Another guerilla

group calls truce

in N Ireland

Northern Ireland's most ruth-

Volunteer Force, has said that

its war is over for ever, a British

newspaper reported, says

within two weeks if the British

The LVF said it could destroy

its weapons in front of televi

month-old ceasefire.

The LVF said it would not re-

Reuters.

LONDON, Oct 30: One of

### 60 killed in Swedish discotheque fire

GOTEBORG, Sweden, Oct 30: A fire started by an explosion raced through an upstairs discotheque jammed with hundreds of teen-agers attending a Halloween dance early Friday in Sweden's second-largest city. killing at least 60 people and injuring about 190 others, many seriously, reports AP.

"It reminded me of the gas chambers at Auschwitz," local rescue service leader Lennart Olin said on national radio, describing the sight when rescuers first entered the building in Goteborg, on the country's west coast and about 500 kilometres southwest of Stockholm.

The fire was the deadliest in modern Swedish history since 1978, when 20 people died in the

town of Boraas "We are still searching the building ... but so far we have found 60 dead," Goteborg police official Jan Edmundson said on national radio.

The cause of the fire was not immediately known. "What we know is that there was an explosion," Edmundson said. Olin said there were signs that the fire was set. "The fact that it spread so fast indicates that it was not a normal fire," he said.

The Swedish news agency TT reported 190 people were taken to hospitals with injuries, and about 20 were in intensive care. Seven of the most severely injured were taken by helicopter to burn clinics in other cities, the report said.

The fire broke out about midnight (2300 GMT Thursday) in building of the local Macedonian Association, which organised the dance. The crowd in the second-story of the building ports AFP. contained mostly 13 to 18-year

Jamal Fawz, 15, told TT that he was out on the dance floor when the blaze started with about 400 people inside.

"It looked like it started in the ceiling, and lamps and loudspeakers fell to the floor. he was quoted as saying. "It was chaos. Everybody was trying to get out and people trampled on each other on the way to the exit. ... Others kicked out the windows and jumped out."

Ambulances were called in from several nearby communities. The Goteborg rescue services also brought city buses into service to help transport

Key state elections next month

International =

# Sonia opens talks with opposition parties to form alternative govt

NEW DELHI, Oct 30: Indian opposition leader Sonia Gandhi has opened talks with opposition parties to prepare for pos-sible changes following next month's key state elections. party sources said today, re-

Sonia is quietly lobbying for support for her Congress Party's plans to form an alternative government in the event of a poor showing by India's ruling Hindu nationalists in the November 25 polls, the sources

The Italian-born Sonia had a 40-minute meeting here Thursday with former Defence Minister Mulayam Singh Yaday, a socialist. She had earlier talked to communist leader

Harkishan Singh Surjeet. Details of the talks were not available, but Congress officials said they were aimed at building up a broad coalition against the nationalists both during and after the hustings.

Elections are due in New Delhi and the states of Rajasthan. Madhya Pradesh and Mizoram for local governments. They will be the first popularity test for the nationalists since they took office in emerge politically stronger.

Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's nationalists Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government both New Delhi and Rajasthan. The Congress rules Madhya Pradesh and Mi-

While the BJP is not a player in Christian-majority Mizoram, a Hindu nationalist defeat in New Delhi and Rajasthan as widely expected - could spur the Congress into trying to topple the seven-month-old Vajpayee government, analysts

Vajpayee and other nationalist leaders have already declared that the upcoming elections should not be viewed as a referendum on their national

government in New Delhi. Opposition leaders said that if the BJP wins in Madhya Pradesh, India's largest state, and manages to retain New Delhi, then Vajpayee would

"But if the Congress wins both Rajasthan and Delhi, then it will come under a lot of pressure to form a new central government with the support of smaller opposition parties." a veteran communist said.

Sonia Gandhi took to active politics in January this year for the first time after her husband's assassination in 1991. She became Congress president

The Hindu nationalists head a fragile multi-party coalition which has been hurtling from one crisis to another since March, disproving their election pledge to provide a stable government to India.

