

Australian Minister announces to observe International Mother Language Day on 21 February in Canberra, Australia

Australian Capital Territory Minister for Multicultural Affairs praised the heroic sacrifice of National Martyrs' for the language movement in 1952 while making a speech at the celebration programme on the occasion of the Shaheed Dibash and International Mother Language Day at the Bangladesh High Commission in Canberra on 21 February 2009. A discussion meeting on the significance of the Language Martyrs' Day and International Mother Language Day was organized by the Mission where Hon. John Hargreaves, MLA, Minister for Multicultural Affairs of the ACT Government was the Chief Guest and other guests were High Commissioners/Ambassadors for India, Sri Lanka, Fiji and Brunei in Canberra, Counsellor from the US Embassy in Canberra and few other diplomats, Faculty of Asian Studies at the Australian National University, other dignitaries and members of Bangladesh community from Sydney and Canberra. The meeting was presided over by H.E. the High Commissioner Lieutenant General Masud Uddin Chwodhury.

The Minister in his speech highlighted the importance of preserving the mother tongue and showing respect to other languages and cultures. He assured that in near future his government will observe the International Mother Language Day on 21 February each year.

The programme began with hoisting the National Flag at half mast in the morning by the High Commissioner. The messages on the occasion from the Hon'ble President, Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh were read out in the meeting.

In the meeting, apart from the Minister, Dr. Richard Barz of the ANU, H.E. Mrs. Sujatha Singh, Indian High Commissioner, Dr. Maksudul Bari, President of Bangla Proshar Committee, Sydney, Mr. Anamul Haque Bhuiyan (Mukul), President, Bangladesh Australia Association Canberra and a number of distinguished members from Bangladesh community also spoke on the importance and significance of the day. All of them recognised the unprecedented sacrifice made by Bangladesh to protect the right to speak in mother language. They also highlighted the importance of nourishment of mother tongue to promote the social cohesiveness in countries around the world.

While highlighting the sacrifice of the language martyrs' in his concluding remarks, the High Commissioner commented that unanimous decision of the UNESCO on declaring the day as International Mother Language Day is a testimony to the creative leadership of Bangladesh which ensured the most basis of all human rights- the right to mother tongue for all people of all languages. He praised the leadership of Bangabandhu and the Father of the Nation Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who delivered his first speech in the UNGA in 1974 in Bangla. He assured the Bangladeshi community that appropriate measures will be taken from the High Commission to promote the Bangla language and culture in Australia. The meeting has been very useful in portraying the history and significance of Amar Ekushey as well as highlighting the heritage, tradition and culture of Bangla language.



