

# Israel to release three Lebanese :

Israel said on Friday it would release three Lebanese men who were abducted from south Lebanon overnight by helicopterborne commandos, reports Reuter Saturday from Jerusalem. With the conclusion of questioning, the Israel Defence Force plans to release the suspects..., an army spokesman

said, adding that the three would be released on Saturday. Military sources said this showed their abduction from a road near the village of Jibsheet was simply part of Israel's continuing efforts to curb guerilla attacks in and around its self-declared security zone in south Lebanon.

## Cuomo won't run for Presidency:

New York Governor Mario Cuomo ended months of speculation on Friday when he announced that he would not be a candidate for the US democratic presidential nomination because of his state's budget problems, reports Reuter Saturday from New York.

Cuomo, 59, was considered by many political experts to be the strongest democrat who could enter the race to unscat Republican President George Bush in the 1992 presidential election.

"I would be less then honest if i did not admit to you my regret at not having the chance to run for president," Cuomo told a packed news conference.

#### Russia to set up ties with Israel: Russia will establish diplomatic relations with Israel, Russian President Boris Yeltsin announced Friday, reports AFP Saturday from Rome.

It is "unfair to isolate a great nation", Yeltsin told a press conference on the last day of his two-day visit to Italy. Recognition would be part of Russia's contribution to a settlement of the Middle East conflict, he added.

#### Filipino rebels declare truce : Communist rebels declared a five-day Christmas and New Year's cease-fire Saturday in their 22-year war with

government forces, reports AP Saturday from Manila. The rebel National Democratic Front said in a statement that the cease-fire would take effect from 1 a m Tuesday, Christmas Eve, until 1 a m Thursday and again from 1 a m December 30 until 1 a m January 2.

Holiday cease-fires are traditional in the Philippines. Last Thursday, President Corazon Aquino declared a unilateral 72-hour cease-fire with communist rebels for the Christmas and New year holidays.

#### Cocaine seized in Mexico, 4 held: Federal police setzed nearly a ton of cocaine and arrested four people after a gun battle at a rural airstrip, Mexico's chief anti-drug officials reported, reports AP Saturday from Mexico

Jorge Carrillo Olea, head of the anti-drug office at the attorney general's office, said police confiscated 32 bags of cocaine containing more than 900 kilograms (1,980 pounds) of cocaine. There were no reports of injuries.

Carrillo also told a news conference that the federal judicial police working under the attorney general's office had seized 48,368 kilograms (106,392 pounds) of cocaine earlier. Mexico is a major transit route for Colombian cocaine en route to the United States.

#### UN team to monitor Angolan polls: UN poll watchers should monitor Angola's first free elections scheduled for September 1992. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar recommended Friday, reports AP Saturday from United Nations.

"There is broad public support in Angola for the United Nations assuming such a role," he advised the Security Council.

Perez de Cuellar said he would send a preliminary survey team to Luanda to prepare recommendations, and then would recommend the election-monitoring mission based on their

UNITA, a former guerilla movement, and the formerly socialist governing MPLA party are the two major contenders among about 30 parties vying for power.

In May, a peace agreement brought about a cease-fire in the 16-year civil and a promise for free elections to be held late next year.

# India, China have a duty to promote peace: Rao

India. The Indian press has

scathingly attacked a policy of

"drift" in the Foreign Ministry.

Pakistan and Indian officials

complained to Li about Bei-

ing's arms deliveries to

India's position that Tibet was

an autonomous region of China,

but added: "our respect for his

holtness the Dalat Lama as a

religious and spiritual leader

refugees fled with the Dalai

Lama to India after an abortive

uprising against Chinese rule

in 1959. A Tibetan extle gov-

ernment, which no country

recognises, operates from the

north Indian town of Dhar-

Li complained that India al-

Rao discussed human rights

"No country should be de-

nied assistance in the name of

human rights," he said. "Norms

for human rights cannot be

determined unilaterally and

lowed Tibetans to engage in

with Li and India's "adherence

to the concept of the indivisi-

bility of all human rights."

anti-Chinese activities.

More than 100,000 Tibetan

remains high."

Rap said he reiterated

China has strong ties with

NEW DELHI, Dec 21 : India and China, which together account for a third of mankind, have a duty to promote peace and economic development in the world, Indian Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao said on Friday, reports Reuter.

