

# Rescuers race against time to save life of sub crew

TRONDHEIM, Norway, Aug 17 : British and Norwegian deep-sea rescuers equipped with a high-tech submarine and mobile hospital gear set sail here Thursday in a race against time to save the crew aboard a crippled Russian nuclear submarine near the Arctic circle.

"If there are men alive in the submarine then this looks to be their best option," British Commander David Stanesby told AFP as the Norwegian oil supply ship carrying the rescue equipment edged out to sea from the port here.

"Other rescue missions have failed and I don't know of anyone else who is on their way to help," he said.

The Norwegian vessel, the Normand Pioneer, carrying rescue personnel and sophisticated equipment rushed here by air from Britain left this central Norwegian port at the start of a

two-day voyage to the Barents Sea where the stricken Russian vessel lies.

The voyage around the western and northern coasts of Norway to the site of the disaster was expected to take more than 50 hours, putting the foreign rescue teams in place by Saturday.

Stanesby, the official coordinating the operation here, acknowledged there were questions on whether any of the crew of the Russian submarine were still alive, but said the British-Norwegian rescue assistance effort would continue full-speed.

"The Russians are in command on the sea and we'll do what they want us to do."

Meanwhile, Russian rescuers stepped up their efforts to free 118 sailors trapped in the Kursk submarine as weather conditions improved Thursday but there were no signs of life aboard as Britain and Norway prepared a

high-tech rescue mission.

Moscow finally asked for western help with its own rescue mission to the crippled nuclear submarine Wednesday after admitting the sailors trapped in Arctic waters were no longer showing signs of life.

Improving weather at the site of the accident encouraged Russian rescuers to step up efforts to free the beleaguered crew of the submarine, Northern Fleet officials told Itar-Tass on Thursday.

A storm which plagued the rescue operation and impeded attempts to dock the rescue capsule with the crippled Kursk was abating, navy officials said.

A US intelligence official said Wednesday his services also had detected no signs of life in the Kursk which sank to the bottom of the Barents Sea Saturday.

The Russian navy denied US reports that at least two explosions ripped through the vessel.

but refused to comment further. President Vladimir Putin, in his first comments on the accident, said the situation aboard the crippled submarine was "critical" and consulted with his US counterpart Bill Clinton on the rescue mission.

At the same time, Moscow swallowed its pride and accepted help from Britain which flew a state-of-the-art mini-submarine to Norway on Wednesday.

Russia's deputy navy commander, Vladislav Ilyin, said Putin "issued an official order to accept assistance from anywhere that it comes" following his conversation with Clinton.

A special British submersible vessel described as an "underwater helicopter" along with its three-man crew and other deep-sea rescue gear were rushed to Trondheim aboard a Russian Antonov transport plane from Britain.

## Grenade blast kills 8 in Kashmir

LOS ANGELES, Aug 17 : The Democratic Party nominated Vice President Al Gore late Wednesday as its official candidate to replace US President Bill Clinton in January, reports AFP.

At the party's national convention here, more than a majority of delegates put their support behind Gore, making him the official nominee in the November 7 race against Republican Texas Governor George W. Bush.

With the Florida delegation casting its votes for the vice president, Gore secured the 2,170 votes needed to win. His nomination had been assured for months, after winning more than enough support in his party's primary elections.

Gore wowed the crowd earlier Wednesday by making a surprise appearance on stage after a nomin-

nating speech by his daughter, Karen Gore Schiff.

Gore was also nominated by his college roommate at Harvard, Oscar-winning actor Tommy Lee Jones.

Meanwhile, a surprise came by Al Gore sent Democrats into a frenzy Wednesday just before they formally made him their champion in the November elections, as his running mate praised the vice president and assailed their Republican rivals.

Trailing Republican Texas Governor George W. Bush in the polls, Gore was to make the most crucial speech of his political life Thursday, aiming to win over skeptical voters as he officially accepts the party's nod to replace President Bill Clinton.

Lieberman, the first Jew on a major party's national ticket in

US history, slipped easily into the vice presidential candidate's traditional role of paving the way for the number one man while cutting down the opposition whom he rarely named but skewed with humorous barbs.

Their idea of school modernisation means buying a new calendar for every building ... their tax plan operates under that old theory that the best way to feed the birds is to give more oats to the horse," he quipped.

