# NATO airsrikes kill 100 in Kosovo

KORISA, Yugoslavia, May 14: At least 100 civilians were killed and dozens were seriously injured in a bombing attributed to NATO overnight Thursday on a village in southern Kosovo, witnesses at the scene and the state news agency Tanjug said Friday, reports

Ethnic Albanian survivors said bombs fell around midnight on a farm compound where some 400 people, most of them ethnic Albanian Kosovars who had formerly been hiding in forests, had gone to take shelter for the night.

One of them, Feriz Ametaj, reckoned that at least 100 people had been killed. "Numerous burnt bodies have been evacuated since this morning in bags." he told AFP.

The village of Korisa is five kilometres north of the town of Prizren on the road to Suva

Some 30 tractors, 20 of which were completely burnt, were still parked in the yard when an AFP reporter arrived in Korisa shortly after noon (1000 GMT) Friday.

Nine charred bodies lay near

the tractors, and body parts of at least seven others were spread around the site, the reporter said. The village was struck by

eight cluster bombs around midnight Thursday (2200 GMT). the center said.

The Yugoslav state agency Tanjug said at least 100 people were killed and 50 were injured in a "criminal and barbaric NATO bombing."

Another report from Washington says: US congressional negotiators agreed on Thursday to a nearly \$15 billion package

to finance the air war against Yugoslavia, boost American's military preparedness and aid hurricane-battered Central America.

The emergency spending bill, hammered out by lawmakers representing the House of Representative and the Senate. will free up \$11.8 billion to cover the cost of the Kosovo operation - nearly double the amount requested by President Bill Clinton.

The International Committee of the Red Cross is to send a team into Kosovo today to assess the humanitarian situation, the first since air strikes against Yugoslavia began on March 24, president Cornelio Sommaruga said.

The team will take in some emergency aid but its primary task is to assess the humanitarian situation in the province.



Some one hundred Chinese demonstrators protest in front of the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland on Thursday against the NATO airstrikes on Yugoslavia and the bombing by NATO of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade. -AFP photo

#### Assad; Khatami discuss Iran-Arab ties

DAMASCUS, May 14: Iranian President Mohammad Khatami and Syrian leader Hafez al-Assad today held their second round of talks, covering Iran's ties with Arab countries bilateral cooperation and relations with Israel, reports Reuters.

"The two leaders resumed discussion of issues regarding the international and regional developments and Iranian-Arab relations," said Syrian presidential spokesman Joubran Kourieh.

He did not elaborate but diplomats said the talks focused on improving Tehran's ties with several Arab states including Egypt, which severed diplomatic relations with Tehran in 1979 after accusing Iran of backing Islamic fundamentalist groups.

Tehran-Cairo ties have improved recently as a result of Syrian mediation, and Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa took part in the Islamic summit held in Tehran last

Diplomats said Syria was satisfied with the progress of Iran's ties with Gulf Arab states, which will be strengthened further by Khatami's visit to Saudi Arabia on Saturday.

#### Annan to visit Macedonia, Albania

GENEVA, May 14: UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said Friday he will visit Macedonia and Albania next week, reports

He told a press conference he would visit Albania and Macedonia next week "in order to get personal sense of the plight of the people there and the conditions under which they are being housed.

He would also be looking at the "immense burden that both assylum countries are bearing

with understandable anxiety." The UN leader is currently in Geneva chairing a two-day gathering of UN agency heads to map out the UN's role in the Kosovo crisis.

#### May '98 riots Indonesians rally in rememberance

JAKARTA, May 14: Hundreds of Indonesians staged two separate rallies here Friday to mark the first anniversary of bloody riots last May,0 which left more than 1,000 dead, re-

ports AFP. Some 150 youths under the "Solidarity for Justice for ethnic Chinese" massed at a central Jakarta roundabout, carrying banners in sympathy with the victims of the riots, which helped pressure the resignation of president Suharto later the same month.

"Thousands of lives were lost, hundreds of women raped, thousands of shops looted. We don't want to fall victim any-

more," read one huge banner. The protestors later marched to a monument marking the country's proclamation of independence five kilometers away, waving white mourning

# BUFFIN

37 Kurdish rebels killed in Turkey:

Thirty-seven separatist Kurdish rebels and five Turkish soldiers were killed in fighting in southeastern Anatolia, security officials said here on Friday, AFP says from Diyarbakir.

