

NEWS AT A GLANCE

■ **Deputy Defense Minister Mordechai Gur committed suicide**, prompting national mourning for the loss of a widely respected military and political leader. Gur, 65, was suffering from terminal cancer. [Page 1]

■ **French President Jacques Chirac publicly recognized the French state's responsibility in the deportation of Jews during World War II.** Speaking during ceremonies commemorating the 1942 roundup of Paris Jews, Chirac said that "those dark hours tarnish forever our history."

■ **President Clinton voiced his unequivocal support for affirmative action programs at a meeting with civil rights leaders.** Among the some 18 leaders gathered were Rabbi David Saperstein, director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, and Lawrence Rubin, executive vice chairman of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council.

■ **Israeli and Palestinian negotiators launched intensive negotiations in an effort to meet their July 25 deadline for concluding their second-phase autonomy agreement.** Progress on the Syrian front, however, slowed after U.S. envoy Dennis Ross returned from the region empty-handed. [Page 3]

■ **Israeli police in Hebron arrested 25 settlers who were protesting the earlier arrests of five Israeli youths.** According to a police spokesman, youths were arrested for allegedly firing slingshots at Palestinian passers-by. [Page 3]

■ **A senator, a doctor and the Anti-Defamation League launched a public crusade to bring to justice an alleged Nazi war criminal living in Germany.** Hans Joachim Sewering allegedly sent 900 disabled children to a "healing" facility, where they were starved to death, during World War II. [Page 4]

■ **Argentine government officials revised recently completed educational guidelines to satisfy the demands of the Catholic Church.** Schools in Argentina are being directed to teach evolution as "just a theory" and as an alternative to creationism. [Page 4]

Israelis mourn suicide of Minister Mordechai Gur

By Uriel Masad

TEL AVIV, July 16 (JTA) — Israeli leaders and the public at large reacted with shock and sorrow at the suicide of Mordechai Gur, Israel's deputy defense minister.

Sunday's weekly Cabinet meeting opened with a moment of silence in Gur's memory.

With tears in his eyes, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin gave an uncharacteristically emotional eulogy for Gur, who was Rabin's comrade-in-arms and close political ally for almost half a century.

"Motta was a special person, sensitive and strong, a soldier and a civilian, a lover of books and of writing, and above all, a friend," Rabin said. "You knew at all times that he was with you and at your side. May his memory be blessed."

Gur, known throughout Israel by the affectionate nickname "Motta," committed suicide Sunday after years of fighting cancer.

Gur, 65, was found dead early Sunday morning by members of his family in the garden of his home in a Tel Aviv suburb.

A gun was found next to his body. He had a single bullet wound to the head.

Gur, who had suffered from terminal cancer, left a suicide note in his study saying he no longer wanted to be a burden to his family.

A retired lieutenant general, Gur commanded the Israeli paratroop unit that liberated all of Jerusalem during the 1967 Six-Day War.

He personally headed the force that entered the Old City and reached the Western Wall and Temple Mount.

Gur planned successful Entebbe raid

News of Gur's death dominated Israeli news bulletins Sunday, pushing aside stories about peace negotiations with the Palestinians and Syrians.

Throughout the day, Israeli radio stations broadcast the historic words Gur uttered on the third day of the Six-Day War: "The Temple Mount is in our hands. The Temple Mount is in our hands. And now the entire Old City is in our hands, and we are very, very happy."

Along with the Israeli public, Gur was mourned by government leaders and by members of the opposition.

On Israel Radio, Gur was praised as both a military man and as a politician by a host of public figures, including Likud member of Knesset Ariel Sharon, a former defense minister, and the recently retired Israel Defense Force chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Ehud Barak.

Barak, along with other officials, stressed Gur's outstanding integrity, honesty and foresight.

Born in Jerusalem in 1930, Gur joined the Palmach, the elite unit of the Haganah, the pre-State army, and continued to serve in the army after the State of Israel was founded.

During his military career, he took part in many of Israel's special operations beyond enemy lines. Rising through the ranks, he served as Israel's military attache to Washington during the 1973 Yom Kippur War.

A year later, he was appointed Israel's 10th IDF chief of staff, a position he held until 1978.

