Indonesia pays \$2.3m compensation to Dewi Sukarno

JAKARTA, Nov 19: Indonesia has paid 2.3 million dollars in compensation to Dewi Sukarno, the Japanese-born widow of its first president, for a house it took from her and now uses as a Museum, news reports said today, reports AFP.

Another house she owned in the mountain resort of Cipayung, outside the capital and which the government also uses, will be handed back to her soon, state secretary Murdiono was quoted as saying in Seattle where he is attending a meeting of the Asia Pacific Eco-

Jordan valley to remain a security zone, says Peres

JERUSALEM, Nov 19: The Jordan valley will still be a "security zone" between Israel and Jordan under a permanent settlement in the Middle East. Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said Thursday, reports AFP.

"The Jordan valley will remain a Security Zone between Israel and Jordan." Peres told state radio on a tour of Israeli settlements near Jericho.

The army is due to start withdrawing from Jericho from December 13

BANGKOK, Nov 19: Myan-

mar's military junta has made a

fresh offer to talk peace with

minority rebels groups but the

largest of them insists op-

position leader Aung San Suu

Kyi be freed first, state radio

and rebel sources said today.

Nyunt, the powerful secretary

general of Myanmar's ruling

State Law and order Restoration

Council (SLORC), guaranteed

the safety of the rebels during

negotiations. Myanmar's state

radio reported on Thursday

like to call on ethnic minority

rebels who have been fighting

fruitlessly for the past 40 years

to have peace talks with the

government," Khin Nyunt was

quoted as saying at a gathering

of Myanmar's regional armed

forces in eastern Kayah state

"On behalf of SLORC I would

Lieutenant general Khin

reports Reuter.

nomic Cooperation forum After discussions between the government and Dewi's lawyers it was agreed to pay her 6.11 billion ruptah (2.90 million dollars) for the property in Jakarta's Gatot Subroto road. said the Kompas Daily quoting

Murdiono. After tax payments she got 2.3 million dollars, he said.

The government paid the compensation last week, several days before President Suharto left for Seattle to attend this weekend's APEC summit.

Dewi, who has not had the use of her house for 20 years. said she was still the owner and called on the government to use it for public use only and not for commercial purposes.

The army confiscated the two houses in 1970 following the death of President Sukarno, founder of the Indonesian Republic.

Dewi, one of Sukarno's two surviving widows, arrived in Jakarta last week to try to recover the homes.

She arrived amid a storm of controversy over a book of mostly nude photographs of herself she published in Japan. Indonesia banned the book

and issued an indirect warning that Dewi risked losing her na-tionality.

safety of delegates who would

take part in the peace talks.

Even if the talks fail to bring

about a peaceful solution, we

will fly you home safely by heli-

copter," Khin Nyunt was quoted

norities, especially the largest

group the Karen, have been

fighting with varying degrees of

staged a bloody coup in

September 1988, SLORC last

April declared a unilateral

ceasefire in the fighting and of-

fered to hold individual peace

(KNU) doubted the sincerity of

sincerity and honesty by releas-

ing Aung San Suu Kyi from

house arrest. That is the first

step for us to have confidence

The Karen National Union

"SLORC has to show their

talks with each minority.

SLORC's latest offer.

Formed after the military

intensity for independence-

Myanmar's dozen ethnic mi-

Myanmar junta offers

fresh talks with rebels

as saying.

Military ruler dissolves democratic institutions

US considers punitive steps against Nigeria

WASHINGTON, Nov 19: The United States condemned Thursday the military's return to power in Nigeria and said it is considering taking some punitive steps against the African country, reports Reuter.

Head of state Ernest Shonekan resigned abruptly Wednesday and General Sani Abacha, Nigeria's most powerful military officer, assumed his of-

"The United States condemns the action by General Abacha and his Nigerian military. colleagues to displace the interim government installed on July 26". State Department spokeswoman Christine Shelly

"Additional military intervention in Nigerian politics cannot solve the crisis the military created when it annulled the June 12 election, she said.

