

BRIEFLY

Grachev to meet Perry: Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev said on Thursday he was heading to Geneva over the weekend to discuss differences with the United States over Bosnia and NATO with US Defense Secretary William Perry. AP reports from Moscow. Grachev announced last month that Russia couldn't take part in US-Russian peacekeeping exercise scheduled to open at Fort Riley, Kan., on October 17, because of NATO raids on Bosnian Serbs.

All-woman police station in Bihar: The first all-woman police station in Bihar has been set up at Bhagalpur on an experimental basis with a view to emancipating women and enable them to lodge complaints without any fear of social stigma or harassment. PTI reports from Patna. The state's director general of police, Ganga Prasad Dohare, to PTI that the police station headed by a lady sub-inspector would comprise woman havildars and constables.

China names new armed forces chief: General Fu Quanyou has been appointed the new Chief of General Staff of China's armed forces, replacing General Zhang Wannian, according to the Xinhua news agency yesterday. AFP reports from Beijing. In a brief despatch on a meeting between Fu and a Turkish military delegation, the agency referred to the 65-year-old general as the "newly-appointed Chief of the General Staff of the People's Liberation Army (PLA)."

Road mishap kills 12 in Philippines: A truck that struck a group of police trainees running before dawn near Casayan de Oro yesterday killed 12 and left 18 injured police said. AFP reports from Casayan de Oro, Philippines. The truck sped away after plowing through a group of 67 police trainees on a downhill portion of the national highway in Balubal village said Casayan de Oro police Chief Alberto Olario.

Quakes continue to shake Tokyo: A series of quakes continued to shake the Izu peninsula south of Tokyo yesterday with a tremor of 3.8 on the Richter Scale at 4:32am (1932 GMT Wednesday), the meteorological agency said. AFP reports from Tokyo. The epicenter of the quake in Ito, Shizuoka prefecture, was about 100 kilometres (60 miles) south of Tokyo in shallow Pacific waters.

Russia begins strategic exercise: The Russian military launched an exercise Wednesday to test mechanisms of control over the country's strategic nuclear forces, a Defence Ministry statement said. AP reports from Moscow. The brief statement, carried by the Interfax news agency, said the head of the Russian General Staff, Mikhail Kolesnikov, will supervise the exercise, meant to test the strategic forces "in different conditions."

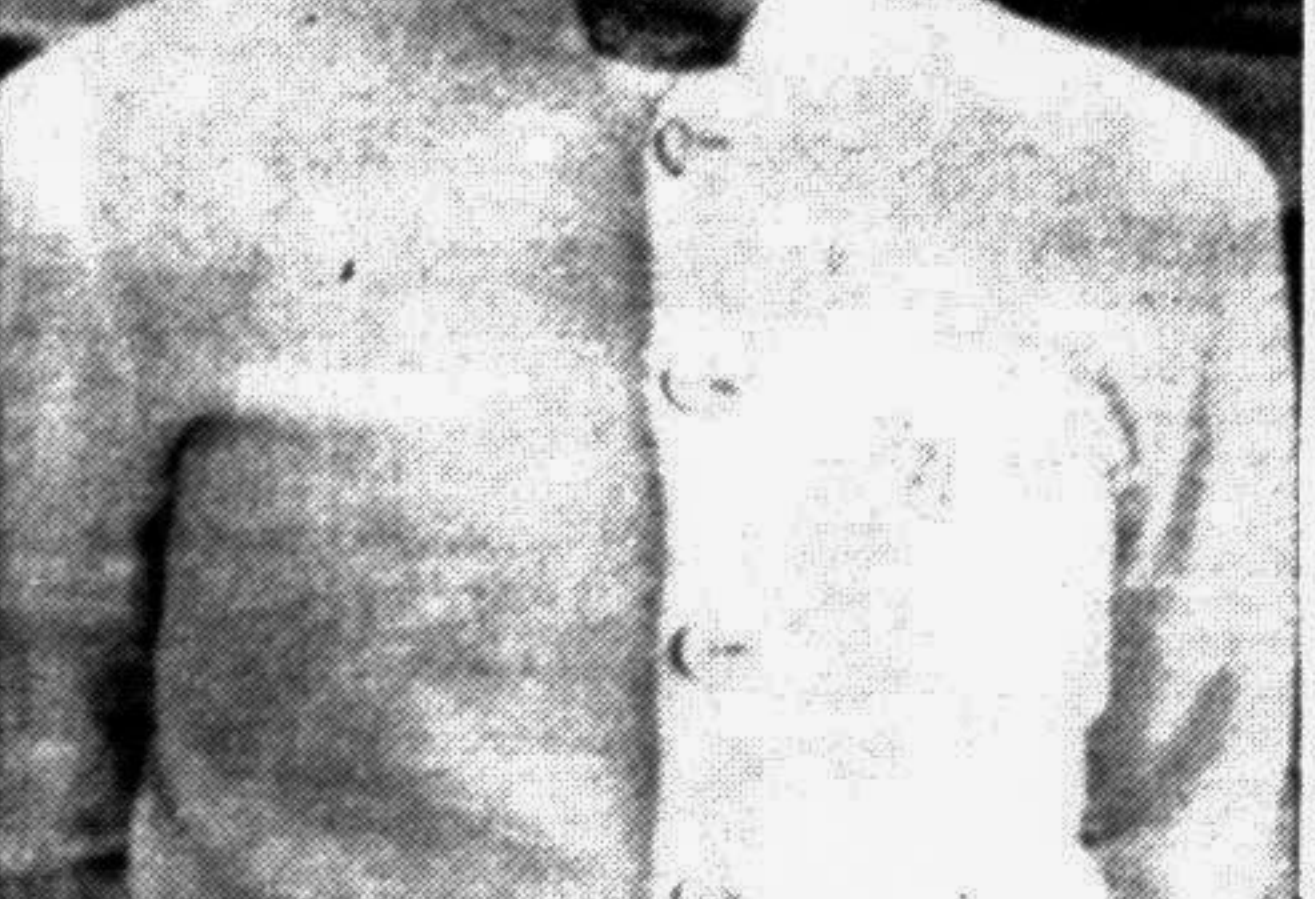
7 infant bodies found in Tokyo aptt: Seven corpses of infants have been found in the closet of an apartment whose resident has been missing for nearly two months, police said Thursday. AP reports from Tokyo. A plastic bag containing the infant skeletons was discovered inside the closet when the landlord of the apartment complex noticed a bad odour, a Chiba prefectural police official said.

