



Govt to introduce Int'l Mother Language Award

The government decided to introduce 'International Mother Language Award' to highlight significance of the struggle and martyrdom of the Bengalis for their mother tongue, reports UNB.

A high-level meeting in observance of the International Mother Language Day, recognised by the United Nations, also decided to hold month-long programme beginning February 21 to mark the occasion with due importance.

The language martyrs' day programme will end on March 5, the nation's Independence Day. That symbolically links the struggle for establishing mother tongue Bengali as a state language under the Pakistani regime in 1952 and the fight for independence from Pakistan of 1971.

Held at the PM office with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair, the meeting laid emphasis on expediting implementation work for establishing 'International Mother Language Institute'.

The meeting was informed that land for the proposed institute had already been selected and work would be started soon.

An announcement for setting up the institute was made at a state function held for celebrating the UNESCO declaration of International Mother Language Day in 1999. At the institute in Dhaka, research in scores of languages spoken by various

nationalities of the world will be carried out.

The meeting also decided to invite world personalities, hold seminar, discussion in Bangladesh Missions abroad on the significance of the day.

Besides, drama festival, recitation and essay competitions will be arranged at school level and an international book fair will be held in the country as part of the comprehensive programme.

Speaking on the occasion Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said International Mother Language Day is a glorious achievement of the nation and only Bangladesh is a language-based nation state in the world.

"The Bengalis upheld the dignity of mother tongue at the cost of lives," she told the meeting.

In this context, she focused on the history of the language movement from 1947 to 1952 when the movement got a final shape into its climax and achieved the right of mother tongue through the sacrifice of blood.

"It is our duty to depict the real but glorious history of our nation to the new generations and to world community through film, documentary and other media," the Prime Minister said.

She mentioned that a Canada-based organisation - International Mother Language Lovers Association -

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proposed to UNESCO to declare the 21st February as International Mother Language Day. UNESCO suggested them to tell the Bangladesh Government to send the proposal.

Accordingly, Bangladesh Government promptly sent the proposal and thus the mother language day of the Bengalis got the status of International Mother Language Day.

"We achieved our independence through our struggle initiated at the language movement," Sheikh Hasina said in tribute to the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for establishing the Bengalis' right to speak, write and express through the language they learnt from mother's tongue.

She noted that a nation cannot survive without cultural freedom, which was attained through this language movement.

The PM said ahead of the Independence Day, the International Mother Language Day would be observed through elaborate programme upholding the great achievements.

"Observation of the International Mother Language Day has created a scope for us to project our history rich in various achievements to world arena," Hasina observed.

Education Secretary Dr Saadat Hossain placed the agenda of the meeting while Education Minister ASHK Sadique gave welcome address.

Present among others in the meeting were Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria, Forest Minister Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Food Minister Amir Hossain Amu, Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury, Syeda Zohra Tajuddin, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, State Minister for Planning Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Suranjit Sengupta, Nurul Islam Nahid MP, language veteran Gaziul Haq, DU VC AK Azad Chowdhury, cultural activist Hasan Imam, Journalist Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, principal M Kamaruzzaman, artist Hashem Khan, MR Akhter Mukul, Kazi Farooq, National University VC Prof Durgadas Bhattacharya, Lutfur Rahman Riton, Foreign Secretary Syed Moazzem Ali and Cabinet Secretary Kazi Shamsul Alam.