31 die in Peruvian plane crash: 31 people were killed when an airliner crashed in the Peruvian jungle in the western Ucayali department that borders Brazil, police reported Saturday, AFP reports from Lima.

The plane, travelling between Tingo Maria and Lima, went down Friday near Carpis hill near Tingo Maria, police said.

A Peruvian air force search plane located the crash site about 30 minutes flight the city of Tingo Maria in an areas often shrouded in fog.

20 killed in Indian bus mishap Twenty people were killed when a bus hit bridge and plunged into a ditch in southern India, the Press Trust of India reported on Saturday, Reuter says from New Delhi.

It said 13 people died at the scene of the crash on Friday at Byladahalli in Karnataka state. Seven more died later of their injuries. -

11 Branch Davidians acquitted: All 11 Branch Davidians were acquitted Saturday of murderconspiracy charges stemming from the deaths of four federal agents during a raid on the cults' compound a year ago,

broadcast reports said. Reuter says from San Antonio. Eight members of the branch Davidians were found guilty of weapons possession and other lesser charges, while three were acquitted of all charges, the reports said.

Fire kills 7 in London: At least seven people died and 20 others were injured Saturday when fire broke out in a central London cinema the fire brigade said, AFP reports from London.

At least one victim died shortly after admission to hospital, said fire fighters, adding that up to six others could have perished in the blaze.

The cause of the fire, which broke out Saturday afternoon in a private cinema in the Saint John street area of the capital, remained unclear said fire fighters.

One killed in NZ chopper crash: A helicopter crashed about 100 kilometers north of Wellington yesterday morning, killing one and injuring the rest two on board, New Zealand television reported, Xinhua says from Wellington.

The crash took place at around 10:30 am near the city of Levin. The assistant to the pilot died instantly and the pilot and the passenger were wounded.

The two have been sent to hospital and the cause for the crash has not been determined, the report said.

Diarrhoea claims 22 in Timor: An outbreak of diarrhoea has killed a total of 22 people in the north central region of the island of Timor, the official News Agency Antara said Saturday, AP reports from Jakarta. The report said the outbreak, which began in early

January, has hit 13 villages in the central and northern part of the island with more than 300 being treated in hospitals and homes. Dr Derven J Lada, a spokesman of the local health depart-

ment said the government has provided medicines including antibiotics for the patients.

Catholic church

Rabin may take action

against Kach group

JOUNIEH (Lebanon), Feb

27: A bomb exploded under

the altar as worshipers took

Communion at a crowded Ma-

ronite Catholic church Sunday

killing at least nine people and

injuring more than 30, police

and witnesses said, reports AP.

covered the floor of the Notre

Dame de la Delivrance Church.

among the biggest churches in

this port city and surrounding

towns north of Beirut that

porter who witnessed the ex-

plosion said the bomb went off

as hundreds of worshipers

lined up before the altar table

to take communion at the

Sfeir, and a 4-year-old girl

were among the wounded. A

A priest, Father Antoine

JERUSALEM, Feb 27: Prime

Minister Yitzhak Rabin is likely

tremist Jewish settlers to try to

quell Palestinian anger over the

massacre of 43 Muslims in a

mosque. Israeli radio stations

Sunday's cabinet meeting would

also consider freeing 1.000

Palestinian prisoners as a

that dramatic measures would

be taken against settlers and

the extremist Kach group to

which settler Baruch Goldstein,

the gunman who shot the wor-

shippers in the mosque at

Hebron in the West Bank, be-

nounce his decision to the

cabinet about what measures to

take regarding the attack," said

Heavy fighting

The Prime Minister will an-

Radio stations suggested

An Israeli official said

indicated, reports Reuter.

goodwill gesture.

to announced action against ex-

An Associated Press re-

form a Christian enclave.

morning mass.

Survivors said pools of blood

dead body was slumped over

Merhel told reporters on the

scene that four bombs planted

in the church organ were dis-

sion stations interrupted pro-

gramming to flash reports of

the area and stopped journal-

ists from taking photographs.

Hundreds of onlookers

jammed the nearby coastal

highway to watch rescue oper-

Lebanon's top police chief.

