



Shahed Masud
Govt Laboratory High School
Class X

Days come and go, disappearing into oblivion. But to the nation there are some days which are illuminated by their own glory. Ekushey February is one of those glorious days of our nation. This day is remembered by the twelve crore people of Bangladesh. They will honour this day because the sacrifice made on this day in 1952 by the Bengalees has had a great influence on our liberation war of '71. The Language Movement of 1952 was the driving force for the younger generation to liberate our country. The commitment to the liberation war and courage of the people was inspired by the supreme sacrifice made on Ekushey February.

The coming of the great Ekushey February was the rise of the Bengalee people in support of nationalism and democracy against tyranny and exploitation. This awakened human strength is Bangladesh's symbol.

Ekushey February of today — the Ekushey of free Bangladesh, brings with it new hope and inspiration for us. The Language Movement of 1952 was spontaneous. Now it is time to carry out the message of Ekushey from door to door. We will speak in Bangla we will write in Bangla, we will read in Bangla, we will think in Bangla.

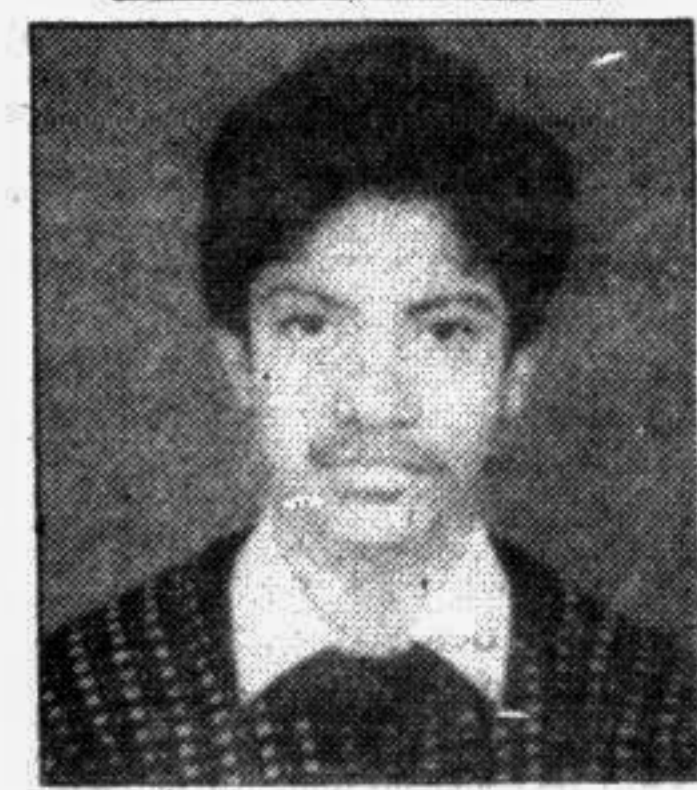
It is only if we enhance and enrich our language that we will be able to fulfill the dreams of those people who sacrificed their precious lives for us.



Sabigh-Bin-Masood
Govt. Laboratory High School
Class-X

To me Ekushey February is the greatest landmark of our history. The dignity of the nation was at stake on this day. I read with pride about the supreme sacrifice made by our brave youths like Salam, Jabbar, Rafiq and Barkat. The rallies of 1952 on this day, culminated in our independence in 1971.

Every year the day is observed with great enthusiasm. However, behind this, I find a certain lack of sincerity. The great sacrifices made by the martyrs should not be minimised with empty festivities. More constructive steps should be taken to fulfil the task of making Bangla, a dynamic and scientific language. Steps taken by the government and Bangla Academy should be strengthened by all of us. We have to take adequate measures to put Bangla Language on its rightful place both nationally and internationally. This cannot be achieved in isolation. We have to work harder to make our political independence more significant by building our economy. Only in a stable economic system can we take steps to bring our language to its appropriate standing. Only in this can we show proper respect to our great martyrs. To me, every Ekushey February should bring more success in this regard.



Syed Mustafa Khelat Bari
Class-X
Government Laboratory High School

"What Does Ekushey February Mean to You?"

February 21, 1952. Is it only a day when our brothers shed blood for our mother tongue? No, it is the milestone of our glorious history of independence. I believe that Ekushey February is an eternal source of