Thirty-five of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) rebels and the soldiers were killed in an operation lannched near Mount Cudi in the Sirnak province, lying on Turkey's border with Iraq and Syria. The remaining two rebels were killed in a similar operation in rural areas near Divarbakir's Lice town the operation in rural areas near Divarbakir's Lice town, the sources said.

Fire claims 3 in France: Three people died and four were injured after a fire tore through a nursing home near the Normandy town of Bayeux. officials said yesterday, AP

says from France. The fire, which broke out around midnight Thursday in the Saint Joseph residence, was apparently caused by an electrical short-circuit, rescue officials said. Firefighters brought the

blaze under control about a half an hour later.

UN forces to remain in W Sahara: The Security Council agreed on a draft resolution Thursday that would keep a UN force in the disputed Western Sahara for another six months to let both sides complete work toward a referendum on the territory's future, AP reports from UN.

The resolution was expected to be adopted Friday. The proposed draft asks Secretary-General Kofi Annan to submit a revised timetable and financial implications for holding the ballot.

Blast claims 6 in China: An explosion at a large chemical factory in Shanghai seriously injured six people, the official Shanghai News reported vesterday. AFP says hom Shanghai.

The blast at mid morning Thursday rocked the Tianyuan Chemical plant, located at the western edge of this sprawling metropolis.

7 killed in Lebanon violence: Guerrilla and Israeli attacks killed seven people Thursday, with the highest single-day toll this year coming four days before Israeli elections that could alter the course of the occupation of southern Lebanon, AP reports from Lebanon,

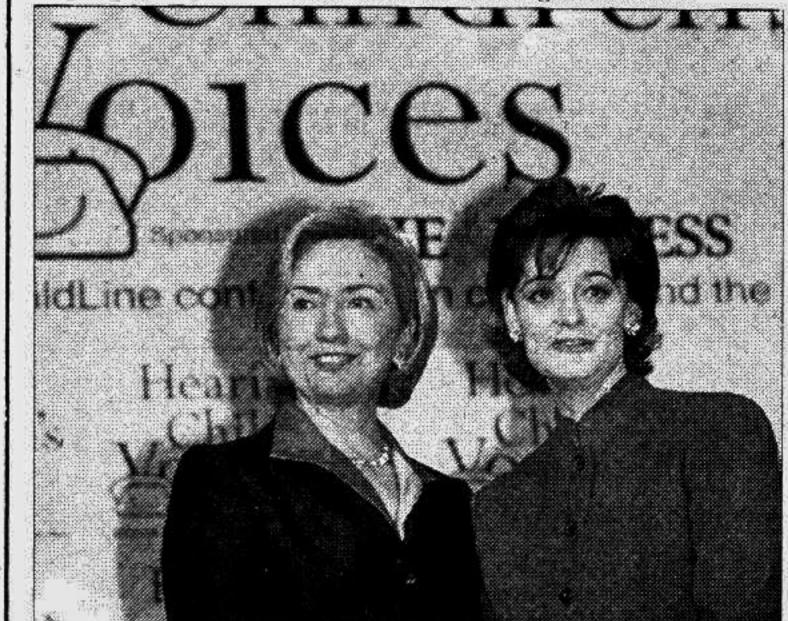
An Israeli-allied militiaman and three of his relatives died in an apparent guerilla roadside bombing, a guerilla rocket attack killed a Lebanese civilian and Israeli airstrikes killed two guerillas. Lebanese security officials said on condition of anonymity.

Guatemalan leader assassinated: Left-wing opposition leader Roberto Gonzalez of the Democratic Front of New Guatemala (DFNG) was assassinated by unknown gunmen on Thursday, fire department spokesman Byron Vasquez said, PTI says from Guatemala City.

The gunmen shot at the 40-year-old as he was leaving his home, in the West Quarter of the capital, hitting him with eight bullets, Vasquez said.

6 die in Philippines fighting: Six people were killed including four civilians caught in the crossfire as communist guerillas and government troops clashed south of here, the armed forces said yesterday, AFP reports from Manila.

The civilians were hit during a brief firefight between soldiers patrolling a village in Lobo town in Batangas province and 10 heavily armed members of the New People's Army (NPA). Two of the guerillas were also killed, the military said without detailing if their were any casualties among the soldiers.