Brig Gen Rafik Hassan, said in

tional Lebanese Broadcasting

Corp television investigators

have not established the mo-

tive or identified the culprits.

Rabin spokesman Oden Ben

Palestinians and wounded

more than 50 on Saturday as

violent Arab protests against

Friday's massacre spilled over

from the occupied West Bank

The Israeli army said it was

Israeli troops killed three

Ami, refusing to elaborate.

and Gaza Strip into Israel.

an interview with the Interna-

Christian radios and televi-

Lebanese troops sealed off

Interior Minister Bishara

another, unexploded bomb.

mantled after the blast.

the blast.

Central Timor is about 2,000 kilometers (1,250 miles) southeast of Jakarta. Bomb kills 9 in Lebanon's

Demonstrators in Arab capitals call for 'holy war' against Israel

NICOSIA. Feb 27: Tens of thousands of angry demonstrators poured into the streets of Arab capitals on Saturday to denounce the massacre of Muslim worshippers in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, reports AFP.

Thousands of Jordanians burned an Israeli flag in Amman' following midday prayers. while in Cairo 10.000 Egyptian

the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Yemen and the United Arab Emirates all pinned the blame squarely on Israel accusing the authorities of failing to protect the Palestinians.

At the United Nations, Arab and other Muslim countries backed a PLO demand for a

Mosque in Amman denounced the Israeli-PLO autonomy accord signed in September and called for Arafat's downfall.

The demonstration was organised by the Fundamentalist Islamic Action Front, political wing of the Muslim brotherhood, one of whose representa-



Palestinians carry the body of twenty-year-old Fadi al Issawi shot in Jerusalem during clashes with Israeli borderguards Feb 26, following the Hebron mosque massacre Friday Feb 25.

university students denounced zionism and demanded revenge for the 52 killed in the Hebron mosque.

Demonstrations are also reported in the Libyan capital Tripoli, while special services were held in the mosques throughout the Arab Gulf states. Outraged Arab leaders urged

Israel and the international community to act swiftly to half violence by Jewish settlers in

MOSCOW, Feb 27: Hard-lin-

ers who staged an armed rebel

lion against President Boris

Yeltsin's reforms have admitted

guilt for the bloodshed in

October by accepting an

amnesty, a senior member of

parliament said Sunday, re-

"Each of the released partic-

ipants in the October events

has virtually admitted his guilt

for the death of 150 people,

mass unrest, and wounds sus-

tained by 700 people, for there

is no such thing as an amnesty

for the not guilty." Viktor

Mironov, deputy chairman of

security told the ITAR-Tass

Hard-liners who were freed

the State Duma committee for

ports AP.

news agency.

slaughter, described by PLO Chief Yasser Arafat as a "serious blow" to the peace pro-

Arafat summoned negotiators to Tunis on Sunday to determine when and if to resume negotiations with Israel to launch autonomy in the West Bank town of Jericho and the Gaza Strip.

Fundamentalist speakers at the rally outside the Al-Husseini

Rutskoi, Khasbulatov admit

guilt for bloodshed in Oct '93

Saturday included former Vice

President Alexander-Rutskoi.

ex-speaker of parliament

Ruslan Khasbulatov and a

half-dozen others involved in

how Yeltsin would respond, but

a spokesman earlier indicated

he might launch a legal

protest charging parliament

with usurping presidential pow-

surrounded by a crowd of sup-

porters, immediately vowed to

continue their struggle, raising

"My first task will be raising

workers' collective to a fight

against the regime." Viktor

fears of new violence in Russia.

Some of the freed prisoners,

ers in granting the amnesty.

It was not clear on Sunday

October's bloodshed

Moscow.

Protestors set fire to an Israel flag at Hashemieh Sauare in the city centre, after midday prayers at the mosque.

Prison.

Yeltsin's

Jordan declared three days of official mourning from Saturday, and all institutions stopped work for two hours at midday (100 GMT).

— AFP photo

Thousands of Palestinian refugees called for revenge and called Arafat a "traitor" in demonstrations at camps out-

Anpilov, one of the most vocal

hard-liners, told the Interfax

news agency after leaving the

maximum-security Lefortovo

Vyacheslav Kostikov con-

demned the release as an "act

of blasphemy," and accused the

parliament's lower house of

"The people whose hands

and conscience were linked to

bloodshed, people who were

ready to push Russia into the

bloody whirl of civil war, were

freed without trial," he said in

serves the right to act "in ac-

cordance with his powers.