In 1976, he was responsible for planning and carrying out Israel's daring rescue of 102 airline hijack victims from Entebbe Airport in Uganda.

Gur's one major blunder occurred in 1977, when Egyptian President Anwar Sadat announced his visit to Jerusalem as a token of peace.

Gur warned Israel's then-Prime Minister Menachem Begin that the visit was a trap and that it would be followed by war. He was sharply criticized at the time for his stance.

Gur entered politics in 1981 as a member of the then-opposition Labor Party. He was elected to the Knesset, and in 1984 he became minister of transportation in Israel's national unity government. Since then, he held many public posts, including minister of health.

Among those mourning Gur were leaders of Israel's settlers movement. The Yesha Council, representing Jewish settlers in the West Bank

and Gaza Strip, announced that it was grieving over the loss of a true friend.

Gur had served as a go-between for Rabin and the settlers movement, enjoying the trust of both.

Considered a hard-liner in the Labor Party, Gur was among those who last year attended the founding congress of a group known as The Third Way.

The group took its name in an effort to provide an alternative both to dovish elements favoring a return of all or most of the land captured in the 1967 war, and to hawkish leaders vowing not to return one inch of land to neighboring Arab countries.

But in his role as deputy defense minister, Gur clashed in December 1993 with Shlomo Goren, the former chief rabbi and chief military chaplain, who advised Israeli soldiers to refuse to obey any orders to participate in military operations to evacuate Jewish settlements from the administered areas.

Describing the former chief rabbi's views as "totally unacceptable," Gur said at the time: "The spiritual world view of a single person should not be allowed to determine positions in a democratic society. The majority must prevail."

In addition to his military and political career, Gur also wrote several books, including "The Lion's Gate," "Company D" and "The Temple Mount is in Our Hands." He also authored several children's books.

Gur was buried Sunday evening at a state funeral in the military section of a cemetery near Tel Aviv. He is survived by a wife, children and grandchildren.

"We want to tell you upon your death what you knew in your lifetime," Rabin said at the funeral. "Motta, we respected and loved you." □

Diaspora museum shuts down after employees declare strike

By Uriel Masad

TEL AVIV, July 16 (JTA) — The entire work force of Beth Hatefutsoth, the frequently visited Nahum Goldman Museum of the Jewish Diaspora, has been fired and the museum has been temporarily closed.

In the brief dismissal notices the approximately 100 employees received earlier this month, they were informed that the museum was being closed down indefinitely "for vacation."

The museum was shut down after employees, angered by what they viewed as an arbitrary 8 percent deduction from their wages, declared a strike June 15.

Repeated phone calls to Giora Goren, the museum's general director, were not returned.

But the office of Tel Aviv Mayor Roni Milo, who co-chairs the museum's board of directors, released a statement about the museum. "Beth Hatefutsoth has been closed down temporarily for reorganization," the statement read. "It will be reopened to the public once the structural and organizational changes that will enable this important institution to function best are made."

The museum's workers, whose strike gained media attention only after they were fired, have thrown up picket lines around the closed building, which is located on the campus of Tel Aviv University.

"Close Down Beth Hatefutsoth — And You Have Closed Down the Heart of the Jewish People," reads one of the posters held aloft by the protesters outside the museum.

Tourists from abroad and local youngsters eager to tour the museum instead find a handwritten notice taped to the front door: "Sorry. We Are on Strike."

According to Assia Reuben, who worked in the museum's public relations department before being fired,

more than 250,000 people visit the museum annually: 60 percent from abroad, 40 percent from Israel.

The museum's annual budget stands at about \$5 million, half of which comes from a governmental grant.

The rest comes from the Jewish Agency for Israel, Tel Aviv University, the Tel Aviv municipality, private donors and income from visitors, merchandise and seminars, according to museum officials.

"This is the natural history museum of the Jewish people," Reuben said. "While many museums dealing with the Jewish past commemorate the Holocaust, we commemorate our heritage of creativity. We are the embodiment of Jewish continuity."

Many of the striking employees fear that once the strike is over, not everyone will be re-employed. Many of the employees believe that Milo is seizing the opportunity to do a thorough overhaul of the museum staff, which may include replacing some members of management.

