

**BRIEFLY**



The "Hope of Peace" statue, a 25 metres high monument made by the French sculptor Armand van tanks and guns immobilised in concrete "to illustrate the imprisonment of violence after Lebanon reached peace after 15 years of civil war," according to Armand, was inaugurated Wednesday at the entry of the Lebanese Ministry of Defence.

**UAE bans "Bombay":** The United Arab Emirates has become the latest country to ban the Indian film "Bombay," a source at the Information Ministry said Thursday. AP reports from Abu Dhabi.

Posters advertising the movie, which were prominently displayed at local cinemas, have now been removed. The film was banned by Malaysia and Singapore earlier this year and its screening sparked protests in Kuwait last month.

**Mother, daughter killed in Turkey:** Relatives shot and killed a mother and her daughter near the Black Sea town of Bafra for "dressing immodestly" in public, the Milliyet newspaper reported. AP says from Bafra, Turkey.

Four male relatives were later arrested in connection with the murders Tuesday of Emine Deniz, 40 and her daughter Hamide, 22, the Istanbul-based Milliyet said. Women traditionally dress conservatively in rural areas of this predominantly Muslim but secular country.

**Israeli jets rocket S Lebanon:** Israeli jets rocketed Muslim guerrilla hideouts in southern Lebanon yesterday the second raid in as many days, security sources said. Reuter reports from Sidon Lebanon.

The sources said two planes fired eight rockets into the Iqlim al-Toufah heights, a bastion of the pro-Iranian Hizbollah militant group which attacks the Jewish state's Lebanese occupation zone to the south almost daily.

**19 die in Venezuela bus mishap:** At least 19 people were killed and 23 injured Wednesday when two buses crashed head-on, authorities said. AP reports from Caracas, Venezuela.

The accident in Carabobo state, 150 kilometres (93 miles) southwest of Caracas, occurred at 11:30 am (1530 GMT) when the driver of one bus attempting to pass a truck around a curve, crashed into a bus headed in the opposite direction, said Francisco Zambrano, a Civil Defense Inspector.

**Filipino murder suspect held:** A suspect in the murder of the leader of the country's largest leftist labour federation has been arrested, the National Bureau of Investigation said Thursday. AP reports from Manila.

Filomeno Maligaya, 48, a former sergeant in the defunct Philippine constabulary, was arrested Wednesday in the November 13, 1986, murder of Rolando Olalia, then chairman of the May One Movement.

**Dudayev accepts military accord with Russia**

GROZNY, Russia, Aug 3: Chechen separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev has accepted the military accord worked out last week between Chechen and Russian negotiators, a spokesman for the Chechen leader has said, reports AFP.

Movlady Udugov, a spokesman for Dudayev, said that the Chechen leader had finally approved the text of the agreement late on Tuesday, the ITAR-Tass news agency reported Wednesday.

Dudayev had earlier been quoted as saying he rejected the agreement and was reported to have dismissed the head of the Chechen delegation, Usman Imayev, who negotiated the agreement.

But Movlady Salamov, an aide to Dudayev, said Wednesday that this was not true and that Imayev had simply resigned.

As well as a prisoner exchange, the military agreement also covers a partial Russian pullout from the Caucasus republic, and entails the creation of buffer zones of between two to four kilometres (1.5 to three miles) between the forces.

The Russians will leave behind them 6,000 troops, while secessionists decommission their arms.

Talks on the outstanding political question — Chechnya's declaration of independence from the Russian Federation in 1991 are to resume Thursday at the working-group level.

**2 newsmen get life term in Nigeria**

VIENNA, Aug 3: The International Press Institute (IPI) said here Wednesday two Nigerian journalists were sentenced to life imprisonment by a military court, and it called for their immediate release, reports AFP.

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**8 killed in South Africa shootouts**

DURBAN (South Africa), Aug 3: Police searching for illegal weapons killed eight people in shootouts in a black township notorious for violence, a police spokesman said Thursday, reports AP.

Thirteen people were arrested. The area where the shootings occurred is known as a stronghold of the Zulu nationalist Inkatha Freedom Party, which has engaged in years of clashes against the African National Congress.

Inkatha has claimed that police, now under the control of the ANC-led national government.

**Sino-US ties suffer further blow**  
**Pentagon concerned at China's growing military potential**

WASHINGTON, Aug 3: Public attention to Sino-American relations has focused recently on disputes over Taiwan, trade and human rights, obscuring somewhat US concern over China's growing military potential, reports AP.

