

Israel frees 13 Lebanese detainees

AYALON PRISON, Israel, Apr 19: Israel today released all but two of 15 Lebanese detainees held as bargaining chips for missing Israeli servicemen, after bowing to a Supreme Court ruling, officials said, reports AFP.

The move had been postponed twice because of attempts to block the release of the 13. It eventually went ahead after the government of Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak decided not to oppose the supreme court's decision.

The 13 were released from Ayalon prison at around 3:00 am 6 am BST to the jail at Kishon, near the northern city of Haifa to be handed over to the army.

2 pupils killed in Kashmir grenade attack

SRINAGAR, India, Apr 19: Two children were killed and 16 injured when suspected Muslim separatists hurled a grenade at Indian security forces near a crowded market in Kashmir today, police said, reports AFP.

The attack occurred at Iqbal market in Sopore town, 52 km north of Srinagar, a police spokesman said.

The grenade missed the target and exploded near the market killing two school children. The security forces retaliated and fired at the militants, the spokesman said.

"Some of the injured are in a critical condition."

Zimbabwe heads for state of emergency

Annan urges Mugabe to defuse tensions

HARARE, Apr 19: Zimbabwe appears headed for a state of emergency that would allow President Robert Mugabe to delay a general election scheduled for next month, opposition sources said overnight, reports Reuters.

With two white farmers killed in a three-day, squatters led by veterans of the 1970s guerrilla war against white settler rule were roaming the countryside, invading and burning farms.

The opposition said government supporters have also stepped up violence against its members since a speech by Mugabe on Tuesday denouncing the "enemies of Zimbabwe."

The opposition Movement for Democratic Change said in a statement that a number of its members had been arrested, others assaulted and its meetings disrupted around the country.

"There is an attempt to seal off the rural areas to the opposition. There is a reign of terror being waged for electoral gain," MDC Secretary General Welshman Ncube told Reuters.

Mugabe's government, which has ruled for 20 years and suffered a humiliating defeat in a constitutional referendum in February, would face a fight for survival if the general election goes ahead in May.

Many opposition figures believe the two months long crisis over land ownership will allow the president to declare emergency rule, which would allow him to postpone elections for up to a year.

"He is pushing us into some sort of state of emergency un-

less he finds a way of restoring law and order," said Heneri Dzvinyel, president of the opposition Zimbabwe Integrated Programme.

Whites the 'enemies of Zimbabwe'

Speaking on Zimbabwe's 20th anniversary of independence on Tuesday, Mugabe all but declared war on white farmers for their opposition to his plans to seize their land without paying compensation.

"Our present state of mind is that you are now our enemies because you really have behaved as enemies of Zimbabwe," he said in unscripted remarks.

Thousands of government supporters have squatted on white-owned farms since late February, backing Mugabe's plans to seize land he says was stolen when Zimbabwe was colonised by the British in the 1980s.

The murder of two farmers and the burning of some farms near the capital Harare have put Zimbabwe's minority whites in a state of panic. Some families have abandoned their farms to seek refuge in towns.

United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan spoke to Mugabe by telephone on Tuesday, urging him to defuse the tension.

The Commonwealth's secretary-general has urged the authorities in Zimbabwe to exercise restraint in the crisis over land reform, which has tipped the country into a spiral of racial violence.

Dou McKinnon said in a

statement released today that the mounting tension was "a matter of growing concern" and not conducive to free and fair elections.

AFP adds: UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan urged President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe on Tuesday to act to defuse tension over land reforms that has caused the deaths of two white farmers.

Annan's spokesman said the secretary general and Mugabe "discussed the issue of land reform in Zimbabwe as recently as this afternoon."

Spokesman Fred Eckhard added that Annan "urged the president to take steps to defuse the tension."

In a speech in Harare on Monday, Mugabe described land tenure as "the last colonial question" and said his government was "determined to resolve it once and for all."

Cook calls on Mugabe to protect farmers

Meanwhile, British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook today rebuked President Robert Mugabe for branding white farmers the "enemies" of Zimbabwe after independence war veterans killed a second landowner.

