And here, Bangla is isolated from all languages. As a result, the development of the language is not happening and we do not see any possibility of the improvement and development of human thought.

(NB: An excerpt from the interview is published in the print edition. To read the full interview, visit The Daily Star’s website.)

## The seed of independence

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The tears of a hundred Mothers, who lost their sons, Flow through February. Can I forget?

These words stand as witness to a turning point in history – an eternal reflection of the bloodstained chapter in the fight for Bangla as state language.

The first two lines came to Abdul Ghaflar Choudhury, a student of Dhaka College, upon witnessing the body of language martyr Rafiquddin Ahmed in Dhaka Medical College. He had gone there to visit the students who were injured in police firing on February 21, 1952.

Ghaflar completed the poem the very next day.

In 1953, it was published as “Ekusher Gaan” (Song of the 21st) in the anthology Ekushey February, edited by Hasan Halizur Rahman. The poem, later transformed into a song, became synonymous with the Language Movement – an anthem without which the Shaheed Dibosh (Martyr’s Day) has become unimaginable.

**WHAT UNFOLDED ON FEBRUARY 21**

From the early hours, students and locals began gathering in the Amra Tal area at Dhaka University, and a meeting, presided over by Gazil Haque, began around 10:00am.

There, Abdul Matin, convener of the DU’s Rashttrabhasha Sangram Parishad, and Gazil spoke in favour of violating the Section 144 order, and the students, divided into several groups, complied.

Police responded with teargas shells, and students retaliated with brickbats and stones in front of the Medical College Hostel. Several of them were arrested.

A session of the East Bengal Assembly was scheduled to begin at 3:30pm. As students began marching toward the Constituent Assembly, police again charged batons and lobbed teargas shells.

The students retaliated, forcing the law enforcers to retreat momentarily. However, police soon began firing indiscriminately from the Medical College Hostel gate, the university’s playground, and towards the Medical College gate.

Rafiquddin Ahmed, a student of Jagannath College, thus became the first martyr of the 1952 language movement.

Several others were injured and later died. University student Abul Barkat succumbed to his injuries that night, while Abdus Salam, a worker at the Secretariat, died from gunshot wounds on April 25.

As soon as the news of police firing on students reached the legislature, Abdur Rashid Tarkabagish immediately walked out of a session and rushed to Dhaka Medical College. That evening, the Chhatra Sangram Parishad, with Golam Maola as the convener, met at the Medical College Hostel.

A nationwide strike was observed, while the local administration of some districts towns imposed Section 144.

But as soon as the news of police firing on students spread, outrage erupted across the country. Almost immediately, students and public took to their respective streets.

That very night, students in Rajshahi and Narial built Shaheed Minars – monuments in memory of the Language martyrs, while ailing Chattogram poet Mahbub-ul-Alam

## 2 shot dead in ‘gunfight’

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According to the ISPR statement, such drives will continue for the protection of people and property.

The Daily Star could not independently verify the details.

When this correspondent visited the site, a part of the corrugated tin sheet on the roof appeared to have been cut out. Locals said they did not see any such cut there before the raid.

Meanwhile, police said the bodies were sent to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

According to a forensic pathologist of the hospital, both bodies bore bullet wounds.

Speaking to The Daily Star at the morgue, Jummon’s elder sister Aklima Begum said her brother was a tiles worker but had been unemployed since August last year. He lived with his wife and son just yards away from the site of the incident.

“He returned home at 10:00pm on Wednesday. An hour later, he received multiple phone calls from Miraz. When his wife, fearing the joint forces’ raid, tried to stop him from leaving, he ignored her and left home around 11:45pm. Another hour later, she was informed that he had died in a shootout.”

Aklima said her brother had been accused in several mugging and narcotics-related cases. He was first arrested at a young age and spent three years in a juvenile correction centre.

Meanwhile, Miraz’s father Md Shahjahan told The Daily Star that Miraz used to drive CNG-run autorickshaws while also helping him run a tea stall. “He lived in a house near the site [of the incident]. That night, he left home around 10:30pm.”