Kostikov said Yeltsin re-

backing political extremism.

spokesman

side the capital Amman. A 1.000-strong demonstration was also held in Irbid in the

Nearly 10,000 Egyptian university students, heeding a call by the Muslim fundamentalistdominated student union at Cairo university waved black flags and carried coffins draped in Palestinian flags.

Leaflets distributed by demonstrators called for "holy war" in support of the Palestinians, and said the "Muslim holy places in Palestine should be put under the protection of a fundamentalist state, such as Jordan."

They urged Egypt, the only Arab country to have a peace treaty with Israel, to break diplomatic relations with the Jewish state.

Black flags fluttered throughout the occupied territories and in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, which were paralysed by a general strike Saturday as Palestinians mourned the massacre victims.

Lebanon declared next Thursday a day of national mour-

In Damascus an official spokesman said Israel's "stubborn position its expansionist ambitions and policy of prevarication in the peace process' provoked the massacre, and Israel was "directly or indirectly responsible for extremism in the region."

A senior Iraqi official urged Palestinians to "step up the Intifada," or uprising against Israel in the occupied territories, which began in December

The hardline fundamentalist Islamic jihad in Palestine group vowed to avenge the massacre, in a statement released in Beirut.

And in Baghdad, another radical group, the Palestine Liberation Front (PLF) led by Abul Abbas called for a resumption of the armed struggle and an end to negotiations with

IAEA inspectors get visas to visit DPRK

VIENNA, Feb 27: Inspectors of the International Atomic Energy Agency were granted on Saturday visas to visit the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), according to a news bulletin released by the agency, says Xinhua.

The bulletins said the group of inspectors were scheduled to arrive in Pyongyang on March 1, and then visit seven nuclear facilities in the country.

DPRK agreed on February 15 to open the seven nuclear facilities, but said two other facilities were not included.

The UN agency urged DPRK on February 23 to grant visas to the inspectors as soon as possible and set a one-week dead-

JKLF leader arrested

SRINAGAR, Feb 27: Indian security forces in Kashmir on Saturday arrested a Muslim militant leader and violence in the state's four-year-old uprising claimed seven more lives police said, reports Reuter.

Security Force arrested Shabir Ahmed Siddique, head of the publicity wing of the outlawed Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) which wants independence for the mainly Muslim Himalayan state.

The paramilitary Border

Police said at least seven people had been killed since Friday, including four armed militants shot dead in an army search operation

One man died when a bomb exploded near a hospital in the south-eastern town of Doda and at least 14 people were in-Police and hospital sources

PLO, US fail to agree on wording of UN resolution

UNITED NATIONS, Feb 27: The United States and the Palestine Liberation Organisation failed to agree Saturday night on the wording of a Security Council resolution condemning the mosque massacre in the occupied West Bank, reports AP.

The Security Council, which had planned to adopt a resolution of condemnation, adjourned without setting a new date for a meeting.

Western and Middle Eastern diplomats said the problems involved two issues: calls for temporary international protection of Palestinians rejected by Israel - and the reference to Jerusalem as an occupied territory.

Israeli officials have blamed the massacre Friday in Hebron on a lone Jewish settler bent on sabotaging the recent peace agreement between Israel and the Palestine liberation Organisation. But the PLO says more than one gunman was involved and blames the Israeli government for not providing adequate security.

The PLO wants Israel to disarm the Jewish settlers. It reminded UN members that Britain.

the Security Council for years has considered Israel's occupation of and settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip ille-

The diplomats, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the Palestinians refused to delete references in a draft resolution to Jerusalem as an occupied territory and to a possible deployment of foreign peacekeepers to protect

Palestinians. Israel captured east Jerusalem in the 1967 war and annexed it that same year. In 1980, the Israeli parliament formally affirmed Jerusalem as Israel's capital, although the city is not recognised as such by the United States.