"The farmers of Zimbabwe are Zimbabwean citizens, they are not the enemies of Zimbabwe, they are entitled to the same protection under the rule of law as any citizen of Zimbabwe," Cook said during a visit to Thailand.

"If their rights are not respected and protected then the rights of any citizen of Zimbabwe is at risk," he said.

Russian prosecutor general dismissed

MOSCOW, Apr 19: Russia's President-elect Vladimir Putin managed at the first attempt to do what his predecessor Boris Yeltsin failed in three -- retire the country's prosecutor general, reports AFP.

The Federation Council upper chamber of parliament in a 133-10 vote approved Putin's recommendation to dismiss Yuri Skuratov from his post.

The vote marks Putin's second important political victory following last week's ratification of the State Duma lower chamber of the START II nuclear disarmament treaty, which is due to be approved by the Council later Wednesday.

It also represents a radical shift in relations between the Kremlin and parliament, which repeatedly refused to cooperate with the increasingly isolated Yeltsin during his second term in office.

The firebrand Skuratov was suspended by Yeltsin in February 1999 shortly after the prosecutor's office launched a series of corruption investigations into the Kremlin.

Yet the dismissal had still to be approved by the Federation Council, a procedure written into the constitution.

Madonna to have a baby boy this time

LONDON, Apr 19: A routine scan has revealed that pop star Madonna will have a baby boy, a British newspaper claimed, reports AP.

The Sun tabloid said in its Wednesday edition that Madonna was "delighted" that her three-year-old daughter Lourdes will have a brother in September.

The baby's father, British film director Guy Ritchie, 31, was said to be "over the moon". Ritchie is currently in London completing a follow-up to his film hit Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels.

Madonna, 41, has taken Lourdes to New York after the girl's father, fitness trainer Carlos Leon, demanded to see her, The Sun said.

HR Commission adopts resolution on Palestine moved by Bangladesh

Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury, Ambassador and permanent representative of Bangladesh moved resolution on Palestine at the Human Rights Commission currently in session in Geneva, according to a message received here.

Introducing the resolution on behalf of Bangladesh and other cosponsors he said: "More importantly I speak on behalf of the suffering men, women, and children of the occupied Arab territories including Palestine who look to us to help ameliorate their pains."

The draft stated that despite the occasional glimpses of light at the end of the tunnel, the situation in Palestine and the other occupied territories remained unchanged. There were continuing violations of human rights there including killing, torture, detention without trial, confiscation of Arab lands, demolition of their homes and establishment of illegal Israeli settlements. The draft called upon Israel to desist from such activities and withdraw its forces from all occupied lands.

The draft was voted upon and adopted with 31 votes in favour, 19 abstentions and only one against. This was the first resolution to be adopted during the current session of the Commission.

Communal clash leaves 1 dead in Varanasi

LUCKNOW, India, Apr 19: Civil authorities imposed curfew in the holy Indian town of Varanasi in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh following a communal clash that left one man dead, officials said today.

"We have deployed armed police in the affected areas and imposed strict prohibitory orders on movement of people," Varanasi's district magistrate, Alok Kumar, told Reuters.

He said a Hindu youth was stabbed to death in the clash between Hindus and Muslims late on Tuesday when a Muslim procession passed through a Hindu-dominated area.

"Tension was already brewing in this communally-sensitive city between Hindus and Muslims over the passing of a Muharram procession through a Hindu locality," Kumar said. Muharram marks the Muslim new year.

The Dubai court also found two businessmen and two drivers guilty of using drugs and sentenced them to four years in jail to be implemented if the death sentences are overturned during the appeal process, the English-language Khaleej Times reported.

Khaleej Times said another defendant in the case was sentenced to 10 years to be followed by deportation while a sixth suspect was acquitted.

Pak govt files graft cases against Sharif, family

ISLAMABAD, Apr 19: Pakistan's military regime has registered three corruption cases against deposed prime minister Nawaz Sharif and his family, the anti-graft National Accountability Bureau (NAB) said Tuesday, reports AFP.

