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# The Daily Star

**NIRMAN TILES**

Broken Marble Tiles  
In More Shades  
Than The Rainbow

Tel : 608987, 661986

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## Yeltsin stripped of more power

### Russian Congress okays referendum Apr 25

MOSCOW, Mar 29: Russia's Congress on Monday approved an April 25 referendum asking voters whether they want new elections for the president and parliament, report AP, Reuter.

Lawmakers, frustrated after failing to impeach the president over the weekend, also stripped Boris Yeltsin of more power.

Speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov closed the four-day emergency session of the Congress of People's Deputies by claiming that the lawmakers had blocked "an attempted coup d'etat." He did not mention Yeltsin by name.

If the plan of the President's team had succeeded, we would have gone back to the worst times of totalitarianism, the splitting of society and maybe... civil war," Khasbulatov told Congress in his closing speech.

"Congress has defended the constitution in critical circumstances," Khasbulatov said, "for the first time in Russia we have managed to prevent unconstitutional actions, but the thrust of them has not yet been completely stopped."

The Congress was called last week to consider impeaching Yeltsin. An impeachment bid on Sunday won a majority of votes, but failed to reach the necessary two-thirds majority.

The legislature voted to hold a referendum on April 25 but on terms almost certain to be unacceptable to the President and weighted to make it difficult for Yeltsin to win or for Congress to be dissolved early.

"The referendum about whose needs the neo-Bolsheviks spoke, will take place," Khasbulatov said, echoing a famous phrase of communist hero Vladimir Lenin, "no one dare say that the legislators are afraid of referendums."

The Congress of People's Deputies agreed on four referendum questions, including a question asking whether people approved the economic reform.

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A CART WHERE A BOAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN: A big shoal in the middle of the Padma near the Hardinge Bridge negating the necessity of the bridge itself. — Star photo

### 30 Hare Rd bldg, Saipem project: Officials to face action for lapses

Departmental action will be taken against the officials found responsible for lapses in the construction of a government building and also of the Second Gas Development Project by Saipem, reports UNB.

This is one of several decisions the Cabinet took yesterday at its weekly meeting at the Bangabhaban with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in the chair.

The Cabinet, in taking the decision, considered two separate inquiry reports on the construction of the government building at 30, Hare Road and the construction of North-South Pipeline by Saipem under the Second Gas Development Project.

The Cabinet also approved a Commerce Ministry proposal relating to export of fine quality rice like Chingura, Kalijira and Kataribhog.



Police lathicharge Nirmul Committee supporters in city yesterday. — Star photo

### Police swoop on another Nirmul body rally in capital

**By Staff Correspondent**

Another procession of the Ekatturer Ghatk Dalal Nirmul Committee yesterday came under police attack as the processionists attempted to march forward breaking a police barricade at Purana Paltan crossing in the city.

More than a dozen of processionists were hurt in the police action that was followed by a rally of the committee at Topkhana Road in the afternoon.

After the police action, several crackers were exploded in the area. However, none was injured in the explosions.

As riot police obstructed the procession at both the ends of the Topkhana Road, the Nirmul Committee workers marched within the cordoned area raising slogans against the government and the police actions on the Ghatk Dalal Nirmul Samannaya Committee workers on Friday and Monday.

The rally was organised to protest Sunday's police attacks on Samannaya Committee leaders including its chief Jahanara Imam and Friday's police swoop on the Nirmul Body office at Topkhana Road.

Nirmul Committee Coordinator Col (retd) Kazi Nuruzzaman while addressing

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### Dhaka-Delhi water sharing talks begin today

## Padma flow falls to record 9,247 cusec

**By Toufique Imrose Khalidi back from Bheramara, Kushtia**

As the river level of the once mighty Padma keeps on declining writing new low in record books everyday, Bangladesh water experts sit with their Indian counterparts today to demand a share of the flows of the "controlled" river, the Ganges.

Due to the dehydrational impact of the Farakka Barrage built to divert water at Hooghly point to keep Calcutta port navigable, the Water Development Board (WDB) engineers spoke of multiplicity of problems.

High in the list are closure of the largest irrigation project, non-navigability of the Padma and its two dead tributaries—Goral and Mathabhanga, fall in the ground water level and far-reaching ecological impact.

"The Ganges is a controlled river, we cannot predict anything," engineers at Bheramara told reporters Monday.

Although the two-day meeting of the so-called Joint Committee of Experts (JCE) has in its agenda the sharing of flows of all common rivers, the Dhaka experts will put emphasis on the Ganges, authoritative sources said.

"We are optimistic" Irrigation Minister M Majid-ul-Huq said Sunday of the meeting. But, he hastened to add, "our optimism has a limit."

"I think this time we will have to come out with something positive," the minister told reporters at the National Press Club.

The JCE, formed last August after a two-day ministerial meeting in Dhaka, met in Delhi last November but failed to produce results.

The flows have been continually on the wane since 1988 when last memorandum of understanding expired.

