

BBC Bangla Radio goes silent after nearly a century

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The Daily Morning Voice Online Desk: The BBC Bangla radio broadcast, the most reliable source of news during the years leading up to the Liberation War and later, will be discontinued after 81 years. The last two sessions on news and current affairs, Prabaha and Parikrama, aired at 7:30pm and 10:30pm yesterday, respectively. Mansi Barua hosted the show in London while Akbar Hossain was on the broadcast microphone in Dhaka.

The station's broadcast in other languages, including Arabic, Persian, Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Hindi, Chinese, Indonesian, Tamil, and Urdu, will also stop. The decision came as a part of the BBC World Service's plans to accelerate its digital offering and increase impact with audiences around the globe while adhering to austerity measures. "High inflation, soaring costs, and a cash-flat licence-fee settlement have led to tough choices across the BBC, and its international services need to make a saving of £28.5m, as part of the wider £500m of annual savings and reinvestment to make the [a] BBC digital-led [platform]," the BBC announced on October 30.

The decision will lead to the closures of around 382 posts. BBC Bangla Radio broadcast began with a 15-minute weekly programme on October 11, 1941, and launched its website in 2005. It proposed moving seven more language services to digital-only, modelling the success of others, which are already offering purely digital services and performing well with audiences. This means that nearly half of all 41 language services will be digital only.