

BRIEFLY

Israeli army officer held: An Israeli army lieutenant has been arrested on suspicion of helping anti-Arab Jewish militants obtain weapons, Israel army radio said yesterday. Reuter reports from Jerusalem.

The officer, a resident of the Jewish settlement of Kiryat Arba, near Hebron in the occupied West Bank, was taken into custody on Friday, the report said.

Perry cancels Russia visit: Defence Secretary William Perry cancelled plans to visit Russia for a joint peacekeeping exercise to remain in Washington to work on matters involving Haiti and Cuba, officials said on Saturday. AFP reports from Moscow.

Perry had been due to leave on Monday to observe the peacekeepers' manoeuvre marking the first presence of US infantry soldiers in the heart of Russia.

6 die in Bombay bldg collapse: At least six people were killed and 13 injured when a three-storey building collapsed in northern Bombay on Saturday, police said. Reuter reports from Bombay.

The accident occurred in the crowded suburb of Dombivli, the second mishap in two days in Bombay which has experienced heavy monsoon rains in the past week. Police said seven firemen and six rescuers were injured while clearing the debris of the 17-year-old block.

Egypt frees 30 rebels: Thirty suspected Muslim militants who 'renounced extremist thought' were freed from Egyptian jails on Saturday, police said. AFP reports from Cairo.

The release brings to 90 the number of suspected militants released since last May. None of those freed Saturday were involved in murder or attempted murder, but were 'accused of joining armed militant groups,' police said.

Lusaka meet next week: Delegates from eight African countries are expected to meet in Lusaka next week to sign an agreement to set up a multinational African task force to combat the international syndicates smuggling wildlife products out of the region. Xinhua reports from Lusaka.

The meeting, the third and final round of negotiations among Eastern and Southern African countries, will be attended by Lesotho, Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. Zambian tourism permanent secretary Xen Vlarakis said at a press briefing here Friday.

Sudanese officer kidnapped: Sudan said on Saturday Egyptian troops had launched an attack on a disputed border area and kidnapped a Sudanese officer, Reuter reports from London.

A foreign ministry statement broadcast by Sudanese radio, monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation, said the attack was designed to occupy the area, at the heart of tense relations between the two neighbouring nations.

12 killed in Peru: Twelve workers died and five were injured when a wall collapsed on Friday at a construction site in the southern Andean city of Arequipa where they were building a parking garage, authorities said on Saturday. Reuter reports from Lima.

Lieutenant Alejandro Saenz of the Arequipa Fire Department said eight bodies have been recovered so far and four remain buried beneath cement, rocks and dirt at the work site on San Jose street.

Talks on Liberia tomorrow: Former American President Jimmy Carter said that Liberia's warlords and political leaders would start peace talks in Ghana next Tuesday. Reuter reports from Accra.

Carter, whose departure from Ghana was delayed by a technical fault in his private plane, was addressing reporters on Saturday at Accra Airport.

7 die as roof caves in: At least seven people were killed and 17 injured when the roof of a low category hotel caved in during heavy rains in Lahore on Saturday, the officials Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) said. AFP reports from Lahore.

Most of the victims were labourers, the agency said, adding that the condition of some of the injured, who were all hospitalised, was critical.

China fights against cancer: China has selected a number of exemplary individuals and families for putting up a fight against the dreaded disease, cancer, in an apparent attempt to spread awareness and encourage patients to pursue cures. PTI reports from Beijing.

A total of 102 people have been selected as 'cancer-battle stars' here for the 'courageous spirit they have shown in fighting against the deadly disease,' official Xinhua news agency said on Saturday night.

Israel-Mauritania secret contact: Israel and Mauritania have held secret, non-official contacts aimed at setting up interest sections in each other's countries, Israeli television said Saturday. AFP reports from Jerusalem.

Contacts took place in recent months with a European country acting as intermediary, the television said quoting 'political sources.'

Li Peng may visit S Korea: Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng may visit South Korea next month to discuss business, North Korea's nuclear problem and security. Yonhap news agency said yesterday. AFP reports from Seoul.