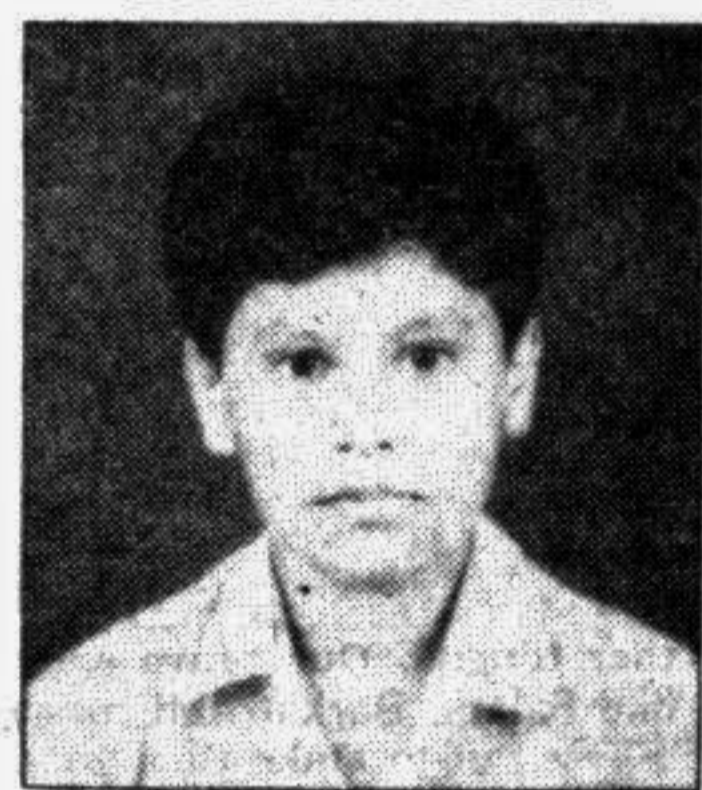
inspiration to each Bangladeshi. It is his pride.

In 1948 the rulers of the then Pakistan declared 'Urdu' to be the only State Language. The people and the students of the then East Pakistan raised their voice and protested vehemently against this announcement.

All the people of the country, men and women, young and old, rose to the occasion. The student community especially, was firmly determined to carry on the struggle until the government yielded to their demand. The students declared February 21 in 1952 as the 'Language Day'. The government imposed Section 144 and banned all meetings and processions.

The students defied the order and brought out a procession. Many brave sons of the country like Rafiq, Salam, Barkat and Jabbar made supreme sacrifices with their lives that day. The movement became so strong that the government was forced to recognise Bengali as one of the two state languages.

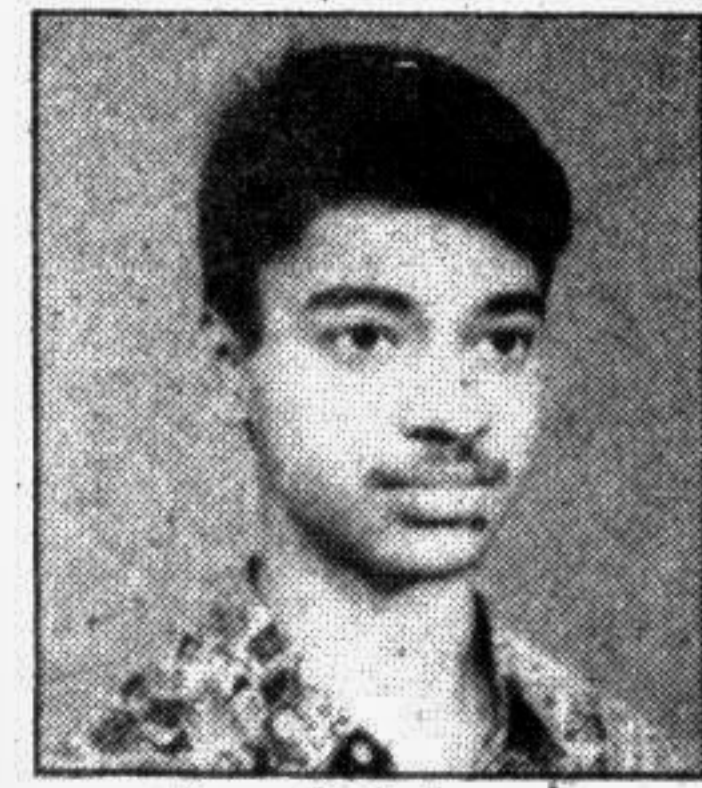
Since then the Bangladeshis have been paying homage to the martyrs of the Language Movement of 1952 every year on the 21st February. This day bears a great significance in the history of our nation. It is an eternal source of inspiration to us all. It is a part of our sensibility that has shaped our destiny and helped us to discover ourselves.



Imran Khan
SSC Candidate '94
Govt Laboratory High School

Before the Muslims invaded Egypt, the mother-tongue of the Egyptians was Coptic. But after the invasion of the Muslims the Coptic language ceased to exist and Arabic took its place. The Pakistani rulers also wanted to destroy our language. But valiant sons of our country revolted against this heinous conspiracy.

To me Ekushey is the source of my inspiration and nationalism. The country I live in, the language I speak, the language I sing in and above all the language through which I receive my education — everything is made possible through the sacrifices made on Ekushey February. So Ekushey influences my realization and sense of freedom. I am proud that I am a successor of a nation that fought to save its language. Ekushey is not an incident or a story to me. It is the inspiration that leads me to fight against all falsehood and injustice. Like so many students of various schools, I feel the influence of Ekushey in every sphere of my life. Infact 'Ekushey' is a great treasure in my heart and mind. My feeling about 'Ekushey' is that it defines the difference between being a Bengalee and not being a Bengalee. So I owe my very existence to these martyrs who sacrificed their dear lives on Ekushey February. I pay my greatest respect to them on this auspicious day.



