Dole's popularity declines: Senate majority leader Bob Dole is losing support in the 1996 president race while retired General Colin Powell, who has not declared his candidacy, is now the front-runner, a new poll said Friday. AFP reports from Washington

Some 36 per cent of 600 people interviewed for a Time magazine/CNN poll said they would support Dole in a race against President Bill Clinton down from 39 per cent in September. But former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell emerged as a clear favourite, drawing 46 per cent support in a two-way match up to Clinton's 36 per cent, the poll said.

Volcano erupts in NZ: New Zealand's active volcano erupted Saturday, tossing lava blocks and gushing columns of steam high into a clear sky on one side of Mount Ruapehu while people skied down the other. AP reports from Wellington.

Brad Scott, a spokesman for the Institute of Geological and Nuclear Sciences, said the 3:03 pm (0303 GMT) eruption was the largest recorded since the volcano fireworks began two weeks ago.

Noted US violist Stein dies: Lillin

Fuchs Stein, a renowned violist who taught some of the world's best known string musicians, died Friday. She was 91. AP reports from Eaglewood, US

Stein graduated with honours from the New York Institute of Musical Art in 1924. She was the first violist to perform and record the six Bach suites written for solo cello, according to The New York Times.

Shining Path rebels kill 18: At least 18 people were killed by Shining Path guerillas in Peru's eastern jungle region, according to reports Friday from survivors and victims' family members, AP reports from Peru.

The killings occurred Wednesday night or Thursday morning on the road between the jungle towns of Aucayacu and Pucayacu in the department of Huanuco. The towns are 40 to 60 kilometres (25 to 40 miles) north of Tingo Maria, which is 325 kilometers (200 miles) northeast of Lima, the capital.

AFP newsman dies in road mishap: Agence France-Presse (AFP) reporter and photographer Georges Bendrihem died Friday in a road accident in Tunisia where he had been covering an official visit by French President Jacques Chirac, AFP reports from Paris.

According to an initial report, the vehicle in which Bendrihem was travelling with another French photographer overturned after a tyre burst. His colleague and the driver were slightly hurt.

More quakes hit Japan: More earthquakes hit the Izu Islands, south of Tokyo yesterday following a major jolt measuring 5.6 on the Richter scale overnight, causing landslides and damaging houses and roads, official said, AFP reports from Tokyo.

Early yesterday six people were reported missing in Kozu, small island in the Izu chain a local police officer said adding there were no reports of casualties.

Police informer killed in Egypt: Muslim militants shot dead a farmer who worked as a police informer in south Egypt Saturday, police said, AFP reports from Minya, Egypt.

Fawzi Mahran Maged, 30, was working in his fields near the town of Idara in Minya province, 250 kilometres (150 kilometres) south of Cairo, when unidentified gunmen ambushed him from a neighbouring field.

25 drown as ferry sinks in China: Twentyfive people drowned when a ferry sank in a lake in southwestern Sichuan province, according to reports reaching Beijing Saturday, Reuter says from Beijing.

The ferry, carrying at least 77 people went down about two km (1.2 miles) from shore during an early morning crossing of the Longjiang Lake on September 21, said Wednesday's edition of the Sichuan Daily, just available in the Chinese capital.

Mandela shows support for Cuba: President Nelson Mandela has again defied the United States and strongly pledged support for Cuba, target of a US trade embargo since the early 1960s, AP reports from Johanesburg.

"Many countries, including some very powerful countries have called upon us to condemn the suppression of human rights in Cuba," Mandela told the Cuba-Southern African Solidarity conference.

US-Syria talks fail to bridge gap on ME peace WASHINGTON, Oct 7: A

second round of US-Syria talks on relaunching peace negotiations with Israel failed to break the impasse on Friday and the United States conceded it may take some time before the two adversaries can make progress, reports Reuter.

US officials had hoped the Israeli-PLO peace accord signed last week at the White House would clear the way for all parties to prefocus efforts on the Israeli-Syrian peace track after three months of no visible progress.

Washington between Syrian Foreign Minister Faroouk al-Shara and senior administration officials produced no tangible movement toward resuming negotiations that effectively broke off last June.

