# Soviet collapse poses problems for existing

dominated by the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the ministers said in a statement they wanted to build a "new cooperative order in which no country need harbour fears for its security."

General Manfred Woerner said the Soviet collapse posed problems for existing arms treaties, particularly a key accord on cutting conventional forces in Europe, signed last year by the North Atlantic republics of the crumbling Soviet Union to respect arms he was hopeful that they

Now that the old cold war military divisions no longer exist, the 38-nation Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) is due to take over arms control after a summit of the member nations in Helsinki next March.

The ministers said there should be talks after Helsinki to keep the level of armed forces in Europe to a minimum, as well as exchanges of information to build mutual confidence.

# Israeli commandos

20 : Israeli commandos abducted eight Lebanese from near the south Lebanon village of Jibsheet, a witness said today, reports Reuter.

to be named, said he and 10 other people were stopped by commandos on a road near Jibsheet, the village from which the Israelis two years ago kidnapped Shi'ite cleric Sheikh Abdel-Karim Obeid.

The witness said he and two others were briefly held by the Israeli commandos with cight captives.

Among those kidnapped was journalist Shawaki Fahs, who works for Reuters and the Beirut newspaper As-Safir. Fahs is based in Nabatiych.

The Lebanese army and the international committee of the Red Cross said they were

Fah's brother told Reuters that Fahs heard helicopters hovering over Nabatiych and nearby villages on Thursday night. He went out to investi-

Airborne Israeli commandos abducted Obeid, a leading pro-Iranian cleric, from his home in Jibsheet, on July 28, 1989.

pro-Iranian Hizbollah (party of God), is Israel's triumph card in the Jewish state's efforts to secure the release of six missing Israeli servicemen or their

Only one of the missing Israclis, airman Ron Arad, is believed to be still alive.

There were no immediate reports on the operation from Israel, which imposes military censorship on security mat-

### SAARC summit to focus on links between terrorism, drug trafficking

COLOMBO, Dec 20: South Asian leaders meeting in Colombo on Saturday are expected to focus on the growing links between terrorism, drug trafficking and the arms trade, conference sources said on

Friday, reports Reuter. The meeting was originally scheduled for November but Bhutan's King Jigme Wangchuk could not attend because of domestic security problems.

Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka form the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation set up seven years ago to raise the living standard of a billion poor people in the

Their Foreign Ministers were putting the final touches today to a draft statement, called the Colombo Declaration, to be issued by the leaders on Saturday.

The statement was expected to call on the member

MOSCOW, Dec 20 : Soviet

called on republican leaders

Thursday to set up a single

command for strategic nuclear

weapons, saying collective

control would be "absurd", re-

out a foreign policy, saying "I

don't see how we can keep a

common strategic defence

without a minimum common

ahead of a meeting Saturday of

leaders of republics setting up

a new commonwealth of inde-

pendent states, Gorbachev said

the Commonwealth should

"define immediately a single

structure of control and

supreme command for strate-

command would be absurd."

He added that "a collective

ISLAMABAD, Dec 20

President Ghulam Ishaq Khan

called Thursday for an Islamic

bloc in Asia comprising

Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan,

Pakistan and the Muslim cen-

tral Asian republics, reports

Parliament, Ishaq Khan said

"highly promising new opport

tunities" had emerged with the

restoration of the sovereignty

and Islamic identity of the

Soviet central Asian republics.

but stressed the need for the

early settlement of the Afghan

conflict to make this "dream"

said, when 'the chain of

friendship binding together

Turkey, Iran and Pakistan will

The day would come, he

In his annual speech to

Writing in the Daily Izvestia

He also urged them to work

ports AFP.

foreign policy."

gic forces.

states to take action, under two conventions signed at previous meetings, to control terrorism and drug trafficking in

the region, the sources said. Tamil rebels, fighting for a separate state in Sri Lanka, are known to buy arms for their military operations with drug

money, the sources said. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eclam rebel group is the main suspect in the assassination of former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi seven months ago in India.

The summit was also expected to set up a commission to recommend ways of alleviating poverty in the region, the sources said.

Regional economic cooperation, liberalisation of trade, environmental issues and tourism promotion are also on the summit agenda.

Some leaders are also expected to hold separate informal discussion on bilateral problems, contentious political

ROME: Russian President Boris Yeltsin smiles as Italian President Francesco Cossiga pins

the medal of Grand Cross Knight of the Italian Republic on Yeltsin's coat during a cer-

emony held Thursday in the Presidential Quirinale Palace. Yeltsin arrived for a two-day

'Collective control of N-arms absurd'

Gorbachev urges republics

to set up a single command

President Mikhail Gorbachev himself as "President," annexing the Kremlin and

Gorbachev said he had a

"political and moral" right to

address the letter to republi-

can leaders meeting at the

weekend in Alma Ata, the capi

tal of the central Asian repub-

Commonwealth should have "a

political representative" in

international bodies such as

the European Community,

saying that otherwise the in-

ternational community would

lose trust in the

This was all the more im-

portant because "it has inher-

ited the Soviet Union's status

In the letter, which he

mailed Wednesday before the

publication of decrees by

Ishaq calls for Islamic bloc in Asia

extend through Afghantstan to

The President's speech to

Gorbachev said the

lic of Kazakhstan.

