

Bangladeshis

FROM PAGE 1
"Computers and some heavy machinery were stolen but we do not know how much the damage will cost at the moment," said Baik Joo-Hyeon.

"We don't know if this is directly related to the civil unrest in the country," he said of the attack.

Shafiuddin Biswas, a Bangladeshi worker in the port city of Darnah, east of Benghazi, told BBC Bangla Radio that there are around 450 Bangladeshis among around 2,000 workers taken "hostage" by armed men.

The workers who used to work for a South Korean company came from Bangladesh, Vietnam, Nepal, Thailand, Philippines and Ghana, he said.

Shafiuddin said the hostage takers herded the workers into different buildings from the company's worksite three days ago and their demand is not clear.

A small group -- mostly armed -- is always keeping an eye on the workers.

"Here we have no food, no toilet," Shafiuddin said. "Law and order has totally collapsed. Police are not working here."

Bangladesh Ambassador ABM Nuruzzaman, however, said they have no authentic reports of any casualties in Benghazi or Tripoli or any group holding Bangladeshi workers hostage in any part of Libya.

The diplomat said there is a sense of uncertainty about food and jobs of not only Bangladeshis, but also of

other nationals working in the African country.

Talking to The Daily Star over the phone, Nuruzzaman said the embassy has already opened a control room to monitor the situation and asking the companies to ensure the workers' safety.

He said they were facing problems in contacting both in and outside Tripoli, as Internet and fax services were closed.

About reported holding of Bangladeshis, a foreign ministry spokesman in Dhaka yesterday said they have not received any confirmation, reported BSS.

"We have contacted the Bangladesh ambassador to Libya and he said he was not informed about such incident or any casualty of Bangladeshis in the African country," he headed.

"We have alerted the Bangladeshi nationals living in those countries to move cautiously against the back-drop of the movement," he added.

Zafar Ahmed Khan, the expatriates' welfare secretary, said the ministry instructed the Bangladesh embassy in Tripoli to take every measure to ensure safety of the Bangladeshi nationals.

Libya is witnessing a protest against Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's rule since February 16. The violence that left an unknown number of people dead and injured spread to the capital city of Tripoli on February 20.

Workers clash

FROM PAGE 20
more than half an hour, police and witnesses said.

They also vandalised at least four vehicles.

On information, police rushed to the scene and baton charged to disperse the workers who hurled brickbats at police.

Vehicular movement on the highway resumed at about 2:45pm after the law enforcers brought the situation under control, said Forkan Sikder, officer-in-charge of Rupganj Police Station.

Workers said Mazharul, son of Yad Ali of Borabo area in the upazila, died due to the negligence of the factory authorities and for lack of proper treatment.

They said they demonstrated as the authorities refused to compensate his family.

Muggers

FROM PAGE 20
a laundry shop sustained stab injuries on his right leg, while his younger brother Asadul Talukdar, 27, employee of a private firm was stabbed in the chest.

Both were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Two muggers waylaid their rickshaw at about 6:00am as they were heading for a bus stop to board a Patuakhali-bound bus, the injured told reporters at DMCH.

The thugs stabbed them and made away with Tk 14,000 and two mobile phones, they added.

Both the victims were residents of Kalabagan in the capital.

Khaleda

FROM PAGE 20
decoration and interior design of the house which belongs to Tanveer Islam, son of former state minister Maj (ret'd) Quamrul Islam.

On a one-bigha plot of land at Gulshan-2, the house has seven bedrooms, a living room, a lawn and a garden.

After leaving her former house at Dhaka Cantonment on November 13 Khaleda was looking for a house. She has chosen Tanveer's house to live.

Some senior leaders of the party, however, expected her to take the official residence at the city's Mintoo road. But Khaleda declined the offer.

Khaleda lost the cantonment house on Shahid Mainul Road following a legal battle.

Language breaks

FROM PAGE 20
Two distinguished Indian guests -- Minister for Minorities Development and Madrasa Education of West Bengal Abdus Sattar and former Lok Sabha member Amitava Nandy -- were present.

Addressing the occasion Abdus Sattar said "I've come here to respond to the call of the mother tongue. I'm overwhelmed to see the friendly people celebrating the day together."

Later he handed over a truckload of sweets to chief guest Sheikh Afil Uddin MP (Jessore-1) to be sent to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina as a goodwill gesture.

