

Thousands protest Philippine leader's arrest for corruption

By Associated Press INTERNATIONAL
MANILA, Philippines — An angry crowd stoned police as they cleared a path to escort ousted President Joseph Estrada from his home in the first arrest of a Philippine leader over corruption. Thousands more protested later today outside his jail cell.

Estrada, who defiantly maintained his innocence and insisted he never gave up the presidency, left home accompanied by his wife — a Senate candidate — and son Jinggoy, also arrested today on plunder charges. The non-bailable offense carries the death penalty, although it is considered unlikely to be imposed.

Just miles away, the former action film star was fingerprinted and had

mug shots taken at Camp Crame, the main police camp, where a special cell was prepared for him.

About 8,000 supporters gathered outside the police camp, tearing up election posters of administration candidates. They took iron railings from along the highway and brought traffic to a standstill.

The chief anti-graft court, the Sandiganbayan, ordered Estrada's arrest hours earlier on plunder and eight lesser charges. Prosecutors claim he pocketed \$82 million kick-backs and payoffs during 31 months in office.

JERUSALEM — Israel wants "some changes and improvements" in an Arab plan for restarting Israeli-Pal-

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estinian peace talks, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon says, but Palestinian officials insisted today that any alterations would erase the proposal's meaning.

In an interview published in the Jerusalem Post newspaper, Sharon said Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres will go to Cairo to deliver Israel's formal response to the Egyptian-Jordanian proposal. Israeli media reports said Peres would visit Egypt on Friday, but his spokesman, Yoram Dori, said a date for the trip has not been set.

Next week, Peres is to hold talks in Washington with U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell.

"It is impossible for us to accept any proposals that would change this initiative," said Palestinian Planning Minister Nabil Shaath, who met Tuesday in Amman with Jordanian Foreign Minister Abdul Ilah Khatib.

The proposal calls for an end to seven months of fighting and an Israeli freeze on settlement construction ahead of a resumption of talks. It also calls for a return to negotiations on a final peace deal, while Sharon only wants to negotiate a long-term interim agreement.

NATIONAL
LOS ANGELES — Robert Downey Jr.'s latest brush with the law has cost

him the job for which he won a Golden Globe earlier this year.

The actor, who made a much-heralded comeback as Calista Flockhart's love interest on TV's "Ally McBeal," was fired from the show Tuesday, hours after his arrest for investigation of being under the influence of drugs.

Downey was on foot in Culver City, near southwest Los Angeles, when he was taken into custody by officers who said he displayed symptoms of being on drugs, according to police Lt. Dave Tankenson.

Downey, 36, of Malibu, was detained a few hours, issued a misdemeanor citation and released to his parole agent. He was ordered to appear in court May 4. Hours after his release, "Ally McBeal" producer David E.

Kelley issued a brief statement saying Downey had been fired.

Tuesday's arrest could have returned him to jail immediately, but his parole agent decided instead to send him to a detoxification center for at least 72 hours, said Terry Thornton, spokeswoman for the California Department of Corrections.

SPACE CENTER, Houston — Astronauts finished installing the international space station's new 58-foot robot arm and prepared to test it out today with a mechanical handoff of a giant packing crate.

Their goal is to pass the 3,000-pound crate from the station's new robot arm to a smaller robot arm attached to space shuttle Endeavour.

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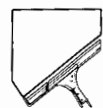
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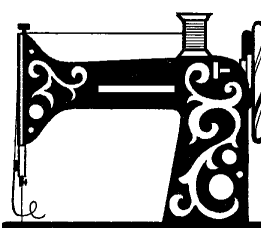
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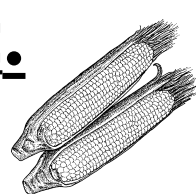
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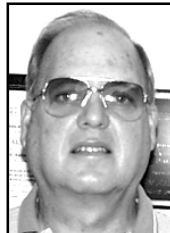
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