# '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.

"No more subsidies to Cuba - all subsidies have ended as of today", he told a news conference on what he said was the final day of the last Soviet-Cuban trade pact. A new treaty was not negotiated before the

Castro in case of any uprising.

**Exports had put past Soviet** trade subsidies to Cuba in the vicinity of four billion to five

# 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.

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

A major component of the planned airlift would be direct flights to Israel from the ex-Soviet republics, where 60 Jewish agency staffers are working with officials of those governments in 27 different ocations, the Globe said.

"No one can guarantee that there will not be another coup or civil war," Jewish agency Director Simcha Dinitz was quoted as telling the Globe.

"Whenever there is disintegration, minorities are in jeopSoviet Union collapsed.

He also said officials he spoke to said no Russian soldier would rally to defend

"This is a very, very happy day for a free Cuba," Mas Canosa said, adding that his delegation and Russian officials had toasted Cuba's democratic future with rum and vodka.

Mas Canosa said the Russians did not rule out commercial trade with Cuba, including possible oilsales, but that all transactions would be in hard currency and at market rates.

billion dollars a year.

## ardy. We are very concerned about the Jews, especially in

outlying areas. There are 200,000 Jews in the Muslim republics, for example," Dinitz One Israeli official esti-

"Between the economic and constitutional difficulties, we must prepare for the worst scenario. We are preparing and infrastructure so that every Jew in the Soviet Union can leave," he said.

Neither Dinitz nor Israeli Knesset Immigration Committee Chairman Michael Kleiner would provide details of the proposed operation, but Kleiner likened the plan to the airlift of Ethiopian Jews earlier this year the newspaper re-

"We can take out between 50,000 and 100,000 a month," Kleiner said. "Arrangements have been made. We have planes, and we can rent more planes. We took 15,000 out of Ethiopia in two days, so the sky is the limit."

# BRIEFLY

#### 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

In another groundbreaking sentence, the court ordered similar terms Thursday for the publisher-distributor of Alaa Hamid's. "The Distance in a Man's Mind" and the owner of the press where the book was printed.

Published in May 1990, "The Distance in a Man's Mind" comprises dream sequences in which the main character meets Prophets of the Quran, Islam's holy book, in comic situations. Many of the Prophets are revered by Christians and Jews as well as Muslims.

#### Former Peru President acquitted: Supreme Court tribunal ruled there was insufficient evidence to warrant trying former President Alan Garcia on

embezzlement charges, reports AP from Lima. In upholding a lower judge's finding, the tribunal late Friday ended the case against Garcia, the first former leader to face prosecution in Peru's 170 years as an independent

The three-member tribunal voted unanimously in Garcia's favour. Cases in Peru's Supreme Court are assigned to threemember tribunals rather than the entire court.

The attorney general leveled charges last month arising from allegations that Garcia used 400,000 dollars in public funds to build three houses for himself in Lima.

#### US turns down Gaddafi's offer: The United States on Friday turned down an invitation from Libyan leader Muammar Gaddaft 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. "Libya must surrender for trial all those charged with the crime related to Pan Am 103," State Department spokesman

Joe Snyder told a regular briefing. "The United States and the United Kingdom have jurisdiction in this case. We expect Libya to comply promptly and in full." This is the position that was set out in a joint US-British

statement issued on November 27, Snyder told reporters when asked if Washington would accept Gaddafi's offer.

#### 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. The quake measuring 6.8 on the Richter scale struck about 7:52 pm EST (0052 GMT Saturday) near the South Sandwich Islands, a remote and sparsely populated group of islands in

the South Atlantic, the geological survey said. Almost 21 hours earlier a quake measuring 7.4 on the Richter scale hit the same area, according to the geological survey's National Earthquake Information Center in Golden,

#### 10 killed in boat capsize : Rescuers ic and 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 Mantla. Nineteen other people are missing from the motor boat Amie 5, which has been missing since December 22, after leaving the island of Cuyo a day earlier. Cuyo is about 415 kilometers (250 miles) south of Mantla and is east of the

northern coast of Palawan Island. The 189-ton Amie 5, which was bound for Manila, sank after being buffeted by unusually big waves in the Cuyo West Passage, said spokeswoman Petty Officer 2nd Class Brigitte

#### 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.

The UN chief expressed "profound shock and concern" over fighting in Mogadishu which, he said, had turned the city into "a nightmare of violence" and caused 20,000 deaths and injuries since November.

Ethnic clashes have raged in the country since guerillas ousted Somali leader Mohammed Stad Barre last January Since November fighting broke out between rival clans loyals to Warlords Mohammed Farah Aideed and Ali Mahdi Mohammed.

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.

People in Russia's second city - hit by severe food shortages - are issued with coupons which entitle them to basic foodstuffs at subsidised state prices.

