

# THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER

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## Bengali Everywhere

President Ziaur Rahman has called upon all to be imbued with the spirit of February 21. This is the day which had added a new chapter, a glorious one, to our history and had inspired us to move ahead on the road to independence. Since language and our national identity are inseparable and indivisible and February 21 was the most vital phase of the language movement, the spirit of the day should naturally be reflected in our endeavour to develop Bengali and facilitate its use in all spheres of life. This should be our primary concern.

This is a target which however does not seem to have been fully realised as yet. And that in spite of persistent and sincere efforts. There are obvious difficulties, but there is no reason to think that these are insurmountable. If Bengali typewriters are in short supply, measures can be taken to procure more. If the required number of stenographers are not available, arrangements can be made for training up more people. The Bengali typewriter which is now in use is far better than the one that was first introduced. But if this typewriter too is found to be inadequate, necessary research process can be initiated to improve its quality and performance. Arrangements can also be made for its production locally if such arrangements do not already exist. The process for writing in shorthand can, if necessary, be refined. Material inadequacies that reportedly stand in the way of a rapid and all out introduction of Bengali for official purposes can and should be done away with.

Where does then lie the problem? Technical words in use in the office have been rendered in Bengali. Those who have done it are learned people and must have looked into the adequacy, grammatical and otherwise, of the terminology that has been coined. It

is possible that the work is not complete and that there are many more words for which there is a need to find out an appropriate Bengali equivalence. But with the stock of words that is already available, it should be possible to carry out most of the official work in Bengali. Where there is a gap, words of foreign origin may for the time being be used. It is also important to give the words already coined a fair trial. It is time alone which would be able to pass a judgement on their acceptability in the language and also on their suitability for the purpose for which they have been coined. A large number of such words has already gained ground. More can reasonably be expected to do so if used more frequently and on a wider scale.

It is common knowledge that each language has its own peculiarities and that these have developed over the centuries. It is virtually impossible to impose any predetermined pattern on any living language. One need not therefore be worried about the shape and the dimension that Bengali is likely to take for the discharge of official business. Bengali as a language has remarkable possibilities and it will grow and adapt itself to the demands of the changing time. Bengali is the language of our life. The business of the state is not divorced from life either. On the contrary, it is as close to it as it can be. The gap between the people and government has been bridged over. The gap between the language of the people and the language of government must also be bridged over. What is important is to shun love, if any, for the glimmers of a foreign tongue and to persistently, tenaciously and unfailingly use Bengali in all possible cases. It is only through such efforts that the spirit of February 21 would be truly honoured.