

BRIEFLY

Mother Teresa turns 85: Personal messages from world leaders poured in at the Missionaries of Charity Home for the Destitute in Calcutta wishing Mother Teresa a long life on her 85th birthday yesterday. PTT reports from Calcutta.

Children and people from all walks of life called on Mother Teresa to greet her on the occasion, a morning prayer was organised at the home.

9 women killed in Algeria: Suspected Algerian Muslim militants killed nine women — beheading six and burning the bodies of three others — in eastern Algeria, an Algerian newspaper said Saturday. Reuter reports from Paris.

The daily Le Matin said most of the victims were wives of communal guards in the village of El Grarem near Mila in eastern Algeria. They were killed during the night of August 19-20.

3 Filipinos held on murder charge: Police have arrested three college students in connection with the kidnap-murder of a 14-year-old boy, a town mayor said Saturday. AP reports from Angeles, Philippines.

Eduardo Pamintuan, Mayor of Angeles City in Pampanga province, said the suspects were arrested Friday in Laurel town in Batangas province, south of Manila.

Colombian rebels kidnap Briton: A British Embassy official in Colombia has been kidnapped by leftist guerrillas, BBC World Service radio reported yesterday. Reuter says from London.

"The official was abducted at a roadblock in the southwest of the country about two weeks ago but the news has only just emerged. It's not clear whether the guerrillas have made any demands," the BBC said.

Lok Sabha amends minority bill: The Lok Sabha yesterday passed a bill to amend the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992, providing for a new post of Vice-Chairperson in the commission. PTT reports from News Delhi.

Giving a brief reply to the discussion on the National Commission for Minorities amendment bill, the Welfare Minister, Sitaram Kesri, said government had enhanced the powers of the commission.

Women leaders to meet in May '96: An international conference on women in leadership will be held in May 1996 in Stockholm, Sweden, according to a city official. Xinhua reports from Stockholm.

Current and former female heads of state or government will be invited to the meeting, the official said. Those to be invited include former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland and former Philippine President Corason Aquino.

Sudan frees political prisoners: The Sudanese government has begun fulfilling its pledge to release political prisoners, but it remained uncertain Friday when a former prime minister might be freed, AP reports from Khartoum.

Four detainees were released Thursday night, but ex-prime Minister Sadiq el-Mahdi was not among them, the independent daily Akhbar al-Yom said. Reporters who went to his home Friday were told he had not been freed.

Saudi Arabia executes 3 more: Two Indian men and a Nigerian woman were executed Friday in Saudi Arabia for drug-smuggling, the Saudi Press Agency reported. Xinhua says from Kuwait City.

Quoting statements issued in Jeddah by the Ministry of Interior, the agency said Raghwan Asari Santosh and Musa Abdul Gader Banajri, both Indian nationals, were convicted of smuggling heroin and sentenced to death.

Ex-Nazi capt under house arrest: A former Nazi captain was put under house arrest on Friday in Argentina and could be extradited to Germany on war-crime charges a judge said, Reuter reports from Buenos Aires.

Federal judge Leonidas Mouldes ordered the detention of 81-year-old Erich Priebke after Germany requested the former SS officer's extradition local news agencies reported.

4 Russian border guards killed: Four Russian border guards were killed and 13 wounded on Friday in clashes with Chechen rebels that cast further doubt over prospects for peace in the separatist region, Reuter reports from Moscow.

Interfax News Agency, quoting a statement by border guard headquarters in Moscow, said the casualties came in fighting near Lake Kezenoyam, close to Chechnya's eastern border with the Dagestan region.

'UN sanctions against Iraq would fizzle out soon'

BAGHDAD, Aug 26: A defiant Iraq today said UN sanctions against it would soon fizzle out and the anti-Iraq camp abroad would vanish like bubbles, reports Reuter.

"Despite all attempts by America, the sanctions... are wearing out," declared Al-Jumhuriya Daily, the mouthpiece of the government in Iraq.

Iraq's optimism came despite US Ambassador to the United Nations Madeleine Albright saying on Friday Iraq's latest revelations of its nuclear and biological weapons programmes made the lifting of sanctions a remote possibility in the near future.

Jumhouriya said there would be no backing down on Iraq's decision to fully cooperate with the UN on the annihilation of the weapons prohibited under the 1991 Gulf War ceasefire.

