Mandela meets two top Indian politicians

Coalition govt in UP shows first signs of strain

NEW DELHI. Mar 28: A new coalition government in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh showed the first signs of strain after just seven days in power when two key allies began arguing over how the government should be run, newspapers said today, reports AFP.

Manshi Ram, Chief of the BSP, a party of "untouchables" which heads the coalition. Thursday accused its partner the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party), of interference, The Times of India and other dailies said.

The BSP and Hindu nationalist BJP formed a coalition on March 21 in the northern state. home to some 140 million people, after five months of political deadlock in the province.

Under the accord, BSP leader Kumari Mayawati became the chief minister for six months. with the BJP nominating a successor for the next six months. Ram's warning came after

Mayawati was criticised for ordering the transfer of a large number of civil servants and police officers without consulting the BJP.

"The government cannot

function if such interference takes place," Ram was quoted as saying. "The chief minister has the prerogative of running the government."

The alliance was formed after hung elections last year. The main parties failed to agree on a coalition, forcing New Delhi to step in and run the state before the BSP and BJP finally struck

Ram also ruled out the possibility of extending his party's alliance with the BJP in Uttar Pradesh to other parts of the country.

Newspapers have quoted BJP leaders as saying that they were trying to enter into coalitions with BSP, which champions the cause of the millions of Hindu "untouchables", right across In-

The BJP, the country's main opposition party, formed a national government after last year's parliamentary elections but was forced out within 13 days after failing to muster majority in the House.

Another AFP report says: South Africa's President Nelson Mandela yesterday met two prominent Indian politicians more democratic.

and the widow of former pre-Rajiv Gandhi, a spokesman said.

Mandela, who arrived Thursday on a three-day visit, had an hour-long breakfast with the Italian-born Sonia Gandhi at her residence. "It was a private engagement," a South African diplomat said.

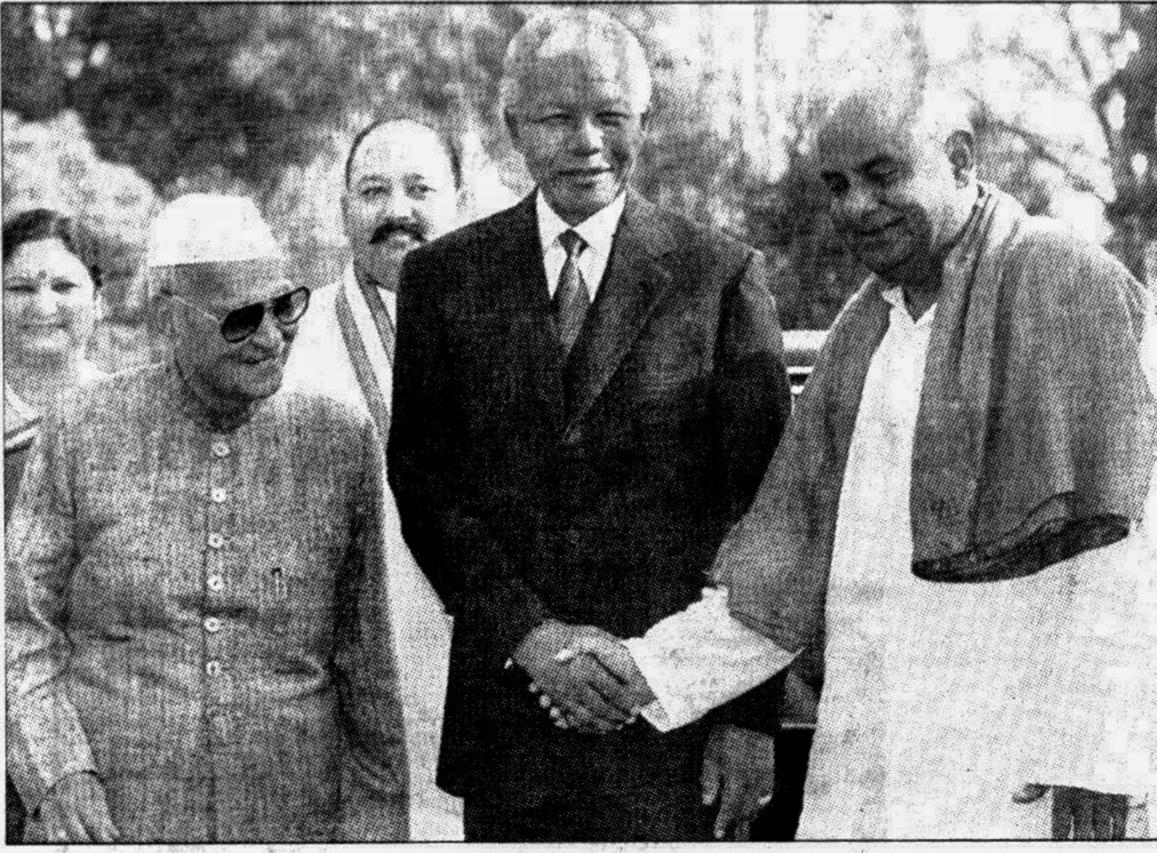
Mandela later met opposi-tion leader Atal Behari Vajpayee, who was prime minister for 13 days last year, and Sitaram Kesri, president of the Congress (I) Party, which keeps the present coalition government in power.