#### sion cameras. Over 100 killed as bandits attack Kenyan villages

NAIROBL Oct 30: More the 100 people were killed and dozens of others are missing after heavily-armed bandits. many of them from Ethiopia, attacked Kenyan villages near the border, police said today, reports AFP.

A local newspaper quoted politicians in the region as saying that more than 300 people were feared dead following last weekend's raid on the Bagalla area of the northern Wajir dis-

Police spokesman Emmanuel Mwachiti said that armed gangs from the Boran tribe backed by fighters from an Ethiopian rebel group, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) attacked villages inhabited by their Degodia rivals and embarked on an orgy of murder

Local officials put the death

Dozens of young women were

and pillage. toll at 139, according to press reports today.

abducted during the attack by the bandits, who were estimated to have numbered about 500.

#### UP says no to play on Nehru

LUCKNOW, India. Oct 30: A Hindu right-wing party has been denied permission to stage a play that depicts India's first prime minister as a lovelorn man pining for the wife of the country's last British viceroy officials said Friday, reports

The Shiv Sena had sought permission from the government of the northern Uttar Pradesh state to stage on Jawahar Lal Nehru's birth anniversary Nov. 14 the Hindi play "Lady Mountbatten's Tresses and Nehru."

The alleged love affair between Nehru and the viceroy's wite has been the subject of books and newspaper articles in India for years, but writers have rarely attempts to piece together the story in a country where the personal scandals of politicians rarely make head-

After consultations with the federal government, permission was denied because the play could lead to violent protests and law and order problems, a government spokesman said

### UNSC extends sanctions on Libya

UNITED NATIONS, Oct 30: The UN Security Council on Thursday extended six-year-old sanctions against Libya for a further four months to press Tripoli to surrender two Lockerbie bombing suspects. reports AFP.

UN Security Council President Sir Jeremy Greenstock noted that the 15 members were formally offering to suspend the sanctions as soon as Tripoli hands over two Libyan suspects for trial in the Netherlands.

Greenstock the British ambassador, and US Charge d'Affaires Peter Burleight called on Libya to promptly hand over the two suspects wanted in connection with the 1988 bombing of Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland which killed 270 people.

## Off the Record



Britain's Prince Charles with his youngest son Harry and niece Zara Phillips leaving the Liberal Synagogue in St John's Wood, London, Thursday, after attending the wedding of Simon Sebag-Montiefore and Santa Palmer-Tomkinson. - AP/UNB photo

#### Justice at last for doctor who treated Lincoln's killer?

SAGINAW, Michigan: The Army was ordered Thursday to reconsider the conviction of a doctor who treated John Wilkes Booth after he assassinated President Abraham Lincoln in 1865, reports AP.

Dr Samuel Mudd was sent to prison 133 years ago for helping Booth escape. Mudd's grandson, 97-year-old Dr Richard Mudd of Saginaw, sued last year to have Mudd's conviction overturned. Federal Judge Paul Friedman in Washington, DC, sent the case back to the Army on Thursday. Friedman said the Army's recent rulings against the request were arbitrary.

The morning after Booth shot Lincoln in the head at Ford's Theatre, he came to Mudd's home in Maryland seeking treatment for the leg he broke while jumping from the president's box onto the stage. What happened after that is in dispute. A military commis-

sion convicted Mudd in 1865 of aiding Booth in his escape. Mudd said he did not know of Lincoln's assassination and failed to recognise Booth, a popular actor. Federal troops killed Booth 11 days after Mudd put a cast on his leg. Mudd was pardoned by president Andrew Johnson, but

his conviction was not overturned Richard Mudd argues that his grandfather, a civilian, was entitled to a civil trial. In 1992, the Army Board for Correction of Military Records concluded the military tribunal lacked jurisdiction at the time and recommended the conviction be set

Army leaders twice rejected the recommendation, ruling the military tribunal had proper constitutional authority and that the jurisdictional question had been rejected during the doctor's

### Archimedes' work sells for \$2m

NEW YORK: A 1,000-year-old parchment volume that is the oldest known copy of Archimedes' work sold for 2 million dollars at auction Thursday to a private American collector, reports AP.

