



# Daily News Bulletin

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83rd Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Leah Rabin dead at 72

"The Middle East has lost a friend of peace," President Clinton said after Leah Rabin, the widow of the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and a leading proponent of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, died Sunday of cancer at 72.

Leah Rabin stood by her husband throughout his military and political careers, and she championed his peace policies after his assassination five years ago. [Page 3]

### Hijacking ends quietly

The hijacking of a Russian airliner to southern Israel ended when the lone Chechen hijacker, described by authorities as "unstable," surrendered and released all 58 passengers and crew onboard unharmed.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, who had ordered his plane to turn homeward, resumed his flight to Washington after the incident was resolved.

### Unrest rages as Barak visits D.C.

Violence raged across the West Bank and Gaza Strip as Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak was scheduled to meet with President Clinton in Washington.

Palestinian gunmen fired at Israeli troops in Hebron and Ramallah. Near Bethlehem, a Jewish settler shot and wounded a 16-year-old Palestinian who had been stoning a passing Israeli car.

Palestinian militants in Gaza detonated two roadside bombs, but no one was hurt.

### U.N. convoy attacked in Hebron

A bullet hit a car in the convoy of the U.N. human rights commissioner as she was visiting the West Bank town of Hebron. Mary Robinson was not in the car, and no one was hurt in Sunday's shooting.

Robinson is touring the West Bank and Gaza Strip to investigate complaints that Israeli soldiers are using excessive force against Palestinian stone-throwers and gunmen.

### German rabbinical school opens

Germany's first rabbinical school since the Holocaust was inaugurated Sunday. Abraham Geiger College, located near Berlin, is expected to graduate about five students a year to lead religious services in Europe's Jewish community.

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

### Crisis harms Israel's economy — and some warn it could get worse

By Avi Machlis

JERUSALEM (JTA) — With images of violence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip flashing across television screens around the world, it did not take long for Israel's tourism industry to start feeling the pinch.

Hotel occupancy has plummeted at lightning speed, Ben-Gurion Airport is deserted and taxi drivers and tour guides have lost a big chunk of their income as cancellations of trips have flowed in.

Despite the impact on tourism and other industries, especially those that rely on Palestinian laborers, the crisis is unlikely to harm overall economic growth in the Jewish state this year because there is often a lag between political instability and economic fallout.

Since the crisis broke out at the beginning of the fourth quarter of 2000, its impact on this year's overall statistics will be limited.

But, say business experts, next year could be a different story.

"The tourism industry is always the first industry to be affected all year round from the geopolitical situation, and safety and security are the main pillars for the industry," said Abraham Rosental, chairman of the Israel Hotel Association.

"We have been in crisis before, but this time it is different because nobody knows exactly how far it is going to go and when it will end."

Before the crisis, Israel was on course for 3 million tourist arrivals, which Israel had promoted as part of the Christian millennial year.

It was expected to be a record year for the industry, which makes up about 3 percent of the Israeli economy.

Now, at least 10,000 of the hotel industry's 35,000 employees are at risk of losing their jobs, as are many more workers in other tourism-related fields.

In the short term, Rosental's only hope is that Jews around the world will choose to show solidarity with Israel by visiting.

"We hope we will see a movement of more Jews, which is why we are sending a big delegation to the G.A.," Rosental said.

He was referring to the U.S. federation movement's annual gathering, the General Assembly, which began last Friday in Chicago.

But even if large numbers of Jewish tourists suddenly order solidarity packages with Israel, it will not be able to prevent the crisis from affecting other areas of the Jewish state's economy.

Other industries already hit hard include construction and agriculture.

Even though these sectors have increasingly relied on foreign labor during the past few years, Palestinians still made up a big part of the workforce.

Now, with the West Bank and Gaza Strip sealed, many kibbutzim and other agricultural settlements have no means of harvesting, and building contractors are often without enough manpower to complete projects.

All of this has happened just as the Israeli economy was finally pulling out of a four-year economic slowdown.

Gross domestic product, which measures all goods and services produced in an economy — and is the main indicator of overall economic health — has grown about 2 percent in each of the last three years.

This year, just before the crisis broke out, Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Jerusalem neighborhood fired on

Palestinian gunmen opened fire on the southern Jerusalem neighborhood of Gilo. No injuries were reported during Sunday's daylight attack, and Israeli troops fired back at the Arab village of Beit Jalla.

The Fatah leadership in the West Bank, whose armed Tanzim militia has been directing much of the shooting, said last Friday it considers itself in a "state of war" with Israel after its senior militia leader was killed in a helicopter rocket attack.

