Off the Record

Lakshmi no longer

exclusively the Hindus

LONDON: Goddess Lakshmi had appeared in Europe about 2,000 years ago but the Europeans failed to recognise her. It

took nearly a century for archealoists to identify the Hindu

Deity of prosperity after she was first traced in Denmark in

The Goddess of good fortune is unambiguously depicted.

The cauldron, made up from a number of curved and deco-

The images of Gods and warriors, a unique masterpiece of

But a new interpretation derives their iconography from

India and Matches them with specific Hindu deities. It was

The will is still young

even if the heart isn't

Friday with a new pacemaker and the same old verve. After

shedding his bedside garb, the 67-year-old New York institu-

reporters in a freezing wind outside his office building. His

hospitalized Wednesday after passing out at a health club

suit jacket was open. A scarf was draped over his shoulders.

NEW YORK: Former Mayor Edward Koch left the hospital

"How come you guys are wearing coats?" Koch bellowed at

Koch, the mayor of New York city from 1978-1990, was

Doctors blamed an irregular beat in Koch's otherwise

Koch, who had a stroke in 1987, boasted Friday that doc-

Jewish tradition obliges him to go the synagogue Saturday

tors told him "my body was 25 to 30 years younger than my

chronological age. So my body now is about 45, my brain is

about 31, so I'm bringing them closer into alignment."

rated silver plates on a basal bowl has been dated on stylistic

being bathed by a pair of elephants, on the mysterious caul-

dron, one of pre-historic Europe's most enigmatic artifacts,

found in the gundestrup peat bog in northern Denmark.

Celtic art, had remained a mystery for nearly a century.

1891, reports PTI.

grounds to around 150 BC.

shown on British television recently.

tion headed for his law office, reports AP.

where he works out every day.

and thank God for saving his life.

strong heart.

Russia wants political solution to Afghan issue

ISLAMABAD, Dec 22: Vice-President of the Russian federation Alexander Rutskoi said here today Russia intends to facilitate a peaceful political settlement in Afghanistan, reports Xinhua.

Addressing a press conference before his departure for Kabul at the end of a 4-day visit to Pakistan, Rutskoi said the Afghanistan issue should be solved based on the five-point peace plan initiated by the UN Secretary General in May this

He said Russia and Pakistan agreed to cooperate with each other for the promotion of the objective.

Rutskoi, who came after a visit to Iran, said he had meetthe problem, calling for con-

He stated that the Islamic

Mujahideen leaders and Soviet leaders during their Moscow talks in November should be established in Afghanistan and later elections and referendum could be held for a permanent

The Russian leader, who had also had talks with Afghan Mujahideen leaders in Islamabad, said the Afghan people should be left to decide themselves their own future through an inter-Afghan dia-

Four opposition guardsmen were shot outside Government House by Gamsakhurdia's troops and died instantly, the agency said.

Several people trying to remove their bodies from Tbilisi's main street were wounded, Iprinda said. "After that, a real armed fight started," it said.

Georgian Radio reported that Deputy Interior Minister Ramon Gventsdze was among those injured, but gave no de-

Troops restore firm grip over Phnom Penh

PHNOM PENH, Dec 22: Cambodia's army and police reestablished a firm grip over the capital today after demonstrations turned violent and left at least three people dead, reports AFP.

The process of peace in Cambodia appeared to be seriously set back by the unrest, which prompted a curiew and the cancellation of all visits by foreign dignitaries through the end of the year.

The events, the turmoil of Saturday will certainly delay Former Pak Chief

Justice dead LAHORE, Dec 22: Former Chief Justice of Pakistan's Supreme Court AR Cornelius

died here Saturday aged 90,

reports AFP. Cornelius was one of the few Christians who rose to high office in Pakistan, whose population is 95 per cent Muslim.

He leaves behind two sons, both of whom recently tried vainly to persuade him to join them in the United States.

Foreign Minister Hor

Khmer Rouge leader Khieu Samphan and Son Sen were forced to cancel their second attempt to return to the capital because of the unstable situation, the Phnom Penh gov-

Prince Norodom Sihanouk appealed to Phnom Penh authorities to use only "gentle

violent after police arrested one medical student and shot dead another who was de-

By Sunday morning, at least two more people had been shot dead and 30 injured.

