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IMMORTAL EKUSHEY FEBRUARY

GLORIOUS MARTYRS' DAY &  
INTERNATIONAL MOTHER LANGUAGE DAY

Special Supplement

Art & Design : Department of Films & Publications ♦ Assistance : Press Information Department, Ministry of Information



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ  
  
PRESIDENT  
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF  
BANGLADESH

Message

February 21 is the great 'Shaheed Day' as well as 'International Mother Language Day'. I recall, with profound reverence, the unfading memories of the language martyrs namely Barkat, Rafiq, Salam, Jabbar, Shafique and many unknown others who made supreme sacrifice on this day in 1952. I pray to the Almighty for the salvation of those departed souls.

The great language movement is a historical and significant event in our national history. This movement not only achieved the demand of mother tongue but also revealed the sense of Bangalee Nationalism and inspired tremendously to achieve independence. This spirit of Bangalee Nationalism paved the way for the long-cherished independence in 1971. Today I recall with due respect the 'Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman' and the then Gonoparishad member Dharendra Nath Dutta along with all the language martyrs whose undaunted courage and indomitable inspiration helped to reach the movement to the highest culmination and at last the Bangalee achieved the right of mother tongue. Language movement inspires us to protect and bring up our own language and heritage as well as revives us to oppose against all the injustice and illegalities.

No nation's sacrifice goes in vain. We feel proud that 21st February is now turned into International Mother Language Day. We can have the inner significance of our great language movement through observance of International Mother Language Day all over the world. So the 21st February not only generated the advancement of our own language, literature and culture but also preserved and promoted the language and cultures of various nations around the world. Actually the great language day united the people of different languages and made a bridge of unity and amity amongst the people of the world.

Language and culture together move forward. I believe the people of the world would contribute more to revive the flow of world's checkered languages and cultures as well as to protect the world's most defunct languages.

May the language and heritage of all the ethnic groups of the globe be protected and peace prevailed on earth. This is my expectation on this great 'Shaheed Day' as well as 'International Mother Language Day'.

Khoda Hafez, May Bangladesh Live Forever.

  
Md. Zillur Rahman

## Formation of a New Nation and State through the Language Movement

Shamsuzzaman Khan

It can't be said that the school of Bangalee thoughts has taken a particular shape during the last few centuries. Rather we observe a complete and main trend developed through the blending of many thinking, ways, and secret methods of meditation, schools of Nath and Yogis, Gawrio Vaishnava religion and culture of Chaitanya Deb, Sufism of Islam, material senses and statements of human superiority in the principal religions, and through accepting-rejecting-adjusting in the vast rural areas out of central patronization. This trend can be termed as a mixed or incorporated cultural trend. This school got enriched with the combination of all religious beliefs, domestic thoughts and the gist of different basic popular human practices of the land. As a result, it achieved a very active and advanced shape. In fact, the common people of Bangladesh have created this endless basic human and of creative potential source of the language through a platform of coexistence and tolerance through centuries in their practical experiences of life. Till the middle ages, the commoners, out of their motivation of earthly sense of interest and social development, chose the school remaining beyond the state's central influence and governance. Resultantly, all the expressions of our everyday desires and sorrows got the language Bangla as the medium.

The interconnections of our language with our social and individual life created a lively culture full of realistic elements and human significance. This culture is not something of the Bangalee Hindus, Buddhists, Christians or Muslims - this culture is the combined culture of all Bangalees.



Base of this culture was in the experiences of our passed life and in the initiatives, arrangements and desires of making the life beautiful. Many facets of the cultural structures and cultural development of ancient and Middle Ages had emerged with that. The thoughts & feelings, lifestyles and beliefs & cultures of the Ostrich community hugely influenced the agrarian rural society of Bangladesh. These cultural elements embraced the Bangalee society in such a way that the demarcation line between the white and black water had diminished. The Bangalee life and Bangla Language had been enormously influenced by it too. The receiving and accommodating power of Bangla language and the Bangalee is not negligible. The Creole culture of the west has achieved uniqueness in some countries. The Creoleness of our culture is made not only by the Ostrich

elements, but the elements of the Aryans and non-Aryans, Dravidians-Bhot Chinese, Arabic-Persian-Turkish-Portuguese-English nations have also been intermingled with this in such a way that it is not possible to differentiate those at the moment.

In fact the strength and accommodative power of Bangla language is so immense that it gets stronger rather than weekend, after getting mixed with other languages and cultures. Its intercourse with the international flow of thoughts has made it more powerful.

The renaissance people of the nineteenth century Bengal upgraded the language from a provincial to an international height. People like Ram Mohan, Michel, Bidyasagar, Bankimchandra, Akshaykumar Dutta made an interaction of Bangla language with the global knowledge, science and philosophy. Thus Bangla language and Bangalee culture have accommodated the best thoughts of the world. The Bengal of the middle ages did not get the opportunity to experience geographical discoveries, industrial revolution, advancement of science and technology, rationalism, wider enlightenment and demolition of authority of the churches, i.e. religions over state. But it has a rich height to place the humans above everything which was the greatest result of European Renaissance. We can remember that great poem of human superiority of the middle ages titled 'Sobar Uporay Manush Shottoy' (humans are above everything) which was a wonderful achievement of the Bangalees' human heritage. In this way, we got from Lalon Fakir in the pre-modern periods - 'Manush Ratan' (humans are the jewels) or 'Koli Juger Manush Aubotaar' (human emancipator of the Koli era) which was extracted from the heart of Bangladesh; and when the modern version of it -

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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ  
  
PRIME MINISTER  
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S  
REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

Message

I extend my best wishes to the Bangla-speaking people at home and abroad, 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. I also recall with great respect the contributions of all other language veterans.

