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### NEWS BRIEFS

#### Indian FM hospitalised

NEW DELHI, Apr 23: Indian Foreign Minister Dinesh Singh was hospitalized here today suffering from exhaustion, a government spokesman said. The 67-year-old Singh was admitted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences where doctors said he was feeling better. Singh was appointed foreign minister in a cabinet reshuffle by Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao in January, reports AFP.

#### 3 missing as boat capsizes in Jamuna

SIRAJGANJ, Apr 23: Three people were missing after a cargo boat capsized in the river Jamuna during a storm today (Friday). Another four people swam ashore after the boat sank in mid-Jamuna at Godarbagh in Kazipur thana in the afternoon, according to local sources. The Sirajganj-bound boat from Jagannathganj Ghnt was carrying two tons of fertilizer, reports UNB.

#### Demirel nominated to succeed Ozal

ANKARA, Apr 23: Premier Suleyman Demirel was nominated by his party Friday to succeed President Turgut Ozal, whose death last week touched off a scramble to fill the leadership vacuum. Demirel indicated he would accept the nomination when it is announced officially Tuesday at the start of the Parliament's succession process, reports AP.

#### 3 cops killed in Amritsar blast

AMRITSAR (India), Apr 23: Three police officers were killed and a senior civil servant was injured today when a bomb exploded in the northern Indian state of Punjab, Amritsar Police Chief Hardeep Dhillon said. A station house officer and two special police officers died in the blast which occurred in the district of Bhatinda, some 400 kms (240 miles) north of New Delhi, he said, reports AFP.

## Benazir asks army to conduct elections

ISLAMABAD, Apr 23: Former Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has called on the army to conduct upcoming elections, saying it was the only institution that could ensure a clean outcome, reports AFP.  
Finance Minister Farooq Leghari, a key figure in Bhutto's party who was brought into the cabinet after the government was dissolved Sunday, said the army had an "honourable stance of neutrality and has not delved in politics."  
The army could conduct the polls under the authority of the election commission, Leghari said at a news conference, stressing the new interim government was determined to ensure fair elections.

The call by Bhutto, whose Pakistan People's Party stands left of center, represented yet another step in her rapprochement with the armed forces that overthrew her father Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's government in a coup in 1977.  
Balkh Sher Mazari, the Interim Prime Minister appointed on Sunday when President Ghulam Ishaq Khan dissolved the National Assembly and dismissed the government, has agreed in principle to Bhutto's proposal, officials in her party said.  
Mazari however said a final decision would be taken by the cabinet, which Bhutto's husband Asif Ali Zardari joined late Thursday when 17 new cabinet-level officials were added to the government.  
Ishaq Khan called for elections on July 14 after sacking the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif for alleged corruption and inefficiency, capping a three-month power struggle between the two men.  
"We want the election to be seen as fair and free and its outcome to be accepted by both winners and losers, and the army is the only institution that can ensure this," Bhutto's political aide Shafiqat Mahmood said by telephone.  
Another PPP official said Bhutto felt the army was "neutral" and would ensure that the electoral process could not be subverted.  
Bhutto's call may conflict with Sharif's stated desire for the army to stay out of politics, though Sharif, attending Friday prayers in his hometown of Lahore, could not be reached for comment immediately.  
Bhutto was quoted in newspapers as saying that the elections of 1970, run by the army and won by her father's party in what was then West Pakistan, were the cleanest in the history of Pakistan.  
But potential cracks in the new government have begun to show, Leghari said the dissolution of Pakistan's four provincial assemblies was imperative, something Ishaq Khan has not yet done.  
Leghari said that governments of national consensus must be formed in the provinces — Punjab, Sindh, North West Frontier Province  
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## Foreign firms allowed to borrow taka from banks without limit