"All the three cases have been registered afresh by the NAB", the bureau's prosecutor general, Farooq Adam, told Reuters.

Adam said the cases include accepting a huge amount of "illegal gratification" in an M-8 helicopters deal and money laundering during Sharif's tenure ended by a coup in October.

Special anti-graft courts are to handle the cases.

Sharif, who was ousted by general Pervez Musharraf hours after trying to dismiss the army chief, was sentenced for life on charges of hijacking and terrorism last week.

Corruption scandals plagued Sharif's two terms as prime minister from 1990 to 1993 and again from 1997 until his overthrow.

But Sharif and his family have denied the allegations.

Musharraf set up the NAB to investigate the alleged wrongdoings of previous government leaders and officials.

While Sharif is in Karachi jail awaiting a decision on his appeal against the conviction, his predecessor Benazir Bhutto, who was also twice sacked from

office, lives in London since being convicted of graft under Sharif's government in April last year.

Adam said his bureau was making efforts to ascertain the volume of capital flight out of Pakistan.

He said NAB had been in touch with Interpol for the recovery of plundered wealth from people who had fled the country.

The bureau has so far filed 53 corruption cases since its inception in November.

The NAB, which launched a campaign to recover unpaid bank loans, has so far recovered 16 billion rupees (320 million dollars) from the defaulters, he said.



Indonesian Attorney General Marzuki Darusman (4th L) poses with members of a team yesterday comprising of lawyers, human rights activists and officials tasked with investigating the violence in East Timor last year. The team was earlier sworn-in in a ceremony at the attorney general's office. — AFP photo

'ME peace depends on Israeli pullout from all occupied land'

DOHA, Apr 19: Lebanese President Emile Lahoud has said a comprehensive peace in the Middle East was only possible if Israel completed its withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories and allowed the return of Palestinian refugees, reports AFP.

"Fair and comprehensive peace necessitates Israel's withdrawal from all occupied territories, and an acknowledgement of the right of Palestinian refugees," Lahoud told members of the Lebanese community in Qatar late Tuesday.

"We do not want to bequeath illusions to our children, we want a comprehensive solution to our problems," said Lahoud.

A cautious Lahoud added that Beirut wanted to "wait and see" how the unilateral Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon scheduled for July 7 progressed.

"Will it be a global withdrawal, will air and sea violations continue, and will our prisoners be released? That is what will decide how we take our next decisions," he said.

Lahoud stressed he was already "on his guard against traps laid by Israel which normally respects neither promises nor agreements."

"We have waited for 22 years and we have struggled for a withdrawal. Now we have a victory for Lebanon, for its sacrifices and resistance," he said.

Lahoud was in Qatar on the fourth leg of a regional tour which has already taken him to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates. He will travel on to Bahrain, Iran and Egypt.

Israel on Monday notified the United Nations in a letter of its decision to implement Security Council resolutions 425 and 426 by withdrawing its troops by July from southern Lebanon, which it has occupied since 1978.

In Beirut, Prime Minister Salim Hoss said the decision was "the first time in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict Israel is being forced to withdraw from Arab territory."

Malaysia probes 126 civil servants for anti-govt acts

KUALA LUMPUR, Apr 19: A total of 126 government officers are being investigated for suspected involvement in anti-government political activities, a senior official said today, reports AFP.

Noh Omar, parliamentary secretary to the prime minister's department, told the senate that disciplinary action would be taken against the civil servants if found guilty.

BRIEFLY

Gen Musharraf meets Gaddafi: Libyan leader Moamer Gaddafi Tuesday discussed the situation in South-East Asia with Pakistan's military leader General Pervez Musharraf the official JANA news agency reported, AFP reports from Sirte, Libya.

The two also examined ways of strengthening their cooperation and "questions of mutual interest," it said. Musharraf stressed during the meeting "the feelings of friendship felt by the people of Pakistan for the Libyans and their leader," JANA added.

