

অমর একুশে

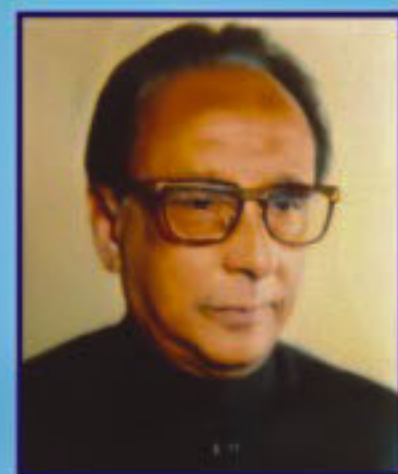
Immortal Ekushey

Language Martyrs Day &

International Mother Language Day 2010

Supplement on the occasion of the inauguration of international mother Language Institute, Ministry of Education, Bangladesh

09 Falgun 1416, 21 February 2010



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'.

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.

Today, we feel proud that the International Mother Language Day is observing all over the world in connection with the Language Movement Day.

I am confident the International Mother Language Institute would be to play a very significant role in protecting and developing languages and culture of different races around the world.

Khoda Hafez, May Bangladesh Live Forever.

Md. Zillur Rahman



Minister Ministry of Education Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Message

It was on November 17, 1999, that UNESCO declared the day of our glorious Language Movement -21st February, as the International Mother Language Day.

The then Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had played a significant role in the initiative of UNESCO's declaration of 21st February as the International Mother Language Day.

With the aim of the development and enrichment of the Bengali language as well as study, research, development and preservation of all world languages, on December 7, 1999, in the Paltan festival-meeting the then Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina declared the establishment of the International Mother Language Institute.

The International Mother Language Institute should become a center point for the study, research and development of not only Bengali but all languages of the world.

The International Mother Language Institute should become the place inspiration for all hopes and aspirations of the people of the world - this is what I hope for.

Nurul Islam Nahid M.P.

Bangla language situation in the World

Shourav Sikder

As a race we have a heritage of a thousand years. Our mother language and our national language is Bangla. This language is also more than a thousand years old.

Bangla is amongst the most dynamic languages of today's world. The place of a language in the world is indicative of how many speakers speak the language.

Geographically, Bangladesh and the Indian State of West Bengal are considered to be Bangla speaking areas. In the map of the world these two pieces of land comprise Bangla speakers.

According to the eighth record (1997) of the Indian constitution Bangla is placed second amongst eighteen languages. The first place in this respect is occupied by Hindi with 34 crore speakers, and Bangla is spoken by almost 7 crores.

In Bangladesh 98 percent of the population is Bangla speaking. Therefore the number of Bangla speakers in Bangladesh will be approximately 14 crore.

Those have gone to London, Australia, Canada or America as migrant workers or immigrants are also considered to be expatriates. Hence the total number of Bangla speakers in the world is - 9 crore in West Bengal and other states of India, 14 crore in Bangladesh, and about 1 crore of expatriates - a total of 24 crore.

International Mother Language Day

Kabir Chowdhury

21st February has been declared International Mother Language Day by the world body giving due recognition to the struggle of the Bengalees of the then Pakistan, waged in 1952, for establishing their legitimate right of having Bengali as one of the State languages of the country.

Since then the Language Movement of February 1952 has acquired symbolic and mythic properties. Now it has become a symbol of democracy, secularism, Bengali nationalism and socialist values.

With 21st February becoming the International Mother Language Day certain responsibilities have devolved on us. We have to help develop the languages of our 'adivashis', while enriching our main stream Bengali by translating world classics into our mother language.

Long live Ekushey February! Long live International Mother Language Day!

The Bengali Language Movement and Emergence of Bangladesh

Rafiqul Islam

It has been suggested that the freedom struggle of Bangladesh originated from the Bengali language movement. In a way this is correct, as the basic inspiration of the freedom struggle of the Bengali-speaking people of Pakistan came mainly from linguistic nationalism.

Statistically Bengalis were the majority community of Pakistan- about fifty-five percent of the total population. The Urdu-speaking Pakistanis were mostly immigrants from India. They were mainly concentrated in the city of Karachi, the newly-formed capital city of Pakistan.

The language controversy of Pakistan started even before the creation of Pakistan. Dr. Ziauddin Ahmed, a former Vice-Chancellor of the Aligarh University of India had suggested that Urdu should be the state or official language of the future state of Pakistan.

