

## International

## Taiwanese plane crash Real cause yet to be ascertained

TAIPEI, Feb 17: Grieving relatives gathered at an orange-and-blue tent near Taipei's airport Tuesday to identify victims of a China Airlines jet that crashed and exploded, killing more than 200 people, reports AP.

Officials were trying to piece together the final moments of flight CI676, which was returning to Taipei on a foggy, rainy night from the resort Island of Bali. One report suggested the pilots may have mistaken a nearby road for the runway.

The crash and explosion destroyed several houses located along the roads in a semi-rural area.

On Tuesday, hundreds of police, soldiers and firefighters still were searching the crash site along a road that runs parallel to the runway for more human remains and personal items that may help identify the victims.

Rescue teams had to pull bodies and body parts off the second floor of houses blackened by the explosion. Other charred and dismembered bodies lay in the road.

An official on the scene said all 196 people on board were dead. The official news agency

had said nine people on the ground were killed, but police later reduced that number to seven. Among the dead was a 2-month-old baby. Two others were injured on the ground.

Even though the weather was bad, it was far from clear what caused the crash.

Airport officials said the flight data recorders had been recovered and sent to the United States for analysis.

On Monday, a China Airlines official said the plane had asked to make a second approach due to poor visibility. But airport officials said Tuesday there was no evidence to determine whether the plane actually tried a second approach, or simply veered off course.

A released recording of conversations with the control tower showed that the pilot asked to land when the plane was on course. But then lost touch and did not answer a question about whether he would try a second approach. Two beeps were then heard, which Chang Kuo-cheng, Taiwan's deputy director of civil aeronautics said could have been from the plane's warning system.

## BRIEFLY

### 15 labourers killed in India

Fifteen labourers, including 12 women were killed and nine others injured when mounds of earth gave way in two separate incidents in Gujarat during the last 48 hours, PTI says from Surat.

Police said Monday that 12 women, who were engaged in digging work at Kathana village under Anand police station in central Gujarat on Saturday last, were crushed to death after they were trapped under the debris. The rescue workers extricated seven others, police said. In the second incident, three labourers were killed and two others seriously injured at Bhensali village under Vagra Taluka of Broach district on February 15.

### Bosnian Serb army chief sacked

President Biljana Plavsic on Monday sacked Bosnian Serb army chief Pero Colic, the presidency said in a statement, AFP reports from Banja Luka.

Colic, seen by Plavsic's staff as too close to nationalist hardliners, was replaced by General Momir Tadic, the statement said. Tadic, commander of the Bosnian Serb army first Corps, showed support for Plavsic last year during a power struggle the president and hardliners loyal to wartime leader Radovan Karadzic.

### Myanmar leader in Philippines

Myanmar's senior leader was to arrive Tuesday for a state visit to the Philippines, the first by a leader of the military-run country since it joined a regional grouping last year, AP reports from Manila.

Gen. Than Shwe is scheduled to meet with Philippine President Fidel Ramos and sign several accords, including an agreement on a Philippine scholarship programme for 60 Myanmar students, officials said. Than Shwe is accompanied by a 47-member delegation comprised of businessmen and senior Myanmar officials.

### Congo opposition leader held

Etienne Tshisekedi, opposition leader in the Democratic Republic of Congo, is under house arrest in his native village in Kasai province, the independent daily Le Potentiel reported yesterday.

Le Potentiel said it had sent one of its reporters to Kabea-Kamwanga, where Tshisekedi was taken on Saturday after his arrest here on Thursday. The paper said Tshisekedi arrived at the family home on Saturday evening, escorted by about 30 soldiers and accompanied by the deputy interior minister for security, major Faustin Munene.

### Farrakhan arrives in Cuba

Louis Farrakhan, the leader of the militant US Nation of Islam group, arrived in Cuba Monday on an unofficial three-day visit to the communist-ruled Caribbean island nation, officials said, AFP reports from Havana.

Farrakhan, who is on an extensive world tour, was due to meet with government officials and hold a press conference Tuesday, the officials said.

## Srebrenica women demand int'l effort to locate 6,000 missing men

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Feb 17: Three thousand desperate women and children from Srebrenica gathered Monday in Sarajevo to demand stronger international efforts to locate 6,000 men missing since Bosnian Serbs overran the Muslim enclave in 1995, reports AP.

"I lost two sons, husband, brother and many relatives," said Sabra Mujicic, 50. "There are thousands of mothers like me and we will never give up."

International forensic experts have found more than 1,000 bodies near Srebrenica since Bosnian Serbs forces captured the eastern enclave, once one of six UN-protected "safe areas."

Some 6,000 Srebrenica residents, mostly men, are unaccounted for and are presumed

dead. About 27,000 Bosnians are still missing.

For almost a year, women from Srebrenica have been protesting across Bosnia, demanding information about their missing relatives.

