



**“TE SAURUS.”** A TE Connectivity Japan staff member demonstrates how to control remotely its dinosaur robot “TE Saurus” with a smartphone during the annual CEATEC Japan advanced technologies show in Chiba, east of Tokyo. With a Sharp Aquos ZETA mobile phone model, users can make the 6’11” tall, 21’4” long dinosaur robot walk forward and backward; jump; move its head, hands, and legs up and down, left and right; open and close its mouth by touching the screen panel; and make it bark by shaking the handheld. (AP Photo/Koji Sasahara)

## Funky robots display Japan’s latest technologies

By Haruka Nuga  
The Associated Press

**T**OKYO — A smartphone-controlled dinosaur, synchronized cheerleaders, and a ping-pong-playing spider are some of the robot technology showcased at the CEATEC Japan electronics exhibition.

Exhibitors used such attention-grabbing gadgets to showcase their technology and stand out at the event. Sadly for gadget lovers, the robots aren’t for sale.

### A dinosaur pal

TE Connectivity’s dinosaur robot, the “TE Saurus,” lets users experience a close encounter with a 6’11” reptile without going back in time.

A smartphone application can make the dinosaur walk or jump. A shake of the smartphone prompts the “TE Saurus” to bark. It also can play trivia games as users answer questions through the app.

### Ping-pong companion

Despite its intimidating spider-like resemblance, OMRON Corp.’s three-legged robot is a relaxed ping-pong playmate. It watches its human opponent to predict the ball’s path. Still, the robot takes it easy on opponents by missing a few hits here and there. With five motors to control paddle movement, it is programmed to serve the ball in a way that makes it easy for the player to return.

“This ping-pong robot is really a demonstration of how a robot can interact with a person and react in an appropriate manner,” says Takuya Tsuyuguchi, an Omron manager. “We envision this robot perhaps being used in a factory or production line and having a role in which it would have to interact with a worker to do or build something. This would involve the robot understanding the needs of its human counterpart and behaving appropriately.”

### Synchronized cheerleaders

They are 14 inches tall, but their choreography is flawless. Murata Manufacturing, a leading electronic component manufacturer, presents a group of 10 robot cheerleaders with color-changing pom-poms that use gyroscopic sensors to roll on spherical bases in unison without losing their balance.

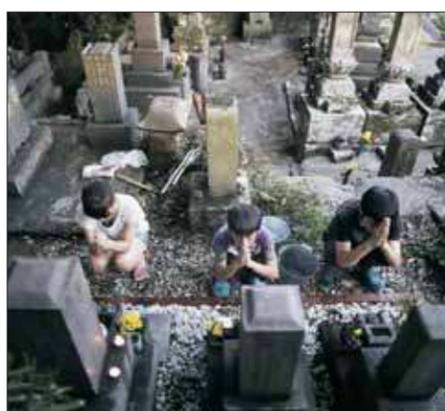
“These robots use our proprietary balancing technology combined with technology that prevents, in real time, the robots from clashing together,” said Tomoyuki Mori, a Murata engineer. “It also uses technology that coordinates the movement of all the robots together in a synchronized manner.”

## Cemetery overcrowding an issue around the world

(AP) Cemetery overcrowding is an issue that resonates around the world, particularly in its most cramped cities and among religions that forbid or discourage cremation. The reality of relying on finite land resources to cope with the endless stream of the dying has brought about creative solutions.

One space-saving option is to put graves on top of each other, separated by a concrete divider, and have a shared headstone. This is common among couples and even whole families. A second option is stacking the dead above ground into niches built into walls, a bit like in a morgue, but adorned with headstones. A third, revolutionary option is to be buried in a building where each floor resembles a traditional cemetery.

Cemetery towers have been proposed for Paris and Mumbai. In Mexico City, there is another big project in the works: the Tower for the Dead, which will combine a vertical necropolis and an 820-foot-deep subterranean complex. Currently in Mexico City, families are forced to exhume



**OVERCROWDING AN ISSUE.** Children pray for their ancestors after sweeping their family tombstones at a cemetery in Haiki, Nagasaki prefecture, southern Japan, as they celebrate the Bon Festival. Cemetery overcrowding is an issue that resonates around the world, particularly in its most cramped cities and among religions that forbid or discourage cremation. (AP Photo/Eugene Hoshiko, File)

and remove their relatives’ remains after a period of years. Unclaimed remains may be reburied as unmarked loose bones beneath the fresh grave, or piled with others on exposed altars.

## Train service back in former Sri Lankan war zone

JAFFNA, Sri Lanka (AP) — Cheered by tens of thousands of people, a train decorated with banana trees and colorful flower garlands has arrived in Sri Lanka’s northern Tamil heartland, 24 years after the “Queen of Jaffna” was suspended due to civil war.

President Mahinda Rajapaksa bought a ticket and boarded the train for the last 43 kilometers of the journey and opened several railroad stations along the way.

Yarl Devi, as it is known in Tamil, was once a popular mode of transport between the ethnic Tamil-majority north and the Sinhala-majority south but was scaled back in 1990 because of the heightening of the civil war between the



**SERVICE RESTORED.** An ethnic Sinhalese Sri Lankan man eats lunch during a train ride from south to north in Vavuniya, Sri Lanka. The “Queen of Jaffna,” a once-popular train linking the ethnic Tamil’s northern heartland to the rest of Sri Lanka before a bloody civil war cut the link 24 years ago, has chugged back into service, reinforcing the government’s authority in a region once controlled by Tamil rebels. (AP Photo/Eranga Jayawardena)

government and the Tamil Tiger rebels.

The civil war that raged since 1983 ended in 2009 when Sri Lankan troops crushed the rebels.

## Japanese governor says it is too soon for nuke restarts

TOKYO (AP) — A Japanese governor says the country should not restart any nuclear plants until the cause of the Fukushima meltdown is fully understood and nearby communities have emergency plans that can effectively respond to another major accident.

Hirohiko Izumida, governor of central Niigata prefecture — home to the seven-reactor Kashiwazaki-Kariwa plant — said regulators look at equipment but don’t evaluate local evacuation plans.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is pushing to restart two reactors in southern Japan that last month were the first to be approved under stricter safety requirements introduced after the Fukushima disaster. Nuclear Regulation Authority chairman Shunichi Tanaka has called the new standard one of the world’s highest.

Regulators are inspecting 18 other reactors, including two in Niigata

operated by the utility that runs the Fukushima plant, which experienced meltdowns following the 2011 earthquake and tsunami. All 48 workable Japanese reactors are currently offline.

Izumida also said the Tokyo Electric Power Co. was responsible for the Fukushima crisis and has no qualifications to resume operating a nuclear plant without fully clarifying unanswered questions about the accident.

Ensuring protection of nearby residents from radiation exposure as part of a multi-layer safety measure is an international standard, but still not required in Japan. Towns as far as 18 miles from the plant, an expansion from the 12 miles before the crisis, are now required to compile evacuation plans, but many have not. Niigata compiled its evacuation plan in June and is set to test it next month.

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