

BRIEFLY

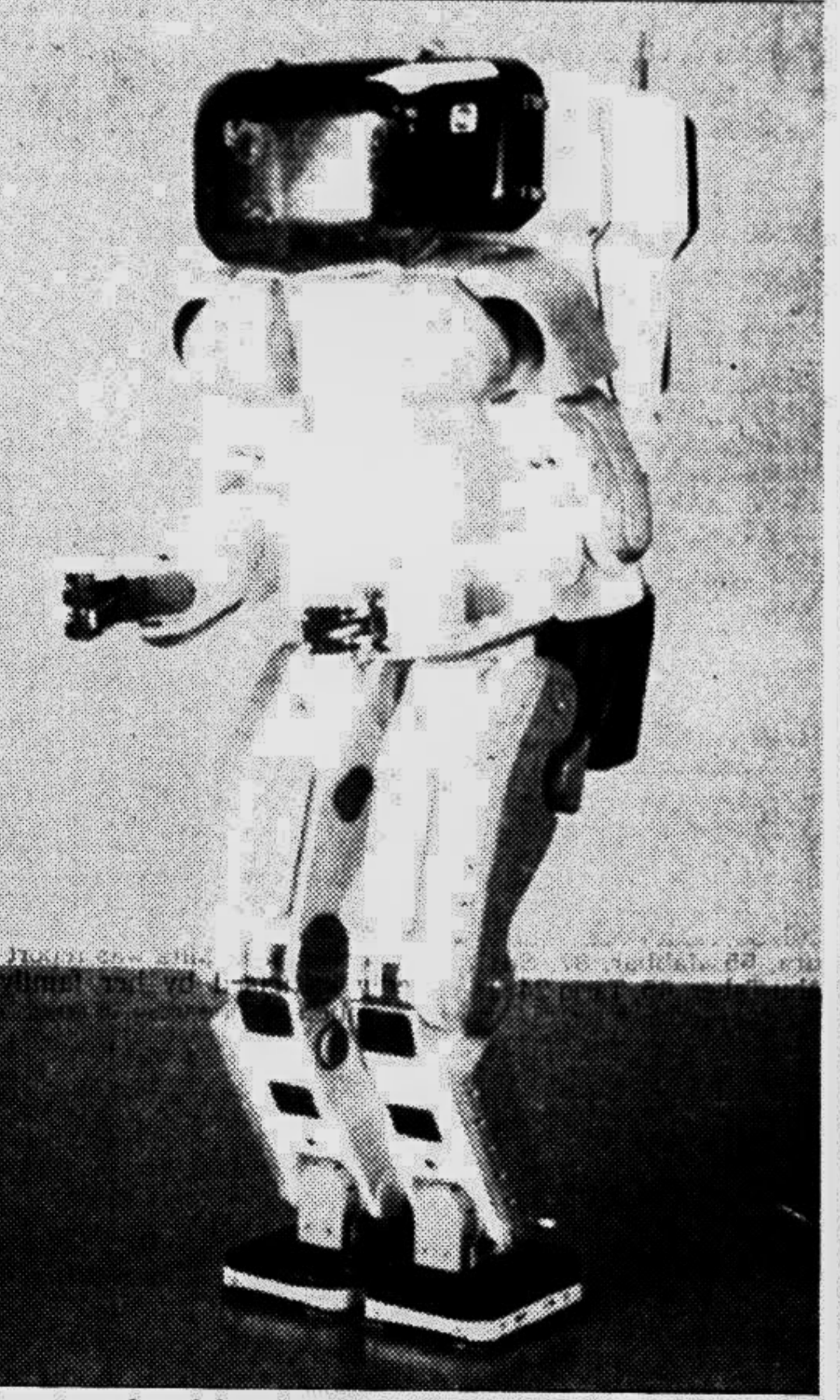
Quake hits India: An earthquake of moderate intensity, measuring 5.1 on the Richter scale, shook Himachal Pradesh late last night, the Meteorological office said in Delhi yesterday. PTI reports from New Delhi.

Annun sends envoy to Afghanistan: With fighting raging north of the Afghan capital Kabul, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annun decided to send a former Algerian foreign minister to Afghanistan to see what actions the United Nations can take to end the conflict. AP reports from United Nations.

Lakhdar Brahimi will report back to Annun before the next annual debate of the UN General Assembly in September. No date was given for his arrival in the region. A UN statement said Brahimi will "assess the UN peacekeeping activities in Afghanistan" and consult with "relevant countries and parties" to the conflict.

Road mishap kills 11 in US: A dump truck pulling a backhoe collided with a pickup truck at a rural intersection in south-central Michigan, killing nine children and two adults in the pickup. AP reports from Concord Township.