Tanwir Zubayer
Class X A
Govt Laboratory High School

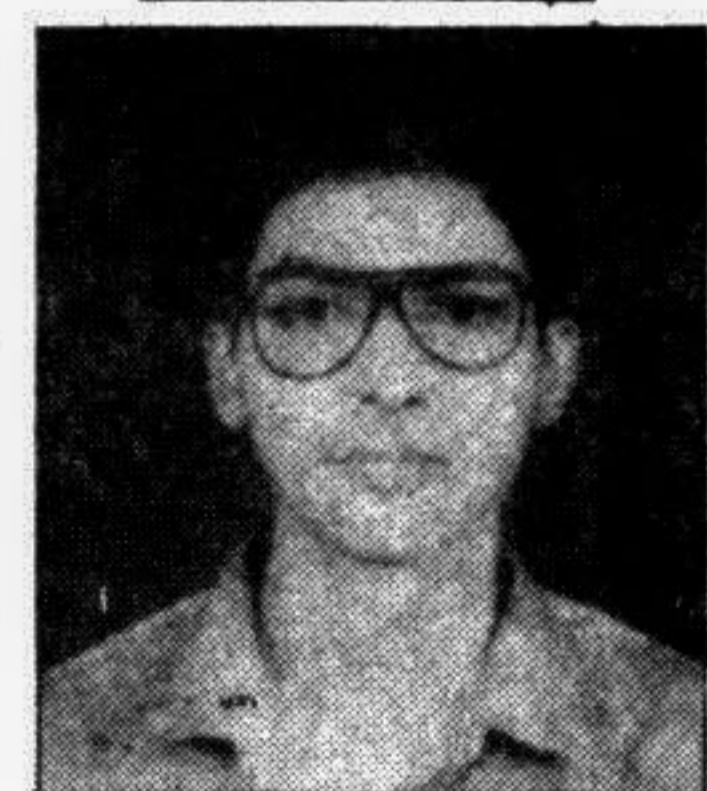
Ekushey February is a red letter day in the history of the then Pakistan. We all know what 'Ekushey' means to us and how Salam, Barkat and others have sacrificed their lives on the 21st February, 1952, to establish 'Bangla' as one of the state languages of erstwhile Pakistan.

Ever since I was a boy of five, I saw my father put on a white pajama and panjabee

early in the morning of Ekushey February and go to the 'Shahid Minar' barefoot, with flowers in hand. I used to be with him every time. As a youngster I enjoyed the huge procession, placing flowers at the Shahid Minar and the beautiful decorations — the alpana etc. very much. I was delighted about attending the musical functions organized by different cultural groups.

I am now 15 and so see things a little more critically. Now it seems to me that most of the things we do in 'Ekushey' fail to reflect the reason behind the sacrifices made by Salam, Barkat and others. We have taken 'Ekushey' as a time for fun and merry making. But we have not done anything to continue, what Salam, Barkat and Rafiq started. In no way can I accept that just walking barefoot in the morning of Ekushey and placing flowers on the Shahid Minar and graves of 'Shaheeds' once a year, is enough. Moreover, the 'Boi-Mela' which could be a perfect way to show respect for 'Ekushey' is simply turning to be a place of profit making for book-sellers and others.

To me Ekushey should be reflected in the everyday activities of our life. We should enrich 'Bangla Bhasha' to such an extent that we can use it to learn all faculties of knowledge. We must all work hard to improve our mother tongue in order to show respect for Ekushey. We must try individually to teach our illiterate people how to read and write Bangla. We must remember that love for one's mother tongue is eternal and we must not forget that others too love their own mother tongues as much as we do ours. Thus while we love our mother tongue and must also learn to respect the mother tongue of others. Our love for Bangla must not blind us to learn other languages. We should learn other languages as well even English, Arabic, Hindi or Urdu if it is necessary to improve ourselves. It is only when we learn other languages that we can enrich our 'Bangla Bhasha' and show real respect to 'Ekushey'.



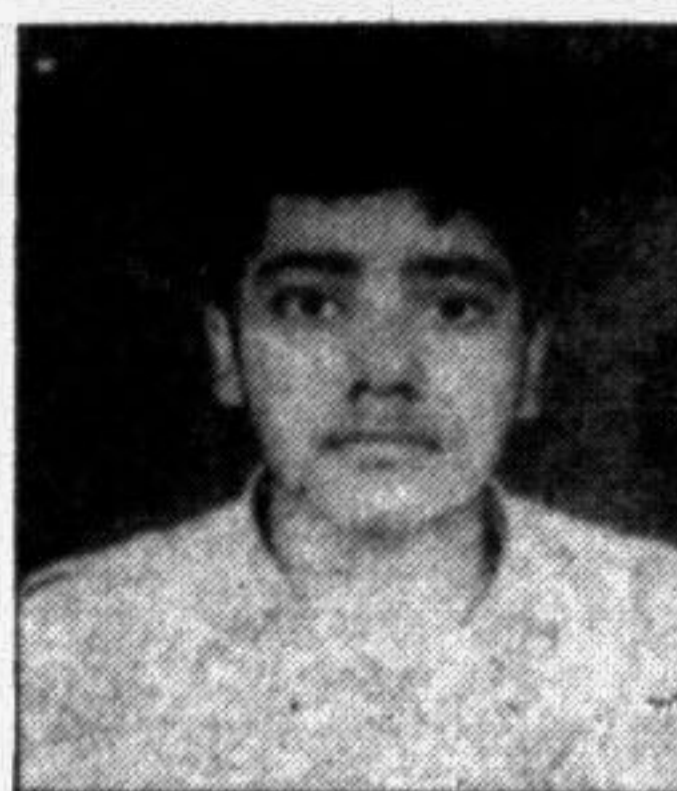
Tanveer Elahi
Class X, Section-Ka
Adamjee Cantonment College