'Sister Ping' arrested in HK: A woman alleged to have smuggled citizens from the People's Republic of China into the United States in exchange for a large fee has been arrested in Hong Kong, US federal prosecutors announced, AP reports from New York.

Cheng Chui Pingo, also known as "Sister Ping," was arrested Monday in Hong Kong, capping a five-year worldwide hunt by the New York officers of the Internal Revenue Service and the FBI. If convicted, Ping could face a maximum of life in prison without parole on federal racketeering charges. According to a 1994 indictment returned in US District Court in Manhattan, Ping was alleged to have been part of an extensive international alien organization that threatened Chinese citizens with violence if they did not pay tens of thousands of dollars in fees on time.

Train driver killed in Belgium: The driver of a passenger train was killed and about 20 passengers injured after a train in southern Belgium was derailed and crashed in the path of an oncoming locomotive, AP reports from Brussels.

One train appeared to have been derailed by a concrete bloc, which police suspected had been placed deliberately on the track at Aiseau-Preles outside the city of Charleroi, about 60 km south of Brussels.

Smoking in later life impairs mind

PARIS, Apr 19: Smoking in later life promotes mental decline, according to research reported in the upcoming May issue of the Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery and Psychiatry, reports AFP.

A team from Britain's Institute of Psychiatry studied the health and lifestyle of more than 650 people aged 65 and over, and tested them for mental acuity, using a technique similar to one used to screen for dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

C year later, of the 417 people who could be retested, one person in 16 had suffered significant intellectual decline.

After taking into account such factors as depression, general health, education and alcohol use that are known to affect brain function in older people, the researchers found that current smokers were up to four times more likely to be mentally impaired than people who had never smoked.

They found no link between drinking and mental decline in this group.

Tigers launch fresh offensive, 30 killed

COLOMBO, Apr 19: Tamil Tiger rebels and Sri Lanka's Defence Ministry said Wednesday that a fierce ongoing battle along a strategic northern highway had left at least 30 combatants dead, reports AP.

"Yes, the battle is still going on," Defence Ministry Spokesman Brigadier Palitha Fernando told The Associated Press 20 hours after the rebels launched their latest attack to capture a crucial causeway.

Fernando declined to give any details, but other army officers reached by telephone said the army lost at least 15 men. The rebel radio monitored in the northern town of Vavuniya admitted that they also lost 15 fighters.

Earlier, in a statement issued from its office in London and put on its web site, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) said the Sri Lankan army had suffered heavy casualties in the latest fighting that started Tuesday afternoon and was still raging.

The narrow Elephant Pass causeway which links the northern Jaffna peninsula with the rest of the country has been

the scene of heavy fighting since March. The militants made an earlier attempt in December to regain the causeway but did not succeed in penetrating military defenses.

"According to latest reports from the field a large number of Sri Lankan troops have been killed and a huge quantity of arms and ammunition have been captured. Heavy fighting is still raging in the area," the rebel statement said.


The rebels want to wrest control of Jaffna, 300 kilometers (185 miles) north of the capital, Colombo, which was their capital until the army took it back in 1996.

"The Sri Lankan army lost several square miles (kilometres) of territory to the Liberation Tigers and suffered heavy casualties in the fierce fighting," the rebel statement said.

The combat formations of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam launched a major offensive thrust in the army controlled areas... (and) the LTTE forces are advancing deep into the area."



Passengers disembark from an Air Philippines Boeing 737, similar to the passenger jet which crashed yesterday in the southern Philippines on a domestic flight between Manila and the southern city of Davao killing all 131 passengers and crew on board. — AFP photo



Bangladesh Railway Engineering Department (East Zone) Tender Notice

No. CE/E/16/2000/W(V) Dated: 11-4-2000

Sealed tenders are hereby invited for the following works from the enlisted "C" class contractors of Bangladesh Railway/East Zone.