US First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton (L) and Cherie Booth, the wife of Britain's Prime Minister Tony Blair pose together during a Childline conference on children and the law in London on Thursday. -AFP photo

#### Sonia Gandhi a non-graduate?

MUMBAI, May 14: Union Urban Development Minister Ram Jethmalani last night questioned credentials of Congress President Sonia Gandhi to occupy the highest office of the land, reports PTI.

"I don't hold Sonia Gandhi's birth in Italy against her as the Constitution does not discriminate a citizen on ground of place of birth, nor will I hold it against her that she has a fairer skin than us, Jethmalani said at a Maharashtra chamber of housing industry function here. But I don't want a prime

minister who is not a graduate, whose identity is not yet established, he said and praised Samajwadi president Mulayam Singh Yadav for saying the country from a disaster.

I want such a person to be a prime minister who knows the ethos of India, its history, culture, religious, the problems of multireligious and multi-racial society and who is born from the crucible of poverty and suf-

fering, he said. Jethmalani said the present government was a full fledged government and it would take decisions and fulfil tasks before it and one such ask was reviving of economy which was in

doldrums.

#### Saudi Arabia executes three drug smugglers

RIYADH. May 14: Saudi rabia today executed two Pakistani men and an Indian convicted of smuggling drugs into the kingdom, the officials Saudi Press Agency (SPA) re-

ported, says Reuters. It quoted a Interior Ministry Statement as saying Pakistanis Ashraf Ali Kader Baksh and Khosi Mohammad Talen were convicted of smuggling heroin in their intestines.

It said the Indian man, Mozhar Hassan Anwar Hossein, was convicted of smuggling opium. The three men were be-

headed by the sword, the statement said. The executions raised to at least'14 the number of people

put to death in the kingdom this

#### SC upholds move to form courts to try Jayalalitha

NEW DELHI, May 14: India's Supreme Court Friday upheld a move to have three special courts hear more than 40 corruption cases against a film actress-turned-politician who helped topple the government in April, reports AFP.

The court approved the decision by the provincial government of the southern state of Tamil Nadu to establish special courts to try cases against former chief minister Jayalalitha Jayaram. The cases relate to Jay-

alalitha's time as Tamil Nadu chief minister from 1991-1996. Friday's ruling was widely seen as a major setback for the former screen star, dubbed India's Imelda Marcos for her

wildly profligate lifestyle. An erstwhile ally of outgoing Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, the mercurial Jayalalitha helped topple the multi-party coalition led by Vajpayee's Hindu nationalist party when she withdrew support last month.

The Press Trust of India said there were 46 corruption cases against Jayalalitha, her closest aldes and top state bureaucrats and officials.

#### Myanmar junta denies use of forced labour

YANGON, May 14: Myanmar's powerful First Secretary. Lieutenant General Khin Nyunt, today opened a ASEAN labour minister conference with a forthright denial that the junta uses forced labour, reports AFP. Khin Nyunt accused the West

of distorting events in Myanmar and said the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was determined not to be "pressured" by international organisations. "If one is to believe some of

the allegations found in the Western media, the picture (of Myanmar) will be rather somber indeed," he said.

"We feel very strongly that these allegations were largely the result of misperception and misunderstanding of the situation and the mentality of the

### Fighting in Kashmir: 17 killed

SRINAGAR, May 14: Fierce fighting between Indian troops and Pakistani infiltrators in the mountains of India's northern Kashmir state have left at least 17 combatants dead, officials said Friday, reports AP.

Military officials said 10 infiltrators and seven Indian soldiers were killed Thursday night in the fighting in the Kargil region. It was the worst fighting since cross-border artillery and mortar firing began last Sunday along the disputed Kashmir cease-fire line. Residents said the area was

calm Friday morning. The officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said reports from the battle were still sketchy, and casualties could be higher. The area is 130 kilometres (80 miles) northeast

of Srinagar. Unconfirmed reports Thursday said the infiltrators captured two or three Indian border posts. An Army spokesman refused to comment.

But Defense Minister George Fernandes, who was visiting the area of Leh on the eastern

April after a 13-month rule.

