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NEWS BRIEFS

Dhaka condemns attack on Lebanon

Bangladesh has condemned the recent Israeli attacks on Lebanon that left at least 94 people killed. A spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday said that Bangladesh government demanded immediate end to the hostility in the area and called upon the United Nations to take effective measures in this regard. "The attack is the violation of sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon", the spokesman said, reports UNB.

Indian envoy meets Hasina

By Staff Correspondent

Indian High Commissioner in Bangladesh Dev Mukherjee made a courtesy call on Awami League president Sheikh Hasina yesterday at the latter's Dhanmondi residence in the city. During the meeting they discussed matters relating to mutual interests between the two neighbouring countries and international issues, says an AL press release.

JP rally at Manik Mia Avenue Apr 23

The Jatiya Party will hold a public rally on April 23 at the Manik Mia Avenue. Central leaders of the party will address the rally. A Jatiya Party press release said yesterday, reports BSS.

City AL extended meet today

By Staff Correspondent

An extended meeting of the Dhaka City unit of the Awami League will be held at a city community centre today, said party sources. AL chief Sheikh Hasina is scheduled to address the meeting beginning at 10 in the morning while City unit president and Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Mohammad Hanif will preside over.

LDF March Apr 25

The Left Democratic Front (LDF) will organise a march across the country on April 25 to press home their demand for stopping use of black money and recovery of illegal arms, a press release of the Front said yesterday. This was announced at a rally of the Front held at JSD-BSD office premises in the city. Leader of the Front Dilip Barua and AFM Mahbubul Haq, addressed the rally, reports BSS.



The week-long Baishakhi Mela at Dhanmondi ground in the city, which concludes today, attracted huge crowd on the weekly holiday yesterday. — Star photo

Polls manifesto to focus on women, youths

BNP may pledge to set up elected local bodies

By Nazmul Ashraf

BNP's manifesto for the forthcoming parliamentary elections is likely to give special emphasis on plans for the welfare of women, youths and students, whom the party considers its vote banks, according to sources in the party. The plans may include expansion of the development programmes adopted while the party was in power and new programmes for creation of more employment opportunities for women and youths and increased facilities for students, especially the female ones, the sources added.

The most significant aspect of the BNP manifesto is likely to include a pledge that the Zila and Thana Parishads

would be run by elected representatives.

The manifesto will also promise not to renew the 25-year Bangladesh-India Friendship Treaty, separate the judiciary from the executive and autonomy to the Radio and TV, the sources hinted.

The manifesto is also expected to highlight BNP's commitment to maintain democratic and constitutional process in the country at any cost, a top party leader involved in its preparation said adding, "Our singular contribution towards making constitutional provisions for holding of all future national elections under non-party caretaker government will be mentioned

in this context."

The BNP, in its manifesto, will also highlight the 'achievements' in various sectors during its rule and renew its commitment to carry forward all those development projects if returned to power.

"We're working on the manifesto and receiving various proposals in this regard," party secretary general Abdus Salam Talukder told The Daily Star.

Another influential leader of the party on condition of anonymity said, "Major changes are unlikely in the party's economic, administrative, educational, socio-cultural and foreign policies, which were declared for the

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JP may finalise polls manifesto at today's meet

By Staff Correspondent

Jatiya Party may finalise its election manifesto in its presidium meeting scheduled to be held today, according to party sources.

The manifesto is likely to emphasise decentralisation of the administration and integration of rural areas with urban areas, particularly the capital. It may also include plans to create a congenial investment climate, the sources said.

The manifesto will be announced through a press conference after the election schedule is declared by the Election Commission.

Today's presidium meeting may also discuss formation of the party's parliamentary board. Earlier a list of 11 members were sent to party chairman H M Ershad for selection of the board, said the sources.

According to some insiders Ershad has chosen an eight-member parliamentary board for the upcoming elections. The members of the board are H M Ershad, Mizan Chowdhury, Begum Roushan Ershad, Moudud Ahmad, Kazi Zafar Ahmed, Shah Moazzem Hossain, Anwar Hossain Manju and Nazim Rahman (Advocate Humayun).

32 DU Senators demand probe into corruption, nepotism

By DU Correspondent

Thirty-two members of the Dhaka University Senate have demanded investigation into what they said corruption, nepotism and partisan activities of the Vice Chancellor and the University administration during the last five years.

Addressing a press conference at the Dhaka University Club yesterday, they alleged that corruption had gripped almost every section of the university.

They said that some irregular appointments had been made during the last few years and in some cases less qualified candidates were promoted in violation of rules, the senators alleged. In case of new appointments, candidates of their own choice were called for interview even if they were not fit for the posts, they added.