It also praised a recent statement by the UN's top disarmament official Rolf Ekeus that Iraqi disclosures

could advance lifting of the oil embargo imposed on Iraq after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

"Current events are nothing more than bubbles... bound to blow up by themselves outside Iraq," it said.

Another report from Washington adds: Iraq went on a crash programme to produce its first nuclear bomb and deploy lethal biological agents on bases around the country only months before the 1991 Gulf War, the chief UN arms inspector said on Friday.

Rolf Ekeus, the Swedish diplomat who heads the UN special commission in charge of ridding Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction, said the arms programmes were more dangerous than anyone thought when Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

In response, the United States and Britain said Iraq had severely damaged its credibility by the chilling disclosures.

US Ambassador Madeleine

Albright said she could not foresee trade sanctions, imposed five years ago, lifted in the near future and doubted any easing next year also.

Russia and France agreed. But Russian envoys pointed out that if Ekeus eventually gave Iraq a clean bill of health, the Council had an obligation to ease the oil embargo, as stated in a 1991 Gulf War ceasefire resolution.

Ekeus told a press conference on Friday that Iraq had instituted a "crash programme to test its first nuclear bomb by April, 1991." But the Gulf War broke out on January 15 and US aircraft bombed Iraqi facilities.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said in a statement that it had no reason to believe that the programme was ongoing and stood by its earlier reports that it had accounted for Iraq's nuclear efforts.

"It is however clear that a crash programme could have reduced the time needed to Iraq to demonstrate its nu-

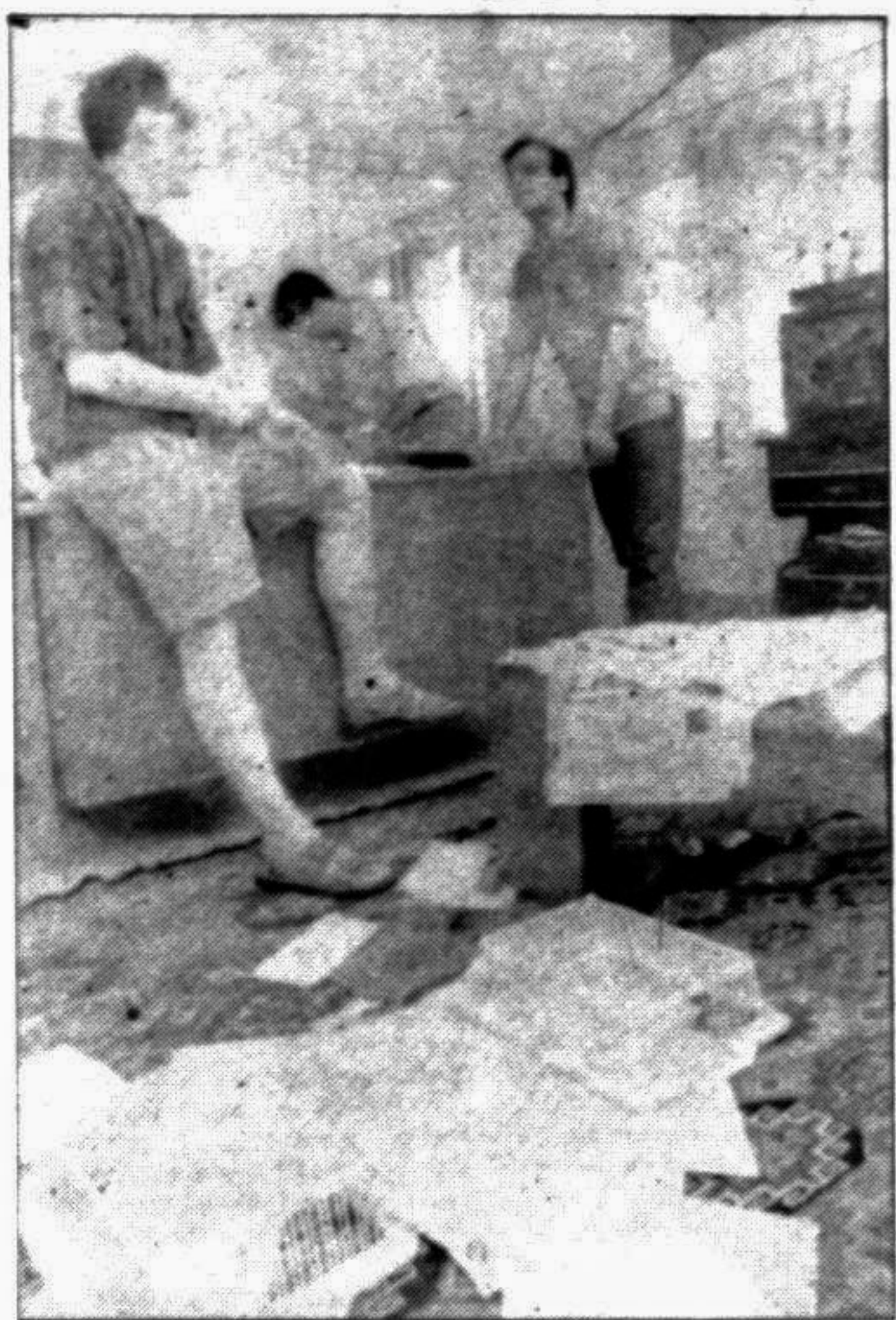
clear capability," the IAEA said.