NEW DELHI, May 14:

Congress yesterday ridiculed

prime minister Atal Behari

Vajpayee's statement that

Congress was responsible for

the present political instability

and said it is nothing but crying

hoarse on his part after the

BJP-led coalition lost the con-

landar rally on Wednesday was

a new chap er in Indian philos-

ophy which says that it was the

primary responsibility of the

opposition party to ensure that

the government was stable.

party spokesman Ajit Jogi told

sponsible for the fall of the gov-

ernment but its non-perfor-

mance and rag-tag coalition. he

said adding that the real face of

Vajpayee has been exposed as

his lust for power was now open

the role of the opposition was to

oppose, expose and depose but

Vajpayee wants that Congress

should help sustain him in

prime minister's part to say

that BJP was never involved in

toppling game. "Who was re-

sponsible for the fall of the

Morarji Desai government and

the VP Singh government," he

statement of State Congress

leaders that they would make

"non-implementation of Bengal

package" a major plank for the

coming election, Trinamool

Congress leader Mamata Baner-

jee today said that the party

should target its campaign

statement of CLP leader Atish

Sinha and senior Congress

leader Somen Matra, Banerjee

told newsmen that Congress

sold itself to the CPI-M. The list

submitted by AICC president

Sonia Gandhi to the president

for the formation of alternative

government included the MPs

ty's manifesto would include

the achievements regarding

"Bengal Package". Listing her

Banerjee said that her par-

belonging to CPI-(M), she said.

Reacting sharply to the

against the CIP (M) instead.

Meanwhile, irked by the

Jugi said it was wrong on the

He said, in political science.

Congress is in no way re-

Vajpayee's statement at Ja-

fidence vote, reports PTI.

reporters.

power.

side of Kashmir, was quoted as saying Thursday that no post had fallen. Fernandes met senior army officers in Leh to get a briefing on the fighting. Senior officers went to the Kargil region on Friday to take stock of the situation.

"Pakistan Troops Capture Strategic Posts," said a headline in the Kashmir Monitor, a local English-language daily. Similar reports appeared in some Urdu-language papers in Srinagar.

Pakistan had no immediate comment on Thursday's fighting. But authorities said at least 10 people have been killed and dozens others wounded in recent weeks from Indian shelling across the border. Dozens of women marched Thursday through the muddy

streets of Muzaffarabad, the

largest city on the Pakistani side of Kashmir, calling on India to stop raining shells across the frontier. The shelling has been going

on in Kargil, a remote mountainous area of 100,000 people,

Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee (C) speaks to Industry Minister Sikander

Bakht (R) on Friday during a top-level meeting of the Hindu nationalist party on upcoming

parliamentary polls. Vajpayee's fragile coalition government was voted out of power in

Campaign should be against CPI(M): Mamata

Congress decries PM's remarks

achievements from declaring

Calcutta as a A-1 city to the

upgradation of NSC Bose Inter-

national Airport, the Tri-

namicol Congress leader said

that she was ready to answer if

they raise specific points in the

Sinha and Mitra, said that they

would make the failure of the

Trinamool Congress to get the

package implemented as a ma-

working or playing sport.

newspaper afterwards.

industries, told the daily.

Records for the chain.

in March.

country fell into Roman hands.

Both the Congress leaders,

package.

jor poll plank.

since Sunday, when Pakistani artillery shells set fire to an

ammunition dump. Army official said at least 60-70 Pakistani mortar shells landed near the outskirts of Kargil town Monday, creating panic and forcing thousands of

resident to flee to safer areas. Sporadic shelling has continued since then, police were killed in heavy artillery battles, just as Indian and Pakistani diplomats were reviving peace talks.

India and Pakistan have fought two of their three wars over Kashmir, a Himalayan territory that is divided between them but which both claim in its entirety. India accuses Pakistan of backing an Islamic insurgency in Kashmir. the only Muslim majority province in overwhelmingly Hindu India. Pakistan denies actively supporting the militants.

Dozens of separatist groups in Kashmir are fighting for independence or for merger with Pakistan. More than 17,000 people have died in the fighting.

#### Jiang, Clinton agree to talk

WASHINGTON, May 14: President Bill Clinton and Chinese President Jiang Zemin agreed to talk, as tensions with China over NATO's bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade appeared to be easing, re-

ports AP. Jiang had avoided talking to Clinton since the bombing Saturday, which killed three peo-ple. His readiness to talk was conveyed by Chinese Ambassador Li Zhaoxing, who took a condolence book to the White

House for Clinton to sign. "He indicated a willingness to talk, and we're setting up the call," National Security Council spokesman David Leavy said Thursday. It was unclear whether the call could be arranged before Friday.

