Himachal Pradesh late last night, the Meteorological office said

in Delhi yesterday, PTI reports from New Delhi. The epicentre of the quake, which occurred at 2330 hours, was at 32 degree (north) altitude and 76.4 degree (east) longitude in the state. According to preliminary reports the earthquake was felt in Sudernagar area adjoining the Kangra Valley, they said. No report of loss of life or property was reported from anywhere so far, they added.

Annan sends envoy to Afghanistan: With fighting raging north of the Afghan capital Kabul, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan decided to send a former Algerian foreign minister to Afghanistan to see what actions the United Nations can take to end the conflict. AP reports from United Nations.

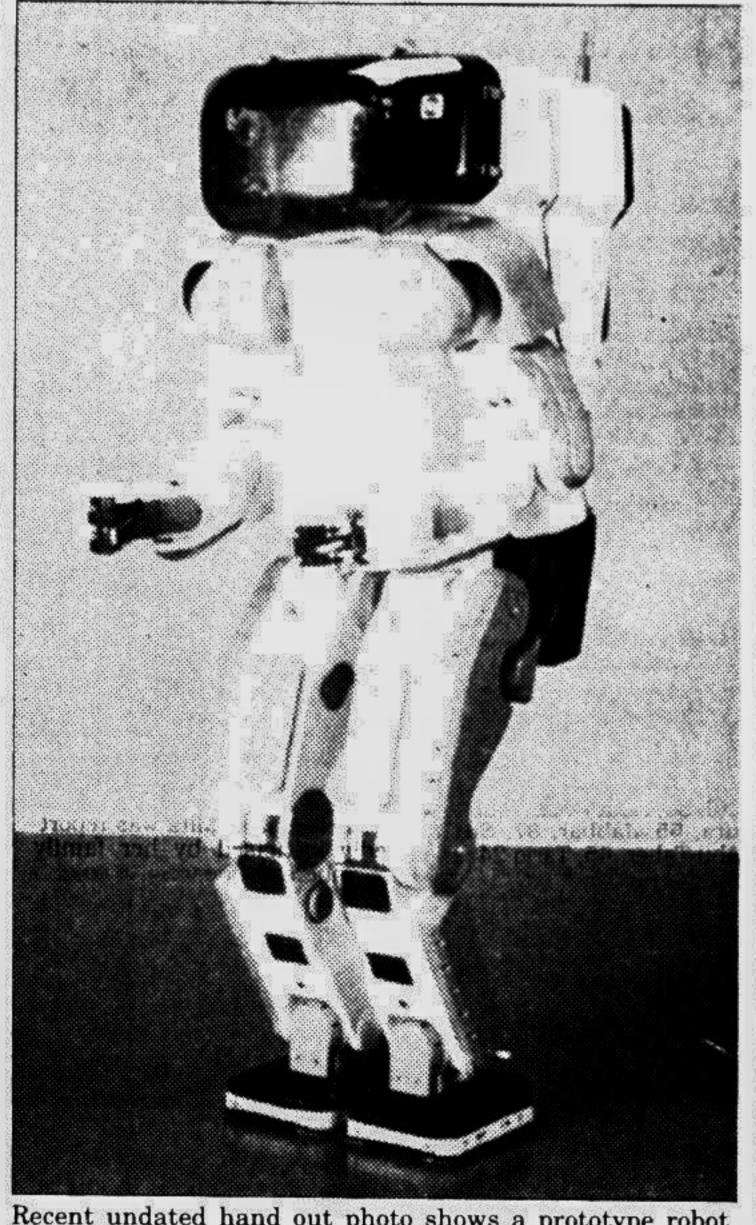
Lakhdar Brahimi will report back to Annan before the next annual debate of the UN General Assembly in September. No date was given for his arrival in the region. A UN statement said Brahimi will "assess the UN peacekeeping activities in Afghanistan" and consult with "relevant countries and parties" to the conflict.

Road mishap kills 11 in US: A dump truck pulling a backhoe collided with a pickup truck at a rural intersection in south-central Michigan, killing nine children and two adults in the pickup, AP reports from Concord Township.

Two other children in the pickup were critically injured. All the children appeared to be under 10 and were possibly related "God, there was so many people in that truck," said Gerald Jones, who lives about a mile (1.6 kilometres) from the scene. "It was just awful. That's all there really is to say about it."

