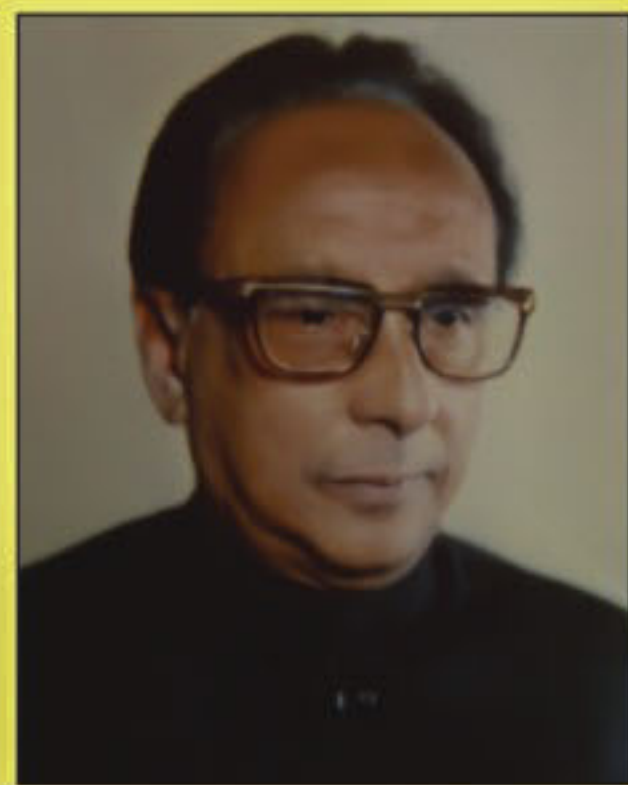




IMMORTAL EKUSHEY GLORIOUS MARTYRS' DAY & INTERNATIONAL MOTHER LANGUAGE DAY 2010

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Special Supplement



**PRESIDENT
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
BANGLADESH**

Message

The 21st February is our great 'Shaheed Day' (Language Martyrs' Day) as well as the 'International Mother Language Day'. On this very significant day, I recall with deep respect the valiant language martyrs namely Jabbar, Barkat, Rafiq, Salam along with other language martyrs who laid down their lives in Language Movement in 1952. I pray for the salvation of those departed souls. On this day, I extend my sincere felicitations to multi-lingual people around the world.

The great Language Movement is a very significant and historic day in our national history. The spirit of nationalism that emanated from the historical Language Movement inspired the Bangalee nation towards attaining self-sovereignty and thus we achieved our long-cherished Independence in 1971. On this day, I recall with deep respect the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, erstwhile member of Legislative Mr. Dharendra Nath Dutta, Editor Moulana Akram Khan, multi-linguist Dr. Muhammad Shahidullah, student leader Kazi Golam Mahub, language hero Gaziul Haque along with other veteran language leaders who contributed immensely to successfully materialize the Language Movement. The glaring spirit of the Language Movement arouses us to stand against all sorts of injustice and unfairness. It also provides us endless inspirations to go ahead along with fostering our own language, literature and culture.

Today, we feel proud that the International Mother Language Day is being observed all over the world in connection with the Language Movement Day. The fortitude of Language Movement is now inspiring not only the advancement of our language, literature, culture and heritage but also the preservation and promotion of languages and cultures of other nations too. The observance of the 'International Mother Language Day' makes the people closer and strengthens the bonds of unity and amity among the people of the world.

On this day, it is my expectation that the native language and culture of different human races would be preserved and the peace and tranquility of the world be prevailed.

