

### 'Era of cooperation with Cuba is over'

MIAMI, Dec 28: A prominent Cuban exile group said on Friday it has received assurances from top-level officials of the new Russian government that the era of cooperation with Fidel Castro's Cuba is over, reports Reuter.

From now on, Russia will enforce a policy towards Cuba to promote freedom and democracy in the island of Cuba, Jorge Mas Canosa, Chairman of the Cuban American National Foundation, said in Miami after a trip to Moscow this week.

### Israel plans huge airlift of Soviet Jews

BOSTON, Dec 28: Israel is planning a huge airlift of Soviet Jews should another coup or a civil war take place in the former Soviet Union, the Boston Globe has reported, says Reuter.

One Israeli official estimated that 50,000-100,000 Soviet Jews a month could be evacuated, as happened when Ethiopian Jews were brought to Israel earlier this year, the Globe said on Thursday in a story from Jerusalem.

### Novelist jailed for blasphemy

A security court convicted a little-known novelist of blasphemy and sentenced him to eight years in prison, the first time this century an author was jailed for his writing, reports AP from Cairo.

### Former Peru President acquitted

A Supreme Court tribunal ruled there was insufficient evidence to warrant trying former President Alan Garcia on embezzlement charges, reports AP from Lima.

### US turns down Gaddafi's offer

The United States on Friday turned down an invitation from Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi to send western judges to Tripoli for the trial of two men allegedly implicated in the 1988 bombing of a Pan Am jet over Scotland, reports Reuter from Washington.

### Second quake rocks S. Atlantic

A second large earthquake in a day happened beneath the Atlantic Ocean some 2,100 miles (3,400 kilometers) south of Buenos Aires, Argentina, the US Geological Survey said on Friday, reports AP from Washington.

### 10 killed in boat capsized

Rescuers found three survivors and recovered the bodies of 10 passengers from an inter-island ferry which sank in the central Philippines six days ago, a Coast Guard spokeswoman said Saturday, reports AP from Manila.

### UN to send team to Mogadishu

Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar said on Friday the United Nations would send a small team of international staff back to the Somali capital of Mogadishu to supervise desperately needed aid, reports Reuter from United Nations.

### Russian flag flies at UN headquarters

## Hungry mob block avenue of St Petersburg for food

MOSCOW, Dec 28: Hundreds of angry citizens with empty shopping bags blocked the central avenue of St Petersburg after failing to exchange their ration coupons for food, Tass news agency reported on Friday, says Reuter.

AP from UN reports: The Russian flag flew for the first time Friday at UN headquarters, symbolizing the transfer of the defunct Soviet Union's Security Council seat and other powers to the Russian Federation.

Inside the building, Ambassador Yuli Vorontsov, the former Soviet envoy, prepared to preside over his first Security Council meeting as the Russian ambassador.

Russian Federation credentials. At that time, Vorontsov gave the United Nations a Russian flag, but with the Christmas holidays, it took until Friday for the world body to find one that was the right size to fly among the others outside the building.

Local authorities brought anti-riot Police detachments to prevent disturbances, but the crowd dispersed peacefully. The Russian Parliament on Friday adopted a Resolution aimed at protecting people on low incomes from dizzying price rises after state price controls are dropped on January 2.

The Russian banner is now between Romania and Rwanda; the space once occupied by the USSR, between Ukraine and United Arab Emirates, was filled in.

The Commonwealth of Independent States, made up of 11 of the 12 former Soviet republics, had agreed to allow Russia to take the Soviet seat last week.

Meanwhile, a freed political prisoner vowed that bloodshed would continue if President Zviad Gamsakhurdia does not bow to opposition demands that he resign.



Rescuers stand near the wreckage of a Scandinavian Air-line System (SAS) plane that crashed shortly after take off. The plane with 122 persons on board was bound for Copenhagen with a final destination of Warsaw, broke in two upon making an emergency landing away from the airport.

### Korean talks on N-arms fail

SEOUL, Dec 28: North and South Korean officials failed today to adopt an accord ensuring a nuclear weapons-free peninsula but agreed to meet again before the new year, a press reports said, reports AP.