The government has decided to do away with a number of exchange control restrictions to make the economy more outward looking, maintain an unfettered trade and investment environment and to further encourage investment, both local and foreign in the country, reports BSS.  
The decision was taken at a high level meeting held yesterday at Bangladesh Bank with Finance Minister Saifur Rahman in the chair, according to a Bangladesh Bank press release.  
The meeting reviewed the effects of the liberalisation policy pursued by the government during the last two years.  
The meeting attended by the Governor of Bangladesh Bank, Finance Secretary and high officials of the bank expressed satisfaction that the liberalisation policy of the government has already started bearing results and the economy is gaining momentum and banks are receiving more and more investment proposals. Banks are sanctioning projects which will generate considerable job opportunities, the press release added.  
Under the decision, foreign and foreign controlled companies operating in Bangladesh shall now be allowed to borrow local currency from the domestic banks without any limit. Prior permission of Bangladesh Bank will also no longer be required for such firms to take short term foreign currency loans from their head offices abroad.  
Hundred per cent foreign owned as well as joint venture  
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## Utilise popularity of BNP, Khaleda asks partymen

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia last night asked her party stalwarts to utilise the popularity of BNP properly in the smooth implementation of the ongoing development programmes of the government, reports BSS.  
She was addressing the leaders of Munshigonj district BNP, Chhatra Dal and Jubo Dal who called on her at Sugandha in the evening. The newly elected office-bearers of different college student unions of Munshigonj district were also present.  
The Prime Minister asked the party workers to spread the organisation at the grass root level by holding rallies and public meetings at villages, unions and thanas and project the current socio-economic development activities of the government to the people. "We must strengthen our organisation", she told the leaders and said there was no alternative in  
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## DMP bans rallies, processions Opposition to go ahead with Apr 25 sit-in

By Staff Correspondent  
A joint meeting of Awami League and its allies last night warned against any attempt by the government to obstruct the staging of April 25 planned sit-in in front of the Secretariat.  
"Any such move by the government would be deemed as an act of curbing the people's democratic right and would be dealt with appropriately," the meeting, chaired by AL Chief and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina resolved.  
The Ekatturer Ghalak Dal National Samannaya Committee earlier announced the sit-in programme as part of its ongoing movement against 'war criminal' Golam Azam and his Jamaat-e-Islami Party. The programme was supported by the AL-led opposition parties.  
Meanwhile, the government last night announced ban on holding of rallies, processions and other public gatherings around the Secretariat area for 24 hours beginning midnight, to night.  
The joint meeting was held to discuss the Samannaya Committee's preparations and the political parties' support to the sit-in.  
The demand of the entire nation is to try Golam Azam constitutionally by a Special Tribunal under the International Crimes Act of 1973," the meeting said in its resolution.  
It said people have been waging movement for last one year to implement the verdict of Gano Adalat. At one stage of the movement, the BNP government accepted the responsibility of the demand and signed a 4-point agreement with the opposition in parliament.  
The meeting demanded implementation of the Gano Adalat verdict.  
The meeting noted with concern that the ruling BNP is patronising anti-liberation Jamaat-Shibir-Juba Command in a planned way to mislead the people. They are involved in anti-nation activities under the cover of communal politics, it observed.  
Without holding trial of Golam Azam as a war criminal the government has brought the question of his citizenship to the forefront, said a resolution of the meeting.  
It said those highlighting the issue of the citizenship of  
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Nirmul Samannaya Committee brought out a torch procession in city yesterday to mobilise support for trial of Golam Azam and its Apr 25 sit-in programme. — Star photo