Assault on women to dissuade me from politics: Benazir

ISLAMABAD, Dec 22 : Benazir Bhutto, Pakistan's former Prime Minister, said Saturday that attacks against, her opposition party have become sexual in nature, reports

In an interview in her home, Ms Bhutto bitterly criticized President Ghulam Ishaq Khan of orchestrating politically motivated assaults on women and mass arrests of her party workers - all to dissuade her from politics.

"I fear for my future," she said. "I know the president would stop at nothing."

She accused the mostlymale government of "trying to appeal to chauvinism with sexual innuendos and vulgarity." She said her male party workers are taunted for following a woman.

Ms Bhutto and her mother, Nusrat, are the only two women in Pakistan's 207member National Assembly, its lower house of Parliament.

In Pakistan's strict Islamic society women are often veiled at puberty and married shortly after. Powerful religious groups accuse Ms Bhutto, who is usually seen wrapped in a voluminous shawl and her head covered, of promoting secular

The former prime minister also noted that a recent conference to bring Pakistan's po-

litical opposition groups together was derisively referred to as the "all prostitute's con-

raped by five masked men. Veena Hyatt, 38, charged Irfanullah Marwat, a powerful Sindhi politician and the president's son-in-law, masterminded the 12-hour night-



ference" by some government members.

In early December, Ms Bhutto's close friend the daughter - of a veteran politician - charged she was gang-

He has vehemently denied the accusation and a judicial inquiry is being held.

your honour is not safe if you

"It was a surrogate rape to

send a message to me: 'Even

continue in politics in Pakistan," said Ms Bhutto. Using his constitutional

powers, Ishaq Khan dismissed her government last year charging it was riddled with corruption and paralyzed by political ineptitude. Ms Bhutto denies the charges.

Her government was replaced at the polls in November 1990 by a coalition of Islamic conservative parties. Ms Bhutto's left-leaning Pakistan People's Party, handed a stunning defeat, says the election was tainted by massive vote fraud.

The president also established special one-judge accountability tribunals to try Ms Bhutto and several of her Cabinet ministers on charges of power abuse. A conviction on any one charge would bar her from politics for seven ycars.

She has vowed to boycott Parliament permanently and conduct only street politics if even a single member of her party is disqualified from Parliament

Each morning before she leaves her home, Ms Bhutto says she prays she will return safely.

"Our only protection is God," she said.

US hails Alma-Ata agreement them in the weeks and months matic recognition to the new

WASHINGTON, Dec. 22: The White House congratulated the new commonwealth of independent states on Saturday, but stopped short of recognising any of the former Soviet republics that make it up, reports Reuter.

"We congratulate the former Soviet republics for having agreed on a new commonwealth," White House spokesman Judy Smith said by

telephone. "We hope the agreement will provide a stable and peaceful environment to permit the individual republics to pursue democracy and market economy reform."

"The US is prepared to assist reform-minded republics in their efforts and looks forward to working closely with

MOSCOW, Dec 22: Russian

The Alma-Ata meeting was

conducted in Russian, and

Russia will take over the Soviet

founders.

ahead," Smith said. Asked whether the United States would, extend diplo-

Russia offers friendship with Pakistan ISLAMABAD, Dec 22: Russia

has offered to sign a friendship and cooperation treaty with Pakistan, the state-run Pakistan Television said on Saturday, reports Reuter.

The offer was contained in a letter from Russian federation President Boris Yeltsin which Russian Vice-President Alexander Rotskoi gave to Pakistani President Ghulam Ishaq Khan in Islamabad on Saturday, it

Soviet demise paves way for

democratic c'wealth: Yeltsin

Union's seat on the powerful

commonwealth, Smith said, "We intend to build close relations with the republics." "Secretary Baker will return

home this evening from Europe and will report to the president before any recognition is made. We will of course want to consult with our allies," Smith said. A senior official travelling

on Baker's plane had earlier expressed satisfaction with the commonwealth accord reached in Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan, on Saturday.

The official said Baker was informed of the events at the Alma-Ata meeting by the commonwealth conference host, Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev, in a telephone call to Baker's plane.

Army or annexation. Until re-

states, and there will be no

commonwealth citizenship.