He told parliament that Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng's visit to New Delhi last week - the first by a Chinese leader in 31 years - had spectal significance because of the imminent collapse of the Soviet Union.

"In a volatile and changing international situation I believe our two countries, which represent a third of humanity, can and should play in important role in the promotion of peace and development in the world," Rao said.

In a wide-ranging address, he repeatedly stressed economie development as a cornerstone of Indian foreign policy, which in the past has focused on disarmament and non-alignment. He did not mention the Non-Aligned Movement, which India helped to found.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and other former allies externally. in East Europe has shocked

#### Rebels bomb French embassy in Peru

LIMA, Dec 21: A wave of bombings damaged an embassy, banks, and a shopping centre Friday night, injuring four people and causing power outages, police said. They said leftist rebels claimed responsibility for the attacks, reports

The bombings hit the French Embassy as well as the residence of the Spanish ambassador. No diplomatic personnel were immediately reported injured.

The bombing of an electrical grid knocked out power to parts of greater Lima, at least three banks were hit, and four people were injured in an exploston at a shopping centre in Lima's fashionable San Ysidro.

The blasts occurred almost simultaneously about 10 pm.

WEST

# 11 Soviet republics agree on a new commonwealth

ALMA-ATA (USSR), Dec 21: Leaders of 11 of the 12 former Soviet republics agreed Saturday to proclaim a new commonwealth of independent states to replace the Soviet Union. Boris Yeltsin said, "Practically everything is done," reports AP.

The leaders of all the Soviet republies except Georgia reached agreement on three key documents that will serve as the basis for the new commonwealth, said Scitkazy Mataev, a spokesman for Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev.

The first is a protocol that recognizes the 11 republics entering on an "equal basis" as co-founders, Mataev said. This was principal demand of the leaders the five Asian republics, which are predominantly Muslim, after the Slavic republics of Russia, Byclorussia and Ukraine formed the

UN mediator

starts peace

talks in

El Salvador

UNITED NATIONS, Dec 21

: 'The UN's chief peacekeeping

official is discussing cease-fire

arrangements in El Salvador

ist rebel negotiators', the main

Salvadoran President Alfre-

with the government and left-

UN mediator said Friday, re-

do Cristiani has also come to

New York to be able to join the

peace talks when needed, the

mediator, Alvaro de Soto, told

Perez de Cuellar said Friday

that the negotiations "are mov-

ing very, very quickly, with

could not say that there had

been a breakthrough yet on any

Bandh paralyses

Kashmir

Kashmir Deputy Inspector

General of Police, Rajan Bak-

shi; escaped an attempt on his

life in the old city, while life

was paralysed in the valley

today due to a bandh called by

some militant organisations,

Bakshi's bullet-proof car in the

old city last evening. His secu-

rity guards returned fire but

the militants escaped under

the cover of darkness. No ca-

sualties were reported in the

lishments remained closed to-

day in the valley and vehicular

transport remained off the

roads due to the bandh called

by militant organisations, in-

cluding the Jammu and

Kashmir Liberation Front

(JKLF), to protest against al-

leged excesses by security

NICOSIA, Dec 21: In what

could reflect a new foreign

policy, Iranian President Has-

hemi Rafsanjani on Friday de-

nounced terrorism and anti-

Western jingoism in of pru-

dence and pragmatism, re-

"The Islamic Republic now

needs a prudent policy more

than anything else," Rafsanjani

said in a sermon at Tchran

both for inside the country, in

order to strengthen our base,

and for our foreign policy, so

that we can have presence and

help people without being ac-

cused of engaging in terror-

"We have no need to speak

fanatically. We have no need to

chant impractical slogans. We

do not need to say things

which are not acted upon,

needlessly frightening the

"We need a prudent policy

Shops and business estab-

Police said militants fired at

SRINAGAR, Dec 21: The

of the major points of con-

However, de Soto said he

Secretary-General Javier

ports AP.

reporters.

tention.

reports PTI.

incident.

ports AP.

University.

ism," he added.

great enthusiasm.

commonwealth on December

The leaders agreed on a second document, called the "Alma-Ata Declaration," which recognizes the independence of the 11 former Soviet republics and their current borders, Mataev said.

A third agreement said a temporary military command would be formed until December 31, according to the spokesman. Another meeting of the commonwealth leaders would be held before then to decide the issue on a more permanent basis, Mataev added.