He also confirmed that his son had

Chowdhury penned the touching “Ekhan ami kadte ashini, phashir daabi niye eshechhi” (I have not come here to weep, I have come to demand the gallows.)

**HOW THE MOVEMENT CAME TO BE**

In December 1947, at an education conference in Karachi, a decision was made to adopt Urdu as the sole state language of Pakistan. In response, a protest meeting, presided over by physics lecturer Abul Kashem, was held at the Bel-Tala of Dhaka University on December 6.

Following the meeting, the university’s students began a march, demanding Bangla as a state language – the first ever procession in support of Bangla.

Khwaja Nazimuddin’s declaration that Urdu would be the state language, in response to Dhirendranath Dutta’s proposal for Bangla, on February 23, 1948, prompted the student community to boycott classes starting February 26 – an act that ignited the movement in the city.

On March 21 and 24, 1948, when Muhammad Ali Jinnah declared Urdu as the sole state language of Pakistan during his speeches at the Racecourse Maidan and Dhaka University, students shouted a resounding “No!”

**THE BEGINNING OF THE ‘52**

On January 31, a meeting was held at the Bar Library Hall of Dhaka University, where, under the leadership of Mawlana Bhashani, the 40-member Sarbodoliyo Kendriya Rashttrabhasha Kormi Parishadh was formed.

A protest meeting was held on February 4 at Dhaka University. There, a nationwide protest programme was announced for February 21.

On February 20, the provincial government imposed Section 144 across Dhaka for one month. The language committee decided not to violate the order.

At 8:00am the next day, a namaz-e-janaza was held for the language martyrs and hundreds poured in to pay their respects. Later, a condolence meeting, chaired by advocate Emadullah, was held, followed by a massive march and multiple processions.

The same day, Abul Kalam Shamsuddin, editor of Azad, resigned from his position in the legislature to protest the police firing.

In the afternoon, police suddenly opened fire on a procession on Nawabpur Road, resulting in the deaths of Shafiur Rahman, Sirajuddin, Abdul Awal, a child named Ahidullah, and others.

The following day, another full-scale hartal was observed. That night, the students of Medical College, under the guidance and design of Said Haider, built a monument in remembrance of the martyrs – the Shaheed Minar.

On February 26, the monument was officially inaugurated by Abul Kalam Shamsuddin. But that same day, police and military personnel destroyed it.

The Sarbodoliya Kendriya Kormi committee was the first to decide observing February 21 as Shaheed Dibosh.

In 1954, pressure from the Muslim League led the Pakistan government to grant Bangla the status of state language of East Pakistan. This recognition was later included in Pakistan’s Constitution of 1956.

However, by then, much had already changed. In essence, the Language Movement marked the beginning of Pakistan’s eventual downfall.

been accused in a narcotics case.

According to locals, Miraz and Jummon were close and had been involved together in various crimes in the area, including mugging and robbery.

A caretaker of the house – known as Julhas’s house – where the duo was found dead said he heard noises of people running and multiple gunshots after midnight.

“Later, the army informed us that two bodies were on the rooftop and I had to be a witness.”

Some locals told this correspondent that an army patrol was ongoing around 10:00pm. After 12:00am, the army used megaphones, instructing people to stay indoors while asking some to surrender.

Miraz’s mother, Surma Begum, told AFP, “The military could have arrested them and locked them up. Why did they kill him?”

Previously, under the AL government led by Sheikh Hasina, law enforcement agencies – mainly police and Rab – faced accusations of extrajudicial killings in the name of “crossfires”, “shootouts”, or “gunfights”.

Such incidents, however, significantly declined after December 10, 2021, when the United States imposed human rights-related sanctions on Rab and several of its top officials.

Abu Ahmed Faijul Kabir, senior coordinator of rights body Ain O Salish Kendra, said, “The law enforcers must conduct raids with caution so there is no loss of lives. For long years, we saw thousands of extrajudicial killings, which had no impact on the law and order situation. Excessive force has yielded nothing.”