Reaching out to "those at home who've not made up your mind yet how you're going to vote ... I respectfully say to you your choice is clear: Al Gore and I are the guys who are ready to do the job," Lieberman said as the crowd roared its approval.

Militants lobbed a grenade at a security vehicle on Srinagar-Jammu national highway at Bijbehara around noon but it missed the target and exploded on the road wounding 18 civilians, an official spokesman said.

Two Hizbul militants were killed in a gunbattle with security forces in Kupwara district's Handwara area.

## Singaporeans more and more materialistic

SINGAPORE, Aug 17 : Singaporeans are becoming increasingly materialistic, a survey commissioned by the Straits Times suggested today, reports AFP.

Nine in 10 respondents said they thought Singaporeans were materialistic, with seven believing the desire for material goods had increased from five years ago.

Six out of 10 said their material possessions reflected their status, according to the survey which covered 605 citizens and permanent residents.

flid the aircraft, making off in a white van. Sixty-six passengers -- mostly tourists -- were on board along with a crew of six.

The aircraft's pilot took off from the isolated landing strip immediately after the heist, some minutes later reestablishing contact with the air traffic control tower in Londrina, also in Parana state.

The plane then made an emergency landing at Londrina airport.

Police surrounded the jet and police units were combing the Londrina region for the thieves, Dalbem said. But he acknowledged authorities had no leads on their whereabouts.

According to military police colonel Sergio Dalbem, the five hijackers, all male, robbed a hefty bank cash shipment and then

Military police first learned there was trouble when air traffic controllers in Curitiba suspected foul play when the aircraft suddenly disappeared off their radar screens shortly after take-off, he said.

None of the passengers or crew was injured during the incident.

The hijackers got away with some six million reales (four million dollars) being transported on the plane on behalf of Banco do Brasil by a company that specialises in shipping valuables.

Passengers and crew were questioned by federal police before being released and allowed to continue their journeys.

## Robbery on air in Brazil

RIO DE JANEIRO, Aug 17 : In Brazil's first combination hijacking and mid-air heist, robbers aboard an airliner snatched four million dollars Wednesday, forced the VASP jet to make an unscheduled landing and fled with the loot, reports AFP.

The armed hijackers forced the pilot of the Brazilian airliner to bring the plane down at a landing strip in Porecatu, northern Parana state, shortly after it left for Iguaçu on a short flight to Curitiba, Parana's capital.

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This image monitored from television shows passengers leaving a VASP airline Boeing 767 at the airport on Wednesday following a hijacking and robbery. Police say the hijackers got away with six million reales (four million USD) before forcing the pilots to land at Porecatu, where they escaped. - AFP photo

## Sharif's lawyers say Kargil conflict sparked Pak power struggle

KARACHI, Aug 17 : The bitter Kashmir conflict sparked a power struggle in Pakistan between Army Chief General Pervez Musharraf and prime minister Nawaz Sharif which led to last year's coup, lawyers for the ousted premier said today, reports AFP.

Following the conflict, Sharif and Musharraf became locked in a battle to oust one other, advocate Azizullah Sheikh said during an appeal hearing at the Sindh High Court.

Dhaka tenders can be procured. Earnest money at the rate of 2% of the quoted cost of tender (refundable)

in the forms of Bank Draft/Pay Order/CD/SDR from any schedule bank approved by Bangladesh Bank in favour of the Executive Engineer. Public Works E/M Division-5, Dhaka will have to be deposited with tender. Participants in tender must submit certificate regarding TIN and original copy of money receipt for tender purchased with tender. The authority reserves the power to accept any tender or reject all tenders without assigning any reason. Contractor himself or any representative bearing an authorised letter can purchase tender by producing all necessary papers including registration book. The last date for selling tender is 23/8/2000.

Serial No. Name of work Estimated cost Earnest money Time allowed

1 Special repairing and renewal work of 4 storied Barrack Bhaban No 1 with ferrocement technology in the police line at Mill Barrack in Dhaka. On item-rate based. 2% of the quoted cost 60 (sixty) days

AKM Shafi

Executive Engineer  
Public Works E/M Division-5, Dhaka.  
Phone No. 9348972

Malaysia's ruling party will hold a special meeting in November to amend its constitution and will consider changes to open up the contests for top leaders, reports said Thursday, AFP says from Kuala Lumpur.