Amitava Nandy said people of this soil could set such a rare example of sacrificing lives for their mother tongue and hoped such gathering would bring the people of two neighbouring countries even closer.

Lauding the role of Indian people and government in Bangladesh's journey to independence, the chief guest said Language Movement had led to the independence of Bangladesh.

The nation will remember the heroes of the soil who sacrificed their lives to establish Bengali as the state language, added the chief guest.

Several social, cultural and political organisations joined the celebrations reciting poems and singing.

Language Movement veteran Sayed Shamsul Haque, Anwar Ali, convener of International Mother Language Day Uddjan Parishad and Golam Mostafa, director of Benapole port, also spoke at the function.

Aussie pace

FROM PAGE 1
taking two wickets and Lee and Tait one apiece.

Zimbabwe, however, had reasons to be pleased with the performance of their spinners, who did not allow the Australian batsmen to score freely with their disciplined efforts.

But their top-order batsmen failed to back the bowlers, offering no resistance to the Australian pace trio of Johnson, Tait and Lee with tailender Graeme Cremer top-scoring with a fighting 37.

Lee was the first to strike when he removed Charles Coventry, who top-edged an attempted pull to be caught by the bowler. The Zimbabwean made 14, including a flat six over point off Lee.

Johnson had Tatenda Taibu caught by Shane Watson in the slips and trapped Craig Ervine lbw in successive overs, while Tait bowled Brendan Taylor before accounting for Sean Williams (28).

Australia were earlier indebted to in-form opener, and man of the match, Watson (79) and Michael Clarke (58 not out) for setting a challenging target, but could never really dominate the Zimbabwean spin attack.

Zimbabwe used seven bowlers, including five spinners who sent down 39 of the allotted 50 overs.

Left-arm spinner Price, who shared the new ball with seamer Christopher Mpofu, was instrumental in keeping the run-rate low early in the innings with a tidy line and length to finish with 1-43 off 10 overs.

Off-spinner Prosper Utseya and leg-spinner Cremer bagged one wicket apiece, giving away 84 runs in a combined tally of 20 overs.

Watson, who smashed one six and eight fours in a 92-ball knock, added 61 for the opening wicket with Brad Haddin (29) and 79 for the next with Ponting (28).

Clarke provided the late flourish with a 55-ball knock as Australia plundered 90 runs in the closing 10 overs, with Cameron White (22), David

Hussey (14) and Steven Smith (11) playing supporting roles.

Australia managed just 65 in the opening 20 overs, their best coming when Watson and Haddin smashed two fours apiece in a Mpofu over in a rare show of aggression.

Skipper Elton Chigumbura promptly turned to spin. Utseya provided the breakthrough when he trapped Haddin lbw, with Zimbabwe asking for a review of the umpire's decision after the batsman had initially been given not out.

Watson was also ruled out lbw off Cremer following a referral, but not before he had set the stage for the final onslaught.

Ponting looked set when he was run out after a superb piece of fielding by Mpofu, who hit the stumps at the non-striker's end from deep midwicket.

SCORES IN BRIEF

AUSTRALIA: 262 for 6 (Watson 79, Haddin 29, Ponting 28, Clarke 58 not out, White 22, Hussey 14, Smith 11; Mpofu 2-58, Price 1-43, Utseya 1-43, Cremer 1-41)

ZIMBABWE: 171 (Taylor 16, Coventry 14, Chigumbura 14, Williams 28, Utseya 24, Cremer 37; Tait 2-34, Johnson 4-19, Krezja 2-28)

Result: Australia won by 91 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Shane Watson.

5 killed

FROM PAGE 20
Dayamair in Balaganj upazila on Dhaka-Sylhet highway around 11:30am, killing all five in the auto-rickshaw on the spot.

Locals caught truck driver Bimal Das, 50, and handed him over to law enforcers. Later police seized the truck from the spot.

Highway traffic remained suspended for half an hour due to traffic jam following the accident, said Nirmalendu Chakravarty, officer-in-charge of Osmaniaagar Police Station.

Police sent the bodies to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsies.

Double blow

FROM PAGE 20
instead of paying the compensation, Israfil alleged.

Bricks from the rooftop wall of the four-storey under-construction building fell on Tawhid, and Maruf, 6, in East Rampura on January 24.

