

# WHO praises Dhaka for adopting new TB control strategy

The World Health Organization (WHO) has a word of appreciation for Bangladesh for the multi-million dollar tuberculosis control now being carried out in the country and wished success in its battle with this dreadful but curable disease, reports BSS.

"I am impressed in the commitment of your government to control TB which is world's number one killer disease," said Dr A Koshi, head of WHO's tuberculosis programme.

Dr Koshi, who was here last week to lead a two-member team to assess the progress of the programme in the country, said Bangladesh is the first country in the region to implement WHO's new strategy to control TB. Strong governmental interest coupled with political will has helped Bangladesh take up the programme ahead of others in the region, he added.

Styled as "further development of tuberculosis and leprosy services in Bangladesh," the 30 million US dollars World Bank-aided programme

has begun in the country nearly a year ago with facilities created at five thanas of five districts in the five divisions in the first phase. It is planned to cover the entire thanas during the programme period which spans over six years.

Of the three million global population who die annually from TB, 80,000 are Bangladeshis. TB is the second killer disease in Bangladesh after diarrhoea.

Dr Koshi said that with the discovery of strong and effective medicine and taking of some other points into consideration, the concept hitherto practised (treating the patients at hospitals) has been replaced by keeping him or her at homesteads with constant monitoring till fully cured. Study found such treatment is the most cost effective in treating TB, he said.

Dr Koshi was hopeful that treatment of TB, long remained neglected in most countries, will get a boost with the implementation of the new strategy and administering more effective medicine taking



Delegates gather at the Great Hall of the People during the opening ceremony of the second plenary session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference yesterday in Beijing.

## Women's Day celebrated across Asia

HONG KONG, Mar 8: Women across Asia marched in protest, celebrated their identity and were adorned today as they struck a reminder of their struggle to overcome a second-class status to men, reports AFP.

Sexual and other types of violent abuse, unequal education, a lack of basic rights and discrimination were all issues brought up in various degrees as Asian women celebrated International Women's Day.

Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, one of the few women holding power in Asia, admitted that "unfortunately Pakistani women have been denied their due status as guaranteed both by Islam and the country's constitution."

She said, "March 8 is a day of crying aloud against their exploitation by an unjust and unfair system."

In Manila, Aging Filipinos forced to work as prostitutes for Japanese troops during World War II joined militant feminists, workers and students today in a street protest marking Women's Day.

The former "comfort women," currently suing the Japanese government for compensation, took part in a 300-strong protest near the presidential palace.

In Sydney, at the first Australian convention on Women as Leaders, top academic Leonie Still said women were becoming a force in positions of power.

"As we move towards the third millennium ... it appears that women face an exciting future," said Still, who is Commerce Faculty Dean at the University of Western Sydney, said.

Women across China celebrated the day with a half-day holiday as factories, schools and government departments nationwide put on sporting and cultural events for their female workers.

"Female graduates still find it harder to get jobs than male graduates, while girls in the countryside often receive only rudimentary schooling because parents feel they should help out in the house or in the fields," the spokeswoman for

## India lodges protest with Bangladesh

NEW DELHI, Mar 8: India has lodged a strong protest with Pakistan and Bangladesh following the arrest of their nationals for allegedly indulging in terrorist activities in India, an External Affairs ministry spokesman said today, reports PTI.

The spokesman confirmed that four Pakistani and one Bangladeshi nationals were apprehended by the police recently.

The ministry has lodged a strong protest through their missions in New Delhi at this latest and dangerous manifestation of Pakistan's policy of indulging in terrorist activities in India, he said.

## 4 dacoits beaten to death in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Mar 8: Four alleged dacoits were beaten to death last night by a mob at the Foudherhat overbridge on the Dhaka Chittagong highway under Sitakundu thana.

The armed dacoits had attempted to snatch cash and kind from passengers after intercepting a coach at gunpoint. However they were overpowered by some of the inmates of the vehicle, aided by members of the public, police said.

After overpowering the robbers the mob started beating them, leading to the deaths of three on the spot. Another succumbed to his injuries following admission in a hospital here, police and hospital sources said. All of the dead are yet unidentified.

A case was filed with the Sitakundu thana.

## Land allocation approved

The central land allocation committee yesterday approved the necessary allocation to acquire lands for different projects in Dhaka and Narayanganj, reports BSS.

The allocation was made in a meeting of the committee in Dhaka with State Minister for Land M Kabir Hossain in the chair.