In 1948, State Language Action Council comprising Chhatra League, Tamddun Majlish and other student organizations was constituted. The council called a hartal on 11 March 1948 to press home for making Bangla as the state language. Bangabandhu along with many other student leaders was arrested from in front of the Secretariat on that day. They were freed on March 15. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman presided over a meeting on Dhaka University campus on March 16. The language movement had spread all over the country.

Bangabandhu was again arrested from Faridpur on 11 September 1948. He was freed on 21 January 1949. He was again detained on 19 April and freed at the end of July. On 14 October 1949, Bangabandhu was again imprisoned. Under his directives from behind the bar, the language movement had got momentum. In continuation of the vigorous movement, the language martyrs sacrificed their lives on the 21st February in 1952 while breaking Section 144 imposed by the rulers.

The blood-stained resonance of Amar Ekushey is now resounded in the hearts of the people of 193 countries surpassing the boundary of Bangladesh. A number of Bangladeshi expatriates, including Salam and Rafiq, in Canada took initiative to recognize the 21st February as the International Mother Language Day. Later, the then Awami League government placed a proposal in the UN in this regard. Subsequently, the Unesco declared the day as International Mother Language Day on 17 November 1997.

The International Mother Language Day is now a source of inspiration for all the people of the world to establish the truth and justice.

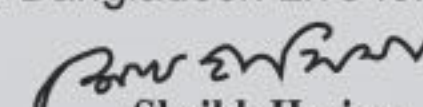
I have already placed the demand in the UNGA to make Bangla, spoken by 25 crore people of the world, as one of the official languages of the UN.

We have established International Mother Language Institute for carrying out research on all languages of the world and preserving those.

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 made to build a modern digital Bangladesh free from hunger, poverty, terrorism, communalism and illiteracy in last four years' journey of our government.

Let us take a fresh vow being imbued with the spirit of the great Ekushey to work together for improving the lot of the people sinking all differences.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu  
May Bangladesh Live forever

  
Sheikh Hasina

## Contribution of Women in the Language Movement

Selina Hossain

Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman wrote in connection with the language movement in his autobiography "The Unfinished Memoirs":

We were put up in a place in the jail. It was Ward 4. The building was three-storied. Outside the walls of the jail was Muslim Girls' School. All the five days that we were in jail, the schoolgirls began their morning raising slogans from the school's roof-top and ended their day doing the same at four in the afternoon. They seemed indefatigable as they cried out, 'The state language must be Bangla', 'Our brothers in prison must be freed', 'Police brutality must end', and so on. I remember telling Mr. Shamsul Haque then, "See how even our sisters have come up for the cause. Surely Bangla will be the state language after such an event." Mr. Haque said, "I agree, Mujib."

Bangabandhu had evaluated the contribution of women in the language movement by his profound political wisdom. Undoubtedly he had held high esteem for the role of women in its greater perspective and from the point of equality of men and women in achieving success. But till today, it's a reality that the contribution of women do not get due acknowledgement in our society. Most of the times, the historians either by-pass the role of women or acknowledge it partially ignoring their right role and importance. As such, nominal mention of the facts makes history appear to be lineage from patriarchal point of view. The chronicles of the language movement of 1952 too did not portray women with due dignity. Nevertheless, the role of women in this movement was extended up to the member of the legislative assembly from the positions of ordinary housewives. They had played very active role in each and every move.

In a conservative state perspective of Pakistan, which was just separated on religious grounds, women accessibility in all spheres of life was not very easy in

1947. Despite the womenfolk did not remain inactive in the name of religious platitudes since the commencement of language movement in December 1947. They had participated in meetings and processions. Even the school girls walked down to the streets to join processions.

Female students of Dhaka University were assigned to raise funds for the movement when the State Language Action Committee was formed. Besides



executing this responsibility, they had also rendered a very significant task out of their consciousness. Contributor of the language movement Rowshan Ara Bachhu mentioned in her memoirs, 'We went door to door that time. Majority of the womenfolk were not in jobs but many of them had donated their gold ornaments, some had contributed in cash. We made them realize the dignity of the mother tongue; we also told them why it was important to have Bangla as state language for our self-esteem. This way we had created awareness in favour of the slogan "The state language must be Bangla". An important reason

behind the spontaneous participation of the people to the cause was this. She also said, 'Many a time girls had joined in processions wearing yashmak because of their family prohibitions. One of the Banglabazar Schoolgirls had to sacrifice hair in the hands of her mother since she had desired to join processions, even in such a situation she did join in the procession covering her head with a scarf. Girls had contributed to that extent.' Two major points

come up from the memoirs of Rawshan Ara Bachhu. One is donating ornaments and the other is joining in processions ignoring family resistance. In the first case - they were silent activists who had contributed to raise funds in favour of the movement. This act had added velocity to the struggle. The second one was their participation in person. Men face less prohibition from the family and it's not a big challenge for them to come out from the home. The role of women was very significant from social and political perspective and in spite of all these, they had to crack the shackles of social impediments. They had achieved it and got rid of the struggle for their existence by dint of their deep-rooted aspirations and commitment to cultural values. This is how the history marks progress, accomplishes its splendor through collective involvement of men and women. None of any noble deed was sufferings caused for such achievements.

This is an issue of the participation of women in our language movement. Four and a half years had elapsed since the separation of the country. Students had kept agitations continued for the demand of the mother tongue. The rulers had roared pronouncing - "only Urdu will be the state language". Students had outburst into protests and contests. 'All-Party State Language Action Committee' was formed on 31st January 1952 at the Library Hall in Dhaka. The

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