Arafat cancels visit to Cambodia

Reuter.

Arafat, who arrived in capital, this afternoon.

asked not to be identified.

Lankan Tigers ambush security patrol: 4 killed

COLOMBO, Dec 22: Three government soldiers and one Tamil rebel were killed when separatists ambushed a security patrol in eastern Sri Lanka, military sources said today, reports Reuter.

Three soldiers and four rebels had been injured in the fighting in Trincomalee district on Saturday.

About 25 rebels attacked the patrol but retreated to the nearby jungle

Clashes leave 4 dead in Georgia

MOSCOW, Dec 22: Fierce fighting erupted early Sunday between troops loyal to and opposed to Georgian President Zviad Gamsakhurdia, killing at least four people in the capital city of Tbilisi, a news agency reported, reports AP.

Fighting continued a midday between troops using automatic weapons, grenade launchers and cannons, said the independent Georgian news agency Iprinda.

US navy officer stabbed to death in Philippines

MANILA, Dec 22 : An American navy officer was stabbed to death outside a US Naval base in the Philippines after he accused a Filipino of grouping his girl friend, police said today, reports Reuter.

Petty officer second class Daniel Bartley, assigned to the Special Warfare Unit at Subic Bay Naval Base northwest of Manila, was stabbed with a meat knife during a quarrel with a group of Filipinos on Friday night.

HANOI, Dec 22: Palestine Liberation Organisation leader Yasser Arafat has cancelled a planned trip to Cambodia because of the political violence there, Vietnamese officials said today, reports

Vietnam's capital Hanoi for an official visit on Saturday, had been expected to leave for Phnom Penh, the Cambodian

Arafat cancelled the trip after hearing news of unrest in Phnom Penh — where police opened fire on student demonstrators on Saturday said Vietnamese officials who

Fonda CNN's first lady' at last

the Imperial court.

CAPPS, Fla: Media mogul Ted Turner and actress, Jane Fonda tied the knot Saturday—her 54th birthday, reports AP. About 30 friends and relatives attended the ceremony at Turner's ranch near Capps, according to Turner's Cable News Network.

TOKYO: Prince Akishino and Princess Kiko smiles as

they watch their daughter Mako in their Akasaka Palace.

They took 59-day-old Princess Mako to the three Shrines in

- AFP/UNB photo

Miss Fonda wrote the couple's vows and was given away by her 18-year-old son, Troy Garity. The two had been cryptic about their plans for months.

"You'll know when it happens," Turner, 53, said in a October interview. "We think that's a private thing. We don't want helicopters buzzing over out house. It'll be small and

private with just family and close friends." They had announced their engagement Dec. 7, 1990, when Miss Fonda displayed a diamond and opal ring.

The marriage is the third for both. Miss Fonda, a two-time Academy Award-winning actress, and Turner, chairman of Turner Broadcasting System Inc. parent company of CNN, and owner of the Atlanta Braves and the Atlanta Hawks.

Birdwatchers now free as birds

LONDON, Dec 22: The end of the cold war has proved a boon for scientists who track migrating birds, a British ornithologist said today, reports Reuter.

Robert Prys-Jones of the British Trust for Ornithology said he and colleagues had recently taken advantage of the new openness offered by Moscow to mount the first international expedition to Siberia's Arctic Taimyr peninsula, summer home to many European and African birds.

"The changing political situation has spawned an ecedented collaborative research effort," he said.

Dissidents say Suu Kyi remains chief of NLD

BERLIN, Dec 22: The leader of Burma's government in exile said on Saturday Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi remained head of the National League for Democracy party (NLD), the East German news agency ADN reported, says Reuter.

Sein Win a cousin of Aung San Suu Kyi and Prime Minister of the provisional parallel government, told reporters in Berlin Burma's military funta wanted the party to expel her, it said.

Thailand, Japan, South Korea,

Taipei or Singapore, no one is

bothering to conceal their lust

for the investment contracts

and natural wealth expected to

The 46-year-old Aung San Suu Kyi has at no time been expelled from the NLD. although the junta headed by General Saw Maung wants to force leading dissidents to take this step through torture, and quoted Sein Win as saying.

