

## Int'l Mother Language Day promising cultural heritage tourism product for BD

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Dhaka : In order to play a larger pivotal role in Bangladesh's socio-economic development, foreign currency earning and employment generation while tapping its full potential, the travel industry must utilise all avenues of tourism that the country is blessed with. Boasting a glorious history, Bangladesh stands tall in the global arena as an iconic destination with cultural heritage.

The upcoming February 21 is recognised as the International Mother Language Day by UNESCO and observed throughout the world in tribute to the movement done by the people of Bangladesh (then East Pakistan)-the martyrs-to fight for the recognition of the Bangla language.

The day, rich in history and an integral part of our culture and heritage,

is being celebrated countrywide with various events and activities. The occasion not only attracts domestic visitors but is also promising to drive the inbound international tourist numbers with tourism aimed at the country's cultural heritage.

Bangladeshis celebrate International Mother Language Day by placing flowers at the Martyrs' Monument and its replicas. Social gatherings and celebratory events honouring our language and culture are held by all government and private organisations across the country. Literary competitions are organised. People draw alpana on the roads, and listen to Bangla language songs. Bangla Academy arranges the iconic Ekushey Book Fair in the capital for the entire month of February. The events are endless to celebrate the occasion, making the day full of activities to do.

People starts celebrating the day with a barefoot walk to the Central Shaheed Minar in the capital, one of the city's most significant monuments, and pay homage to the martyrs with flowers wearing traditional dress and singing patriotic songs. Day-long events are organised at the site to commemorate the language martyrs and celebrate the historic day.

The premises are washed and cleaned thoroughly. Artists of the Faculty of Fine Arts of Dhaka University colourfully paint the Central Shaheed Minar premises with intricate designs.

The Central Shaheed Minar has a very close association with the city's cultural history. It also happens to be one of the primary tourist attractions in the capital and is visited by thousands of tourists throughout the year.

Hence, it must be well-maintained throughout the year and not only on February 21. Special care must be taken all year long by the authorities to maintain the monument's sanctity and attractiveness, while adorning the site with proper tourist facilities.

Academies and museums in the city adorn themselves with a new look and hold literary events in honour of the day. Cultural events take place in the Dhaka University campus, Rabindra Sharabar and other public locations as the country celebrates the day colourfully.

National tourism organisations like Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation, Bangladesh Tourism Board and different hotels celebrate the day with attractive offers, befitting events and activities.

Hotel Pan Pacific Sonargaon Dhaka also organises day trips for guests where they take visitors to historically rich locations of Dhaka. They can organise a special trip on such occasions like International Mother Language Day and include locations, activities and cultural events that honour the language movement in the itinerary. This will not only excite the travellers but also entertain them.

The iconic Ekushey Book Fair held in the Bangla Academy premise for the entire month is another location or event that must be put in the itinerary to celebrate the International Mother Language Day. Millions of people visit the extravagant book fair that represents the colourful literature, culture and history of Bangla.

Cultural heritage tourism means travel to experience the places, artifacts and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past. It can include cultural, historic and natural resources that Bangladesh has in abundance.

However, this must be tapped not only to uphold the significance of our cultural and historical milestones like the International Mother Language Day but also to play a significant role in our country's tourism by including it in the country's tourism framework. This way, we will be able to more brilliantly portray our culture and history to the world, excite future generations to acknowledge, and people to visit.