

## BRIEFLY

**Strong quake claims 3 in Chile:**

A powerful earthquake struck the northern coast of Chile overnight, killing three people and sending scores of people fleeing to higher ground, preliminary reports indicated yesterday. AFP reports from Antofagasta, Chile.

Another 12 people were injured in the quake, which measured 7.8 on the Richter scale, according to seismologists at the University of Chile.

**Russian soldier kills 5:**

A Russian border guard on sentry duty on Popov Island in the far east shot dead five fellow servicemen early yesterday, a spokesman at Pacific Border Guards' headquarters said. Reuter reports from Russia.

Six other people, including a woman and the son of one of those killed, were wounded, the spokesman said.

**Iranian FM due in Sarajevo today:**

Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati is to travel to Sarajevo for talks with his Bosnian and Croatian counterparts on the war with the Serbs, the Daily Iran News reported yesterday. AFP reports from Tehran.

The paper, quoting a Foreign Ministry source, said the meeting with Mohammad Sacirbey of Bosnia and Croatia's mate Granic would take place on Monday.

**Rains cut railway links in China:**

Torrential rain cut two main railway lines in northeast China, the Xinhua news agency reported Sunday. Reuter says from Beijing.

Rail services on the lines from Chnghun, capital of Jilin province to the main northeast port of Dalian and from Shenyang, capital of Liaoning province, to Dandong on the border with North Korea were suspended on Saturday it said.

**Israel reopens borders:**

Israel reopened the crossing points from the Gaza Strip and West Bank yesterday, a week after a suicide bomber killed six people on a Tel Aviv bus, an army spokesman said, AFP reports from Jerusalem.

"Palestinians workers crossed over as expected," the spokesman said. The borders reopened after midnight Saturday (2100 GMT), but Palestinians can still not enter Israel and Jerusalem without special passes.

**Quake claims one in Chile:**

A powerful earthquake with a preliminary magnitude of 7.8 jarred northern Chile early Sunday, killing at least one person and injuring 12. But damage was reported as minor. AP reports from Santiago.

The quake hit at 1:11 am (0511 GMT) in the port city of Antofagasta, 1,290 kilometres (850 miles) north of Santiago, the government's National Emergency Office said. Two milder aftershocks immediately followed.

**Turks protest arms ban on Bosnia:**

More than 50,000 Turkish Islamists staged a demonstration in central Turkey on Saturday to protest against an embargo on arms sales to Bosnia. Reuter reports from Konya, Turkey.

Witnesses said the demonstrators in Konya city, a stronghold of the Islamist Welfare Party (RP), burned US and UN flags as they shouted "allah-u akbar" (God is greatest) and demanded an immediate end to the embargo.

**China test fires 6 missiles:**

China test fired six missiles in its missile tests last week on seas north of Taiwan, and five of them hit targets, a military official said Saturday. AP reports from Taipei.

Tsai Chao-ming, a Defence Ministry official in charge of intelligence, said in a public hearing that China fired two missiles each day on July 21, July 22, and 24, with five of them hitting their targets. Tsai did not elaborate. But the remarks differed from China's claim last Thursday that all six missiles hit targets.

**Troops kill 9 Zaireans:**

Security forces opened fire on protesters from a radical opposition group in Zaire's capital Kinshasa during clashes which killed up to nine civilians and a paramilitary gendarme. Reuter reports from Kinshasa.

Sixteen people have been brought in Kinshasa 10 of them dead, among them one woman and one gendarme, a doctor told Reuters at Kinshasa's main hospital, Mama Yemo after the clashes on Saturday.

**Blasts hurt 3 in Tehran:**

Three people were injured when two car bombs exploded in central Tehran on Saturday night, Iran's state-run news agency reported. AP says from Nicosia.

Casualties were limited because the blasts occurred in districts that were relatively deserted at the late hour. The first bomb, planted under a vehicle parked on Kushk Street, went off at 10:47 pm (1817 GMT), the Islamic Republic News Agency said.

