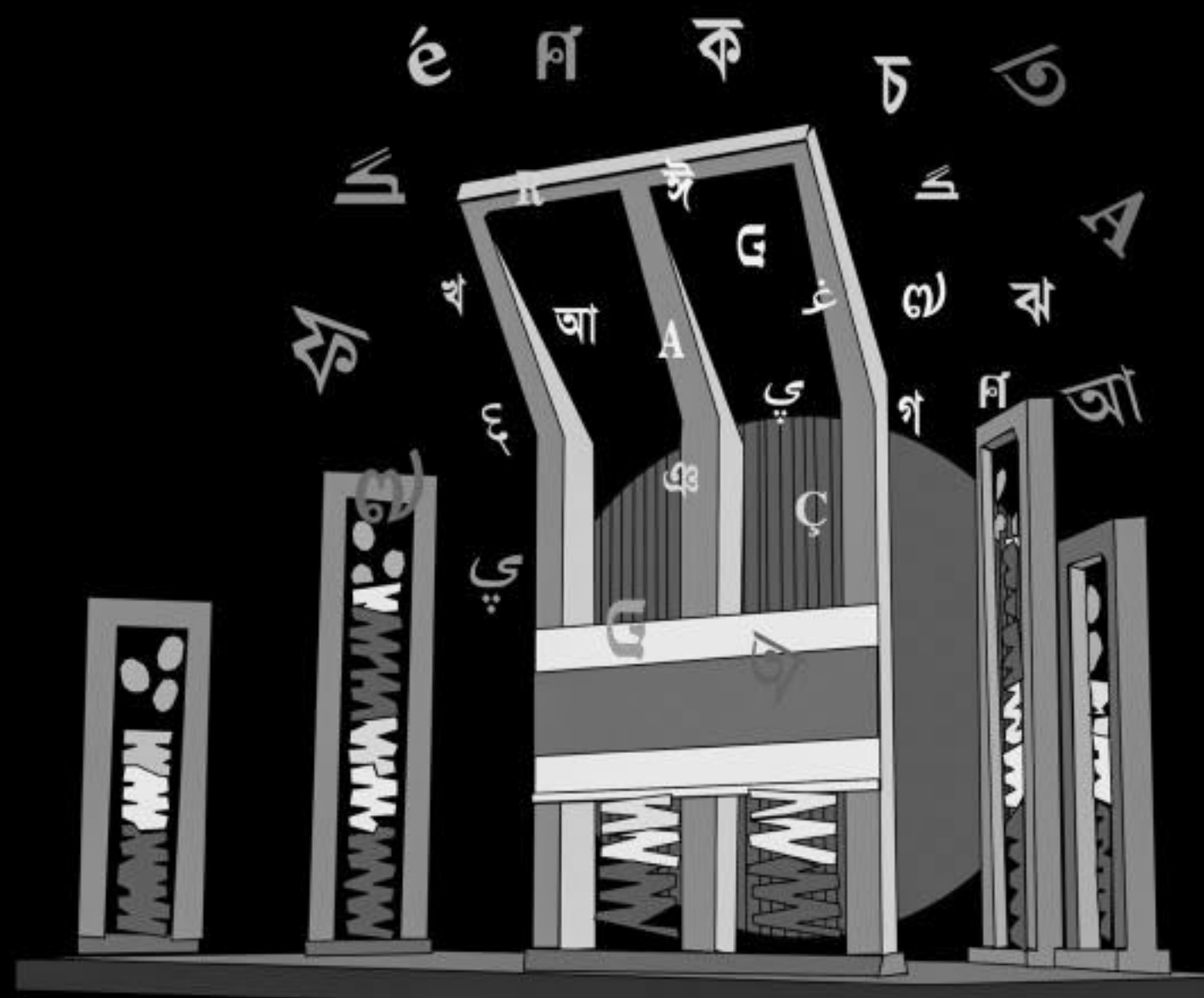




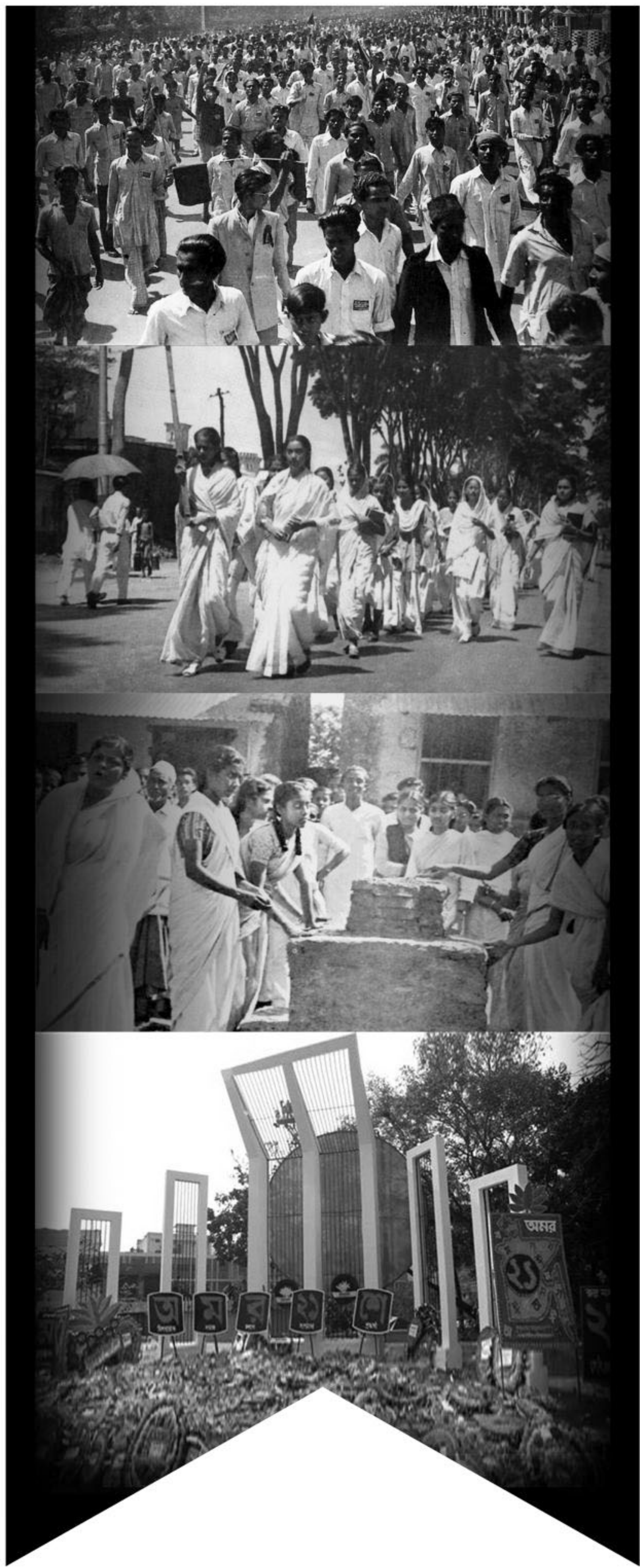
Special Supplement 21 February 2018

Immortal Ekushey

Martyrs' Day and International Mother Language Day



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



بنیرالہاگیت الزکیہ



PRESIDENT
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
BANGLADESH

Message

On the occasion of great Shaheed Day (Language Martyrs' Day) and the International Mother Language Day, I extend my warm congratulations and sincere felicitations to all multilingual people of the world along with Bangla-speaking people.

Today, I recall with deep reverence the language martyrs namely Shaheed Salam, Barkat, Rafiq, Jabbar, Shafiur and so many unknown and unsung language heroes who laid down their lives for the cause of mother tongue. I also remember with profound respect, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who led *Sarbodolio Rashtrabhasa Sangram Parishad* (All Party State Language Action Committee), formed in 1948 and was arrested for his active role in favour of the language movement. I recall Dhirendranath Dutta, the then Member of *Gonoparishad* (Constituent Assembly) who raised the historic proposal before the *Gonoparishad* to turn Bangla into the state language of Pakistan. I also remember Dr. Muhammad Shahidullah and all other language heroes for their farsightedness, unmatched valour, bravery, able organizing capacity and rapid steps in this regard that facilitated the Language Movement to reach its ultimate culmination on February 21, 1952. Consequently, the Bangali achieved their right to mother tongue.