Commonwealth.

as a nuclear power."

While he did not refer to Russian President Boris Yeltsin

visit aimed at establishing direct relations between Italy and Russia.

issues being barred from the formal meetings of SAARC.

AFP adds: Security forces continued a drive against Tanul Tiger guerillas in Sri Lanka's northeast and killed four more rebels in a brief firefight, a military spokesman here said today.

Troops opened fire at a group of men believed to be from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Vavuniya region overnight Thursday, killing four of them. and recovered an automatic rifle, the spokesman said.

He said security forces kept up routine operations against the LTTE across the embattled northeast but denied reports that there had been aerial strikes against LTTE posi-

"We have not carried out any acrial attacks or any artillery strikes in the past 10 days. But we have dropped leaflets asking people to move away from LTTE targets." Colonel Sarath Munasinghe

He said security forces were on top of the situation in the northeast, where the LTTE is fighting to establish a separate state for Sri Lanka's two million Tamil minority concentrated there.

"We are planning more opcrations against the LTTE. All our plans are moving according to schedule," said Munasinghe.

His remarks came as a senior minister in President Ranasinghe Premadasa's government planned to travel to the LTTE's main stronghold of the northern Jaffna peninsula for peace talks with the guerilla leadership.

Tourism Minister S Thondaman has proposed greater autonomy for minority Tamils in a bid to end the 19year-old guerilla war which has cost thousands of lives.

#### ME talks resume in Moscow Jan 28

BRUSSELS, Dec 20: The next multilateral phase of the Mideast peace conference will take place in Moscow on January 28 and 29, US Secretary of State James Baker said here Thursday, reports

Baker said "the parties involved all want this to happen in Moscow."

The latest bilateral round limped to a close on Washington Wednesday after two weeks of Israeli-Arab talks that yielded little more than agreement to convene again in Washington January 7.

The first multilateral session was held in Madrid in October.

#### Maoists kill 16, kidnap 2 in Andhra

NEW DELIII, Dec 20 Maoist guerillas killed 16 bus passengers in a landmine explosion in the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh and kidnapped two nuclear scientists in neighbouring Maharashtra, news reports said today, reports Reuter.

The victims of Thursday's bus explosion included eight policemen and two militants, the Unites News of India (UNI) news agency reported.

The police party had ar rested the militants for setting a bus on fire the previous day and were taking them to jail, UNI said.

The bus ran over landmines laid around the village of Ramavaram, 1,140 km (705 miles) south of Delhi, it said.

Also on Thursday, two guerillas were killed in a shootout with police in the nearby village of Huzurabad,

#### Iceland recognises Croatia, Slovenia

REYKJAVIA, Dec 20 iceland said on Thursday if had recognised the independence of Croatia and Slovenia from Yugoslavia and would soon set up diplomatic relations with the two break away republics.

Foreign Minister Jon Baldvin Hannibalsson told Reuter that Iceland had sent messages to Croatia and Sloventa informing them of the decision.

Arafat in China

BEIJING. Dec 20 : Yasser Arafat, President of the State of Palestine and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) arrived here this morning by special plane on an official visit to China at the invitation of the Chinese President Yang Shangkun, reports Xinhua.

### Off the Record

#### Gorby yet to learn what others know

BOSTON: Mikhail Gor bachev may soon learn what many unemployed political leaders already know : There's life after the last hurrah - on American col lege campuses, reports Al'.

Harvard, Boston and Stanford universities all are reported to be trying to woo Gorbachev even as the Soviet Union crumbles around him. "It would be a coup, if

you'll pardon the term," said David Reisman, a professor emeritus at Harvard University. Steve Singer, spokesman

for Harvard's John F Kennedy School of Government, said the school recently re-

she was "a little bit French, even so."

newed a longstanding invitation for Gorbachev to speak there. Boston University Presi-dent John Silber, mean-while, is in Moscow this week for a conference and was reported to be making overtures to Gorbachev to come to the university.

Stanford University in Palo Alto, California has a "number of possibilities" for Gorbachev, a school spokesman said.

#### Sophia Loren'a little bit French'

PARIS: - Actress Sophia Loren and mime Marcel Marceau received high honours Thursday from President Francois Mitterrand at the traditional year's end awards ceremony at the Elysee Palace, reports AP.