February 21st is the name of a spirit, the name of a movement. It also symbolises an insurrection of a nation. Numerous wars have taken place in this world from ancient times till today. Sometimes these wars have taken place for the sake of expanding an empire, sometimes for wealth and sometimes even for fame. But except the Bengalees, none had ever made struggles to establish the right to speak in their mother tongue. In 1952, the spirited youth of this country soaked the streets with their fresh blood to establish the right of their mother tongue. We, the new generation, are not fortunate enough to observe this victory of the nation. But the picture has been engraved in our hearts forever.

Yet detect some disturbing elements while observing this sacred day every year. We first of all show our love for our mother tongue only on that particular. This is the only month, when we make a promise to establish our mother language in every sphere of our life. But we remain silent the rest of the year. We even remember this day according to the English Calendar. Many of us do not know the Bengali date of this event. Various cultural programmes including bookfair are arranged in this month. But there are not enough books on this day, perhaps these books cannot capture the market.

But fact remains that revolutionary spirit which led the insurrection, had no evasion, no doubt. We must, therefore, go ahead and build our nation remembering the victorious day of February 21st.

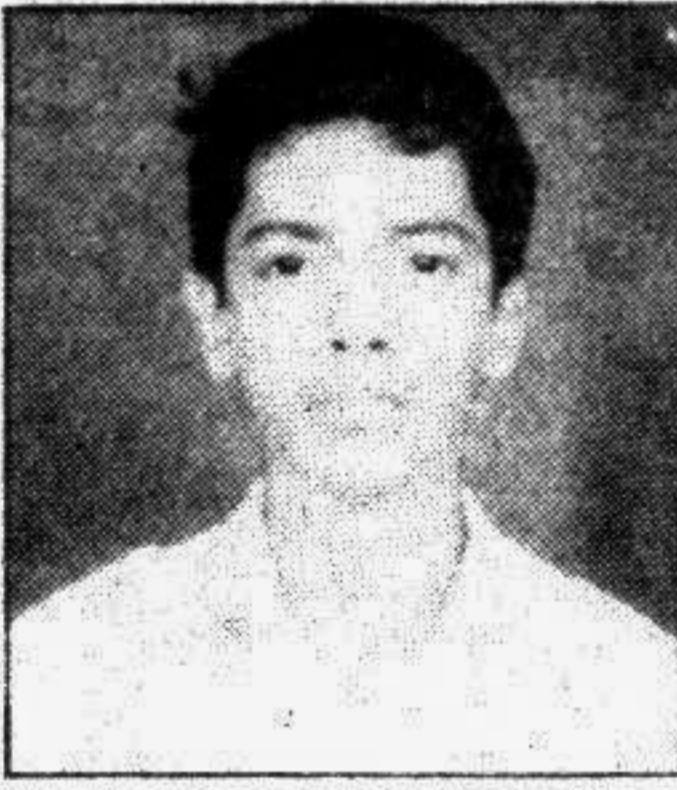
(Translated from Bangla)



Md Nur-e-Alahi
Class X
Adamjee Cantonment College

The 21st of February is our cultural heritage, our national identity. The movement of 21st February was the inception of a new era. Among the movements which took place before our liberation, the language movement was the most important. On one side of this movement it upheld the Bangla language for us and on the other side it laid the foundation of Pakistani nationalism. On 21st February of 1952, the young energetic youth of Bengal saved their mother language spilling their blood. But my heart becomes heavy with sorrow whenever I see the disgrace suffered by our mother tongue, whenever I see collaborators of '71 proudly claiming to be the freedom fighters. Was this why Salam, Barkat, Rafiq, Jabbar sacrificed their lives? Disorder and anarchy remains everywhere in the country. We do not even hesitate to give up our cultural tradition that was so bravely protected by the martyrs of the Language Movement. We are under the false conception that if we utter some foreign dialect we will be civilised. This fallacy is nothing but a product of our warped psychology. Terminating this slavish attitude we will have to work for our country irrespective of party and opinion. We will have to protect the culture of our country. Only then the slogan "We will not let the martyrs' blood in vain", mean something. Thus the Bengalees will be able to repay to a small extent, the price of so many martyrs' blood.