Russian drug dealer held in Cuba: Cuban authorities are holding a 36-year-old Russian woman after they discovered cocaine hidden in wooden artwork she was carrying in her luggage the Cuban news agency Prensa Latina said on Wednesday. Reuter reports from Havana. Reported drugs seizures are very rare on the communist ruled Caribbean island.

Father, son among 5 killed in Karachi
KARACHI, Oct 5: Five people were killed here today, including a father and son branded "informers," as violence continued in this strife-torn Pakistani city, officials said, reports AFP.

The bodies of a 60-year-old man and his 25-year-old son were found in the Malir area near the city's airport. Both bodies carried notes saying the men had been killed because they were police "informers." Two brothers, in their 20s, who had been missing since Wednesday, were found dead in the city's western district of Orangi today, police said.

Another young man was shot dead in the industrial area of Korangi, they said. Six people including a policeman, were killed in isolated incidents in different parts of the city Wednesday, taking the death toll to 11 in two days.



Handout picture of Sulak Sivaraksa of Thailand, one of the prize winners in the 1995 Right Livelihood Awards dubbed as the alternative Nobel Prize announced in Stockholm Wednesday. Sivaraksa's work is developing economic and social models for his country. The jury honors Sivaraksa for his vision, dedication and spiritual conviction in search for a development that builds on democracy, justice and cultural integrity. — AFP/UNB photo

6,000 Chechen rebels regrouped to fight
MOSCOW, Oct 5: Some 6,000 Chechnya separatists have regrouped during peace talks with Moscow and are ready for battle equipped with tanks and other armoured vehicles, Russian defence minister Pavel Grachev said today, reports AFP.

The forces loyal to separatist Chechnyan leader Dzhokhar Dudayev have used the negotiations process to enlarge their forces with the aim of taking up military action again, Grachev told the news agency Interfax. Grachev said the rebels held 12 tanks and 10 armoured personnel carriers. Grachev is opposed to the ongoing negotiations between Russia and a team from the Muslim Caucasus republic.

**LTTE admits loss of 150 guerillas
Heavy fighting leads to food crisis in Jaffna**

COLOMBO, Oct 5: Heavy fighting between Tamil Tiger guerilla and government troops in northern Sri Lanka has led to a food shortage in the region, residents and rebels said today, reports Reuter. "There's no flour, nor vegetables," said a resident of the Jaffna peninsula, the headquarters of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) rebels. "Areas like Puttur and Awarankal where fighting is going are agricultural areas," he said on reaching Vavuniya, the northern most town under government control. "Farmers are displaced. So there is no food production."