**2 US firefighters killed:**

Two firefighters died in a blaze sparked by lightning and fuelled by wind that kept burning Saturday, blackening 10,000 acres (4,000 hectares), AFP reports from Boise, Idaho.

The two firefighters tried to summon help late Friday after they were trapped inside their truck by flames about 32 kilometres (20 miles) south of Boise, the capital of Idaho.

**10 die in Kenya road mishap:**

Ten people died on the spot and several others injured last night when a bus was involved in an accident with a Nissan lorry and its trailer along the Nairobi-Naivasha road in Kenya, Xinhua reports from Nairobi.

The accident occurred at around 9:00 pm when the bus was heading for Naivasha, some 100 kilometres west of Nairobi, and the Nissan lorry for Nairobi.

**Algerian forces kill 20 rebels:**

The Algerian security forces have killed some 20 presumed armed fundamentalists in four days in Algeria, the security forces said in a statement late Saturday, AFP reports from Algiers.

The security forces said they had recovered eight rifles, four Kalashnikov assault rifles, two rapid-firing pistols and two automatic pistols, in their raids.

**Hamas asks Clinton to free detained leader**

NEW YORK, July 30: The militant Palestinian group Hamas is demanding that President Clinton release one of its officials detained by US authorities on suspicion of terrorism, the group said Saturday, reports AP.

Abu Marzuk, 45, was arrested at Kennedy Airport on Tuesday. He has lived in the United States for 14 years and has a permanent resident visa, but immigration officials filed papers Thursday to have him barred from the country. Israel said it is considering seeking extradition.

White House spokesman Jim Fetig said there had been no official talks between Hamas and the White House and that he had no knowledge of the letter.

**66 pc of graduates deprived of higher education in India**

NEW DELHI, July 30: Alarmed by suicides by students who failed India's highly competitive school examinations, social analysts worry changes in tradition-bound Indian society are nudging it towards a crisis, reports Reuter.

"In Delhi, 66 per cent of eligible class 12 graduates cannot get admission into colleges because there aren't enough seats," said George Mathew, a sociologist who heads New Delhi's Institute for Social Sciences. "Of course they're frustrated."

India has recently reserved about half of all government jobs and state-funded college seats for people belonging to low castes and tribes, leaving ambitious youngsters from the higher castes to compete fiercely for

**China claims its 'indisputable sovereignty' over Spratlys**

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, Brunei, July 30: As foreign ministers from around the world gathered for talks on regional security, China said Sunday it has "indisputable sovereignty" over the Spratly Islands, the most serious hot spot in Southeast Asia, reports AP.

Renewing a hard-line stand, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman said the one-year-old security forum of 18 countries and the European Union had no business discussing the dispute over the Spratlys, claimed by six countries.

"We should specially guard against the involvement or interference of those countries who have nothing to do with this question," spokesman Shen Guo Fang told reporters. "For the involvement of those outsider countries may further com-

licate this question.

"It is very clear that China has indisputable sovereignty over (the Spratlys) and their adjacent waters," he told reporters. Other claimants to all or some of the islands are Vietnam, Taiwan, Malaysia, Brunei and the Philippines.

Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen, who is already here, is among those due to attend the security meeting Tuesday. So is US Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

The ASEAN Regional Forum is organised by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations — Brunei, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. The United States, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the European Union, Japan and South Korea attend as dialogue partners. China is here as a guest of ASEAN.

Qian and Christopher also are expected to privately discuss relations soured by the recent US visit by President Lee Teng-hui of Taiwan, which China considers a renegade province. China said Lee's visit, even though private, violated a pact that requires the United States to maintain only unofficial relations with Taiwan.

Shen said Taiwan is the "most crucial question in US-Sino relations."

He said Lee's visit marked a U-turn in Washington's foreign policy and "to make such a big change... is really inconceivable for a big country."

"So it is our hope that the US administration will take resolute measures to correct the mistakes and effectively honour its commitments," he said.