#### Pak PM says Economy on right track

SINGAPORE, May 14: Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said today his country's economy has done well and gradually economic sanctions slapped against it after last year's nuclear tests are being removed, reports Reuters.

"It has done well and gradually the sanctions are now also being removed," Sharif told reporters. Sanctions were imposed on

Pakistan after last May's nuclear stand-off with neighbouring India.

Speaking on the sidelines of an investment conference in Singapore, Sharif said that the economy was undergoing a process of recovery in 1999. "It is under the recovery pro-

cess," he said. Pakistan has followed a programme of economic reform in the face of the sanctions, including wide-ranging banking and financial reforms to encourage the development of the capital markets.

Sharif said the reforms were already yielding tangible re-

#### Egypt killings Bin Laden was behind 1997

massacre' CAIRO, May 14: Islamic mil-

-AFP photo

They alleged that neither the

rail projects included in the

"Bengal Package" were imple-

mented, nor was the unem-

ployment problem addressed by

Chairperson claimed that 80

per cent of her much-publicised

package was implemented, but

Banerjee should state what

progress was made in those rail

projects in the last 13 months.

The Trinamool Congress

the BJP-led government.

they said,

Off the Record

Topless males no harm

to women

up in the hot Hong Kong summer after a judge rejected a wom-

an's claim that the sight of bare-chested men amounted to sex-

ual harassment, a report said yesterday, says AFP.

HONG KONG: Topless males have been spared having to cover

Cheng Yin-fong objected to men stripping to the waist while

In a landmark claim she sought 330,000 Hong Kong dollars

But after 45-minute closed-door hearing her case was tossed

"My goal was to establish a legal precedent," Cheng told the

"Men sexually harass women by being half-naked. These sit-

uations are harmful to women. They degrade women," she said,

Tribute to Cleopatra

CAIRO: The world's longest gold chain is to go on sale during Egypt's shopping festival in July, newspapers reported Friday,

queen, the 4,500-meter-long chain will weigh 250 kilograms

Egypt's second annual month-long shopping festival that opens

on July 20. Abdel Moneim Seudi, head of the federation of

(550 pounds), Al-Akhbar newspaper said.

Dubbed Cleopatra's Snake in tribute to the last pharaonic

The chain will be sold off in sections to customers during

Cleopatra was Egypt's last pharaonic queen before the

Her political ambition and legendary beauty won her the

Organisers of the festival hope to enter the Guinness Book of

Dubai, which prides itself as the "city of gold," manufactured

what it dubbed the longest gold chain, weighing 50 kilograms

(110 pounds), for its four-week shopping festival that was held

hearts of Julius Ceasar and then Mark Antony. According to

legend, she used an asp to commit suicide after her lovers died.

(42.635 US) from three men who had been working with their

shirts off, claiming that by their actions they had 'sexual de-

signs on women, the South China Morning Post reported.

itant leader Osama Bin Laden financed the massacre of 58 foreign tourists, 35 of them Swiss, near the Southern Egyptian city of Luxor in 1997, the Swiss Federal Police Chief said here yesterday, reports AFP. The Egyptian conclusion is

that Bin Laden seems to have financed the attack which was ordered directly or indirectly by Mustafa Hamza and we are satisfied with this, police chief Urs Von Daeniken told a press con-

Hamza is the military leader of the Gamaa Islamiyya, the outlawed Egyptian Islamic mil-itant group which gunned down 58 tourists and four Egyptians outside the Hatshepsut temple near Luxor.

Six militants were killed in the attack that claimed the lives of nationals from several countries, including Britain, Japan and Germany. The Swiss suffered the largest number of

Hamza is believed to be living in Afghanistan, where Saudi dissident Bin Laden has his headquarters although the latter is reportedly seeking a new home because of a fallingout with his hosts.