Tawhid died on the spot, while Maruf's skull was badly damaged. Admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Maruf, who could neither speak nor move, underwent surgery on February 9 after The Daily Star published a report on the incident the same day.

According to the Bangladesh National Building Code, the authorities concerned must ensure safety measures around a construction site.

"Babu did not allow us to enter my house when we returned four days after the burial of my son. He even forced me to leave the locality saying if we are seen in the area they will get us maimed," alleged Israfil.

"Babu and his men had

also fixed February 15 for returning the Tk 15,000 and seized my belongings," Israfil added.

Israfil and his family have taken refuge at his younger brother Jahangir's house.

He said he cannot buy food for his infant son or afford educational expenses for his primary student daughter as he has stopped door-to-door fish sale fearing attack by Babu and his men.

During a spot visit, The Daily Star correspondent found that though the densely populated slum was very close to the under-construction building, the owner took no safety measures.

Nobody opened the gate despite repeated attempts to meet the owner for his comment.

At one stage, some people appeared and asked the correspondent to leave at once. They said it was an accident and they have already settled the matter.

Language martyrs

FROM PAGE 1
Tens of thousands of people came in thereafter to pay their tributes.

At daybreak, they came in numbers and like rivers emptying into the sea joined the mass on Dhaka University campus.

Every street was leading to the Central Shaheed Minar. As the area was off-limits to vehicles, people walked to the monument.

Imbued with the spirit of patriotism, all demanded the war crimes trial.

On February 21, 1952, Salam, Barkat, Shafiur, Rafiq, Jabbar and others, mostly students, laid down their lives to establish Bangla as one of the state languages of the then Pakistan.

The day has since been observed as the Language Martyrs' Day. In November 1999, Unesco declared it the International Mother Language Day.

Bangladesh missions abroad also observed the day in a sombre mood.

The Central Shaheed Minar and its surrounding areas received a facelift with street paintings and festoons on central reservations of roads.

State-run Bangladesh Television and Bangladesh Betar, and private TV channels aired special programmes. BTV telecast the wreath laying ceremony live from the Shaheed Minar. Newspapers published supplements highlighting the significance of the day.

After paying their tribute at the Shaheed Minar, many thronged the ongoing month-long Amar Ekushey Book Fair at Bangla Academy.

It was a public holiday. The national flag at half-mast and black flags flew on government, autonomous and private offices.



Esteem for the language martyrs, love for books and some added flavour of holiday become recipe for yesterday's brimming crowd at Amar Ekushey book fair.

Big day draws largest crowd

RAKIB AHAMMED

The Amar Ekushey Boi Mela witnessed a huge crowd yesterday as thousands of people dressed in black and white gathered in the fair on the International Mother Language Day.

Gates of the fair were opened at 8:00am so that people who had arrived at the Central Shaheed Minar to pay their tribute to the martyrs of Language Movement in 1952 could visit the book fair.

Women draped in black and white sarees and men in panjabis were seen waiting in long queues in front of the Bangla Academy.

"I brought my daughter to the Shaheed Minar early in the morning and came to browse through some books," said Tamiz Uddin, a resident of capital's Bokshhi Bazar

area.

Publishers also seemed satisfied as they experienced a high sale.

"We are expecting to reach our maximum daily sale today, just like previous years" said Sohel, a seller in the Mowla Brothers' stall.

However, visitors had to struggle to move in the evening through the ever-rising crowd in the dusty fair premises.

Meanwhile, a total of 2,273 new titles of various categories hit the fair since February 1. Poems topped the list with 496 new titles followed by 399 collections of novels 301 collections of stories.

The street vendors outside the fair premises also had a busy day selling their wares.

Monir Hossain, a vendor selling toys, said he sold yesterday the highest number of items.

20 hurt

FROM PAGE 20
over boarding a CNG-run three-wheeler.

The clash spread to adjoining areas when the Bangalee settlers made a surprise attack on the indigenous people, injuring a few of them seriously, police and locals said.

"Some ethnic and Bangalee students got involved in the running battle," Shyamol Kanti Barua, officer-in-charge of Kawkhali upazila said.

Police arrested 15 students but they were released later. UPDF filed a case with Kawkhali police station in this connection.

UPDF in a press release condemned the incident and blamed the Bangalee settlers for burning down their office. It demanded arrest of the culprits and exemplary punishment to them.