Palestinian gunfire killed two Israeli soldiers over the weekend, one near Rachel's Tomb in the Bethlehem area and the other in the Gaza Strip, after a Palestinian opened fire from a car. Palestinians reported 10 people killed in dashes with Israeli troops.

On Sunday, a Palestinian youth was shot dead at the Erez checkpoint between the Gaza Strip and Israel, according to a Palestinian hospital official.

### Reports: Abducted soldiers dead

Israel holds Hezbollah, Syria and Lebanon responsible for the well being and security of the three Israeli soldiers kidnapped on the northern border last month, the Israel Defense Force's chief of staff said.

Lt. Gen. Shaul Mofaz was responding Sunday to media reports that the three died from wounds sustained during the abduction.

The uncle of one of the soldiers said the families were unable to confirm the reported deaths.

### Israel blasted at Qatar summit

Muslim leaders accused Israel of war crimes against Palestinians during an Islamic summit in the Persian Gulf state of Qatar.

Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat told the 56-member Organization of the Islamic Conference on Sunday that the Palestinians are determined to continue fighting Israel despite the heavy loss of life. U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan urged restraint, telling the summit not to promote violence and hatred.



## Daily News Bulletin

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estimated the economy would grow at a robust rate of 5.8 percent.

But late last month, when the government presented its budget and economic forecasts for 2001, it lowered its projections for economic growth next year from 5 percent to between 4 percent and 4.5 percent.

At the same time, in anticipation of massive layoffs in tourism and other industries, it raised unemployment forecasts from 8.1 percent to 8.4 percent.

Oded Tira, president of the Manufacturers Association, an umbrella group for the business sector, said reducing unemployment will become more difficult if the crisis begins to eat away at economic growth.

Some economic officials add that Israel should count its blessings. The economy is in better shape than ever before, with strong growth and low inflation of about 1 percent.

"This does not mean we will not be affected if the unrest continues," said Avi Ben-Bassat, director general of Israel's Finance Ministry. "But we are entering this period with a stronger economy than ever before, and that will enable us to endure more easily."

According to conventional wisdom in the business sector, Israel's high-tech industry, which has been the engine for economic growth in recent years, will have a greater ability to withstand political volatility.

The biggest sign of this came on the October day that President Clinton announced a truce in the Egyptian resort of Sharm el-Sheik.

The same day, Marvell Technology, a communications equipment company from California, announced that it would acquire Galileo Technology of Israel for \$2.7 billion in a stock deal.

However, there are already signs of weakness in the industry, which has always been considered immune to the political ups and downs of the region and more affected by sentiments on the U.S. Nasdaq exchange.

Expected business visitors are canceling trips to Israel en masse, making it difficult to conduct normal business, and some players quietly say that despite the Marvell acquisition and other recent investments, potential foreign investors will not be able to remain indifferent for long.

"We are already starting to feel the impact," said one Israeli venture capitalist, speaking on condition of anonymity. "It may become much more difficult to attract foreign investors."

Despite all of these question marks hovering over the Jewish state's economy, financial analysts have been cautious before making big revisions to their economic forecasts.

Many say they are waiting to get a sense of whether Israel and the Palestinians will find some way of pulling back from the brink and stopping the violence before the economy is hit too hard.

But already, some of these analysts are estimating the potential impact of a drawn-out conflict.

For example, said Jonathan Katz, chief economist at Nessuah Zannex Securities, a Tel Aviv brokerage firm, an open-ended conflict will put a damper on overall consumer spending, which accounts for about 65 percent of the GDP.

"This is much more significant than high-tech," he said.

"If there is gloom and pessimism, people will certainly shop less and go less to malls and restaurants.

"They will also be more wary of taking on increased debt or mortgages when their future permanent income is uncertain and it's hard to see the light at the end of the tunnel." □

### 'Jewish lobby' blamed for election delay

JERUSALEM (JTA) — An Iraqi newspaper is blaming "the Jewish lobby" for the delay in declaring a victor in the U.S. presidential elections.

If the Jews "succeed in making Gore win the election, they will become the real leaders of America," read an article in the Babel newspaper last week. □

## JEWISH WORLD

### Supremacist's trial set for April

The trial date has been postponed again for a white supremacist accused of wounding five people in a shooting rampage at a Los Angeles Jewish community center and killing a postal worker in August 1999.

Prosecutors and defense lawyers said the complexity of the case against Buford O. Furrow Jr. makes it necessary to delay the trial until April 24, 2001.

### Russian moguls summoned

Russian prosecutors summoned a Jewish media tycoon for questioning on suspicion of embezzlement on Monday.