Li would be the highest Chinese official to visit South Korea since the former adversaries normalised diplomatic ties two years ago. Li's visit is drawing special attention in South Korea where concern has grown over uncertainty over the power transfer in North Korea, is suspected nuclear programme and a campaign to renew Pyongyang-Washington ties.

Fake voting alleged in Mexico: The leading left-wing opposition party has charged that about 1 in 20 voting precincts reported more votes than registered voters in Mexico's August 21 presidential elections. AP reports from Mexico City.

A representative of the Democratic Revolutionary Party, or PRD, told the Federal Electoral Institute on Friday night that 3,349 precincts each reported more than 1,500 votes, the maximum number allowed under Mexican electoral law. There are 63,589 precincts nationwide.

Moros free Koreans

MANILA, Sept 4: Muslim rebels allowed South Korean engineers to leave a construction camp Sunday where they were stranded since last week because of fighting, the military chief said, reports AP.

Gen. Arturo Enrile said the seven Koreans were 'freed' by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front near the town of Carmen about 600 miles (960 kilometers) south of Manila.

They were taken to a military camp for medical check-ups and were expected to fly to Manila later.

The Koreans, employees of Shinsung Construction Corp. were trapped at an irrigation project last week. The military launched attacks against the Moro rebels, who had been employed as project guards.

Rabin, Peres campaign against each other for Nobel Peace Prize

JERUSALEM, Sept 4: The 1994 Nobel Peace Prize has opened up old hostilities between Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres who are campaigning for the award and against each other.

The two are running intensive campaigns to try to win the peace prize, one minister told AFP. 'Everything else has become secondary to winning the Nobel Prize.'

They are both over 70 years old and in the twilight of their towering careers. Glory and a place in history is a huge motivation for the pair now, he said.

Rabin's bureau director and former journalist Eytan Haber is orchestrating the premier's bid, centred on the United States, the officials said.

And Uri Savir, Foreign min-



(L-R) Second runner-up Miss Spain Carmen Vicente, Miss International Christina Llekka of Greece and first runner-up Miss Aruba Alexandra Ochoa pose after winning the 1994 Miss International beauty pageant yesterday at Ise city in western Japan. — AFP photo

Lankan troops wary of peace accord with Tamil Tigers

PALALY MILITARY BASE, Sept 4: Battle hardened Sri Lankan soldiers are wary of a peace accord with their separatist foes, the Tamil Tigers that they fear may backfire, reports AFP.

Troops in jungle-camouflaged uniforms assembled outside a Buddhist shrine in this sprawling complex Saturday to question junior Defence Minister Anuruddha Ratwatte on the new government's peace bid.

AP from Jaffna reports: Battle weary troops manning military outposts in northern Sri Lanka fear Tamil rebels may once again use peace talks to strengthen their depleting defences.

The new Peoples' Alliance (PA) government had promised unconditional talks when it came to power about two weeks ago and the rebels have agreed to come out of the northern jungles for negotiations.

When the previous government offered to hold talks, the rebels used the ceasefire to strengthen their bases, captured 900 policemen, killed most of them and buried them in mass graves.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) has been fighting soldiers for 11 years to carve out a homeland for the minority Tamils in the north and the east. The war has left 34,000 people dead.

'In the past, the rebels broke ceasefire during peace talks. ... This must not happen again,' said Kapila Pushpakumara, a soldier at an air base in northern Jaffna Peninsula.

During a visit to many bases in the north Sunday, Anuruddha Ratwatte told soldiers the government will use the military to end the war if negotiations fail.

'I will negotiate ... to end the war, but will not give in to rebel demand for a separate state,' said Ratwatte, a retired

army colonel.

But the army reportedly has told the government that soldiers should not be confined to the barracks to prevent surprise attacks by the rebels. The soldiers should continue to be in full alert, military officials said on condition of anonymity.

The army commanders also have said the government must reject the demand for a ceasefire, one of conditions of the Tigers to begin talks, military sources said.

On Friday, the rebels released 10 policemen who were held captive for four years. That gesture was in response to the government partially lifting an economic embargo on the north, which has impoverished millions of people.

