Grenade attack on political rally in

Cambodia: 11 killed, 112 injured

Beijing talks create new momentum in Sino-US ties'

WASHINGTON, Mar 30: US Vice President Al Gore returned from his most high-profile overseas trip with virtually nothing in terms of specific commitments from the Chinese, reports AP.

But beyond any specific pledges or issues, Gore advisers said the paramount goal was to gain a better insight into China's leaders and develop a personal report with them. Gore claimed significant success on this front.

Heading home after his trying Asia journey, Gore sad Saturday that talks in Beijing created critical "new momentum" in US-China relations.

"I think the mission was accomplished," Gore said in Seoul, the final stop on a weeklong trip that included visits to Tokyo, three Chinese cities, the South Korean capital and the Demilitarized Zone separating the Korean peninsula. The stops in Seoul and

Tokyo were courtesy calls on solid US allies, and marked Gore's first visit to South Korea in 21 years of government service. It also was his first time in China, the anchor of a trip designed to promote President Clinton's policy of engaging China on economic and security issues despite long-festering disputes about personal, po-litical and religious freedoms.

"We made true progress in lending forward momentum to the relationship with China while making it clear that the issues where we disagree will be pursued," Gore told reporters before boarding Air Force II for a 15-hour journey home that included a refueling stop in Alaska. He arrived in Washing-

future of Cambodia's fragile ton late Saturday night. democracy into uncertainty. It followed predictions of worsen-On the first day of the visit, ing political violence as parties China did sign lucrative busimaneuver before legislative ness contracts with General elections scheduled for Novem-Motors and Boeing, and the vice presidents visit helped push ber 1998. these deals to fruition.

sembly.

Rainsy was slightly injured

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia

Mar 30: Grenades thrown into a

political rally Sunday killed at

least 11 people and wounded

112 including Cambodia's lead-

ing opposition politician, Cam-

bodian officials said, reports

thrown in the apparent assas-

sination attempt against oppo-

sition leader Sam Rainsy as he

led some 200 supporters of his

Khmer Nation Party in a

demonstration against the gov-

erning Cambodian People's

Party outside the National As-

The bloody attack threw the

·Several grenades were

in the leg by shrapnel. A bodyguard who threw himself on the political leader to shield him was ripped apart by the blasts and killed. Aides drove Rainsy

to safety. Appearing at a news conference later, his clothes soaked in blood and the left lens of his glasses cracked, Rainsy blamed the attack on police and army "terrorists" taking orders from the formerly communist CPP, led by his bitter enemy. Second Premier Hun Sen.

Hun Sen ... the bloody guy, he should be sentenced and arrested," said Rainsy. "This is a terrible setback for the democratic process in Cambodia. It bodes ill for the national elec-

Khieu Kanharith, secretary of state for information and a member of the CPP, said at least 11 people were killed and 112

"The CPP has long experience with politics, and does not commit acts of violence against innocent people," Kanharith

said on behalf of his party. The injured included a US citizen, Ron Abney, 55, of the International Republican Institute, a democracy advisory group. Abney, of Cochran, Georgia, was wounded in the

Two reporters from local newspapers were reported killed. A correspondent for China's Xinhua News Agency was injured, as were four Cambodian journalists.

First Premier Prince Norodom Ranariddh, an ally of Rainsy, issued a statement calling the attack "totally unacceptable and barbaric." He named no suspects but called for a full investigation.

"This is a clear indication that the situation is deteriorating dramatically in Cambodia,"

"This attack was aimed to kill people, definitely. It's a clear act to crack down on the opposition.

Initial accounts said three grenades were thrown from a white car that drove past the crowd, gathered at a park in front of the National Assembly to denounce CPP control over the judicial system.

But Rainsy said grenades came from several directions. The first was thrown into a crowd of journalists near him, he said, and he was saved only by the bodyguard's interven-

Another was hurled from the crowd by a man in a military uniform, Rainsy said. Two more followed in quick succes-sion, sounding like a single blast. At least one came from the car.

Bid to kill Chandrika alleged

Lankan police nabs LTTE suicide squad member

COLOMBO, Mar 30: Sri Lanka police have arrested a senior Tamil Tiger rebel suicide squad member planning to as-sassinate President Chandrika Kumaratunga, the state-owned Sunday Observer newspaper re-

ported, says Reuter. The 26-year-old suspect, Anthonypillai Nesarajah, also known as Major Rahu Appa, had videotaped temple trees. Kumaratunga's official residence, from a high-rise building in the capital Colombo, the pa-

He had also revealed plans to attack helicopters used to transport senior government officials, it said.