A French draft resolution urges measures to guarantee the safety and protection of Palestinian civilians in the occupied Palestinian territories, "including temporary international or foreign presence."

But Western diplomats, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that calls for an international military presence would be rejected, since it is opposed by at least two of the five countries with veto power: the United States and

Off the Record

Thatcher holds secret annual auctions

LONDON: Former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher held auctions each year at which she sold some of the gifts given

her by foreign visitors, the Sunday Times reported, says

"Margaret Thatcher held secret annual auctions at Downing Street of some of the gifts given to her by foreign dignitaries when she was Prime Minister," the paper said.

"Bids were accepted from staff at number 10 for trinkets and pieces of china." the paper said, adding that proceeds of the sale "wen to charity" and "those involved were under strict instructions to keep the auctions

Ten days ago, the magazine Tatler reported that Thatcher had complained that Norma Major, wife of Prime Minister John Major had worn her favourite diamond necklace from the Downing Street collection.

Tatler said Major had agreed to let his wife wear the jew-

Burglars break into home of ex-queen guitarist

LONDON: Burglars broke into the west London home of former Queen guitarist Brian May and snatched cassette tapes bearing "work in progress," police said Sunday, reports AP.

The intruders forced open the front door and grabbed a briefcase containing a personal organiser, a camera, a wallet, dollars, two passports and the cassette tapes, a police spokesman said, requesting anonymity. May reported the break-in when he returned home shortly

after midnight.

Mother shoots 3 children before killing herself

PHILADELPHIA: A corrections officer telephoned her estranged husband Saturday to say she was going to kill their three children and commit suicide - and then she began while he was still on the phone, reports AP.

The husband called police after he heard a gunshot, said Philadelphia police spokesman Cpl. Joseph McQue. Carmen Shahiyd killed her 15-year-old son Theodore and

wounded her 9-year-old son Mashi with a rifle, McQue said. Investigators believe the rifle jammed, and that Shahiyd then used a .25-caliber handgun to kill her 8-year-old daughter Tya and herself.

"She called him and told him she was going to kill her children and then herself."

Mrs. Shahiyd and Theodore were dead at the scene. Tva was pronounced dead from gunshot wounds to the chest at Temple University Hospital, nursing supervisor Karen Steinke said.

Mashi was in critical condition at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children, said hospital spokeswoman Linda Van Winkle.

Mrs. Shahiyd, 36, was a guard at a city jail. Neighbours described her as a hardworking woman whose husband, Basil, frequently stayed at her row house in North Philadelphia.

"He would leave and then she would take him back in," said neighbour Janie Jamison, who said she frequently babysat the two youngest children.

Last month, neighbours said, police responding to a violent domestic dispute had to force their way into Mrs. Shahiyd's house through the front door.

But Rodriguez and other neighbours said that was the only visible fight during the couple's two years in the neighbour

following an amnesty recently passed by the Russian parliament. Next to Rutskoi is his wife say more than 15,000 people have been killed in the uprising - AFP photo Ludmila. Other persons not identified. Rabuka may take Heroes, villains loom larger than life in Chambal Valley

along Kabul River KABUL, Feb 27: Islamic factions launched a nighttime at-

tack against President Burhanuddin Rabbani's forces. firing scores of rockets at government positions along the Kabul River that runs through the capital, reports AP. There was no word on casu-

alties from the Saturday night barrage unleashed by the main opposition groups, headed by Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and warlord Rashid Dostum.

However, during the day Saturday artillery fire hit a crowded marketplace, killing 15 and wounding 27, according to Radio Kabul, which is controlled by the president.

The opposition forces launched an attack January 1 to oust the president. They have been unable to gain any ground but remain entrenched on the outskirts of the city.

BHIND, India, Feb 27: The Chambal Valley is India's own Wild West, where heroes and villains loom larger than life. reports AP.

have carved a web of brambled ravines and gorges in 8,000 square miles (20.720 square kms) of soft black soil stret ched across three states in central India.

A person can vanish here and never be found. Perfect bandit country

The murder, kidnapping and highway robbery in Chambal is a stark, brutal version of the strife between India's castes, the religiously sanctioned social hierarchy that determine the fate of Hindus by birth

Since British colonial rule began in the 18th century. travellers have feared this

treacherous land where a cult called thugs robbed and killed to honour Kali, the Hindu goddess of destruction.

