

অমর ২১শে

FEBRUARY 21, 2022



70th Anniversary of Ekushey February

Today marks the 70th anniversary of Ekushey February, a day commemorating the sacrifices made in defense of the Bengali language. Bangla goes beyond just a means of communication. It is a fond memory of a parent's prayers and comforts. An instant connection with a street vendor in an unknown city. A passage into the world of Rabindranath Tagore and Kazi Nazrul Islam. An unshakable bond with millions of other people who share a common history, culture, and identity. Today we honor those who granted us the power and privilege of our mother tongue.







In 1948, the government of Pakistan declared Urdu as the singular national language, sparking outrage among the Bangla-speaking province of East Pakistan (present-day Bangladesh). Spearheaded by university students, rallies and protests erupted across the region. The people of East Pakistan demanded recognition of their mother tongue and refused to be demoted to second-class citizens. The Bangla Language Movement was born.

On February 21st, 1952, East Pakistani students gathered in front of Dhaka University. Police opened fire, injuring countless demonstrators and killing five students. This brutal event shook the region with shock, grief, and indignation. A new wave of rallies, strikes, and boycotts swept across East Pakistan, feeding fire to the movement. Four years later, in 1956, the Pakistani government finally recognized Bangla as an official language.

February 21st, 1952 marks one of the few instances in history in which individuals sacrificed their lives for the right to speak their language. In Bangladesh, this date is known as "Ekushey February" and is celebrated as a national holiday. Many Bangladeshis pay their respect at Shahid Minar, a national monument in Dhaka that memorializes the five student martyrs—Abdus Salam, Abul Barkat, Rafiq Uddin Ahmed, Abdul Jabbar, and Shafiur Rahman. It is common to hear the song "Amar Bhaier Rokte Rangano" ("My Brother's Blood Spattered"), which recollects the events that led to Bangladesh's freedom of speech and eventual sovereignty.

In 1999, the 30th General Assembly of UNESCO unanimously declared that "21st February be proclaimed International Mother Language Day throughout the world to commemorate the martyrs who sacrificed their lives on this very day in 1952." Mother Language Day is celebrated around the world to promote cultural awareness, multilingualism, and the right to speak one's language.

Ideas for Celebrating Ekushey February

-  [Listen](#) to Abdul Gaffar Choudhury's "Ekusher Gaan"
-  [Read](#) a poem by Kazi Nazrul Islam
-  [Recreate](#) Shahid Minar at home with family
-  [Brush up](#) on Bangla or [find](#) a new language to learn
-  [Call](#) a relative or friend and converse in Bangla
-  [Pay respect](#) by wearing black and white

**"Amar bhaiyer rokte rangano Ekushe February
Ami ki bhulite pari?"**

— "Ekusher Gaan" by Abdul Gaffar Choudhury



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