1 die as bus falls into river in US: A charter bus loaded with children learning about slavery in the United States plunged off Interstate 95 into the Nottoway River, killing one person and injuring the other 34 people aboard, authorities said, AP reports from Stony Creek.

Most of the injured Tuesday were treated at hospitals and released, but four were seriously hurt, including the bus driver and a 16-year-old girl who broke both ankles.



Recent undated hand out photo shows a prototype robot recently developed by Japan's car and motorcycle manufacturer Honda Motor Co Ltd. The 180 cm, 210 kg human-like robot has a battery life of 15 minutes and is capable of walking up and down slopes and stairs either by remote control or by installed programme. - AFP/UNB photo

Air crash kills 1 in Nigeria: One person was killed and five injured Tuesday when a private Nigerian plane with 55 people on board crashed on landing at Calabar International Airport in south east Nigeria, an airport source said, AFP reports from Lagos.

The BAC 1-11 plane owned by ADC Airlines crash-landed at about 11:40 am (10:45 GMT) when it overshot the runway and ran into a ditch, the source said.

Israeli kills Palestinian in WB: An Israeli soldier shot dead a Palestinian who stabbed and lightly wounded another soldier near a Jewish settlement in the West Bank on Tuesday, the army said, Reuter reports from Beit Dajan. "An Israeli soldier was lightly wounded after being stabbed by a Palestinian at the Elon Moreh junction near Nablus, the spokesman said. "Soldiers on patrol in the area were attacked by the Palestinian assailant, one soldier fired his gun in response and killed the attacker," he said.

1 held for killing mother in US: Police said on Tuesday they had arrested a northern California teenager on suspicion of strangling his mother and dumping her body in a water-filled quarry, Reuter reports from Sacramento.

Police in Rocklin, near Sacramento, said they had received reports that the 17-year-old boy had held parties at his house since his mother, 40-year old Barbara Schultz, was murdered just over a week ago. Rocklin police did not release the name of the boy because of his age.

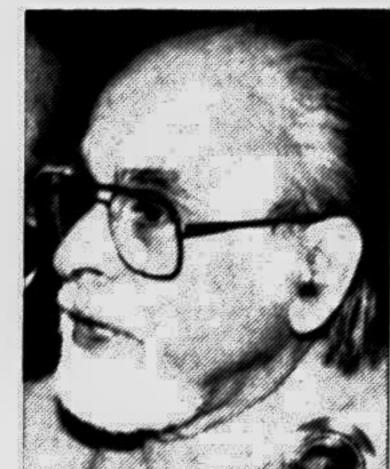
# BRIFFIY Gujral's offer to Kashmiri youths a cruel joke

ISLAMABAD, July 30, Prime Minister IK Gujral's unconditional offer of talks to misguided youths in Kashmir has irked the Pakistani media which said it was nothing but a cruel joke on Kashmiris, reports PTI.

Most of the leading dailies described Gujral's clarification in parliament on Monday as a "volte-face" and cautioned those who are expecting positive out-come from the foreign secretaries-level talks between India and Pakistan.

Gujral, while making the offer during his two-day visit to Kashmir over the weekend, said talks could only be held after the estranged children laid down their arms.

The largest circulated Urdu daily, "Jung" in its editorial, described Gujral's clarification as a cruel joke on Kashmiris and said by this way India wants to establish before international community that New Delhi is



ready to talk on Kashmir. Nawa-e-waqt, another leading Urdu daily, said now is the time that Pakistani premier Nawaz Sharif should forget

about normalising relations

with India because even the

Prime Minister of the country cannot keep his word. The Pakistan Times in its editorial said certainly there

must be tremendous pressure on Gujral from the Indian armed forces or other political or fundamentalist groups, of India. Meanwhile, the Hurriyat

conference General Secretary, Ghulam Mohammad Shafi in a statement issued on Monday had said that this is a strategy on the part of New Delhi to paint the Kashmir issue as India's internal matter.

While described the unconditional offer to misguided youth as an attempt to disintegrate Kashmiris, he said they will not accept any formula other than liberation.