Shen's statement on the

Spratlys quashed speculation that China may have eased its position by expressing a willingness to abide by international laws to settle the dispute. This was reported by Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas after a visit to Beijing earlier this month.

Shen said China's position has remained unchanged and it will settle the dispute based on "international law and other relevant laws."

Asked what those were, he said laws approved by China's legislature. "They constitute the basis for a settlement," he added.

He said the dispute should be settled bilaterally with each claimant, but the ASEAN Regional Forum "is not an appropriate place for discussing how to handle this dispute, for ARF is at its launch," he said.

**Pakistan charged with failing to protect workers rights**

WASHINGTON, July 30: Employers throughout Pakistan forcibly extract labour from thousands of workers through physical abuse, debt-bondage, and forced confinement, aided by the Pakistani government, a report said today, reports AFP.

In a 78-page report, "contemporary forms of slavery in Pakistan," human rights Watch-Asia charged Pakistan with failing to protect workers from such illegal treatment or take action against those who keep workers in servitude.

"Although slavery is unconstitutional in Pakistan and violates numerous national

and international laws, state practice support its existence," the report said.

"The state offers these workers no effective protection from this exploitation," it said, adding that the government "rarely prosecutes or punishes employers who hold workers in servitude."

Workers who protest their ill-treatment often face harassment from police, who jail them on false charges, it said.

While some non-governmental organisations say millions of people live as virtual slaves in the country, human rights Watch-Asia said "at least thousands of persons in Pakistan are held in debt-

bondage, many of them children."

Brick kilns, located outside most major Pakistani cities, are run almost entirely through bonded labour, which is also used in agriculture, carpet-weaving, and handicraft-making.

Human rights Watch faulted Pakistani authorities for failing to arrest, prosecute, or punish employers who hold workers in bondage and for using official mechanisms to sanction workers.

Bonded labourers who file charges against employers, try to organise other workers, or leave their workplace can be arrested or jailed, the report said.

**131 militants to die in Algeria**

PARIS, July 30: An Algerian court has sentenced 131 Muslim militants to death for what it called "terrorism", the Algerian official news agency APS said on Saturday, reports Reuter.

Only four of the condemned were in the dock for sentencing at the Criminal Court of the northeastern town of Tizi Ouzou. The remainder were sentenced in absentia.

The sentences brought to nearly 200 the number of militants condemned to death by Algerian Criminal Courts since last February.

The Algerian government scrapped in February three special courts set up in 1993 after they sentenced more than 1,000 militants to death. Criminal Courts have since taken over.

**Russia 'enemy of Islam' says Saudi daily**

RIYADH, July 30: Russia is "the enemy of Islam" because of its support for Serb attacks against Muslims in Bosnia, a Saudi newspaper charged Sunday, reports AFP.

"In spite of the collapse of communism and the Soviet Union, Russia remains the enemy of Islam and the Muslims," Al-Bilad said.

"Moscow's support for the Serbs is not only revealed by its supplying weapons to the aggressors, but also by President Boris Yeltsin's request to lift the arms embargo on the Serbs," it charged.

Another Saudi newspaper, Al-Madina, accused Russia and other European countries of having "armed the Serbs in the last five years."

Last Tuesday, the Saudi Daily Al-Riyadh called on Muslims for the first time to take a tough line toward Russia for its stand on the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

**Lankan top army official, three soldiers killed**

COLOMBO, July 30: A Tamil rebel mine killed an army brigadier and three government soldiers when it exploded their vehicle in eastern Sri Lanka, military officials said, reports AP.

Three soldiers were wounded in the explosion in Valaichchenai town.

Brigadier Nalin Angammana, the highest military officer killed in three years in the civil war, was on his way to inspect a military camp in northern Sri Lanka that rebels attacked on Saturday, a military officer said on condition of anonymity.