Shelly said that the United States is considering taking some unspecified further steps against Nigeria.

Shelly said that military leaders had brought pressure on Shonekan, but she declined to call it a coup.

Shonekan, a lawyer and industrialist, quit 82 days after previous military ruler General Ibrahim Babangida installed him and his government.

Babangida precipitated the crisis when he annulled an election in June, which business tycoon Moshood Abiola appeared poised to win.

Babangida stepped down in August after eight years in power but Abiola supporters and democracy campaigners strongly opposed Shonekan's appointment. A high court last week ruled the administration

Token sanctions were imposed by the United States and **European Community nations** after the June election.

AP adds: Nigeria's new military leader has abolished nearly all the country's democratic institutions, promising real democracy later but setting no timetable.

Gen. Sant Abacha, who took over in a coup Wednesday, banned the two national political parties, the federal assembly, all political associations, the National Electoral Commission and state and local governments.

"This government is a child of necessity with a strong determination to restore peace and stability to our country." Abacha said Thursday, in his first nationally broadcast speech since the coup.

He promised to hold a constitutional convention to establish a democratic government, but did not say when. In the meantime, he said he would rule as head of a "provisional ruling council" made up of mostly military officers.

"We must lay a very solid foundation for the growth of true democracy," Abacha said. "We must avoid any ad hoc or temporary solutions."

Abacha spoke to the nation of 90 million one day after ousting the civilian government of Ernest Shonekan, who was named by outgoing dictator Gen. Ibrahim Babangida as his successor.

"This regime will be firm. humane and decisive," he said. "Any attempt to test our will will be decisively dealt with."

Babangida resigned under pressure on Aug. 26 after annulling the results of the June 12 presidential election, which was to end a decade of military rule. The annulment led to civil unrest and political turmoil that Abacha said had seriously damaged the economy.

Abacha was a key figure in the military coup that ousted the last elected government in 1983, and the subsequent coup that put Babangida in power two years later. He was believed to have forced Babangida to step down and remained the real power in Shonekan's gov-

Though some Nigerians believe Abacha would like to see the military end its history of dominating the government, his promises of democracy were reminiscent of empty pronouncements made by previous military dictators.

Some Nigerians hoped Abacha would immediately install the man who apparently won the June ballot, business tycoon Moshood K.O. Abiola, as president. But Abacha did not say if he would do that.

of electoral misconduct

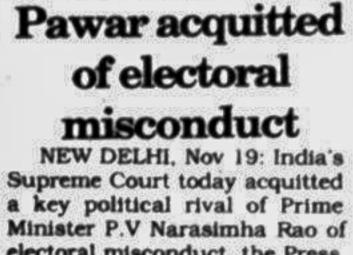
electoral misconduct, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said, reports

It said the Court had cleared Sharad Pawar, 53-year-old Chief Minister of India's Maharashtra state, of charges related to 1991 parliamentary elec-

Pawar, who was elected to India's Lok Sabha (lower house) that year but gave up his seat to assume state power, was found guilty by the Bombay High Court last March.

Congress party, Pawar is widely seen as a key rival of the 72year-old Prime Minister. If he had lost his appeal to the Supreme Court, he would have been barred from contesting further parliamentary elections.

An independent candidate had accused Pawar of engaging in character assassination



Reuter.

A member of Rao's ruling

last Wednesday. in them," said a senior Karen "SLORC guarantees the

6 die in Kazakh coal mine blast:

An explosion of methane gas in a coal mine in northern Kazakhstan killed six workers Thursday, a news agency

reported, AP says from Moscow. The explosion at the Bogatyr mine near the city of Ekibastuz, 1,500 kilometres (925 miles) southeast of

Moscow, occurred when workers were drilling holes in water drainage pipes, the agency said. The mine provides 80 per cent of the 100 million tons of

coal mined yearly in the Ekibastuz basin. A commission has been set up to investigate the accident.