## Rafiqul on Azam issue BNP ready to implement accord with opposition

Works Minister Barrister Rafiqul Islam Mia yesterday said the government is ready to resolve all problems relating to Jamaat leader Golam Azam as per constitutional provisions and law of the land.  
"We are ready to implement the salient features of the 4-point agreement" the ruling party and the opposition in parliament signed on June 30 last year, BNP Joint Secretary General Barrister Rafique told UNB last night.  
The agreement stipulates, among other things, the trial of Golam Azam under the law of the land and constitution, and withdrawal of the case against 24 sponsors of Gano Adalat.  
The Works Minister said certain groups, including the Nirmul Committee, are obstructing implementation of the accord through sponsoring people's court or people's enquiry commission which are contrary to constitutional provisions and existing laws, and such other activities.  
Referring to the High Court's verdict restoring citizenship of Golam Azam, Rafique said the government has already decided to go to the Appellate Division to contest the judgement.  
To a question on the demand for holding trial of Golam Azam as "war criminals", the minister said if there is any specific allegation against him (Azam), anybody can go to court to lodge complaint against him as there is no legal bar in this respect.  
Replying to another question, he said the International War Crimes Tribunal Act of 1973 was framed by the Awami League government which later turned the Act "inoperative and ineffective" through its activities and conducts.  
In support of his contention, Barrister Rafique said the AL government had appointed a Chief Prosecutor to conduct trials under the Act, but the post was later abolished by that government and no body was prosecuted under that Act.  
"BNP government is committed to implementation of the spirit and objectives of the country's liberation war," he said, adding it is now the time to fight unitedly against hunger, poverty, diseases and illiteracy to materialise the dreams of the martyrs of the liberation war.

## Athulathmudali assassinated

COLOMBO, Apr 23: A lone gunman assassinated key Sri Lankan opposition leader Lalith Athulathmudali at an election meeting here today, a party source said, reports AFP.  
Athulathmudali, 56, was shot in the chest as he attended a public rally to drum up support for his candidature as Chief Minister of the important Western Provincial Council.  
NEW DELHI, Apr 23: For the first time, India has agreed to allow Amnesty International officials to visit the country to investigate human rights violations, the government said Friday, reports AP.  
A team of Amnesty researchers will travel to Bombay, where the London-based organization has requested permission to investigate reports that police failed to protect Muslims during riots.  
Many of the 1,200 people who were killed during the riots in December and January were Muslims, and some policemen reportedly refused to rescue Muslim victims despite repeated requests.  
"We have permitted them to go to Bombay," said S P Taneja, a spokesman for India's Home  
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## Amnesty allowed to visit Bombay

Federation of Bangladesh Customs Clearing and Forwarding (C&F) Agents Association Friday placed fresh proposals expressing readiness to shift the office at the new building complex under certain conditions, federation sources said.  
A meeting between the authorities and the federation leaders would be held today (Saturday) to resolve the week-long stalemate in cargo handling at the Zia International Airport.  
At a press briefing at the National Press Club federation Secretary General M Salim Ullah said that they were ready to go to the new complex pay-  
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## Release Azam immediately: Jamaat

By Staff Correspondent  
Several thousand supporters of Jamaat-e-Islami Friday attended a rally and thanks giving prayers in the downtown capital as part of their countrywide programmes to celebrate the restoration of Golam Azam's citizenship.  
Jamaat's Acting Amir Abbas Ali Khan, who conducted the munajat, addressed supporters at the post-Jumma rally near Baitul Mukarram Mosque saying "It is a victory of Islam and truth, not only a victory of Golam Azam alone."  
"We have lost our voice to express gratitude to Almighty Allah," the Jamaat leader said demanding immediate release of Azam from jail.  
He said that the government  
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Jamaat workers offering 'Shukrana' (thanks giving) prayer at the north gate of Baitul Mukarram Mosque in city yesterday. — Star photo

## German environment law threatens jute exports

By Nazmul Ashraf  
The German Packaging Legislation for Environmental Protection has seriously threatened the country's prospect of jute and jute goods in the European market, a highly placed source in the Ministry of Jute said yesterday.  
According to the source, all the 12 member countries of the European Community (EC) are now contemplating enacting laws in line with the German legislation with a view to protecting the environment.  
If the EC countries enact such laws providing for the restriction on the use of jute and jute goods, the country's export earning is feared to decline by 25 per cent, a top official of the ministry revealed.  
The European Commission is expected to issue a directive in this regard, he said.  
In view of the situation, the government has launched extensive lobbying with the governments of the EC countries to cooperate actively in its effort seeking an exemption of jute from the ambit of the packaging legislation, official sources said.  
The country's missions in the EC countries have already been instructed to explain to the buyers that jute is an environment friendly substance and it should not fall victim to the packaging law or any such law to be effected in future, sources added.  
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## C&F agents ready to shift office on conditions

