

# BRIEFLY

**Desai's condition stable:** The clinical condition of Morarji Desai, former prime minister who underwent a major neuro-surgery on Friday last for removal of blood clot at Jaslok Hospital in Bombay, was stable although he continued to be in semi-conscious state on Monday night. PTI reports from Bombay.

According to doctors attending on him, all his vital parameters were normal. Desai's condition seemed to be improving and his urine output was also normal. The doctors are of the opinion that Desai's recovery was "slow" probably due to old age.

**Clinton meets King Hussein:** President Bill Clinton privately met King Hussein of Jordan on Monday and assured him he will fight efforts in Congress to block writing off all of Jordan's debt to the United States. Reuter reports from Washington.

The president expressed his determination to work with Congress to secure full appropriations... for Jordan debt forgiveness. White House Press Secretary Mike McCurry said in a statement.

**Taiwan's president plans ME trip:** Taiwan's president plans to go to Jordan and the United Arab Emirates next month in his first trip to the Middle East and only his third overseas tour since he became president, an official said on Tuesday. Reuter reports from Taipei.

**Editor shot dead in Algeria:** The Chief-Editor of the government-run newspaper El Moudjahid, the nation's oldest, was shot and killed Monday in another high-profile assassination by suspected Muslim radicals, security services reported. AP reports from Algiers.

Mohamed Abderrahmani was ambushed in the eastern Alger suburb of Oued Kniss as his car sat in traffic, and shot by "armed criminals".

**5 more beheaded in S Arabia:** A woman convicted of prostitution was among five people beheaded in Saudi Arabia on Monday, an Interior Ministry announcement disclosed. AP reports from Riyadh.

The male convicts put to death were two Pakistanis and an Afghan found guilty of smuggling heroin into the Kingdom, and a Saudi Arabian convicted of murder. The woman's name and nationality were not disclosed. The announcement said she had been found guilty of running a brothel.

**Meningitis claims 1,572 in Niger:** A total of 1,572 people have now died of a meningitis epidemic sweeping the West African state of Niger, the Health Ministry said on Monday. Reuter reports from Niamey.

It said the dead represented 10.3 per cent of total cases reported. Official figures last Thursday put the number of dead at 1,291 out of 12,645 afflicted with meningitis.

**3 Tajik police officers killed:** Three police officers were killed and one was wounded in an apparent revenge attack by Tajik criminals, officials in the Central Asian republic reported on Tuesday. AP says from Dushanbe.

The police squad was responding to a distress call on Monday night in the city of Kofrnikhon, 25 kilometres (15 miles) off the capital Dushanbe, said Col. Nikolai Madzhar of the Tajik Interior Ministry.

**Diarrhoea claims 34 in Indonesia:** A diarrhoea outbreak has killed 34 people and forced the hospitalisation of hundreds of others in the eastern Indonesian province of Irian Jaya, the Antara news agency said on Tuesday. AFP reports from Jakarta.

Antara quoted a health official of the Merauke regency on the southern coast of the province as saying that most of the casualties of the outbreak, which began spreading about a week ago, were children.

**Sudan announces ceasefire:** Sudanese President Gen. Omar Al-Bashir announced late Monday a two month ceasefire with the rebels in the south of the country last night midnight (2200 GMT) the Sudanese News Agency (SUNA) reported. AFP says from Khartoum.

The official agency said Al-Bashir, speaking at a press conference during a visit by former US President Jimmy Carter, also renewed an offer of a general amnesty towards those who carried arms against the government.

**ROK test fires missile:** South Korea has successfully test fired a short range surface to air missile and will begin mass production in 1998, the Defence Ministry said today yesterday. Reuter reports from Seoul.

A ministry spokesman said the Chonma missile was developed by the Agency for Defence Development (ADD) in cooperation with civilian defence contractors to intercept low flying enemy aircraft.

**Japanese team leaves for DPRK:** A Japanese government delegation left for North Korea on Tuesday, in an effort to restart talks on normalising relations with the reclusive communist state. AP reports from Tokyo.

The 11-member parliamentary group, led by former Foreign Minister Michio Watanabe, departed aboard a special flight bound for Pyongyang, the North Korean capital.