Bus mishap claims 17 in Brazil: Seventeen people were killed and 12 badly injured when a bus carrying 46 passengers plunged off a mountain road and into a ravine east of Sao Paulo, police said yesterday, Reuter reports from Sao Paulo.

The accident occurred Wednesday night on the road between Caraguatatuba, a holiday beach resort popular with Sao Paulo residents, and Sao Jose Dos Campos.

Police said the driver apparently lost control of the vehicle while climbing a steep road and the bus plunged 30 metres (100 feet) into a ravine, rolling over several times and landing upside down.

Gunmen kill six in S Africa: Gunmen shot dead six members of a family in a township east of Johannesburg on Thursday night, South African police said on Friday, Reuter reports from Johannesburg.

They said at least four gunmen armed with AK-47 assault rifles opened fire on the family's home in troubled Katelehong at about 10:15 pm (2015 GMT).

"Three men and three women were killed. Two children were wounded but survived the attack and were taken to hospital," a police spokeswoman told Reuters. No arrests have been made.

Ex-ROK minister jailed for 3 yrs: Former Defence Minister Lee Jong-koo was sentenced to three years in prison Friday and fined 225,000 dollars for accepting bribes from arms dealers while in office from 1990 to 1991, AP reports from Seoul.

Lee's predecessor, Lee Sang-hoon, also received a threeyear sentence in October and was fined 36,000 dollars for applying pressure in several arms deals, including a 1991 contract to buy five P-3C anti-submarine patrol planes from Lockheed Corp.

President Kim Young-sam has attacked corruption since taking office in February, purging thousands of people in government, business and the military

Tuberculosis to kill 3m: Tuberculosis will kill 3 million people worldwide this year - more than any other infectous disease - the World Health Organisation said on Thursday, Reuter reports from Atlanta.

"This is a global emergency and, so far, nobody has answered the 911 call (emergency telephone number)," said Richard Bumgarner, senior programme management officer for WHO.

In addition to the 3 million people who will die, another 8 million will become infected with the disease, WHO officials said in an Atlanta news conference.

Russia, Lithuania sign 9 accords: Russia and Lithuania signed nine cooperation agreements Thursday that Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin called "a breakthrough" in relations, Reuter says from Moscow.

The main document, signed by Chernomyrdin and Lithuanian Prime Minister Adolfas Slezevicius, granted the two former Soviet republics most favoured nation trading status and halved taxes on transfers of capital and goods.

UN extends mandate for troops in Somalia

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 19: The UN Security Council has extended by six months the mandate for troops in Somalia. but delayed until February a decision on what will happen after US forces withdraw, reports

Reuter. In a resolution, drafted by the United States and adopted by all 15 members Thursday, the council renewed the life of the UN Operation in Somalia

(UNOSOM) until the end of May. But the resolution says that Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali must present a detailed report on UNOSOM's future as soon as possible and that the council would review the substance of the mandate by February.

The debate reflected fears that turmoil would break out in Somalia once President Clinton. as promised, pulled out American troops March 31. There were also apprehenwould rearm. But, there was general recognition that UN troops in future would not be ordered to disarm groups by force except in self-defence. US ambassador Madeleine

sions that Somali factions

Jim Mouth of San Diego, California, uses a fan to blow smoke from 155 cigarettes as he breaks

the record of 'the Guinness Book of World Records' for smoking the cigarettes Thursday. Mouth

attempts to break this record annually on the 'Great American Smoke Out' a day when various

organisations encourage smokers to give up their habit for one day.

Albright told the council that the United Nations would not abandon efforts to bring peace and political reconciliation to the people of Somalia.

But she warned that if factions could not work together. "they cannot expect the United Nations to do it for them."

