## KSA, Egypt, Syria brush aside opposition by 3 members

CAIRO, Apr 1: The powerful alliance of Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Syria brushed aside the concerns of less influential Arab League members to force through a resolution calling for a freeze in ties with Israel, reports AFP.

The league's three big guns were the power-brokers behind June's Arab summit called to unify ranks after the right-wing Israeli election victory, and they carried the day again at the two-day meeting of Arab foreign ministers which ended on Monday.

"These three countries were able to overcome the reservations of Jordan. Morocco and Mauritania, who could well have prevented the adoption" of the resolution to freeze ties on Sunday, said an Arab diplomat.

Jordan, Morocco and Mauritania all opposed a first version

of the resolution - tabled to punish Israel for building a new Jewish settlement in disputed east Jerusalem - said the diplomat asking to remain

anonymous. The first draft called for countries to "approve" the freezing of normalisation with the Jewish state, and representatives of the three countries insisted they were not authorised to agree to such wording.

However, they were severely chastised by Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Mussa and Saudi counterpart Prince Saud Al-Faisal, said the source.

"I ask how you cannot be authorised to take such a decision at this very critical stage when Arab countries are confronted by such defiance and Muslims face losing Jerusalem for ever?" asked the Saudi diplomat

"This resolution is based on a decision taken by the Arab summit, unanimously approved by Arab leaders," added

Egypt then proposed a second draft replacing "approve" with "recommend", and the resolution was carried unani-

The league finally "recommended a halt to all measures of normalisation with Israel within the framework of the peace process (and), the closure of bureau and missions until Israel abides by the principles of the (1991) Madrid conference."

League members also "recommended the suspension of Arab participation in multilateral (peace) negotiations, and the pursuit of the full Arab boycott against Israel until the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace in the region."

For several months, Syria had been frantically preparing the ground for an Arab push towards a freezing of ties with the

Jewish state. Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq Al-Shara and Vice President Abdel Halim Khaddam toured influential Arab countries, notably in the Gulf, at the beginning of the year to push for a harder stance towards Is-

Shara was also very active on the sidelines of the Arab League meeting, holding a series of meetings to promote the Syrian position.

AP adds: Two bombs exploded near Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip on Tuesday. killing the two Palestinian suicide attackers and wounding several other Arabs, Palestinian police said.

Bid to avert clash

International

#### Birendra closes winter session of Nepali parliament

KATHMANDU, Apr 1: King Birendra closed parliament's winter session after only four weeks in an apparent bid to avert clashes between the main opposition Nepali Congress and the new tri-partite coalition government, a parliamentary source said today, reports AFP.

"The king has prorogued the 11th session of the parliament as of Monday evening," the state-run radio announced to-

The winter session has been the shortest one since the reestablishment of the parlia-'mentary system in Nepal in April 1990 after the dissolution of the 30-year-old partyless penchayat system.

The beginning of the session saw the Nepali Congress coalition government fall in a surprise move after former prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuta tailed to win a vote of confidence in early March.

## Indian political leaders begin jockeying for power

NEW DELHI, Apr. 1: Indian political leaders began jockeying for power on Tuesday ahead of a parliamentary confidence vote in Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda's government, triggered by the sudden loss of a key ally, reports Reuter.

Deve Gowda's 15-party coalition swiftly closed ranks behind the prime minister after the Congress Party, which gave make-or-break support to the government, suddenly withdrew its backing on Sunday and staked a rival claim to power.

The 10-month-old centreleft United Front alliance controls only 178 seats in the 545member lower house of parliament, the Lok Sabha. The Congress Party had reluctantly shored up the government with its 140 deputies since June.

Deve Gowda on Monday won an extra four days from President Shankar Dayal Sharma to prove his majority. Sharma had earlier set an April 7 deadline for a confidence vote.

Sharma's directive to Deve Gowda to take a vote of confidence by April 11 closed the government's option to call snap polls, forcing the prime minister either to resign or seek a split in the Congress Party to

gain a majority. Most senior Congress leaders have stopped short of publicly throwing their weight behind party president Sitaram Kesri's decision to topple the government, sparking speculation over an imminent rift within the party.

Congress' shock decision sent share prices in Bombay plunging more than eight per cent on Monday as investors struggled to come to grips with the unexpected bout of political uncertainty.