The president will have a luncheon meeting with Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda on Friday and follow it with meetings with other Indian leaders.

He will give a press conference Friday and leave for home Saturday. He met Indian President Shankar Dayal Sharma Thursday.

On his arrival, Mandela, making his second trip to India in two years, called for a restructuring of the United Nations to make the world body

Pilots of Air



South African President Nelson Mandela (C) is greeted by Indian counterpart Shankar Dayal Sharma (L) and Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda (R) on Thursday at Rashtrapati Bhavan (Presidential Palace) in New Delhi. Mandela, who arrived in New Delhi after attending Bangladesh's independence celebrations, called for the restructuring of the United Nations so that powers are evenly distributed. We don't believe a few countries should undermine what the international community decides," he said.

- AFP/UNB photo

8th day of protest continues in West Bank

US mediator meets Netanyahu

JERUSALEM, Mar 28: Special US mediator Dennis Ross met Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday night in an attempt to save the collapsing Israel-Palestinian peace process, as Israel - anticipating fresh violence - sent troop reinforcements to the

The American envoy faced a cool reception in the region. The Palestinian legislative council accused the United States of bias, and joined calls for Palestinians to take part Sunday in protests against Is-

"The goal of my mission is to

Arafat said that Israel's construction in disputed east Jerusalem was "a real crime versus the peace process."

Ramallah, hundreds of Palestinians threw stones at Israeli soldiers on the eighth day of protests against Israeli construction in disputed east Jerusalem, which Palestinians claim as a future capital, Israeli bullets, and Palestinian police

things develop," said the armed forces chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Amnon Shahak. "Therefore, there are forces there."

day with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem.

and Palestinians appeared far more difficult to bridge than the last time Ross visited the region, when he brokered Israel's January military withdrawal from most of the West Bank

"The tensions between the

level," said Edward G. Abington, the US consul general in Jerusalem.

Israel demands that before peace talks can resume. Arafat send a clear signal to Islamic militants that he will not accept terrorist attacks against Israel, and that Palestinian stone-throwing riots end.

Myanmar waters

YANGON, Mar 28: The Atlantic Richfield Company of the United States has struck commercially-exploitable gas at an offshore test well in the Myanmar waters of the Andaman Sea, the state-run New Light of Myanmar reported Fri-

ARCO struck natural gas at a

Hundreds of Chinese children being smuggled into HK

HONG KONG, Mar 28: Hundreds of Chinese children are being smuggled into Hong Kong each month and handed over to the government, apparently on rumours they will be allowed to stay in the British colony. local newspapers said today, reports Reuter.