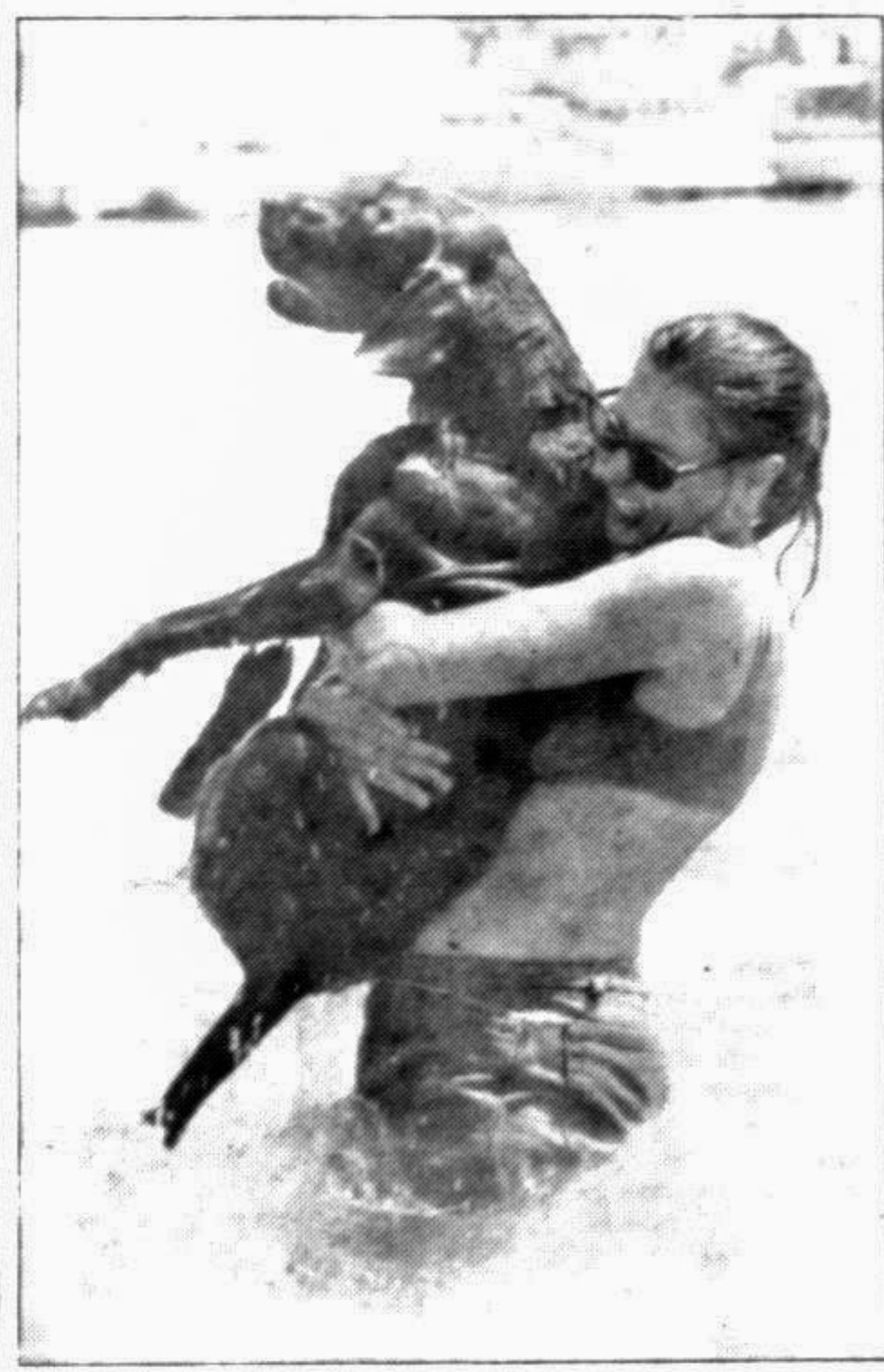
Which is very sad, because average, by definition, means normal — it has to include 70 per cent of the population," she said.

"It's the catching-up syndrome which India's urban middle class is strongly prone to, they're always copying the child next door," Mathews said. "And those who can't catch up get no support from their families or peers. They are persecuted."