A military spokesman said he had no information on the

A Tamil Tiger spokesman in London, Anton Rajah, said he had no information on the report but said the government has arrested innocent Tamil

civilians and then falsely claimed they were members of the rebel group.

Meanwhile, Sri Lanka's Tamil Tiger rebels have called for third party mediation to help end the country's ethnic conflict, a newspaper reported

The Independent Sunday Times quoted Shanker Mastrer, a rebel leader in the Indian Ocean island, as saying they wanted third party mediation because the Tamil people had been betrayed by successive governments and had no confidence in direct talks.

The government has declined previous offers of third party mediation to end the war, saying it was an internal mat-

"We'd like to find a lasting solution through dialogue," the newspaper quoted Shanker Mastrer as saving.

Jewish settlement in E Jerusalem

Egypt warns Israel of dire consequences

BREFFIY

Vietnam okays \$ 163m tunnel project: Vietnam has approved a 163 million dollars project to build a

tunnel through Hai Van Pass in central Vietnam, the official

Vietnam news agency reported yesterday, AFP says from Hanoi.

The project includes construction of a 14 kilometre (8.68 mile) road, including a five kilometre (3.1 mile) tunnel, running

through Hai Vann Passion Vietham's backbone North-South

National Highway one; the agency said. The rail and road

tunnel will dramatically shorten travel time between Vietnam's

ancient imperial capital of Hue and the coastal city of Danang.

a journey which now entails snaky switchbacks to climb the

Trials of 30 rioters begin in Jakarta:

Trials for some 30 people charged with involvement in riots in

Indonesia's central Java last week have already begun, police

Saturday," said police chief Triyono from Pekalongan, the town

some 300 kilometres (190 miles) from Jakarta where 1.000

people rioted for three days last week. Lieutenant Colonel

Triyono said 12 suspects were tried on Thursday and another 18

on Saturday on charges of damaging property and disturbing

Rabies hit 18 Indonesian provinces: A

total of 18 of Indonesia's 27 provinces remain affected by

cases of rabies, the director general for the eradication of

communicable diseases, Hadi Abendnego was quoted as saying

Road mishap kills 10 in China: Ten

people died and 17 were seriously injured when the bus they were travelling in plunged over a 200-metre (600 foot) drop and

into a river. Chinese news reports said yesterday, AFP reports

Qianjiang to Chongqing, plunged into the river on a winding,

mountainous road on the afternoon of March 24, the Yancheng

Evening News reported. It did not say how many people were

three-people died in a Seoul apartment building fire yesterday.

as a helicopter plucked people from the roof of the blazing

Complex area also left at least seven injured, firemen at the

scene said an hour after the blaze broke out at 5:00pm (0800

GMT). An AFP photographer at the scene said several people

were rescued by helicopter from the roof of the building. And

firefighters were moving in with hammers and hoses to rescue

The blaze in the densely-populated Han River Apartment

3 killed in Seoul bldg fire:

building, witnesses said, AFP reports from Seoul

The bus, which was travelling across Sichuan province from

More than 1,000 villages in the 18 provinces have registered

rabies, a report said yesterday, AFP reports from Jakarta.

"The court has already begun their trials on Thursday and

CAIRO, Mar 30: Israel will be "playing with fire" if it continues building on disputed land in east Jerusalem, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said Saturday, reports AP.

Relations between Egypt and Israel have deteriorated following Israel's decision to go ahead with the construction of 6.500 homes in the Har Homa neighbourhood that Palestinians call Abu Ghneim.

"What is happening in Jerusalem, the building in Abu Ghneim, is like playing with fire," Mubarak told a meeting of his ruling National Party.

"It will also leave the door wide open to all kinds of religious fundamentalism, be it Jews. Muslims or Christians. the Middle East News Agency quoted Mubarak as saying. "Tensions and violence will not cease until the construction in

900 metre (3,000 foot) pass.

by the Antara news agency.

from Beijing.

travelling on the bus.

said yesterday, AFP reports from Jakarta.

public order but he declined to give further details.

east Jerusalem stops. ... There is

no other solution. Mubarak also warned that "terrorism and violence are more dangerous than war, because terrorism knows no limits... Its effects will not touch only Israel, but all the countries that support peace.'