Name of work	Earnest money	Experience	Place & last date of selling of tender documents	Place, date & time of dropping & opening of tender documents
1. At Railway Training Academy Halishahar/Chitragong sinking of a deep tubewell of 4' dia up to depth of 600 feet or more as per site requirement on turnkey basis by reverse circulation method with rotary rig complete in all respect as per drawing with strainer, housing pipe fitting etc. complete as per direction of Engineer-in-Charge.	2% of the quoted price	Enlisted experienced 'C' class contractors of Bangladesh Railway/East Zone and enlisted Ctg WASA & BADC those who have got experience of sinking of deep tubewell.	Chief Engineer/East/Bangladesh Railway/Ctg & DEN/III/DA's office, Last date of selling: 26-04-2000 during office hours.	Chief Engineer/East/Bangladesh Railway/Ctg & DEN/III/DA's office Opening date 27-04-2000 Dropping time up to 12:00 Noon & opening time 12:30 PM.

- All terms and conditions regarding the above tenders will be available in the tender documents.
- Experience certificate should be issued by an officer not below the rank of an Executive Engineer mentioning his telephone number and full name.
- Per set tender documents are to be purchased at the cost of Tk 750/- (seven hundred fifty) only (non-refundable).
- Railway Administration reserves the right to accept the tender in whole or in part thereof and to reject the tender without assigning any reason whatsoever.
- Contractor of other dept. (WASA & BADC) will have to deposit Tk 3000/- (three thousand) only (non-refundable) as enlistment fee for this particular work only obtaining permission of Chief Engineer/East/Bangladesh Railway, Chittagong.

Md Nurul Islam Mian
Chief Engineer /East
Bangladesh Railway
Chittagong.


No. Rail/B/77
DFP-8966-17/4
G-704

4 Pakistanis to die for drug dealing

DUBAI, Apr 19: Four Pakistani men were sentenced to death for drug dealing by a United Arab Emirates (UAE) court, local newspapers reported today, reports Reuters.

The Dubai court also found two businessmen and two drivers guilty of using drugs and sentenced them to four years in jail to be implemented if the death sentences are overturned during the appeal process, the English-language Khaleej Times reported.

Khaleej Times said another defendant in the case was sentenced to 10 years to be followed by deportation while a sixth suspect was acquitted.



Bangladesh Power Development Board

রাত ১১টা থেকে ভোর ৬টার মধ্যে সেচ পাম্প চালান

Tender Notice

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from

(1) A class contractors having valid A, B & C electrical license & A, B & C supervisory license and valid A class electrical & civil enlistment in BPDB/DESA/REB and experience in completion of construction/augmentation of at least 1 (one) 5 MVA and above 33/11 KV regular type sub-station for group No. 1 to 7 and experience in completion of construction/augmentation of at least 1 (one) 10 MVA and above 132/33 KV sub-station (for group No. 8)

(ii) Internationally-reputed manufacturer/construction firm registered in Bangladesh and experienced in completion of similar type of works as stated above for the construction/renovation and extension of the following 132/33 KV and 33/11 KV Sub-stations as per terms and conditions given below:

Group no.	Name of work	Estimated cost	Cost of tender document
1	Renovation and extension of Katakhal 33/11 KV Sub-station, Rajshahi	Tk. 65,55,075.08	Tk. 3000.00
2	Renovation and extension of Shaabaqan 33/11 KV Sub-station, Rajshahi	Tk. 21,74,856.75	Tk. 3000.00
3	Renovation and extension of 33/11 KV Sub-station at Chapainawabgonj Electric Supply Campus, Rajshahi	Tk. 59,30,684.89	Tk. 3000.00
4	Construction of 2x20/26 MVA 33/11 KV Sub-station at Eidgah (City Central), Rajshahi	Tk. 61,57,472.47	Tk. 3000.00
5	Construction of 2x10/13.33 MVA 33/11 KV Sub-station at Airport, Rajshahi	Tk. 63,16,750.12	Tk. 3000.00
6	Construction of 2x10/13.33 MVA 33/11 KV Sub-station at Bus Terminal, Naogaon	Tk. 63,87,799.35	Tk. 3000.00
7	Construction of 2x10/13.33 MVA 33/11 KV Sub-station at Baitalaha, Chapainawabgonj	Tk. 57,84,921.39	Tk. 3000.00
8	Renovation and extension of 132/33 KV Katakhal Grnd Sub-station, Rajshahi	Tk. 13,66,314.20	Tk. 1000.00