French Defence Minister Francois Leotard (L) meets Kuwaiti Minister of Defence Sheikh Homaud Al-Sabah (R) on Monday. Leotard signed a contract to sell eight gunboats to Kuwait at a cost of 480 million dollars. —AFP/UNB photo

**UK to buy US Tomahawk missiles**

LONDON, Mar 28: Britain is to spend 200 million pounds (318.6 million dollars) buying US Tomahawk cruise missiles, the Daily Telegraph said on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

It said defence chiefs were preparing to seek cabinet approval to equip the navy with the missiles, used with devastating effect against Iraq in the 1991 Gulf War.

A Defence Ministry spokesman, asked to comment on the report, said negotiations were proceeding "in the direction we want them to." He described talks with the United States as very positive.

## Hillary trades thoughts on marriage vs jobs with Pak women

LAHORE, Mar 28: Hillary Rodham Clinton perched on the courtyard bedstead of 70-year-old Burkat Ali and got the full rundown on his household: Wife, three sons with wives, four cousins with wives and 21 children, reports AP.

Then she trooped inside for a tour of his mudcake "middle class" home while one of the women kept busy outside shaping dung into discs for fuel.

Over and over on Monday, the first lady interacted on a very personal level with the people of Pakistan.

She traded thoughts on marriage vs jobs with MBA-bound college women: "You don't want to give up one for the other."

# Delhi decides to impose direct rule in Bihar

NEW DELHI, Mar 28: The Indian Government decided today to impose direct rule in Bihar as the last round of voting began in the violent eastern state, the United News of India (UNI) news agency said, reports Reuter.

The Press Trust of India (PTI) reported that at least one person was killed in a clash between armed supporters of rival parties in the state, where assembly polls have been postponed several times because of violence. More than 50 people have been killed in the campaign.

In New Delhi, the lower house of parliament, the Lok Sabha, was adjourned three times as angry left-wingers protested against government plans to impose direct rule in

the state.

The five-year mandate of Bihar Chief Minister Laloo Prasad Yadav of the leftist Janata Dal was officially due to have expired on March 15, but Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao asked him to continue in a caretaker role.

Politicians from Indian's ruling Congress Party said Rao was worried Yadav would exploit any move to impose direct rule from New Delhi in the state.

But with the final round of voting finally under way, there was little Yadav could now do to affect the result.

UNI said a formal proclamation imposing president's rule in Bihar would be issued later. It said the move was inescapable as there was no

assembly to approve public sector salaries and other urgent state government spending after the end of the month.

PTI reported that by midday, some 30 per cent of the 8.3 million voters had cast ballots in the 47 constituencies being polled on the fifth and final round of the assembly election in the state.

It said a woman was injured when explosive were hurled at a polling station in the Raghupur constituency, which Yadav was contesting.

India's Chief Election Commissioner T N Seshan has delayed and re-scheduled the vote several times in Bihar, the last in the current round of state assembly elections. More than 100,000 paramilitary police have been deployed in the

state to supervise the vote.

Police have arrested scores of people for looting ballot boxes and generally disrupting the election.

Yadav has accused Seshan of conspiring with Rao and the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) against the poor and lower castes he represents in the state.

Janata Dal members of parliament accused the Indian government of creating a constitutional crisis by imposing direct rule while polling was still going on in Bihar.

They shouted slogans accusing the government of trying to kill democracy in Bihar and left their seats to protest in the well of the house, forcing repeated adjournments.

## List of Academy Awards winners



Actress Dianne Wiest smiles as she holds the Oscar she won during the 67th Annual Academy Awards on Monday in Los Angeles. Wiest won the best-supporting actress Oscar for her role in "Bullets over Broadway." —AFP/UNB photo

LOS ANGELES, Mar 28: The following is the list of winners in the 67th Academy Awards ceremony in Los Angeles on Monday, reports AFP.

Best picture: "Forrest Gump."

Actor: Tom Hanks, ("Forrest Gump")

Actress: Jessica Lange, ("Blue Sky")

Supporting actor: Martin Landau, ("Ed Wood.")

Supporting actress: Dianne Wiest, ("Bullest Over Broadway.")

Director: Robet Zemeckis, ("Forrest Gump.")

Original screenplay: Quentin Tarantino and Roger Avary, ("Pulp fiction")

Adapted screenplay: Eric Roth, ("Forrest Gump")

Foreign film: "Burnt by the Sun," Russia.

Art direction: "The Madness of King George."

Cinematography: "Legends of the Fall."

Costume design: "The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Cesert."