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## Yeltsin offers new constitution on the eve of referendum

MOSCOW, Apr 23: President Boris Yeltsin sought the high ground in an increasingly nasty campaign Friday, releasing portions of a new constitution he has promised to put forward if he wins a vote of confidence Sunday, reports AP.  
The president's press office also said he had taped a nationwide television address to be broadcast Friday or Saturday. The Interfax news agency said it would air Friday.  
Defense Minister Pavel Grachev, meanwhile, denied corruption allegations leveled by the prosecutor general ahead of the crucial referendum on the President and his painful economic reforms.  
Grachev called the charges "a political action aimed at discrediting the government, the Defense Ministry leadership and the defense minister himself on the eve of the referendum."  
The prosecutor's office said Vice President Alexander Rutskoi, a Yeltsin rival, was the source of the information on which the allegations were based.  
Rutskoi, and Afghan war hero, has led the charge of corruption allegations central to the opposition referendum campaign.  
In addition to votes of confidence in Yeltsin and his reforms, voters will be asked to consider early elections for president and parliament, which is now dominated by former Communists elected during the Soviet era.  
Yeltsin has said a victory for him Sunday will mean a new constitution replacing parliament with a bicameral legislature, something that would likely put many of his critics out of office.  
It is a prospect that would meet with wide public approval, at least in Moscow, according to a poll released Friday.  
Just more than 67 per cent of the respondents said they would vote to elect a new parliament. While 60.1 per cent said they would give Yeltsin a vote of confidence Sunday.  
The poll, by the respected Russian public opinion firm Momenic, surveyed 1,063 Muscovites by telephone on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. It had a margin of error of less than 3 per cent.  
The Kremlin press service on Friday released excerpts from Yeltsin's proposed constitution.  
Yeltsin originally sought a referendum that would give voters a chance to approve the outlines of a new national charter to replace Russia's Soviet-era constitution. Instead, the Congress loaded the ballot with the question on economic reforms, which have been painful for most Russians.  
By floating portions of the draft constitution, Yeltsin was clearly seeking higher ground in a campaign that has grown more bitter by the day.

## Coastal embankment project goes slow

By Inam Ahmed  
The progress of the Priority Works Programme of the coastal embankment rehabilitation project has been found to be very poor though half of the time-frame has already elapsed.  
According to an evaluation report of the Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) values of works carried out vary from about 1.3 per cent to 10.7 per cent against planned values varying from 18.3 per cent to 38.8 per cent.  
The report identified lack of proper planning of activities and experienced key personnel, too slow mobilisation of construction equipment and non-availability of land due to local people's resistance as the main reasons for delay in works.  
The Priority Works Programme is scheduled for implementation in fiscal 1992-93 and comprises rehabilitation and construction of embankments on the coast between Sitakunda and Cox's Bazar, including Sandwip.  
The works comprise reconstruction of some 79 kilometers of coastal embankments and construction of about 44km of newly retired embankments, 17 new hydraulic structures, repair of 21 hydraulic structures and construction of allied protection works.  
It was found in the evaluation report that equipment could not be mobilised at the  
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## Delhi urged to lift import duty for 5 yrs

CALCUTTA, Apr 23: Bangladesh Deputy High Commissioner Syed Noor Hossain proposed India to lift import duty on all items from Bangladesh for the next five years, reports BSS.  
It will create an enormous fund of goodwill in Bangladesh and may lead to greater economic cooperation between the two countries, he noted.  
Addressing members of the Merchants' Chamber of Commerce here yesterday, Hossain said the Bangladesh economy would not be able to absorb the continued trade deficit with India.  
Giving a list of exportables from Bangladesh, he said, import of these items by Indian importers would in no way hamper the marketing of similar local products since  
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