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ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং সেবা প্রদানে 'ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং কর্ণার' পূবালী ব্যাংকের প্রায় সকল শাখা এবং উপশাখায়



Language debate in Pak era went beyond religion

Speakers tell *Star* Itihas Adda



Speakers at the event yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The debate over the language of Bangalee Muslims during the Pakistan period was shaped not only by religion but also by questions of power, region, economy, and democracy, speakers said yesterday.

They made the remarks at the 12th session of The Daily Star's Itihas Adda, titled "The Language Question of Bangalee Muslims: Pakistan Period," held at The Daily Star Centre in the capital.

Writer and thinker Firoz Ahmed said debates over Urdu and Sanskrit vocabulary are often reduced to Hindu-Muslim binaries, though the issue is more complex. "When we debate the use of Urdu or Sanskrit words, we assume it is only about a Hindu-Muslim division. But it is not simply a communal issue," he said.

He referred to the historic East-West divide within Bengal. Citing an 1885-86 controversy, he said a Kolkata-based publication had described eastern Bengal's language as "impure" and suggested that writings from the region be edited in western Bengal. "Who gives them the authority to fix the standard of language?" he asked, adding that debates over linguistic purity were also contests over cultural authority.

He said words such as "Bondobosto" had long been part of Bangla and rejected the idea that vocabulary could be imposed from above. "No one can push a word into a language by force. A word survives only if people use it," he said.

Firoz also cautioned against discarding either Arabic-Persian or Sanskrit vocabulary. Referring to Abul Mansur Ahmad's idea of a "middle path", he said language should not be driven to extremes.

Removing words from either tradition would weaken Bangla rather than strengthen it, he added.

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SCENES FROM THE DAY



Newly elected Prime Minister Tarique Rahman receives warm applause from BNP lawmakers after being chosen as leader of the House yesterday. President Mohammed Shahabuddin also extended his greetings to Tarique after administering the oath of office. Immediate past Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus also offered him best wishes. Earlier, Tarique arrived at the oath-taking ceremony for members of parliament accompanied by his wife Zubaida Rahman and daughter Zaima Rahman. The event was attended by foreign dignitaries and other distinguished guests, including Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz-Zaman. Meanwhile, NCP leaders elected in the 13th parliamentary election also took their oaths.

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN, CHIEF ADVISER'S PRESS WING, REUTERS



Only three women in the new cabinet

TANGILA TASNIM

Only three of the 49 members in the newly announced cabinet are women, accounting for just 6 percent of the government's top executive body.

Afroza Khanam Rita, newly elected MP for Manikganj-3, is set to become minister for civil aviation and tourism, said BNP sources.

Party sources also said Shama Obaid Islam, member of parliament for Faridpur-2, will serve as state minister for foreign affairs, while Farzana Sharmin Putul of Natore-1 will become state minister for two ministries -- women and children affairs and social welfare.



Afroza Khanam Rita



Shama Obaid Islam



Farzana Sharmin Putul

Men will hold around 94 percent of cabinet posts under the new formation.

Notably, three previous cabinets had higher female representation than the incoming one.

The 2019 cabinet had four women among 47 members -- about 8.5 percent. They were then prime minister Sheikh

Hasina, Dr Dipu Moni, Begum Monnujan Sufian, and Begum Habibun Nahar.

Dipu Moni served as education minister, Begum Monnujan Sufian as state minister for labour and employment, and Begum Habibun Nahar as deputy minister for environment, forest and climate change.

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প্রথমে

Artist
Mahbubur Rahman

This exhibition is built upon the burnt down structure of Prothom Alo and its remnants, incorporating artworks, kinetic objects, light, sound, images, videos, and a range of both animate and inanimate elements.

The exhibition is open to all.

Venue

Prothom Alo Office, 19 Karwan Bazar, Dhaka

Time

18 February 2026 : 4:00 PM-7:00 PM
19-28 February 2026 : 11:00 AM-1:00 PM
3:00 PM-5:00 PM

প্রথম আলো

প্রবাসী ভাইদের অনন্য অবদান

- ▶ ৩.৩০ বিলিয়ন মার্কিন ডলার: দেশের ইতিহাসে মাস হিসেবে সর্বোচ্চ রেমিট্যান্স এসেছে গতবছর মার্চ মাসে;
- ▶ ৩০.৩২ বিলিয়ন মার্কিন ডলার: ২০২৪-২৫ অর্থবছরে রেমিট্যান্স এসেছে আগের বছরের তুলনায় প্রায় ২৭ শতাংশ বেশী;
- ▶ ১৯.৪৩ বিলিয়ন মার্কিন ডলার: জুলাই ২০২৫ থেকে পরের সাত মাসে এসেছে রেকর্ড পরিমাণ রেমিট্যান্স।



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