Another militant group, Al-Bark Mujahideen, had also rejected the unconditional offer saying that it is an international issue and not an Indian



US actor Robert De Niro and Italian actress Sofia Loren stand on stage during the awarding ceremony of the 20th Moscow International Film Festival in Moscow Tuesday, where they were both awarded for lifetime achievement. De Niro was also awarded for his role of actor and producer of the film "Marvin's Room." - AFP/UNB photo

### Clinton sends special envoy to ME

# Israel won't accept US dictates: Netanyahu

JERUSALEM, July 30: With US President Clinton's envoy heading to the region Wednesday for peace talks, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel would not accept American dictates, reports AP.

Israeli media have reported that the United States - the main sponsor of the Mideast peace process — wants Israel to commit to a building freeze in Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Netanyahu has said he would refuse such a freeze.

"I don't think it's acceptable to operate with a take-it-orleave-it approach," Netanyahu said in an interview published Wednesday in the Haaretz newspaper. Israel, he added "isn't a pro-

tectorate of the United States." The United States had been trying to break a four-month impasse in negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. Earlier this week, the two sides agreed to resume talks.

Netanyahu told Haaretz that a peace agreement "has to be achieved by consultations and agreement and not by dictate."

His outspoken position came a day before US envoy Dennis Ross was to hold talks here with Netanyahu and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

PHNOM PENH, July 30: Af-

ter publicly distancing itself

from the notorious Pol Pot

through a show trial, the Khmer

Rouge vowed Wednesday to keep

fighting coup leader Hun Sen

and the new regime he is impos-

expected for its denunciation of

Pol Pot, clandestine Khmer

Rouge radio said the movement

speculation that Pol Pot was

publicly humiliated and sen-

tenced to house arrest for the

rest of his life by his former

comrades Friday to cleanse

their image in the eyes of the

Rouge cadre, insisted in the

broadcast that "Pol Pot is fin-

support of the international

community and its pressure on

Vietnamese communists and

Hun Sen the puppet," In

coup July 5-6 against his co-

premier, Prince Norodom Ra-

nariddh, shattering the tense

coalition government that

emerged from UN-sponsored

Hun Sen launched a violent

In Sopheap, a senior Khmer

"Our struggle comes with the

world.

ished."

Sopheap said.

will be "stronger than ever."

With international support

The broadcast supported

ing on Cambodia, reports AP.

Haaretz said Israel and the Americans were trying to reach a formula under which Israel would agree to a temporary settlement freeze, a key Palestinian demand.

Netanyahu's aide David Bar-Illan, however, said Israel wasn't prepared to make concessions in advance of the

"We are not going to pay a price for a return to the table." Bar-Illan told The Associated Press. "They quit, they boycotted for five months and now they want to be paid." Talks between Israel and the

Palestinians broke down in March after Israel began construction of Har Homa, a housing project for Jews in east Jerusalem, which the Palestinians claim as a future capi-

AFP adds: Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on Tuesday warned of danger ahead if the Middle East peace process remained deadlocked, Egypt's government press reported in its early Wednesday editions. "If the deadlock remains for

several more months there will be dangerous consequences for everyone in the region and outside it," Mubarak told Egyptian newspaper editors who accompanied him on visits to Damascus and Amman.

Khmer Rouge vows to fight

against Hun Sen

The prince's forces have been

driven north toward Thailand

as Hun Sen has consolidated

power in the capital. Cambodi-

a's strongman is keen to prevent

Ranariddh's royalists from

allying with the Khmer Rouge

Khmer Rouge remnants who

tried Pol Pot — estimated to

number about 1,000 - are ready

to fight, but it was unclear

whether they could bring along

thousands of comrades who

laid down arms over the past

Rouge alliance to have any hope

of international support, the

Khmer Rouge would need to jet-

tison Pol Pot, the symbol of its

genocidal rule between 1975

and 1979 that caused the deaths

east Asian Nations this month

postponed Cambodia's entry as

a member to protest the coup.

Khmer Rouge radio Wednesday

"The coup severely affected

called ASEAN's stance "a great

and directly threatened stabil-

ity, peace and security in the

Southeast Asian region and the

victory.

The Association of South-

of up to 2 million Cambodians.

For a Ranariddh-Khmer

year. Most are staying neutral.

The broadcast indicated the

elections in 1993.

against him.

The Al-Akhbar and Al-Gomhuria government newspapers said that the Egyptian President had expressed his concern in messages to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and US President Bill Clinton.

