Legislation Details (With Text)

File #:	Res 0474-2023	**Version:** *	**Name:**	Recognizing February 21 as Mother Language Day in the City of New York.
Type:	Resolution		**Status:**	Adopted
			In control:	Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations
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Title: Resolution recognizing February 21 as Mother Language Day in the City of New York to honor the importance of the Bengali/Bangla language to Bangladeshis everywhere and to promote the acceptance of linguistic and cultural diversity in our communities

Sponsors:

Indexes:

Attachments: 1. Res. No. 474, 2. February 2, 2023 - Stated Meeting Agenda, 3. Hearing Transcript - Stated Meeting 2-2-23, 4. Minutes of the Stated Meeting - February 2, 2023, 5. Committee Report 2/15/23, 6. Hearing Testimony 2/15/23, 7. Hearing Transcript 2/15/23, 8. Committee Report 2/16/23, 9. Hearing Transcript 2/16/23, 10. Committee Report - Stated Meeting, 11. February 16, 2023 - Stated Meeting Agenda, 12. Hearing Transcript - Stated Meeting 2-16-23, 13. Minutes of the Stated Meeting - February 16, 2023

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
2/2/2023	*	City Council	Introduced by Council	
2/2/2023	*	City Council	Referred to Comm by Council	
2/15/2023	*	Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations	Hearing Held by Committee	
2/15/2023	*	Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations	Laid Over by Committee	
2/16/2023	*	Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations	Approved by Committee	Pass
2/16/2023	*	Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations	Hearing Held by Committee	
2/16/2023	*	City Council	Approved, by Council	Pass

Res. No. 474

Resolution recognizing February 21 as Mother Language Day in the City of New York to honor the importance of the Bengali/Bangla language to Bangladeshis everywhere and to promote the acceptance of linguistic and cultural diversity in our communities

By Council Members Farías, Hanif, Cabán, Won, Hudson, Krishnan, Dinowitz, Williams, Ossé, Avilés, Marte,

Louis, Menin, Sanchez, Rivera, Velázquez and Gennaro

Whereas, A mother language is the first language someone speaks and is a vital and lasting part of someone's cultural identity; and

Whereas, Since one of the world's 6,000 languages becomes extinct every two weeks, preserving languages is a critical part of preserving the history of all peoples and their cultures; and

Whereas, Preserving the status of the Bengali/Bangla language became imperative after the India-Pakistan partition in 1947 that created Urdu-speaking West Pakistan with a population of 25 million people and Bangla-speaking East Bengal/East Pakistan with a population of 44 million people; and

Whereas, Urdu was then established by the Pakistani government (dominated by West Pakistanis) as the only language to be taught in schools; and

Whereas, The disrespect for Bengali/Bangla led to the rise of the Bengali Language Movement, as students, community groups, and politicians protested this linguistic and cultural discrimination; and

Whereas, The 1952 declaration by the Pakistani government that Urdu would be the only official language of Pakistan instigated a call for student protests in East Bengal on February 21; and

Whereas, Protests by University of Dhaka and Dhaka Medical College students, held in spite of a government order that prohibited gatherings of more than three people, led to the arrests of several students; and

Whereas, Several student protesters were then killed by police as they tried to storm the East Bengal Legislative Assembly, leading to larger protests with broader participation and additional deaths, beatings, and arrests; and

Whereas, Further Bengali Language Movement protests supported the movements that eventually led to independence for Bangladesh on December 16, 1971; and

Whereas, The deaths of the Bengali Language Movement protesters were honored by the building of the Shaheed Minar memorial in Dhaka and continue to be honored there every year on February 21 in observance of Shaheed Dibas (Martyrs' Day); and

Whereas February 21 (Ekushey February) is observed as Language Movement Day, a national holiday in Bangladesh; and

Whereas, Bangladeshis are one of the fastest-growing immigrant groups in New York City (NYC), totaling more than 65,000 Bangladeshis and Bangladeshi Americans-more than in any other city in the U.S.-according to data from the Asian American Federation; and

Whereas, Bangladeshi communities in NYC-like those in Parkchester in the Bronx, Kensington in Brooklyn, and Jamaica and Jackson Heights in Queens-celebrate religious and cultural festivals and are home to Bangladeshi restaurants, stores, mosques, and cultural centers; and

Whereas, The Bangladeshi culture brought to NYC by immigrants for over a century has enriched the multicultural fabric of NYC and continues to do so; and

Whereas, In 1999, the General Conference of the United Nations (UN) Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) proclaimed February 21 as International Mother Language Day; and

Whereas, In 2002, the UN General Assembly supported the UNESCO proclamation by calling on UN member states “to promote the preservation and protection of all languages used by peoples of the world”; and

Whereas, Establishing February 21 as Mother Language Day in NYC allows New Yorkers time to reflect on the value of every New Yorker’s mother language as well as to express support for NYC’s continually arriving immigrants, who speak many languages in NYC schools and communities; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York recognizes February 21 as Mother Language Day in the City of New York to honor the importance of the Bengali/Bangla language to Bangladeshis everywhere and to promote the acceptance of linguistic and cultural diversity in our communities.

LS #11991 and #12181
1/30/23
RHP