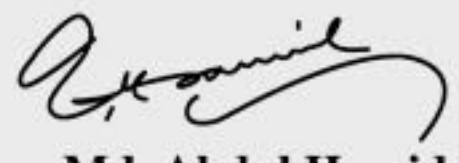
The great Language Movement is a historic and significant event in our national history. This movement aimed at establishing the right of our mother tongue as well as protecting self-identity, culture and heritage. Being a source of ceaseless inspiration, *Amar Ekushey* (Immortal Shaheed Day) inspired and encouraged us to a great extent to achieve the right to self-determination and struggle for freedom and war of liberation. With the bloodshed passages of Language Movement, we achieved the recognition of Bangla as our mother tongue and we attained our long cherished independence under the charismatic leadership of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1971.

In fact, to embrace martyrdom for the cause of mother tongue is an unprecedented event in the world history. February 21 has now been recognized by the UNESCO as the 'International Mother Language Day' in 1999 with the spontaneous keenness and sincere endeavour of Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina along with the primary efforts of some expatriate Bangla-loving Bangladeshis. As a Bangali nation, it was our great achievement. Today many languages and culture around the globe are becoming extinct due to lack of proper practice, preservation and patronization. Observing the International Mother Language Day, I firmly believe, will play a positive role in attaining the sustainable future through using multilingual education along with developing and protecting own languages and culture around the world.