Deve Gowda has ruled out stepping down to defuse the cri-

The Hindu rightwing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which emerged as the single largest party in last year's inconclusive general elections.

has vowed to vote against the

confidence motion. The BJP, which lost power after 12 days of government last May when it failed to muster a parliamentary majority, says it will not stake a claim to form a

government at this stage. Analysts say the BJP, which controls 1994 seats in parliament with its allies, is keen to contest mid-term elections. An opinion poll last month showed that the BJP was the only party likely to gain from fresh general elections.

Both Congress, which suffered a humiliating defeat in elections last May, and the United Front, which was hastily cobbled together after the polls grew up no clear winner, appear reluctant to face fresh polls.

Congress and the coalition's constituents had been bitter opponents during the election campaign but they had joined hands solely to thwart the BJP's bid for power.



Scene of the derailed passenger train, in Spain on Monday evening. At least 26 people were killed and more than 50 others injured when a passenger train derailed in the Huarte Arakil district of northern Spain, Spanish radio said citing the rescue services.

- AFP/UNB photo

#### Zairean rebels force refugees to move away from Kisangani under the dense forest canopy ernment troops, according to a

LULA, Zaire, Apr 1: Banished from the outskirts of rebel-held Kisangani, nearly 20,000 Rwandan refugees set out Monday for a new encampment where they can gather strength for the long journey home, reports AP.

Rebel leader Laurent Kabila has restricted the flow of food and medicine for the refugees, part of a group of 170,000 Rwandan Hutus who scattered after the rebels overran their camp at Tingi-Tingi on March

After days of talks with international aid officials, Kabila has agreed to let them stay long enough to regain their health but not so close to Kisangani. which the rebels captured March 15. The rebels, who seek to oust

President Mobutu Sese Seko, say they plan to be in the capital, Kinshasa, by June. On Monday, they took the town of Kamina without meet

ing any resistance from gov-

the 31-year dictatorship of

report by the British Broadcast ing Corp. Kamina is 260 miles (420 kilometres) northwest of Lubumbashi, Zaire's secondlargest city.

The refugees at Lula, many of them ill and malnourished, got their first shipment of food last week since the fall of Kisangani, Zaire's third-largest city. Another load of supplies went out by rail on Sunday, but it's not clear how much more they will get - if any. Aid workers have said the restriction on aid shipments is tantamount to starving them to death.

The refugees are Rwandan Hutus, some of an estimated 1.2 million who fled their country to escape retribution for a 1994 massacre of half a million Tutsis. All but an estimated 400,000 still in Zaire have re-

At Lula, four miles (six kilometres) south of Kisangani. the stench of human excrement, sweat and disease was trapped

as exhausted people started to move to their new camp 12 miles (20 kilometres) further

Stretched out behind them for more than 25 miles (40 kilometers) were thousands more who fell behind. Many will never catch up.

One gaunt man dropped his walking stick at the side of the road and folded onto the hard ground. A grimace covered his face as he waited to die.

AFP adds: Zairean rebels on Monday continued their advance on the strategic city of Lubumbashi, raising the stakes ahead of the first face-to-face peace talks expected later this

In New York, a UN spokesman said Mohamed Sahnoun, mediator for the United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) would lead talks which will probably take place at the weekend in South Africa.

World's 1st global

phone service

launched

world's first global personal

salellite phone service, en-

abling users to communicate

from the most remote places,

was launched today in South-

send and receive phone calls,

fax messages and e-mail using a

portable satellite phone as

said David Simbar, president of

Asatel Communications Pts

Newly-formed Asatel is as-

small as a lap-top computer.

Customers will be able to

east Asia, reports AFP.



US President Bill Clinton (R) and his wife Hillary wave to Easter Egg hunters from the balcony of the White House Monday. Clinton, who is recuperating from knee surgery kicked off the annual event in which children aged 3-6 years-of-age participate in an Easter Egg Roll and Hunt. - AFP/UNB photo

# BUIFFIY

Storm leaves 1 dead in US: A spring storm lashed the US east coast on Monday, pummeling residents from Maine to Maryland with snow, rain, hail, and howling wind and leaving one dead and thousands without

power. Reuter reports from Boston. More than 18 inches (45 cm) of wet snow fell in New York state, where the death of a 36-year-old man in a catskill mountain region traffic accident was blamed on the storm. Further south in Sussex county. New Jersey, more than a foot (34 cm) of snow blanketed the region and a painful mix of sleet, rain and snow pummeled New York city and long island as the storm slowly lumbered east toward the Atlantic.