While China is not yet a full-blown US adversary, the Pentagon has been increasingly wary about Chinese capabilities.

Earlier this year, US defence officials simulated a war game with China in which American naval vessels were pitted against Chinese land-based missiles. The US side lost.

China in recent years has been reducing the size of its military forces while increasing investment in weapons systems. And the United States is eager to learn the

results — as the case involving the detention of two US Air Force officers last week ended.

China says the two, Air Force liaison officer Joseph Wei Chan and a subordinate, Dwayne Howard Florenzie, got caught photographing and videotaping military zones in southeast China.

The officers, who had been detained since last week, were released early Thursday, State Department spokesman Sharon Bowman said.

US officials acknowledged that the two were on a spying mission. "This is what defence attaches do," one senior administration official said.

Although the subject did not come up during this week's talks in Brunei be-

tween Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen, the spying incident did nothing to enhance mutual confidence.

However, UN Ambassador Madeleine Albright said Wednesday she would lead a full US delegation to the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing September 4-15, despite the detention of the two officers and the earlier arrest of Chinese-American human rights activist Harry Wu. Relations between the two countries have also been strained by the US decision to allow the president of Taiwan to visit.

"It just does not make sense, in the name of human rights, to boycott a conference that has, as a primary purpose, the promotion of

human rights," said Albright.

For years, the military equipment China produced was well below superpower standards. Rick Fisher, of the Heritage Foundation's Asia Studies Centre, said US jet fighters made quick work of the Chinese-made tanks that Iraq used in the Gulf War four years ago.

He said China now is intent on producing several hundred high performance jet fighters and on acquiring an aircraft carrier, along with improved air defence systems. And it recently tested missiles over six days in the East China Sea north of Taiwan, boasting that all targets were hit. The State Department, noting the proximity to Taiwan, complained that the exercises were not conducive to peace.

**Severe ozone depletion over Antarctica**

NEW YORK, Aug 3: The annual depletion of ozone high over Antarctica has steadily worsened over the past 10 years and has reached about the most severe level possible, says a co-discoverer of the so-called ozone hole, reports AP.

"Basically the situation is we've not seen any slowdown at all. If anything there's an acceleration of the depletion," meteorologist Jonathan Shanklin said.

Ozone is a form of oxygen that shields against harmful ultraviolet rays from the sun. The ozone destruction is caused by pollution from compounds containing chlorine or bromine.

The Antarctic depletion begins in August and hits its low point in October, as chlorine and bromine destroy ozone within high-altitude clouds.

Ozone levels then begin to climb as warmer temperatures make the high-altitude clouds disappear and ozone-rich air pours in from elsewhere.

**Soya is a great help to reduce cholesterol**

BOSTON, Aug 3: A group analysis of 38 studies measuring the effects of adding soya to the diet has concluded that the vegetable protein can dramatically reduce cholesterol in people with high cholesterol counts, reports Reuter.

In one sense the finding, published in today's New England Journal of Medicine, is not surprising because 26 of the 38 studies had already concluded that soya protein was effective in lowering cholesterol levels.

**PFLP-GC vows revenge for Israeli air raid**

RASHAYA, Lebanon, Aug 3: Palestinians guerrillas promised revenge for an Israeli air raid in eastern Lebanon after details emerged Thursday that the warplanes and inflicted major damage, reports AP.

Wednesday's foray was the deepest by Israeli warplanes in more than a year, attacking guerrilla positions in the eastern Bekaa Valley near the Syrian border.

Six guerrillas were wounded in the attack on a base of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command, security sources said Thursday.

"We will retaliate twofold and it will come at the earliest time, base commander Abu Fida told the leftist Beirut newspaper As-Sa'ir, singling out Israel and PLO leader Yasser Arafat.

**Chandrika urges islanders to support her peace plan**

COLOMBO, Aug 3: President Chandrika Kumaratunga urged Sri Lankans on Thursday to support a new peace plan aimed at ending the 12-year Tamil ethnic conflict in the country, reports AP.

In a statement on state television at the astrologically auspicious time of 6:40 am (0110 GMT), Mrs Kumaratunga said she will not be deterred by "people who profit from the ethnic conflict and chauvinists." She said the peace plan she would make public later Thursday ensures the rights of all communities.

Mrs Kumaratunga chose the time set by her astrologer because she believes that a project begun at an auspicious time will succeed.