Hena murder

FROM PAGE 20
Kazi Kamal Hossain, sub-inspector of Noria Police Station and also investigation officer of the fresh case filed in connection with Hena's murder following a High Court order, brought Latif to Noria at 2:00pm.

He would be produced before court with a remand prayer today. So far, police have arrested only seven out of 18 accused, as most of them are hiding.

Meanwhile, Criminal Investigation Department (CID) began interrogating Shilpi, wife of the rapist, Mahbub, 40, since Sunday. A Shariatpur court granted a second round of remand for Shilpi last Wednesday.

Shilpi was arrested immediately following Hena's death as she was accused of beating her up severely after discovering her rapist husband with Hena.

Currently the CID is investigating the first case filed immediately after the death of Hena, as it was already transferred to the department by the first week of February.

On February 11, the High Court (HC) ordered filing of another case as deep injury marks were revealed following another postmortem on Hena's exhumed body.

The HC in a suo moto rule ordered exhumation of Hena's body following a report published by The Daily Star which stated that the first autopsy "did not find any trace of injury" to Hena's body.

Tumpa abduction

FROM PAGE 20
killing case, Sub-inspector Moktar Hossain of Shahbagh Police Station, suspects that the gang kidnapped, raped, and killed Tumpa out of spite, because she had celebrated the Valentine's Day with Sayeed, instead of them. He also suspects that her brother was killed because he had slapped one of the stalkers.

Shahbagh police arrested Sayeed, and alleged stalker Nurul Huq, 19, who had been slapped by Babla. Nurul is a student of Ideal College.

Gang leader Hridoy, 22, is now on the run along with all his family members, after allegedly kidnapping a teen-aged daughter of a ruling party lawmaker on February 19. Tumpa's family and the lawmaker's family live in the same apartment building in Segunbagicha.

"As my son had slapped Nurul, his gang led by Hridoy, beat up my son and later killed him after abduction, and now they abducted and killed my daughter too," said Khairunnahar Shikha.

Tumpa's family had to escort her to and from school for the last three years for the gang's persistent stalking, Shikha said.

She said after Babla had been missing for five days, he told his wife over the phone that he was going to die, and in an eerie resemblance, on the night of Tumpa's abduction she also said the same thing to Shikha over the phone, and right after that the connection was cut-off. Shikha got Tumpa on the phone very late that night after repeated attempts.

Postmortem reports found extensive marks of injuries on both bodies, while Tumpa's postmortem also confirmed rape.

Shikha said although they had suspected that her daughter's stalkers had killed her son eight months ago, they did not mention the stalkers' names in the case filed back then, considering Tumpa's security.

"But now I have nothing more to lose, as I lost both my son and daughter. I fear nothing now," said the victims' father Amanatullah Chowdhury.

SI Moktar Hossain said, "We suspect that the killings are linked, and gang leader Hridoy, his associates Nurul,

Sohag and Jasim are among the suspects."

"During preliminary interrogation, Nurul disclosed some names including Rhidoy's," he said adding, "Both arrestees were produced before a court, seeking their remand."

Babla's father filed a case with Raipura Police Station accusing four of Babla's in-laws in connection with his death.

Raipura Police Station Officer-in-charge Abdul Baten told The Daily Star that they could not unfold the mystery behind Babla's killing as his father "informally" withdrew the charges against Babla's in-laws.

"But, officer-in-charge of my police station Mominul Huq has been sent to Dhaka to interrogate detained Nurul about Babla's killing," he said.

Nurul's mother Nur Jahan Begum said although police arrested her son, she is not clear about the facts.

"I asked my son to disclose everything he knows," said Nur Jahan.

Hamas pours scorn on Fatah, calls for unity

AFP, Gaza City

Gaza's Islamist Hamas rulers yesterday shrugged off calls for reconciliation with Fatah, saying its secular rival must prove its seriousness by freeing prisoners.

"These declarations lack seriousness and credibility, they make no sense in light of the continued arrests and torture (of Hamas members) in Fatah prisons in the West Bank," said Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri, in response to an appeal by Fatah for the two factions to start talking.

"The only real way towards reconciliation is to stop the arrests, free the detainees and allow the movement's charities to start helping the Palestinian people again," he told AFP.

Hamas and Fatah are bitter opponents which have carried out periodic arrests of each other's members, often holding detainees without charge or trial and routinely trading allegations of prisoner abuse.