A Palestinian blew himself up in a Tel Aviv cafe on March 21, killing himself and three Israeli women.

In an interview with Israeli television broadcast Saturday, Mubarak said Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's proposal to negotiate a final settlement with the Palestinians in six months is not practical.

"The interim agreement took years and years," he told Channel 2. "I can't believe that they will be able to finish in six months.



Palestinians carry Abdallah Khalil Salah, a Palestinian student who was killed by an Israeli soldier in the main street of Ramallah on the eve of "Land Day" in the first killing since protests erupted over new Jewish settlement, on Saturday. Abdallah Khalil Salah, a 21-year-old student, was killed with live ammunition a day before the annual "Land Day" demonstrations against Israeli land confiscations, hospital officials said. - AFP/UNB photo

PLO-Israeli ties receive

JERUSALEM, Mar 30: Worstinian unrest over Jewishoset-

Jerusalem, reports Reuter. Palestinian hospital officials said Israeli troops shot Abdullah Khalil Abullah, 20, dead during clashes on the outskirts of the Palestinian self-

Thousands of Israeli police and troops, backed by tanks and helicopters, were already on alert against civil violence peaking today, the annual "Land Day" when Israeli Arabs stage protests against government confiscations of land.

Abdullah's death suggested

grims flock to sites sacred to them in the holy land for Easter celebrations.

and we will take our revenge."

ammunition.

The army said in an initial investigation showed troops did not use live ammunition at Ramallah though they did in An honour guard of red- clashes with Palestinians at bereted Palestinian security (Coreany Calandaya Actuge 6)

> and said he could "go to hell." Farouk Qaddumi, the Pales-

> chief, said "Ross can go hell.

Qaddumi made the comment in response to a question about what Ross had proposed in talks on Thursday and Friday with Palestinian and Israeli leaders.

4m people visit Calcutta everyday

CALCUTTA, Mar 30: This megapolis is visited everyda by four million people for busi-ness and the like. Besides, the 66 million living here also do not fulfil their commitment towards a clean city, reports

"The culture is such that everybody enjoys their rights we all love our city - emotionally, culturally or psychologically. But, there is little reflection in our concern and commitment to work for it," West Bengal Transport Minister, Subhas Chakraborty, said at a meeting here on "Cleaner Calcutta."

Dwelling on the other problems besetting Calcutta, he said West Bengal, unlike other states in the country, is a one-city state with "every aspect of the state's socio-economic life rest ing on it. Besides, it is also the hub of a large section of people from Bihar. UP and others from the east."

According to the minister, the city loses rupees four crore everyday and about a thousand crore annually due to slower movement of traffic.

"Time has to be saved," he urged, stating that a although some improvement has been registered in the speed of vehicular traffic after 'operation sunshine' a lot more is yet to be done. "The speed of the city has to be increased and extended as a continuous process". The aim was that by the year 2000, Calcutta would run faster than Bombay, he said.



Catholic Cardinal Roger Mahoney (R) blesses a Burmese python that belongs to Bart Hibbs (L) during the Blessing of the Animals celebration on Saturday that takes place on the Saturday before Easter in the old Spanish quarter of Los Angeles. Hundreds of people bring their animals to be blessed by the cardinal each year. AFP/UNB photo D 2 - of work : Construction of 42.68 metrell

another blow on the day when Christian pil-

ening relations between Israel and the Palestinians suffered vet another blow with the first fatality in 10 days of Palestlement building in Arab east

rule enclave of Ramallah.

that clashes were more likely

forces escorted Abdullah's body to his village of Beit Sahour late on Saturday and chanted, "your blood was not spilled in vain

He is to be buried today at Beit Sahour beside Jabal Abu Ghenim, known as Har Homa in Hebrew, where Israel has staged work on building its latest controversial Jewish set-

Hospital officials said 24 Palestinians were wounded by Israeli rubber bullets yesterday and two were wounded by live

AFP adds from Cairo: A senior Palestinian official on Saturday accused the US coordinator for the Middle East peace process, Dennis Ross of being biased in favour of Israel

tine Liberation Organisation's political affairs (foreign affairs)

Pakistan behind blasts at bus station: Farooq Abdullah JAMMU, India, Mar 30: ter 25 minutes, a police Kulbushan Jandial said.