#### Khmer Rouge chief executioner charged in Cambodia

PHNOM PENH, May 14: Former Khmer Rouge chief executioner Duch has been charged and will stand trial alongside the genocidal rebels' military chief Ta Mok, court officials announced Friday, reports

Kang Kek leu — better known under his revolutionary name as Pol Pot's brutal security chief "Duch" — has been charged with multiple counts of murder and torture as well as under a 1994 law outlawing the faded rebel "We have charged him using

the law outlawing the Khmer Rouge, and also with a 1990 law against committing torture and murder on a number of people," chief investigating judge of the Phnom Penh military court, Ngim Sam An, told reporters. Duch, living in anonymity

as a born-again Christian and aid worker, was found earlier this month by investigative reporters. He fell into government hands a week ago.

## Arab voters a deciding factor in Israeli polls

ABU GOSH, Israel, May 14: Najah Othman, a conservative Muslim who wears a headscarf, hopes the peace process gets going soon so that Israel's economy will improve and her husband can find a job, reports AP.

A 32-year-old mother of four. Othman also says incumbent Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu promised a computer for every child "but he did not deliver." So she will vote for Ehud

among Arabs, despite the presence of the first-ever Arab candidate for prime minister. Arabs, who make up 11 per cent of Israel's 4.3 million voters, pack almost as much punch as the Russian immigrants and the ultra-Orthodox Jews, who have been kingmakers in past

If a second round is neces-

sary in Israel's prime ministe-

rial race, which is a strong pos-

sibility, then Arab voters may

elections.

Barak, the runaway favourite

well determine whether Barak is able to unseat incumbent Benjamin Netanyahu. "Our role is very essential.

We can decide who is the next prime minister in Israel," said Abdel Wahab Darawshe, head of the Arab Democratic Party. Israel's nearly one million

Arabs, unlike the Arab residents of the West Bank, Gaza and Jerusalem, are Israeli citizens entitled to vote. Most see themselves as Palestinians, but there are sub-groups that do not, including the Druze, Beduin, and Circassians. In the first round, Arab vot-

ers are expected to give a large majority of their votes to Barak even though his campaign ads. boast his military exploits, including the killing of Palestinian hijackers and guerillas. The key question is how

many Arab voters will be moti-

vated to show up for a second

round when Arab parties will

not be contesting the race. A low

turnout could hurt Barak's chances, and Arab politicians say Barak will have to come out strong for social equality and other Arab issues to rally Arab support. "(Barak) never says equality.

He won't say it. Somebody must say it," said Azmi Bishara, a chain-smoking philosophy professor who is one of five candidates for prime minister. Bishara, 42, a critic of

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat who reportedly urged him to drop his candidacy, hopes to garner about a third of the Arab vote if he stays in the race. Arab insiders predict he will drop out at the last minute to give Barak a better chance to win in one round.

A survey of 910 Arab voters conducted by the Jewish Arab Center for Peace in April found that 83 per cent said they would go to the polls in the first round and only 74 per cent would go a second time. In a five-way race,

Barak would get 56.6 per cent of the Arab vote in the first round while Bishara would get 24.3 per cent and Netanyahu would garner only 6.5 per cent, the poll reported. The margin of error on the

poll was 3.4 per cent. Arabs hold 12 of the 120 Knesset seats, but one reason they are not more influential is that Arab voters are deeply divided on tactics as well as ideology, with many casting bal-

lots for Jewish candidates. One such voter is Mohammed Haitham who lives in Abu Gosh, where villas are scattered on the hillsides and in valleys just off the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv highway. Wrapping loaves of freshly baked bread for a customer, Haitham says he is not planning to vote for Arab parties because they can't

deliver. Haitham points over the counter at a newly built high school across the street and

credits Shas, the ultra-Orthodox Jewish party which holds two Cabinet posts. Portraits of the Shas leader Arieh Deri outnumber those of Arab candidates on Abu Gosh's main thoroughfare.

The Peace Center's poll and 32.8 per cent of the Arabs identified themselves as Israeli compared to 63.2 per cent in 1995. Arabs who felt closer to Jews than to Palestinians fell from 49.6 per cent to 31.2 per cent. Suleiman Abed Rahman, a

bartender in the Elvis Presley theme cafe just outside Abu Gosh, is known to his Jewish co-workers as "Shlomo" and says he voted for Netanyahu in 1996. Relations between Jews and Arabs, he maintains, are

But he said he is changing his vote this time because "people are sick of the way that Bibi has behaved and the mistakes that he has made."