Documentary feature: "Maya



Veteran US actor Martin Landau kisses his Oscar on Monday at 67th Annual Academy Awards in Los Angeles. Landau won the Oscar for his supporting role as the actor Bela Lugosi in the film "Ed Wood." —AFP/UNB photo

Lin: A Strong Vision."

Documentary short subject: "A Time for Justice."

Film editing: "Forrest Gump."

Makeup: "Ed Wood."

Music original score: Hans Zimmer ("The Lion King").

Music original song: "Can You Feel the Love Tonight" ("The King").

Animated short film: "Bob's Birthday."

Live action short film: "Franz Kafka's It's a Wonderful Life" and "Trevor."

Sound: "Speed."

Sound effects editing: "Speed."

Visual effects: "Forrest Gump."

Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award: Quincy Jones.

Irving G Thalberg Memorial Award: Clint Eastwood.

Honourary award: Italian filmmaker Michelangelo Antonioni.

Technical award of merit: Petro Vlahos and Paul Vlahos.

Technical award of merit: Eastman Kodak Co.

### Dalai Lama prays for independence of Tibet

NEW DELHI, Mar 28: The Dalai Lama led a prayer service today as thousands of activists ended a two-week, protest march in India to demand that China grant independence to Tibet, reports AP.

The march coincided with the 36th anniversary of an uprising in the Tibetan capital, Lhasa, that China crushed.

As drums reverberated, Hindu, Buddhist, Christian and Muslim religious leaders chanted hymns in Japanese, Tibetan, Sanskrit and English to pray for universal peace.

Police said 5,000 people attended the service at Rajghat, the Mohandas Gandhi memorial, which was typical of the Dalai Lama's non-violent efforts to win independence for Tibet.

On March 10, Tibet's spiritual leader had blessed the 500 Tibetan marchers as they left Dharamsala, the town in northern India where the Dalai Lama maintains a government-in-exile.

Earlier, the Nobel Peace Prize winner had persuaded the protesters to drop their plan to march to Lhasa and risk being stopped by Indian, Nepalese or Chinese forces.

The Dalai Lama sometimes faces opposition from younger Tibetan refugees

## Lankan forces on red alert

COLOMBO, Mar 28: Security forces went on red alert in Sri Lanka as a deadline set by separatist Tamil Tiger guerrillas to resume stalled peace talks with the government lapsed today, defence officials said, reports AFP.

Armed forces were ordered to step up their patrols and roadblocks in the capital, as well as in northern and eastern regions where the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) group is active, officials said.

"We have tightened security all round but there are no immediate signs of fighting breaking out. We are only taking basic precautionary measures," a defence official said.

The LTTE had asked the government to completely lift an economic embargo on their stronghold on the northern Jaffna Peninsula and dismantle a key military base by today to end the impasse in their peace talks.

The Tiger supremo, Velupillai Prabhakaran, had warned of "dire consequences" unless his demands were met by Tuesday. The government for its part has played down the ultimatum, saying the peace process was still on

## Indian troops encircle mosque in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, Mar 28: Muslim rebels holed up in an ancient mosque in Kashmir and Indian soldiers surrounding it have fired bullets at each other for several days, residents said on Tuesday, reports AP.

Thousands of soldiers encircled Char-e-Sharif town, north of Srinagar, after the rebels, most of them suspected to be Pakistan-trained mercenaries, moved in there one month ago.

Over the weekend, soldiers trained spotlights on the houses around the mosque and fired in that direction, residents who fled to Srinagar said on condition of anonymity.

The rebels fired on troop positions in a bid to clear a passage out of the town, the Indian Express newspaper said on Tuesday.

More than half the 25,000 residents have fled Char-e-Sharif, and some said they could see rebels brandishing Kalashnikovs.

Defence Ministry officials in Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu-Kashmir state, have refused to confirm or deny that the rebels and the soldiers were exchanging fire.

More than 11,300 people have been killed in Jammu-Kashmir since 1989.

## Russian warplane misfires rockets

MOSCOW, Mar 28: A Russian warplane misfired six combat rockets at a military airfield in the south of Russia, hitting a nearby country house but causing no casualties, the air force said today, reports AP.

The incident occurred in Krasnodar, 1,200 kilometers south of Moscow, when a Su-25 attack jet was being prepared for a flight Monday the air force's press service said.

No serious damage was reported, the press service said.

# Off the Record

## She feels she is being raped

LONDON: Princess Diana, one of the world's most photographed women, says the paparazzi hounding her on an Austrian skiing holiday make her feel like she is being raped, reports Reuter.