"We respect Gorbachev and we want him to resign smoothly in December, as he himself wants, and correspondingly today, we will discuss all the necessary," Yeltsin said on arrival in Kazakhstan.

"I think the heads of state will determine all the necessary privileges and statues for him." he said.

"We'd like in our civilized state to have the president of the country, who has done a lot of good as well as made mistakes, to leave with dignity while we build the Commonwealth Independent States," Yeltsin

Yeltsin said it will be the first time since the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution that a head of state has retired peacefully.

The Russian president, who is the driving force behind the commonwealth, had agreed with Gorbachev last Tuesday that the Soviet Union would be dissolved by the end of the year. Gorbachev's resignation is expected before then.

Yeltsin voiced optimism before heading into the meetings with the other republic leaders in the white marble

Presidential Palace overlooking Alma-Ata, nothing that only the southern republic of Georgia was absent.

"I am in a very good mood because everyone is here in Alma-Ata," he said at the airport. They said it would be 10 republics, and it's 11. Practically everything is done. There will be an historic meeting to agree on a Commonwealth Independent States."

The 11 republics are Russia, Byclorussia, Ukrainc, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan. Tadzhikistan, Kirgizia, Uzbekistan, Moldavia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Yeltsin also told reporters that there should be a single nuclear command and he believed the issue of nuclear weapons, which the Kremlin had deployed in four republics, would be settled at the meet-

#### Soviet embassy in Delhi switches allegiance to Russia

NEW DELHI, Dec 21: The Soviet embassy in the Indian capital has switched allegiance to Russia, newspapers said today, and has raised the federation's flag in place of the red hammer-and-sickle banner, reports Reuter.

Ambassador Anatomy Drukov told Delhi's External Affairs Ministry of the change on Friday, the Times of India reported.

No one was available at the embassy today to comment on the reports.

## UN to maintain embargo against Iraq

NEW YORK, Dec 21: The **UN Security Council on Friday** decided to maintain a 16month-old trade embargo against Iraq but voiced support to ease the procedure for channelling unexempted goods to Baghdad, reports AFP.

Yuli Vorntsov, the current President of the Security Council, told reporters here the UN "Sanctions Committee" would draw up a list of goods that are exempted from the embargo.

with security arrangements for

backed by about 150 riot po-

lice with helmets and metal

shields, fired off hundreds of

rounds into the air as the

There were no deaths re-

ported but several people were

The riot erupted after po

lice arrested a medical student

leagues last week's protests by

civil government officials of

selling government property

and pocketing the proceeds.

who was discussing with col-

protest began to turn violent.

Nervous security men,

the session.

injured.

# Shamphan cancels trip to Cambodia

ALGIERS: Two young supporters of the Islamic Salvation

Front (FIS) hold the Algerian flag in the neighbourhood of

Bab El Oued before Friday's prayers, several days before the

legislative elections which will take place on December 26.

PHNOM PENII, Dec 21 Police fired warning shots and clashed with rock-throwing student demonstrators Saturday on the fourth day of unprecedented demonstra tions against alleged government and police corruption,

Guerrilla sources in Bangkok said the unrest forced

people," Rafsanjani told wor-

PRESIDENT RAFSANJANI

Pragmatic leader

His call for moderation, for

Khmer Rouge leader Khieu Samphan to cancel his return to the Cambodian capital, where he was nearly lynched by a mob last month.

- AFP/UNB photo

The first meeting on Cambodian soil of the country's interim reconciliation council, scheduled for Saturday, was postponed with the Khmer Rouge reportedly not satisfied

flerce anti-Western slogancer

ing, which became hallmarks

of Iran's 1979 revolution, clash

with the teachings of the late

Ever since his election in

Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomcinf.

June 1989, weeks after

Khomeini died of cancer,

Rafsanjani has been trying to

improve relations with the

west and Iran's Arab neighbour

to attract investment and

technology for a faltering

Islamic Republic, made anti-

Western sentiments corner-

lieved to be the umbrella for

hostage-holding factions in

Hezbollah is the group be-

stones of his revolution.

Khomeini, who led the rev-

economy

Lebanon.

The students claimed their colleague was severely beaten Rafsanjani blasts terrorism by police, and one witness said he was bleeding from the abandoning terrorism and

On Friday, a mob ransacked and partly burned down the home of the minister of transport and communications, Ros Chhun. He later resigned. The protestors claimed the minister had taken over a govern ment-owned villa for his private residence.