ROK students

stage anti-govt

There was an expectation

Shara might meet President Bill Clinton and the fact that he did not underscored how little apparently the Washington talks achieved.

I can't point to any specific breakthroughs, State. Department spokesman Nicholas Burns told reporters after Shara met US Middle East negotiator Denis Ross and White House aide Mark Parris for 90 minutes at Shara's hotel.

It did take over two and a half years for the Untied States and the parties Israel and the Palestinians - to But two days of talks in make the progress that we saw last week. It may take some more time for Israel and Syria to make progress, he said.

He added, the United States cannot make a peace between two countries that are unwilling to have a peace.

Clinton seeks support for use of US troops to enforce Bosnian peace

WASHINGTON, Oct 7: President Bill Clinton, decrying an "isolationist backlash" in America and saying the nation must lead the world. appealed on Friday for support for the use of US troops to enforce a Bosnian peace accord, reports Reuter.

In a foreign policy speech clearly intended to tout his suddenly multiplying foreign policy successes heading into next year's elections. Clinton also announced he was easing some US restrictions on Cuban hopes of nurturing democracy in the Caribbean nation.

We must continue to bear the responsibility of the world's leadership," he said in a wide-ranging address that combined a defence of his record with his view of the future

"Voices from the left and the right are calling on US to step back from instead of

Celsius.

NEW DELHI, Oct 7: India's

defence spending as a share

of national income has de-

clined over the past decade

while neighbours Pakistan

and China have spent a rela-

tively higher proportion, a

defence analyst said on

Jasjit Singh, head of the

Institute for Defence Studies

and Analyses, said India cut

defence spending to a pro-

jected 2.4 per cent of Gross

Domestic Product (GDP), or

national income, in 1995-96

(April-March) from 3.05 per

cent in 1986-87.

Friday, reports Reuter.

stepping up to the challenges of the present day this isolationist backlash, which is present in both parties, is very real," he said.

Senate Republican leader Bob Dole, at a news conference responding to the president, agreed "isolationism is wrong" but said he wanted to "remind the administration that it is misguided interventionism that strengthens American

isolationism Dole, a leading contender for his party's nomination to challenge Clinton next year. said the Democratic president "is sadly mistaken" if he thinks Congress and the public have been convince US ground troops should back a Bosnian peace pact.

Clinton, addressing the Freedom House, a nonpartisan group that promotes world democracy, said the United States is obligated to

Astronomers Michel Mayor (L) and Didier Queloz of the Geneva Observatory stand

together after announcing the discovery of a new planet outside of the solar system on

Friday. They divulged their discovery during the "Cold Stars" International Congress.

The unnamed new planet is as big as Jupiter and has a temperature of 1,000 degrees

India cuts defence spending

by 9 pc of total budget in '95

that China's expenditure has

been steady at about six per

cent of GDP over the same

seven per cent.

period and Pakistan's at about

"When we compare our-

selves with our two major

neighbours, our defence bud-

get has decreased in terms of

GDP while their spending is

spending, india's defence

expenditure declined to nine

per cent of the total budget

in 1995 from 10 per cent in

1985, according to the state-

In terms of government tary expenditure.

still steady," he said.

He told a news conference

send troops to enforce a Bosnian peace agreement.

He said only NATO can effectively preserve what would be a fragile peace in the former Yugoslavia and that, "as NATO's leader, the United States must do its part and send in troops to join those of our allies under NATO command with clear rules of engagement."

Clinton has pledged to contribute up to 25,000 troops to a NATO force that would enforce any permanent peace pact that might result from talks between Bosnia's warring factions, set to begin about October 25 in the United States. A ceasefire is due to take effect next Tuesday.

The Republican-led Congress has questioned whether the United States should risk troops for such an operation.

"The United States will

- AFP/UNB photo

funded institute's annual

as a share of the national

budget rose one percentage

point to 27 per cent while

China's remained steady at

no single standard among

Asian states to measure mili-

quisition is not included in

the defence budgets of many

states, Pakistan and China be-

ing two notable examples,

But Singh said there was

"It is clear that arms ac-

was released on Friday.