According to a copy of the plan, obtained by The Associated Press last week, the government will propose

making Sri Lanka a federation of eight regions, including a Tamil-dominated region, and give each one wide powers to rule itself.

Mrs Kumaratunga hopes that would address the demands of Tamils fighting for a homeland.

Meanwhile, a Tamil government minister suggested that the government consider giving power to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the main rebel group.

"The task of governance of the north and east under the devolution package is best entrusted to the LTTE for an interim period of five years," said Savumyamoorthy Thondaman in a statement.

"The LTTE which has relentlessly spearheaded the struggle for freedom for well over 12 years, is well equipped to wield power, ex-

ercise authority, and maintain law and order," he said.

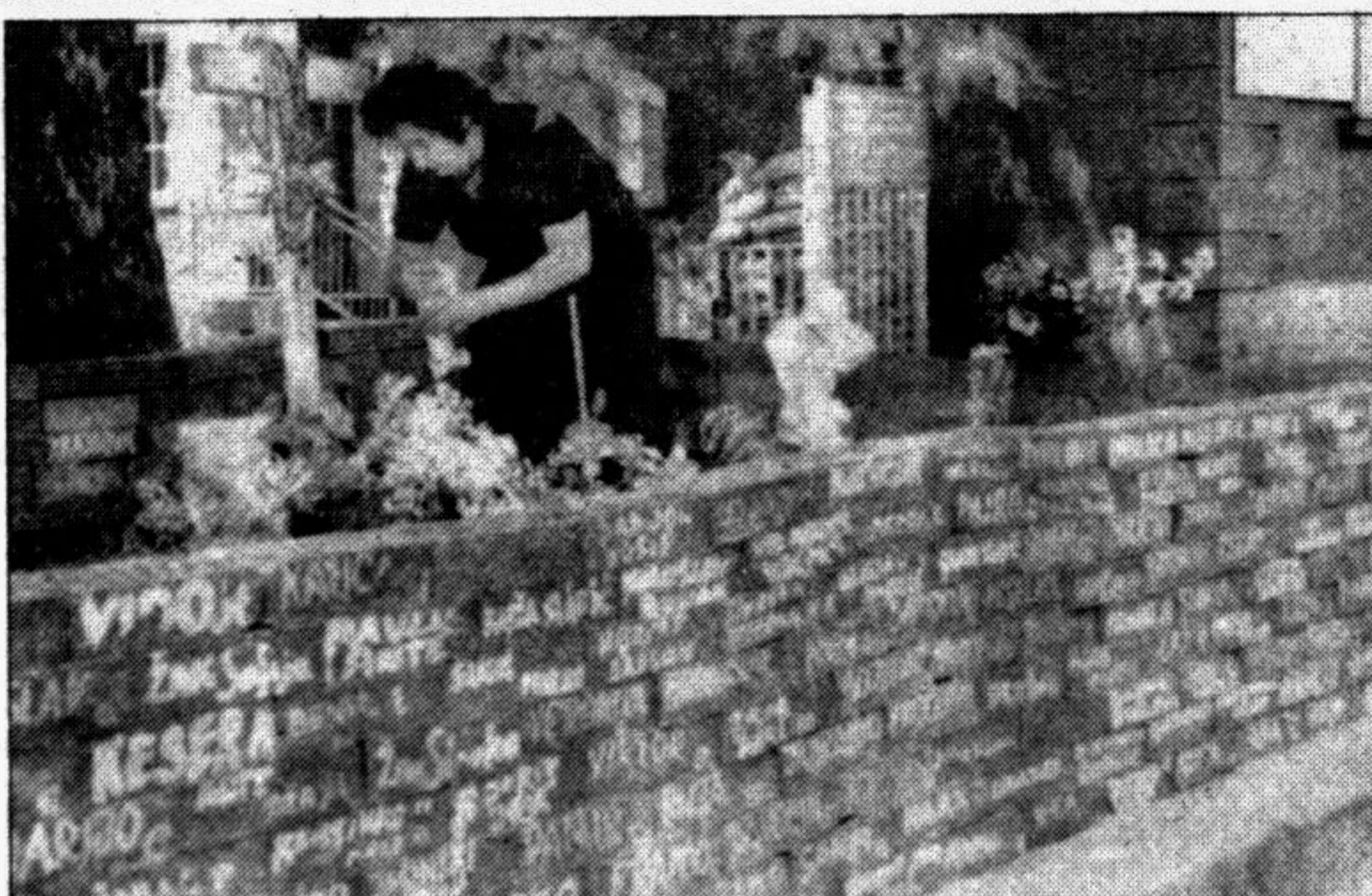
Thondaman is the leader of the largest trade union of Tamil plantation workers and the minister of livestock development in Mrs Kumaratunga's cabinet.