(Translated from Bangla)



Tanjil Shaugat
Class X
Adamjee Cantonment College

Aamar Bhaier Rokte Rangano Ekushey February. Ami Ki Bhulite Pari is a song that I have been hearing from I don't remember when. I have not witnessed the happenings of the Ekushey in '52, but I have heard about this act of heroism by the sons of this soil — Salam, Barkat, Rafiq, Jabbar and so many like them who made their supreme sacrifice for the love of their mother tongue and country. I understand that it is a day to be proud of. With the pride and joy of achievements on this day, comes sadness and painful remembrances for those who died in upholding the cause of the language. This is why people wear black badges on this day and carry flowers to the Shaheed Minar.

But I have seldom found the reflection of mourning people in the usual Ekushey congregation. It has often seemed more like a month of festivity. The procession to the Minar and the Boi Mela — everything seems to represent a gay picture. The Bangla alphabets seem to lose its way in the fashionable and hypocritical crowd. The various political parties in seminars, on this occasion, shamelessly gives coverage of their own political 'achievements'. Is Ekushey being used as a political propaganda instrument then?

Abdul Guffar Chowdhury, the composer of that immortal song, Amar Bhaier Rokte..... now in a foreign land, is probably thinking of what that song really wanted to convey to the people of this country!

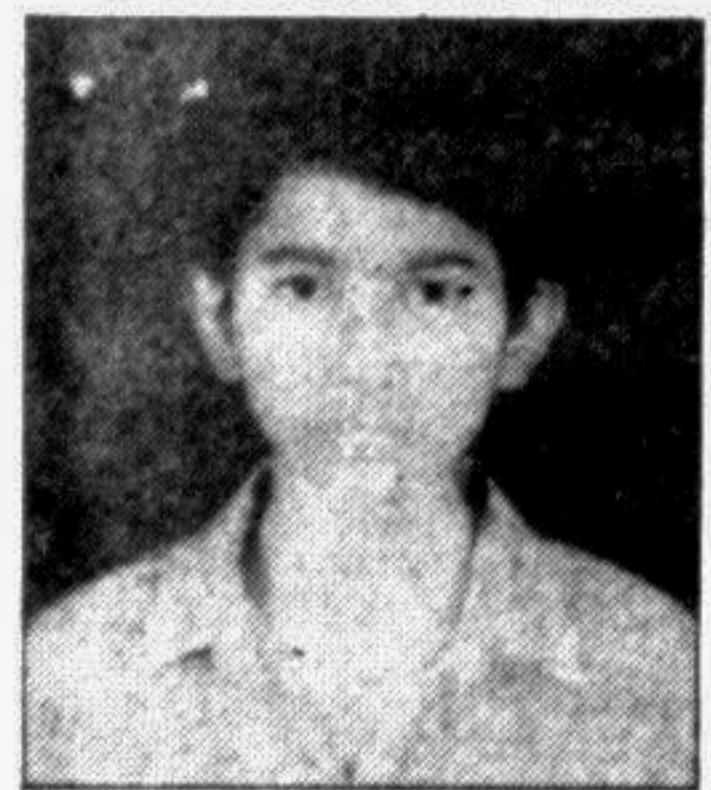
If the spirit of Ekushey was really nurtured then some unruly youths would not have vandalised the Shaheed Minar

premises and torn down the red sun off the Minar that symbolically represents everything that Bangladesh has ever stood for. But this indifference is gradually being spread in the minds of many.

The Ekushey that I have been told about by my parents and that I know from books, seem to be different from the Ekushey I see today. I am sure that the present generation will be able to shake the stillness off the Shaheed Minar and infuse into it warmth and life and for doing this we are ready to go to any extent.

The blind craves for light, the cripple craves for mobility and we crave for the spirit of Ekushey to revive a sleeping nation. Is it too much of a dream that can never be materialised? Only those imbued with the true spirit of the day can tell.

(Translated from Bangla)

