

## The Language Movement

The Language Movement is a unique event in the history of the political Movement of Bangladesh. Bengali was the mother tongue of about 56 percent of the people of Pakistan. On the other hand, Urdu was the mother tongue of only 6 percent people of the whole of Pakistan. Although 56 percent of the people of Pakistan were Bengalis, the West Pakistani didn't want Bengali to become the state language. On the other hand, Bengalis wanted to make their language the state language along with Urdu and had no objections against that language'.

**Announcement of Muhammad Ali Jinnah:** On 21 March 1948, Muhammad Ali Jinnah visited Dhaka and addressed a public meeting at the then Race Course Maidan. In that meeting he declared, "Urdu and only Urdu shall be the state language of Pakistan". When he repeated these words at the Dhaka University Convocation Ceremony held on 24 March at the Curzon Hall, the students protested vehemently by shouting 'No, No'. On that day, Rastrabhasha Parishad submitted a memorandum to Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

### Events of 1952:

**144 Section:** On 20 February the Government of Nurul Amin, being scared of the student Movement imposed section 144 at 3 p.m., and banned the processions and the meetings.

**21 February:** On 21 February, the students of Dhaka University in an organized way defied section 144 and leading a procession from the University campus proceeded towards the Provincial Assembly which was in session, chanting the slogan "Rashtrabhasha.Bangla Chai". In a tense situation the students assembled in the campus. The police used tear gas to disperse the students. And clashes occurred between the police and the students. **At one stage, the police opened fire. A number of people and students including Jabbar, Rafiq, Barkat and Salam were martyred and many students and people were injured.**

### Bangla as State language:

At last, the Government of Nurul Amin adopted a resolution in the Provincial Assembly to the effect that a proposal would be raised at the Constituent Assembly containing the demand to accord Bengali the status of one of the state languages of Pakistan. In the face of continuous student's and people's Movements the Pakistan Government was compelled to give Bengali the status of one of the state languages.

Finally, Bengali was given the status of one of the state languages in the **Constitution of Pakistan of 1956.**

## Background of International Mother Language Day:

The idea to celebrate International Mother Language Day was the [initiative of Bangladesh](#). It was approved at the [1999 UNESCO General Conference](#) and has been observed throughout the world since 2000.

UNESCO believes in the importance of cultural and linguistic diversity for sustainable societies. It is within its mandate for peace that it works to preserve the differences in cultures and languages that foster tolerance and respect for others.

Multilingual and multicultural societies exist through their languages which transmit and preserve traditional knowledge and cultures in a sustainable way.

Linguistic diversity is increasingly threatened as more and more languages disappear

Globally 40 per cent of the population does not have access to an education in a language they speak or understand. Nevertheless, progress is being made in multilingual education with growing understanding of its importance, particularly in early schooling, and more commitment to its development in public life.

## 2023 celebrations

The 24th edition of International Mother Language Day will focus on the theme ‘multilingual education - a necessity to transform education’.

Multilingual education based on mother-tongue facilitates access to and inclusion in learning for population groups that speak non-dominant languages, languages of minority groups and indigenous languages. The event organized by UNESCO on 21 February will explore and debate on the potential of multilingualism to transform education from a lifelong learning perspective and in different contexts. The discussions will be based around the following three inter-connected themes:

Enhancing multilingual education as a necessity to transform education in multilingual contexts from early childhood education and well beyond;

Supporting learning through multilingual education and multilingualism in our fast-changing global contexts and in crisis situations including emergencies contexts;

Revitalizing languages that are disappearing or are threatened with extinction.