

# Bengalis in London's East End

## Shahid Minar (Martyr's Monument)

Shahid Minar (Martyr's Monument) is in Altab Ali Park. It is an abstract work of art - a white structure representing a mother protecting her children in front of a rising crimson sun erected in 1999. This is a locally-made replica of a larger memorial in Dhaka, Bangladesh, which commemorates the 'Language Martyrs' shot dead by the Pakistani Police on the 21st February, 1952 during a protest against the imposition of Urdu as Pakistan's state language.

In February 1999, the United Nations declared February 21 World Mother Language Day.

At midnight on the 20th February (Shahid Dibosh) the martyrs of the Language Movement are remembered in a solemn ceremony in the Park, and the Bengali community comes to lay wreaths. Abdul Gaffar Choudhury, a journalist and freeman of Tower Hamlets, wrote a Martyr's Day song, Amar bhaier rokte rangano Ekushe February.

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