#### 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 Sunday, AFP reports from Beijing.

The bus, which was travelling across Sichuan province from 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 travelling on the bus.

#### Demonstrator jailed in E Timor: An East Timor court has jailed a demonstrator for a year for insulting President Suharto by brandishing a caricature during

a protest in November, a report said Tuesday. AFP says from Jakarta. Rosario Pires Al Joao, 24, waved a banner depicting Suharto holding skulls in his hand and a bone in his mouth. The caption read "Suharto eats East Timorese bones", according to

Timor capital Dili. Hashimoto has 101m yen in assets: The personal wealth of Japan's Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto was less than the average declared by his Liberal

witnesses at the demonstration outside the Diocese in the East

Democratic Party (LDP) MPs, according to an official report released Monday, AFP reports from Tokyo. Hashimoto has 101 million yen (815.000 dollars) in personal assets, while the average for LDP MPs was 115 million

yen, the report said. The richest of Japan's political leaders was Yukio Hatoyama of the Democratic Party, who declared 2,335 million yen in personal assets including deposits, real estate and securities, said the report on 500 lower house members elected last year.

#### 21 die as train derails in Spain: A

crowded passenger train was derailed in northern Spain on Monday night, killing at least 21 people, injuring 89 and trapping screaming travellers in the wreckage, officials said yesterday, Reuter reports from Huarte Araquil.

It was Spain's deadliest train disaster in nearly two decades. A spokesman for Spanish railway company Renfe said it was "very possible" the death toll would rise to as high as 26 as rescue crews pulled more bodies from the twisted metal. Miguel Sanz, President of Navarre province, ruled out sabotage, Renfe officials said an investigation was under way and it was too early to determine the cause of the derailment.

#### Blast in Kashmiri police station: 7 injured

SRINAGAR, India, Apr 1: Seven Indian policemen were injured, two of them critically, when a booby-trap attached to a dead separatist militant explotled in a Kashmiri police station, police said, reports

A police spokesman said the district police chief and his deputy were critically injured in the blast at Kupwara district, 90 kilometres (56 miles) from Srinagar.

He said a villager told the police that a body of a militant had been found on the road.

"When the police took the body to the police station and started searching it, it blew up," the spokesman said.

#### Annan condemns grenade attack on rally in Cambodia

PHNOM PENH, Apr 1: United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan has condemned Sunday's deadly grenade attack on an anti-government rally here that killed at least 16 and wounded another 119 people. reports AFP.

"The Secretary General deplores the attack against peaceful demonstrators in Phnom Penh on Sunday," a spokesman for Annan said in a statement received in Cambodian capital Tuesday.

The UN chief further "calls on the royal government of Cambodia to investigate this act of violence and take all appropriate measure to see that such incidents are not repeated," the statement said. "He calls on all sides to exer-

cise restraint and to do their utmost to ensure a political process conducive to the holding of free and fair elections scheduled for 1997 and 1998. The demonstration, protesting government and judicial

dent Sam Rainsy.

United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan (R) kisses US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright (L) Monday on corruption, was organised by her arrival at UN headquarters in New York. Albright will the unrecognised opposition Khmer Nation Party (KNP) and meet later with the King Hussein and Queen Noor of its president, prominent dissi-

#### China, Vietnam to discuss dispute over oil exploration "We are planning expert-

turned.

BEIJING, Apr 1: China and Vietnam plan to hold expertlevel talks to resolve a dispute over oil exploration in waters claimed by both sides. China's Foreign Ministry said Tuesday, reports AP.

Vietnam has demanded that China withdraw an exploratory oil rig it claims has been operating since early March in the northwest corner of the South China Sea between Vietnam and China's Hainan Island.

China says it considers the area part of its continental

The dispute will be "resolved through consultations in the spirit of friendliness and equality." Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Shen Guofang said at a twice-weekly briefing.

level talks with Vietnam to resolve these problems," he said. In Vietnam, the state-controlled newspaper, Vietnam News quoted Foreign Minister Noguyen Manh Cam as saying

We hope the meeting between Vietnam and China will take place at the earliest possible It also quoted an unnamed official of the Foreign Ministry's Law and International

Treaties Department as saying

Hanoi likely would be host for the talks. In its contention that the disputed waters are on its continental shelf. Vietnam has been lobbying for support from fellow member states of the As-

sociated with the Infoasia Group of Indonesia and has been chosen as the regional service provider for planet 1, the sociation of Southeast Asian satellite phone service intro-Nations.