Official Radio Rangoon said last week Aung San Suu Kyi, who has been under house arrest since July 1989, had been expelled from the party she helped found and led in absentia to electoral victory last year.

1991 a year of diplomatic breakthrough in Asia

HONG KONG, Dec 22: The return of peace to Cambodia, the reconciliation agreement between North and South Korea and moves by Asia's communist states to break out of their international isolation made 1991 a year of diplomatic breakthrough in the re-

gion, reports AFP. Historic agreements and unprecedented contacts between national leaders knocked down barriers that had been erected over the past 40 years, reflecting movements elsewhere in the world that brought about the collapse

of the Soviet Union and its communist dependencies.

Seoul and Pyongyong finally agreed to bury their bitterness and to turn the armistice which stopped the Korean War in 1953 into a real peace treaty: China and Vietnam ended 12 years of hostility and Li Peng made the first visit to India by a Chinese Prime Minister for 30 years in a bid to resolve a long-standing border dispute.

Meanwhile, the virulently anti-communist government in Indonesia and Singapore renewed their relations with China, Japan began difficult talks on doing the same with North Korea, and Beijing started working towards normal ties with Seoul.

Paradoxically, the return of peace to Cambodia with the help of the United Nations was both a catalyst and a result of this mass burying of hatchets in Asia.

Vietnam, deprived of its traditional support as the Soviet Union foundered, was forced into a drastic reversal of its policy on Indochina, where it backed the Cambodian government towards Beijing.

chance to increase its influence in Asia if not elsewhere. decide the best way was to pressure its own clients, the Khmer Rouge guerilla group, into making peace with Phnom Penh.

China, meanwhile, seeing a

The peace agreement signed in Paris on October 3 did more than end nearly 13 years of civil war. Political constraints snapped and ideological barriers feel, launching a contest for economic spoils in which each competitor is

hoping for the lion's share.

Whether in Australia or

be up for grabs as Indochina opens to the world. With the Cambodian prob-

lem out of the way, both China and Vietnam -where foreign investment has doubled in a year to reach a record 1.2 billion dollars - have begun to move decidedly closer to the comparatively wealthy countries of southeast Asia.

Taiwan, meanwhile, boosted by its 78 billion dollars of re-

China's veto to join the Asta-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Forum. Other diplomatic develop-

serves, has broken through

ments saw Manila break 45 years of military ties to the United States, though against the wishes of President Cornzon Aguino. It was the tiny Philippine senate which decided not to renew the lease on Clark Air Force Base and Subic Naval Base. Mikhail Elsewhere,

Gorbachev broke the ice with Japan with the first visit to

government there.

ings with the Presidents of Iran and Pakistan and both the countries were committed to a speedy political settlement of crete actions to be taken to this end.

transitional government as agreed upon between tails.

> the process of the peace plan,' Namhong told reporters.

> ernment said.

It blamed the violence on armed subversives bent on destabilizing the government.

persuasion" to restore order. The weekend's unrest started as a peaceful protest against alleged corruption by municipal officials but turned

manding his release.

protest again in the morning but were deterred by a line of

The students tried to police and warning fire from automatic weapons.

BIRTHE

Israel detains 30 Palestinians: Israeli soldiers on Saturday detained 30 Palestinian supporters of the Islamic fundamentalist Hamas movement in the occupied West Bank, reports AP Sunday from Jerusalem.

The military confirmed that 30 Palestinians were detained

for questioning, but gave no further details. Arab reporters said the Palestinians were detained after soldiers raided a Hamas meeting at a vocational training college in the occupied West Bank town of Dahiyat el Barid north

of Jerusalem. At the meeting, masked activists marched through the college with Palestinian flags and called for armed struggle

against Israel, Israel television reported. Polish cabinet presented to Sejm: Prime Minister Jan Olszewski presented his proposed cabinet to parliament on Saturday, saying its chief task was to pull Poland out of a disastrous recession, reports Reuter

Sunday from Warsaw. Olszewski put forward his line-up eight weeks after Poland's first free post-war parliamentary elections returned a deeply-fragmented parliament and unleashed prolonged arguments over economic policy.

