

EDITOR'S NOTE They were there . . .

SIXTY years after 21 February 1952, it becomes important for us to take a step back and ask ourselves again the old question: why did the need arise for those who came before us to do what they did in defence of the Bangla language? The answer, once again, is the old one. It is that a nation must find space for itself, must be able to breathe in the air it needs to survive and indeed to expand in its many dimensions. That is what happened sixty years ago. Most of the generation who joined the struggle to resist

the imposition of a foreign language on us have passed on. It is their legacy that we celebrate today, for the legacy is one which in time gave us the force, the strength, indeed the wherewithal to launch ourselves into newer struggles aimed at keeping alive our own worth of ourselves. It has always been self-esteem which has mattered for us, all the years from 1952 to 1971. It was the heroes of February 1952 who taught us anew the ancient truth of life being lived on the edifice of courage.

Ekushey was that point where we climbed the heights of courage. Sixty years on, it becomes our responsibility to let those who have come after us to know why Bangla mattered in 1952, why it matters today and always will.

This morning, we salute the martyrs of 1952. We are here today because they were there yesterday.

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Editor

