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INDIA: STREET PLAY COMPETITION

The All India Catholic University Foundation (AICUF) West Bengal State Team organized a Street Play Competition on April 28 at St. Xavier's College, Kolkata. Six teams of college students took part in the event, each tackling different social issues concerning the state of West Bengal. The group which staged "Crying Monalisa" was judged the winner after recounting the misery of rape victims of nandigram. Judges were four professors including Jesuit Father Dominic Savio. (THE HERALD)

INDIA: TEACHERS UNDERGO MEDIA TRAINING

The diocese of Dibrugarh in cooperation with NESCOM (North East Social Communications), an NGO based in Guwahati, conducted two seminars on media education for teachers of St Paul's High School in Majuli May 8-9, and St. Mary's High School in Margherita May 10-11. The total 57 teachers were animated on the basics of communication, the influence and effects of mass media, media language, advertising, media evaluation skills and the need for media education. Facilitators included NESCOM Director, Fr Joseph Manickathan, and Fr William Horo, director for communications of Dibrugarh diocese. (THE HERALD)

INDIA: PIONEER CHRISTIAN JOURNALIST LEO PANAKAL DIES AT 80

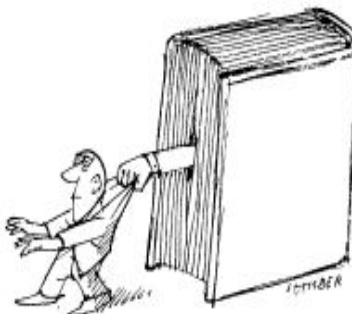
Long time news correspondent and editor of the first-ever Catholic news agency in Asia ("Catholic News of India") Leo Panakal died on May 14 in his hometown Kochi, Kerala. He was 80 years old. Panakal received world recognition as a journalist by interviewing the first prime minister of India, Jawahar Lal Nehru, after India became a republic. He worked with American Jesuit Fr John Barrett to establish "Catholic News of India" and the Indian Catholic Press Association (ICPA). Besides being a writer, Panakal was also a great thinker, author, teacher and linguist. (THE HERALD)

PHILIPPINES: CHURCH-RUN RADIO CONNECTS WORKERS TO HOME VIA INTERNET

Radio station DZWT run by Baguio diocese started Internet broadcasting to overseas Filipino workers (OFW) on June 6. The transmission is enabled by "streaming audio" technology through www.dwzt540.am, a website launched by the station in February. The station started "Damdamag OFW" (OFW News) in August 2005 with on-site reporters who themselves are OFWs. The service aims to reach out to fellow OFWs needing help in various forms. The service going online will further boost OFWs in many more places around the world. The country's National Statistics Office says that about 24,000 of the 1.06 million OFW deployed in 2004 in Asia, Europe and North America were from the Cordillera Administrative Region in northern Luzon, where Baguio belongs. (UCANEWS)

RADIO VERITAS ASIA SUPPORTS PEASANTS IN VIETNAM

Since 1978, peasants in Vietnam's poorest areas have "been able to follow Sunday Mass, hear Bible teachings and be informed of the life of the Church" through Radio Veritas Asia (RVA) broadcasts from Manila. Monsignor Pietro Nguyen Van Tai said this on June 29, feast of St. Peter the apostle and first Pope, when more than 200 Vietnamese Catholics visited the radio station. "RVA is a welcoming place that supports Catholics in Vietnam and other Asian countries," said a Vietnamese religious staying in the Philippines. RVA is the continental short-wave radio station of the FABC broadcasting in 16 languages throughout Asia and parts of Russia. (ASIANEWS)



INDIA: MOTHER TERESA STATUE IN BERTHAMPORE

The city of Berhampore in Murshidabad district installed a statue of Mother Teresa in front of the District Magistrate's office on June 24. "I want someone worthy of people's love to be placed here," said former District Magistrate Manjunatha Prasad who initiated the statue installation project. About 2,000 people participated in the open-air civic function including District Magistrate Subir Kumar Bhadra, Archbishop Lucas Sirkar of Kolkata,

