WHO endorses public health care
Geneva meeting shortened to fight new influenza virus

LEIPZIG, Germany/GENEVA, Switzerland: The improvement of primary health care and pandemic influenza preparedness are two of the main resolutions adopted at this year’s World Health Assembly in Geneva in Switzerland. Last week, the 193 Member States adopted a final plan of action on public health, innovation and intellectual property, which includes an agreed list of stakeholders who will be involved in the process, as well as a time frame and indicators by which to monitor progress.

This year’s meeting in Geneva was closed after only five days. The WHO Director-General Dr Margaret Chan was called upon to consider criteria other than geographical spread when evaluating the phases of influenza pandemic. Dr Chan further stated that her decision to declare an influenza pandemic would be based on current knowledge, as the virus continues to spread over the coming weeks and months.

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The WHO World Health Report 2008 found striking inequities in health outcomes and the access to care. Globally, annual government expenditure on health varies from as little as US$20 per person to well over US$6,000. For 5.6 billion people in low- and middle-income countries, more than half of all health-care expenditure is out-of-pocket payments.

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British Asian kids avoid the dentist

Children of Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani origin in the UK visit the dentist less frequently than any other ethnic group, according to recent research. Three-quarters of all children under 16 in England have a high amount of sugar in their diet, which in turn has a negative impact on general health. In addition, the two universities have announced that they will arrange the exchange of students on a regular basis.

Tokyo Medical and Dental University is the largest public dental school in Japan, with over 5,000 students. The university hospital treats 19,000 patients per year.

New college for Pakistan

Pakistan has opened the new Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed bin Al Nahyan Medical and Dental College in Lahore. The school is the first in the country to be opened this year to tackle the shortage of medical and dental personnel.

Devices for snoring fail

A survey by the UK watchdog Ofcom has shown that three-quarters of over-the-counter remedies for snoring do not work for their users. Among others, the magazine tested dental devices that hold the jaw forward to keep the airway open.