1 die as bus falls into river in US: A charter bus loaded with children learning about slavery in the United States plunged off Interstate 95 into the Nottoway River, killing one person and injuring the other 34 people aboard, authorities said. AP reports from Stony Creek.



Recent undated hand out photo shows a prototype robot recently developed by Japan's car and motorcycle manufacturer Honda Motor Co Ltd. The 180 cm, 210 kg human-like robot has a battery life of 15 minutes and is capable of walking up and down slopes and stairs either by remote control or by installed programme. — AFP/UNB photo

Air crash kills 1 in Nigeria: One person was killed and five injured Tuesday when a private Nigerian plane with 55 people on board crashed on landing at Calabar International Airport in south east Nigeria, an airport source said. AFP reports from Lagos.

Israeli kills Palestinian in WB: An Israeli soldier shot dead a Palestinian who stabbed and lightly wounded another soldier near a Jewish settlement in the West Bank on Tuesday, the army said. Reuter reports from Beit Dajan. "An Israeli soldier was lightly wounded after being stabbed by a Palestinian at the Elon Moreh junction near Nablus, the spokesman said. "Soldiers on patrol in the area were attacked by the Palestinian assailant, one soldier fired his gun in response and killed the attacker," he said.

1 held for killing mother in US: Police said on Tuesday they had arrested a northern California teenager on suspicion of strangling his mother and dumping her body in a water-filled quarry. Reuter reports from Sacramento.

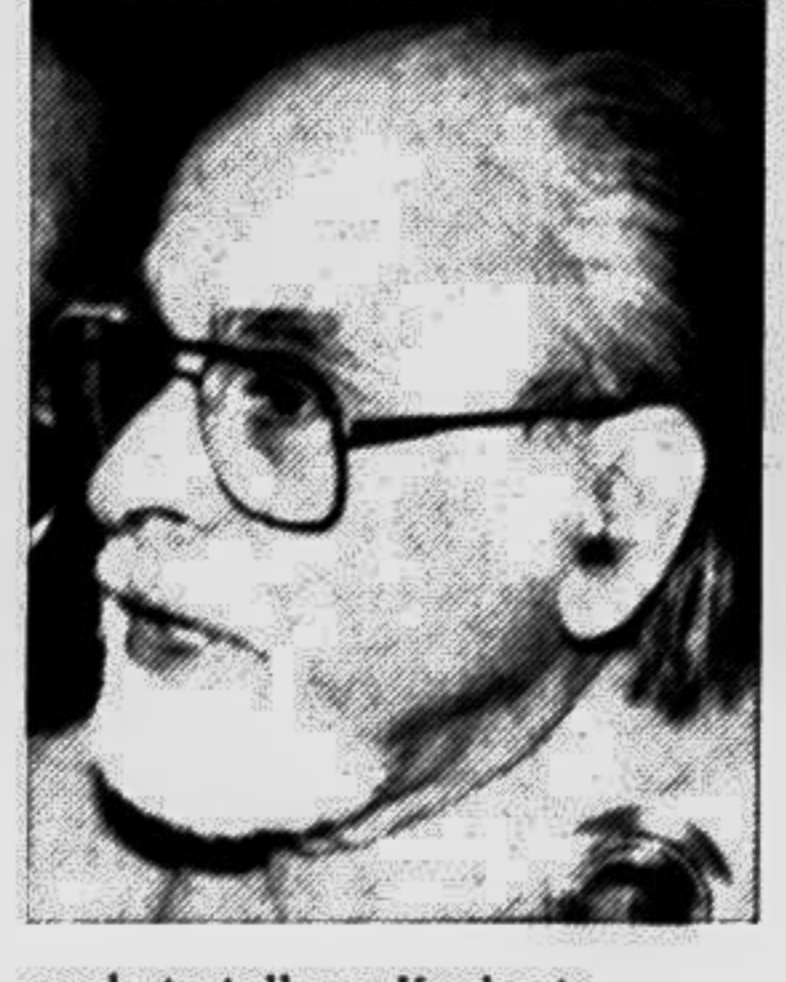
Police in Rocklin, near Sacramento, said they had received reports that the 17-year-old boy had held parties at his house since his mother, 40-year-old Barbara Schultz, was murdered just over a week ago. Rocklin police did not release the name of the boy because of his age.

Bomb caused Brazilian airliner explosion

Gunmen kill 2 Shi'ite activists in Pak Punjab

Pak media says Gujral's offer to Kashmiri youths a cruel joke

ISLAMABAD, July 30. Prime Minister I.K. Gujral's unconditional offer of talks to misguided youths in Kashmir has irked the Pakistani media which said it was nothing but a cruel joke on Kashmiris, reports PTI.