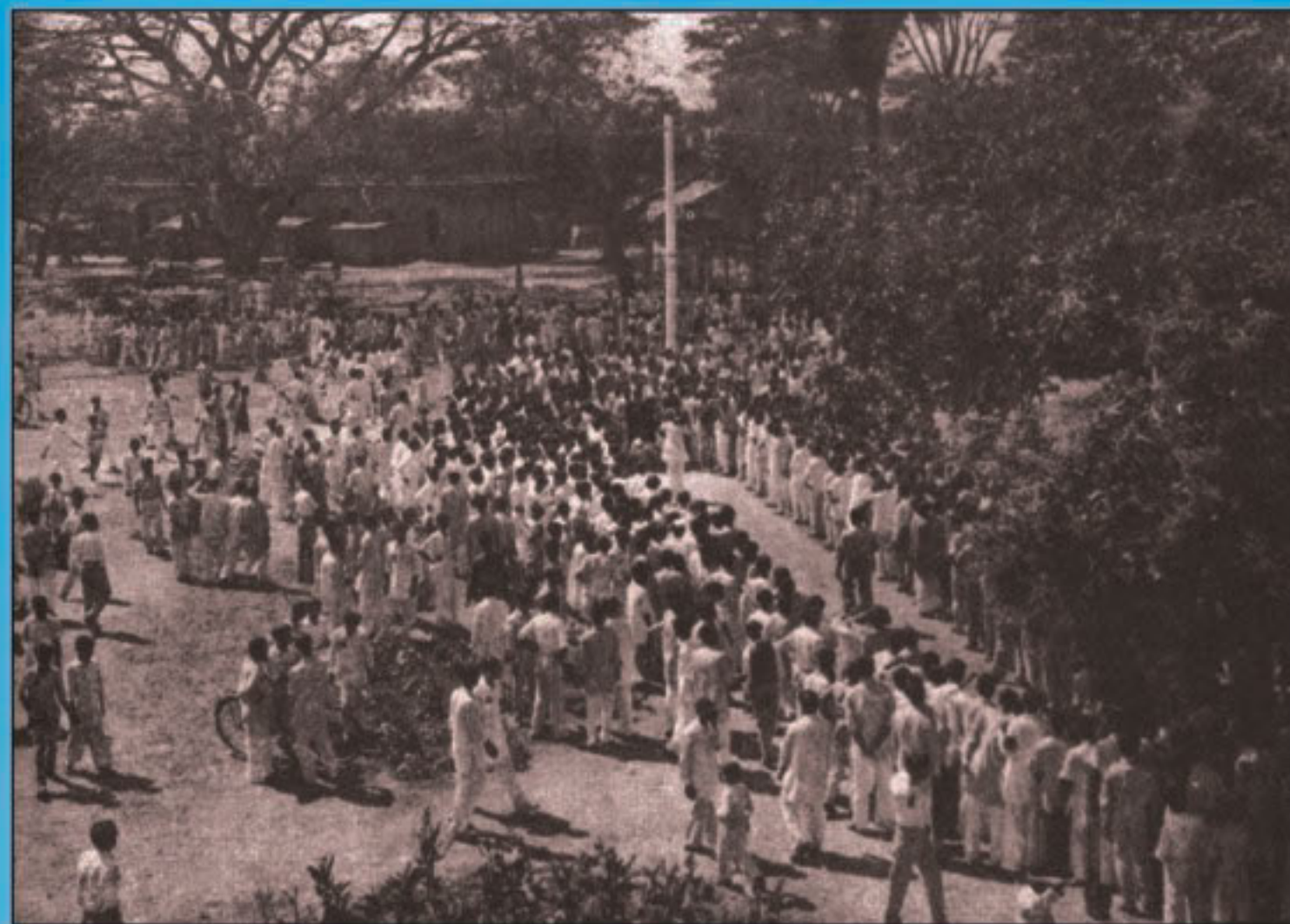
Khoda Hafez, May Bangladesh Live Forever.

Z Rahman.
Md. Zillur Rahman

Language, Nationalism and Struggle for Secular Bangladesh Nooh-UI-Alam Lenin

We have always been identifying the 1952 Language Movement to be the defining moment of Bengali nationhood. Partly it is true, not totally. Because, the status of Bengali language and Bengali nationhood were subjects of long past. These old issues came to the fore in a new perspective in 1948-'52.