Ms Loren was named a knight of the Legion of Honour and Marceau, along with French cabaret star Raymond Devos, was named a commander of the National Order of Merit.

Mitterrand praised Ms Loren for her acting and her humanitarian work. He noted her Italian nationality but insisted

#### Sex in parked car okay if.....

ALBANY, New York : Sex in a parked our is allowed, as long as no one is likely to see you, New York state's top court ruled Thursday, reports AP.

The Court of Appeals threw out changes of public lewdness against three women arrested in Buffals in separate incidents in 1989. The court, ruling in a 6-1 decision said the parked cars

where the women were having sex with men were not a "public place" under state law because it was early morning, it was dark out and casual passersby we unlikely to see what the couples were doing.

The women's lawyer, David Schopp had argued the lewdness law did not apply because the women were parked where they could not "readily be observed."

There has to be the real likelihood that someone just walking by can see this thing," Schopp said. "If it's a convertible and it's high noon and it's in a public place, then (the car) is a public place."

Prosecutors in the Eric County de riet attorney's office claimed the women were quilty of public lewdness because a city street is a public place and the somen were visible to passerby.



LONDON: A new brand of cigarettes just launched here called "Death" is leaving smokers grasping at the honesty of the tobacco firm behind the product. A pack of 20 cigarettes are among the most expensive on sale and cost 2.95 pounds (5.5 dollars). The Company which distributed the product said they would be giving 10 per cent of the profit to cancer research charities. - AFP/UNB photo

#### Blast kills 8 in Medellin

BOGOTA, Colombia, Dec 20 A bomb blew up in a shopping centre in the Colombian city of Medellin on Thursday afternoon, killing at least eight and critically injuring 20, authorities said, reports Reuter. The bomb, containing 30

packed with shrapnel and serews, exploded in a car parts store in central Medellin, 250 kms (160 miles) northwest of the capital, authorities said. It was a massacre," a police spokesman said.

kilograms of dynamite and

## Deng for powerful army to face hostile foreign forces

BEIJING, Dec 20 : Senior Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping, citing the continued presence of imperialism, has called for maintaining powerful armed and police forces, a newspaper reported today, says AFP.

Separately, a spokesman said today the Chinese Parliament would start the process of introducing ranks to the police force for the first time since the Communist Party took power here in

1949. The Liberation Army Daily, the mouthpiece of China's Armed Forces, carried a signed analysis arguing for the preservation of a powerful

army as a deterrent against hostile foreign forces.

"It is inconceivable for the standing army, public security organs, courts and prisons to wither away under condition in which classes, and imperialism and hegemonism exist," Deng was quoted as saying.

"We must build a powerful, revolutionary army that is modernized and standardized," the 87-year-old military veteran said

Deng is officially retired but used to be the head of the powerful party Central Military Commission (CMC) and still holds a decisive role in military affairs, army officers say.

He was the guiding force behind a reduction of one million troops from the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in the 1980s, as China strived to foster a more professional fighting force. The PLA now has some three million soldiers.

Deng's reported comments came amid the destabilization of the former Soviet Union, Chinese leaders have voiced concern over the chaos of their northern neighbour. especially the future of its nuclear amenal.

The PLA Newspaper refuted the theory put forward by foreign commentators that the

importance of a strong army was decreasing as military conflict gave way to economic and diplomatic competition.

"It is clear that we must pay attention to the diplomatic struggle, but if there is no military backing, this struggle is doomed to lose," it said.

"If one wants to defend the independence, sovereignty and security of the state, not only the army is needed, but also the army's scale and quality must conform to the international status and the demand state interests and rights of the state," the commentary

It cited party General Secretary Jiang Zemin, who now heads the military commission, as supporting this stance.

The building of socialist modernization requires a stable environment, so it is necessary to maintain a powerful army and consolidate national defence," Jiang was

quoted as saying. The newspaper said that" in the new historic period, the army still has a very important role to play," adding that although military force is less and less the means of resolving

conflict, it was still the final

Maintaining a strong army was also key in deterring the use of force, the paper said. The spokesman for the National People's Congress (NPC) said the Chinese parlia-

ment would next week the process of introducing ranks into its national police force. The measure was aimed at "strengthening construction.

senst of duty and honour and discipline of the police," spokesman Zhou Chengkut told reporters, adding that ft would improve the command and management of the force. Ranks were first given to

the many in 1988.

#### arms treaties: NATO BRUSSELS, Dec 20 : NATO now defunct Warsaw Pact. Foreign Ministers outlined a The ministers urged the new arms control agenda on Thursday and said the alliance would forge closer links with a treaty limits agreed previously by Moscow and Woerner said new pan-European security forum, reports Reuter. After a meeting in Brussels

But NATO Secretary-Treaty Organisation and the

abduct 8 Lebanese NABATIYEH, Lebanon, Dec checking the report.