The alleged that the VC implemented the proposals and decisions of the Senate and Syndicate in whatever way he liked.

The Senators said they had

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BCL leader killed in Jhenidah

JHENIDAH, Apr 19: A local leader of Awami League-backed Chhatra League was killed by unknown assailants at a village in Shaiklupa thana today (Friday), police said, reports UNB.

Nazrul Islam, 27, of village Mirgram, the Abajpur union general secretary of BCL, was waylaid and stabbed by the assailants at about 7 am when he was going to neighbouring Taka-Dangai village.

He succumbed to his injuries on way to Shaiklupa thana health complex. In another incident, Abdul Halim, 27, who was kidnapped and left injured by unidentified miscreants, succumbed to his wounds at Magura Sadar Hospital on Thursday night.

Police said some armed men raided the residence of Halim at Ratnai village in Shaiklupa thana on Wednesday night, took him to a nearby field and left after stabbing him repeatedly.

11-member AL polls supervising body

By Staff Correspondent

The Awami League has formed an 11-member election supervising committee, headed by party chief Sheikh Hasina, to ensure organised and stepped up party activities ahead of the coming general elections.

S A M S Kibria and Gaziul Huq, members of the party's advisory council, have been made co-chairmen of the committee while Mohammad Hanif and Mahiuddin Chowdhury, mayors of Dhaka and Chittagong city corporations respectively, have been made its members-secretary.

The election supervising body was formed at a meeting of the party's central working committee (CWC) held yesterday afternoon with Hasina in the chair.

The CWC also formed a few sub-committees to look after financial aspects of the party and campaign for the elections.

The meeting also discussed the contents of the party's draft election manifesto, but did not finalise it.

According to a leader attending the meeting, the CWC discussed intra-party feuds in a few districts, and took some decisions to end those before the elections.

Another leader hinted that the party chief would start selecting party candidates in the polls immediately after her return from Hajj on the first of May.

A resolution adopted at the meeting said that the AL was determined to establish rule of law in the country and believed in the principle that law should be equally applicable to all.

The CWC meeting, held just a day after an extended meeting of the party, discussed in detail various issues of national and political importance for over three hours, according to party sources.

The meeting in another resolution, alleged that corruption was being patronised at top level after the killing of the father of the nation on August 15, 1975.

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Fire Service vehicles supply water



Fire service personnel supplying water at Madhubagh in the city yesterday. — Star photo

By Staff Correspondent

The Fire Brigade and Civil Defence department is distributing water among the general people to ease the acute water crisis in different areas of the city. Using its own water carrying vehicles the Fire Service is distributing seven to eight thousand gallons of water every day for the last few days in different city areas, said an official of the Fire Department. The Fire Service official said that they took the initiative to supplement the activities of the Dhaka WASA in the dry season. Presently, the city dwellers of Moghbazar, Modhubagh, Taltala, Agargaon, Nakhalpara, and parts of Mirpur and Mohammadpur of areas are suffering from severe water crisis, said the Fire Service official.

ID card project

EC likely to seek extension of time-limit

By Staff Correspondent

The Election Commission (EC) has decided to review the voters' ID card project and send it to the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) for extension of the time-limit of the project, scheduled to expire on June 30, EC officials said.

The review procedure has already started at the project level. Once the project officials finish their job, the EC Secretariat would look into it. The Chief Election Commissioner would have the final say before forwarding it for ECNEC's approval, the officials told this correspondent.

"The Planning Commission has already asked us to put forward suggestions on how to improve the project," said a top official of the EC.

The official said, requesting anonymity, that ultimately the project would be brought under the EC Secretariat and its revenue budget and an electoral database would be maintained permanently.

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9 killed, 50 injured in road accidents

By Staff Correspondent

At least nine people were killed and 50 others injured in road accidents in Dhaka, Mymensingh and Sirajganj yesterday and Thursday night.

One Humayun Reza Hira, 28, of 52/15 Paik Para, Mirpur, was killed when a speeding minibus knocked him down in the city's Farm Gate area early yesterday.

UNB adds from Mymensingh: Five people were killed and 20 others injured when a Dhaka-bound microbus collided with a Netrakona-bound minibus at Chalerkath in Trishal thana yesterday.

Police said the microbus was carrying patients from Sherpur to the PG Hospital in Dhaka when it met with the accident on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway at about noon.

Three people died on the spot and two others on way to the Mymensingh Medical College hospital (MMCH). They were identified as Hajj Ahmad, 71, and his son Shahin, 25, Nurullah, 35, Selim 30, and microbus driver Hira, 35.

The bodies were sent to the MMCH morgue for post-mortem.