Although nation-consciousness is an old idea, the concept of nationhood is comparatively modern. The topics such as nation, nationalism and concept of nation-state are contextual to the bourgeois revolution of the Europeans. The feudal consciousness of a nation and statehood and patriotic feeling or patriotism of the middle-age were obviously so different from the natural development of bourgeois nation-state and patriotism of the post-renaissance period. This question had cropped up in the nineteenth century in subjugated India. Consequent to the impact of the European renaissance and the introduction of the modern scientific and educational system, the questions like patriotism, nationalism, statehood and state language surfaced manifestly as question-mark for the 'enlightened' segment of India's Bengali population.



Although Raja Rammohan Roy, the pioneer of Bengali renaissance, was a complete Bengalee, he was the exponent of Indian nationalism. Known as 'Bharat Pathik', Rammohan used to think Hindi should be the state language of India. Likewise, the educated son of Bengal, Nawab Abdul Latif of the nineteenth century spoke in favour of Urdu. None of them were real 'Raja' or 'Nawab', they were titled so. But on the question of nationalism and language, they maintained similar outlook, they were opposed to linguistic nationalism and Bangla as state language. Rammohan was not averse to Bangla, but Abdul Latif was. The source of the language debate went beyond the confines of academic discussion. At the heart of the debate were religion and politics, nationhood and state-consciousness.

Before proceeding further on this subject, I would like to focus marginally on the inter-relation between language and nationalism. The noted American social scientist, Rudlof Rocker in his book, 'Nationalism and Culture' writes, "Of all the evidences which have been cited for the existence of national ideology, community of language is by far the most

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**PRIME MINISTER
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH**

Message



I extend my good wishes to the Bangla-speaking people and people of all languages and cultures across the world on the occasion of the glorious Martyrs and International Mother Language Day.

The greatest Ekushey is the symbol of grief, strength and glory in the life of every Bangalee. On this day in 1952, many valiant sons of the soil, including Rafiq, Shafique, Jabbar, Barkat, Shafiuddin and Salam sacrificed their lives for protecting the dignity of the mother tongue.

I pay my deep homage to the memories of the martyrs, I also pay my deep respect to the greatest Bangalee of all time, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who had steered the language movement from inside the jail, and all other language veterans.

In 1948, the Bangalee youths raised their voices to resist the attempt to impose Urdu as the lone state language of Pakistan by the imperialist rulers. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who had been leading the people's movement against the move was thrown into jail. However, his undaunted inspiration from inside the jail provided new impetus to the people's movement. In continuation of the movement, the language martyrs sacrificed their precious lives on the 21st February in 1952 while breaking Section 144 imposed by the rulers.

The resonance of the pride of Amar Ekushey is now resounded in the hearts of the people of 189 countries surpassing the boundary of Bangladesh. The International Mother Language Day is now a source of inspiration for all people of the world to establish truth and justice.

The day has been reached to a new height when the UNESCO gave recognition to the 21st February as the International Mother Language Day on 17 November 1999 at the initiative of the then Awami League government and with the help of some expatriate Bangladeshis.

I have already placed the demand in the UNGA to make Bangla, spoken by 25 crore people of the world, as one of the official languages of the UN.

We are also going to establish International Mother Language Institute for carrying out research on all languages of the world and preserving the languages.

The greatest Ekushey is the symbol of our democratic values, Bangalee nationalism, spirit of Liberation Struggle and secularism. We have made a good progress in the pledges to build a hunger, poverty, terrorism, communal and illiteracy-free Bangladesh during the one year journey of our government.

Let us take a fresh vow to work together to improve the lot of the people sinking all differences.

I pray to the Almighty Allah for salvation of the departed souls of the Language Martyrs.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever

Sheikh Hasina
Sheikh Hasina

It is a matter of great national pride and honor that "Amar Ekushey" is also observed as the "International Mother Language Day" all over the world. A resolution to that effect, tabled by Bangladesh, was unanimously adopted by the UNESCO General Conference on 17 November 1999. Earlier, on 12 November 1999, as Bangladesh's Permanent Representative to the UNESCO, I had the privilege to formally introduce the draft resolution on behalf of Bangladesh at the Conference, and pilot its unanimous adoption.

