longtime rival Koreas are to

meet at the border for critical

talks on ending nuclear

weapons development on the

divided Korean Peninsula. The

nuclear talks were agreed

upon December after the

Korean nations signed a his-

toric accord calling for peace-

interested in avoiding a satis-

factory resolution of nuclear

problem than in facilitating

one," U.S Rep Stephen J.

Solarz, a Democrat, told re-

porters at a news conference."

resolved", Solarz said, " it

could lead to grave conse-

quences... I hope I am wrong

The clock is ticking. Time is

The Nuclear arms develop-

ment in isolated Communist

North Korea is the gravest sc-

curity threat in Asia and the

major powers including the

United States have expressed

increasing alarm that it be

cate the North could produce

nuclear arms by 1993.

Off the Record

Too large to swallow

a place in the Guinness Book of Records with a 32-foot (9.75-

metre) long sugar model of London's Tower Bridge, the Press

model of the famous bridge, weighing 800 kg (1,760 lbs), is

that award goes to a Marzipan chocolate weighing 1,850 kg

(4,078.5 pounds) made at Ven International Fresh Market in

cake festival in the southern city of Bangalore, PTI said.

Trust of India (PTI) said on Sunday, reports Reuter.

the world's biggest "sugar construction."

NEW DELIII: An Indian confectioner has staked a claim to

PTI quoted confectioner Ramachandran as saying his sugar

It is not the largest sweet, however. According to Guinness

The Tower Bridge model is on display at a pre Christmas

Demeaning but

secure

Intelligence reports indi-

" If the nuclear issue is not

"North Korea seems more

ful coexistence.

running out."

Nuclear talks with

DPRK discouraging,

says US congressman

SEOUL, Dec 23: A U.S con-

gressman said Monday that

time was running out to stop

North Korea from halting nu-

clear weapons development

and he was greatly discouraged

after talks with North Korean

said it would sign nuclear

safeguards accords and called

for Washington to verify its

pullout of U.S nuclear arms

from South Korea. The signing

is considered meaningless

without compliance for nuclear

inspections, which the North

Seoul said they were studying

the statement to determine if

it constituted a positive step

forward or whether it repeated

past rhetoric and was, in ef-

newed South Korea's demand

for simultaneous inspections of

suspected nuclear facilities in

North and South Korea and

demanded the dismantling of

the North's nuclear reprocess-

The developments come

President Roh Tae- woo re-

South Korean officials in

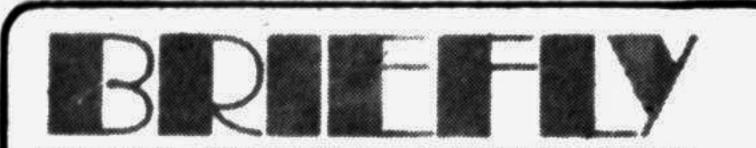
has rebuffed in the past.

fect, a stall.

ing facilities.

Also Monday, North Korea

leaders, reports AP.



### Face-face talks in El Salvador:

Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar accelerated peace talks on El Salvador's civil war on Sunday by calling for the first face-to-face meeting among combatants in his latest round of negotiations, reports Reuter Monday from United Nations.

U.N. spokesman Juan-Carlos Brandt said delegations from the government and the rebel Faribundo Marti Liberation Front would meet Perez de Cuellar together today (Monday) for the first time since they came to New York a week ago.

Both parties have been meeting separately for the past week and on Sunday were summoned in two groups to Perez de Cuellar's residence for another round of talks.

### Gunmen kills one in Belfast pub: A gunmen opened fire Sunday in a pub located in a Roman Catholic neighbourhood, killing one man and wounding two

men and an 8-year-old boy, police said, reports AP Monday from Belfast. The dead man, in his early 20s, was the fifth to die in a

weekend of sectarian shootings.

The Ulster Freedom Fighters, an outlawed Protestant paramilitary group, claimed responsibility for Sunday's shooting, saying it did so in response to a " systematic" campaign by other groups to kill Protestant loyalists.

Police said they believed the attack was waged in revenge for Saturday's killing of two Protestants in a pub. An IRA splinter group is suspected.

### Krajina declares 12-hr curfew: The self-declared Serbian Republic of Krajina, carved out of

the territory of Croatia, on Sunday declared a dusk-to-dawn curfew, Tanjug news agency said, reports AFP Monday from Belgrade. The agency did not give the reasons for the measure, de-

cided at a meeting of Krajina's civilian and military leaders in the town of Dvor Na Uni, some 100 kilometres (60 miles) south of the Croatian capital Zagreb.