But a lawyer for Vladimir Goussinsky, who has been living abroad since July, said he would tell his client not to appear.

Prosecutors also summoned Boris Berezovsky, another Russian media tycoon with Jewish roots, for questioning Monday.

### German extremists banned

Germany's upper house of Parliament voted to outlaw the far-right National Democratic Party, with some lawmakers warning that the fringe movement wanted to create a Fourth Reich and crush the nation's democratic values.

The lower house is expected to vote on the ban in the coming days, but the country's Constitutional Court ultimately will decide the fate of the party in a process that could take up to two years.

### Muslims: Arrest Jewish militant

A Muslim group is calling on the U.S. government to arrest the son of slain Jewish militant Meir Kahane because he leads an organization on the State Department's list of terrorist groups.

The Washington-based Council on American Islamic Relations made the request regarding Binyamin Kahane, who was scheduled to speak in Brooklyn on Sunday.

### Sarajevo cemetery vandalized

Vandals overturned about 30 tombstones at the historic Jewish cemetery in the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo. Jewish community leaders said it was the first such incident since World War II.

On Saturday, police in Sarajevo detained four teen-agers who confessed to the desecration.

### Russian shul inaugurated

A new synagogue was recently dedicated in the Russian city of Chelyabinsk.

The governor of the region recently donated \$70,000 for the new synagogue in the city, which is home to about 10,000 Jews.

## OBITUARY

### Leah Rabin, 72, picked up slain husband's peace torch

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Leah Rabin, widow of assassinated Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and a leading proponent of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, has died at 72 after losing a battle with lung cancer.

"The Middle East has lost a friend of peace," President Clinton said in a statement issued after she died Sunday.

"The work to which she and Yitzhak dedicated their lives must and will continue."

Rabin stood by her husband throughout his military and political careers, and she championed his peace policies after his assassination following a Tel Aviv peace rally five years ago.

Her illness prevented her from taking part in memorial ceremonies last week marking the fifth anniversary of her husband's assassination.

She died Sunday afternoon surrounded by family members.

Rabin confirmed earlier this year that she had lung cancer and was recently hospitalized after complaining of chest pains.

She is survived by two children, Dalia Rabin-Pelossof, a lawyer who now serves in the Knesset, and Yuval, who founded a peace group after the assassination and now represents an Israeli software firm in the United States.

She also leaves behind three grandchildren.

A prominent and sometimes controversial figure in Israeli society, Rabin was born Leah Schlossberg in 1928 in Germany.

The day after Hitler rose to power, her family immigrated to what was then called Palestine.

She grew up in Tel Aviv and at the age of 15 met Yitzhak Rabin, then 21 years old. Leah Rabin once described the encounter as love at first sight, their eyes locking as they stood near an ice cream stand on a Tel Aviv street.

The two married during the 1948 War of Independence.

She staunchly supported her husband throughout his army career, his posting as U.S. ambassador to Washington and while he served as prime minister and defense minister.

In 1977, he stepped down as prime minister after it was discovered that Leah Rabin had maintained a U.S. bank account while he was posted in Washington — a violation of Israeli currency regulations at the time.

She was later fined for the offense, which prompted her critics to accuse her of sabotaging her husband's political career.

Leah was long known for speaking her mind plainly.

Following her husband's 1995 assassination, she accused then-opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu of cultivating an atmosphere of incitement that led up to the slaying.

Rabin refused to shake Netanyahu's hand at her husband's funeral, where she sat with silent dignity as world leaders came to pay their respects.

When Netanyahu was elected prime minister in 1996, she threatened to pack her bags and leave the country.

Following her husband's assassination, Rabin took up the torch for peace, becoming a fierce advocate of his legacy.

In September, she told an Israeli newspaper that "Yitzhak is surely turning in his grave," accusing Prime Minister Ehud Barak of not following on her husband's path toward peace.

Nava Barak, the wife of the current prime minister, addressed the disagreement from her hotel suite in Chicago, where the General Assembly of U.S. Jewish leaders is being held this week.

There are "different ways to achieve peace," Nava Barak said.

"If there was a disagreement about the way, that's not important. What is important is that we all pursue the path of peace." □

## FOCUS ON ISSUES

**Refashioning Hebrew school:  
Is one time per week enough?**

By Julie Wiener

NEW YORK (JTA) — Michele Frankel of Fort Lee, N.J., wants her fifth-grade son, Roger, to get a Jewish education, but she also wants him to be able to go to baseball practice and complete his regular-school homework.

Her husband works every other Saturday, so Sunday mornings — often a Hebrew school day — is one of the few times the family can spend together. And she wants her son to enjoy and not resent Hebrew school.