Another Reuter news says: Syrian President Hafez Al-Assad said on Tuesday he could see no hope for Middle East peace despite an apparent revival of diplomatic activity after Israel suspended plans for a new Jewish enclave in Arab East Jerusalem.

"It is difficult for me to say there is hope in light of the current situation," Assad said at a joint news conference with visiting Egyptian President Hosni

The tone contrasted with upbeat comments by many governments such as the United States trying to revive the peace talks.

Which after the election of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in May 1996 stumbled from crisis to crisis and then ground to a halt last

"Our main concern is lack of progress on the Israeli-Palestinian track and we are encouraged by the recent developments Jordanian Foreign Minister Fayez Al Tarawanah said.

Pacific," Khmer Rouge radio

jected ASEAN mediation ef-

forts, is seeking legitimacy, and

sent a message Tuesday to the

group's annual meeting asking

help in returning stability to

toppled the Khmer Rouge in

1979, Pol Pot led guerrilla war

against the Hanoi-installed

government - eventually led by

Hun Sen, himself a former

Khmer Rouge cadre - in an al-

liance with royalist forces led

Hun Sen and Ranariddh formed

their coalition. But thousands

of war-weary rebels defected

last year, leaving Pol Pot with

Ranariddh was negotiating a

dwindling forces and territory.

peace deal with the final hold-

outs when Hun Sen overthrew

him. The rebels had previously

turned against Pol Pot after he

ordered the execution of his de-

had said, was to turn Pol Pot

over for trial. That seems un-

likely now that the guerillas

have tired him in their north-

ern base at Anlong Veng.

Part of the deal, negotiators

Pol Pot kept fighting after

After a Vietnamese invasion

the country.

by Ranariddh.

fense minister.

Hun Sen, who initially re-

#### Benazir stopped, Palestinian ministers to later allowed to leave for London

ISLAMABAD, July 30: Pakistani police stopped opposition leader Benazir Bhutto from boarding a London-bound plane at Karachi on Tuesday but later allowed her to leave by another flight on orders from the interior ministry, her party said, reports Reuter.



Government officials were not immediately available to comment about the matter.

The Pakistan People's Party said in a statement that Federa Investigation Agency (FIA) police at Karachi Airport stopped Bhutto from boarding an Emirates Airlines flight to London saying the government had put her name on a list of people banned from leaving the coun-

It said the interior ministry later told the agency to allow Bhutto to leave after her political secretary called the ministry in Islamabad to protest.

Bhutto later left for London on a Pakistan International Airlines flight, the statement

#### Govt-rebels to resume peace talks in Philippines

COTABATO, Philippines, July 30: Peace talks between the Philippines government and Muslim guerillas resumed here today and the government said it hoped to reach a settlement by the end of the year, says

Contacts were halted after a military offensive last month, but the two sides agreed to resume talks after a ceasefire was started this month.

"We hope to complete the GRP-MILF (Government of the Republic of the Philippines-Moro Islamic Liberation Front) peace process by December 31, chief government negotiator Fortunato Abat told reporters. The 10,000-member MILF

waging a 19-year campaign for an Islamic state in the southern region of Mindanao, agreed to a general ceasefire after the military overran and later withdrew from its major training base. camp Rajamuda.

# answer corruption charges JERUSALEM, July 30: Ac-

cused of corruption and mismanagement, members of Yasser Arafat's Cabinet will likely face some tough questions Wednesday when they defend themselves before the Palestinian legislature, reports

At least two Cabinet members were expected to address the legislature Wednesday, a day after a legislative committee issued a report that found extensive abuses in all 18 government ministries.

The report included allegations that foreign aid had been diverted for personal use and urged Arafat to "form a new Cabinet made up technocrats and qualified people."

While the bipartisan com-mittee has no legal authority. its findings placed Arafat on the spot by fingering top politi-cal allies — including prominent peace negotiator Nabil Shaath.

"If (Arafat) sleeps on it, it will weaken him and his credibility," said Mahdi Abdel-Hadi, head of Passia, a Palestinian research centre. But Arafat could strengthen his position bus Husan Khader, a legislaby acting quickly, he said.