But government officials denied there was a food shortage in Jaffna, saying enough stocks had been shipped to the peninsula. The government says at least 300 people have been killed in an army offensive against the rebels in Jaffna, which was launched on Sunday.

Rebel radio said fighting was now concentrated on the towns of Awarankal and Puttur, indicating the army had swung south in the direction of Jaffna city after breaking eastwards out of the government-controlled Palaly Airbase and capturing Achchuveli town on Sunday.

The rebels broke a three-month truce and resumed hostilities with the government in April, refusing to consider a peace plan to end the 12-year revolt. The government then said recapturing Jaffna would be its priority.

The government today asked parliament to approve an extra 8.6 billion rupees (165 million dollar) in defence funds, raising expenditure on the military to about 36 billion rupees (692 million dollar) this year. The money was required for military operations and more weapons for the armed forces, it said. Voice of Tigers, the rebel radio station broadcasting from Jaffna, said the civilian death toll in the latest offensive had risen to 22 and the number of displaced people to 75,000.

Refugees were streaming into Chavakachcheri in the south of the peninsula, said residents who monitored rebel radio said. Tiger fighters were putting up fierce resistance to prevent troops from advancing further, the radio said. More than 50,000 people have died in the war for an independent homeland for minority Tamils in the island's north and east since 1983.



Army troops examine the bodies of Tamil Tiger guerillas and their weapons Tuesday following a ferocious attack in Sri Lanka's northern Jaffna peninsula. The military claimed killing over 200 Tigers for the loss of some 28 security personnel. — AFP/UNB photo

'ROK almost completed atomic bomb in early 1980s'

SEOUL, Oct 5: South Korea almost completed an atomic bomb in the early 1980s but dropped the project under US pressure, a parliamentary defence committee member said Thursday, reports AP.

There have been reports that South Korea once actively pursued a nuclear weapons project to establish a more independent military relationship with the United States. The lawmaker's account offered the most detailed glimpse so far into that secret project.

"Late President Park Chung-hee told me in September 1978 that South Korea had completed 95 per cent of building an atomic bomb," Rep. Kang Chang-sung

said during a parliamentary inspection of a government agency allegedly involved in the project. There was no immediate government reaction to Kang's claim.

Kang, a retired three-star general, was a close confidant of Park, who was assassinated by his intelligence chief in October 1979. He once headed the powerful military spy agency, the Defence Security Agency, under Park in the late 1970s.

Citing his own conversation with Park and private testimony by senior officials of the Park government, the opposition legislator said he believed that South Korea was very close to developing a nuclear bomb.

Kang's accounts conform with testimony by two senior officials of the Park government. Former Science Minister Choi Hyong-sup said in a published report a few years ago that South Korea had the capability to develop a nuclear bomb in the late 1970s.

Sunu Ryon, a former government party legislator under Park, last year quoted the late president as saying South Korea's first atomic bomb was to be completed by early 1981.

If the planned atomic bomb was finished, the late president planned to announce it on the October 1 Armed Forces Day that year and step down, he said.

Taiwan to modernise weaponry to meet Chinese threat

TAIPEI, Oct 5: President Lee Teng-hui said Thursday that Taiwan must modernise its weaponry to meet what he termed a Chinese military buildup threatening Taiwan and the rest of the region, reports AP.

Saying China has not ruled out an attack on Taiwan, Lee accused it of "increasing military expenditure, expanding armaments, and even adjusting strategic deployment in recent years to pose a serious threat to the security of the Asia-Pacific region and the Taiwan Straits."

Lee was addressing troops at a military display at Tsoying, southern Taiwan, which was part of celebrations marking the end of World War II and Taiwan's National Day, which falls on October 10.

This summer China test-fired missiles off Taiwan's

waters in a show of displeasure over Lee's US visit, which it saw as an attempt to break the diplomatic isolation it has imposed on the island.

China has been beefing up and modernizing its armed forces for more than a decade. In the past two years, China has bought 26 Su-27 fighter planes, 144 air-to-surface missiles and four attack submarines from Russia. It has also tested a mobile missile launcher and a super-gun capable of firing artillery shells into Taiwan.

Lee, who is military commander-in-chief, said the armed forces must modernise faster and improve military training.

To update its aging weaponry, Taiwan has purchased six 1,200-ton frigates and 60 Mirage 2000-5 jets from France, and 150 F-16

jets from the United States.

It expects them to arrive here starting next year. Some 6,000 soldiers, 61 ships, 66 aircraft and 372 tanks participated in the display, along with homemade anti-submarine frigates, minesweepers, early-warning planes and helicopter gunships.