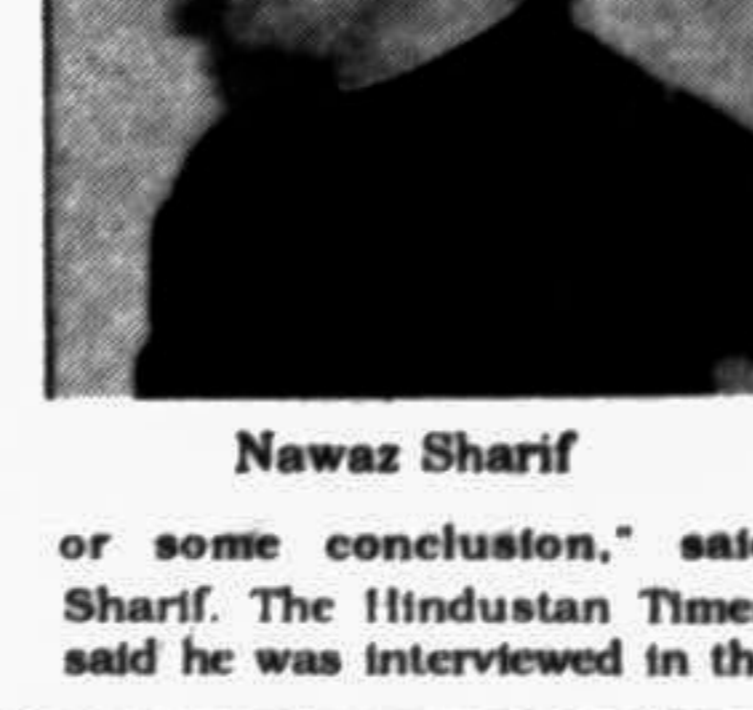
Five delegates from each side, meeting at the border truce village of Panmunjom were unable to iron out differences on a joint declaration pledging a nuclear free Korea, but they agreed to continue their talks Tuesday, the national Yonhap news agency said.

The Dong-a evening daily however, said the two sides agreed to form a joint committee to implement any future agreement on a nuclear weapons-free Korea.

## Sharif hopeful of solving Kashmir crisis by '92

NEW DELHI, Dec 28: Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif says that within the next year he wants to resolve the Kashmir dispute that has caused two wars with India, reports AP.

two prime ministers. "We should also now fix a time limit and say that within this time frame we have to come to some understanding



Nawaz Sharif

Let 1992 be the year of the solutions," Sharif said in an interview published Saturday in the Hindustan Times, an independent Indian daily.

Urging flexibility by both sides, Sharif was quoted as saying, "India has adopted the same approach since 1947. So has Pakistan since 1947. This has not worked."

Talks by senior diplomats and foreign ministry officials had yielded no results, he said, and future efforts should be moved to the political level to be resolved ultimately by the

## Break-up of Soviet Union good news for US: Cheney

WASHINGTON, Dec 28: The United States supports the idea of a central military command for the republics of the former Soviet Union to safeguard their nuclear weapons, Defence Secretary Dick Cheney said on Friday, reports Reuter.

Cheney said the breakup of the Soviet Union was good news for the United States and the rest of the world, but he cautioned against major cuts in the US defence budget until it was seen how the new commonwealth of independent republics would develop.

Cheney said Friday. "I think that it's very important for us as we move forward to make certain that we maintain adequate military capability," Cheney told Cable News Network (CNN) in an interview.

Cheney said the breakup of the Soviet Union was good news for the world, but he warned against making hasty decisions about vital defence strategy as changes were still taking place

## Off the Record

### Yeltsin -too quick to take over

MOSCOW: Russian President Boris Yeltsin, apparently anxious to move into the Kremlin, took over Mikhail Gorbachev's office Friday before the former Soviet President had time to clean out his desk, a newspaper reported, says AP.

The sign identifying the third-floor office as Gorbachev's was unceremoniously removed and replaced with Yeltsin's, the Russian Information Agency said.