Beth Hatefutsoth was first opened to the public in 1978. The museum's permanent exhibition is spread throughout its three stories and depicts various aspects of Jewish life in the Diaspora throughout history.

In addition to its exhibits, the museum provides an extensive photo and film archive. It also houses a genealogy center that allows visitors to trace the roots of their family names — etymologically and geographically — on the museum's computers. □

Cooperation needed to sweep away mines worldwide: Israel

By Tamar Levy

GENEVA, July 16 (JTA) — The international community should help countries in need when it comes to the issue of mine clearance, an Israeli official said at a recent conference here.

Eytan Bentzur, deputy director-general of Israel's Foreign Affairs Ministry, who represented Israel at the conference, said the Jewish state would like to continue to take part in that effort.

Mine clearance involves a tremendous amount of time and resources as well as research and development, Bentzur said.

Israel already has helped fund some projects, including a seminar last month in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Israel has developed sophisticated systems that can neutralize areas laid with different types of explosives. New mine clearance equipment allows sappers to get to areas that would have been difficult to reach in the past.

Bentzur said Israel also may offer short-term courses in mine clearance for those countries that need immediate assistance. □

Amsterdam tightens security for European Maccabiah Games

By Ruben Vis

AMSTERDAM, July 16 (JTA) — Security measures at the European Maccabiah Games here have been tight, with more than 500 police officers on duty during the games.

More than 1,500 athletes from 26 nations, mostly European, are taking part in the games, which have drawn thousands of spectators. More than 5,000 people attended the opening ceremony.

At the opening ceremony, the lighting of the flame was carried out by Anouk Spitzer, the daughter of Andre Spitzer, one of the Israeli athletes who died in the 1972 Munich Olympics attack by Palestinian terrorists.

Many sports comprise the games, including soccer, tennis, bowling, karate and basketball. □

NEWS ANALYSIS**Israeli-PLO talks intensify as negotiations with Syria stall***By David Landau*

JERUSALEM, July 16 (JTA) — While Israel and Palestinian negotiators have launched intensive negotiations in an effort to conclude their second-phase agreement on Palestinian autonomy, the Israeli-Syrian negotiating track appears to have all but ground to a standstill.

Last week's optimism on the Syrian front dissolved as the Syrians refused to resume security talks in Washington between senior military officers of the two countries.

U.S. Middle East envoy Dennis Ross, who spent last week shuttling between Jerusalem and Damascus, flew home last Friday, unable to set a date for the resumption of military talks.

The talks were intended to be a follow-up to last month's meetings between Israel and Syria's chiefs of staff.

In contrast, Israeli and Palestinian negotiators have launched round-the-clock negotiations in an intense effort to reach their July 25 target date for a new agreement that would extend self-rule in the West Bank.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said Saturday night that "60 percent of the paperwork was already done." He added that the two sides would "more or less" be able to meet the signing deadline, which officials hope will be capped with a White House ceremony in Washington.

Both Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestinian Authority leader Yasser Arafat are apparently set to sign the agreement in Washington if the agreement is concluded on time.

The latest round of talks began last Friday, broke for Shabbat and resumed Sunday at a resort hotel in the northern Israeli town of Zichron Ya'acov. More than 70 Israeli and 60 Palestinian negotiators are meeting in subcommittees to hammer out various aspects of the agreement.

Arafat balked at choice of site

The Israeli-Palestinian talks were initially to have been held at a military base near Florence.

An advance party of Israelis was in Italy last week to make preparations for the talks, but at the last minute Palestinian officials balked at the choice of the site. Arafat reportedly decided that the talks should proceed closer to home to enable him to monitor the negotiations closely and to intervene if necessary.

Negotiators will reportedly remain at the Zichron Ya'acov hotel, located on the coast between Tel Aviv and Haifa, until an agreement is reached.

According to hotel officials, Israel's Foreign Ministry has rented the entire hotel complex for 10 days.

The hotel, which was closed to journalists, was under heavy security. Police reinforcements brought in to guard the site of the talks soon had their hands full when a group of settlers opposed to handing over any of the West Bank to the Palestinians held a demonstration outside the hotel Sunday afternoon.

The two sides are hoping that the seclusion and intensity of the talks will create a Camp David-like atmosphere that will prove conducive to reaching an agreement.