It said however that the Krajina militia force had been ordered to maintain public order and prevent looting. The curiew was to run from 6 P.M to 6 A.M.

### Japanese aid for Cambodians:

Japan has promised dirs 1 million in emergency aid for people suffering from war and floods in Cambodia, the official Cambodian news agency SPK reported, says AP Monday from Bangkok.

Japanese Foreign Ministry official Seiji Kojima made the pledge in a recent meeting in Phnom Penh with Cambodian Foreign Minister Hor Nam Hong, the repor said. Kojima is 'director of research and planning of the ministry's Economic Cooperation Bureau.

The news report, dated Sunday and seen in Bangkok Monday, did not say what day the two officials met.

### Floods claim 14 lives in Texas : At least 14 people are dead in flooding sparked by relentless

rains that have soaked Texas for nearly six straight days and authorities said on Sunday they expected the toll of rise, reports Reuter Monday from Houston.

Many roads across the state were closed and rainfall records were shattered, including in San Antonio, where 13.3 inches (33 cm) of rain have fallen since late on Tuesday. Hundreds of people across the state have been evacuated

from flooded areas since Friday. The heavy rainfall broke the previous December record of 7.11 inches (18 cm) set in 1986, the National Weather

### Service said. BSF guns down six extremists:

Six extremists of the All Tripura Tribal Force (ATTF) were gunned down by BSF Jawans during an encounter at Thatcher, in north Tripura district, last night, police sources said PTI from Agartala reports.

A large number of arms and ammunition were recovered from them. Senior police officers have rushed to the spot.

### Control of occupied land top priority: Shamir

JERUSALEM, Dec 23: Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir says maintaining control of or cupied Arab territories is Israel's highest priority and should guide his Likud Party in its bid for re-election next year, reports Reuter.

The highest obligation with the highest priority, which is now entrusted to the Likud ..... is the obligation to fight the political battle for the safe guarding, the security and the wholeness of the land of Israel", he told a Likud convention on Sunday.

All of us must be deeply aware... that all our efforts must be derived from the supreme national task of this generation and the coming generations keeping the land of Israel is above all.

Shamir and the Likud Party regard the West Bank, Gaza strip and Golan heights, captured in 1967 from Jordan, Egypt and Syria respectively as integral parts of the historical land of Israel.

In an exceptionally harsh attack on his left-wing opposition Shamir accused peace fighters" of helping Israel's

worst enemies. "We have groups and parties leadership.

who advocate peace at all costs, who are willing to give up the last shred of national interest for what they call peace, he said. They collaborate with our

most extreme enemics who call for a Palestinian state who scheme to steal Jerusalem away from US, who support armed terrorism against

Hardline Housing Minister Ariel Sharon, who was said he would challenging Shamir for leadership of the party, spoke in the same vein.

Who ever thought the Israeli left would help the heads of terrorism to fight against a democratic Isracli government, he said. The Jewis nation is great but part of it is very sick."

Israel faces national elections in 1992. The Likud con vention voted on Sunday on a bill to introduce a new system where the public would vote separately for the Prime Minister and for members of Parliament.

Shamir recommended his party turn down the bill, saying direct election of the Prime Minister could cost them the

## No room for multi-party system in Vietnam'

HANOI, Dec 23: Vietnam's ruling Communist Party, resolute in the face of yet another catastrophic year for its allies, has reaffirmed its commitment to one-party socialism, reports

### Germany recognises Slovenia, Croatia

BONN, Dec 23: Germany formally recognised the breakaway Yugoslav republies of Croatis and Slovenia today and said it would open diplomatic ties with them in mid-January,

reports Reuter. The Foreign Ministry said in a statement the two republics fulfilled a set of conditions drawn up by the European Community

"Under the leadership of the communist party, the Vientnamese people have remained dedicated to their option for socialism. That course is a correct one," party chief Do Muot said in an interview published in the state press

Whatever the situation in the world may be, Vietnam will persist in the course of its own choice, "he said.

There is no place for a multi-party system in Vietnam' he added in the interview. which was given to the Japanese television company Nihon Denpa news on December 16.

The party chief said events in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe were in the concern of those countries and said he hoped they would soon overcome their difficulties and regain stability.