On the more developed biological weapons programme, Ekeus said that after the Security Council on November, 30, 1990 authorised the United States to invade Iraq, Baghdad responded by loading 199 bombs and warheads with the bacteria anthrax and the even more deadly toxin, botulinum.

A third newly revealed substance, called aflatoxin, a bacteria that causes cancer, was also put into 16 warheads.

It was a very dangerous situation," Ekeus said. "We suspected since spring that they were working on biological weapons but not the enormous force and dynamism."

But he said Iraq apparently was persuaded not to use them after former president George Bush and secretary of state James Baker late in 1990 threatened massive retaliation. Ekeus said he thought Iraq took this to mean a nuclear attack.



Danial Lak (L), bureau chief of BBC, and his reporter Zafar Abbas (R) chat in their damaged office Friday. Some five unidentified attackers stormed BBC bureau Thursday night and roughed up staff. — AFP/UNB photo

Sino-US officials talk strained relations

BEIJING, Aug 26: A top US State Department official and a Chinese vice foreign minister held more than three hours of talks Saturday on problems that have brought Sino-US relations to a low point, reports AP.

Peter Tarnoff, an under-secretary of state, arrived in Beijing Friday and met Saturday with Vice Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing.

The talks were held in a "frank, open and constructive manner," said US Embassy spokesman Robert Laing, who declined to provide details of specific issues discussed.

Tarnoff will meet again with Li at a banquet Saturday night, and on Sunday with Foreign Minister Qian Qichen.

China hopes the talks will be a "concrete step forward," Foreign Ministry spokesman Chen Jian said earlier in the week.

Greenpeace Japan collects 400,000 signatures

TOKYO, Aug 26: Greenpeace Japan said today it had collected more than 400,000 signatures, including those of more than 120 MPs, to protest against France's resumption of nuclear testing, reports AP.

"On average, almost 7,000 Japanese citizens per day have signed up to express opposition — including about two MPs in every 24-hour period," said Greenpeace campaigner Kazuo Suzuki, in a statement issued by the Japan branch of the environment group Greenpeace International.

The Japanese petition is part of a worldwide Greenpeace project expected to bring in more than three million signatures opposing the resumption of nuclear testing, the statement said.

The petition will be delivered to French President Jacques Chirac on September 1, it said.

Taiwan opens its own women's confce

TAIPEI, Aug 26: Taiwanese women opened their own international conference on promoting women's rights Saturday, denouncing China as unfit to host the huge UN Conference on Women next month, reports AP.

Taiwan's conference was organised by opposition lawmaker Annette Lu, who was refused permission by China to go to Beijing during the UN's Fourth World Conference on Women.

Lu said women should boycott the Beijing conference to protest China's "suppression of its own women as well as those in Taiwan."