Djibouti's ambassador, Roble Olhaye, said Somali factions were rearming in advance of the American withdrawal. As a neighbour of Somalia.

he said the "bottom line is that Somalia must disarm and that the United Nations must make an effort to bring this about." Ethiopia's ambassador,

Mulugeta Eteffa, emphasised negotiations and development

aid. He said that if the world was willing to pay for costly peacekeeping operations, it should be ready to invest a modest amount for peacemak-

He said there should be no illusion that a settlement was in sight but he noted that including all factions in the negotiating process, led by his country, was important.

Boutros-Ghali has given the Security Council three options for UNOSOM after the American troops leave, ranging from retaining its strength more or less intact to securing only ports and airports to keep supply routes open.

Diplomats said most members favoured his second option of retaining some 16,000 troops plus about 2,500 logistics personnel to be approved - if enough forces and sophisticated logistics support were available.

withdrawing by March 31 would not have to be replaced and UNOSOM would only use force in self-defence. But the disarmament of Somali factions would be entirely voluntary. UNOSOM currently com-

Under this option, troops

prises more than 29,000 troops, including about 3,000 Americans. Another 17,700 US troops are in Mogadishu or based on ships offshore. Belgium, France and Swe-

den, which together provide about 2,000 troops, have announced their intention to pull out even sooner and other countries may well follow suit.

French ambassador Jean-Bernard Merimee criticised the separate status of US forces outside the UN command, apparently fearing this could set a precedent for other nations participating in future UN oper-

Off the Record



A model of William Tang wears a translucent copper-coloured dress Thursday at the Grand Hotel in Paris during presentation of nine Hong Kong designers' - AFP photo collections.

Swami jumps from 19-storey building

NEW DELHI: Hindu mystic Swami Vidyanand plunged to his

telling his followers he intends to " shed his body," the Indian Express reported Friday, says AFP. Vidyanand, 75, drove to the administration building Thursday in an ambulance and went up to the roof telling se-

death from the top of a 19-storey building in Bombay after

curity personnel he wanted to pray to the sun - he was accompanied by three of his closest disciples. The eccentric guru, who had recently taken to wearing vests

and shorts made of jute, died instantly in the fail, the Indian Express said. His disciples said the mystic had told them of his intention to "shed his body and leave for a heavenly abode." The Indian

Express said he distributed to followers a pamphlet on his "last voyage" before committing suicide. The guru was close to several Indian politicians. He charted the horoscopes of many leaders including the late Prime

Mountain peaks resemble Mao's head

Minister Indira Gandhi.

December 29, 1976.

HONG KONG: Two more mountain peaks which resemble the late Chinese leader Mao Zedong have been discovered in northeastern China, the semi-official Hong Kong China News Service (CNS) said Friday, reports AFP.

The two peaks, resembling Mao's head, were found in a mountain range in Xiuyan in southeastern Liaoning province. CNS said.

Other mountains in China's northwestern Xinjiang province and near the southern city of Huizhou, near Hong Kong, also show a likeness to Mao.

In Huizhou, local authorities and an armed police troop stationed in the area have tried to profit from the natural wonder

by building facilities for visitors. China is preparing to mark the 100th anniversary of the birth of the former Communist Party chairman who died

"Improved nutrition, health care precipitate puberty"

WASHINGTON: Eating and learning better - and putting off marriage - has led to more adolescent sexual activity in most countries, a new study says, reports AP.

"Improved nutrition and health care mean that puberty now begins earlier," said the International Planned Parenthood Federation report

"The report said more youths in developing countries are going to school, staying in school longer and getting married later. These are all positive developments, but the longer period between maturity and marriage leads to more unwanted pregnancies, the report said.

In Latin America, it found teenage girls accounting for nearly one birth in five. In some part of Africa the figure is almost one in four.