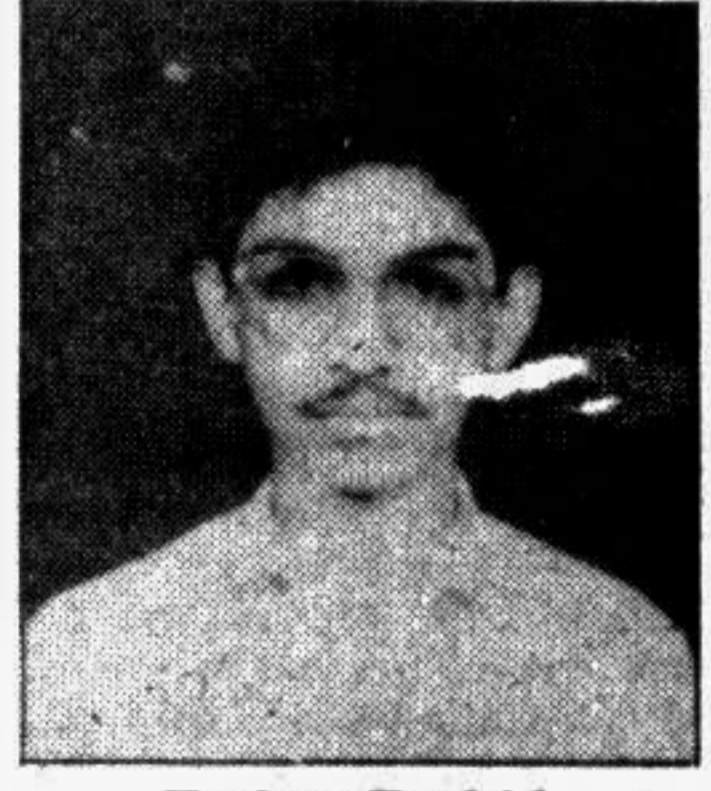


Anwar Ahsanul Haque
Class-IX
Adamjee Cantonment College

I have not witnessed the momentous day of 21st February, 1952. But I can still realise its profound significance to me as a Bengalee. The energetic youth of this country advanced ahead to get the right of using Bangla the mother tongue as the state language of East Pakistan. For this they split their fresh blood on the black pitch-road of Dhaka against the bar of bullets of foreign rulers. The rulers had to accept their demand. It is thanks to those noble martyrs of Ekushey that we now have our state language as Bangla. We are also citizens of an independent country. The liberation of this country has also been possible through the spirit of Ekushey. Actually the influence of 21st is behind our very existence. We now can read and write in Bangla, speak in Bangla and read Bangla literature, read books of various disciplines in Bangla because all of the sacrifices made on the 21st. Thus we observe this day with respect and remember the martyrs.

The great Ekushey has come again and various programmes have been arranged. We have been rekindled with the spirit of Ekushey. Ekushey represents the struggling spirits for all Bengalees. It is not only for any group or community. The 21st will come as a symbol of struggle, promise and protest against injustice.

(Translated from Bangla)



Farhan Rashid
Class-X
Adamjee Cantonment College

Every nation has in its history some memorable events which remain a source of inspiration in every aspect of national life. This Language Movement is such a momentous event for our nation.

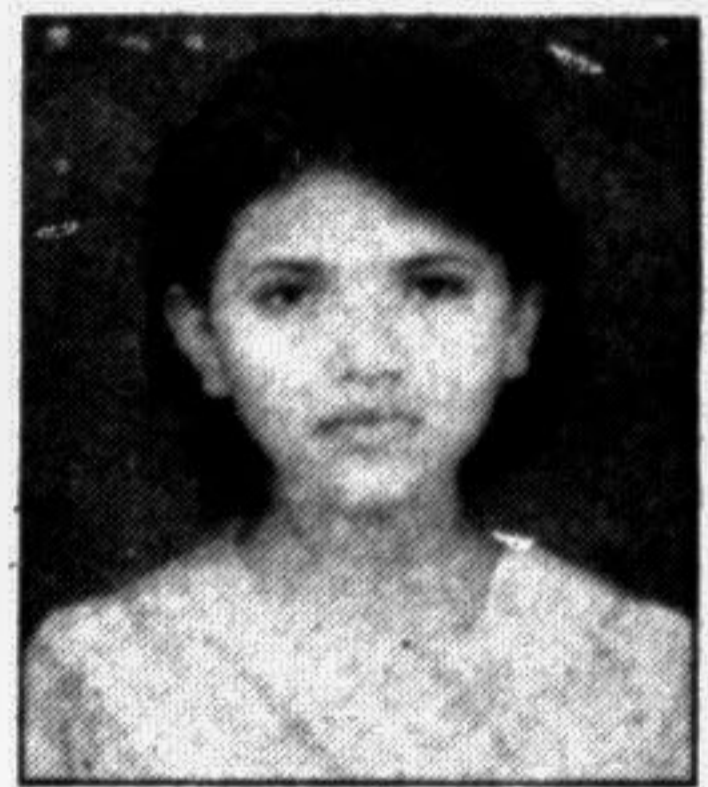
We, the youth of today, have not witnessed the Language Movement of 1952, the mass insurrection of '69, nor have we seen the days of '71.

But we have heard and read about these times so that they are imprinted deep within our souls. The month of February has been treated as a month of ceremony. The largest book fair of the country takes place at the Bangla Academy from the beginning of February. Radio and TV arrange special programmes to mark this sacred month. Newspapers also publish special articles. After midnight on the 20th February, people begin to assemble with bouquets of

flowers at the Shaheed Minar. This has become a custom now. But it is shocking when we see that soon after the month of February everyone forgets the supreme sacrifice made by Salam, Barkat, Rafiq, Jabbar and become seduced by foreign culture.

Whenever the month of February arrives the way people behave it seems as if February 21st is a day of great festivity. But the Language Movement was to uphold the dignity of our mother tongue and so should be observed with solemnity. The way our gaiety in dress and behaviour consistently increases with the coming of February, it seems one should ask the question: Do we need another movement to save Bangla language?

(Translated from Bangla)



Zahida Sharmin
Class X
Viqarunnisa Noon School and College

Precious lives were lost on February 21st, 1952 in order to save the pride of our country.

When in 1949 Muhammad Ali Jinnah announced at the stadium that "Urdu and only Urdu will be the official state language of Pakistan," various organisations and activists started a revolution that took its final shape in Feb 21, '52. A day when history was made for the mother tongue.