The witness, who declined gate and failed to return.

Obeid, a member of the



Pilot killed as Pak fighter crashes: A Pakistan Air Force fighter has crashed, killing the pilot, an

official statement said Friday, reports AFP from Islamabad. The Chinese-built F-6 aircraft came down near the airfield at Sukkur in southern Sindh province Thursday while it was on a routine flight, the statement said, adding that an inquiry had been ordered into the incident.

**Bush to visit Australia:** President George Bush said Thursday he was looking forward to meeting new Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating when he visits the country at the end of December, reports AFP

from Washington. Bush said that the United States and Australia had "historic good relations" and that he "knew and respected" Keating who earlier Thursday had replaced Bob Hawke as head of the Australian Labour Party and as Prime Minister.

Hawke, who led his party to a record four election wins since 1983 was ousted in a secret ballot of his party's MPs and replaced by his former Treasurer Keating. Bush will leave the United States on December 30 arriving

the following day for a three-day trip to Australia after which

he goes on to visit Singapore, South Korea and Japan.

phone exchange in Bharat Nagar Chowk.

took office in November 1990.

13 killed in Punjab blast: Thirteen people were killed and 26 injured, some of them seriously, in a powerful bomb blast in Ludhiana Thursday, reports PTI from

Chandigurh. Elsewhere in Punjab five militants and a person were killed since last night. The blast took place outside the main building of the tele-

An unidentified militant was killed in an encounter with security forces near village Kartarpur in Patiala district. One AK-47 rifle and some cartridges were recovered from the A special police officer, Pala Singh, was gunned down by militants in Sangrur district.

Sharif visits Singapore tomorrow: Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif will pay a two-day visit to Singapore from Sunday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said Thursday, reports AFP. He is to call on his counterpart Goh Chok Tong, and also

see senior nitnister Lee Kuan Yew, the city-state's founding prime minister. Sharif will be arriving from the South Asian Summit in

The visit will be the first to Singapore by Sharif since he

FMLN downs Honduran copter: Leftist Salvadoran rebels said on Thursday they had shot down a Honduran military helicopter, killing its nine man crew

including two colonels, reports Reuter. The clandestine rebel radio Venceremos said forces of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) shot down the helicopter during clashes with Salvadoran government forces in the northeastern province of Morazan, near the Honduran border.

The US-made UII-III craft was shot down during heavy fighting" when it flew over the combat zone "flying low, in a provocative position," the radio said. The FMLN regretted the incident and asked the Honduran

military high command to keep its aircraft away from zones

Four killed in Ohio plane crash: small airplane lost an engine and crashed in a field, killing at least four people, authorities said. Rescue crews searched

the Salvadoran guerillas consider under their control.

for a fifth victim, reports AP from Ohio.

night, said Ron Bradley, area manager for the Federal Aviation Administration at Port Columbus International Airport. The plane crashed in a cornfield near a housing complex about two miles (3 km) east of the airport, Bradley said.

The twin-engine Cessna exploded on impact Tuesday

Four bodies were found in the wreckage, said Rick minerd a spokesman for the Franklin country Sheriff's Department. The plane's on board-flight plan listed five people aboard, said William Henestofel, Chief of the Jefferson Township Fire Department. A search was continuing for other victims, he

premier Benazir Bhutto.

the Muslim republics."

the Parliament was interrupted for half an hour by opposition uproar inside and violence outside between police and supporters of former Ishaq Khan described

Cambodian minister PHNOM PENII, Dec 20

Cambodian Prime Minister

Hun Sen fired his Transport

Minister today in a bid to quell

violent demonstrations against

official corruption, reports

with central Asia, after what he called "historic" changes in the political and economic structure of the Soviet Union, as satisfactory. He recalled that the cities

Pakistan's efforts to renew ties

abolishing the Soviet Foreign

Ministry, Gorbachev added, "

don't see how one can keep a

common strategic desence

without a minimum common

be viable economically, he

went on, it "needs structures

of economic cooperation," in

the financial, customs and

Commonwealth should be a

"multinational entity" with ab-

solute equality between states,

and between ethnic groups,

religions, traditions and

come "a citizen of the

Commonwealth" and there

must be respect for "human

Every citizen should be-

Gorbachev said the

For the Commonwealth to

foreign policy."

banking sectors.

customs.

of Samarkand and Bukhara in the central Asian Soviet republic of Uzbekistan were once the Islamic world's "cultural and spiritual centres" and that Pakistan's relations with the region dated back to centuries.

"The Muslims cannot thank almighty enough for the return of these symbols of glory and splendour of Islamic civilization," said the President, one day an official Pakistani delegation returned from a threeweek tour of the region.