The 174-page work contains the notes and calculations for two of the Greek mathematician's most famous theories - "On Floating Bodies" and "Method of Mechanical Theorems."

The buyer was not identified. Bidding for the work known as the Archimedes Palimpsest, lasted just a minute and a half in an intense session at

Christie's auction house Other bidders included the Greek government, which has said the work was stolen from a library and rightfully belongs in Greece.

The buyer will make the work available to scholars, said Felix De Marz Oyens, a Christie's book expert. The work's pre-auction value was put at 800,000 to 1.2 mil-

A palimpsest is a work written on parchment on which one manuscript has been erased and another written over it.

The Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem has said the Archimedes Palimpsest was stolen from a library in Constantinople, now Istanbul. The patriarchate went to federal court in New York on Wednesday to try to halt the sale, but a judge refused, saying the seller had clear title to sell the manuscript.

The seller's identity was not disclosed. Christie's said only that it is a French family that has owned the manuscript since the 1920s.

Archimedes lived in the ancient Greek city of Syracuse in Sicily and was killed in 212 BC by the Romans during the Second Punic War. He is credited with many engineering developments, including catapults, pulley hoists, machines for pump-ing water and grappling irons used to tip ships over.

### Shame drives them to suicide

DUBAL Oct 30: Whether it be by hanging, poisoning or leaping off apartment blocks. dozens of Asian workers commit suicide in the Gulf each year rather than face the shame of going home with nothing to

show for their toil, reports AFP. "NK, an Indian national, hangs himself from the ceiling fan of his apartment" reads the headline to a short story in a Dubai newspaper.

What it fails to disclose are the reasons behind such a desperate act. According to a police report.

the construction worker was sacked five months ago, failed to find a new job to pay off his debts and became an "illegal" resident because he was out of

What he left behind was a hovel he shared with half a dozen other Indian labourers

and an impoverished family back in Kerala, southern India, the man wrote in a suicide note. Asians, who make up the bulk of the labour force in the oil-rich Gulf monarchies, see

the region as a gold mine when they first apply in their millions for jobs. Failure to make a small fortune, at least by the standards

back home, is seen as bringing shame on the family, according to studies on suicide in the Gulf.

United Arab Emirates (UAE) newspapers earlier this year reported how a Sri Lankan maid strangled her 15-month baby before killing herself with a strong does of chemical detergents in her employer's villa.

Others jump from the top of apartment blocks. A total of 230 suicides were recorded in the UAE alone between 1992 and 1997, according to a police study.

#### bail to higher court KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 30 learned judge was wrong in law" to refuse her husband bail. She Lawyers for jailed dissident

Turkish plane hijack drama

ends: Hijacker shot dead

Anwar Ibrahim asked a higher court Friday to free him on bail after a lower court refused to do so, reports AP.

Attorney Sankaran Nair said they asked the judge for an early hearing on the appeal. On Monday, Anwar is to

stand trial on 10 counts of corruption and illegal homosexual acts, charges he says were trumped up to stem his rising popularity. High court Judge Augustine Paul, who'll preside over the

trial starting on Monday, earlier rejected Anwar's request for bail. The judge said the lawyers weren't able to prove that Anwar would not tamper with witnesses if released on bail. Anwar's wife, Azizah Ismail.

said the appeal filed on Friday contained five principal grounds arguing that "the

ANKARA, Oct 30: Anti-ter-

rorist squads shot dead a hi-

jacker of a Turkish plane after

a seven-hour standoff Friday at

Ankara's airport — in a clear

message that the Turkish gov-

ernment does not tolerate ter-

rorist actions to promote Kur-

blood on the Republican Day

could not reach their goal," In-

terior Minister Kutlu Aktas told

reporters after the ordeal. None

of the 38 passengers and crew

Russian-made hand grenade

and a gun, took control of the

Ankara-bound flight Thursday

night as Turkey celebrated its

75th anniversary as a secular republic with street parties, of-

acting to protest Turkey's

crackdown on Kurdish rebels.

according to accounts from the

government and passengers.