Bishop Joseph Gomes of Krishnagar, Church of North India Bishop Brojen Malakar of Barrackpore and Kolkata Salesian Provincial, Fr. John Berger. (SAR NEWS)

INDONESIA: BISHOP, PRIESTS OFFER SONG TO WIDOWS

Bishop Fransiskus Xaverius Rocharjanta Prajasuta of Banjarmasin diocese sang his homily at the June 17 silver jubilee Mass in Jakarta Cathedral for widows. The bishop was joined in by his three concelebrants in his song for some 600 Catholic widows from Jakarta who attended the 25th anniversary of *Perhimpunan Warakawuri Katolik Santa Monika* (St. Monica union of Catholic widows). "Even though the night is very dark, I know that the sun is there. Even though my life is filled with sorrows, I know his love is faithful. Everything will be better," Bishop Prajasuta sang to conclude his homily. As he finished the song, which he had composed, applause filled the cathedral. (UCANEWS)

PAKISTAN: SEMINAR ON "CHILDREN AND MEDIA"

The National Catholic Centre for Social Communications conducted a media seminar at Rabita Manzil, Lahore on May 12 to celebrate World Communication Day (WCD). About 100 religious, seminarians, parents and youth joined in the event hosted by Archbishop Lawrence Saldanha, chairman of the Pakistani bishops' communication commission. The seminar aimed to acquaint people on the proper use of media. Rabita Manzil prepares the annual celebration of WCD in Pakistan with relevant liturgical and promotional materials. (WAVE)

PHILIPPINES: ART EXHIBIT AIMS TO INSPIRE PEOPLE TO LOVE

An exhibit of businessman-turned-artist, Joey Velasco's paintings at the major seminary of University of Santo Tomas in Manila opened on June 29 and lasted till July 14. The works included Velasco's famous "Hapag" (table), a rendition of the Last Supper, with Filipino street children aged 4-14 sharing a meal with Jesus instead of disciples. After finishing this painting in December 2006, Velasco wrote a book "They Have Jesus: The Stories of the Children of Hapag" about the children who posed as models for the painting. Another work displayed in the exhibit is Velasco's rendition of the Parable of the Prodigal Son called "Atrophia" (Greek for "atrophy"). The twist is that the "prodigal son" is returning to God no longer as a young man. He came to his senses after straying for so long when he is already old. Velasco, 40, hopes that the Spirit who inspired him will also inspire viewers of his work to love. (UCANEWS)

SINGAPORE: PRIESTS, SEMINARIAN PUBLISH BLOGS

Some priests and a seminarian have started their own weblogs as a way to reflect on their spiritual experiences as well as evangelize the Internet community. Fr Aloysius Ong maintains his blog "Life's Crosses" at <<http://alongcorner.blogspot.com>> since 2001 when he was still a seminarian. The goal is to give readers insight into the life of a seminarian, now diocesan priest. Jesuit Fr Christopher Soh has been reflecting on liturgical readings on his blog "Breaking the Word" at <<http://breaking-the-word.blogspot.com>> since March 2006. He sees blogging as a convenient way to share his reflections and homilies with readers. Seminarian Terence Kesana of St Francis Xavier Major Seminary maintains "My Spiritual Journal" at <<http://schwiing.blogspot.com>> since 2004 to share how he experiences God in his daily life. "Blogging is a great tool for evangelizing. I want to be part of the effort to bring God's presence onto the Internet," Terence wrote. (CN)

INDONESIA: ENVIRONMENT HIGHLIGHTED FOR WORLD COMMUNICATIONS DAY

Atambua diocese in West Timor celebrated the 41st World Communications Day on May 18 with an essay writing contest on the environment for secondary school students. Some 54 senior high and 71 junior high school students joined the contest held at the diocesan retreat house, *Pondok Emaus* (Emmaus house). (UCANEWS)

KOREA: 10TH ANNUAL 'CATHOLIC LITERARY AWARD'

