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Homage paid to language martyrs

# Immortal Ekushey observed

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The nation on Monday paid homage to the golden sons of the soil who laid down their lives to establish Bangla as the mother tongue in 1952.

Tens of thousands of people thronged the Central Shaheed Minar to pay their tributes to the best sons of the soil—Salam, Rafiq, Shafiq, Jabbar and Barkat.

This year's Shaheed Dibash (Martyrs' Day) was marked by its recognition as the International Mother Language Day by the UNESCO.

The programme of the day began with the placing of wreaths by President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed at the altar of Shaheed Minar at one minute past 12 midnight (Sunday night).

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina followed the President and paid her respect to the language martyrs. Then came Speaker of Parliament Humayun Rasheed

floral wreaths at the Shaheed Minar at 12:32 am.

For the first time, representatives of the diplomatic missions in Dhaka paid homage to the Language Martyrs in the early hours of February 21.

Veterans of the language movement led by President of State Language Action Council Gaziul Huq offered their tributes to their comrades who sacrificed lives for the cause of Bangla language. Vice Chancellor of Dhaka

University Prof AK Azad Chowdhury also placed wreaths in the early hours of Ekushey.

Different political parties and their front organisations including student wings, socio-cultural organisations, teachers, journalists and various professional groups paid tributes to the martyrs.

On the occasion of February 21, the Ekushey Book Fair and the Dhaka University area, unlike previous years, wore a festive look after the day had been declared an international one. City dwellers and current as well as former students of DU gathered at the vast areas surrounding the Shaheed Minar.

The Ekushey Book Fair at the Bangla Academy hardly had any space to walk with enthusiastic visitors jamming the area.

The ruling Awami League's city unit placed wreaths at around 8:30 in the morning. Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak, Food Minister Amir Hossain Amu, Commerce Minister Abdul Jalil and State Minister for Shipping Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury led the Probhat Ferry.

Leaders of opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party including party Secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan MP, Sadeq Hossain Khoka MP, Barrister Moudud Ahmed and Abdul Matin Chowdhury placed wreaths on behalf of the BNP city unit.

Judges of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh led by Chief Justice Latifur Rahman paid homage by placing wreaths at the altar at 10

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a.m. Among other organisations which placed wreaths at the Shaheed Minar included Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists, Muktiyoddha Kendrya Command Council, Pahari Chhatra Parishad, Ganotantrik Aiyeenjibi Samity, Udichi, Bangladesh Human Rights Commission, Biman Bangladesh Airlines, Khelaghar, Hindu-Buddhist-Christian Oikya Parishad, National University, Open University Teachers' Association, College University Teachers' Association, Jatiya Samantantrik Dal, Samajantrik Chhatra Front, Chhatra Union, Banggabandhu Parishad, Bangladesh Chhatra League, Pochatturer Ghatatak Dalal Nirmul Committee and Jaker Party.