#### duced by New York-listed Comsat Corp. 4,500 Kuwaitis to get compensation for Iraqi invasion KUWAIT CITY, Apr 1: More than 4,500 people in Kuwait with compensation claims stemming from the Iraqi inva-

sion will receive their first payments today, the authority dealing with the claims said Monday, reports AFP.

Some 4554 people, mainly Kuwaitis, will receive about 2.500 dollars each with a total of 11.3 million dollars disbursed, officials at the Public Authority for Assessment of Compensation said.

This installment is the first being made to those in category A claiming losses of up to 8,000 dollars for forced departure during the 1990 invasion and category C claimants seeking compensation of up to 100,000 dollars for death and injury, illegal detention and other

The public authority has already made payments to around 3,000 people in category B claiming up to 2,500 dollars for injury or loss as a result of the 1990-1991 Iraqi invasion and occupation.

have three hours to waste. So

far as taxis are concerned, most

of those are wrecks which in

countries that have appropriate

road police wouldn't even be al-

Other speakers repeated

longstanding complaints that

the police often ticket diplo-

mats who are parked in legal

spaces. They also complained

lowed on the road."

#### Off the Record personal satellite Because Diana didn't like it SINGAPORE, April 1: The

LONDON: Urged on by Princess Diana, a passer-by grabbed a photographer who had been taking pictures of her, put him in an arm lock and took his camera, according to a news report Monday, reports AP Popula The London tabloid The Sun quoted news photographer Brendan Beirne as saying the incident happened Sunday in a west London street as Diana left after a work-out at a gym. The

paper identified the passer-by as Irishman Kevin Duggan. It quoted Beirne as saying: "Suddenly she saw me and ran across the road. She said: "What are you doing, what are you do-

ing, give me the film." Beirne said he refused. "Then the guy appeared and said: 'Can I help you?" Di said: "Yes, I want his film. 'The guy said: "Give her the film," and grabbed me in an arm lock."

"He twisted my wrist. I was frightened he would break it," Beirne continued. "I let the camera go and heard it being opened. Di and the guy were behind me. I then saw her with the film in her hand walking away."

The divorcee princess has had frequent disputes with photographers who trail wherever she goes. Scores of pictures of her after work-outs have been published over the years. There was no indication why she should want Beirne's film apart from annoyance at being photographed.

The Sun printed seven pictures of the incident taken by another photographer, Kelvin Bruce, featuring Beirne, Diana in training shoes and a long dark coat and 28-year-old Duggan in sports clothes.

It quoted Beirne as saying: "It was outrageous. She knows I am not a stalker or a threat. I have been taking photographs of her for 10 years.' Scotland Yard said in a statement: "No formal complaint

has been received. Accordingly, police are not investigating the matter.' The Sun quoted Duggan as saying: "I would have done the

same for any woman. It's a question of manners. My mum brought me up to be a gentleman.

### He died jokingly

BAYOU VISTA, Louisiana: A man who popped a friend's 6inch (15 centimetres) tropical fish into his mouth as a joke died when it got stuck in his throat, reports AP. Steven Hill Epperson, 36, was dead on arrival at a hospital

He put the Jack Dempsey fish in his mouth at his friend's house, and it became wedged in his airway, said Dr. F.H. Metz, coroner for St. Mary Parish.

## Gingrich for more power to Japanese politicians

TOKYO, Apr 1: US House Speaker Newt Gingrich urged Japan on Tuesday to deregulate its economy and give elected representatives more power than the "unaccountable" bureaucracy, reports AP.

Gingrich, speaking at a Japan National Press Club luncheon in Tokyo, said Japan should invigorate its economy through reform rather than driving up exports or increasing government spending.

"Pursuing deregulation will not only spur the domestic Japanese economy," said Gingrich, a Republican from Georgia. "It will increase market access by removing current re-

striction." But Gingrich said the reforms must include strengthening the hand of the Parliament.