The protests, which began Wednesday, are the first in this nation for more than two decades. During that time, Cambodia endured a savage war, the Khmer Rouge's bloody reign and 13 years of civil con-

olution that replaced the The Vietnamese-installed Iranian monarchy with the government announced in October it had renounced Communism in favour of multiparty democracy and greater human rights. On October 23, the four warring parties signed a peace treaty in Paris ending the civil war.

# Off the Record



PARIS: French President Francois Mitterrand holds the hand of Italian actress Sophia Loren shortly after presenting her with the Legion of Honour during a - AFP/UNB photo ceremony at the Elysee Palace Friday.

### Fall follows fun

HOUSTON: US security guards who were watching TV in-stead of a nuclear power plant have been fired or suspended, company officials said on Thursday, reports Reuter.

Houston Lighting and Power Co officials fired five workers and suspended 17 without pay for watching TV in a vacant conference room at a nuclear power plant instead of staying at assigned posts.

The guards, hired by a subcontractor, worked at the south Texas project plant about 100 miles (160 km) southwest of

But company officials said plant security was not compromised since the workers served as backup guards in the event an electronic surveillance system failed.

Company officials did not reveal how they caught the workers watching TV. "There was no break in security because the electronic

system did not fail," a company spokesman said, adding that he assumed the workers watched sporting events.

#### 'China's sorrow' changes colour

BEIJING: China's Yellow River is running clean and green for the first time in 265 years, the official New China News Agency said Saturday, reports Reuter. The river, which gets its name from the huge quantity of

sand and silt it usually carries, is nicknamed "China's sorrow" because of its record of disastrous floods over the centuries. The agency said scant rain in the upper reaches of the

5,000 km (3,000 mile) long river in the past few months meant the sand content of China's second longest river was half as much as usual.

The last time the river ran clean was in 1726, it said.

### The benign doctor

ALEXANDRIA: An infertility specialist accused of using his own sperm to impregnate women may have fathered as many as 75 children, a prosecutor said Friday, reports AP.

Assistant US Attorney Randy Bellows said during a hearing that workers in the former Vienna, Va, clinic run by Ceril B. Jacobson never saw evidence of a sperm donor, and that he treated more than 75 women who were having problems becoming pregnant.

Eleven parents whose 15 children were allegedly fathered by Jacobson are scheduled to testify at the trial, the prosecutor added.

At the hearing, US District Judge James Cacheris denied a government request to keep the public and the news media out of the courtroom during the trial. Bellows had argued that secreey was needed to protect the

"For a parent's identity to be disclosed, that would disclose

the identity of the child," he told the judge. Jacobson, who now lives in Provo, Utah, faces trial Feb. 10

on 53 counts of mail fraud, wire fraud an perjury. The perjury counts come from alleged false statements to the Federal Trade Commission, which obtained a court order three years ago requiring him to set up a fund to reimburse patients. He has pleaded innocent to the charges.

# Corazon urges army to ensure peaceful polls

MANILA. Dec 21: President Corazon Aquino called on the Philippine army today to preserve the gains of democracy by ensuring an honest, orderly election and a smooth turnover of power next year, reports Reuter.

"The 1992 elections shall be another test for our political maturity and moral discipline. It is yet another erucible for the Filipino soldier," Aquino said at celebrations to mark the 56 the anniversary of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). She also commended the

soldier for remaining loyal to the constitution during the six coup attempts by rebel military officers in her six years in of-There is no doubt that the

Armed Forces of the Philippines today upholds civilian supremacy," she declared. "Remain firm in your resolve to uphold the ideals of your profession. The chain of command must be free from obstruction." "I remind you all of your

duty to ensure the smooth and peaceful turnover of power in June. It is not just the sanctity of the ballot that you must guarantee but also the sanctity of the will of the people, Aquino told soldiers at camp Aguinaldo.

Aguino has said she would not seek a second term and there are at least nine candidates vying to succeed her in next May's elections. The anniversary celebration

also marked the blessing of the restored general headquarters building in camp Aguinaldo which was burned down by fleeing rebel military officers in the failed coup of August

Many of the coup plotters have either surrendered or been captured but the mostwanted rebel officer, cashiered colonel Gregorio Honasan, has remained at large after negotiations for his return collapsed last month. Armed Forces chief General

Lisandro Abadia said last week the door was still open for Honasan, leader of three failed coup attempts. Taiwanese elect

## first national assembly in 44 yrs

TAIPEI, Taiwan, Dec 21: Taiwanese elect their first new National Assembly in 44 years Saturday in voting that could turn into a referendum on whether they want to unify with or break away from mainland China, reports AP.