This day is therefore a landmark in the history of our nation. The strength, to stand upright and demand what is rightfully ours, all have come out of Ekushey. This strength ultimately gave way to our independence in '71.

Ekushey February symbolizes freedom. Free from autocratic rule, from poverty, from discrimination it shows us our path forward.

So today we should try to realise the dreams of Ekushey or what Ekushey stands for. We must all together look forward to a better future and work towards it too.

(Translated from Bangla)



Humaira Tasin Hossain
Viqarunnisa Noon School

To me Ekushey is going to the Shaheed Minar every year bare footed and placing flowers there and the rest of the year forget the brave soldiers of our language movement. Ekushey means to drop a few tears only in the month of February, and to maintain status, send our children to English medium school.

To me it is like the time of the year when the government the media talk about the language movement in full swing, meetings and cultural programmes — the same monotonous things every year force the common people to close down their TV & Radio on that day and move away from the place where meeting and processions are being held. Ekushey is holding a month long book fair at the Bangla Academy where Hindi songs are played in ear deafening sound and the young readers instead of buying useful novels buy some cheap books.

But, did I want to see this Ekushey? Is this for what millions of people laid down their lives that day in 1952. Ekushey is a symbol of struggle of the Bangladeshi people against injustice, against inhumanity, against cruelty, it is supposed to represent the strength of the people. Ekushey has shown us the way towards liberation from which we earned a place called home, a free country and a flag. Then why does some people try to mark the

day in holding cultural shows on this immortal day?

Why cannot I think a message of professor Anis-ur Rahman that: Ekushey February does not come to us once a year, but it is mixed with our every breathe?

The dream of the martyrs was about a 'Sonar Bangla', will that remain a dream or would that be a reality?

The nation which made history for the cause of its language, how come in that same nation the Ekushey Padak is stolen of late Abdus Salam. The eve of the Shaheed Dibash, the ever lasting red sun behind the Shaheed Minar is torn and burned, but still no actions were taken against those Rajakars who time and time again worked against the liberation of Bangladesh?

(Translated from Bangla)



Moutushi Kabir
Viqarun Nisa Noon School and College

I did not witness the language movement of '52. I had no part of the processions and meetings that took place so many years ago.

Yet when spring is here, when I can talk in my own language Bangla — the gift of Ekushey, or when I pass the Shaheed Minar, and see its burning red sun, I can only express my deep inner thoughts, in the poet's verse, "I have seen Ekushey, I was part of that very procession decades ago."

Ekushey is my beliefs, my spirit, my thought. Today my words, to some, seem like age old slogans. But no matter how much they appear on newspapers or are said in meetings, they will never lose their luster. These feelings are not superficial. Because the language I talk in is Bangla, the language with which I call my mother is Bangla. The language with which I paint my dreams is Bangla.

(Translated from Bangla)



Nameer Rahman
Class IX
Scholastica

Ekushey February for me as well as for the entire nation is a special day. No other day in the Bengalee's history is commemorated like the 21st of February. Maybe it is because Bangladesh is culturally, religiously and racially different from any other nation.

Combined with these traits its distinct Bangla language separates us from the rest of the world and gives us our identity. Whatever the reason four young men gave their lives for our language back in 1952. For me personally the 21st of February is a day of respect and deep homage to those four youths who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Yet Ekushey, for me also has a dark side. Apart for the fact that gardens are robbed of their beauty, this is the day when the leaders of the countless political parties, shove, push and jockey each other for a close up TV shot of them laying a wreath at the memorial. Each one of them can be seen looking from the corner of the eye to make sure that the camera is pointed in their direction. Each one of them carry out a carefully planned public relations campaign by honouring the "spirit of martyrdom," just to get a few votes. Thinking of this one is filled with shame and disappointment at the behaviour of politicians. Let us keep the true spirit of Ekushey and not taint it with dirty politics.