Negotiations with the Tigers would be a major breakthrough because the earlier UNP government refused to hold talks until the Tigers laid down arms.

Confce on future of N-power in Vienna from today

VIENNA, Sept 4: The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) begins a four-day conference here on Monday to debate the future of nuclear power as a source of energy, reports AFP.

The gathering comes amid public anxiety over nuclear energy, prompted by recent reports of plutonium smuggling and lingering fears left over from the 1986 accident at Chernobyl power plant in the former Soviet Union.

The challenge for nuclear industry is to maintain and improve the technical and economic performance of nuclear power while enhancing

even further its safety and environmental credentials," IAEA Director Hans Blix said.

Delegates here — who will not adopt formal resolutions will evaluate new type of reactors, such as the European pressurised water reactor being readied for commercial service in 2005 by French and German engineers.

Participants at the conference — which marks the 40th anniversary of the world's first civilian nuclear power station at Obninsk in Russia — are also to discuss measures to reduce investment costs in order to make nuclear power more competitive in relation to coal

and gas as a source of energy.

Between now and 2010, according to Blix, who cited a study by the organisation of economic cooperation and development, demand for electricity will increase by 75 per cent.

'Where will this electricity come from?' he asked.

At present 430 nuclear reactors are operating in 30 countries, providing 17 per cent of the world's power.

There are 55 reactors under construction, mostly in Asia and Central Europe, in response to economic expansion there.

25 foreigners held in Pakistan

PESHAWAR, Sept 4: Pakistani authorities on Saturday arrested 25 Arabs, Afghans and West Indians at Torkham, on the border with Afghanistan, officials said, reports AFP.

The foreigners, who allegedly crossed the border secretly, were booked for illegal entry into the country, they said.

An official campaign has been under way in Pakistan's northwestern region to deport Muslim Arab volunteers who have settled here following the end of Afghanistan's anti-communist war.

Pakistan, which still shelters some 1.2 million Afghan refugees, closed the main border crossing in January after Mujahideen factional fighting triggered a new exodus from Kabul.

Libya won't yield to Western pressure

TRIPOLI, Sept 4: Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi vowed Saturday that Tripoli would never yield to Western pressure over the Lockerbie bombing, reports AFP.

Libya will never give in, Gaddafi, told foreign reporters in Libya for Thursday's 25th anniversary of the coup which brought him to power.

'We are suffering from United Nations' sanctions but even if they are maintained until judgement day we will never sell out our independence and sovereignty, he added.

The United Nations imposed an air traffic and arms embargo on Libya in April 1992 after Tripoli refused to hand over two Libyans sus-

pected of bombing a Pan Am plane which exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland, in December 1988, killing 270 people.

The sanctions were tightened last December with a ban on some oil equipment.

The UN Security Council has also demanded that Tripoli cooperate with French justice officials investigating the bombing of a French UTA airliner over Niger in 1989, which left 170 people dead.

But Gaddafi said it is France which violated the UN Security Council resolutions and refused to cooperate with Libya in the investigation.

'If Paris does not want a solution, too bad. The plane which fell was not ours,' he added.

French student abduction: Two Indian cops held

NEW DELHI, Sept 4: Two police guards of a top Indian politician's grandson have been arrested for the abduction and alleged rape of a French student, newspapers reported today, says AFP.

The policemen were caught on Saturday. They were later identified by the girl as two of the five or six men who abducted her from the home of Kenyan friends in the northern city of Chandigarh on August 31 and raped her in another house.

The woman, who has only been identified as Katia, escaped next morning and told her friends she had been raped. She is reported as saying that under pressure from police, she charged her kidnappers only with a less serious count of molestation.

The Asian Age daily said the two police were guards of a grandson of Beant Singh, Chief Minister of the northern Indian state of Punjab

Little progress in US-Cuban talks

NEW YORK, Sept 4: Cuba's chief negotiator says the United States has taken a rigid stance in talks to stop the flight of Cubans to Florida, and predicted little progress until discussions tackle the economic embargo, reports AP.