The report recommended that three ministers - Shaath, Civil Affairs Minister Jamil Tarifi, and Transportation Minister Ali Qawasmeh — stand

Qawasmeh was expected to appear before the legislature at a debate on the report scheduled to begin at 11 am (0800 gmt) Wednesday in Ramallah. It was not clear whether Shaath and Tarifi would appear. Health Minister Riyad Al-Za 'noun was also expected, although he was not personally implicated by

The investigative committee was set up in response to a state comptroller's report two months ago that found 326 million dollars of the Palestinian autonomy government's 800 million dollars annual budget had been squandered through corruption or mismanagement.

the report.

Committee members said Tuesday that the 326 million dollars figure was too high, and an accurate number could only be determined after an investigation by the state attorney.

The suspicions of waste, graft and nepotism, and brazen shows of wealth by government officials with huge villas and four or five cars apiece, have raised resentment among ordinary Palestinians and concern among international donors.

tor from Nablus, said he was not optimistic the report would lead to significant change. "The mismanagement starts from the top - way up on top," he

# Taliban fighting uphill battle to gain UN seat

UNITED NATIONS, July 30: As opposition forces threaten the Afghan capital, the Taliban government is waging an uphill battle to gain the UN seat still held by the administration it drove from Kabul nearly a year ago, reports AP.

But Abdul Hakeem Mujahid, the Taliban's designated ambassador to the United Nations. has been unable to arrange a meeting with the chairman of the General Assembly's credentials committee, Denis Dangue Rewaka of Gabon.

A favourable recommendation from the committee to the 185-member General Assembly would all but guarantee that the Taliban could take the UN seat still held by the government of President Burhanuddin Rabbani, which was driven from

"They cannot represent the people of Afghanistan," Mujahid told The Associated Press on Tuesday. "We have met all the conditions for recognition by the United Nations as the government of Afghanistan."

Kabul on September 27, 1996.

Last year, the General Assembly was holding its annual debate when the Taliban Islamic army captured Kabul and extended its control over about two-thirds of the Central Asian

But with the situation in Afghanistan uncertain, the General Assembly held off on withdrawing the US membership of the Rabbani government.

This has created an unusual situation where UN officials deal daily with Taliban in Kabul and in other parts of Afghanistan the Islamic movement controls.

But at UN headquarters in New York, it is the Rabbani government which represents Afghanistan during General Assembly and Security Council

"We have captured and restored peace in most of the country," Mujahid said. But still representation at the United Nations is in the hands of Rabbani."

In recent weeks, resurgent opposition forces have pushed Taliban army southward, coming within rocket range of Kabul. Nevertheless, some UN members believe Taliban has a legitimate claim on the right to represent Afghanistan in the

world organisation.

will be able to capture and hold Kabul

They doubt the opposition

# Bomb caused Brazilian airliner explosion

Brazilian airliner explosion which blew a passenger out of the aircraft in mid-flight was caused by a bomb placed underneath one of the plane's seats. Globo television reported on Monday night, reports Reuter.

A report by the Technical Air and Space Centre, not yet made public said the bomb consisted of about 7 ounces (2000 grams) of ammonium nitrate wrapped in newspaper, Globo

Police still do not know who was responsible for planting the device on Brazilian Airline Tam's Flight 283, Globo added.

The Technical Air and Space Centre declined to confirm the report, and said it did not yet know when it would make the results of its investigation pub-

"We can't confirm the information they put out," a spokesman for the Centre told the agency on Tuesday, our work continues and we are still investigating."

The Fokker 100 was on a

city 70 miles (110 kms) west of Sao Paulo and Sao Paulo's domestic Congonhas Airport on July 9 when the blast occurred.

#### Gunmen kill 2 shi'ite activists in Pak Punjab

LAHORE, Pakistan, July 30: Gunmen killed two Shi'ite Muslim activists in Sahiwal town in the central Pakistani province of Punjab today, police said, reports Reuter.

They said activists Syed Abid Hussain Bukhari and his son Hyder Abbas Bukhari, both lawyers, were attacked when they were going to local courts in Sahiwal, 170 km (106 miles) southwest of Lahore.