The projects include digging and development of Shahjahanpur canal by WASA under the coordinated flood protection project for Dhaka, pipe switch construction under the same project, water treatment plant construction at Sayedabad, construction of the office of local government engineering department in Narayanganj, construction of martyred intellectuals' mausoleum at Rayerbazar and construction of new district jail in Narayanganj.

The members of the committee and the representatives from concerned ministry were present.

## Plane crash

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nesses said the Boeing 737-200 jetliner split into two before crashing. One wing with an engine scythed the top portion of the Aerofoil and the engine landed a few feet outside the door leading to a service area of the two-storey terminal building.

Others said that the Sahara aircraft was ablaze before it crashed.

The Boeing was completely destroyed and only a charred portion of the tail was found outside another door of the building.

The impact scattered debris over a large area. Aviation fuel spread on the tarmac and set fire to the grass in the area. A car and a food service van also were burnt.

Sahara India is one of the half dozen private airlines created in the last two years after India deregulated its skies. Most are flown by pilots who left the state-owned Indian Airlines.

Last year, two Indian Airlines jetliners crashed in New Delhi and in the western city of Aurangabad, killing a total of 56 people. Four other planes were hijacked.

# The Midnight File

## Whitewater scam: Clinton names Cutler as new counsel

WASHINGTON, Mar 8: Ending a hasty search for a lawyer with "unquestioned integrity," President Clinton has selected former Carter White House counsel Lloyd Cutler to be his chief lawyer. White House officials said Tuesday. Cutler, 76, would succeed White House counsel Bernard Nussbaum, the scrappy mentor to first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton. Nussbaum resigned Saturday, a victim of an investigation into a real estate company that the Clintons were involved in when Clinton was governor of the state of Arkansas. The owner of a savings and loan corporation that went into bankruptcy was the Clintons' partner in the real estate venture, called Whitewater Development Corp. reports AP. [See also Page 6]

## Spanish plane hit by fire over Croatia

MADRID, Mar 8: A Spanish air force plane made an emergency landing Tuesday after being struck by anti-aircraft fire while ferrying personnel between the Croatian cities of Zagreb and Split. The Defence Ministry said. Three passengers aboard the C-212 Aviocar, twin-engine turboprop suffered minor injuries, but crew members were unhurt, officials said, reports AP.

## 18 killed in Kabul

KABUL, Mar 8: Hundreds of incoming rockets terrorised Kabul residents Tuesday as the city faced one of its most intense attacks in more than two months of nonstop fighting. At least 18 people were killed and 100 wounded, according to hospital workers. But the actual toll is higher, because the dead are often buried immediately and many of the injured are unable to reach hospitals, reports AP.

## Troops storm hijacked Saudi aircraft

NAIROBI, Mar 8: Troops stormed a hijacked Saudi airliner at Nairobi Airport tonight and shot an Ethiopian hijacker holding the Saudi captain, security sources said, reports Reuters.

Earlier report says, hijackers freed all passengers and crew except the captain of a Saudi Arabian Airliner in Kenya today and demanded the plane be refuelled for Rome, airport sources said.

They said crew members were allowed to leave the Saudi Airbus, ringed by heavy security and parked at the far end of a runway at Nairobi's Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, about an hour after the passengers including some 130 who were being deported to Ethiopia, were released using emergency escape chutes at the rear of the plane to reach the tarmac.

Only the captain, a Saudi national, remained with the two hijackers — one armed with a gun, they said. The hijackers, who apparently were trying to avoid being deported to Ethiopia, demanded the aircraft be refuelled for a flight to Rome, the sources added.

## Daring dacoity at Savar factory

SAVAR, Mar 8: A gang of dacoits broke into an aluminium factory here, shot at workers and looted Tk 20 lakh worth of cash and raw materials early today, reports UNB.

Witnesses said about three dozens of miscreants broke open the back gate of the Dhamrai Aluminium Factory at about 2:00 am and opened fire on the workers, leaving 15 of them injured.

## Delhi vows

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ticipants said, but the Pakistani resolution could well scrape through by a small majority.

The Indian Prime Minister said Islamabad was insisting on the human rights issue because of "internal compulsions."

"One fails to understand how Pakistan is a champion of human rights and India, with its tradition, law and record in human rights, is in the dock."

"This is absolutely incomprehensible, but this is what is happening," Rao said.

He denied that Indian troops were guilty of human rights abuses, saying, "We have nothing to hide. Our record is absolutely clear."