The Catholic Literary Award, instituted by the "Catholic Times" in 1998 for authors who promote the Catholic spirit in literature, celebrated its 10th anniversary on June 7 with an awards function in Seoul. Present were Bishop Thaddeus Cho Hwan-kil, auxiliary of Daegu diocese, and Bishop Basil Cho Kyu-man, auxiliary of Seoul. (FIDES)

DAILY CATHOLIC NEWS BY EMAIL

Catholic News Update Asia (CNUA) started daily news dispatches by email on June 29. The aim is to disseminate "authentic Church news" via electronic email to Asian countries. Compiling editor K.M. Selvaraj says the news service also aims to help "network, coordinate, and share knowledge and expertise for missionary and pastoral works." For subscriptions, email to <catholic.asia@hotmail.com>. CNUA is a member of the Indian Catholic Press Association (ICPA), and Signis-India. (CNUA)

INDIA: CREATE MOVEMENT OF LETTER WRITERS, BISHOP TELLS CATHOLIC JOURNALISTS

Bishop Antony Devotta of Tiruchirapalli diocese urged members of the Indian Catholic Press Association (ICPA) to create a movement of people who can write letters to newspaper editors. At the April 12, 2007 meeting of ICPA in Chennai, the Chairman of the Commission for Social Communication in Tamil Nadu recalled his association with "The New Leader" magazine when Catholics responded to a column titled "Tell the bishops what you think." The interaction between bishop and lay people through the magazine "was very encouraging," the prelate said. (THE HERALD)

CAMBODIA: COMMUNICATION CENTER LAUNCHES WEBSITE

The Catholic Social Communications (CSC) office of Cambodia has launched this year the website <www.catholiccambodia.org> with a news service in Cambodian, English, French and Spanish. The aim is to inform net visitors about the Catholic communities in the country. Cambodia's 11.4 million population is 95 percent Buddhist. Muslims make up about 2.5 percent. Christians are a small minority and were heavily persecuted during the Khmer Rouge regime. The bishops' conference of Cambodia is made up of the Apostolic Vicariate of Phnom Penh, and the Apostolic Prefectures of Battambang and Kompong Cham. (FIDES/CSC)

CAMBODIA: DON BOSCO OVER THE RADIO

Don Bosco Sihanoukville Radio (DBS Radio) started broadcasting a series of 60 minute programs on the life, work and spirituality of Salesian Founder, Don Bosco, aimed towards young listeners in the country. The programs are produced by a former student of Polpet Communications School in cooperation with the Don Bosco Technical School in Sihanoukville. (FIDES)

INDIA: ICPA TO PROMOTE VALUE-BASED JOURNALISM

The newly installed president of the Indian Catholic Press Association (ICPA) said he would strive hard to make ICPA a national organization among the secular mainstream media and promote Christian values. The 35-year-old Father Adolf Washington, a freelance journalist from Bangalore and former ICPA vice president, said he will enroll young journalists to infuse "fresh blood" into the organization and promote value-based journalism. Washington was elected president at the ICPA Annual General Body Meeting in Bangalore on May 6. ICPA is the 44-year-old organization of Catholic journalists, editors, educators and publishers in India. It organized the 13th National Conference of Christian Journalists in Bangalore on May 5. (THE HERALD)

SRI LANKA: SINGING OF LATIN HYMNS OFFERS SENSE OF 'REUNIFICATION'

A program involving choral music in Latin called *Metanoia* (change your life) in April at St. Joseph's College in Colombo helped foster an atmosphere of unity as well as holiness. More than 800 people attended the Holy Week event with hundreds of students from prestigious Catholic schools singing Latin hymns and praying in English, Sinhalese and Tamil - the three national languages. "The sweet songs made me remember the past," a 64-year old woman said. An elderly priest said the music took him to his childhood in the 1950s when Sinhalese, Tamils and Burghers (people of European descent) attending Mass together sang "God's music," the Latin hymns. Latin had long been a common language for Catholics in Sri Lanka before it gradually disappeared after the Second Vatican Council. But many elderly Catholics still consider it their spiritual "mother language." (UCANEWS)