Sihanouk calls for end to violence

# Schools, Universities in Phnom Penh shut down

PHNOM PENII, Dec 23: The Phnom Penh government in a bid to quell further unrest today ordered all schools and universities in the capital closed, reports AFP.

Weekend violence, which began with a student demon stration that spun out of control, left three people dead, by official count, including a police officer.

Eyewitness account put the death toll between five and seven with at least 30 injuries.

Soldiers firing automatic weapons moved in with armoured personnel carriers Saturday night to restore order. By Sunday afternoon the situation had calmed and the army withdrew, leaving heavily armed police in full force on street corners.

The government also imposed an indefinite curlew from 8:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m.

It did not say when the schools and universities would reopen.

They would probably remain closed until Cambodia's na tional holiday January 7 cele brating the ousting of the Khmer Rouge and installation of the Phnom Penh govern ment, Cambodian sources said Closing the universities keeps student leaders from having an

normal this morning, with the easy meeting place in which to exception of armed police at plan further demonstrations. key intersections and roadone source said. blocks around the royal palace.



On the main Achar Mean Boulevard where the fighting took place Saturday, shopkeepers cautiously opened their gates half way to do busi-

> The ricl was trading on the black market at the same rate as before the shootings began, at 520 to the dollar.

The shops and the nearby central market were barricaded by the army for most of the day Sunday.

Buildings all along the street showed evidence of the weekend's violence bullet holes, spent bullet casings and bloodstains.

Reuter from Paris adds Prince Nordom Sihanouk. Chairman of Cambodia's National Reconciliation Body, called on Sunday for an end to the violence in Phnom Penh. saying both sides must negotiate a peaceful solution to the crisis.

"I appeal to my beloved here three days before the compatriots in the two opposing camps to settle their differences peacefully, agreeing to immediately renounce all violence and create a climate conducive to constructive dialogue," he said in a statement released in Phnom Penh and made available in Paris.

## Georgian rebels storm parliament as power struggle steps up

MOSCOW, Dec 23 : Rebel troops seeking to oust a president they call dictatorial pummelled Georgia's parliament building with rocket and machine-gun fire Monday, stepping up a fierce power struggle in the Caucasus nation, reports AP.

Georgia is the only former Soviet republic apart from the Baltics that has refused to join the new Commonwealth of Independent States and street fighting by forces vying for its control broke out Sunday in Tbilisi, the capital.

The embattled President, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, was rcported hiding Monday in the basement of the parliament building. Late Sunday, he rejected opposition calls for his resignation and an offer of safe passage out of the country.

Gamsakhurdia, a former political dissident, has seen his

MANILA, Dec 23 : Imelda

Marcos, facing trial for alleged

corruption, was fingerprinted

Philippine court today and said

the "ugly" episode would spotl

her Christmas, reports Reuter.

"She's dirtied my hands,"

the former first lady exclaimed

as a clerk pressed her fingers

on an ink pad. She appeared in

court on charges of helping

her late husband, former dieta-

tor Ferdinand Marcos, loot the

economy and hide their wealth

"She's getting used to it."

her lawyer Antonio Coronel

said, referring to the finger-

"You don't get used to ugli-

ness," said Marcos, a symbol of

elegance in her country for 20

years until she and her hus-

band were overthrown in a

in Swiss banks.

printing session.

after surrendering to

power base crode since his landslide victory in the country's first direct presidential elections in May.

The Tass news agency said shootings and explosions resumed before dawn Monday on Rustaveli Avenue in front of the Georgian parliament. It said the building - already damaged by Sunday's fighting was hit by rockets.

Figures on the death toll varied. The opposition said three people were killed; the government said seven. dated roads, rails and tele-Unconfirmed reports said as many as 17 people were killed. None of the figures could be independently confirmed.

The fighting capped a week of mounting tensions in Tbilisi and was part of the power struggle that wracked the city through most of September and October.

It reflected the fact that

1986 popular revolt that

forced them to flee to the

United States. He died in exile

in 1989.

while the Soviet Union is dead with the birth of the new commonwealth, the political, economic and social problems accentuated, by its disintegration are long from being solved.

Although Georgia is not a member of the commonwealth endorsed Saturday, it and the other former republics have inherited the Soviet Union's huge debts, all-but-worthless currency, poorly managed farms and factories and dilapi-

phone systems. Many people fear their living conditions will get worse before they get better, especially in Russia, where government price controls on most goods and services will be lifted January 2.