With the enthusiastic eagerness of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the International Mother Language Institute was established in Dhaka in 2001 for the research and preservation of the dignity and the rights of flourishing as well as nearly extinct languages of the world. Besides, text books and teaching methods have been introduced for the tribes, minor races, ethnic sects and communities in our country with a view to protecting and developing their own languages. I believe that these far-reaching steps for protecting the own languages and culture of multilingual races both at home and abroad.

The spirit of *Amar Ekushey* is now the source of incessant inspiration for the protection and preservation of own languages and culture of multilingual people of the world. Keeping the inspiration for Ekushey in mind, let the multilingual people be united, let the almost defunct languages of the world be revived in their respective communities and let the globe be coloured with diverse languages and cultures. It is my expectation on the great Shaheed Day and International Mother Language Day.

Khoda Hafez, May Bangladesh Live Forever.


Md. Abdul Hamid

بنیرالہاگیت الزکیہ



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 Bangali. On this day in 1952, many valiant sons of the soil, including Rafiq, Shafique, Salam, Jabbar and Barkat 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 Bangali of all time, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who had led the language movement and all other language veterans.

In 1948, State Language Movement Council was constituted comprising Tamuddin Majlish, Student League and other student bodies as per a proposal of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The council called a general strike on 11 March to realise the demand for recognising Bangla as the state language. Bangabandhu along with a number of student leaders was arrested on the day from in front of the Secretariat. They were released on 15 March. The Father of the Nation chaired a public meeting at Amtola in the Dhaka University campus on 16 March. The movement spread all over the country.

On 11 September 1948, Bangabandhu was arrested from Faridpur. He was released on 21 January 1949. He was again detained on 19 April and released at the end of July. On 14 October, Bangabandhu was again arrested from Dhaka and confined to jail. 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 21 February 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 193 countries surpassing the boundary of Bangladesh. The day has been reached to a new height when the UNESCO gave recognition to 21 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, including Salam and Rafiq. The International Mother Language Day is now a source of inspiration to all people of the world in establishing the truth and justice.

We have taken initiative to make Bangla, spoken by about 25 crore people of the world, as one of the official languages of the United Nations. I have already placed the demand before the UNGA. We established International Mother Language Institute to preserve the languages of the world and carry out research on those.

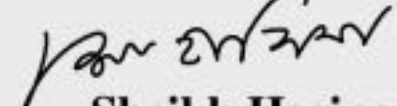
The greatest Ekushey is the symbol of our democratic values, Bangali nationalism, spirit of liberation struggle and secularism. Awami League government has relentlessly been working to develop the country being imbued with the spirit of the great Ekushey and liberation war.

During the last 9 years, our government achieved desired progress in all sectors. Bangladesh is now a 'Role Model' for development in the world. We will turn Bangladesh into a middle-income country by 2021 and a developed one by 2041, Insha Allah.

Let us work together with the spirit of the immortal Ekushey keeping aside all differences for the development of the country upholding the democratic value and build a non-communal, hunger-poverty-free and happy-prosperous Sonar Bangladesh as dreamt by the Father of the Nation.

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

Twenty-first of Fifty-two : Outside Dhaka

Hasan Azizul Huq

The language movement that took place in our country in 1952 is part of our history, and for that reason many consider it to be a thing of the past. But history does not mean the mere past, nor is it some terrible event falling from the sky that is disconnected from the present. History is a flow, and it also has some back-pull; for this reason it is also the present time forever. The language movement carries huge importance in the annals of progressive democratic movements in Bangladesh; the struggle for self-determination of the Bangali nation and the achievement of a sovereign Bangladesh was an outcome of that movement; in the flourishing of the middle class; in the fight to realize distinctiveness in thoughts, knowledge and intelligence; in the movement for establishing an exploitation-free socialist society in the backdrop of one that was severely bruised due to the bites of exploitations and repression, the language movement of fifty-two has continuously energised and inspired us in our struggles.

Details can be obtained of what happened in Dhaka on 21 February of 1952; it can be gathered from various sources. The picture of 21 February becomes more or less clear by piecing together information and news items collected from different sources and by comparing and contrasting those. Detailed descriptions of the preceding and subsequent events of 21 February are also available. But what is not clear is what happened in the vast mofussil or semi-urban areas of an enormous rural Bangladesh outside Dhaka.