B. Terms and Conditions:

- Time for completion of work: 180 (one hundred and eighty) days.
- Office in which tenders will be sold:
 - Office of the Divisional Commissioner, Rajshahi.
 - Office of the Additional Chief Engineer, Distribution, Northern Zone, BPDB, Rajshahi.
 - Office of the Additional Chief Engineer, Distribution, Rangpur, BPDB, Rajshahi.
 - Office of the Project Director, Greater Rajshahi Power Distribution Project (Phase-II), BPDB, Rajshahi.
 - Office of the Chief Engineer Project, BPDB, Dhaka.
- Last date of selling tender: 03-05-2000 during banking hours on written permission from the head of the above-mentioned offices.
- Date & time of receiving tender: On 04-05-2000 up to 12:00 Noon in all the offices stated as above.
- Date & time of opening tender: On 04-5-2000 at 12:30 PM in the above offices in presence of bidder (s) representative (if any) who choose to attend.
- Earnest money: Group No-1 Tk. 1.50 lakh, Group No-2 Tk. 50,000, Group No. 3 to 7 Tk. 1.00 lakh, Group No-8 Tk. 40,000/- only in the shape of Bank Draft/Pay Order from any scheduled bank of Bangladesh in favour of the "Project Director, Greater Rajshahi Power Distribution Project (Phase-II), BPDB, Rajshahi" shall have to be submitted along with the tender, in absence of which tender will be rejected.
- Rate to be quoted: On percentage basis below/at par/above both in figures and words. Erasing or hazy or illegible writings will not be acceptable. Bidders quoting rates 10% above or below the estimated cost must submit analysis with the tender, in absence of which tender will be rejected.
- Any bidder seeking permission to purchase tender documents (cost of tender documents is non-refundable) shall have to apply in their/its original pad (no photocopy is acceptable) and the application shall be signed by the person(s) whose specimen signature(s) is given in the enlistment book of the bidder. Bidders shall also have to produce valid original licenses stated as above and documentary evidence (original copies of work order and experience certificate given by the competent authority not below the rank of an Executive Engineer to the effect that they have experience in completion of construction/augmentation of at least 1 (one) 10 MVA & above 132/33 KV Substation/regular type 33/11 KV Substation of capacity of 5 MVA & above). The photocopy of the above-mentioned work order and experience certificate duly attested by not below the rank of an Executive Engineer shall have to be enclosed with the application.
- A two-envelope bidding procedure will be adopted. Bidders are to submit simultaneously two sealed envelopes, one containing the technical proposal and other containing the financial proposal. Initially only the technical proposals will be opened. Technical proposals that are not substantially responsive will be rejected. The financial proposals of only the technically qualified bidders will be opened in presence of the bidders' representatives (if any) who choose to attend at the time and date at the office of the Project Director, Greater Rajshahi Power Distribution Project (Phase-II), Rajshahi.
- In case of consortium, the bidders shall have to produce original documents of formation of consortium and the attested photocopies of the same shall have to be enclosed in the application. Minimum one party in the consortium must have A-class electrical & civil enlistment of BPDB/DESA/REB and have to fulfill all conditions of tender notice.
- The tender will be rejected, if bidders fail to fulfill any of the above terms and conditions.
- The competent authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders(s) without assigning any reason therefor.
- Bids submitted by Fax, Telex, or cable or by post/courier will not be accepted.

Project Director
Greater Rajshahi Power Distribution Project (Phase-II)
BPDB, Rajshahi
Camp Office, Dhaka.

Biddt/Jana-1831(6)/99-2000
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