Kashmir Chief Minister Faroog Abdullah said on Saturday Pakistan was behind the blasts at a bus station in this winter capital which killed 17 people and injured 53 others, reports

"Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency is behind the killings," Abdullah

The attack coincided with the first Indo-Pakistan talks in three years, being held in New Delhi, and brought the disputed Himalayan state back into the spotlight.

"Pakistan is trying to disturb the peace in the valley after the formation of the elected government in the region," Abdullah said.

·Police said two explosions at a crowded bus station in Jammu killed 17 people, including three women.

None of the dozen Muslim militant groups in the state have claimed responsibility for the attack but police said "the hand of militants cannot be ruled out."

Kashmiri Muslim separatists have denounced the Indo-Pakistan talks as meaningless because of their non-inclusion in the dialogue.

The first blast, which occurred at 6.50 pm (1320 GMT). ripped apart three buses which then caught fire, and was followed by a second explosion afspokesman said. Witnesses said the late

evening explosions completely destroyed the three buses, burned down 10 shops and nine kiosks and sparked protests. Police said most of the people killed in the blast were wait-

ing to board the bus. Meanwhile Indian police arrested 10 suspected militants believed to be behind Saturday's bornbings in Kashmir, which left 17 dead and injured 58, an official spokesman said in Jammu today.

"Police have arrested 10 suspected militants from Jammu," state government spokesman

Policy on Europe big headache for Major

LONDON, Mar 30: British Prime Minister John Major admitted in the Sunday Telegraph this week that policy on Europe has been his "biggest headache" while in office, reports AFP.

Major, whose Conservative Party is heading for defeat in upcoming legislative elections according to latest opinion polls, said that by saying he wanted to put Britain "at the heart of Europe" he had made a mistake.

"We think the Harkat-ul-Ansar or the Hizbul Mujahideen is behind the killings," he added, referring to

two militant groups battling Indian security forces. "The car in which the bomb was planted has been identified. The police are working on definite clues."

Two bombs exploded at a bus station in Jammu late Saturday, none of the Muslim separatist militant groups fighting against Indian rule in the state have claimed responsibility for the attack.

Another AFP report says, an Indian government spokesman today denied talks with Pakistan nad become bogged down. following a Press Trust of India report Saturday the negotiations had stalled over the dis-

puted territory of Kashmir. Talmiz Ahmed, a joint secretary in India's External affairs Department, denied reports the foreign secretary-level talks. the first in three years between the two neighbours, were on the brink of failure because of the Kashmir issue.

Ahmed's comments were the first official reaction to a Press Trust of India report Saturday which said the negotiations, the first in three years between the two countries, had stalled over the disputed Himalayan terri-

Sinn Fein may join peace talks this summer

BELFAST, Northern Ireland, Mar 30: Supporters of the Irish Republican Army could join in peace talks this summer if a cease-fire is restored soon, a Labour Party spokeswoman said Saturday, reports AP.

others believed trapped inside.

Mo Mowlam, Labour's spokeswoman on Northern Ireland, said that the Sinn Fein Party could be invited to the table in June if a permanent cease-fire is in place.

"If they show by word and Solution to Peru's hostage crisis still a far cry'

LIMA, Mar 30: The leader of leftist rebels holding 72 hostages here said on Saturday a solution to the crisis remained "a long way off," disputing government statements that hinted the two sides were close

to an agreement, reports AFP. There is no agreement or any sign of one," Nestor Cerpa Cartolini said in a walkie-talkie interview with WTN television and AFP from the Japanese ambassador's residence in Lima.

deed that they are committed to the democratic process then we think they ought to safely move into the talks process," said Mowlam, whose party is about 20 points ahead of the governing Conservatives with the election a month away. "If they did it now and those

words and deeds were seen throughout April and May, I think it would be a high possibility," she said in an interview with the BBC in Northern Ire-

"If this drags on and they call a ceasefire on May 10, then say it was in line with what I have said, that is clearly not the case. It has to be done now," she said.

Nine parties are involved in a slow-moving talks on the future of Northern Ireland. Sinn Fein has been excluded because the IRA ended a 17-month cease-fire 13 months ago. On Wednesday, the IRA disrupted rail service with two bombs on a main line in northwest England.

If Labour wins the election, Mowlam would likely succeed Sir Patric Mayhew as the Cabinet member responsible for Northern Ireland.