As she struggles to balance her family's different needs, she is relieved that her synagogue, the Jewish Center of Fort Lee, offers school once a week, rather than the two or three days most Hebrew schools require.

"More than once a week would be a little hectic," she said.

Hebrew school was a three-day-a-week regimen, accompanied by Shabbat attendance. But its frequency has decreased over the years, according to a new report on congregational schools released by the Jewish Education Service of North America.

Facing pressure from parents whose work schedules make frequent carpooling tricky or who find religious instruction hard to squeeze into children's calendars crammed with sports and music lessons, a number of schools — like the Jewish Center — are shifting to a once-a-week model.

Diana Yacobi, education director at the Jewish Center, which is Conservative, said enrollment at her school has jumped from 65 children to close to 200 since it began offering a one-day option three years ago. Students also can enroll in a two-day track, something approximately half do. Bar Mitzvah students attend more frequently and work additional hours with a tutor.

Yacobi's school offered the once-a-week option because it was losing families to other once-a-week congregational schools and contending with poor attendance rates. "The reality was people were attending one to two days a week anyway," said Yacobi.

Giving parents a choice "lifted from the school the level of resentment traditionally there," and has led to a drop in student discipline problems, said Yacobi.

"If you can do three days a week, that's fantastic," said Yacobi. "If you can't, you don't have to jump ship."

The secret, says Yacobi, who is pursuing a doctorate in education, is in using the time efficiently.

"It's not once a week — it's seven years, and we should be able to get something worthwhile done in seven years," she said, adding that the curriculum is very focused and she works closely with the teachers to ensure the lessons are well-planned.

The question over hours and days reflects a larger debate over the goals of Hebrew schools and the extent to which they should more closely resemble formal education like day schools, or informal education like summer camps.

That is, to what extent should they attempt to inculcate students with specific skills and knowledge — something that is challenging with few hours available — or instill them with positive feelings about their Jewishness in hopes that the children will continue Jewish learning later in life?

Rabbi Steven Moskowitz, who directed a once-a-week Hebrew

school at Manhattan's 92nd Street Y before becoming rabbi of the Jewish Congregation of Brookville, a nondenominational synagogue on Long Island with a once-a-week school, aligns himself with the informal camp.

"We've clearly made the decision, and I don't mind saying this bluntly, that the feeling we're creating in the children's hearts is more important than measuring a kid's specific knowledge level," he said.

Moskowitz wants to ensure that children don't, like many of their parents, hate Hebrew school and he insists that if students enjoy school they will learn and retain more in the long run.

"What's more important than creating positive Jewish memories and a feeling that 'Wow, it's fun to learn about Judaism?' " he asked.

However, many are skeptical that once-a-week schools can accomplish much.

"At some point, you lose the critical mass," said Rabbi Robert Abramson, director of education for the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, the umbrella arm for Conservative Jewry.

"The analogy I frequently use is if you're in an exercise regimen that requires five days of training a week and you do two, you shouldn't think you're going to be two-fifths as good," he said. "You'll probably never run the marathon that way. The other analogy is with medication — if the doctor tells you to take an antibiotic for 10 days and you take it for seven, you just might not get better."

United Synagogue requires member congregations to offer six hours of instruction per week, but the policy is not strictly enforced and is believed to be widely flouted.

Abramson acknowledges that schools need to respond to families' busy schedules and difficulty getting to Hebrew school, but is reluctant to support a reduction in hours. He also argues that mastering Jewish skills — something that takes time — is an important part of creating positive Jewish identity.

A 1995 study by Hebrew University sociologist Steven Cohen found that all forms of Jewish education improve adult Jewish identity — except for once-a-week Hebrew or Sunday school. The study found that those who attend Sunday school score lower on standard measures of Jewish identity than people who had no Jewish education at all.

However, defenders of once-a-week schools argue that number of hours is less important than the overall quality of the program and the extent to which parents are involved.

Congregation Dor Hadash in San Diego opted for a compromise of sorts four years ago when the school — once a week by necessity because a large number of families live more than 45 minutes away and find frequent commuting difficult — felt there were "too many holes in the curriculum," said its education director, Barbara Carr.

The school now requires 30 hours a year of "independent learning" for its fourth- to sixth-graders in the categories of religious services, outings, Jewish study, family life and the arts.

Using the school's ideas and suggestions, the students take on various projects such as seeing Jewish-themed movies, visiting a Jewish museum with parents or trying to keep Shabbat or kosher for a week if they do not already do so.

"We really want them to pursue things that interest them but also count curricularly," said Carr. The program "allows kids to explore areas supplemental schools normally don't get into." □