Ricardo Alarcon insisted the thousands of Cubans have risked crossing the Florida Straits in flimsy rafts because of the embargo maintained by the United States against the communist government.

Cuba is 'flexible enough' to discuss trying to end the exodus when talks resume Sunday afternoon in New York, he said on CNN's 'Newsmaker Saturday.'

'But we have to make it very clear ... that if you want to find a real resolution to this problem, you cannot ignore the sources of the problem,' he said. 'And the sources are the economic embargo.'

The US negotiators 'are not prepared even to talk about that,' Alarcon said.

Russia threatens to withdraw troops from Bosnia

MOSCOW, Sept 4: Russia would withdraw its troops from Bosnia-Herzegovina if the UN arms embargo is lifted to boost the Bosnian Muslims against the Serbs, Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev warned here Saturday, reports AFP.

Kozyrev told Russia's leading television station, 'if the worst were to happen, for example NATO airstrikes or the lifting of the arms embargo, then we have already warned our partners that our contingent could not remain in place as its peace mission would be changed and it would become part of military operations.'

Israel, Syria very close to peace accord: Sharon

JERUSALEM, Sept 4: Israel and Syria are very close to a peace agreement, according to former Defence Minister Ariel Sharon, reports AFP.

Only a few minor points remain to be settled for an agreement, Sharon told the right-wing Likud Party on Saturday night.

As soon as an agreement is signed the government is ready to withdraw the army from most of the Golan within one year and to deploy along the line of Heights overlooking the galilee, Sharon said.

'That line will also be handed over to the Syrians after an interim period.'

The reserve general said the outstanding points were Israel's demand for a five-year interim period while Syria wants only three years and the final line of withdrawal.

Off the Record

Obscenities spray-painted on president's grave

LANCASTER: The cemetery where President James Buchanan is buried was vandalised and obscenities were spray-painted on his tombstone, reports AP.

America's 15th president, who died in 1868, is buried in Union County's Woodard Hill Cemetery overlooking the city of Lancaster and the Conestoga River.

On Thursday, someone painted three sexually-explicit slang words on his tombstone and toppled neighbouring tombstones. A construction company donated the work of removing the paint on Saturday.

'I was real upset that this was done,' said Eric Berman, owner of Berman Construction, 'Good God, this was a president of the United States.'

Buchanan, America's only bachelor president, served from 1857 to 1861.

Boy slits throat of widow

CHICAGO: An 11-year-old boy was charged with murder Saturday for allegedly slitting the throat of an 84-year-old widow during a robbery last year, reports AP.

Police said the boy, who was not identified because of his age, confessed to the crime in an interview Friday. He had been interviewed at the time of the slaying, but police initially didn't consider him a suspect. When other leads didn't work out, police interviewed him again.

The boy, who lived next door to the woman, had no previous criminal record, police said.

Anna Gilvis was found bound and beaten in her apartment on October 5, 1993.

Police said the woman found the boy in her kitchen and hit him with her cane, then locked herself in a bathroom. The boy pushed the door open, beat her with her own cane and cut her throat with a knife.

Otzi was Italian

LONDON: Otzi the 5,300 year old iceman found in an Alpine glacier three years ago was an Italian, say researchers who studied the moss he used as toilet paper, reports Reuter.

The iceman was found sticking out of the glacier by two climbers in the Otztal Alps on the Austro-Italian border. He had been freeze-dried 10,000 feet (3,000 metres) above sea level.

Dr James Dickson, of Glasgow University in Scotland, says he has solved Otzi's nationality after researching the moss found around the body.

'Mosses were often used — until recently — for wiping. People would grab a clump and use it later. That is what Otzi must have done,' Dickson told the Observer newspaper.

The nearest source of that moss is the Vinschau valley in Italy and Dickson concluded: 'The bottom line is simple: Otzi was Italian.'

Punishment indeed!