Most of the happenings that took place outside Dhaka before and after 21 February are now on the verge of getting lost under the dust of time. Newspapers could be the main source for such information. But '*Pakistan Observer*' then remained shut due to a government order and '*Ittefaq*' was not yet born. Therefore, whoever wants to collect information about the language movement today will have to look at the '*Morning News*'. That is because we have no other option but to examine this newspaper to know about the thoughts of the ruling coterie, whom it represented, and the extent of their conspiracy against the people of Bangladesh. On the other hand, a more or less clear picture of the language movement can also be obtained by scrutinising the daily '*Azad*'. In his statement, Abul Hashim had specifically commended the role of '*Azad*' alongside the periodicals '*Millat*' and '*Insaf*'. But these old newspapers are now quite scarce.

Those who had come into contact with the language movement in one way or another in the remote and semi-urban areas of the country are at the fog end of their lives. Among them, the reminiscences of those who are still quite conscious and can supply information about the national and social perspectives of that time would have been valuable. The language movement was never a linear one, rather the currents of many events had met and blended with the occurrences of 21 February. Below the clearly articulated demands were the unspoken ones. Just as the demand for making Bangla the

principal state language was pronounced in a thunderous tone, it was also linked to the life and livelihood of the middle-class people, and art, literature required for the flourishing of that class. Just as it contained the question of freedom of practicing one's culture and upholding democratic principles, similarly the language movement incorporated a fiery resolve to break up into pieces the unspeakably repressive and exploitative society. That resolve found expression through a massive explosion of emotions. The events that took place outside Dhaka in semi-urban or semi-rural areas



can be divided into three classes. These were: events prior to 21 February, events of 21 February, and events after 21 February.

The first page headline of the daily '*Azad*' in large letters on Thursday, 21 February were: 'Processions banned for one month'. The magistrate of Dhaka clamped down section-144 in the city on Wednesday, 20 February. The previous day's '*Azad*' showed 39 lawyers of Dhaka issuing a statement in support of the demand for making Bangla the state language. After the passage of a resolution condoling the deaths of some eminent personalities including King George VI of Britain at 3 pm on Wednesday, 20 February, a member of the East Bengal legislative assembly Najmul Haque asked the education minister Abdul Hamid whether the government had accepted the recommendations of the language committee. In reply, the minister informed that the recommendations were not yet accepted, but he wanted to inform the assembly that those were under consideration of the government. In response, the member Haranchandra Ghosh Chowdhury wanted to know why the language committee recommendations were not being accepted by the

(Continued to the next page)

The Language Movement and Twenty-First February: Victory of the Bangla Language and the Bangali

Jinnat Imtiaz Ali

A Mother's relation with her child is inseparable. The development of the child depends entirely on her care and nursing. When babies live in their mother's womb they get acquainted with the melodious sounds uttered by the mother. After their birth, they gradually become familiar with their culture through the mother language. This language helps them learn to express their sensation and realization. There is an immense importance, too, for learning languages other than the mother tongue. Rabindra Nath Tagore, the renowned poet and philosopher of the East, depicted the relation between mother and child and effect of mother language in the following manner: "Any education intended to be fruitful, deep rooted and extensive must thoroughly be molded through the ever-known mother tongue. If education can be mingled with the very language that flows everywhere in the country and is never prohibited even from the room where the rays of sun does not reach and with which the mental respiration of the whole of the nation-functions, it can purify the blood of the nation and then a connection is created with the essential functionalities of the whole nation." The education psychologists of present world defying all hesitation say that there is no other choice but the mother language that can create our consciousness, build our emotion and generate our susceptibility. But it is heartrending to witness the reality of preserving the dignity of mother language and language-based national identity. There are instances in the world that the imperialist and occupation forces intentionally killed many language communities. For this reason, we have lost the knowledge and wisdom of these people forever. Our glorious Language Movement of 21 February reminds the citizens of the world about this.

Background to the Ekushey (21 February) is almost known to all. Two independent states – India and Pakistan were created after the separation of the Indian subcontinent in 1947. Because of this partition Bangla language and Bangla spoken region were severed. We came to be known as the inhabitants of the eastern region of Pakistan. Rest of the Bangla speakers were included in the states of West Bengal, Assam and Tripura of India. It is worth mentioning that citizens of this territory had much more important contribution in the creation of Pakistan than the members of other regions/states of Pakistan. It was very natural for them to have high hopes as they became members of the newly created country. They aspired that antagonistic colonial attitude would cease to exist. Their language, practice of art and literature would have much more momentum. National advancement would be greater than the 'previous time'. Instead only despair came. Their high-flying aspirations crumbled down within a year. Governor General of Pakistan came to Dhaka and announced that only Urdu would be the state language of Pakistan. Inherent meaning of this announcement was clear. Far reaching conspiracy acted behind this announcement. People of this land did not err to understand that the effect of this announcement would not only make them outcast in their own country but also endanger their unique identity. To accept this condition would mean to be lost forever. So only one way was open to preserve

(Continued to the next page)