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INTERNATIONAL

■ **Former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev Dies**

Former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev has died at the age of 91 at a hospital in Moscow on 31st August 2022. According to media reports, his health had been declining in recent years. Mr. Gorbachev became General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party and de facto leader of the country in 1985. At the time,

he was 54, the youngest member of the ruling council known as the Politburo. He is also known for opening up the then-USSR to the world and introducing a set of reforms at home. After decades of Cold War tension, Gorbachev brought the Soviet Union closer to the West than at any point since World War-II. In fact, Gorbachev's policies of Glasnost and Perestroika defused the soaring tension of the Cold War. Glasnost encouraged Russians and Eastern Europeans to speak out against communism whereas Perestroika was an attempt to modernise and 'rebuild' the Soviet state. He won the Nobel Peace Prize for negotiating a historic nuclear arms pact with US leader Ronald Reagan, and his decision to withhold the Soviet army when the Berlin Wall fell a year earlier was seen as key to preserving Cold War peace. After his demise, the world lost an unparalleled preacher of peace.