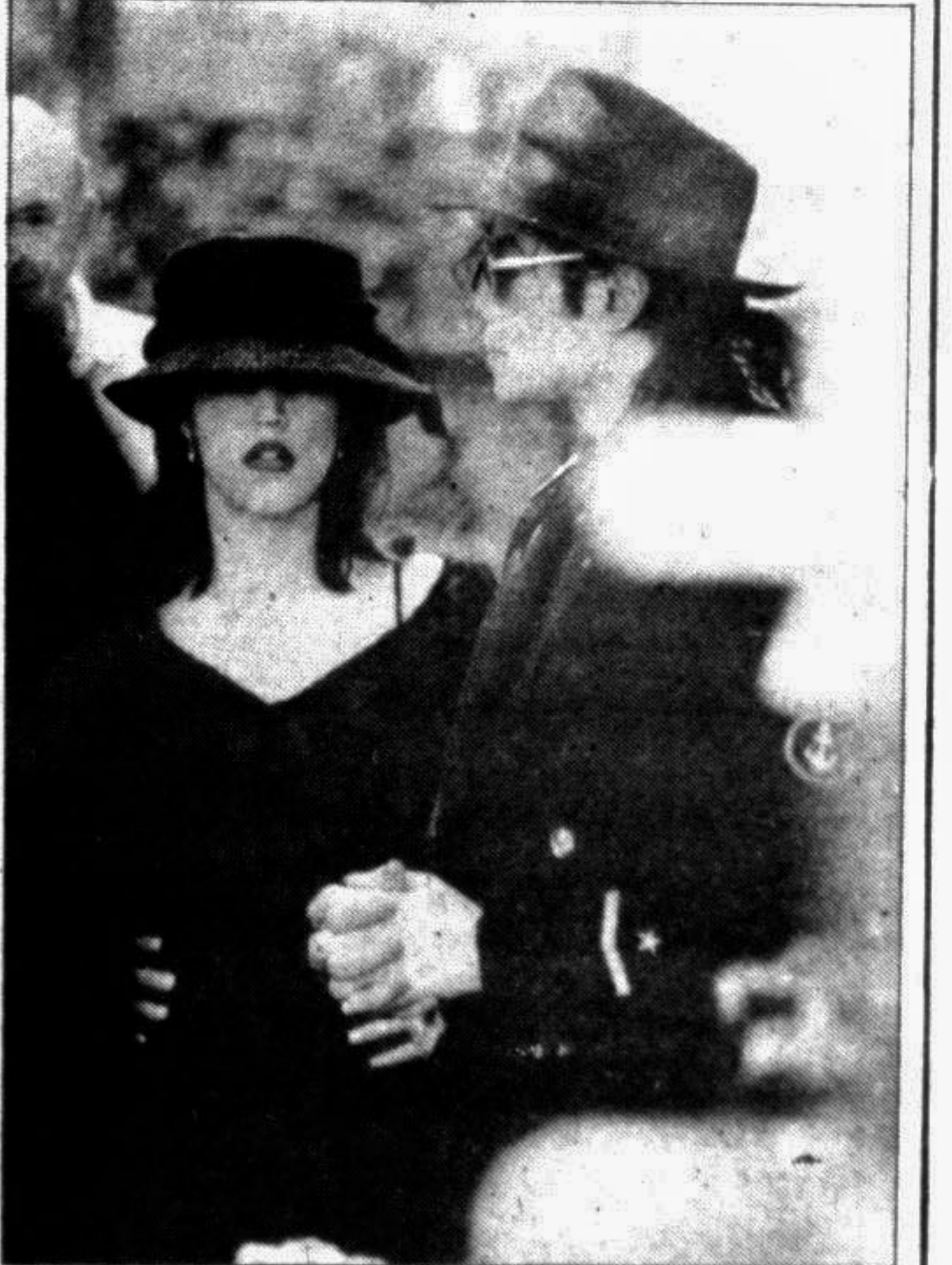
KLAWOCK, Alaska: They'll have sleeping bags, and tools for cutting firewood and gathering food. But they'll have no way to contact the outside world during a year or more of exile to offshore islands whose only inhabitants are animals, including black bears, reports AP.

Two 17-year-old Tlingit Indian youths, Adrian Guthrie and Simon Roberts, were banished to separate islands by tribal elders for beating and robbing a pizza delivery man.