Parents from China now living legally in Hong Kong are paying up to 3,000 (390 US dollars) to have their children. who do not have Hong Kong residency rights, smuggled into the territory, the South China Morning Post reported.

"We can't leave my son in China while both my husband and I are here," one woman queuing at the immigration department with her smuggled 14year-old son told the Post.

"We've heard that many par-

ents in our hometown are finding ways to smuggle their children to Hong Kong lately ... so I thought there would be an amnesty very soon," she said. But the Hong Kong govern-ment has repeatedly said all il-

legal immigrants, adults or children, will be sent back to China.

Some 487 have been surrendered to Hong Kong authorities this month. Five times the number from November, the Post said.

The tide is rising. The Ming Pao Daily said the number of

smuggled children under 14 years of age intercepted by police reached 330 in February, compared to an average of 26 during the first six-month last

Police intercepted a boat carrying 10 children, the youngest aged five, on Thursday, Ming Pao said.

Govt, MRTA make progress to end hostage crisis

LIMA, Mar 28: Peru's President Alberto Fujimori said on Thursday the government and Marxist rebels holding 72 hostages were making progress toward ending the 100-day crisis but there were still problems to overcome, reports Reuter.

The men held at the Japanese ambassador's home are set to spend Easter under the gun, but the final negotiating phase seems likely to start early next week," even though naturally, difficulties still exist, we are getting closer," Fujimori told local television station Panamericana.

Indo-Pak high level talks begin

Salman Haidar.

Sunday or Monday.

Kashmir Valley.

in the talks," said Omar Farooq,

the senior Muslim cleric in the

Earlier AFP says. Kashmir

separatists intend to carry their

guerilla war until they win self-

determination, despite India

and Pakistan reopening talks

separatist movements — Hizbul

Mujahedin, Lashkar-i-Taiba or

Harkatul Ansar told AFP at

Muzaffarabad that they are

determination, as twice pro-

posed by the United Nations:

of the divided state which has

left tens of thousands dead over

can end the war in hidin's part

The guerilla leaders say self-

Leaders of the three main

today on the divided state.

united on this point.

the past seven years.

US for closer EU-Turkish ties:

The United States reaffirmed Thursday its support for closer

relations between the European Union and Turkey, AP reports

declined comment on the announcement by German Foreign

Minister Klaus Kinkel ruling out Turkish membership in the

State Department spokesman John Dinger otherwise

"We would hope that the door to EU membership could re-

Billionaire Shaul Eisenberg dies:

Billionaire Shaul Eisenberg, a Nazi Germany refugee who built

up a business empire with a presence in dozens of countries,

died of a heart attack Thursday during a trip to Beijing, his

pany with interests throughout Israel, Europe, central Asia and

elsewhere. He also had controlling interests in the Israel

Chemicals conglomerate and in Zim Navigation, Israel's biggest

Blast kills 2 in Algiers: A bomb attack

in a restaurant-bar in the eastern suburbs of the Algerian

capital killed at least two people and left more than 20

wounded, hospital workers said Friday, AP reports from

bomb. The attack occurred in the El Marsa port at around 9 PM

(20:00 GMT) Thursday, hospital workers said on customary

China to crack down on drug trade:

China will crack down harder on the drug trade to ensure that

its "humiliating history" of narcotics abuse is not repeated, the

nation's top judge was quoted as saying Thursday. AP reports

also a major political issue concerning social stability, state

security, and the destiny of the nation," Ren Jianxin told a

national anti-drug conference in the Beijing that ended

meeting. China will work to curb the number of addicts, stop

drugs from entering the country and raise public awareness

about the dangers of drugs, the state-run Xinhua News Agency

Japan to resume grant aid to China:

Japan's Cabinet decided Friday to resume grant aid to China,

which it canceled in 1995 to protest China's nuclear weapons tests, the Kyodo news agency reported. AP reports from Tokyo.

day, will carry documents on new grants totaling 1.7 billion yen (dlrs 13.8 million), including one for medical equipment, Kyodo said. In 1994, the last full year of Japanese assistance to China,

Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikedo, who visits Beijing Satur-

Under a three-year anti-drug programme outlined at the

"The drug problem is not only an issue of public security, but

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the

Eisenberg was head of the Israel Corp., a huge holding com-

family said. He was 76, AP reports from Jerusalem

Ahmed said.

No apparent hint of compromise on Kashmir

NEW DELHI, Mar 28: Pakistan's senior diplomat met Indian Foreign Minister I.K. Gujral Friday, marking an end to a three-year gap in negotiations over difference that have brought India and Pakistan to war three times in 50 years, reports AP. In Kashmir, the Himalayan

territory claimed by both countries, shopkeepers closed their stores and streets were deserted in protest against the exclusion of Kashmiris from the talks. In New Delhi on Thursday,

police used water cannons and bamboo riot sticks to disperse hundreds of demonstrators trying to march toward the Pakistan Embassy to protest Pakistan's support for Muslim sep-aratists in Kashmir. The renewal of high-level

talks signalled an easing of tension after changes of governments in both countries. But neither has given any hint of compromise on their mutually exclusive claims to Kashmir. Pakistan Foreign Secretary

Shamshad Ahmed paid a courtesy call on Gujral to begin his four-day mission in India, and was to start formal talks later Friday with his counterpart.

from Washington.

EU in the near future.

shipping company.

Algiers.

anonymity.

from Beijing

Thursday.

main open for Turkey," Dinger said.

wing on strike PARIS, Mar 28: Ground per-

sonnel from Air France's domestic wing staged the latest in a series of wildcat strikes Friday, causing cancellation of "The meeting went off well," several flights at Paris' Orly airport, the airline said, reports Gujral said it was decided not to brief reporters about the

The strike, which as the talks until their conclusion on French began the long Easter weekend, will cause "very A pro-separatist Kashmir strong disturbances" in Air group, the All Party Hurriyat France Europe's flight schedule, Conference, said it wanted to be spokeswoman Fabienne part of future negotiations. Brebessen said. "If Kashmir is the issue, Kashmiris have to be involved

It was not immediately clear how long the strike would last. but the airline's pilots already have called a 48-hour strike for Monday and Tuesday. The unions have been

protesting the airline's restructuring. Air France Europe is merging with its parent company, the state-run Air France, later this year. The pilots and navigators of

Air France Europe, formerly known as Air Inter Europe, will have their paychecks cut with the restructuring and some jobs may be eliminated. The head of state-owned Air

France warned the company's bilots earlier this month that the strikes planned for March and April will cost the airline 1 billion francs (178 million

WASHINGTON, Mar 28: Two

teams of researchers working

independently have identified a

mutated gene that fosters ag-

gressive forms of brain, breast

and prostate cancer, reports AP.

lead to a test to help identify

cancers that are fast growing

and which should be treated

Arafat pulled

out gun

during banquet?

Lankan legislator today in-

sisted PLO leader Yasser Arafat

did pull out a revolver during an

official banquet here, despite

denials from Palestinian offi-

Tamil legislator Dharma-

lingam Siddarthan said he was

surprised to see a press release

by the Palestinian Mission in

New Delhi denying Arafat

pulled out a gun at the banquet

hosted by President Chandrika

nial," Siddarthan said. "I was

seated at the same table with

the two presidents when Arafat

pulled out the revolver from

under his olive green bush

President Kumaratunga had

just announced to her guests at

her tightly-guarded temple trees

residence on Monday the Pales-

tinian leader no longer carried

a gun, when Arafat proved her

lightly," Siddarthan said,

adding he took exception to the

PLO mission in Delhi belittling

him in its press release Thurs-

"Both presidents took it

"I am surprised at the de-

cials, reports AFP.