Until 1988, Bangladesh used to get around 39,000 cusec at the minimum. "Minimum flow used to be between 60,000 to 65,000 thousand before Farakka was commissioned in 1975," the WDB engineers said.

In the negotiations for a permanent settlement, both sides agree on the need to augment flows but differ on how.

India advocates an inter-basin transfer of waters through a canal between the Brahmaputra and the Ganges.

Bangladesh speaks of a trilateral solution involving Nepal and insists that reservoirs be built in the third country to conserve monsoon water.

According to Majid-ul-Huq, "Transfer of water from one basin to another is the most

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Date	Discharge at Hardinge Bridge (in cusec)	River level (in feet)
	1993	1992
Mar 1	12,915	23,210
Mar 8	12,661	21,665
Mar 15	11,145	14,812
Mar 23	10,318	15,562
Mar 28	9,761	13,521
Mar 29	9,247*	Not available

\* Lowest Source : Water Development Board

### We will make progress, says Indian Water Resources Secy

The Indian Water Resources Secretary, Dr C D Thattai, last night expressed the hope that "progress" would be achieved at the water sharing talks that resume here today, reports BSS.

Talking to newsmen at the Zia International Airport on his arrival at the head of his country's delegation for the two-day talks he said "We had lot of discussions in New Delhi last time. We will continue from there."

"We are sure we will make progress", Dr Thattai said replying to questions.

The Irrigation Secretary, M Asafuddaulah and the Indian High Commissioner in Bangladesh, K Raghunath, received the delegation at the airport.

The two secretaries will lead their respective sides at the meeting of the Joint Committee of Experts (JCE) to resume the discussions on vexed Ganges waters sharing issue as well as other common rivers.

The Bangladesh High Commissioner to India, Farooq Sobhan, who will take part in the talks, also arrived from New Delhi the same time.

Asked how far it was correct to say as had been commented by some of the Indian media that the Indian bureaucracy was trying to foil the political will generated by the leadership of the two countries

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### NEWS BRIEFS

**PM greets Li Peng**

The Prime Minister, Begum Khaleda Zia, yesterday felicitated Li Peng, on his re-election as the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China. Begum Zia said in a message to Li, "the government and the people of Bangladesh join me in extending to you our warmest congratulations on your re-election to the high office of the Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, reports BSS.

**PM condoles deaths in ROK train mishap**

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in a message yesterday condoled the loss of valuable lives in the tragic train accident in Pusan, South Korea. In a condolence message to Prime Minister of Korea Hwang in Sung, Begum Zia said "on behalf of my government and my own behalf, I express my heartfelt condolence to you and through you to the grieving families of the victims, reports UNB.

**SC Bar polling begins**

The two-day polling of the Supreme Court Bar Association began here yesterday. Of the 1303 voters, 481 cast their votes yesterday. Five candidates are in the race for the post of President of the Supreme Court Bar Association, reports BSS.

**9 more die of diarrhoea**

Diarrhoea claimed nine more lives and attacked 1,965 people in the 15 affected districts in 24 hours till 9 am yesterday.

Of the fresh deaths, four were in Laxmipur, two in Patuakhali and one each in Barguna, Jhalakati and Kishorganj, reports UNB.

**Biman opens new route to HK**

Bangladesh Biman has opened a new route to Hong Kong, its 29th international destination from yesterday, reports UNB.

Biman, the national flag carrier will operate twice-a-week regular flight to Hongkong on Mondays and Fridays with DC 10-30.

## Commentary

### A counterproductive action

**by Mahfuz Anam**

In an action that is politically counterproductive, constitutionally untenable and administratively brutal — and one that constitutes a major shift in her style of governance — Begum Zia's government has opted for a confrontational course against the Nirmul Committee that stands for the trial of Golan Azam (whose nationality question lies before our courts) for crimes committed during our liberation war.

We condemn the attack on the political leaders, and express our deep concern at the way the government has so far behaved. Either prior to the police move, or during it, the police were unable to produce any legal basis for its action. No court order banning the meeting, nor any government provisions, has so far been produced to justify the brutalization of some of our political leaders. This apparent absence of any legal basis for the police action raises very serious questions about the government's respect for the Constitutional provisions, fundamental freedoms, basic human rights and for the legal process, whose most scrupulous votary it is oath-bound to be.

Why did the government suddenly decide to hit out against the Nirmul Committee? This action is bound to create a backlash, further embitter the political climate and raise serious doubts about the government's intention to observe the democratic norms of governance. The action was unnecessary, and it was carried out with in a fashion that revealed a total lack of respect for the members of the public and its leaders. The physical assault on an elderly woman, — in a culture that holds elderly people in such high esteem — known to be suffering from serious illness, has added a new dimension to police brutality for which the democratic BNP government will have to forever take unalloyed "credit". Through this action, which was an overkill by any measure, the government has laid itself open to

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### Jahanara Imam leaves hospital, advised bed-rest

**By Staff Correspondent**

Jahanara Imam, the convener of the Nirmul Committee, was released from the Institute of Post Graduate Medicine and Research (IPGMR) Hospital Monday morning and was shifted to her residence in a stable condition.