"To say that we have violated human rights is an exaggeration which borders on an untruth," the premier said.

India has in recent weeks adopted a new policy of openness concerning Kashmir, taking New Delhi-based diplomats to the valley and giving the green light to human rights watchdog, Amnesty International and Red Cross teams to visit the state.

A group of 10 diplomats was in Srinagar, hub of Muslim insurgency, today and was scheduled to meet leaders of the All-party Kashmir Freedom Conference, an umbrella organisation of Muslim militants and political parties.

## Oil exploration

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many decision-making meetings among concerned authorities failed to take place in time — the progress had been very slow regarding the approval for the exploration," the sources admitted.

Meanwhile, negotiations with an American company — Occidental — have reached the final stage, sources informed. Occidental is likely to sign initials very soon. The US company is interested in oil and gas exploration in the Surma basin and in Mymensingh.

A representative of British oil company Steller Oil and Gas (BVI) Ltd is also currently in the city for negotiations, the sources added.

"The government is failing to reciprocate the interest shown by the foreign companies. If the government continues to be slow and indecisive in the negotiation process — it is likely that the interested foreign companies would leave Bangladesh and try their luck in countries like Vietnam," the sources pointed out.

Already, French oil giant Total Exploration Production has proposed to cancel its memorandum of understanding with Bangladesh following a series of fruitless negotiations.

## PM: women

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government.

"We want participation of everybody whether male or female for changing the lot of the people," Begum Zia said.

She called upon all to work in concert with the women community to build a world where women matter."

Recalling the establishment of the Jatiya Mahila Sangstha by late President Ziaur Rahman, the Prime Minister said, "We have transformed this organisation into a statutory body for infusing more dynamism."

She noted that our womenfolk are gradually becoming conscious and demonstrating their efficiency in development activities, but stressed that more groundwork should be done to ensure their overall uplift.

Begum Zia said the government alone cannot do the job and called upon the private sector to play a supporting role, saying, "Let us all strive hard to gear up the socio-economic development of our nation."

Presiding over the function, State Minister for Women's Affairs Begum Sarwar Rahman said offices of the Women's Directorate should be set up in 42 districts of the country where they do not exist.

UNICEF Representative in Bangladesh Rolf C. Carriere said he did not like the theme of this year's Women's Day. "Frankly, I don't quite like this phrase. Because, as you and I know, women already matter and always have mattered."

The real problem is that most societies have not acknowledged the innate equity of women and men, he said adding, "That is precisely the reason why each year the world community pauses for at least one day to observe International Women's Day."

Secretary of the Ministry of Women's Affairs Mohammad Enamul Huq and Director of Women's Affairs Department S K M Majnunul Huq also spoke on the occasion.

## More Canadian aid

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Bangladesh, Chan said that it would come and stressed on the need for "a fertile climate of investment."

On the question of quota in the garments sector, Chan said there existed a quota of only six to seven per cent for the last few years and assured that it was a temporary step which would ultimately be waived.

"We do not like the quota system," he said and added that the issue had to be negotiated among Bangladesh, Canada and other countries under GATT. "This is why GATT is so important," he emphasised.

The visiting Secretary of State appreciated the role of the government and the NGOs in developing the economy.

"Our countries have very close ties and we are optimistic that (Bangladesh) will be able to stand quickly on its own feet."

He also stated that some of the development programmes undertaken by the government and the NGOs were really commendable and hoped many other countries will emulate and replicate the positive examples.

Emphasising that the government and the NGOs were facing the economic challenges boldly, Chan commended particularly the development work being done by the Grameen Bank, BRAC and Proshika.

Asked about his views on the water sharing issue between India and Bangladesh, Chan replied it was a matter of concern and should be settled bilaterally.

"The issue should be addressed within the region," he emphasised.

"The formation of SAARC is very encouraging and issues like water and other problems of the region should be considered and settled mutually."

He said that the entire world was a global village. "We all should learn to share our resources."

Chan said that the US and Canada too have common rivers and they solve their water problems mutually. In this connection he referred to the Columbia River Treaty signed between Ottawa and Washington.

## Menon clarifies press report

By Staff Correspondent

Workers' Party (WP) general secretary Rashed Khan Menon yesterday told The Daily Star that he had not ignored his party resolution asking him not to maintain any contacts with the Jamaat-e-Islami in any forum.