" A study in rural Uganda found that the mean age for first sex was 15 years for both boys and girls," it said. The finding means that when Ugandan youngster were asked at what age they first had sex, just as many named ages

below 15 as above it. "In Algeria and Morocco 2,000 unwanted babies are abandoned every year by young unmarried women," the study re-

De Klerk warns against bid to foil democratic process

DURBAN (South Africa), Nov 19: President Frederik de Klerk on Thursday warned against any attempt by political parties opposed to South Africa's new draft constitution to hamper the democratization process by violence, reports AFP.

De Klerk and African National Congress (ANC) President Nelson Mandela were both in the southern region of Kwazulu-Natal on Thursday, hours after the end of the all-night constitutional session in Johannesburg that saw political leaders adopt the basic law to end 300 years of white minority rule.

We dare not allow anyone to jeopardize the legitimate democratic process by illegal means," De Klerk said after a meeting with the visiting Commonwealth Secretary General, Chief Emeka Anyaoku.

It was a barely veiled threat against the freedom alliance of conservative parties, including the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) - which has its stronghold in this region - and white far-right groups that have called on their followers to -prepare for war.

Anyaoku said he was "delighted" with the new phase in South Africa's negotiated

passage to majority rule and that the Commonwealth was prepared to help South Africa meet "the challenge of plural-Mandela, meanwhile, took

his campaign for the April 27 election into the heartland of his most virulent opposition; heavily right-wing Richard's Bay, a stronghold of Eugene Terre Blanche's Neo-Nazi Afrikaner Resistance Movement, and nearby Empangeni, which strongly supports the IFP.

Hours after the all-night constitutional session in Johannesburg, the 75-year-old Mandela was grilled at Empangeni by Church leaders over the ANC's alliance with the South African Communist Party and ANC members with communist views, participants at the closed-door meeting reported.

A sleepless Mandela, arriving here straight from the World Trade Center in Johannesburg, had a short rest at a local hotel before heading for the black township of Sundumbili, on the banks of the Tugela river that draws the southern boundary of what is historically Zulu terri-

The township has been the scene of fierce clashes between

supporters of the ANC and Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi's IFP, and ANC security officials and the South African police took strict measures around Mandela.

The ANC leader, in an IFP stronghold for the second weekend in a row, was scheduled to hold one of his "people's forums," in which he replies to questions from the general public on a variety of issues. The meeting in Sundumbili,

ANC sources said, would target mainly "minorities," including White and Indian businessmen of the region. Mandela's trip came shortly

after IFP regional secretary Muzi blessed Gwala called on his supporters to "go in their thousands" to ANC rallies to challenge the ANC leader and "hear all the nasty things Mandela is saying about Dr Buthelezi.

Senzo Mchunu told the Sapa news agency that he had contacted Gwala over the remarks. apparently sparked by special invitations to attend the forums the ANC had sent to some IFP supporters. Mchunu said Gwala had ap-

ANC regional secretary

parently misinterpreted this as a general invitation to all IFP supporters.



A militant of Ezzedin el Qassam, the armed wing of the Islamic fundamentalist movement, Hamas, gestures to a photographer while patrolling Rafah refugee camp in Gaza — AFP photo

PLO-Israeli talks resume Monday

CAIRO, Nov 19: Israeli-PLO autonomy talks are to resume at a secret location here on Monday and are expected to continue for four days, chief Palestinian negotiator Nabil Shaath announced Thursday, reports AFP.

He told a news conference that each side would be represented by five-member delegations, which could be enlarged to a maximum of eight.

Talks between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation, aimed at implementing a September 13 accord providing limited autonomy to the West Bank and Gaza Strip, broke down two weeks ago after several sessions at the Egyptian Red Sea

resort of Taba. Shaath complained that "the Taba arrangement had been too crowded burdened with a plenary committee and sub-commit-

But since moving to Cairo last week in a streamlined session, he said, "the negotiations have become more positive."

Shaath earlier Thursday said

he was "optimistic" that Israel and the PLO would meet a December 13 deadline to iron out differences on the scope of an Israeli military withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho, where autonomy is to be initially implemented.