Unfortunately, the Central Government of Pakistan failed to appreciate the depth of feelings of the majority community of Pakistan and to allot the rightful place for the Bengali language in state affairs. As a consequence, the 'Rashtra Bhasa Sangram Parishad' (the state language committee of action) was formed by different students and cultural organizations of Dacca in the month of October 1947.

In the second session of the Constitutional Assembly of Pakistan, held on the 25th of February, 1948, Mr. Dharendra Nath Datta, a member from East Pakistan moved an amendment on the rules of procedure of the Assembly. This amendment sought to give Bengali equal status along with Urdu and English as the state language of Pakistan.

Indeed Mr. Datta's arguments were of no avail in the Constitutional Assembly. The language policy of the Pakistan government was resented by the people of East Pakistan. The students of Dacca reacted sharply and a protest strike was observed in Dacca on the 26th of February, 1948.

1. In the April (1948) session of the East Bengal legislative assembly a special resolution will be moved to propose to the constituent assembly of Pakistan to make Bengali one of the state language of Pakistan and to give Bengali the same status with Urdu in the competitive examinations of the central services of Pakistan.

In the month of April another resolution will be moved in the East Bengal legislative assembly to make Bengali the official language of the province of East Bengal in place of English.

Immediately after the signing of the agreement, Mr. Mohamed Ali Jinnah, the Governor General of Pakistan came to visit Dacca. While addressing a mammoth gathering of the 21st of March, 1948, he pontifically issued the following: Let me make it very clear to you that the state language of Pakistan is going to be Urdu and no other language.

On the 27th of December 1948, the education minister of Pakistan, Mr. Fazlur Rahman, suggested to the All Pakistan Education Conference that for the sake of Islamic ideology, the old and traditional scripts or writing systems should be changed in lieu of Arabic or Urdu script which should be adopted.

The Bengali Academy in Dacca appointed a committee in April 1963 to reform Bengali grammar and the writing system. The recommendations made by this committee, if implemented, would have drastically changed the nature of the language that would not only have severed ties with the past traditions of the Bengali literature, but also with that of West Bengal.

As a result of the victory of the United Front in East Pakistan the voice of Bengal could now be heard in the Constitutional Assembly of Pakistan in Bengali. What's more in the First Constitution of Pakistan in 1956, Bengali was made one of the state languages of Pakistan.

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Prime Minister Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh



Message

I am happy to learn that the International Mother Language Institute is going to be inaugurated on the greatest Martyrs Day. On this occasion, I pay my deep homage to the language martyrs as well as the language veterans.

The glorious achievement of the Language Movement of 1952 is no longer limited within the boundary of Bangladesh. In 1999, UNESCO declared the 21st February as the International Mother Language Day at the initiatives of the then Awami League government and a group of expatriate youths.

To uphold the recognition, we took steps to establish International Mother Language Institute in 2001. But the 4-party government stopped the work of the institute.

We again resumed the work of the institute after assuming office last year and the Institute is going to attain its full-fledged shape today.

I believe, the Institute dedicated to the memories of the language martyrs will be turned into one of the main mementos of the Language Movement of 1952.

The International Mother Language Institute, I hope, will not only work on carrying out research, preservation of languages and language training, but also contribute in building international bridge in the field of languages.

I wish the International Mother Language Institute all out success.

Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu May Bangladesh Live Forever

Sheikh Hasina



Secretary Ministry of Education Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh



Message

21st February is the first step towards our Liberation Movement. Following the path of our language martyrs, the valiant freedom fighters liberated Bangladesh in 1971 through their supreme sacrifice.

On November 17, 1999, UNESCO declared 21st February as the International Mother Language Day. This day is commemorated for the preservation and development of linguistic diversity and multilingual cultures as well as the enhancement of linguistic and cultural heritage on the basis of understanding, tolerance and dialogue.

On March 15, 2001, Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina laid the foundation stone of the International Mother Language Institute. On the 11th International Mother Language Day another milestone is being celebrated. Centered on the aim of preservation and research of all mother languages of the world, the International Mother Language Institute is inaugurated by the Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

I believe that this Institute will be known to the people of the world as the center for research on world languages and culture. On this auspicious occasion I pay respect to the martyrs of 21st February. May the International Mother Language Institute achieve the goals it has set forth. My heartfelt felicitations to everyone involved in this endeavor.

Syed Ataur Rahman



As West Bengal is multilingual and Hindi has unilateral dominance socially and culturally, therefore it is only natural that the rate of increase of Bangla speakers in India will be diminutive. In our country, despite the sky-culture (?) and the increase of English medium schools with poor Bangla programmes, foreign languages are studied by a small number in the city.