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Nation salutes language martyrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thousands barefoot and singing paid homage to the Language Movement martyrs of 1952 in Dhaka with the clock striking a minute past midnight to mark a day of supreme sacrifice.

On this day 52 years ago, students in Dhaka took to the streets in protest at the denial of Bangla as the national language and imposition of Urdu as the sole official language of

Pakistan. The protest sparked on February 21, 1952 progressed into the long-drawn struggle and eventual birth of Bangladesh.

President Iajuddin Ahmed led the nation in paying tributes to the language martyrs by placing a wreath at the Central Shaheed Minar, the venue for centrepiece February 21 observance, at 12:01am today, followed by Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, who paused in solemn silence.

Next came Speaker Jamir Uddin Sircar, Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka, foreign envoys and Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Professor SMA Faiz on the leafy campus abuzz with the milling crowd breaking the nighttime silence with the theme song -- *amar bhayer rokte rangano Ekushey February*.

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina laid a wreath at the Shaheed

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President Iajuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia place wreaths at the Central Shaheed Minar, the venue for centrepiece February 21 observance, a minute past midnight. Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina, right, also lays a wreath to pay homage to language martyrs on International Mother Language Day today.



PHOTO: STAR

Hosts back in Plate

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's dream of playing in the Super League for the first time in their history was dashed after the young Tigers of Richard McInnes lost by 131 runs to India at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

A terrific 120 off 148 balls by Shikhar Dhawan gave India a massive 309-7 after being put in. The hosts then disappointed the near-capacity big bowl as they ended on 178.

Elsewhere holders Australia's miserable campaign ended on a

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Police do it again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police barred Awami League (AL) activists and supporters from assembling at the venue of the party's three-day International Mother Language Day celebration programme by blocking the roads to Bangabandhu Avenue for the second day yesterday.

However, some 200 leaders and workers managed to slip through the police barricade while several thousand others had to stay away.

The AL leaders condemned the government and law enforcers for the 'undemocratic' attitude of not

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Positive Bangladesh
See our special story titled 'the strength within' on page 12.

Envoys ask AL to return to JS

Left coalition to walk alone in polls

REAZ AHMAD

Despite development community's call to return to parliament keeping aside street agitation, main opposition Awami League was preparing for a showdown with the BNP on February 28 sticking to its 'quit-power' gun amid leftists' electoral non-alliance decision.

Key diplomats from three countries, major development partners of Bangladesh, held talks with an AL delegation on Thursday in a bid to persuade the party to parliament, but the AL appeared unbent on its 'anti-government movement until the BNP-led coalition's fall from power'.

AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil told British High Commissioner Dr David Carter, European Union Ambassador Esko Kettschynskyj and Netherlands Ambassador Sjef Ijzermans that 'a sense of utter insecurity pervaded the people' who wanted to 'get rid of the coalition misrule'.

The diplomats asked the AL delegation, also comprising the party's International Affairs Secretary Syed Abul Hossain and frontline leader ASHK Sadique, to stop using hartal as a political tool.

As the AL was preparing to enforce another dawn-to-dusk hartal on February 28, the fourth in a

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Hundreds in Ctg denied degree exam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Faulty announcement of the rescheduled degree examinations under National University denied several hundred examinees in the city yesterday.

The aggrieved candidates drew attention of the education minister and National University authorities to the matter and appealed for providing them with an opportunity

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Holiday

The offices of The Daily Star will remain closed today on the occasion of International Mother Language Day. Therefore, there will be no issue of the newspaper tomorrow.

Thousands cheated with lucrative false jobs in UAE

Dubai police open probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A London-based recruiting agency has allegedly cheated a huge amount of money from Bangladeshis with lucrative job offers in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), prompting the Gulf nation to open a probe.

Job-seekers said Saturnjobs.com asked them to apply online and send 55 pound sterling (Tk 6,150) a person to a London bank in processing fees, but anybody is yet to get a job.

UAE police are investigating the allegations of fraud by the agency,

which claims to be housed at a Dubai high-rise.

"After receiving reports from different sides, we sent embassy employees to look into the firm at the mentioned address. We are largely sure that it is a fraud," Bangladesh ambassador to the UAE Mirza Shamsuzzaman said.

The envoy said the Bangladesh embassy asked the local police to open an investigation into the allegations of fraud and they made progress in the probe. "Dubai police have already gathered information

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