The two died instantly when two gunmen riding a motorcycle fired several bullets from an automatic weapon, police

PLA on right track since its founding People's Liberation Army (PLA) turns 70 on Friday, but does so in far more sprightly and confident fashion than many of the

political leaders it affects to obey, reports AFP. In fact, the world's largest army is arguably in as good a hope as it has ever been since its official founding on August 1, 1972 although some experts point disparagingly at its

backward technology and overmanning. Mao Zedong's celebrated dictum that political power grows from the barrel of a gun has lost little of its validity in China where political leaders lobby furiously for the military sup-

port considered vital to their survival. Such activities have intensified significantly in the wake of patriarch Deng Xiaoping's death in February and in the run-up to the key 15th Communist party Congress in the au-

The military's influence has

grown with its economic trans-

formation into one of China's

largest commercial entities

boasting tens of thousands of

tumn.

hotels and nightclubs to ice cream manufacturers. Income from those enter-

prises is the main source of funding for the PLA's ambitious military modernisation plans and far exceeds the official 1997 defence budget of 80.57 billion yuan (9.7 billion dollars). The three-million strong

army "is a virtual state within a state, and perhaps the most powerful institutional lobby in China, says George Washington University sinologist and specialist on the Chinese military David Shampbaugh.

This is a military that is there to preserve the party state in power. It is not going to let the party fall from power as was the case in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union." The army whose symbiotic

relationship with the party goes back to the early days of the revolution, has always stepped in the restore order and put down any threat to the regime such as during the cultural revolution and the secession struggle after Mao Zedong's death in 1976. And it was military inter-

nally put an end to the prodemocracy demonstrations in Tiananmen Square, at the cost of hundreds if not thousands of lives.

However, with Deng dead, the question of where the PLA's true loyalties now lie remains unanswered, despite President Jiang Zemin's repeated efforts to shore up his position as head of the powerful Central Military Commission (CMC). After Deng's death on Febru-

ary 19. Jiang moved swiftly to secure pledges of loyalty from the top military brass but the first and second CMC Vice Chairman Liu Huaging and Zhang Zhen were noticeably tardy in parroting the mantra of obedience to the party, "with Jiang Zemin at the core." Liu, 81 and sole military

representative in the politburo standing committee is widely expected to retire from the country's top decision-making body at the upcoming Congress leaving a space that Jiang can fill with a more secure military

However, other Jiang rivals have also been manoeuvering to

BEIJING, July 30: China's desperate enterprises — from vention in June 1989 that fi- increase their influence with During a recent visit to

France, the number three in the Chinese hierarchy, Qiao Shi, issued a veiled challenge to Jiang when he suggested that the CMC chief should be answerable to China's parliament of which Qiao is the chairman.

The army itself has little to gain from such factional infighting especially if it were to spill over into an all-out power "The PLA is very much and

integral part of the economic equation in China, said one western military attaché based in Beijing. "As long as the economy develops so does the army and that gives the military a powerful vested interest in political stability, hence the lovalty pledges to the party and Jiang, the military attaches Despite its strength in num-

ber most experts estimate that the PLA will take up 20 year to become a truly modern fighting force especially the army which has missed out on spending budgets to the air force and navy.

# US legislator suggests Camp David-type Indo-Pak parleys

Aziz Haniffa writes from Washington and Arab-Americans, both In-

An influential Democratic Congressman has urged the Clinton Administration to convene a Camp David like summit and play the role of a catalyst to foster a peace agreement between India and Pakistan.

Rep Richard Gephardt, speaking at the "Leadership for the 21st Century" dinner hosted by the India Abroad Centre for Political Awareness (IACPA). said, "I have been very pleased that the leadership of both countries lately have been talking about trying to bring about a greater peace.

The IACPA is a non-profit, non-partisan organisation that seeks to improve the political effectiveness of the Indian American community and to strengthen ties between the U.S. and India.

Rep Gephardt said that similar to lobbying by the Jewish

dian and Pakistani-Americans should lobby "our councils of government that as American citizens that (helping to bring about peace between India and Pakistan) should be a priority of our government in foreign policy. Rep Gephardt, who is ex-

pected to mount a fierce challenge to Vice President Al Gore for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2000, recalled, We spent an enormous amount of energy in the United States. trying to bring about peace in the Middle East. He noted that "part of the

reason it happened was that the Jewish community in the United States and the Arab community in the United States has been lobbying and working to get our government to be an active force for peace.

India Abroad News Service

#### SAO PAULO, July 30: A routine flight between Sao Jose Dos Campos, and industrial