According to a statement by the Ghatk Dalal Nirmul Samannaya Committee, Imam was released from the hospital at 9:30am after physicians at PG and BIRDEM conducted a series of tests on her and treated her injuries.

She sustained injuries on her neck, abdomen and waist during police action to break up a rally at Bangabandhu Avenue on Sunday.

Attending physicians advised her complete bed-rest

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### Hearing on Writ resumes 'Azam was a citizen until disqualified'

**By Staff Correspondent**

Citizenship by birth cannot be taken away without compliance to the principles of natural justice, that is without a hearing, as a birth right is more important than fundamental rights, argued Barrister A R Yusuf Monday.

Acting on behalf of the petitioner at the hearing of the Writ petition challenging the cancellation of the citizenship of Golan Azam, he claimed that the petitioner, who was born here, was a citizen of Bangladesh as per all existing laws and remained so until the government notification, disqualifying him of his citizenship, was issued April 18, 1973.

The tenth day's hearing on the petition resumed yesterday after being adjourned March 4 at the High Court division Single-Bench comprising Justice Anwarul Huq Choudhury.

The State was represented at the hearing by Attorney General Aminul Haque. The hearing began at 10:40 am on the day and continued till 4:15 pm with an hour's break.

The hearing will resume today at 10:45 am and the counsel for the petitioner is likely to complete placing his argument on the day.

Touching on the previous day's argument, Barrister

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### Awami League, allies observe 'protest day' April 8

**By Staff Correspondent**

Democratic Front held at the Minto Road official residence of the AL chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina who presided over the meeting.

On the protest day, an all-party public meeting would be held at the Bangabandhu Avenue, the meeting decided. Hasina would chair the meeting which would also be addressed by other leaders of the AL, the 5-party and the PDF.

Yesterday's joint meeting was organised to discuss the situation prevailing following police atrocities on the Samannaya Committee.

The meeting in a resolution expressed utter surprise and strong resentment over the brutal attack by the police and BDR on the Samannaya Committee-called rally Sunday.

Noting that the Constitution guaranteed the right to hold meetings and rallies, the resolution said that the government

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### Police lathicharge Nirmul rally in Chittagong

**From Staff Correspondent**

CHITTAGONG, Mar 29: Police backed by paramilitary troops foiled today a rally of Nirmul Committee, Chittagong unit, scheduled to be held at the Shahid Minar here.

Several hundreds of police personnel ringed the Shahid Minar before the scheduled time of the rally at 3:30 pm today and did not allow the assembly in front of the Minar.

Witnesses said chase and counter-chase between police and the Nirmul Committee members took place several

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### Mitterrand chooses Balladur as PM

PARIS, Mar 29: President Francois Mitterrand on Monday named former Finance Minister Edouard Balladur the new premier of France following the landslide victory by the right in legislative elections that knocked the Socialists from government, reports AP.

Balladur, 63, of the conservative Rally for the Republic Party, had been considered the most likely man to succeed Premier Pierre Berégovoy, who resigned earlier Monday.

In an unusual move marking the size of the Socialist defeat, Mitterrand left tradition aside to announce who would serve as premier.

The president chooses the premier but normally leaves the announcement to a spokesman.

Berégovoy presented his resignation shortly before noon to President Francois Mitterrand, who asked him and his Cabinet to remain until a successor is named.

Mitterrand chose a right-wing prime minister with whom to govern for the last two years of his term.

### BDR foils BSF bid to push in 35 more

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Mar 29: BDR personnel foiled an attempt of Indian Border Security Force (BSF) to push 35 Bangla speaking Indian Muslims into Bangladesh territory on Sunday, reports UNB.

BDR sources Monday said BSF had tried to push the Indian nationals through Sonamajdi border near Shialmar in Sibganj thana of the district. But BDR jawans resisted the attempt made by BSF from Mchedipur border in Maldah district of India.

Meanwhile, a high-level meeting between BDR and Indian BSF will be held in Calcutta tomorrow (Tuesday) at 11 am to discuss bilateral issues.

Deputy Director of BDR Brig-Ittekarul Bashar will lead the Bangladesh side while the Indian side will be led by IG of West Bengal's BSF.

### Lok Sabha okays bill to acquire land in Ayodhya

NEW DELHI, Mar 29: Parliament today approved a bill allowing the government acquisition of certain areas in Ayodhya for the construction of a temple and mosque with the Home Minister, S B Chavan, refusing the change that there was any collusion between the government and the BJP, reports PTI.

The Acquisition of Certain Areas at Ayodhya Bill, already passed by the Lok Sabha, was adopted by Rajya Sabha by a vote vote amidst a walkout by the BJP, JDS and the left parties.