The triumph at the UNESCO is a befitting tribute to our Shaheeds and a historic achievement for the nation. Since this historic national honor was achieved due to bold action of our Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the succeeding BNP Government tried to minimize its importance and even tried to give the impression that this honor was achieved due to the initiative of an expatriate group in Canada with the cooperation of the UNESCO Secretariat. They awarded Ekushey Padak to members of the private body and even the UNESCO Secretariat to take away the credit.

However, the reality is that only member states can table, adopt or reject resolutions at the UNESCO, and not individual groups or people, and certainly the UNESCO Secretariat does not have any role on such matters. Surely, a Canada-based multilingual group called "Mother Language Lovers of the World" had initially submitted a proposal for the proclamation of 21st February as the International Mother Language Day and they deserve our commendation. But the UN and the UNESCO are inter-governmental bodies and they can not accept proposal from a private body/individual and hence the Group was directed to approach a member country.

International Mother Language Day How this great national honor was achieved at the UNESCO Syed Muazzem Ali

Accordingly, members of the Group had contacted us in Paris and we had advised them as to how they should approach our Government.

When they approached our Government, the

proposal was processed and it was our Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina who took the bold decision and authorized us to submit it as our official proposal. From then on all initiatives and negotiations were conducted at the government level.

The UNESCO Secretariat had initially raised objections on our draft on both budgetary and procedural grounds. We had to convince them and allay their concern. Finally the proposal was put up for Second Commission's consideration. Colin Power, the then UNESCO Deputy Director General, helped us immensely in overcoming the initial obstacles.

On the substantive question, our draft resolution, which

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Nation and State-Building through Language Movement By Shamsuzzaman Khan

It cannot be said that the trend of Bengalee consciousness in Bangladesh has been transformed into any specific format over the past centuries. A terrestrial consciousness with the message of human supremacy woven from various opinions, paths, devotional mysticism, tantric ways of Nath-Yogis, the Vaishnav culture of Chaitanyadeb in Gaud, Sufism of Islam and the flourishing of a mainstream and comprehensive outlook have been observed through adoption-rejection-coordination in a huge rural habitat outside the patronisation of the centre. This can be termed as a mixed or concerted cultural trend. It became very lively and progressive due to the synthesis of fundamental human values emanating from the ingredients of numerous religions-opinions and folk beliefs. As a matter of fact, this elementary humanism and conception have given rise to an acceptable form of coexistence and mutual tolerance based on centuries-old lifestyle of the common people of Bangladesh. It forged an infinite source of promising trends. Up to the middle ages, the ordinary people living outside the sphere of influence and centralised control of the state opted for this trend out of worldly considerations as well as the urge for society-building. Our mother-language Bangla became the medium for ventilating our day-to-day aspirations

and feelings. A unique life-based, deeply humane and vibrant culture had evolved through this fusion of language with the social and individual beings.

This culture does not belong to the Bengalee Hindus, Buddhists, Christians or Muslims alone - it is a unified culture of all Bengalees. The basis of this culture is our experience of living and diverse initiatives-arrangements-efforts for making our life beautiful. Different important

elements have been incorporated in the building of a society and culture in ancient and medieval Bengal. It appears that the influence of views-lifestyle and faith-custom of the Austric population was intensely felt in the agro-based rural society of ancient Bengal. These cultural ingredients were embraced by the nascent Bengalee society in such a way that it erased the distinction between black and white. The Bengalee life and Bangla language were also enriched socially through this process. Bangla and the Bengalees have an enormous power of adoption and assimilation. The Creole culture has assumed a unique form in some countries including in the West. Not only Austric ingredients, inputs from innumerable races and tribes including the Aryans-Non-Aryans, Dravidians-Mongoloids, Arab-Farsi-Turkish-Afghan-Portuguese-French-English have mingled with this Creole-ness of our culture, which cannot be viewed separately.

The strength and adaptability of Bangla language is so extraordinary that instead of becoming weak and extinct due to the influence of other powerful languages and cultural facets, it has become stronger. It has also been empowered by the interactions with various currents of thoughts in the outside world.

The pioneers of Bengal renaissance during the 19th century have occupied places in history by lifting the Bangla language from a provincial status to an international one. Rammohun, Michael Madhusudan, Bankimchandra, Akhsay Kumar linked Bangla language to global

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