"Any move toward deregulation must involve increasing the influence of directly elected representatives at the expense of an unaccountable bureau-

cracy," he said. Japan's bureaucracy is traditionally stronger than the Parliament. Bureaucrats write the country's laws, and are credited with engineering Japan's rise to

affluence after its defeat in World War II. Gingrich, who arrived in

morning with the head of the powerful Ministry of International Trade and Industry, Shinji Sato. Gingrich was given an out-

line of a wide-ranging plan to overhaul the troubled financial system and roll back some of the government's role in managing the economy.

#### 5 Tigers killed in Sri Lanka

COLOMBO, Apr 1: At least five Tiger guerillas were killed when a navy gun boat destroyed a Tamil rebel boat off Sri Lanka's north-eastern coast Tuesday, officials said, reports AFP.

The separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) craft was detected near the coast of Kokkilai just after midnight, they said.

"The boat exploded after it was hit by a dvora gun boat," a local official said adding that there were five rebels aboard the twin-engine craft.

same area and said that up to 100 rebels were killed in the attack. The LTTE, however, said only five cadres were killed.

#### Diplomatic war flares over parking between UN & New York City Russian diplomats alone capitals in the developing matic community look like UNITED NATIONS, Apr 1: vately that Mayor Rudolph Hubert Legal. world," he said. "The buses are somebody who says I want to be owe at least 722,000 dlrs in. Angry diplomats threatened to Guiliani is exploiting anti-UN "New York isn't the only remarkable, yes indeed, if you sentiments among the Amerimove UN operations out of New

can people to score political York if the city goes ahead with points for standing up to the plans to implement a crack-United Nations. down on diplomat parking US diplomat Robert Moller which the United Nations says told the UN committee on relaviolates international law, retions with the United States ports AP. that the city's programme The programme, aimed at would take effect on schedule. collecting hundreds of thou-But he noted that under the sands of dollars in parking vioplan, the US State Department lations, takes effect Tuesday.

Under the plan, violators could would not begin confiscating plates for one year. lose their license plates and That would allow time for driving privileges if they do not all parties to make sure that the pay fines within a year. city was living up to its part of But diplomats from the programme, including prothroughout the world maintain viding additional parking spots that would violate the princiand establish a hotline for ples of diplomatic immunity, under which foreign diplomats

where they are assigned.

diplomatic complaints. "Let's give this a chance to are exempt from civil and crimwork," Moller pleaded. "I think inal prosecution in countries it's in everybody's best interest and it doesn't make the diplo-Diplomats complained prileft alone, I want to be able to violate the law and you just can't do anything about it because I'm a diplomat." But that did little to assuage

diplomatic anger. A Spanish delegate accused New York City of treating the diplomatic community as "a poor immigrant." The committee agreed to

meet again Tuesday to consider a French proposals to refer the issue to the full 185-member UN General Assembly or perhaps the International Court of Justice in The Hague. "The impression you get is that diplomats are allegedly

nice people spending time here

at the UN toasting one another

and joking around and engag-

ing in meetings for the fun of

it," said French representative

place to put the UN as a headquarters. There is Geneva and Vienna, he added. "There is nothing to stand in the way of this organisation transferring

more important portions of what it does to Geneva or Vienna." The UN legal office said that portion of the law, which could effect a diplomat's driving privileges, violate international rules which allow diplomats to be immune from prosecution

The city also is notifying more than 500 diplomats who have ignored public safety violations, such as parking near fire hydrants, that they must pay their fines within 30 days or surrender their license

under the laws of the countries

where they serve.

outstanding parking fines, the city has said. On Monday, the Ivory Coast said its mission was hit last week with a 13,661 dlrs fine after one of its vehicles was towed from a legal parking place in Manhattan on March US officials claim the city

- AFP/UNB photo

plan does not violate international law because driving is a privilege and not a right. Last week, American delegates suggested that diplomats could always use public transport. But the French diplomat

said public transport in New York City is "disastrously poor in quality" and the subway was a "blot on this capital city." "We're talking about an outdated, dangerous and dirty set

Moller acknowledged that there may be some discrimina-

of services worse than in many capitals, indeed many major programme.

tion against diplomats in the issuing of tickets. He said that if such practices appeared to be widespread, the State Department would disavow the city

that the city has not yet provided the promised parking

> Japan on Sunday as part of a tour of East Asia, met Tuesday

Last week, the navy sank a flotilla of Tiger boats in the