Kumaratunga.

COLOMBO. Mar 28: A Sri

Discovery of the gene may

France's domestic

US researchers find muted

gene linked to cancer

to save ME peace process reached a very, very serious

West Bank, reports AP.

Ross arrived in Jerusalem from Morocco, where he met for two hours Thursday in Morocco with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

raeli land expropriations.

take account of the situation in the Middle East for the president and the secretary of state and to give them a report at the end of this week," Ross said after meeting with Arafat.

Near the West Bank town of

troops fired tear gas and rubber moved quickly to disperse the protesters. Concerned that the violence would spread Sunday, Israel de-

ployed more troops around Palestinian cities in the West "We will not wait to see how

Ross was to meet late Thurs-

The gap's between Israelis

Palestinians and Israelis have

Gas found in

day, reports AP.

depth of 10,750 at its first test well which it has named "Shwepyihtay," the paper said. ARCO, which signed a pro-

duction-sharing agreement with Yangon's Ministry of Oil and Gas-in 1995, has the rights o drill in two blocks, M-9 and M-7. The gas was found in the M-9 block.

A Zairean woman with her child on her back carries the bread she sells as she walks in Kinshasha on Wednesday. Delegations from Kinshasha's transitional government and Laurent-Desire Kabila's rebel movement attended the start of the first international conference in Lome, Togo, organised by the Organisation of African Unity, aimed at bringing an end to Zaire's warring factions.

Off the Record

She loved to be loved

WOLVERHAMPTON. England: Barbara Fruin liked falling in love and getting married so much, she did it five times by the time she was 29. Four times, she forgot to get divorced first, re-

"I just wanted to be loved," she told Thursday's Birmingham Post, after pleading guilty to bigamy. She wanted cash as well said two of her husbands who went to police after finding out about each other.

Fruin, now 31, married her stepfather, Frederick Sims, in 1983, in Crawley in southern England when she was 18, police said. They never divorced, but that didn't stop her from marrying Vincent Morrish in Hove, just 20 miles (32 kilometers) away on the southern coast, in 1986. In 1988, still married to Sims and Morrish she married

Stephen Nicholson in High Wycombe, west of London, after meeting him on a pay-per-call chat line. He divorced her in 1989, he said, after she had a series of affairs — and after a pregnancy she claimed to get him to the altar

never materialised. She moved to Portsmouth, also on the south coast, and married Adam Curtis, a Navy man, in 1990. She soon ran up 8,000

pounds (dlrs 13,000) in debts while he was at sea; she disappeared, and he was left paying the debt. She married another Navy man, Andrew Grice, and they moved in with his mother in Wolverhampton central England in 1994 — again, after telling him she was pregnant — and while

she was still married to Sims, Morris and Curtis. Fruin squandered his life savings on a vacation, he said, and then left him a year later — but not before getting an "abortion" that cost his mother 200 pounds (dlrs 320). She told Grice she didn't want the child because it would have been disabled.

Curtis heard that his wife had married Grice through a mutual friend, and got in touch. They sent police after her, and on Wednesday, she pleaded guilty to two charges of marrying Curtis and Grice under false pretenses in a Wolverhampton court.

Police were still considering charging her with charges of bigamy because of her marriages to Morrish and Nicholson. "I suppose I'm blind when it comes to men," Fruin said, after

being told that she would be sentenced at a yet to be specified future date. "I just can't help falling for a bit of love and atten-Her husbands were less sentimental.

"I wish - I would have been spared that woman," Nicholson "I'll never be able to trust a woman again," Curtis said. "She

has ruined my life." Grice said he gave up his Navy career for her. "I wanted to be with her for the rest of my life," he said. "She's an evil, deceitful

Real 'Spiderman'

KUALA LUMPUR: Refused permission to climb the world's tallest skyscrapers, a Frenchman called "Spiderman" went across town Friday and climbed 12 stories up the side of a hotel.