Amor Masovic, the head of the Muslim commission for missing people, said remains are deteriorating.

At Monday's protest, the women urged Alja Izetbegovic, the Muslim president of the joint Bosnian presidency, to request help from Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic, who still yields great influence in the Bosnian Serb republic.

Despite official denials and inconclusive international investigations, some Srebrenica survivors believe that some of their relatives are still alive and being kept in prisons or mines in Serbia.

"We are giving them all the benefits we can," said one. "We are providing them medical fa-

## Clash leaves 87 dead in Angola

KINSHASA, Congo, Feb 17: Fighting between Angolan troops and rebels seeking independence in a small petro-rich coastal region has left 87 people — including 57 civilians — dead, guerrilla officials said Monday, reports AP.

The guerrilla army known as FLEC-FAC said that its fighters were "hunting down" an estimated 5,000 Angolan military troops in Cabinda — a coastal territory tucked in between Congo and the Republic of Congo, according to a statement released in the Congolese capital, Kinshasa.

The statement did not say how many rebels or soldiers were killed in the fighting.

Fighting began earlier this month over Cabinda, killing an unknown number of the people, the rebels said.

Millions of Indians will enter polling booths for national elections which started on Monday. But for residents of Orissa, as well as many other parts of the country, the high-profile promises of politicians have little or no impact on their daily struggle against intrastate poverty.

Just one narrow, potholed road leads to Orissa's Sukinda Valley, home to 80 per cent of

the country's chromite mines. Cars are a rarity in a district where most people get around on their bare feet, bullock carts or rickety bicycles.

Though this eastern state is rich in minerals, almost half of Orissa's 32 million people get less than 2,400 calories of food per day, the Indian Planning Commission's poverty line.

Living standards have stood still for 20 years "elections or no elections, we still struggle for two square meals every day," says Gopinath Mundu, one of thousands of miners in the Sukinda Valley.

He says living conditions have stood still here for the last two decades.

"We have to work very hard the whole day, but the daily wages are extremely low," says Ramchandra Hembram, who

has toiled in mines for 15 years.

"The wages have increased over the years, but prices have increased much more. Our conditions in the earlier days were better, even with lower pay."

Mine workers take home some 80 rupees (2.05 dollars) a day.

Pramila, the wife of a miner in a separate settlement of mud huts and primitive buildings near Sukinda, says elections and electoral promises have come and gone for the past 30 years — but still nothing has changed.

"At every election, we are promised that something better might happen, but it's always the same," she says. "I am struggling to feed my family."

Electoral promises keep coming. Promises are again coming thick and fast from po-

litical parties in the run-up to India's second election in less than two years.

The Congress Party, which has traditionally enjoyed wide support in Orissa, says its agenda is "the elimination of poverty as we have known it for centuries".

Few take the rhetoric seriously. Many do not know who is standing for election in their constituency, some are not even aware that a poll is coming.

"When are the elections? What elections? Asks a middle-aged labourer in a village outside the valley, though with no excitement in his voice.

Officials at the mining firms in Sukinda say they are doing their best to improve the lot of their workers.

"We are giving them all the benefits we can," said one. "We are providing them medical fa-

cilities. They are definitely leading a better life here than in many parts of the state."

State government officials say a lack of funds and cumbersome red tape make it difficult to tackle Orissa's poverty.

For example, the announcement of elections has put a break on the implementation of some World Bank poverty alleviation programmes.

"For the last two months, the development activities, the real implementation part of some poverty alleviation projects, have slowed down," says state Janata Dal General Secretary Krishna Chandra Patra.

Mishra said about 40 per cent of the state's population comprised lower castes and tribals.

"Unless their condition improves, the overall condition of

the state's economy cannot improve," he said.

Opponents say they have the answer. Major Opposition parties in the Congress-ruled state, the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party and Janata Dal, blame the state government for not taking poverty alleviation programmes seriously.

The right-wing Clerides won a second five-year term Sunday with 50.8 per cent of the vote compared to 49.2 for former Foreign Minister George Lakkovou, who was backed by a centrist-communist alliance.

The polls were held only in the Greek Cypriot part of Cyprus, which is separated from the breakaway northern Turkish Cypriot state by a UN buffer zone. It was set up after Turkey invaded the island in 1974 and occupied Turkish districts.

Clerides reelected Cypriot president

NICOSIA, Cyprus, Feb 17: President Glafcos Clerides got down to forming a national unity government Monday, a day after he was returned to office in an election that disappointed the Turkish Cypriot leadership, reports AP.

The government is not serious about our poor people. People in the government have used power only for their personal gain."

The statement did not say how many rebels or soldiers were killed in the fighting.

Fighting began earlier this month over Cabinda, killing an unknown number of the people, the rebels said.

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