The hijacker declared he was

ficial balls and fire works.

A hijacker, armed with a

"Those who wanted spill

dish problems, reports API

held hostage was injured.

didn't specify what the grounds

Anwar was arrested Sept 20 under a special security law only hours after organising a mammoth rally in the capital. During that protest, he called for sweeping government reforms and the resignation of Prime Minister Mahathir Mo-

Meanwhile, as police brace for another round of weekly anti-government demonstrations Saturday, local traders and politicians on Friday pleaded for calm.

"Violence in any form or from any quarter, whether by demonstrators or police, must be deplored as violence can only beget violence." the opposition leader in Parliament, Lim Kit Siang, said Friday.

In a 10-minute raid, security

forces shot the hijacker at least

four times. Television footage

showed the cockpit damaged

The hijack took control of

the plane sasday evening

shortly dier it took off from

the so there city of Adana, He

de sanded that it be diverted to

Lausanne, Switzerland, a city

significant to Kurds as the site

of a 1919 treaty that blocked

Switzerland, the six-member

crew brought the plane down at

Ankara's airport, apparently

after misleading the hijacker

into believing the plane was

stopping for fuel in neighbour-

All airport lights were

turned off, and the mosques in

nearby villages were ordered

not to cite their prayers to con-

vince the hijacker he was in

Sofia, the private Channel D

ing Bulgaria.

Instead of heading to

their hopes of a Kurdish state.

with bullet marks.

## Lawyers appeal for Anwar's Yeltsin to formally curb his powers next year, aide says

MOSCOW, Oct 30: An exhausted Boris Yeltsin left for a Black Sea vacation on Friday, and a senior aide said the Russian president would formally restrict his political powers

early next year, reports AP. Yeltsin entered a rest home in the woods outside Moscow on Tuesday to receive treatment and recover from what doctors said was extreme fatigue and unstable blood pressure. The president's condition

scheduled trip to Austria, renewing concern about his ability to serve the rest of his term ending in the summer 2000. Yeltsin, 67, has remained largely out of public view since the country was hit by an eco-

nomic crisis in mid-August

and his deputy chief of staff

forced him to abruptly cancel a

Oleg Sysuyev acknowledged earlier this week that the president had turned control over the economy to Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov.

On Friday, Sysuyev went a step further, saying that the president would formally announce his reduced political role in a speech to parliament early next year.

Yeltsin feels comfortable giving the new Cabinet responsibility for day-to-day government affairs because it was formed with parliament's support, the Financial Times of London quoted Sysuyev as say-

"The political situation in Russia has changed," Sysuvev said. "In the past, the president engaged in every aspect of running the country.

He added that Yeltsin would serve the rest of his term and must preserve his constitutional powers to ensure that the next presidential elections are democratic.

Communists and other Yeltsin opponents have demanded his early resignation and immediate changes in the constitution to curb the president's sweeping powers. The Communist Party leadership was meeting on Friday to discuss their election strategy.

Several months before Yeltsin's latest illness and the economic crisis, the Communist-led opposition in parliament has started an impeachment campaign against the president. The campaign is widely expected to fizzle like previous such attempts.