The Tamil Tiger rebels, waging a guerilla war in the north and east, have not commented on the plan.

Opponents to the plan included hard-line ethnic Sinhalese, with Sri Lanka's top Buddhist monks leading the way.

"We are presenting these proposals in the strength you gave us to finish the agony of 12-year," Mrs Kumaratunga said. People who support the separatists "cannot erase the hopes of people."

Barely two hours after the speech, Tamil rebels blew up a bus in eastern Sri Lanka, killing four civilians, a military official said.



A mother places a candle at the tomb of her son, Wednesday, in front of the UNPROFOL headquarters in Zagreb. The tomb is surrounded by a special wall with names of Croatian people who died during the civil war in former Yugoslavia.

**ASEAN nations hail US military presence in Asia-Pacific**

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, Brunei, Aug 3: Southeast Asian nations on Thursday hailed the US military commitment in the Asia-Pacific as vital for keeping the region stable and its economy booming, reports AP.

Although the United States has withdrawn its bases from the Philippines following the end of the Cold War, it still has about 100,000 troops in the region, about the same number it maintains in Europe.

"The question of American presence in our part of the world is not only a question of desirability but much more a question of fact of life," said Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas.

During the past week, ASEAN foreign ministers gathered for an annual meeting and then convened the ASEAN Regional Forum that brought together representa-

tives from the world's major powers, including US Secretary of State Warren Christopher and his Chinese counterpart, Qian Qichen.

In his speech Wednesday to ASEAN, Christopher said a strong US presence remains the foundation for regional stability and prosperity. We will stand by our commitment to security in the Pacific in peacetime no less than we did in the three wars in Asia."

He said the United States' five treaty alliances with Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Thailand and Australia will continue to anchor our security commitment.

His counterparts from Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines also spoke similarly at a joint news conference, which wrapped up a week of meetings, including a major security conference, held by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

"The presence of Americans in our region has changed somewhat from what it used to be, but I still think it is a force for stability," said Thai Foreign Minister Kasem Kasemsiri.

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**Malaysian opposition protests Rao's visit**

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 3: Malaysia's Opposition Party Islam (PAS) fundamentalist Muslim group today protested the visit by Indian Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao who it said had failed to alleviate the sufferings of Muslims in India, reports AFP.

PAS information chief Subky Latif said Rao should be reminded that he had yet to keep his pledge to rebuild the Babri Mosque which was destroyed three years ago by militant Hindus in India.

"Our Muslim brethren are under constant fear from Hindu chauvinism and militancy since the Babri Mosque episode," Subky, who is also secretary of the party's Foreign Affairs Bureau, said as Rao prepared to hold talks with Malaysian leaders on various international issues.

Rao arrived late Wednesday for a four-day official visit at the head of a 140-member delegation of officials and corporate leaders.

Officials said that while talks between Rao and his Malaysian counterpart, Mahathir Mohamad, were expected to focus on bilateral economic cooperation, global issues and regional security concerns, including the thorny issue of Kashmir would also be highlighted.

Rao's visit comes a month after his neighbour, Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, travelled to Malaysia, and also discussed the issue of Kashmir.

"On Kashmir, India's continued occupation and iron-fist policy is extremely painful for Muslims all over the world," Subky said.

India, he said, had failed to implement the UN resolution on allowing the people of the Indian-administered Muslim state of Kashmir "the basic human right of self-determination."

India has accused her Islamic neighbour of fomenting militancy by arming and training the Muslim militants.

**Off the Record**

**May be they were frustrated**

BEIJING: Some 249 sheep and goats have died in a bizarre mass suicide in northern China, jump in one after the other into a lake where they had been taken to drink, Xinhua reported says AFP.

A total of 530 sheep and goats tried to drown themselves on July 17 and some 281 sheep were saved by 30 herdsmen, who however failed during a three-hour struggle to rescue 206 sheep and 43 goats from the depths, the agency said in a report late Wednesday.

The strange incident occurred in inner Mongolia when two goats, driven by their shepherd to the lake to drink, plunged into the 1.5-metre (4.95-foot) deep water and were followed by the other animals, the report said.

Only four sheep did not jump in, it said, noting the animals are usually afraid of water.