Lifting price controls is the first step in Russian President Boris Yeltsin's radical pro-

gramme to establish a free market economy be next fall. The independent Interfax

news agency said Monday that 75 percent of people polled in November expect a "significant deterioration" in the economy and that 64 percent fear increasing tensions among the 120 ethnic groups in the former Soviet Union.

The poll of 1,960 people was conducted by the National Centre of Public Opinion Research and has a margin of error of 3 percent.

Communists on Sunday staged a rally in Moscow, demanding Yeltsin step down. Led by Viktor Alksnis, a hard-line Soviet lawmaker, and Vladimir Zhirinovksy, a popular ultrarightist politician, they marched to the city's television tower demanding air

## Court fingerprints Imelda 'Corazon has dirtied my hands'

Mrs Marcos was finger-

printed on tax evasion charges

before another Manila court on

November 5, the day after she

returned from almost six years'

bail amounting to 240,000 pc-

sos ( about 9,000 dollars) on

seven tax evasion and six graft

charges, making sure the

country's once most powerful

and feared woman would not

Asked by a reporter if hav-

ing to appear in court to be

fingerprinted spotled her

Christmas, Marcos replied: "it

certainly will but peace comes

Dozens of employees

from within and not without."

crowded the courthouse corri-

dors to shake hands with

Marcos and ask for her auto-

graph. "Merry Christmas

the "zero option" - a state of

minimum subsistence in which

external supplies of fuel, ma-

chinery and food will have

Ma am, some said.

spend a minute in jail.

Earlier, her lawyers posted

exile.

MADRAS, Dec 23: The Tamil Eclam Liberation Organisation (TELO) has criticised the leaders of the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) for not paying homage to the late Rajiv Gandhi at their one-day summit at Colombo on December

In a statement here today, the TELO said even at the United Nations, homage was paid to Rajiv Gandhi. It noted that the former Prime Minister was instrumental in signing the Indo-Sri Lankan Tamils by setting up the northeastern provincial council with

nic crisis.

### Tamil body blasts SAARC for not paying homage to Rajiv

21, reports PTI.

Trincomalee as capital.

It criticised the centre for discussing only the return of refugees to Sri Lanka and not raising the issue of a political settlement to the island's eth-

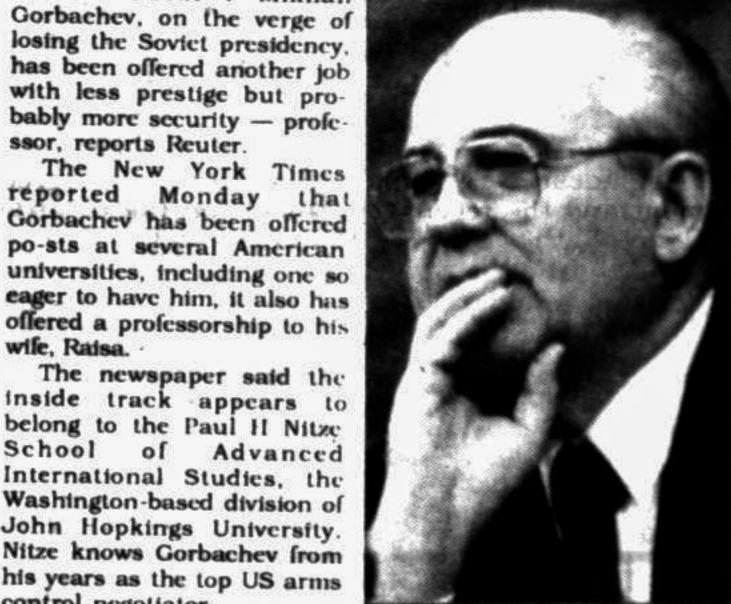
#### ssor, reports Reuter. The New York Times reported Monday that Gorbachev has been offered Several hundred propo-sts at several American universities, including one so

NEW YORK : Mikhail

the Netherlands last year.

eager to have him, it also has offered a professorship to his wife, Raisa. The newspaper said the

inside track appears to belong to the Paul II Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, the Washington-based division of John Hopkings University. Nitze knows Gorbachev from his years as the top US arms control negotiator.