Turkish expriot leader Raul Denktash, right, shakes hands with Pakistam President Rafiq Mohammad Tarrar, as Georgian President Edouard Shevardnadze looks on during a ceremony to mark the 75th anniversary of the Turkish republic at the mausoleum of Kemal Ataturk, the founder of modern Turkey, in Ankara Thursday. - AP/UNB photo

# BEREET

#### 26 die in Russian train mishap: The death tool from a collision between five runaway rail cars and a bus rose to 26 on yesterday when two more people died in a

hospital, a news agency reported. AP says from Moscow. Seventeen people remain in the hospital, one in grave condition. ITAR-Tass said, quoting doctors. The accident occurred Monday at an unmanned railroad crossing in Khabarovsk, about 6,100 km east Moscow

tribals found dead in Assam: Indian police have found the bodies of seven tribesmen killed in a clash between rival ethnic groups in the northeastern Indian state of Assam, a senior police official said yesterday, Reuters reports from Guwahati.

The bodies of the Santhal tribesmen were found Thursday night in the dense forests of Ranipur and Rurikhata about 280

#### km west of the state capital, Dispur. Lankan navy sink 10 rebel boats: Naval gunboats fought off a Tamil Tiger guerilla attack on a military sea convoy off Sri Lanka's northeast coast Friday,

military officials said, AP reports from Colombo. One naval gunboat and more than 10 rebel speed boats were sunk in the fighting off the rebel town of Mullaittivu. The convoy was passing Mullaittivu when more than 20 guerilla boats attacked, and fought a two-hour battle with escorting gunboats.

### Floods ravage Honduran coast as Hurricane Mitch recedes

LA LIMA, Honduras, Oct 30: Hurricane Mitch wore itself out pounding the Honduran coast and was downgraded to a tropical storm early Friday. But floodwaters continued to rise. cutting off communities from food, water and medicine, reports AP.

Already, at least 36 people had died and officials had no word at all from hundreds of small communities cut off by the storms in Honduras and neighbouring Nicaragua. Honduran officials said at least 15,000 houses had been destroyed along the Atlantic coast.

More than 150,000 people had fled homes or hotels in the region. "God save Honduras!" said President Carlos Flores Facusse

after flying over parts of the

vast disaster zone left by more

than two days of rain-charged

A US Coast Guard airplane on Thursday was searching off the Nicaraguan-Honduran border for a yacht reported missing with 31 people aboard.

hurricane-force winds.

Mitch, which on Tuesday ranked among the century's most powerful storms, weakened as it moved slightly inland of the Honduran coastline Thursday and lost much of its

The US National Hurricane Centre said that at 0300 GMT Friday, the storm was centered just inland, about 40 kilometres south of Limon, Honduras. Maximum sustained winds were near 80 kph, down from 290 kph early Tuesday. The centre said Mitch would probably weaken if it remained over land, but could regain force if it returned to sea.

Honduran officials said

more than 200 towns and vil-

lages had been isolated, without power, telephones or clean drinking water in areas where as much as 61 centimetres of rain fell within six hours. More than 72,000 people

were staying in shelters, and countless more were making do on their own. In La Lima, 177 kilometres

northwest of the capital, Tegucigalpa, entire neighbourhoods were in waist-deep water and hundreds of families had set up tents - made of scraps of tarp and wood - on the highway that runs through town.

Agriculture Minister Pedro Arturo Sevilla said grain, citrus and banana crops had been damaged "and the economic future of Honduras is uncertain. In the short term, food, water and medicine already were running out in communities isolated by the storm.

#### First American in space becomes world's oldest space traveller out Glenn's name in billowing cramped Friendship 7 Mercury

capsule during his five-hour.

America's first manned orbital flight. This time, a single try was enough, the weather was perfect and the countdown was interrupted only by a minor alarm problem and then five stray planes that delayed liftoff 19 minutes and 34 seconds. The

As the low man on Discovery's crew, the Democratic senator from Ohio rode in the middle seat of the windowless bottom deck for launch. He wore a baggy orange suit with a US flag stitched to his left shoulder, a contrast to his sleek silver suit

cles was transformed into a media spectacle by Glenn's par-

white letters off in the distance as the countdown entered its final hour. Hundreds of thousands of

people cheered as Glenn and his ship soared toward the horizon, just as so many did a generation and more before. Some burst into tears, others applauded and still others embraced in

"It was the coolest thing I ever saw," said 7-year-old Sam Prince of St Louis.