Gorbachev resigned Wednesday, and Yeltsin has moved quickly to take over the last remnants of his Soviet government and trappings of office. Yeltsin is clearly the most powerful leader in the new Commonwealth of Independent States.

### Indians in US gamble with gambling

LOS ANGELES: Indian reservations are taking a gamble with gambling by ignoring government threats and offering better computerized games that look and play like slot machines, reports AP.

The proliferation of the machines in several states, including Florida, Arizona and California, has put Indians at loggerheads with state and federal officials, who contend the devices are illegal forms of one-armed bandits.

Authorities in California seized hundreds of machines from Indian-run casinos. The US attorney for Arizona vowed to pull the plugs on machines in reservation casinos early next year.

### Yugoslavia seeks UN protection

BELGRADE, Dec 28: Yugoslavia says the European Community's efforts to bring peace to Croatia have lost credibility and it wants "support and protection" from the United Nations, reports Reuter.

The Yugoslav federal presidency, now reduced to a Serbia-led rump, has written to UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar complaining that the EC's readiness to recognise Yugoslav republics that want to break away showed it was biased.

The engagement of the EC, which offered its good services in the resolution of the crisis in this country has... turned into meddling in Yugoslavia's internal affairs and support for secessionism against international law and its own obligations," said the letter, made public on Friday.

It added that the EC's the Hague conference on Yugoslavia "has lost the necessary credibility and trust in its objectivity in seeking a solution to the crisis."

### Iraq frees 450 Kurds

MANAMA, Dec 28: Iraq has freed between 400 - 450 Kurdish political prisoners but tens of thousands of others are still being held in Iraqi prisons, an Iraqi Kurdish opposition leader said Friday, reports AP.

Jalal Talibani told AFP that the prisoners had returned recently to the Kurdish region of northern Iraq, after having been in jail since the 1980s.

Hundreds of prisoners may have been executed in jail, and we fear for the future of almost 200,000 Kurds detained in 1988, in an Iraqi offensive against Kurdistan, he said in a telephone interview from Kurdistan.

### Opposition for an end to bloodshed in Tbilisi

TBILISI, Dec 28: Forces opposed to Georgian President Zviad Gamsakhurdia went on television today and called for negotiations to end the bloodshed in Tbilisi, reports AFP.

A spokesman for the armed opposition, identified as Karakashvili called for the talks to be held at the television headquarters in the city beginning at 12 noon (0900 GMT).

He invited the Interior Minister Dilar Khabuliani, the Justice Minister and other key officials to attend.

A spokesman for the government forces, Besik Kutateladze, also appeared on the television sitting beside Karakashvili.

### Dust storm kills 17 in California

BAKERSFIELD (Calif), Dec 28: Wind-blown dust forced authorities to close about 200 miles (320 kilometers) of Interstate 5 in central California on Friday, including the area where 17 people died in a violent dust storm the day after Thanksgiving, reports AP.

The California Highway Patrol reported a three-vehicle pile-up on state Highway 119 near Bakersfield; no one was reported injured.

### Corazon bans celebratory gunfire

MANILA, Dec 28: President Corazon Aquino today ordered a total ban on traditional celebratory gunfire during new year's eve revelries in the Philippines, reports Reuter.

Aquino blamed the deaths of hundreds of Filipinos in past celebrations on "indiscriminate firing" by soldiers and civilians.

### Ilona back to porn life

MILAN, Italy: Cicciolina, Italy's controversial parliamentarian who made a fortune in movies, is returning to the private life of a porn star, reports Reuter.

But those quirky Italian voters who elected her five years ago need not worry.

Her protegee Moana Pozzi, who has co-starred with Cicciolina in many hard-core films, will be running to succeed her in the Hallowed Halls of the Rome's Chamber of Deputies.

Cicciolina (little cuddly one), whose real name is Ilona Staller, announced through her manager on Friday that she would not seek re-election to the seat she won on the radical party ticket.

Staller, Pozzi, and manager Riccardo Schicchi last September founded "The Party of Love", whose stated object is to "bring love to parliament."

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