"I just cannot stand it," she told veteran royal watcher Jaumes Whitaker of Britain's Daily Mirror while on holiday in the Austrian resort of Lech with her sons William 12, and Harry, 10.

Whitaker, when I see them around all the time it is like I am being raped," she was quoted as telling the reporter in Tuesday's edition of the leading tabloid.

The princess told him do you know, when I go back to my hotel each afternoon all the windows of my apartment are surrounded by photographers looking in at me?"

"I feel they are raping me. I just don't know what to do. I close the curtains but they are there. I know it. If feel it."

But she added "they have no right to pursue me in the way they do. I will not let them get away with it. I will resist like I am doing now."

When she fell skiing just in front of a German photographer, Diana angrily remonstrated with him, saying "why are you following us, leave us alone."



## Charles a 'potty & dotty'

LONDON: Prince Charles, Britain's "greenest" royal often mocked for his habit of talking to plants, has acknowledged he is "potty and dotty" — a crank, reports Reuter.

Queen Elizabeth's first-born son has been groomed from birth as future King but has gained a reputation as an eccentric who would apparently rather be a gentleman farmer.

The royal heir in a speech on Monday wryly conceded what many of his future subjects have been saying about him. "It's potty prince me," he confessed when he spoke about his passion for gardening to the national trust, a heritage preservation society.

Talking about the garden he has planted at his palatial highgrove home in western England, he said: "It might be amusing for future generations to see who the dotty owner was. It might be rather interesting in 100 years' time."

Charles, who speaks to plants to encourage them to grow, has become an environmental campaigner and solitary "ideas" man, in contrast to a glamorous image fostered by his beautiful, estranged wife, Princess Diana.

## All it needs is a simple treatment

FLORIDA: Women who suffer from chronic pelvic pain during sex may find relief from a safe, simple treatment for varicose veins from the ovary, researchers said on Monday, reports Reuter.

Physicians often overlook varicose veins as a possible source of chronic pain, sometimes concluding that painful sexual intercourse is a psychological problem, said Dr Lindsay Machan of the University of British Columbia in Vancouver.

In a study of 22 patients who were found to have varicose veins to the ovary, Machan treated them by threading a catheter to the problem vein, then releasing a tiny metal coil that scars the vein and permanently closes it. Eighteen of the women reported a marked "improvement or end to their chronic pelvic pain, with no side effects," he said.

The coils are safe and made of metal similar to that used in hip replacements.

Some of these women are in a bad way. One of my patients attributed her divorce to an inability to have sexual intercourse and enduring years of pain," Machan said.

## 'High priestess' of satanic cult commits suicide

FRANCE: The "high priestess" and two followers of a satanic cult committed suicide in a Paris suburb within a week of each other, police said Monday, reports AP.

Nicole Letellier, 46, who founded the French branch of the Wicca sect, said in a letter found by her body that she was ending her life because she believed she was possessed by a demon. She shot herself in the head March 15, police said.

On Thursday, her companion, Jack Coutela, 70, apparently distraught by Letellier's death, was found hanging in the attic of the same house along with a 27-year-old woman, whose identity has not been released. Neighbours in the suburb of Kremlin-Bicetre, south of Paris said the younger woman was presented as the couple's adopted daughter.

The three cultists lived with 20 cats in a house marked by water spots and strewn with animal excrement, according to police. Letellier claimed the cats ward off evil radiation.

Police said they found old pornographic films and photos of Letellier — ceremonially called "Diane Luciferia" — performing rituals.

Demonstrators outside the Israeli embassy distribute leaflets on Monday while a delegation, including playwright Harold Pinter and actress Susannah York, is presenting a petition with 22,000 signatures inside the embassy, calling for the release of "nuclear spy" Mordechai Vanunu. —AFP/UNB photo

## Former Rajasthan CM Joshi dead

JAIPUR, Mar 28: The former chief minister of Rajasthan, Harideo Joshi, died in Bombay this morning, reports received here said, according to PTI.

He was 74. He is survived by two sons and a daughter. Joshi had been shifted to Bombay last month following brain haemorrhage and a paralytic attack. He breathed his last in Bombay Hospital, official sources said.

Joshi served as the chief minister of the desert state since 1972 and held the unique distinction of winning all the assembly elections since 1952.

He also had a brief stint as governor of Assam besides acting governor of Meghalaya in 1989.