Leading the Israeli team are the director-general of the Foreign Ministry, Uri Savir, and the director-general of the Finance Ministry, David Brodet.

The Palestinians are led by Ahmed Karia, who is also known as Abu Alaa; Jamil Tarifi; and Nabil Sha'ath.

In contrast to Peres' optimistic assessment, Israeli sources said much work on drafting an agreement — as well as some major decisionmaking — remains to be done.

The sources said that even though the two sides have reached an agreement in principle that the Israel Defense Force will redeploy from four Palestinian cities in the West Bank — Nablus, Jenin, Tulkarm and Kalkilya — the question of responsibility for the surrounding rural areas, including police activities and joint patrols, has still not been worked out.

The two sides also reportedly disagree about the scope and timing of an Israeli pullback from Ramallah and Bethlehem.

Israeli officials have said there will be no army redeployment from Ramallah and Bethlehem until bypass roads are built for Israeli settlers living in the area — a move they said would not take place until the end of 1995.

An agreement on issues surrounding Palestinian elections is said to be close to conclusion. The elections are currently being touted for November.

Two issues involved in the elections — the size of the Palestinian Council that will be elected and whether Arab residents of eastern Jerusalem will be eligible to run for office and vote in the elections — will apparently be left to Rabin and Arafat to hammer out a compromise.

Another area of contention for the negotiators is the West Bank town of Hebron, where special security arrangements will have to be reached to prevent clashes between the approximately 415 Jewish settlers living there among 100,000 Palestinians.

Hebron was the site of confrontations between Israeli settlers and police over the weekend.

On Saturday, police arrested 25 Israelis — 19 of them reportedly younger than 18 years old — after about 40 settlers protested the arrests earlier that day of five Israeli youths.

According to police spokesman Eric Bar-Chen, the youths had been arrested for allegedly firing slingshots at Palestinian passers-by. After the arrests, settlers reportedly attacked houses and cars belonging to Palestinians.

Syrian angling for an Israeli concession?

Meanwhile, on the Israeli-Syrian front, Syrian officials are saying that they are ready to resume ambassador-level talks in Washington, but not the high-level military discussions.

The military talks are considered critical because they are focusing on the nature of security arrangements on the Golan Heights in the event of an Israeli withdrawal in exchange for peace with Syria.

Israeli sources said the Syrians' about face, after reports of progress in earlier talks, may be a result of Syrian angling for an Israeli concession.

They pointed to Damascus' reversal on the issue of ground-based early-warning stations on the Golan Heights after a IDF withdrawal. Syrian officials announced last week that they would accept the ground-based surveillance stations, provided they were staffed by non-Israelis.

But over the weekend, Syria toughened its line again, insisting there could be no such installations because they were an infringement of Syrian sovereignty.

For Israel, ground installations are seen as an important element in early warning and deterrence. Israel has not given up its demand to operate its own early-warning facility on Mt. Hermon on the Golan even after a pullback. Israeli officials said Sunday that Israel would not back down on this issue as a way of wooing the Syrians back to the military talks.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, in a television interview Sunday, called the problem of restarting the military talks "technical," leaving it uncertain whether he would visit the Middle East, as planned, in the near future. He said talks between the two sides' ambassadors to Washington would resume within two weeks. □

Senator joins ADL in campaign to prosecute accused Nazi doctor*By Jennifer Batog*

WASHINGTON, July 16 (JTA) — A senator, a doctor and the Anti-Defamation League have launched a public crusade to bring to justice an alleged Nazi war criminal living in Germany.

Hans Joachim Sewering, a doctor who still practices medicine in Dachau, allegedly sent 900 disabled children to a "healing" facility, where they were starved to death, during World War II.

Last week on the Senate floor, Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.) told the story of the Nazi doctor.

One of Sewering's chief critics, San Francisco doctor Michael Franzblau, sat in the visitors gallery to support Santorum.

Last week, a committee of doctors, headed by Franzblau and supported by ADL, ran a full-page ad in The New York Times charging the German state of Bavaria with "harboring and protecting" an accused war criminal.

The advertisement urged people to write or fax officials in Germany to lobby for the prosecution of Sewering.