Illegal aliens brave long lines to get married before April 1 in US

March 25 in what is believed was a xenophobic arson attack.

NEW YORK, Mar 30: Crowds of illegal aliens are braving long lines to get married before April 1, the date that new tough and poorly understood immigration laws go into effect in the United States, reports AFP.

The rumours and the crowds are the same around the country, but are especially bad in Florida, Texas, California and New York since these states have the majority of the nation's five million illegal aliens, according to the US Immigration and Naturalisation Service.

According to new laws adopted last year, illegal immigrants had until April 1 to begin the process of legalising their status. If they did not, they face deportation and a 10-year-period during which they are barred from the country.

Those requesting asylum

have a year to provide evidence for their case, but that evidence must be more complete than in the past.

Hundreds of residents of Arafat, relatives and friends carry the coffins covered with flags of

a Turkish mother and five of her children in a funeral procession on Saturday. The mother

and the children were killed in a fire in an apartment building in The Hague overnight

Tough immigration law

"That's inhumane," said Denny Lee, a spokesman for the New York office of the American Civil Liberties Union. "Can you figure that out? A kid who's born here, a US citizen, can be separated from his parents."

President Bill Clinton asked Congress to delay implementation of the law by six months, while the INS has said that it planned no large-scale roundup but would focus on arresting and deporting criminals. Nearly three weeks ago, cou-

ples began arriving at the courthouse at 4 am to get in line for marriage licenses at Thursday midday, there were more than 200 people waiting in line to slip crings on their loved ones' fingers. "Six hours in line," com-

plained Corinne, a French woman with plans to becoming Mrs Ron Legates "it's the most beautiful day of my life, but what a circus.

- AFP/UNB photo

Most of the young couples declined to give their names and appeared to be foreign. Ironically, foreigners marrying an American or a legal foreign resident will receive no benefits for several years.

The scene was similar at the INS offices, where dozens of people spent the night in below freezing temperatures to be at the front of the line to apply for a coveted green card, which allows non-US citizens to work in this country.

The INS closes its doors at 8:30 am since by then it has usually accepted all the applicants that it can process in one day but applications must be sent by letter in the mail.

"By mail, it takes a very long time," says Sarah, a native of Egypt.

"If an application is not tilled out right, it gets sent back. "It'll be another kind of nightmare," said Donald Klareich, vice-president of Federal International Services, which shepherds people through the immigration process for a fee. INS spokesman Mark Thorn

defended the decision. "We have no choice, we saw about 3,000 people a day which is twice the usual number," said Thorn, who estimated that half were newly married. New York Mayor Rudolph

Giuliani has criticised the crackdown. "The INS should be putting more resources into helping people," he said. "People are in a sense of real fear. They (the INS) are putting a tremendous amount of pressure on people."

Nearly 400,000 arrive in KSA to perform Hajj

400,000 pilgrims have arrived in Saudi Arabia for this year's annual Muslim pilgrimage to Makka, officials said on Saturday, reports AFP. General Assad Abdel Karim

Freih, Director General of the Saudi passport service, told the official SPA news agency that 371,000 pilgrims have already arrived for the Hajj which begins on April 10.

The Saudi pilgrimage-ministry has also warned that the deadline for the arrival of pilgrims in the kingdom through land or sea borders. Or at Medina Airport in western Saudi Arabia, is April 4, said the

It added that pilgrims could continue to arrive through Jeddah Airport on the Red Sea coast until April 11.

Around 1.5 million pilgrims from outside the kingdom together with 500,000 Saudis are expected to take part in this year's Hajj to Makka and Madina. Islam's two holiest shrines.

RIYADH, Mar 30: Nearly Saudi Arabia operates a strict quota system, allowing each Muslim country to send 1,000 pilgrims per million peo-

ple of its population. Pope prays for peace, freedom

in Albania, Zaire VATICAN CITY, Mar 30: Pope John Paul prayed for peace and freedom in Albania and Zaire on Saturday night at an Easter vigil service in St Peter's Basilica, reports Reuter. During the solemn mass the

76-year-old Polish Pope baptised 10 adult converts to Catholicism. "Two of you come from Albania and two from Zaire, countries which are experienc-

ing tragic moments in their history. May the Lord hear the cries of the poor and lead them on the path to peace and freedom," he said in his homily. More than 13,000 Albanian

refugees have fled to Italy in the last two weeks to escape the chaos in their country.