### Panic-striking joke

SOFIA: An awkward joke on national television Saturday about a nuclear accident resulted in hundreds of telephone calls to the station by panicked Bulgarians and the threat of legal action against the perpetrators, reports AP. Although the bogus accident was announced on "Ku-Ku," a

students' programme. A television announcer said a serious accident had occurred at the plant, in the north of the country.

Authentic-looking footage of what appeared to be emer-

gency measures at the plant was shown, and the announcer said that the president would address viewers. But instead, the hoax was revealed in an announcement 50 minutes later. Television reports later in the day said hundreds of people

protested the "joke." A group of angry viewers outside the television studios mobbed the creators of the programmes but police prevented any violence.

### Elegiac allegory

KALININGRAD, Soviet Union: "The Soviet space programme is like a chicken," said Viktor Surikov in the largelyempty mission control nerve centre near Moscow, reports

You cut off its head and it runs around the yard for a while thinking it's still alive."

Surikov, research chief and supervisor of Mission Control, smiled weakly. He was not joking.

Formerly the standard-bearer of Soviet science, the space programme has suffered acutely from the collapse of the old order. Money, once unlimited, has dried up, the skilled elite are leaving, many for jobs in the private sector. No more breash talk of conquering mars by 2005.

# Fresh offensive against

armed soldiers backed by air cover and local curiews ad vanced into areas held by Tamil Tiger guerillas in northern Srt Lanka today as part of a fresh offensive, a military spokesman here said, reports

into areas held by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eclam (LTTE) in Vavuniya district as part of a campaign to expand the territory under military control, the

Troops are moving with air

KARACHI, Dec 23: Six people have died in gunbattles between police and bandits in southern Pakistan, a police spokesman said today, reports

Meanwhile, police comman-

dos captured a large quantity

Police-bandits

gunbattles

in Sind: 6 killed

He said a policeman and three bandits died in one bat tle and two bandits were killed in another on Sunday in rural

## Castro iterates commitment to socialism, revolution

HAVANA, Dec 23: Cuba, one of the world's last orthodox communist states, ends 1991 under intense international pressure for political change and suffering from an economic crisis triggered by the break-up of the Soviet Union, reports.

President Fidel Castro, 65, remains the undisputed leader after 33 years in power. But he is fighting the hardest battle of his long career to ward off ceonomic collapse while keeping a tight lid on opposition.

To the chilling slogan "socialism or death," coined to reflect Cuba's defiance of the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, the Cuban leader has added a rallying cry for the new year: "save the nation, the revolution and social-

He has made it abundantly clear that, whatever 1992 brings, his government will fight to the end to maintain the island's one-party communist system and socialist economy in a world dominated by multi-party politics and the market economy. "Our enemies should know

that we're ready to defend our ideas and our cause at whatever price - at whatever price - and that we're ready to fight without limits," Castro told a congress of school children earlier this month. But the short-term outlook

for Cuba's more than 10 million people, already suffering from drastic rationing, restrictions and shortages in almost every aspect of their daily lives, is for unremitting hard-The new year could bring

the vulnerable sugar-exporting,

oil-importing economy closer

to what the government calls

dried up entirely or been drastically reduced. Uncertainty surrounds what level of supplies Cuba can expect from what was once the Soviet Union, its political mentor and main economic

provider for three decades. Soviet deliveries of oil, the island's energy lifeblood were abruptly halted for the month of December. In a desperate hunt for hard currency to shore up the

economy, Castro's ruling Communist Party has swallowed past scruples and opened sectors of the economy to foreign investment, especially in tourism, manufacturing and Cuba's fledgling biotechnology and medical indus-

foreign help to explore for oil and develop its considerable nickel reserves. This openness has attracted the interest of businessmen

. The island has also sought

from Europe, Latin America and Canada. But it remains to be seen whether the capital and knowledge brought by investors can fill the economic vacuum left by the Soviet Union and its East European

A US trade embargo is still firmly in place, despite Cuban attempts at the United Nations to have it lifted.

As links with Moscow and other former communist allies become more strained, Cuba has launched a diplomatic campaign to strengthen its ties with Latin American neigh-

#### Lankan Tigers after Tiger guerillas ambushed COLOMBO, Dec 23: Heavily and killed three soldiers and wounded three in northeastern Trincomalee district over

the weekend.

of weapons,

Security forces were moving

spokesman said.

support. There are local curfews enforced because of our expansion operation," the spokesman said, adding that he had no immediate reports of fighting.

The fresh offensive came

Stnd Province.