It is the first case of a state court referring a criminal case to an American tribal panel for a traditional Indian punishment.

Guthrie and Roberts were held aboard a fishing boat Saturday pending their move to the sprawling Alexander Archipelago of hundreds of mountainous islands off the coast of southeastern Alaska. Tribal officials will not disclose their final destinations.

The teen-agers pleaded guilty in May to robbing Tim Whittlesey and beating him with a baseball bat while he was working as a pizza delivery man in Everett. They stole 47 dollars and a pizza. Whittlesey, 25, suffered permanent damage to his hearing and eyesight.



US pop star Michael Jackson and his wife Lisa Marie Presley take a look around a toy-shop in Cannes, on the French Riviera, on Saturday. The newly-wed couple is in Cannes on a brief private visit. — AFP photo

Algeria steps up security in universities

ALGIERS, Sept 4: Faced with a threat by Muslim militants to attack schools, the government said on Saturday it was posting 1,500 security guards at universities for the beginning of fall classes, reports AP.

No additional security was announced for the nation's secondary schools, which would have required the deployment of thousands more guards by the cash-strapped government.

The minister for higher education, Boubekeur Benbouzid, announced the additional guards in a message on the state-owned radio on Saturday. The guards are to check IDs at university entrances.

In 1979, Rabin accused Peres of subversion and megalomania in a book which the opposition used against the latter for years to come.

The vendetta has continued with the struggle for the Labour Party leadership and some analysts predict disastrous results if Peres is snubbed by the Nobel committee.

They shared a UN peace award with Arafat in July, but Spain forgot Peres when it announced an international cooperation award on Friday.

Both Rabin and Peres have been nominated among 132 Nobel Peace Prize candidates, Maariv said.

istry director-general, is running the Peres campaign concentrating on Europe.

Everyone in Israel believes at least one of the two will get the award and both camps have approached numerous previous winners to back their claims.

The laureates will be announced on October 14, fittingly enough in Oslo where secret talks between the PLO and Israel led to the declaration of principles for autonomy last September.

Shevah Weiss exercised his prerogative as Israeli parliament speaker to put forward Rabin's name. 'I could not recommend more than one person,' he said.

The precedent of the award to the late Israeli Premier, Menachem Begin and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in 1979 does not augur well either.

However, in the cabinet, there is wide recognition of the key role Peres played in the breakthrough with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and in pushing Rabin into accepting a deal.

'The best thing would be a joint prize. It would be a tragedy if Rabin gets it and not Peres,' said another senior government official.

Rabin has reportedly told friends that Peres is obsessed with glory.

He was not pleased when Peres put out a book called 'The New Middle East' in the middle of the process, fully praising his own role and ignoring others.

Another minister noted that Rabin, despite his disclaimers, is not indifferent to glory and is well aware of his historic role. He was military chief of staff during Israel's stunning victory over the Arabs in the 67 Middle East war.

Peres appeared to use all his diplomatic talent in a statement on the Nobel race. 'I am not looking for glory,' he said.

'I prefer peace to a Nobel Prize. If Rabin signs peace and wins the Nobel Prize I will congratulate him.'

But the minister, who asked not to be named, said: 'The pair of them are obsessed by their place in history. The battle between them now is for the prime role.'

The Maariv newspaper picked up on the story this week under the headline: 'Nobel Peace Prize Battle.'

'The atmosphere is tense in

the offices of Rabin and Peres,' the daily said. Sources close to Rabin said he wants the prize for himself.

'Peres' men are convinced the prime minister is doing everything he can to stop Peres. Rabin's men have thrown back the accusation.'

The newspaper said hostilities began in November 1993, when a Rabin aide returned from overseas with news that Peres had already launched a campaign with letters of support from French President Francois Mitterrand and British Prime Minister John Major.

In fact, Peres and Rabin have reportedly been at war with each other for decades, marked by periodic truces.

It can be traced back to the mid-50's when Peres, as pre-

mier Ben Gurion's hitman, dismantled the Palmach military unit of which Rabin was a senior commander.

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