Clarifying a news item published in the daily yesterday, Menon said, the WP believed that any negotiation with the Jamaat, in the name of parliamentary practice, was suicidal for the democratic forces and he too, was committed to uphold the position.

Referring to the press briefing, Menon, in his clarification said that leaders meeting the press had presented their views one by one, separately.

Referring to a meeting of the Opposition leaders held immediately before the press briefing Monday, Menon said that he had gone to the meeting following a phone call from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, and to his embarrassment found the Jamaat leader Sheikh Anwar Ali, MP also there. He also said that he did not have any discussion with the Jamaat representative at the meeting.

The WP leader, however, did not make any comment regarding sitting next to the Jamaat leader during the press briefing.

## Press confce 'Adopt policy to change gender bias'

By Staff Correspondent

Leaders of the International Women's Day Observance Committee yesterday demanded equal rights of the women and an honourable life for them.

Speaking at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club, the leaders sought policies to help change the gender bias against the country's womenfolk.

They pointed out that in marriage, sex, childbirth and birth control — nowhere were the women's views given due importance.

They said the free movement of women on the streets had become difficult and they are discriminated in the labour sector.

The committee leaders called for necessary amendments to laws to remove all sorts of discrimination against women.

Quoting survey reports, they said the number of women's deaths due to torture by husbands and in-laws was greater than those dying while in child birth.

Proper measures were required to reduce the unnatural deaths of women in this country, they said.

The leaders demanded formation of female police squads and appointment of more police women to safeguard the security of women.

Nasrin Huq of Naripakkha, Shahin Akhter Dolly of Nari Maitree, Dr Mahmuda Khatun of the Ganashasthya Kendra, Shirin Sultana of Concern, Bangladesh were present at the press conference.

## DUTA condemns exams shifting

By DU Correspondent

The Dhaka University Teachers Association (DUTA) yesterday condemned the Vice Chancellor's decision to reschedule the dates of the examinations without approval of the Academic Council.

The DUTA leaders at an emergency meeting termed the decision 'arbitrary'.

They demanded an emergency meeting of the Academic Council to discuss the issue of rescheduling examinations.

## Israeli move to avert breakdown in talks

JERUSALEM, Mar 8: Israel has redoubled diplomatic efforts to avert a breakdown in peace talks with Palestinians over the Hebron mosque massacre, reports Reuters.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin made a public plea on Monday night to the PLO for quick agreement on implementing the Palestinian self-rule accord signed in September.

Rabin also sent three envoys to meet Palestine Liberation Organisation Chairman Yasser Arafat in Cairo, the first direct contact since the February 25 massacre of some 40 Palestinians by a Jewish settler.

But even as Rabin's advisers met Arafat, Israeli soldiers in Hebron shot dead two more Palestinians and wounded 17 in clashes that erupted when a tight curfew was lifted for several hours so residents could buy food.

Before the killings, negotiators were close to removing the final obstacles to the start of an Israeli troop pullout from the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho outline in the declaration of principles on Palestinian self-rule.

## Benazir cleared of nepotism charges

LAHORE, Mar 8: A Pakistani court cleared Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto today of giving jobs to favourites, her third acquittal of charges used to dismiss her three and a half years ago, reports Reuters.

Special Court Judge Munir Sheikh dismissed the charge saying the evidence showed no wrong had been done.

"She has been provided right once again," a spokesman for Bhutto said.

The allegation was one of seven disputed charges of abuse of power that were used by then President Ghulam Ishaq Khan to oust Bhutto's government in August, 1990.

Bhutto was cleared of the first two of the so-called presidential references by the same court last month. Those accused her of allocating natural gas distribution licences to friends and illegally allotting prime land in the capital, Islamabad, for a hotel.

## 'Croat-Muslim war over'

GORNJI VAKUF, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Mar 8: The United Nations has proclaimed the Croat-Muslim war in central Bosnia over, reports AP.

After mediating an agreement firming the cease-fire, Brig John Reith of Britain, commander of British UN forces in Bosnia, described the truce as an historic moment.

"Effectively the war between Muslims and Croats has ceased," he told reporters Monday.

As Reith watched, Brig Gen Fikret Muslimovic of the Muslim-led Bosnian army and Bosnian Croat Brig Gen Vinko Vrabanc signed maps of central Bosnia and the southern city of Mostar delineating truces over nearly 290 kilometers (180 miles) of previously disputed territory.

Reith said all but 1.9 kilometers (1.2 miles) of the Muslim-Croat battle front were covered by the truces.