



*High Commission for the
People's Republic of Bangladesh*
3.S.R.G. Senanayake Mawatha, Colombo-7, Sri Lanka

Press Release

Colombo, 21st February 2023

Prime Minister of Sri Lanka graces the celebration of International Mother Language Day in Colombo

Bangladesh High Commission in Colombo observed the International Mother Language Day - 2023 this morning at the historic Independence Square with the gracious presence of Prime Minister of Sri Lanka Dinesh Gunawardena. Other dignitaries present were the State Minister of Higher Education Dr Suren Rāghavan, State Minister of Foreign Affairs Tharaka Balasuriya and Heads of Diplomatic Missions and UN and International Organizations. People from all walks of life including academia, intellectuals, political and cultural personalities, high government officials as well as hundreds of students and scouts from schools across the island also joined the observance. On this occasion, the Independence Square turned into a grand assembly of difference language speakers.

The Prime Minister and other dignitaries scribbled in respective mother tongues their feelings about the Day on canvas with the strokes of brush and paint. The programme began with the choral rendition of the immortal Ekushey song by the children of the High Commission officials and their family members. The entire hall stood in solemn silence for one minute as a mark of respect to the Language Martyrs.

To mark the day, under the patronage of the High Commission and with the assistance of Sri Lanka's Ministry of Education, an island-wide creative writing and painting competition for children was launched two months back on the theme "Mother Language: Unity in Diversity". In today's event, the winners of the competition were awarded.

The day's attraction was an absorbing multilingual cultural performance by students and performers of the Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre, Russian House in Colombo, Maldivian Educational & Cultural Centre, Iranian Cultural Centre, SAARC Cultural Centre, Bangladesh High Commission and singers from Sri Lanka. In song, recitation and dance forms in as many as eight languages, they showcased their respective cultural traditions and love for their mother tongue and mother land. The finale was a K-pop performance. All the items drew huge appreciation from the crowd.

In his welcome remarks, High Commissioner of Bangladesh Tareq Md Ariful Islam reflected on significance of the day, shared its historical perspective and emphasized the role of mother tongues in promoting an inclusive society and a peaceful world. Sri Lankan State Minister of Higher Education Dr Suren Raghavan spoke in three languages--English, Sinhala and Tamil, about the importance of preservation of mother languages and linguistic diversity. UN Resident Coordinator Sarat Das spoke about the significance of multilingualism.

The event was organized in partnership with the Ministry of Education of Sri Lanka, United Nations in Sri Lanka and Sri Lanka Scout Association.

A blood-donation camp was also arranged by the High Commission in association with Sri Lanka Scout Association at the General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University Hospital.

The day's in-house observance began at the Chancery early morning with ceremonial hoisting of the national flag at half-mast followed by one-minute silence, special prayers and reading out messages of high dignitaries of Bangladesh.

The observance was widely covered in the local media.

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