

Essay on The Immortal 21st February Or, Shaheed Day/The Martyr's Day

[Hints: Introduction, Origin of the movement, February 21, 1952, as the Language Day, Victory of the movement, Language Movement turned into independence, Significance of the day.]

Introduction: The 21st of February is an immortal (or, a red-letter) day in the history of Bangladesh. It is also called the 'Shaheed Day' which means the 'Martyr's Day'. It is also known as the Language Day. On this day the Bangladesh pay homage to the sacred memory of the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the Bengali Language in 1952.

Origin of the movement: In 1948 the rulers of the west while Pakistan declared Urdu to be the only state language, the people of Bangladesh raised their voice and protested vehemently against this announcement. The movement for making Bengali a state language spread all over Bangladesh.

February 21, 1952, as the Language Day: All the people Bangladesh, men and women the young and the old particularly the students rose equal to the occasion. The prominent leaders of the movement were put in jail. The student community as a whole was firmly determined to carry on the struggle until the government yielded to their demand. The students declared February 21 in 1952 as the. 'Language Day'. The government-imposed section 144 and banned all meetings and processions.

The victory of the movement: The students defied the order and brought out a procession. Many brave sons of Bangladesh like Rafiq, Salam, Barkat, and Jabbar made the supreme sacrifices with their lives that day. The movement became so strong that the government was forced; to recognize Bengali as one of the two state languages. A

memorial called the Central Shaheed Minar was erected at the place where Barkat was killed. Since then the Bangalees pay homage to the martyrs of the Language Movement of 1952 every year on the 21st of February.

Language Movement turned into independence: Later on, the 'Language Movement' turned into the movement for independence. It gave rise to Bengali nationalism which found its goal in independent Bangladesh.

The significance of the day: So the Shaheed Day bears a great significance in the history of our nation. It is an eternal source of inspiration to us all. This day is observed as a public holiday. The entire nation pays homage to the martyrs. The national flag is hoisted at half mast and special prayers are held in all the places of worship for peace of the soul of the martyrs. The Shaheed Day is a part of our sensibilities. It has shaped our destiny and helped us to discover ourselves.

Conclusion: we are really proud of our language martyrs. They will remain ever fresh in our innermost hearts and remind us of the undying memory of dedicating their lives to the cause of mother language.