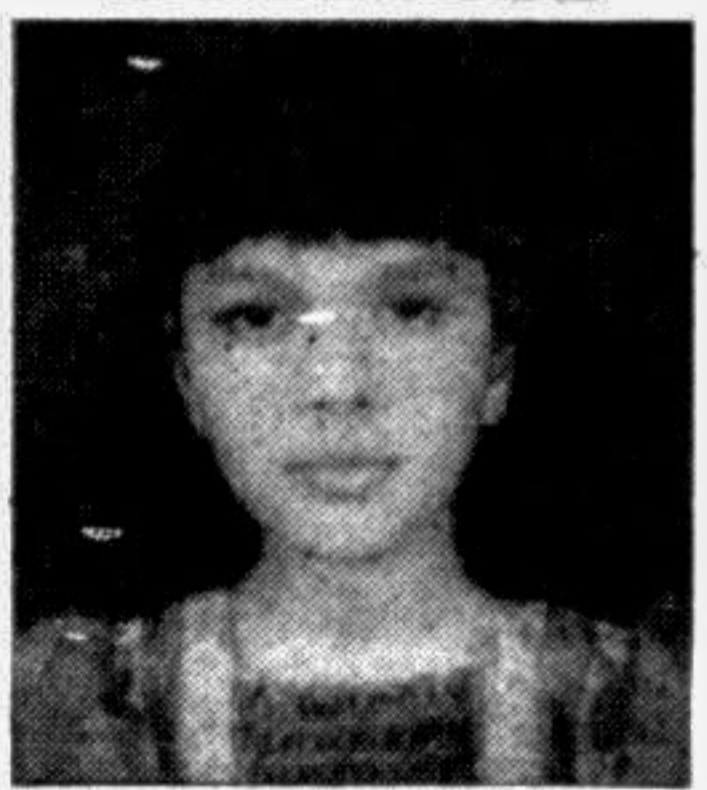


Tazreena Sajjad
Class X-A
Scholastica

The historical events of 1952 are fresh in the minds of every conscientious Bengalee because they uphold the fiery rebellion against dominance and oppression. It is because West Pakistan tried to destroy our identity by not giving recognition to our mother tongue Bangla, that the student community rose up to voice their rights. The oppressors could destroy their physical embodiments, they could not silence their voices.

For me, the Language Movement of 1952 is special because it is not only an emblem of pride and unity but it also signifies the awakening of every Bengalee. The spirit of Ekushey is a forceful, unshakable belief in the triumph of right over wrong. It expresses the right of every individual to retain his identity and to be true to his roots.

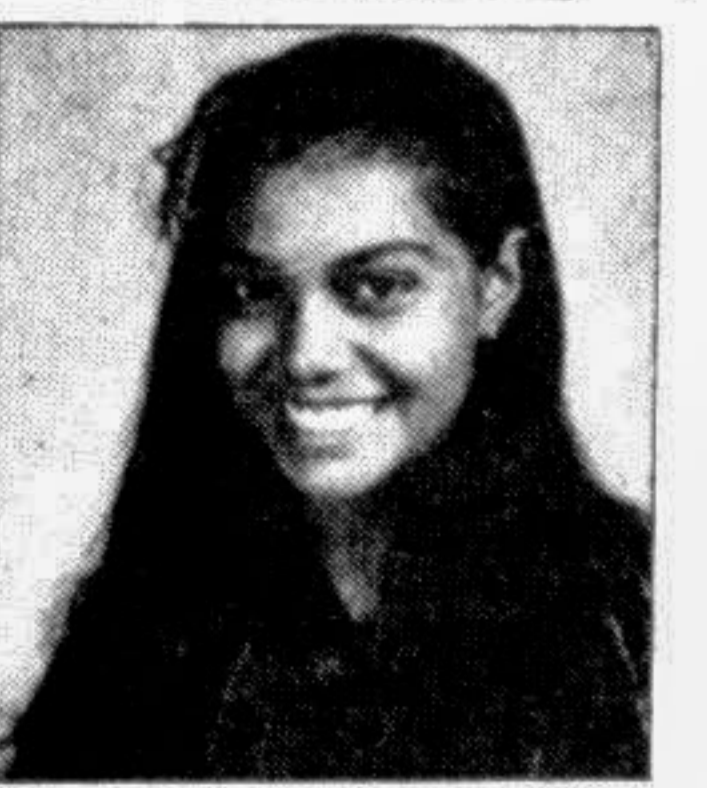
I firmly believe that physical dominance can never quell the voices of the oppressed, neither can it overwhelm the strength of an indomitable spirit. Even after 42 years, the 21st of February is a memorable day for every Bengalee because it establishes the fact that as long as there is unified strength and courage any obstacle can be overcome. For me it symbolises the supreme sacrifice and the ultimate triumph of right over wrong.



Samia Mahjabeen
Majid

Class IX A, Scholastica
The year is 1952. The streets are filled with people shouting in protest to the unjust behaviour of their rulers. Of these people, the majority are students who are unable to bear the prospect of their mother tongue being wrenched from them; unable to imagine a future as bleak as one without Bangla. These brave young people are prepared to shed their lives, if need be. Many mothers can be found crying by her son's belongings when a sudden brush-fire took precious lives.

I tried to imagine it all as I stood in front of the memorial monument, decades afterwards on that same eventful day, barefoot and my head bowed in respect. I might not have known these valiant and courageous people personally, but I knew that they were responsible for the Bangla Language — a truly beautiful one, to prevail as prominently as it does now in our country. I feel proud to think that I belong to this land where these men have given their lives for the love of their language. I feel that I am being given the chance to see that what they accomplished lasts throughout man's existence as a landmark in the vast and interesting history of Bangladesh.



Farheen Wahid
Class IX A, Scholastica
On February 21, 1952 the then East Pakistan achieved a victory in its long road to freedom.

It was the right to speak in the language of the land by its people. On this day, forty-two years ago, people from all over the country came together to protest against the law which declared the people of East Pakistan, majority of them being Bengalee, to adopt a language that was not theirs. Demonstrators crowded the streets demanding the right to have their own language as the state language of the country. Although a few lives were lost, the movement

Continued on page 7