The president and deputy president of the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) are automatically also prime minister and deputy premier. Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, quoted by the Star newspaper, said the meeting would review the rule requiring candidates for various posts to secure a minimum number of nominations from divisions.

## Chechens bomb polling station in Grozny: 2 killed

SLEPTSOVSK, Russia, Aug 17 : Chechen rebels today bombed a polling station in the separatist capital Grozny, killing two civilians and injuring four Russian soldiers, a spokesman for the separatist president said, reports AFP.

A spokesman for Chechen President Aslan Maskhadov said fighters set off the blast after receiving instructions to sabotage Sunday's elections for a seat in Russia's State Duma, lower house of parliament.

The Chechen representative's Duma seat has been vacant since the republic won de facto independence following Russia's defeat in the bloody 1994-96 war.

## Iran imposes ban on pro-reform newspaper

TEHRAN, Aug 17 : Iran's press court imposed a permanent ban on a suspended pro-reform newspaper and barred its director from further press activities, newspaper reports said here today, reports AFP.

Ava (The Voice) was one of more than 20 publications closed in a sweeping crackdown on the press over the past few months.

The government-run Iran paper said Ava's director Mostafa Izadi, accused of attempting to undermine the supremacy of the nation's supreme religious leader in his daily, was also slapped with a fine.

## 1600 agitating teachers of Orissa courted arrest

BHUBANESWAR, Aug 17 : About 1,600 teachers of various non-government schools and colleges of Orissa courted arrest here yesterday demanding release of grant-in-aid to all eligible educational institutions, reports PTI.

The teachers, united under the banner of the All Orissa Federation of Teachers' Organisation (AOFTO) marched towards the state secretariat and contingents of police had a harried time controlling them.

AOFTO sources claimed that about 20,000 teachers had responded to its call for secretariat gherao yesterday. There teachers, who included two women, were injured when the crowd crashed through the barricades, they said.

Policemen had to direct water canons at the demonstrators, coming from three different directions, as a section of them broke through the police cordon and rushed towards the secretariat. They were, however, prevented from entering the secretariat building.

## Barak Valley in Assam remains cut off for 14th day

GUWAHATI, Aug 17 : The Barak Valley in South Assam remained cut off for the 14th day today after landslides triggered by heavy rains blocked roads, reports PTI.

The national highway number 53 near Sonapur, closed to traffic since August 3, is yet to be cleared of the landslides, official sources said adding that the border road task force personnel continued with their round-the-clock operation to clear the blockage.

That flood situation in other areas of the state continued to improve even as the Jonal subdivision of Dhemaji district remained affected following the new course taken by the Siang river.

Six relief camps have been opened which were housing nearly 4000 inmates, the sources said.

The flood situation was fast improving in the districts of Darang, Bongaigaon, Dhubri, Goalpara, Nalbari and Golaghat, the source said.

Shahidul Islam



A North Korean man, visiting Seoul during the Inter-Korean exchange, hugs his grandson in Seoul yesterday. Both Koreas exchanged 100 people each for a four-day family reunions in their capitals in a rare event since the 1950-53 Korean conflict.

-AFP photo

## Koreas seek to set up permanent meeting place for separated families

SEOUL, Aug 17 : South Korean

Unification

Minister Park Jaek-Yu

said today

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He also said talks were underway between South and North Korea to repeat the reunion of separated families before the Chuseok harvest holiday on September 12.

The North's leader Kim Jong-Il said last week.

"And for next year, let's study this issue more broadly and carry on with it so that separated family members visit homes of their relatives," he said.

A group of 100 North Koreans and the same number of South Koreans are currently visiting each other's capital to meet relatives they have not seen or heard from since the 1950-53 Korean War.

Journalists and non-journalist employees of the print and electronic media, wearing black badges and some with their mouths covered, marched from the Calcutta Press Club to Rani Rashmoni Road at esplanade with placards and banners denouncing the attacks and demanding action against the culprits

CALCUTTA, Aug 17 : Hundreds of newsmen from all over West Bengal yesterday organised a silent procession here in protest against the recent attacks on

scribes allegedly by the CPI (M) in various places of the state, reports PTI.

Journalists and