March 1948 (1st week), A Committee of Action of the students of Dhaka University, representing allshades of opinion - leftists, rightists, and centrists - is set up with the objective of achieving nationalstatus of Bengali.March 11, 1948, Students demonstrating for Bangla as state language is baton-charged and a largenumber of students are arrested in Dhaka. The Quaid-i-Azam was due to visit Dhaka from 19March. The provincial government became nervous and Nazimuddin under pressure of widespreadagitation, the impending visit of the Governor-General, sought the help of Muhammad Ali Bogra toenter into negotiations with the Committee of Action. An agreement was signed by Nazimuddinwith the Committee which, inter alia, provided that the Provincial Assembly shall adopt aresolution for making Bengali the official language of East Pakistan and the medium of instructionat all stages of education and the Assembly by another resolution would recommend to the centralgovernment that Bengali should be made one of the state languages.March 21, 1948, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan and its first Governor-General,while on a visit to East Bengal, declares in Dhaka University convocation that while the language of the province can be Bengali, the "State language of Pakistan is going to be Urdu and no otherlanguage. Anyone who tries to mislead you is really an enemy of Pakistan." The remark evoked anangry protest from the Bengali youth who took it as an affront: their language Bangla (Bengali)was, after all, spoken by 54% of the population of Pakistan. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, then auniversity student, was among those who raised the protest slogan and was placed under detention.The Dacca University campus became the focal point for student meetings in support of the Banglalanguage. Jinnah meets the student representatives of Committee of Action to persuade them of thenecessity of having one national language, but the students are not convinced.1952:January 26, 1952, The Basic Principles Committee of the Constituent Assembly of Pakistanannounces its recommendation that Urdu should be the only state language. In a public meeting atPaltan Maidan, Dhaka, Prime Minister Nazimuddin declares that Urdu alone will be the statelanguage of Pakistan. Both the developments spark off the second wave of language agitation inEast Bengal.January 28, 1952, the students of Dhaka University in a protest meeting call the Prime Minister andthe Provincial Ministers as stooges of West Pakistan.January 30, 1952, in a secret meeting called by the Awami League, which is attended by a numberof communist front as well as other organizations, it is agreed that the language agitation can’t besuccessfully carried by the students alone. To mobilize full political and student support, it isdecided that the leadership of the movement should be assumed by the Awami League underBhashani.January 31, 1952, Bhashani presides over an all-party convention in Dhaka. The convention isattended by prominent leaders like Abul Hashim and Hamidul Haq Choudhury. A broad-based All-Party Committee of Action (APCA) is constituted with Kazi Golam Mahboob as Convener andMaulana Bhashani as Chairman, and with two representatives from the Awami League, Students

http://digitaltech.blogspot.com

League, Youth League, Khilafate-Rabbani Party, and the Dhaka University State LanguageCommittee of Action.February 3, 1952, committee of Action holds a protest meeting in Dhaka against the move 'todominate the majority province of East Bengal linguistically and culturally'. The provincial chief of Awami League, Maulana Bhashani addresses the meeting. On the suggestion of Abul Hashim itdecides to hold a general strike on 21 February, when the East Bengal Assembly is due to meet forits budget session.February 20, 1952, at 6 pm. an order under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Codeprohibiting processions and meetings in Dhaka City is promulgated. This order generated tensionand resentment among the students.February 21, 1952, a meeting is held in the campus of Dhaka University. Students decide to defy theofficial ban imposed by Nurul Amin's administration and processions are taken out to stage ademonstration in front of the Provincial Assembly. Police starts lobbing tear gas shells to thestudents. Students retaliate by batting bricks. The ensuing riot spreads to the nearby campuses of the Medical and Engineering colleges. At 4 pm, The police opens fire in front of the Medical Collegehostel. Five persons – Mohammad Salauddin, Abdul Jabbar, Abul Barkat, Rafiquddin Ahmed andAbdus Salam - are killed; the first three are students of Dhaka University (A memorial, the ShaheedMinar , was built later to commemorate the martyrs of the language movement).The news of thekilling spread like wildfire throughout the city and people rushed in thousands towards the MedicalCollege premises.February 22, 1952, thousands of men and women throng the university, Medical College andEngineering College areas to offer prayers for the victims of the police firing. After prayers whenthey go for a procession, the police open fire. The police also fire on angry mob that burned theoffices of a pro-government newspaper. Four persons are killed. As the situation deteriorates, thegovernment calls in the military to bring things under control. Bowing to the pressure, the Chief Minister Nurul Amin moves a motion recommending to the Constituent Assembly that Bengalishould be one of the state languages of Pakistan.3 |Page



February 24, 1952, the government gives full authority to the police and military to bring thesituation in Dhaka back to normal within 48 hours. During these 48 hours the police arrestedalmost all the student and political leaders associated with the language movement.1954:After the resounding victory of the united front in 1954, Bangla was recognized as one of the statelanguages of Pakistan at a session of the National Assembly on 9 May 1954. Feb 26, 1956, theConstituent Assembly passes the first Constitution of Pakistan recognizing Bangla as a StateLanguage. UNESCO General Conference in Paris on 17 November 1999 to declare 21 February asan international day on the ground that on this day many had sacrificed their lives for their mothertongue.

Sources:

1. Hasan Zaheer, The Separation of East Pakistan -The Rise and Realization of Bengali Muslim Nationalism , Oxford University Press, Karachi, Pakistan, 19942. Talukder Maniruzzaman, The Bangladesh Revolution and its Aftermath , BangladeshBooks International Ltd., Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1980 3. Siddiq Salik, Witness to Surrender , Oxford University Press, Karachi, Pakistan, 1977 4. Rafiqul Islam, A Tale of Millions , Ananna, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 3rd edition, 1986 5. Md. Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan, Emergence of Bangladesh and Role of Awami League ,Vikas Publishing House, Delhi, India, 1982