Citizens were queueing for sausage at the central food store on Nevsky Prospect. When it ran out, they blocked the avenue and halted traffic for one and a half hours, Tass said.

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.

It ordered local authorities to set up free canteens for the poor and urged farmers and businessmen to donate food, medicine and services for

from the airport.

South Korean officials failed

today to adopt an accord en-

suring a nuclear weapons-free

peninsula but agreed to meet

again before the new year, a

press reports said, reports

side, meeting at the border

truce village of Panmunjom

were unable to iron out differ-

ences on a joint declaration

pledging a nuclear free Korea,

but they agreed to continue

their talks Tuesday, the na

tional Yonhap news agency

however, said the two sides

agreed to form a joint commit-

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,

"Let 1992 be the year of the

Urging flexibility by both

solutions, " Sharif said in an in-

terview published Saturday in

the Hindustan Times, an inde-

sides, Sharif was quoted as say-

ing, "India has adopted the

same approach since 1947. So

has Pakistan since 1947. This

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

pendent Indian daily.

has not worked."

reports AP.

The Dong-a evening daily

Five delegates from each

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.

A crisp winter breeze unfurled the white, blue and red banner after security guards ran it up the staff at about 2 pm (1900 GMT).

There was no ceremony,

and nothing aside from the

presence of various news photographers and UN staffers most of them former Soviet citizens — to distinguish the flag-raising from the daily routine. Flags are arrayed alphabetically outside UN headquarters, along First Avenue, and the

change in name from the

"Union of Soviet Socialist

Republics" to "Russian

Federation" meant that many

flags in the latter part of the

alphabet had to be rearranged. The Russian banner is now between Romania and Rwanda: the space once occupied by the USSR, between Ukraine and United Arab Emirates, was

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

Korean talks on N-arms fail

SEOUL, Dec 28: North and tee to implement any future side, met at the border truce

The North insisted inspec-

agreement on a nuclear

tions of its nuclear facilities by

the International Atomic

Energy Agency (IAEA) be

linked to northern inspection

of US military facilities to ver-

ify the withdrawal of US nu-

clear weapons from the South,

North and South Korean offi-

cials met today to iron out re-

maining differences as the two

sides appeared close to an ac-

cord ensuring a nuclear

ree nuclear experts from each

Sharif hopeful of solving

Kashmir crisis by '92

"We should also now fix a

time limit and say that within

this time frame we have to

come to some understanding

Five delegates, including th-

weapons-free peninsula.

two prime ministers.

An earlier report said:

weapons-free Korea.

Yonhap said.

filled in.

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

Vorontsov gave Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar is credentials verbally on Dec

Perez de Cuellar's chief of cabinet, Virendra Dayal, said no UN vote was needed on the change for representation.

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.

Vorontsov presented Dayal with a letter from Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin informing the Secretary-General that the Russian Federation "remains responsible in full for all the rights and obligations of the USSR under the UN Charter. in including the financial obligations."

The letter also served to change the credentials of all Soviet representatives to the UN - including Vorontsov - to

-AFP/UNB Photo

village of Panmunjom to

narrow differences before

adopting a joint declaration

pledging a nuclear-free Korea,

weeks have cleared major hur-

dles to adopting the declara-

tion but have yet to agree on a

Korea pledged at the previous

talks Thursday to drop its sus-

pected nuclear weapons de-

velopment programme by

scrapping reprocessing facili

ties, and to sign a nuclear safe-

guards accord "at an early

northern Pakistani city of

Sharif denied Indian accu-

sations that Pakistan ran train-

ing cames for Kashmiri mili-

tants, who intensified their

movement to break away from

India two years ago. More than

3,500 people have been killed,

including about 1,850 this

that there is a freedom move-

ment going on in Kashmir, and

of course, Kashmir is a prob-

lem to which Pakistan is a

is helping terrorists in

Kashmir. ! will suggest that you

should not call the freedom

fighters in Kashmir as terror-

ists. If India closes its eyes,

then the problem cannot be

solved," he was quoted as say

party," said Sharif.

"India has to now believe

"It is wrong to say Pakistan

Lahore by its editor H K Dua.

In a surprise move, North

The two Koreas in recent

officials said.

few points.

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.

#### Bloodshed to continue

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

Georgi Chanturia, a former Gamsakhurdia ally who now leads the opposition National Democratic Party, said after leaving his isolation cell Friday that the turmoil in Tbilisi would continue if Gamsakhurdia remains in power.

"We know that dictatorship is reigning over Georgia, Chanturia said in an interview with the Associated Press.

Chanturia was one of eight political prisoners freed Friday from Georgia's secret police headquarters by rebel forces seeking Gamsakhurdia's over-

## 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 Karkareshvili called for the talks to be held at the television headquarters in the city beginning at 12 noon (0900

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 Karkareshvilt.

