

BRIEFLY

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

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.

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.

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: Lillian Fuchs Stein, a renowned violist who taught some of the world's best known string musicians, died Friday.

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 guerrillas in Peru's eastern jungle region, according to reports Friday from survivors and victims' family members.

The killings occurred Wednesday night or Thursday morning on the road between the jungle towns of Aucayacu and Pucayacu in the department of Huanuco.

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.

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.

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.

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: Twenty-five people drowned when a ferry sank in a lake in southwestern Sichuan province, according to reports reaching Beijing Saturday.

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.

"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.

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

But two days of talks in Washington between Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq al-Shara and senior administration officials produced no tangible movement toward resuming negotiations that effectively broke off last June.

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 United States and the parties Israel and the Palestinians — to 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.

ROK students stage anti-govt protest

SEOUL, Oct 7: South Korean students wielded steel pipes and threw stones at riot police during an anti-government protest in the 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 hours-long rally.

Clinton admin eases restrictions on travel to Cuba

WASHINGTON, Oct 7: President Clinton eased restrictions on travel to Cuba by Cuban-Americans, academics, clergy and students Friday and invited US news organisations to open bureaus there.

Clinton said the steps would take effect immediately, reports AP.

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

"In our own hemisphere, only one country, Cuba, continues to resist the trend toward democracy," Clinton said in a speech to Freedom House, a decades-old pro-

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

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 that "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

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

Tigers kill 5 soldiers

COLOMBO, Oct 7: Tamil guerillas stepped up attacks on security forces today, killing five soldiers in an ambush in northeast Sri Lanka, military officials here said, reports AFP.

Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) carried out a dawn attack on government troops in Mullaitivu district, killing the soldiers and wounding eight others, officials said.

The attack came a day after guerillas killed eight soldiers in eastern Sinhapura area in what appeared to be the start of a retaliatory campaign after the Tigers' heavy defeat by the military in the north earlier this week.

The military said the Tigers lost more than 300 cadres Tuesday when they tried to recapture territory lost during a military offensive in Jaffna Peninsula, the main Tiger stronghold in northern Sri Lanka.

The military said 52 security personnel were also killed in the abortive LTTE raid.

The Voice of Tigers radio also said that in a separate incident a young mother and her two children were killed Friday by army shelling of villages from its Palaly military complex in the peninsula.

Children march for peace in Karachi

KARACHI, Oct 7: More than 400 children, many of them disabled or mentally retarded, marched for peace in Pakistan's violence-racked city of Karachi where two more people were killed today, police said, reports Reuter.

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 Mohammad Ali Jinnah.

The children came from the orphanages of Pakistan's best known social worker, Abdul Sattar Edhi, who runs the largest network of ambulances and shelter homes in the country.

"Some of the children in this march have lost their fathers in the senseless violence in Karachi," Edhi, who organised the peace rally, told Reuters.

"Their poor mothers handed them to us as they were not in a position to bring them up."

More than two dozen children were brought to the mausoleum in wheelchairs and on stretchers to pray for peace. White banners and flags were used to shade the children from the sun.

"We have come to pray for peace," nine-year-old Imran said.



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.

India cuts defence spending by 9 pc of total budget in '95

NEW DELHI, Oct 7: India's defence spending as a share of national income has declined over the past decade while neighbours Pakistan and China have spent a relatively higher proportion, a defence analyst said on Friday, reports Reuter.

Jasjit Singh, head of the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, said India cut defence spending to a projected 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.

He told a news conference that China's expenditure has been steady at about six per cent of GDP over the same period and Pakistan's at about seven per cent.

"When we compare ourselves with our two major neighbours, our defence budget has decreased in terms of GDP while their spending is still steady," he said.

In terms of government 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-

funded institute's annual Asian strategic review which was released on Friday.

Pakistan's defence outlays as a share of the national budget rose one percentage point to 27 per cent while China's remained steady at 10 per cent, it said.

But Singh said there was no single standard among Asian states to measure military expenditure.

"It is clear that arms acquisition is not included in the defence budgets of many states, Pakistan and China being two notable examples."



The Netherlands 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 NATO meeting of defence ministers.

BJP govt wins vote of confidence in Gujarat

NEW DELHI, Oct 7: A right-wing Hindu party government 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 Bharatiya Janata Party (Indian People's Party, BJP) voted for his government in the capital Gandhinagar, the Press Trust of India said.

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

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

convinced Vaghela to 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.

Yeltsin urged to declare emergency in Grozny

MOSCOW, Oct 7: The Russian 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 considers that it is necessary under the circumstances to introduce a state of emergency in Grozny," said a cabinet statement carried by the ITAR-Tass news agency.

The statement did not specify what measures a state of emergency would involve. 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.

Ghising urges to review move for autonomy of DGHC

SILIGURI, Oct 7: The Darjeeling 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 PTI.

The meeting of the executive councillors held at Lalitoti September 30 and presided by Ghising also discussed the problems of overlapping power and functioning of the council allegedly by Panchayats and other agencies.

The meeting felt that the West Bengal government should make fresh review of the provision of West Bengal Panchayet Act.