Reuter adds: Taiwan president Lee Teng-hui said today that China's military forces constitute a great threat in the Asia-Pacific region and the Taiwan straits.

"Chinese communists have not renounced the use of force against us. They have sharply increased military spending and continued to expand its military hardware," Lee said in his speech.

Taiwan's Hua Hsing exercise, in which no shots were fired, ended shortly after Lee made his speech.

Off the Record

Dinosaur graveyard in Siberia

NOVOSIBIRSK, Russia: Russian paleontologists have discovered a dinosaur graveyard in Siberia which may contain bones of previously unknown prehistoric animals, a news agency reported Wednesday, reports AP. The scientists found five whole dinosaur skeletons and bones from an unidentified prehistoric animal twice the size of a mammoth, ITAR-Tass said.

The site, on the Kya River in the Kuznetsk region, is the northernmost spot in Asia where dinosaur bones have been found, said Igor Grebnev, director of the Novosibirsk Museum of Natural History. It is about 3,200 kilometres (2,000 miles) east of Moscow, and about 800 kilometres (500 miles) north of Mongolia.

The unusual location led Grebnev and other scientists to speculate that some of the bones could prove to be those of dinosaurs previously unknown to science, ITAR-Tass said.

Scientists from the Novosibirsk museum went to the site this summer, after other prehistoric bones were unexpectedly uncovered there last year. Dinosaur remains estimated to be 70 million years old were found nearby in 1953.

Specialists from Moscow are expected to examine the bones and give a final analysis. The skeletons will then be installed at the Novosibirsk museum.

Cactus jam, rainwater as new foodstuffs!

COLOGNE, Germany: Cactus jam and bottled rainwater are among the futuristic foodstuffs some 6,000 manufacturers worldwide are promoting in the giant grocer's shop of the International Food Fair staged here this week, reports AFP.

There is no freeze-dried champagne on the shelves yet, but the Australian firm Vecon is offering bottled rainwater collected in the humid forests of western Tasmania. Rainwater is collected in large Vats, then filtered.

A newcomer among the fruits and vegetables is a pocket lettuce called little gem, with leaves less than 10 centimetres (four inches) long. Developed by the French grower prince in brittany, the miniature lettuce is expected to appeal to single people.

A more exotic invention, rich in vegetable fibre, is cactus jam from Dipasa of Mexico. There is a Cheese children can use like plasticine and confetti made of unleavened bread for the economically minded.

Up market, the Cognac of French film star Alain Delon Lords it over American counterpart Paul Newman's popcorn. Newman, whose face is on all his labels, donates the proceeds from his range of foodstuffs to charity.

A caterer from Vienna has targeted first-class air travellers and top hotels with an alarmingly rich confection of goose foie gras pralines stuffed with mango and encased in a fine coating of truffles.

Underwater wonder

ALEXANDRIA, Egypt: Discarding the pick and brush of their colleagues, Egyptian and French archaeologists used a tugboat, crane and parachute Wednesday to haul a 2,000-year-old statue from its undersea resting place, reports AP.

Struggling against high winds and waves, the team retrieved the red granite torso of a woman from a patch of sea off Alexandria that contains hundreds of Egyptian and Greek statues and temples, many lying in pieces.

Littered among the ruins are the remains of the white marble Pharos lighthouse, one of the wonders of the ancient world and for centuries, the symbol of the city Alexandria the Great built. The team hopes to recover at least one piece of the colossal lighthouse and a broken, half-man, half-lion sphinx among the 20-30 relics it plans to retrieve in the next few days. The rest will remain submerged.

"You cannot imagine what a sensation it is to see fish playing with the sphinx," said Jean-Yves Empeur, director of the French Center of Alexandrian Studies, which headed the expedition.

On Wednesday, two black rubber boats carried six divers to the area of the Greek statue. They had already tied cables to the shell-entrusted, algae-blanketed statue. With waves and white foam bobbing the boats up and down, the divers tied a deflated white parachute to the statue. Inflated, it lifted the one and a half ton torso off the seabed, allowing the statue to be dragged into the harbour by tugboat.

Suharto asks armed forces to promote democracy

JAKARTA, Oct 5: President Suharto today called on the Indonesian armed forces (ABRI) to promote democracy to ally concerns that their dominant political role is making this government "authoritarian and totalitarian," reports AFP.

"We are determined to prove that ABRI's role, as a fighter and soldier, will not lead to a government which is militaristic, authoritarian or totalitarian," Suharto said at a ceremony to commemorate the military's 50th anniversary.