He warned against censorship of the opposition-controlled television, but the government's response to the call for negotiations was not immediately clear and the parliament where government forces are located could not be reached for comment by tele-

### 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.

The National Weather Service issued a wind and blowing dust advisory for the area, with reported wind gusts of 47 mph (76 kph) at the Bakersfield airport.

The closure included the same stretch of interstate where a series of crashes occurred November 29 in nearzero visibility. Ninety-three vehicles piled up, killing 17 and injuring more than 100 peo-

Interstate 5 is the state's main north-south artery.

## 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, réports Réuter. Aguino blamed the deaths

of hundreds of Filipinos in past celebrations "indiscriminate firing" by soldiers and civilians.

Chency said Friday

# 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

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.

"When Gorbachev came to his office Friday, Yeltsin was already sitting there," the Izvestia newspaper said.

## 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. The machines play like electronic Las Vegas slots. Players insert money. If a row of numbers or symbols comes up a

winner, gamblers get credits that can be used for replays or

traded for cash. Fine for scalding cat

SINGAPORE: A Singapore court has fined an office secretary 450 Singapore dollars (270 US dollars) for scalding a cat which she said was a nuisance, court officials said Saturday, reports Reuter.

Tan Gher Choo, 43, on Friday pleaded guilty to trapping the cat and pouring hot water on the three-year-old animal in June 1990 to stop it from disturbing her.

The cat, belonging to a neighbour, died from the injury.

## 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 protege 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 Schiechi last September founded "The Party of Love", whose stated object is to bring love to parliament.

# 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 Yugolsav 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 solun to the crisis."

i his being so, said the letter, "we have turned to the President of the Security Council with a request for support and protection from the

Meanwhile, UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar said on Friday he saw no immediate possibility of a peacekeeping force for the breakaway Yogoslav Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

in a statement to the Security Council, the UN Chief said that while he understood "the deep anxiety that lies behind that request" conditions did not yet merit a force.

"It has to be repeated that such deployment could be made only with support from all those concerned on the ground - something that at

the moment is clearly lacking." UN sources said privately that without a ceasefire agreement between Serbs and Croats, it would be absurd to put forces in a calmer area without solving the bigger issue of fighting only a few miles

The European Community had asked for UN peace-keeping forces to be sent urgently to Bosnia-Herzegovina to prevent the civil war from spread-

# 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

Jalal Talibani told AFP that the prisoners had returned recently to the Kurdish region of northern lraq, 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

1988, in an lraqt offensive against Kurdistan, he said in a telephone interview from Talibani called for the release of all Kurdish political

200,000 Kurds detained in

prisoners, in keeping with a general amnesty announced by The Kurds have freed tens of thousands of lraqi soldiers.

leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

in recent months, said the

#### Break-up of Soviet Union good news for US: Cheney there at a breathtaking pace. at this point to doubt they will

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.

"We think that's important. It gives us the most confidence on how they'll operate in the future," Cheney said in an interview on Cable News Network (CNN) when asked about the idea of a centralised command to control the Soviet Union's nuclear weapons.

Chency 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. "It means the old Soviet

Nawaz Sharif

or some conclusion," said

Sharif. The Hindustan Times

said he was interviewed in the

Union no longer constitutes a threat to its neighbours," he

said, but added, "We need to be very cautious about how this will unfold. It's important to maintain an adequate military Congress has approved 400 million dollars to help Russia

reduce the size of its armed forces following the disintegration of the Soviet Union and its massive military machine, Secretary of Defense Dick

and the other republics dismantle their nuclear weapons and Cheney said the United States was prepared to use this as soon as it could be determined how the money could best be spent. A US team will go to

Moscow on January 8 to discuss American assistance for Russia, he said. AFP adds : The United States has no plans to further

He said the United States was confident that leaders of the new Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) would successfully craft a centraffzed ruclear command.

Belarus and Ukraine have already vowed to sign the international nuclear non-proliferation treaty, Cheney said

and "We don't have any reason

"I think that it's very impor-

tant for us as we move forward

to make certain that we main-

tain adequate military capabil-

ity," Cheney told Cable News

Network (CNN) in an inter-

move in that direction. But he said Kazakhstan has not "bec. quite as clear" in its

stance. The defence chief also said

the US administration remained ready to provide any technical assistance the CIS might need to dismantle and destroy their nuclear arsenal.

Chency said overall developments in the former Soviet Union were good news for the world, but he warned against making hasty decisions about vital defence strategy as changes were still taking place

"We need to be very cautious in terms of making any absolute judgements about how this will unfold in the period immediately ahead," Cheney He noted that 'one of the

most massive reductions in US military spending is already underway, with plans to slash a quarter of the total forces. We will continue to moni-

tor events to make certain that we protect and preserve what we need to protect and preserve and save that capabilit we need to protect the country," Chency said.