

Dulu Apa, the unsung hero of the language movement, is the pride of Lalmonirhat

Neon Dula, Lalmonirhat:: During the month of language, we are remembering with deep respect the pride of Lalmonirhat, the language soldier Jahanara Begum (Dulu). This brave woman, born on August 1, 1939, passed away on January 8, 2003. Her father was Yakub Ali and mother Zohra Khatun. Growing up in the Tumol Para area of the city, Dulu Apa was inspired by the spirit of the language movement at a young age.

In 1952, while still a student of Lalmonirhat Girls' School, she actively participated in the movement demanding that her mother tongue, Bengali, be made the state language. She protested against the language policy of the then Pakistan government by organizing meetings, rallies and campaigns in the town of Lalmonirhat, far from the capital Dhaka. She was even arrested in her struggle to establish the right to language, but no obstacle could break her morale.

She was known to her fellow fighters as the youngest leader of the Language Movement Council and everyone's favorite "Dulu Apa". Her struggle was not only for the people of the then East Pakistan—present-day Bangladesh; but symbolically became a reflection of the demand for linguistic dignity of Bengali speakers around the world, including West Bengal.

Historians consider Dulu Apa's contribution to be equally memorable among the unsung heroes, just as the sacrifices of martyrs Abdus Salam, Abul Barkat, Abdul Jabbar and Rafiq Uddin Ahmed are immortal in the history of the Language Movement.

The significance of the Language Movement has also been recognized in the international arena. UNESCO declared February 21 as International Mother Language Day, which was

later adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. This recognition plays an important role in highlighting the importance of linguistic diversity and cultural inclusion.

Freedom fighter Sector 9 member Golam Rabbani Mukul reminisced and said, "Dulu Apa's quiet but strong presence has inspired the family and society, and her ideals teach the new generation to respect language and culture." The pride of the people of Lalmonirhat around this brave woman of the language movement is still intact. May her memory be a source of inspiration to the nation during the month of language – that is everyone's hope.