10 per cent, it said.

Asian strategic review which

Pakistan's defence outlays

not be sending our forces will not send them into a peace that cannot be main tained. But we must use our power to secure that peace." said Clinton

importance of this moment.

Meanwhile, the United States is expected to send 15,000 to 20,000 troops to Bosnia as part of a NATO peacekeeping force and they could be based in the north ern town of Tuzla, administration officials said on Friday.

President Bill Clinton has in the past promised up to can agree on a peace settle-

into combat in Bosnia. We

"I have pledged to consult with Congress before authorising our participation into such an action I believe Congress understands the

of India said.

25,000 troops for the force which would be sent to Bosnia if the warring factions ment.

Tigers kill 5

soldiers

guerillas stepped up attacks

on security forces today. killing five soldiers in an am-

bush in northeast Sri Lanka,

military officials here said.

Liberation Tigers of Tamil

Eelam (LTTE) carried out a

dawn attack on government

troops in Mullaitivu district,

killing the soldiers and

wounding eight others, offi

after guerillas killed eight

soldiers in eastern Sinhapura

area in what appeared to be

the start of a retaliatory cam

paign after the Tigers' heavy

defeat by the military in the

Tigers lost more than 300

cadres Tuesday when they

tried to recapture territory

lost during a military offen-

sive in Jaffna Peninsula, the

main Tiger stronghold in

The military said 52 secu

The Voice of Tigers radio

rity personnel were also

killed in the abortive LTTE

also said that in a separate

incident a young mother and

her two children were killed

Friday by army shelling of vil-

lages from its Palaly military

Children march

for peace in

Karachi

than 400 children, many of

them disabled or mentally

retarded, marched for peace

in Pakistan's violence-rocked

city of Karachi where two

more people were killed to-

day, police said, reports

Riding in ambulances and

vans, convoys of children

passed through some of the worst hit areas of district central and east before

assembling at the mausoleum of Pakistan's founder

The children came from

the orphanages of Pakistan's

best known social worker.

Abdul Sattar Edhi, who runs

the largest network of ambu-

lances and shelter homes in

mausoleum in wheelchairs

and on stretchers to pray for

peace. White banners and

flags were used to shade the

peace," nine-year-old Imran

"We have come to pray for

children from the sun.

"Some of the children in

Mohammad Ali Jinnah.

the country.

told Reuters.

bring them up."

KARACHI, Oct 7: More

complex in the peninsula.

northern Sri Lanka.

The military said the

north earlier this week.

The attack came a day

reports AFP.

cials said

COLOMBO, Oct 7 Tamil

BJP govt wins vote of confidence in Gujarat

NEW DELHI Oct 7 A convinced Vaghela to right-wing Hindu party governing the key western Indian state of Gujarat won a crucial vote of confidence today following a bout of infighting which threatened to

split the party, reports AFP. Gujarat Chief Minister Keshubhai Patel won the vote of confidence after 120 lawmakers of his Bharativa Janata Party (Indian People's Party BJP) voted for his government in the capital Gandhinagar, the Press Trust

Forty-five legislators from Prime Minister P V Narasi mha Rao's Congress (I) Party and an independent candidate voted against the Patel government, the news agency

The united BJP stand followed extensive talks early today between rebel BJP lawmaker Shankarsinh Vaghela and national BJP leader Atal Behari Vajpayee, who

withdraw his challenge. sources said.

Patel's leadership of the six month-old government. which routed the Congress in state polls earlier this year. was under threat after

Vaghela raised the banner of

revolt, accusing Patel of authoritarian rule. Vaghela had earlier claimed the support of 46 BJP lawmakers and would have managed to oust Patel with Congress support on the

182-seat state legislature. PTI adds from Gandhinagar: The crisis in India's Bharatiya Janata Party in Gujarat state seems to have blown over temporarily with the rebel group led by Shankarsinh Vaghela deciding to vote in favour of the vote of confidence to be sought by the Chief Minister

Keshubhai Patel in the state

assembly today.