The sheep — normally capable of swimming a little — strongly resisted efforts to save them and, even once pulled out, tried to jump back in the lake, Xinhua said.

**It's still a man's world**

WELLINGTON: A Department of Justice survey has shown that one in five New Zealand men physically abuse their wife or girlfriend at least once a year, the Department of Justice said Thursday, reports AFP.

"It is now the most comprehensive study of attitudes towards domestic abuse which exists anywhere," Secretary for Justice John Belgrave said, of the survey, called "Hitting home — men speak out about abuse."

The 243-page report says that 21 per cent of men committed at least one act of physical abuse last year and 53 per cent committed at least one act of psychological abuse.

The most commonly acknowledged acts of physical abuse were pushing, grabbing or shaking, slapping and throwing something at a woman. The most commonly reported acts of psychological abuse were insulting or swearing at women, and denigrating her family or friends.

**Ramos tops the sexy list**

MANILA: President Fidel Ramos was ranked as the sexiest man in the Philippines by a socialite who has been romantically lined to him, a business paper said today, reports Reuter.

"President Fidel Ramos because he dresses up very well. He's tall, dark and handsome," Business World quoted Romeraie "bobby" Arenas as saying when asked to name the country's 12 sexiest men.

Arenas, who ran and lost in the race for the Philippine senate in May elections, has been widely reported to be Ramos's mistress, but both have denied this.

Arenas said convicted tax dodger Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr, who attracted scurrying women in the last polls, is not even close to being sexy.

"He's got no butt. How can he be sexy?" she said.

**Bid to refund Pakistan's money**

WASHINGTON asks Manila, Jakarta to buy F-16s

BANDAR SERI BAGAWAN, Brunei, Aug 3: US Secretary of State Warren Christopher has asked Indonesia and the Philippines to consider buying F-16 jet fighters originally ordered by Pakistan in a deal that was then blocked by the American Congress, a senior official said Wednesday, reports Reuter.

State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said the issue was raised on Wednesday during Christopher's meeting with Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas and on Tuesday with Philippine Foreign Minister Domingo Siazon.

The reactions of the min-

**2 newsmen get life term in Nigeria**

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**Still a long way to go for 'her' to be 'his' equal**

NEW YORK, Aug 3: A study released by the United Nations Wednesday showed that despite significant advances in the past decade women still had a long way to go before reaching an equal footing with men, reports AFP.

The study gauged women's plight in the world according to education, health, maternity, work, poverty, violence and the environment.

The study will serve as the official blue-print for the fourth UN-sponsored world-wide conference on women scheduled for the beginning of September in Beijing.

According to the study, women have made significant progress in the area of education during the last few decades but wide disparities between regions remain.

While literacy rates for women increased by 75 per cent in most countries of Latin America, the Caribbean, East Asia and Southeast Asia, women remained largely illiterate in most African countries and in certain parts of Asia.

The report found that schooling for girls under 17 was hampered in the 1980s in certain parts of Africa, Latin America and Eastern

Europe by political and economic instability.

In higher education, the study found women to be in equal numbers as men in Western Asia, Latin America and Western Europe.

In Sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia the ratio of women to men in the university level was lower, estimated at 30 and 38 to 100, respectively.

In the area of maternity the study concluded that increased access for women to education, employment and contraception caused a fall in the number of birth in all parts of the world.

But data pointed again to large discrepancies between regions.

In industrialised countries women give birth on average to 1.9 children during their lifetime, but in Africa women still give birth on average to six children.

The report found that teenage pregnancies decreased in all parts of the world in the last 20 years but that they remained a problem in Sub-Saharan Africa and central America where they were seven times higher than in industrialised nations.

Eighteen per cent of the children in central America

are born to mothers younger than 20.

In developed nations, the report found that teenage pregnancies are the highest in Bulgaria and the United States.

The study painted a somewhat positive picture of women's advances in health. It found that life expectancy increased for women in similar proportions as it did for men in the last 20 years.

The highest jumps in women's life expectancy occurred in North Africa, East Asia, South Asia, Western Asia and central America.

The study's findings were

less encouraging.

Data showed that women worldwide still did not enjoy the same employment opportunities as men.

The report found the best rate of employment for women to be 56 per cent, in Eastern Asia. The lowest employment rate is 21 per cent in North Africa.

The study found that women were still very much barred from managerial or otherwise important positions. At the end of 1994, only 10 women were heads of states and very few worldwide occupied high ranking government positions.

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