A convoy of British UN armed brigade head for Belgrade airport after they left the eastern Bosnian enclave of Gorazde on Friday. Eighty UN peacekeepers were shipped out of Gorazde on August 25 with the rest of the group of 170 British troops and 10 Norwegian medics to follow. The 180 British and Norwegians had all been scheduled to on August 25, following the withdrawal of 72 Ukrainian troops on August 23, but the plans appeared to be confused by an incident late on Thursday in which two Bosnian soldiers were shot dead entering the UN camp. — AFP/UNB photo

Karadzic ready to compromise on quick end of war

PALE, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Aug 26: Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic said late Friday he was ready to make compromises to speed up the end of the war, but would never accept less than 64 per cent of Bosnian territory, reports AP.

Speaking on television in Pale, capital of the self-declared Serb Republic in Bosnia Karadzic said, what matters most is to end the war as quickly as possible, adding that we must be prepared to accept certain compromises to achieve that end.

On the other hand, he added, it was out of the

question to accept any solution which would endanger the vital interests of the Serb Republic, and anything less than 64 per cent of the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina would be unfair and harmful.

AP adds from Sarajevo: Nearly 100 peacekeepers left the last UN "safe area" in eastern Bosnia, ending their mission on a jarring note — an armed clash that left two Bosnian intruders dead.

The United Nations reported that a skirmish broke out after government soldiers attacked British peacekeepers in the "safe area" of

Gorazde Friday. The British killed two of the intruders without sustaining casualties themselves.

A UN spokesman, Alexander Wivanko, said the incident involving an estimated 30 soldiers was "an act of banditry." The United Nations lodged a protest to the Bosnian government in Sarajevo.

But a late night report by the London-based Press Association quoted the British as saying that only four or five intruders were involved, with perhaps only one of them armed and some in civilian clothes.



US human rights activist Harry Wu (L) accompanied by his wife Chang-Lee (R) arrives at his home in Milpitas, CA on Thursday. Wu, 58, a naturalised US citizen, was expelled from China, 66 days after authorities detained him as he entered the country, and after he was convicted of spying and sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment and expulsion. At centre is Jeff Fiedler. — AFP/UNB photo

333m to be stricken with STD this year

on this subject has ever been done to this scale," a WHO spokesman told a news briefing.

The latest study, an overview of selected curable sexually transmitted diseases, was carried out by WHO's global programme on AIDS and the Rockefeller Foundation in New York.

Experts reviewed country data on four of the commonest STDs — gonorrhoea, chlamydia, syphilis and trichomonas — to project new cases in 1995. Viral STDs such as herpes were not in-

cluded. Data suggested that STDs are on the rise in China and in areas of the former Soviet Union, while declining in recent years in Norway, Sweden, Chile, Costa Rica, Thailand and Zimbabwe due to safer sex practices, according to the report.

"In much of the former Soviet Union and China there are suggestions that STDs are on the rise," Dr Stefano Bertozzi, acting head of WHO's Global Programme on AIDS, told Reuters.

WHO in a statement, expressed concern over the link between STDs and HIV, which cause Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.

"There is strong evidence that these curable STDs, because they cause genital lesions or inflammation, greatly increase the risk of sexual transmission of HIV," it said. AIDS is essentially a sexually transmitted disease, but HIV also spreads through drug injecting and blood transfusions. About 4.5 million of the 20 million HIV-infected people have developed

full-blown AIDS, according to the Geneva-based WHO.

Antonio Gerbase, the study's main author at WHO, was quoted as saying: "The huge number of sexual infections sets the stage for the amplification of HIV."

He added: "We must not be complacent. Sexually transmitted diseases are far from being controlled." Studies in sub-Saharan Africa, Europe and North America have suggested that there is approximately four times greater risk of becoming infected with HIV if a

Off the Record

Enormous baby

CARACAS: A girl weighing 15.6 pounds and measuring 28 inches was born recently in Venezuela's Apure state, reports said in Caracas Thursday, reports Xinhua.

Andreina Aguirre was born at the Dr Pablo Acosta Ortiz Hospital in the city of San Fernando. She is the twelfth child of Carmen Hernandez, 35, and Rafael Aguirre, both residents of San Juan de Payara, in the same state.

According to official statistics, Andreina's weight is a record among births registered in the region. The baby's mother said her most immediate concern is how to feed all her children, even though her husband gets up very early to go to work in the fields every day.

Dual life ends after 19 years

NEW YORK: For nearly two decades, Luis Gonzalez cloaked himself in the tapings of an ordinary life, reports AP.