According to Santorum, Sewering joined the Nazi Party in 1933, and worked as a doctor at a tuberculosis clinic in Dachau. The 900 children were originally patients there.

After the war, Sewering gained prestige in Germany as the head of its medical society and as a senator from Bavaria, Santorum said.

Franzblau and the Committee to Bring Dr. Hans Joachim Sewering to Justice began demanding that the government of Germany investigate Sewering in 1993, when he was elected head of the World Medical Association.

ADL has been involved in the issue for three years, said Abraham Foxman, ADL national director.

Although Sewering, 78, still practices medicine, he resigned from his position with the association after the international outcry.

Critics say German prosecutors have refused to look for documents that would indict Sewering and have refused to interview four Franciscan nuns who worked with Sewering at the clinic.

Santorum encouraged senators to sign on to a letter urging the German government to prosecute Sewering.

"It's the least [Germany] can do," Santorum told his colleagues.

"It's the least they can do for 900 children starved to death because of their disabilities. This is an abomination," he said. □

Pro-peace rabbis lobby lawmakers to stay involved*By Jennifer Batog*

WASHINGTON, July 16 (JTA) — A contingent of rabbis from across the spiritual spectrum came to Capitol Hill last week to push for continued U.S. involvement in the Middle East peace process.

Four rabbis, one from each of the Jewish movements, presented a letter to Congress urging legislators to maintain American support for the peace process and to renew the Middle East Peace Facilitation Act, which allows American aid to continue flowing to the Palestinian Authority.

Congress is scheduled to consider the controversial legislation again next month. It was extended temporarily on the eve of its expiration last month.

The four rabbis represented 600 rabbis from the Orthodox, Reform, Reconstructionist and Conservative movements from across the country who signed on to the letter.

In the missive, the rabbis cited their "strong" support for "active U.S. involvement of the United States in the Middle East peace process."

"We come to encourage ourselves and to encourage [Congress] to ardently seek peace and to pursue it," Rabbi Jonathan Rosenblatt, the Orthodox spiritual leader of the Riverdale Jewish Center in Riverdale, N.Y., said at a Capitol Hill news conference.

He was joined by Rabbi Shalom Lewis of the Conservative Congregation Etz Chaim in Marietta, Ga.; Rabbi Sidney Schwartz of Congregation Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation in Rockville, Md.; and Rabbi Ammiel Hirsch, executive director of the N.Y.-based Association of Reform Zionists of America.

The July 13 lobbying trip as well as the letter were noted at a Senate hearing later in the day.

At a Senate Foreign Relations Near East and South Asian Subcommittee hearing on economic development in Gaza and Jericho, Sens. Hank Brown (R-Colo.), the subcommittee chairman, and Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) acknowledged the rabbis' presence.

Feinstein thanked the contingent for its efforts.

Brown entered the letter into the hearing's official record.

"I think if peace is going to be successful and economic prosperity be obtained, efforts like this are necessary, and I, for one, appreciate them very much," Feinstein said. □

Responding to church pressure, Argentina alters education guide*By Sergio Kiernan*

BUENOS AIRES, July 16 (JTA) — Argentine government officials, responding to intense pressure from the Catholic Church, have announced significant revisions to the country's recently completed guidelines for education.

One of the changes is that schools in Argentina are being directed now to teach evolution as "just a theory" and as an alternative to creationism.

The controversy here comes at a time when debate over the place of religion in American public schools has escalated.

President Clinton issued guidelines last week stipulating the existing legal parameters on this issue.

In Argentina, where there are more than 200,000 Jews, the changes called for by the church and accepted by the government are being made in the Basic Educational Guidelines Project.

The project, a yearlong undertaking to establish federal contents for the country's schools, produced guidelines that were introduced in March.

Church leaders came down harshly on what they called the contents' "moral relativism" and "materialistic concepts."

Argentine government officials also consented to requests by the church that the "symbolic names" of evolutionists Charles Darwin and Jean Baptiste Lamarck not be used.

In addition, the revised basic guidelines ban sexual education and the use of the words "sex" and "sexual" in schools.

And students will be taught that in 1492, the conquistadors launched "the evangelization of the Americas" and that the "most basic instinct of human beings is to transcend to God." □