Of the injured, 10 were admitted to the MMCH. They

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S Africa win Pepsi Cup

Sports Reporter

South Africa came, played and won the Pepsi Cup with yet another ruthless display of professionalism and dedication to beat India by 38 runs in front of a boisterous crowd at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Electing to bat, South Africa reached 287 for five in their allotted 50 overs with man-of-the-tournament Gary Kirsten making 115 not out. In reply, India were restricted to 249 for nine. The highlight of the Indians response was Sachin Tendulkar's completion of 4,000 runs in one-day international.

(Details on page 10)

Press reports motivated, says BTTB

By Staff Correspondent

The Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB) has said it noted with regret that a vested quarter was attempting in a motivated way to undermine the integrity of the organisation and its officials by propagating what it termed 'fabricated falsehoods' about its activities through some dailies.

Over the last year, BTTB has been doing its best to bring about a qualitative change in its services by eradicating corruption and streamlining technical aspects and it believes it is possible to accomplish this task with the help of honest, dedicated and capable officers and employees, a press release of the BTTB said yesterday.

A number of telephone exchanges have been upgraded from analogue to digital system facilitating improved service quality, and also stopping pilferage. There has been a three-fold increase in the number of telephone calls and commensurate increase in revenue for the Board and the government.

Disciplinary actions have been taken against the officers and employees who were found involved in corruption.

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Share trading at DSE regains momentum

By Rafiq Hasan

Share trading at the Dhaka Stock Exchange DSE regained momentum last week after a bearish trend in the previous week.

The all share price index, market capitalisation and number of shares exchanging hands rose during the 5 days' business in the week.

The all share price index rose by 9.46 points to 822.40 on the closing day of the last week from previous week's 812.94 points.

The market capitalisation rose to Tk 5583.15 crore, increasing by Tk 64 crore from previous week's 5518.31 crore.

"We can say that the share market is growing steadily," said Imtiaz Hossain, chairman of the DSE. Trading is not surging because there was no primary issue in the share market during last three months. Investors become enthusiastic if some issues enter the market every month. Otherwise the market becomes bored in absence of new issue. Imtiaz pointed out.

Commenting on the sudden rise in the price index by 7 points on Thursday, the DSE chairman said it happened due

to "speculation" among the investors.

He further said that the selling pressure among the foreign investors had decreased because they were surprised seeing the growth in the trading after the long closure due to political unrest in the country.

They had thought that the share market would plunge into depression for long when trading would start again. But fortunately the market has overcome the crisis and boomed soon after reopening, he added.

Responding to a question about the future of the share market he said, "I am very happy that the major political parties have adopted a free economic policy supporting the security market. So, whoever comes into power after the next general election, the share market has nothing to fear about it", the DSE chairman told this correspondent.

MA Huq Hawlader, former honorary secretary of the DSE said that the share market might remain steady till the next general election.

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Crisis of secondary level text books

NCTB, publishers, hoarding & political unrest blamed

By Morshed Ali Khan

Delay in finalising manuscripts of books by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB), negligence on the part of the publishers, hoarding by a section of sellers and shortage of materials because of political unrest caused the text book crisis in the country, sources concerned alleged.

Text books for all classes of the secondary schools could not be found in the markets except in a few, until yesterday although about four months have elapsed since the current academic year started on January 1.

The government formed an inquiry committee on Tuesday to probe the delay in marketing and also higher prices of the text books. It has also decided that the text books will be sold in government-controlled shops.

At Bangla Bazar, in the city, the country's largest wholesale book market, some textbooks were being sold at 50 to 100

per cent higher prices than the government-fixed prices. Retail book sellers there alleged that many unscrupulous businessmen, sensing the 'shortcomings' of the relevant departments, had hoarded the books in their godowns early in the year.

Under the fresh curriculum, the NCTB introduced new books for classes six and nine from this year. But publishers at Bangla Bazar said that they did not receive the final copies of all the books from the NCTB on time to be able to print and market those.

A top official of the NCTB told this correspondent, requesting anonymity, that the final manuscripts of the new books could not be made ready until February.

After the NCTB prepares the final manuscript, it gives the responsibility of printing and marketing of the text books to the 776-member Textbook Publishers and Sellers Association (TBPSA).

"But when we found out that it would not be possible for us to come up with final manuscripts in time, a major decision was taken by the NCTB," the official said, adding that four computer firms were engaged in October last to prepare the positives of the new sets of books.

"This was done with the thought that the publishers would be able to do their job quickly as the work would be almost done. In fact, we are yet to produce all the positives," the official said, adding that the work concerning only the compulsory subjects has been completed.

The official said that the positives of all compulsory subjects of Class Six were given to the TBPSA by January 15 while the positives of compulsory subjects of Class Nine were given in mid-February.

Another official of the NCTB alleged that the TBPSA has violated its contract with the

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