America's 123rd human spaceflight on TV, and elderly people who drew inspiration from Glenn's exploits.

for senior citizens. He is showing what we can do. We're not all sitting around doing nothing." Adelaide Samuelson, 91, said at a nursing home in Wallingford, Connecticut.

from the top of the launch control centre with NASA chief Daniel Goldin. The president described the launch as "stunning excitement." Discovery's thunderous

liftoff and nerve-racking 8 and

half minute climb to orbit

capped a two-year campaign by the World War 11 combat pilot

struck by the similarities be-

tween aging and the effects of

weightlessness - flimsy bones,

flabby muscles, fitful sleep — and offered himself as a test

through all the astronaut phys-

icals as well as an extra battery

of tests that included an an-

giogram. The space agency chief

Goldin made Glenn go

subject.

The four-term senator was

to snag a space shuttle seat.



back into orbit on a mission of science and sentiment, returning as the world's oldest astronaut to the high frontier he pioneered for America 36 years ago. - AP/UNB photo

#### Oct 30: Still the hero and still making history, John Glenn roared back into space aboard the US shuttle Discovery, retracing the trail he blazed for America's astronauts 36 years ago, reports AP.

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida,

"Boy, enjoying the show," Glenn said Thursday as Discovery soared 550 kilometres over Hawaii three hours into the flight. "This is beautiful." "It's still a trite old state-

ment: Zero-g and I feel fine," he added, repeating the words of his first flight, including the shorthand phrase for "zero gravity." His commander, Curtis Brown Junior, said: "Let the

and we haven't been able to remove it yet." Glenn, the first American in orbit on Feb 20, 1962, became at age 77 the world's oldest space traveller when he and six crewmates lifted off aboard the shuttle Discovery at 1919 GMT.

The international crew includes the first Spaniard in space, Mission Specialist Pedro Duque, and Payload Specialist Chiaki Mukai of Japan. Duque is the only space

rookie and the baby of the crew: At 35, he wasn't even born when Glenn first flew. He will help with Discovery's science exper-Mukai, a heart surgeon, will be the first Japanese to fly in

woman in space. She will help Glenn with his medical tests and conduct research in Discovery's mini-laboratory. "Liftoff of Discovery with six astronaut heroes and one American legend," launch commentator Lisa Malone said.

space twice. She already holds

the title of first Japanese

It was a space sequel with all the right stuff. Discovery's departure a mere 19 minutes late was practically routine compared with Glenn's oft-postponed, pioneering flight. The launch was marred when an 46by-56 centimetre drag-chute door fell from the shuttle's tail

before liftoff. The door panel covers part of the shuttle's landing gear. But NASA said the incident will not result in any threat to the crew when the shuttle returns to Earth on Nov 7 after the nine-day flight. "Let the wings of Discovery lift us on the future," launch

and struck an engine moments

control said in its final words to the astronauts. Glenn's return to space as the first orbiting geriatric test subject captured the American

imagination, so much so that

hundreds of thousands of peo-

ple jammed the area to see the

retiring senator off. President Clinton, the first president to witness a shuttle liftoff live, pronounced Glenn's flight "a great day for America and a great day for our senior citizens."

Soon after reaching orbit, Glenn unstrapped himself and for the first time ever floated free and weightless. He never ticipation. got out of the seat of his

triple spin around the planet in It took 11 attempts over two months for Glenn to blast off on

pilots were angling for good views of the launch.

of Mercury. What would have been a routine science flight attracting little notice outside space cir-

Sky-writing pilots spelled

Millions more watched

"I think he's doing it for us,

Clinton and his wife, Hillary, watched the liftoff

finally gave the thumbs-up in January, and Glenn promptly began part-time shuttle train-Discovery's crew will spend the next week conducting not

only medical and other laboratory experiments, but releasing a sun-gazing satellite and a small navy communication satellite.

