

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



PRIME MINISTER
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
BANGLADESH

08 Falgun 1428
21 February 2022

Message

On the occasion of the great Martyrs' Day and International Mother Language Day, I pay my homage to the people of all languages and cultures of the world, including Bangla. With Bangladesh, UNESCO has been celebrating this day with due dignity since 2000. This year's theme of the day – 'Using Technology for Multilingual Learning: Challenges and Opportunities: Crisis and Prospects' – which I think is very befitting; because the Awami League government has been working for a long time to implement an equitable and inclusive education policy through the use of digital technology.

The importance of the language movement in the history of the Bangali liberation struggle is immense. The foundation for a non-communal, democratic, language-based state system was laid through this movement. On this day in 1952, Abul Barkat, Abdul Jabbar, Abdus Salam, Rafiquddin Ahmad, Shafiur Rahman, and many others sacrificed their lives to protect the dignity of our mother language Bangla. I pay my deep respects to the memory of the martyrs of all languages, including Bangla; I remember with the deep tribute all the language movement activists, including the greatest Bangali of all time, Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, whose supreme sacrifices and struggle elevated the esteem of our mother, land, and people.

The glorious history of the language movement of the Bangali from 1947 to 1952 serves as a source of inspiration in our national life from time and again. The Father of the Nation was repeatedly imprisoned for leading the language movement. At the Education Conference held in Karachi on 27 November 1947, Urdu was decided to be the state language of Pakistan. When the news reached Dhaka, the students of Dhaka University immediately protested in front of Khawaja Nazimuddin's residence. Shortly afterward, Sheikh Mujib, a law student of Dhaka University, used his organizational experience to play a vital role in establishing the Chhatra League in Dhaka on 4 January 1948. In the first session of the Constituent Assembly on 23 February, Dharendra Nath Datta of Comilla moved an amendment proposal demanding the inclusion of Bangla as the language of the Assembly. Rejecting the proposal, Khawaja Nazimuddin declared in the Legislative Assembly that the people of East Bengal would accept Urdu as the state language. But to counter the reckless decision of Nazimuddin, an all-party Chhatra Sangram Parishad was formed on 2 March at Fazlul Haque Hall of Dhaka University comprising Chhatra League, Tamaddun Majlish, and other parties. Many language movement activists, including Sheikh Mujib, were arrested in front of the Secretariat for leading the strike on 11 March and were released on 15 March. The day after their release, on 16 March, the students again besieged the provincial council building under the leadership of Sheikh Mujib, and police baton charges injured many. On 21 March, Jinnah spoke out boastfully in favor of Urdu at the Dhaka Racecourse Ground. While declaring Urdu as the state language of Pakistan at the students' convocation on 24 March at Curzon Hall, the students immediately protested.

To transform the language movement into a national campaign, Sheikh Mujib organized a nationwide tour plan and participated in an extensive campaign, and addressed in rallies. He was arrested from Faridpur on 11 September 1948 and released on 21 January 1949. He was arrested again on 19 April and released in July. He was then arrested on 14 October 1949 and released on 27 February 1952. Sheikh Mujib had been in touch with language movement activists and Chhatra League leaders from 1 January 1950, while in Dhaka Central Jail and had given various suggestions to add momentum to the movement. He sent memos to the three messengers on 3 February 1952 to call for a nationwide strike on 21 February and march around the Executive Council meeting venue. That announcement was made after the students' procession on 4 February. When Sheikh Mujib started a hunger strike at this stage, on 16 February, the jail authorities transferred him from Dhaka to Faridpur Jail.