Alain Robert, 34, took about 10 minutes to climb from the second-floor swimming pool of the Hotel Melia to the 14th floor as a crowd of 600 spectators below clapped and cheered.

Robert, of Valance, France, was arrested March 20 when he tried to climb one of the 88-story Petronas Towers without permission. Police pulled him through a window on the 60th floor. Trespassing charges were later dropped and the Malaysian government approved the climb, but managers of the towers

said Robert might damage their exterior fittings, which they said are not designed to support a person. Robert uses only his hands and feet to climb, unlike others who have scaled skyscrapers using special equipment attacked

to tracks for window-washing carts. Dressed in blue jeans and a sleeveless white "Hotel Melia" Tshirt. Robert climbed the hotel by clinging to metal window frames, periodically dipping the tips of his tape-wrapped fingers into white talc in a bag hung from his waist.

He turned and waved to the crowd at several points during the climb, and threw T shirts to them from the top. Passing traffic came to a halt as drivers watched. "This is nothing actually," Robert told reporters. "I want to

climb up the world's tallest building, but so far there is no per-Robert said he still hoped the managers of the 451.9-meter-

tall (1,483-foot-tall) towers would change their minds. "I am not heavy - only 48 kilograms (106 pounds), and I am only about five feet (152 centimetres)," he said

"So far, I have not got the permission, but I am confident we will get it. I want to climb it and give the money for charity, the AIDS foundation. Robert said he began climbing at age 13 when he was locked

out of the family apartment. Since then, he has climbed the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco and the Brooklyn Bridge and the Empire State Building in New York City. "Why do I climb? Because I like it," he said with a shrug. "I get

many sponsors and I have managed to combine my hobby with income and doing what I like to do. That is why my life is happy and good.

Albanian parliament okays limited amnesty for escaped prisoners The insurgency has sent

the aid totaled 7 billion yen (dlrs 62 million). Russia extradites ex-Azeri PM: Russia extradited Azerbaijan's former prime minister Thursday to face charges of plotting coups in his homeland. AP reports past month, Parliament passed from Baku. a law authorising a limited

The former premier. Suret Huseinov, was immediately imprisoned in Azerbaijan's capital of Baku after being extradited on a flight from Moscow, Russia's ITAR-Tass news agency reported. Huseinov briefly seized control over several different parts

of Azerbaijan in 1994. After he was ousted he fled to Moscow,

but was accused of organising coup attempts in Azerbaijan in

1995 and 1996. He also faces charges of involvement in drug

trafficking, state-run television in Azerbaijan reported. Rebels set off 2 bombs in Lima: Leftist guerillas set off two small bombs in residential neighbourhoods the capital, injuring two people, police said

Thursday. AP reports from Lima.

Authorities blamed the attacks Wednesday night on the Shining Path, a Maoist group that was severely weakened by the 1992 arrest of its leader. Abimael Guzman.

The Shining Path movement is at odds over tactics and leftist ideology with rival Tupac Amaru guerillas holding 72 hostages in the Japanese ambassador's residence.

amnesty to escaped prisoners.

convicts who had three years or less to serve.

vision reported. Civilians have looted ar-

high-risk investment schemes. Public rage over the funds, in which nearly every family lost money, soon escalated into anti-government protests. Much of the insurgency that

started in the south has moved north, making banditry and general lawlessness almost a way of life here. An argument between two

families near the southern town of Fier left 20 people dead Thursday, illustrating the danger in a country where many people now seem to be armed. Hurma Rredhi, a local re-

porter quoting police and hospital officials, said three Gypsies were killed Thursday morning when the argument between a Gypsy and another family began at Levan, a village just south of Fier.