Suharto said that many people, here and abroad, have expressed worry that the Indonesian military's dual-function — as a defence force and as a socio-political power — would lead to a militaristic and authoritarian government. "This means ABRI should

take part in promoting the growth of democracy," he added.

However, the 74-year-old President said that the democracy he was alluding to was the country's own brand of democracy.

Pancasila democracy, named for the country's state ideology, Pancasila, stressed decision making through deliberation and consensus and is against open opposition.

Pancasila has five tenets: belief in one God, humanitarianism, nationalism, sovereignty of the people through deliberation and consensus, and social justice for all.

Many people have criticised ABRI's dominant role in the country's politics but others, while not questioning the military's right to its socio-political role, demand that it be gradually reduced.

Philippines to have second woman president?

MANILA, Oct 5: A pint-sized classmate of US President Bill Clinton is being tipped as possibly the second woman president of the Philippines even though she is being decidedly coy about the matter, reports Reuter.

Gloria Macapagal Arroyo surprised most political pundits when she topped the race in May for 12 seats in the country's senate with nearly 16 million votes, three million ahead of her nearest rival.

She has brushed aside questions about running for the top job in the next presidential elections in 1998, but the 47-year old mother of three would not duck the responsibility of running Southeast Asia's most bois-

terous democracy. If it happens, it'll happen," Arroyo told Reuters in an interview, adding she would launch a war against poverty if she became president. Thirty-four million Filipinos are still considered poor.

"I think the country is ready for any president who is capable, who will capture the imagination of the voters, whether it's man or a woman," she said when asked if the conservative Roman Catholic country is ready for another woman at the helm.

Arroyo said the Philippines, which is just shaking off the tag of "sick man of Asia," needs a strong leader willing to take tough decisions, who is technically competent and spiritually

prepared to run the country. Asked if she possessed those qualities, Arroyo said: "I know those are the things needed to be a leader so I try to achieve them."

The 1.5-metre (five ft) tall Arroyo does not feel that a woman president would again invite the string of army coup attempts that its first woman leader, Corazon Aquino, had to face.

"It's not a matter of gender, but a matter of how they (the army) perceive the individual. In the time of president Aquino the military was readjusting to its new role," she said.

"Since they had been supreme for so many years, it was at that time difficult to accept they were no longer the ruling class."

The gravelly-voiced legislator was born in Manila but grew up with her grandmother on the southern island of Mindanao. The presidency may well be in her blood, as her father Diosdado Macapagal was in power from 1961 to 1964 when he had a reputation for being incorruptible.

Arroyo was awarded an international economic affairs degree from Georgetown University in Washington in 1968. Her only daughter is now studying at the same school.

She taught at the Jesuit-run Ateneo University in Manila until she was recruited into the government service as trade and industry undersecretary when Aquino ousted the late dictator

Ferdinand Marcos in 1986. When Aquino's term was drawing to a close in 1992, the struggle for a democratic Philippines (LDP) party drafted her as its woman candidate for its senatorial lineup.

"I was pulled into it (politics)," she recalled "I even said 'wouldn't you rather get my brother' and (they) said 'no, because we need a woman.' So that's how it happened."

Arroyo was given high marks on the campaign trail as vote-getter. Her only drawback is a fiery temper. "He (my father) always tells me that that's my biggest obstacle to true leadership, my temper," she said, adding her temper boils over when she has to do some-

thing she is unprepared for. "My flaring up is part of panic mechanism."

Whatever time she gets away from politics is spent with her husband and three children. She is a couch potato and proud of it.

President Clinton sent Arroyo a congratulatory letter on her convincing senate victory. "It's nice to hear about the success of class '68," the US leader said.

Clinton is "handsome and very popular with the girls," Arroyo said. "He was always dating the foxiest girls in our dorm." "He was one of those boys that we girls in the dorm when we were having our midnight snack in our pyjamas and nightgowns (that) we'd talk about," she said.

Debate over WB autonomy in Israeli parliament

JERUSALEM, Oct 5: Ahead of a cliffhanger vote on the Israel-PLO autonomy accord, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin appealed Thursday to two rebel legislators from his Labour Party to stop threatening to oppose the agreement, reports AP.

Labour leaders said that even if Rabin failed to persuade the two legislators, the agreement on Palestinian self rule in the West Bank was likely to be ratified by a 61-59 vote, barring last-minute surprises.

The debate was scheduled for midday (about 1030 GMT) Thursday. With each of the 120 legislators given a chance to speak, a vote was not expected before early Friday.