Sivasubramanian said the pressure which Indian families put their children under was similar to Japan's because both societies had rigid patriarchal structures.

"There's so much more income disparity now than there was 40 years ago, and you need much more money to live comfortably," Sivasubramanian said. "If you don't have the qualifications that you need to buy life's better things, you haven't made it."

"There is, unfortunately, no reward for being average."

**Off the Record**

Liz Rice escapes from the the heat with Jack, whom she adopted from the Anti-Cruelty Society, by taking a swim at the dog beach on lake Michigan in Chicago on Saturday. A heat emergency has been called for Chicago today with the heat index expected to rise around 105 degrees Fahrenheit (36 Celsius).

— AFP/UNB photo

**Too conservative Queen's too modern son**

LONDON: A senior church of England figures Sunday protested at the "apparent cohabitation" of Queen Elizabeth II's youngest son, Prince Edward with his girlfriend Sophie Rhys-Jones at Buckingham Palace, reports AFP.

In an article for the mail on Sunday newspaper the Archdeacon of York, the venerable George Austin, said "Those who claim intimate knowledge of interconnecting bedroom doors in royal palaces suggest that Prince Edward and Sophie Rhys-Jones are, in the modern jargon, cohabitants."

The prince's mother wanted the two to sleep in separate rooms and opposed them taking holidays together, but without success, said Austin, a controversial figure and noted conservative in the church.

"Perhaps now it is time to revive the custom of betrothal, to distinguish between cohabitantes of convenience and cohabitantes of commitment," he said.

"Maybe we need to discover the value of what we have lost no sex before marriage and none outside it, no cohabitation without true lifelong commitment. No rights without responsibilities."

**Well done! Ugly Sister**

BEIJING: A vigilant cat saved her master and his family of six, waking them just minutes before their two-storey mud house collapsed in the central China town of Beijing, the Sichuan daily newspaper said, reports Reuter.

About 4:40 am on July 16, Li Shuhua and his family were awoken by their three-year-old cat Ugly Sister, which miaowed and scratched at their legs and then jumped on a window still and pushed open the window, the newspaper said in its July 26 edition received in Beijing Sunday.

When the family did not follow her, Ugly Sister jumped down and started pulling at the trousers of her owner, it said.

Li then noticed that mud was starting to crumble from the wall of the house and, seconds after he rushed his family outside, the whole building collapsed, the newspaper said.

It gave no further details.

**Political issue remains unresolved Russia, Chechnya sign military accord**

GROZNY, July 30: Russian and Chechen negotiators on Sunday signed an agreement on military issues, but the critical question of the breakaway republic's political future remained unresolved, Russian news agencies said, reports AP.

The ITAR-Tass and Interfax news agencies said the two sides signed "a package of military documents" early Sunday morning after talks lasting late into the night Saturday.

"But, the two sides have yet to reach agreement on the critical question of Chechnya's standing in relation to the Russian Federation. The Chechen side wants to be recognized as independent, while Moscow insists on some control over the region."

According to Interfax, Sunday's agreement called for an immediate halt to hostilities, a gradual withdrawal of Russian troops from Chechnya, disarmament of Chechen separatists and a prisoner exchange.

It called for the immediate withdrawal of both sides to 2-4 kilometres (1-3 miles) from the conflict zone, to be followed by the step-by-step withdrawal of Russian troops and the gradual disarmament of the Chechen fighters, the news agency said.

The agreement envisages Russia being allowed to keep two brigades in Chechnya, one from the army and one from the Interior Ministry, Interfax quoted Chechen negotiator Akhmad Idigov as saying. The size and area of deployment of the brigades will be determined later, he said.

The two sides also agreed to exchange all prisoners of war, and Russia and Chechnya were likely to hand over lists of detained people later Sunday, the Chechen negotiator said.

The Kremlin sent tens of thousands of troops into Chechnya in December to reclaim control from separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev. Thousands of people have been killed, and sporadic clashes continue despite an informal truce reached last month.