With the 1930s came a new Rivers and monsoon rains kind of bandit people from low castes who rebel against feudal oppression by the landowning upper castes. seeking vengeance and their vision of justice.

They are called "dacoits." a Hindi word written into the British penal code to signified criminals acting in groups of five or more. The bandits call themselves "baghis," or rebels

kidnapping landowners for ransom Poor Indians make heroes of the bandits and help them when they are on the run In turn, the bandits provide pro-

tection, and sometimes money

Popular movies are made

Their main income is from

about famous bandits and polit ical parties woo them at election time, knowing that support in the adobe hut villages of Chambal can swing an entire caste behind a party. Years ago, most of the no-

torious outlaws surrendered in return for easy prison time and financial rewards They now are farmers or businessmen. but still fear retribution from relatives of people they killed Banditry has revived in the

1990s. Police say gangs have kidnapped 31 people for ran som and killed 12. including four of the kidnap victims in the Bhind area, the most active of the 10 districts of the Chambal Valley in the first two months of this year police killed 12 bandits compared with nine in all of 1993 and six in 1992

Those who should know say

the new bandits are not like the old ones. The older generation had

their own code of conduct. said police superintendent Vijay Yadav, the district's se They didn't molest women

they killed only out of revenge and they helped those of their caste who needed it A 61 year old farmer from Bindwa villa who uses only the

he was marched barefoot

name Gursahai told of his kid napping by six men two years Gursahai considered weal thy because he has eight acres

and two buffalo, was seized in his fields and taken into a labyrinth of ravines that begins a few hundred vards away For a week blindfolded and hands bound behind his back

through thorny undergrowth each night. The gang slept by

They demanded 80,000 rupees (dlrs 2.600)," Gursahai said, squatting on his veranda under a thatched roof." I told them. I'm not going to give you a single paise. Go ahead and kill me On the eighth day, as police

search parties closed in, the gang let him go. He was lucky in January, a

new gang leader beheaded both his kidnap victim and the man who was negotiating for his release Dalveer Khangar needed to

establish his name by terror so that next time, the ransom will come," said Sushovan Banerjee, head of police operations against bandits in the Bhind district.

The last legendary outlaw

was Phoolan Devi, dubbed the "bandit queen," after she and her followers allegedly killed 22 men in a village where she had been held prisoner and gang-raped. In villages of Mallahs, her

caste of boatmen, people built shrines to celebrate her revenge on the Thakurs, a landowning caste. Millions of Indians watched

on television Qiny, round-faced woman an ammunition belt over her shoulder and a ban danna around her forehead. surrendered in 1983 in Bhind. a market town on the edge of the ravines She had eluded capture for three years.

Phoolan Devi was never tried. On February 19, after the government of Uttar Pradesh state said it was dropping the cases against her, she was released on bail.

oath as PM today SUVA, Feb 27: Election win-

ner Sitiveni Rabuka will probably be sworn in Monday for a further term as Fiji's Prime Minister, Deputy Premier Timoci Vesikula said here today, reports AFP.

The new cabinet should be in place by Tuesday, Vesikula

Rabuka's Soqosoqo Ni Vakavulewa Ni Taukei (SVT) party won 31 seats in the snap general election, which ended Saturday, and with its parlia mentary allies will command 37 seats in the 70 member parliament Vesikula said that the SVT

would have a caucus session Sunday and then meet with its junior coalition partners He said it was expected that

Rabuka will be "unanimously voted to be the new Prime Minister of this Pacific island republic

sealing off the West Bank indefinitely in the wake of the violence, while a closure of the Gaza Strip would remain in "Beginning Sunday at 3 AM (0100 GMT) there will be a closure on all the West Bank," an army spokesman said. "During the closure, entry of Arab residents to work in Israel will not be permitted. Former Russian vice-president Alexander Rutskoi (C) walks out of the Lefortovo prison in Palestinian leader Faisal Al-Moscow Feb 26. Rutskoi, along with other leaders of the October 1993 rebellion was released Husseini said the 120,000 settlers in the occupied territories should be evacuated.