Family man, hard worker, upstanding citizen: All were apt descriptions. Murder suspect was not — until this week.

Gonzalez, whose real name is David Galletti, was arrested Wednesday in South Carolina in a 1976 slaying in Brooklyn. A routine fingerprint check revealed his true identity, unknown even to his wife and two children, police said.

Galletti, 42, was extradited Thursday to New York City. He was to be arraigned on a murder charge in state Supreme Court in Brooklyn.

Authorities said the fugitive evaded the law for 19 years by skillfully reinventing himself and ending up in Henningway, South Carolina, a town of 800 people.

New York homicide investigators knew Galletti as a drug-using street tough whose yellowing mug shot — taken in 1975 after he allegedly assaulted a police officer — was taped to their office wall, said Detective Bobby Alongi. They were astonished by what they discovered when they flew south to make the arrest.

"He turned his whole life around," Alongi said. "We expected the guy in the picture. We found this clean-cut executive. He looked great."

Galletti is accused of being one of two masked men who, in October 1976, sprayed a group of people with gunfire on a Brooklyn street, killing Leutisher Johnson, 52, and injuring three others.

Rama Rao's wife publicly apologises to save govt

NEW DELHI, Aug 26: An Indian chief minister's wife today offered a public apology in a desperate bid to save a state government that was on the verge of collapse following a family row involving her, reports AP.

Lakshmi Parvathi said in Hyderabad, capital of the southern state of Andhra Pradesh, that she would in future not dabble in politics and confine herself to home. The Press Trust of India (PTI) reported.

Parvathi's statement came as the Andhra Pradesh government, led by her husband N T Rama Rao, faced collapse after a family revolt against her alleged interference in the state administration.

Chief Minister Rama Rao, a movie actor-turned-politician, lost support of the majority of his regional Telugu Desam Party legislators following a coup on Friday by his son-in-law. N

Chandrababu Naidu. Naidu, a Telugu Desam leader, claimed the support of 163 of the party's 220 members in the 294-strong Andhra Pradesh legislature, and announced that he was ready to form a new government in the sprawling coastal state.

Naidu had the backing of Rama Rao's four sons from his first marriage and a second son-in-law. Newspapers said they objected to Parvathi's alleged mounting interference in party and government affairs.

Parvathi, who married Rama Rao, then a widower, in 1993 after starting to write his biography, said in a statement today that she was sorry "for mistakes she had inadvertently committed."

"I am overtaken by a remorseful feeling that I am the cause for my husband's predicament," she said.

Gunmen kill 8 in Karachi slum

KARACHI, Aug 26: A group of armed men stormed a slum house in central Karachi today slaughtering eight people and critically injuring two others, officials in southern Pakistan city said, reports AP.

The victims were mostly labourers from northern Pakistan. A survivor told officials that the unidentified attackers were all armed and had women up everyone in the house by striking them with rifle butts.

GENEVA, Aug 26: Far more people contract sexually transmitted diseases than previously thought and it appears such infections "greatly increase" the risk of catching the HIV virus, the World Health Organisation (WHO) said on Friday, reports Reuter.

At least 333 million people will be stricken this year with curable Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), including syphilis and gonorrhoea, WHO said.

WHO said its previous estimate, dating to 1990, of 250 million new cases per year for all STDs, curable and incurable, was based on far less data. "It is the first time a study

person has a genital ulcer caused by syphilis, according to the Agency.

Sexually transmitted diseases can cause other serious complications, especially for women, it added.

These include spreading of infection to the pelvis, which in turn is a major cause of infertility in many parts of the world.

"Syphilis, gonorrhoea and chlamydia can be passed on to infants during pregnancy and childbirth; their effects range from abortion and stillbirth to severe eye infections and pneumonia in the newborn, WHO said.

Wu intends to return

MILPITAS CALIF, Aug 26: Human rights activist Harry Wu expelled by the Chinese after two months of detention and spying conviction said on Friday that he intends to return to China someday.

"This is the place I was born. This is the place I want to die. Of course I will go back. Wu said in an interview with Reuters. I have my blood, my tears in the Chinese soil."

The government won't welcome me, but that doesn't mean the government will last forever, said Wu