The Gypsy family took revenge later in the day, and a shootout killed another 17 people. Other details were not immediately available. A 6-year-old boy also died Thursday, one day after men

fired machine guns at the passenger bus he was riding in. One man had died instantly in Wednesday's attack. The climate of lawlessness jeopardises European aid shipments needed to stave off

famine. More than 180 people have died so far and hundreds have been injured since the year began. Count Jan de Marchant et d'Ansembourg, the head of a European Union delegation that arrived Wednesday, said the Al-

banian government has asked for EU help in securing the main airport and the ports of Durres and Volora to facilitate aid shipments. "I think it's obvious that Al-

bania does need protection even for the humanitarian aid, and this is what we're working for." he told reporters. He said any European force

would be between a few hundred and a few thousand troops, adding details were still being worked out. In Vienna, the 54-nation Or-

ganisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe decided to send a mission - coordinated by former Austrian Chancellor Franz Vranitzky — as soon as possible to "provide advice and assistance" in the fields of democratisation, the media and human rights as well as election preparation and monitor-

In a memorandum to the UN Security Council in New York, the OSCE also said it would "explore other possibilities" for assistance, including monitor-

ing the collection of weapons looted from Albanian armories. OSCE officials said, however, that the operation was contingent on Security Council approval.

Later Thursday, Italy recommended that the UN Security Council approve sending a European force to Albania to protect humanitarian aid deliveries and help the government recover from a nationwide upheaval.

In the south, gunfire by rival Albanian gangs on Thursday forced the Red Cross to suspend plans to bring a truck carrying nine tons of food and other supplies across the Greek border. Fino has made restoration of law and order a priority of

He has said stability is neces-

sary if early elections are to be

held in June.

istry and secret police. Armed his caretaker administration.

vigilantes that cruise the capital with impunity are thought to be Democratic Party support-"It is very dangerous. There

nearly 12,000 Albanians flee-

ing to Italy, which has set up a

naval blockade to keep more

Albanian vessels from reaching

Italian ports. Italy is sending

back would be refugees it deems

dangerous. Military flights car-

ried 109 people back Thursday.

lice and pro-Berisha vigilantes

patrol the street of the capital

still controls the Interior Min-

after the 7 pm curfew.

In Tirana, heavily armed po-

Berisha's Democratic Party

are too many people with guns, including some of our 'people' we don't even know," said one police officer as he cruised the streets in an unmarked car.

TIRANA, Mar 28: Hoping to curb the violence and banditry that has convulsed Albania the

reports AP. Justice Minister Spartak Ngjela, an opposition member of Premier Bashkim Fino's caretaker government, submitted the legislation Thursday, which grants amnesty to about 700

Parliament, controlled by President Sali Berisha's Democratic Party, unanimously approved the amnesty, state tele-

mories around the country and prisoners have escaped from early all of the country's prisons in the unrest that started after the January collapse of

with stronger therapy, researchers said in studies published Friday. In its normal form, the gene acts as a tumor suppressor. But

the scientists said that when it is mutated, the gene is found most often in cancers that are difficult to treat and are often lethal. Though the finding advances an understanding of brain. breast and prostate cancer, the

researchers said it will offer no

immediate help to cancer pa-"This is an exciting discovery, but we don't want to exaggerate it." said Dr. Ramon parsons of the Columbia-Presbyte rian Medical Centre in New York. "It will require a lot of

work before it has clinical applications. One team that identified the gene was led by parsons and Michael Wigler of Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory in New York. They named the gene PTEN and their study is published Friday in the journal

Another team led by Peter Steck of the MD Anderson Cancer Centre in Houston isolated the same gene at about the same time and named it MMACI, for mutated multiple advance cancers. Steck's study is to be published in April in Nature Genet

The researchers found that the gene was missing or mutated in a high percentage of brain, breast and prostate cancers, but there is some evidence that it is also a factor in other

cancers.

Both Parsons and Steck said when the gene is functioning

- AFP/UNB photo