Off the Record

Mussolini's unknown fantasia

ROME: Italy's stern Fascist dictator Benito Mussolini was mad about Mickey Mouse, hailed "Snow White and the Seven Dwarves" as a masterpiece and sang Disney songs to his children at home, according to his son Romano, reports Reuter.

The dictator, dubbed "il duce," had a "very friendly" meeting with his comic-creator hero. Walt Disney, in Rome in 1935. Romano told the magazine "Immaginie Furnetti.

"He took him to (his official residence) Villa Torlonia and they talked about Mickey Mouse. Minnie and Donald Duck." Romano remembered his father being so taken with

"Snow White" that he wanted to see it again and again and to have a private viewing at home of the classic "fantasia".

A giant puff of smoke to mark the protest SEOUL: Thousands of cigarettes went up in a giant puff

of smoke Saturday as a group of women protesters in Seoul demonstrated against the sale of foreign cigarettes, reports Reuter.

"Let's not buy or sell foreign cigarettes," read one placard during the rally attended by about 150 people. "Let's get rid of foreign cigarettes," said another. The

group, named The Centre For Tomorrow Women's Culture, then burned thousands of foreign cigarettes. A statement by the group said foreign cigarettes were

threatening the nation's cigarette industry. A recent survey showed that 55 per cent of smokers

under the age of 25 preferred to smoke Japan's Mild

Because he looked like Hitler

LONDON: A man who stabbed a pub owner after being taunted for resembling Adolf Hitler was on Thursday sentenced to three years in prison, reports AP.

"They called me Adolf because I look like Adolf Hitler," John Edney, 53, had told police after the incident at a pub in Victoria, central London.

"Someone shouted "sieg heil" and that made me angry." Edney had explained after thrusting a short red-handled blade at publican Michael Lorriman, who was slightly cut

on the chin. Edney, who wears a small moustache similar to the Nazi dictator's, is lonely and suffers from a "siege mentality" and

a belief that "the world was against him." according to his lawyer, Nicholas Bleaney.

Yeltsin urged to declare emergency in Grozny MOSCOW, Oct 7: The Ru-

ssian government on Friday called on President Boris Yeltsin to declare a state of emergency in the Chechen capital Grozny after a bomb badly injured Moscow's military commander in the rebel region, reports Reuter.

The Russian government this march have lost their fathers in the senseless vioconsiders that it is necessary lence in Karachi," Edhi, who under the circumstances to organised the peace rally, introduce a state of emergency in Grozny," said a cabi-"Their poor mothers net statement carried by the handed them to us as they ITAR-Tass news agency.

were not in a position to The statement did not specify what measures a state of emergency would involve. More than two dozen children were brought to the

Under the constitution a state of emergency can only be declared by the president, but the rules on how to introduce and carry out measure are imprecise.

Lieutenant General Anatoly Romanov was fighting for his life on Friday after a bomb blast hit the convoy in which he was travelling as it passed through a tunnel near the rebel capital.

Romanov suffered heavy head, abdominal and leg wounds and was reported to be in a critical condition after emergency surgery. Three Russian servicemen died in the blast and 15 others were wounded.

The government blamed the attack on forces opposed to peace in Chechnya where thousands of people died in bitter conflict triggered by Moscow's military action to subdue the breakaway region launched last December.

The cabinet statement said Russian troops in Chechnya were ordered to take tough measures against rebel groups who have refuse to disarm under a military agreement reached between

Moscow and separatist. Ghising urges to

Clinton admin eases restrictions on travel to Cuba

WASHINGTON, Oct 7: Preprotest SEOUL, Oct 7: South Kor ean students wielded steel pipes and threw stones at riot police during an antisations to open bureaus government protest in the there. The White House said the steps would take effect

southwestern city of Kwangju today, reports Reuter. The students were demanding the government indict two former presidents.

they say were responsible for a 1980 massacre in the city. "Down with the government" masked protesters chanted as about 500 students protested outside the office of the Democratic Liberal Party (DLP) in central

Kwangju. A police official in Kwangju said there were no injuries reported during the hour-long rally.

sident Clinton eased restrictions on travel to Cuba by Cuban-Americans, academics, clergy and students Friday and invited US news organi-

immediately, reports AP. Clinton said the steps would encourage the island's "peaceful transition to a free and open society."