The Sejm (lower house) votes Monday whether accept or reject the eabinet. President Lech Walesa was quoted as saying he had chosen an alternative candidate to form a government if Olszewski's team was rejected. Amnesty Secy-Gen resigns: The Secretary General of Amnesty International, Ian Martin, has

internal row over the future of the human rights organisation, an Amnesty spokesman said on Saturday, reports Reuter Sunday from London. Martin, 45, fought a tough battle to maintain the London-

resigned and will leave his post next year following an

based group's cohesion at a time when it expanded its membership and widened its human rights goals. Amnesty spokesman Richard Reoch said Martin had defeated the challenge to his authority but was quitting because

he felt tired out by the struggle. OAS special envoy in Haiti: An Organisation of American States (OAS) special envoy arrived in Haiti on Saturday for a new attempt to negotiate reinstatement of ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

officials said, reports Reuter Sunday from Haiti. An OAS spokesman said envoy Augusto Ramirez Ocampo, a former Colombian Foreign Minister, would probably spend only one night in Haiti. He was making his third visit since early November. For the past two weeks, Ramirez has been mediating be-

tween the exiled President and parliament on the choice of a

new Prime Minister who would pave the way for Aristide's return to power. Somali gunmen hijack Saudi tanker: Somali gunmen commandeered a Saudi oil tanker delivering an oil shipment to war-torn Somalia 10 days ago and forced it to sail to Sudan and Saudi Arabia, shipping sources said on

Saturday, reports Reuter Sunday from Cairo. The Saudi-owned sea skipper, a 6,174-deadweight-ton tanker which flies a Panamanian flag, was hijacked in Mogadishu harbour by 204 armed men on December 11, the sources said. The hijackers ordered its Indian captain to sail to the

Sudanese Red Sea Port of Port Sudan where they demanded

political asylum in Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt or Canada.

Turkish forces kill five Kurds: Turkish security forces killed a total of five "terrorist separatists," one of them a woman, in two incidents in southeastern Anatolia on Thursday and Friday, the Anatolia news

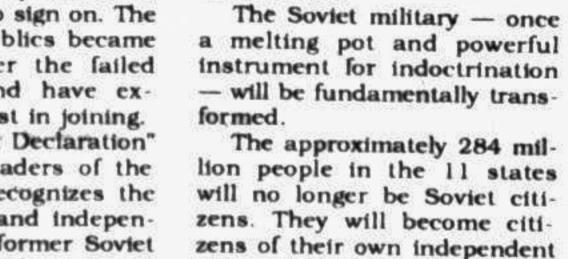
agency said Saturday, reports AFP Sunday from Ankara. The agency, which generally uses the term "terrorist separatists" to refer to Kurdish rebels, quoted officials in the regional capital of Diyarbakir as saying that three men and a woman were killed during clashes near the town of Solhan, 900 kilometres (550 miles) east of Ankara, on Thursday.

President Boris Yeltsin says U.N. Security Council. cently, they were tightly run by the death of the Soviet Union The commonwealth is geo-Communist Party bosses who graphically much like the old opens the way for "a demo took orders from the now-decratic commonwealth" without Soviet Union. Only maverick funct center. totalitarian central control. But Georgia has yet to sign on. The how different it will be re three Baltic republics became mains to be seen, reports AP. independent after the failed The agreement Saturday August coup and have exexpanding the commonwealth pressed no interest in joining. to 11 of the 12 Soviet re-The "Alma-Ata Declaration" publics declares that the signed by the leaders of the members are entering voluncommonwealth recognizes the tarily on an "equal basis" as co-

Yet Russia, although it is just one of 11 republics, remains a first among equals.

current borders and independence of the 11 former Soviet republics, ending the Russian

Yoke for most of them after hundreds of years.



Dual citizenship will be al-All 11 members were lowed, reflecting the fact that millions of Russians live outforced into the Soviet Union either after defeat by the Red side their native republics.



ALMA ATA, Kazakhstan: Russian President Boris Yeltsin (c) flashes the thumbs-up after signing the agreement of 11 former Soviet republics which dissolved the Soviet Union and replaced it with a commonwealth of independent states. (From left to right) Ukrainian President L. Kravchuk, Kazakh President N. Nursultan Nazarbayev, B. Yeltsin and Beloirussian President S. Shushkevick. - AFP/UNB photo