Prime Minister of the country cannot keep his word. The Pakistan Times in its editorial said certainly there must be tremendous pressure on Gujral from the Indian armed forces or other political or fundamentalist groups, of India.

Most of the leading dailies described Gujral's clarification in parliament on Monday as a "volte-face" and cautioned those who are expecting positive outcomes from the foreign secretaries-level talks between India and Pakistan.

Clinton sends special envoy to ME Israel won't accept US dictates: Netanyahu

JERUSALEM, July 30: With US President Clinton's envoy heading to the region Wednesday for peace talks, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel would not accept American dictates, reports AP.

Haaretz said Israel and the Americans were trying to reach a formula under which Israel would agree to a temporary settlement freeze, a key Palestinian demand.

The Al-Akhbar and Al-Gomhuria government newspapers said that the Egyptian President had expressed his concern in messages to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and US President Bill Clinton.

Khmer Rouge vows to fight against Hun Sen

PHNOM PENH, July 30: After publicly distancing itself from the notorious Pol Pot through a show trial, the Khmer Rouge vowed Wednesday to keep fighting coup leader Hun Sen and the new regime he is imposing on Cambodia, reports AP.

The prince's forces have been driven north toward Thailand as Hun Sen has consolidated power in the capital, Cambodia's strongman is keen to prevent Ranariddh's royalists from allying with the Khmer Rouge against him.

Govt-rebels to resume peace talks in Philippines

PLA on right track since its founding

BEIJING, July 30: China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) turns 70 on Friday, but does so in far more sprightly and confident fashion than many of the political leaders it affects to obey, reports AFP.

desperate enterprises — from hotels and nightclubs to ice cream manufacturers.

increase their influence with the army.



US actor Robert De Niro and Italian actress Sofia Loren stand on stage during the awarding ceremony of the 20th Moscow International Film Festival in Moscow Tuesday, where they were both awarded for lifetime achievement. De Niro was also awarded for his role of actor and producer of the film "Marvin's Room." — AFP/UNB photo

Benazir stopped, later allowed to leave for London

ISLAMABAD, July 30: Pakistani police stopped opposition leader Benazir Bhutto from boarding a London-bound plane at Karachi on Tuesday but later allowed her to leave by another flight on orders from the interior ministry, her party said, reports Reuter.



Government officials were not immediately available to comment about the matter.

Palestinian ministers to answer corruption charges

JERUSALEM, July 30: Accused of corruption and mismanagement, members of Yasser Arafat's Cabinet will likely face some tough questions Wednesday when they defend themselves before the Palestinian legislature, reports AP.

Qawasmeah was expected to appear before the legislature at a debate on the report scheduled to begin at 11 am (0800 GMT) Wednesday in Ramallah. It was not clear whether Shaath and Tarifi would appear. Health Minister Riyadh Al-Za'noun was also expected, although he was not personally implicated by the report.

While the bipartisan committee has no legal authority, its findings placed Arafat on the spot by fingering top political allies — including prominent peace negotiator Nabil Shaath.

The suspicions of waste, graft and nepotism, and brazen shows of wealth by government officials with huge villas and four or five cars apiece, have raised resentment among ordinary Palestinians and concern among international donors.

It said the interior ministry later told the agency to allow Bhutto to leave after her political secretary called the ministry in Islamabad to protest.

Taliban fighting uphill battle to gain UN seat

UNITED NATIONS, July 30: As opposition forces threaten the Afghan capital, the Taliban government is waging an uphill battle to gain the UN seat still held by the administration it drove from Kabul nearly a year ago, reports AP.

But with the situation in Afghanistan uncertain, the General Assembly held off on withdrawing the US membership of the Rabbani government.

This has created an unusual situation where UN officials deal daily with Taliban in Kabul and in other parts of Afghanistan — the Islamic movement controls.

Contacts were halted after a military offensive last month, but the two sides agreed to resume talks after a ceasefire was started this month.

US legislator suggests Camp David-type Indo-Pak parleys

COTABATO, Philippines, July 30: Peace talks between the Philippines government and Muslim guerrillas resumed here today and the government said it hoped to reach a settlement by the end of the year, says AFP.

Rep. Richard Gephardt, speaking at the "Leadership for the 21st Century" dinner hosted by the India Abroad Centre for Political Awareness (IACPA), said, "I have been very pleased that the leadership of both countries lately have been talking about trying to bring about a greater peace."

and Arab-Americans, both Indian and Pakistani-Americans should lobby "our councils of government that (helping to bring about peace between India and Pakistan) should be a priority of our government in foreign policy."