At the same time, however, Clinton said the 33year-old trade embargo with the communist regime of Fidel Castro will remain in place.

only one country, Cuba, continues to resist the trend to-House, a decades-old pro-

democracy lobby. Cuban Foreign Ministry spokesman Miguel Alfonso, in a telephone interview with the AP in Mexico City, called Clinton's announcement meaningless because it has no impact on the US em-

NATO meeting of defence ministers.

bargo against Cuba. "We don't give it any importance whatsoever," he

White House spokesman Mike McCurry called the steps "modest adjustments" in US policy toward Cuba. Asked if the administra-

tion believe Castro would go along with the steps. McCurry said: "We would cer-"In our own hemisphere, tainly hope so. We would expect so. We see no reason why the Castro regime would ward democracy," Clinton bar those news organisations said in a speech to Freedom interested in providing news coverage from the island."

US officials said there had been no communication with Havana about the proposal.

The Netherland Defence Minister Joris Voorhoeve (3rd from L), Iceland NATO

representative Ambassador Thorsteninn Ingolfsson (4th from L), US Admiral William

'Bud' Flanagan (C), US Secretary of Defence William Perry (2nd from R), and NATO

Secretary General Willy Claes (R), watch a demonstration of US Naval firepower from

the deck of the world's largest warship, the USS Enterprise Friday, while attending a

Clinton's executive order would allow US news organisations to open bureaus in Havana. Officials suggested the move would enable Americans to learn more about the shortcomings of life under communism.

At present, several West European news organisations have bureaus in Havana but the US media has had no such presence there since the late 1960s.

The US government allows American reporters to travel to Cuba, and Cuban authorities often grant visas but usually only for brief stays. US officials said a permanent US media presence in Havana would be to Cuba's disadvan-

tage because Americans would learn more about rights abuses and the country's economic problems.

- AFP/UNB photo

Officials said too many people living in the United States have been making unauthorised travel to Cuba. often going there via Mexico or other Caribbean countries.

Clinton's plan calls for the stationing of agents with camera equipment at airports with flights to and from Cuba. A particular target are travellers who try to enter Cuba with large sums of money.

Clinton's announcement came two days after Pope John Paul II reiterated to reporters just hours before meeting with the president his opposition to he US embargo against Cuba. "People should not be made to suffer," the pontiff said.

White House officials, however, said the economic sanctions did not come up in a 30-minute private meeting Wednesday between Clinton and the pope, who, according to some reports, may visit bureau. Cuba in February.

When asked about exchanges of reporters, Cuban officials have been non-committal in the past except to say no such arrangement is acceptable if the US government insists on allowing Radio Marti or TV Marti to open a bureau.

Both are US governmentsponsored operations that provide news and commentary tailored to Cuban audi-

ences. Both are heavily jammed, especially TV Marti Initial reaction from some US news organisations to Clinton's proposal was

Jackson Diehl, foreign editor of the Washington Post, said the newspaper asked permission from Cuban authorities a year ago to open a

"We're glad to hear from the US end it will be possible," Diehl said, adding he is hopeful Cuba will agree as

The Associated Press also said it would like to open a bureau in Cuba.

"We've been talking with the Cubans for some time about opening an AP bureau there, but the talks have always hit the roadblock of relations between Havana and Washington," said Thomas Kent, the AP's international editor

review move for autonomy of DGHC SILIGURI, Oct 7: The Dar-

jeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC) chairman, Subash Ghising, has urged both the state and the central government to immediately review the move for autonomy of the DGHC and put an end to the alleged infringement of power and functioning of the council, reports The meeting of the execu-

tive councillors held at Lalkothi September 30 and presided by Ghising also discussed the problems of overlapping power and functioning of the council allegedly by Panchayets and other agen-The meeting felt that the

West Bengal government should make fresh review of the provision of West Bengal Panchayet Act