News In Brief
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The Jaipur-based Buddhist Vipasana group conducted a 10-day silent meditation program entitled "Know Thyself" for 135 inmates and staff at Tihar jail, India's largest prison. The 18-hour-per-day program was led by the former Home Secretary in Rajasthan, Ram Singh. Inmates interacted only with their acharya and reported undergoing a "metamorphosis of the soul." Video-taped reactions will be shown to all 8,000 inmates in hopes the "silent revolution" will spread. Hindi, tamil, telegu, Kannada, Marathi and English are supported by a word processor now available for PC compatible MS DOS computers.The US$140 program features most common editing functions, and simultaneous display of English letters entered and the correct Tamil (or other) word. Contact: Govardhan Reddy, P.O. Box 1644, Coffeyvilla, Kansas, 67337, USA. Europe's largest Hindu population is 1.3-million in the United Kingdom, followed by Holland, 150,000; Germany, 30,000; Spain and Portugal, over 10,000; Switzerland, 8,000; Sweden, 8,000; and Norway, 2,000. Three-hundred Hindu families live in Denmark; 30 families in Austria. Thirty million Hindus live outside India in 150 countries. The figures are according to delegates to a recent European Hindu conference. 500 Hindu Temples in Bangladesh are slated for repair and renovation. The temples are among 3,000 damaged or destroyed during the administration of former President H. M. Ershad. Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has promised funding of US$500,000 from the government-managed Hindu Welfare Trust. Hindu and Muslim cooperation is on the rise, reports the

Harvard Divinity Bulletin. Young Hindu and Muslim professionals in Kanpur have formed the "Friends Circle," while "peace brigades" of Muslims in Bombay are opposing interreligious violence. "What is described as secularism is in fact the emergence of intercommunal, interreligious Hindu, Muslim and Sikh action groups," writes the University's Diana Eck. "Narthaki, a Directory of Indian Dance" is an extraordinary international "yellow-pages" of dancers and dance schools, compiled by dancer/TV producer Anita Ratnam Raj. It includes all styles as well as musicians and singers integral to a dance performance. Critics and costumers, sabhas and cultural organizations are also included. Price $20 ($25 outside US) includes shipping. Order from: Lotus Fine Arts, 109 W. 27th St., N.Y, N. Y. 10001 USA. To be included in next edition, write: Dravida Communications 20, Cenotaph, 2nd Lane, Madras 600 018, India. High-tech spirit communication by computer images and printouts, radio, TV and even telephone answering machines is the subject of an article in the Spring, 1993, Noetic Sciences Review. Researchers in the US and Europe report receiving messages and pictures from spiritual beings, "some of whom once existed in human form on this Earth but now say they reside in delicate, more finely spun dimensions of reality. Taking advantage of modern electronic technology, they have been communicating with earth-bound humans via various devices, seemingly with far more fidelity than when such communication was limited to mediumship or channeling." One such researcher, Friedrich Juergenson, made his image appear six months after his death on the television screen of Swedish parapsychologist Claude Thorin. Contact: Mark Macy, Continuing Life Research, PO Box 11036, Boulder, Colorado, 80301, USA. Greenpeace says beware of USA "green" groups with other agendas. The Greenpeace Guide to Anti-Environmental Organizations points to "Citizens for the

Environment" which opposed the Clean Air Act, the "U.S. Council for Energy Awareness" which promotes nuclear energy, and the "Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow" which advocates repealing the Endangered Species Act. Over 50 "deceptive groups" are named. Contact: Odonian Press, P.O. Box 7776, Berkeley, California, 94707, USA. Yoga has been dropped from the community education curriculum of the Mt. Roskill Grammar School in New Zealand. The school board's action has some calling Mt. Roskill "Auckland's Bible Belt," and charging "intolerance and narrow-minded bigotry." Others call it "an insidious form of discrimination." Claiming that yoga is inconsistent with "very traditional values," the chairman of the school board said yoga was dropped "because they did not want it, and that's that." The Great American Meatout marks its 10th year this month with 1,000 events in all 50 United States and several Canadian provinces. Organizers say 30-million Americans have explored a meatless diet. Address: P.O Box 30654, Bethesda, Maryland, 20824, USA. Sikh hospitality, popular with frugal Western tourists, has led to an adjustment in accommodations at Amritsar's Golden Temple. Food and shelter is given free to all visitors, regardless of religion. Some, however, have been insensitive to Sikh culture. Violations of decorum include scantily dressed women, promiscuity, smoking and drinking of alcohol. "Merely because we give them a room does not mean they can abuse our religion," says one temple official. Western tourists are now being housed in dormitories with other Sikh pilgrims to delicately promote appropriate behavior. Sri Lankan Buddhists are seeking legislation to reduce the number of conversions to Christianity. While freedom of religion is guaranteed, Buddhism is given the "foremost place" by Sri Lanka's constitution, which also "affirms it is the duty of the state to protect and foster it," according to Christianity Today. Fettuccini Alfredo, a popular meat-free Italian pasta

preparation, is no option for heath-conscious vegetarians, according to The Center for Science in the Public Interest. They call the delicious dish of noodles with cream and cheese "a heart attack on a plate" because of its 22-gram fat content and 1,500-calories. Christianity's Virgin mary is worshiped as a Goddess in Harihar, Karnataka and has been since a Brahmin converted and enshrined an idol of "Satyamma," or "Holy Mother," in the year 1800. Later a 13-foot idol of the Mother Mary was installed. But when a huge, new building was inaugurated in 1992, the statue was relegated to a corner on orders from the local Catholic Bishop. Now the town's Christians are threatening a boycott unless the idol is returned to the altar. Many local Hindus also offer penance, offerings and worship to the idol. "The Hindu mind sees God in all ... and that primordial Hindu sense of reverence apparently cannot be rooted out [of the converts], even by the most militant of Christian missionaries," writes Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani of Pondicherry. The United Kingdom's two million Muslims have 28 schools, but none is state-funded, while 23 Jewish and numerous Anglican, Catholic and Methodist schools are state-funded. The Islamia Primary School in London has been trying for state funding for seven years and has the support of 35 Members of Parliament, but financial support has been denied due to a surplus of seats in other nearby public schools. Islamia supporters accuse the government of discrimination and of being afraid of cultural separatism and Islamic fundamentalism. Toronto's temple bombing case has ended with three convictions on charges of conspiracy to commit mischief by endangering life. In a plot Canadian prosecutors say "could have killed hundreds, if not thousands," three black Muslims from Dallas, Texas, were found guilty of conspiring to blow-up the Vishnu Hindu Temple in Richmond Hill, a suburb of Toronto, and the India Theatre in the "Little India" district of downtown Toronto. They were acquitted of

conspiracy to commit mass murder. Two other men were acquitted of all charges. JAIN Satellite TV Network will feature a spiritual channel broadcasting 168 hours a week to India. It has been founded by Dr. J.K. Jain to counter "the cultural invasion launched by foreign satellite networks." People of all faiths will be invited to present their views.