The voting will be the first electoral challenge to the governing Nationalist Party, which has turned Taiwan into an economic powerhouse since fleeing to the island in 1949 after losing a civil war to the Communists.

Many of the island's 13 millton registered voters lined up in drizzle to cast ballots when 10,000 stations opened. Officials said results will be known before midnight Saturday (1600 GMT).

#### Critics dub Stone's 'JFK' a gripping tale their efforts to destroy my tertainment world, to propa-Dallas and opened nationally LOS ANGELES, Dec 21

Oliver Stone's new film "JFK" about President Kennedy's assassination won mostly good reviews Friday from film critics, who called it a gripping tale. But debate raged over just how tall that tale is, reports

"Many prominent journalists and film reviewers contend Stone has fudged facts, invented characters and elevated speculation to truth to support his burning belief that the killing was a high-level conspiracy.

"JFK is not just an entertainment, it's a work of propaganda," Newsweck said this week in a cover story headlined: The Twisted Truth of

The film premiered Thursday night to a select crowd in night and defended the film.

Among the harshest criticism was from New York Times columnist Tom Wicker, who covered the Kennedy assassination for the paper. Wicker lambasted Stone in a December 15 piece titled : "Does JFK conspire Against

Wicker accused Stone of fabrication and lies through omission to assert Stone's "one true faith about November 22, 1963" — that a fascist conspiracy was behind Kennedy's death and a Warren Commission cover-up, making Lee Harvey Oswald a patsy and corrupting democracy.

"He uses the powerful instrument of a motion picture, and relies on stars of the encepted, would be contemptuous of the very Constitutional government Mr. Stone's film purports to uphold," wrote

The controversy actually may help boost the film's boxoffice fortunes. Because "JFK" has been so widely discussed and argued over, industry ana lysts expect the cpic to debut strongly this weekend.

Stone, long used to controversy from his films "Platoon," "Wall Street," and "Born on the Fourth of July," responded by blasting his critics on the oped page of Wicker's won newspaper Friday.

He singled out Wicker and other political journalists, saying. 'I think what is clear from to newsmen. Stone, in an interview with

the Associated Press, acknowledged he played a little loose with some facts, but asserted he has an artistic right to interpret history.

"My movic is ultimately a myth, the countermyth I call it to the Warren Commission," he said. The Warren Commission concluded there was a sole gunman; Stone argues a band of assassins, acting at the behest of the 'military-industrial complex," killed the president

In Friday's reviews, many critics grappled with the questions of Stone's artistic license and his historical responsibilities, and how this juggling act played as enter-

nitely not simple) and as a deliberate act of provocation, wrote Eleanor Ringel, film edi tor of the Atlanta Journal Constitution. Arizona Republic reviewer

Bob Fenster gave "JFK" five stars, the paper's highest rat ing, and Lou Cedrone from The Baltimore Evening Sun said that despite the movie's biases, it is 'a riveting film." Vincent Canby of The New

York Times, however, said Stone takes on too much and doesn't sort things out well. "The movie, which is simul-

taneously arrogant and timorous, has been unable to separate the important material from the merely colourful, he wrote. 'After a certain point, audience interest tunes

dentably effective" but took

Stone to task for inaccuracies, as did Dolores Barclay, the AP's arts and entertainment editor. The facts - and history -

do not support his thesis," she Mike Clark of USA Today

gave the film 3 1/2 stars, writing: "Cinematically, JFK is 90 per cent marvel, faltering in domestic scenes. Historically, it displays enough insidious slight of hand to put Siegiriedand-Roy out of work."

But Time magazine's Richard Corliss said the film, when judged on its own terms, is "terrifie" and offered this response to the historical controversy: "JFK is only a movie."

#### The Los Angeles Times' JFK exists on two levels as film's credibility is that history gate the one true faith - even Friday. Stone went on ABC-Kenneth Turan called the film a movie (not so pure and defi-TV's "Nightline" on Thursday may be too important to leave though that faith, if widely ac "disturbing, infuriating yet un-