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84th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Suicide bomber kills 2 Israelis

A Palestinian suicide bomber killed two Israelis, and Israeli tanks shelled Palestinian checkpoints in the West Bank in retaliation.

Monday's suicide attack in the Israeli coastal town of Binyamina, located midway between Netanya and Haifa, also wounded at least 11 — three of them seriously. [Page 1]

16th Maccabiah Games open

The leaders of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations were among those attending the opening ceremonies of the Maccabiah Games in Jerusalem.

The U.S. Jewish leaders said they are attending the Games, held every four years, to show solidarity with the Jewish state.

Some 2,000 Jewish athletes from around the world are at the Games, which were almost postponed because of security concerns. [Page 4]

Bomb near Maccabiah misses

Two Palestinians were killed late Sunday night while preparing a bomb near a Jerusalem stadium where Israel's Maccabiah Games are being held. [Page 1]

Ambassador to Israel takes oath

Daniel Kurtzer was sworn in as U.S. ambassador to Israel.

Afterward, he told a Washington audience that addressing the Middle East conflict is like walking a tightrope between treating cancer patients and searching for a cure for the illness, sources at the closed-door session told JTA.

A former ambassador to Egypt, Kurtzer also told the small audience of Jewish leaders that he likes to handle issues without speaking to the media.

Kurtzer also encouraged American Jewish leaders to maintain contact with the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv.

Israel arrests lynching suspect

Israeli security forces arrested another Palestinian in connection with the lynching last October of two Israeli reserve soldiers in Ramallah.

Last month, the security forces disclosed they had arrested a Palestinian who was photographed waving his blood-soaked hands after the lynching.

Israel reels as terror bombing hits bus stop in a coastal town

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — A U.S.-brokered cease-fire has gone up in a puff of smoke. Recent days have seen increased diplomatic efforts aimed at ending more than nine months of Israeli-Palestinian violence — but these latest efforts have failed.

On Monday, two Israelis were killed when a Palestinian suicide bomber struck in the Israeli coastal town of Binyamina, located midway between Netanya and Haifa.

Monday's attack — which wounded at least 11, three of them seriously — took place at a bus stop near the town's train station, police said.

Witnesses said they saw a suspicious-looking person at the stop, which is frequented by soldiers, and alerted police before the blast took place.

The two dead Israelis were both soldiers — one a man, the other a woman.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon branded the bombing "a cruel and terrible attack which shows that the Palestinian Authority has yet to decide to act against terror."

Late Monday, Israeli tanks shelled Palestinian checkpoints in the West Bank in retaliation for the attack.

A television station in Lebanon said it received a statement from Islamic Jihad claiming responsibility for the suicide attack.

Sharon's communications adviser, Ra'anan Gissin, told Army Radio the bombing was a slap in the face from Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat, who met a day earlier in Cairo with Foreign Minister Shimon Peres.

After Sunday's meeting, which lasted more than an hour, Peres said he had told Arafat that Israel is waiting for seven days of complete calm before starting peace moves. But ensuing events provided little reason to believe there would be calm — complete or otherwise — anytime soon.

Late Sunday night, hours after the Peres-Arafat meeting, two Palestinians were killed while preparing a bomb near a Jerusalem stadium where the Maccabiah Games were due to officially open the next day.

And on Monday, in some of the fiercest fighting since the Palestinian uprising began last September, Israeli tanks moved into Palestinian-controlled parts of Hebron and exchanged heavy fire with Palestinian gunmen.

During the firefight, Israel destroyed four police posts operated by the Force 17 presidential guard and wounded nine people before withdrawing.

Israel said its incursion came in response to heavy shooting by Palestinian gunmen at Israeli security forces and civilians in the volatile West Bank city.

The fighting dampened hopes that the Peres-Arafat meeting might somehow breathe life into a cease-fire recently mediated by U.S. officials.

Speculation that Arafat and Peres might meet had circulated since last week, when it became clear that both would be in the Egyptian capital for separate talks with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

The meeting came on the heels of talks last week in Ramallah between Arafat and Sharon's son, Omri.

Before meeting with Arafat, Peres held talks with Mubarak and Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Maher. Along with Mubarak, E.U. envoy Miguel Angel Moratinos was said to have been involved in arranging the Peres-Arafat meeting.

According to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz, Peres received a green light as early as July 11 from Sharon to pursue direct contact with Arafat — on the condition that Peres would convey only a message that he and Sharon had agreed on beforehand.

Sharon's oft-declared stance that he will not negotiate while Palestinian violence

MIDEAST FOCUS

E.U. backs peacekeepers

E.U. foreign ministers urged Israel to accept international monitors to help end the ongoing violence. E.U. officials stressed Monday that Israel — which has long opposed Palestinian calls for a peace-keeping mission — would have to accept the plan before monitors could be dispatched to the region.

Netanyahu: Rescind Oslo accords

Former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called on the Knesset to pass legislation to rescind the Oslo accords.

Interviewed on a right-wing radio station this week, Netanyahu said the Oslo process is dead. He also said he regrets signing a January 1997 agreement that transferred parts of Hebron to Palestinian control.

Two wounded in West Bank

Two Israelis were slightly wounded by glass shards when shots were fired at their car Monday as they passed an Arab village in the West Bank.

An Israeli was killed in a Palestinian shooting attack in the same area earlier this month.

P.A. official: Don't attack in Israel

The head of the Palestinian preventative security force in the West Bank called on Palestinians to refrain from carrying out attacks inside Israel.

Israel Radio quoted Jibril Rajoub as telling Voice of Palestine Radio that Palestinians must take international opinion into account when planning their attacks. He did not rule out attacks on Israelis in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Lebanese arrested for smuggling

Jordanian authorities arrested a Lebanese citizen planning to smuggle mortar shells into areas under Palestinian control, Israel Radio reported.

The Lebanese motorist was caught Monday while carrying 25 mortar shells in his car.



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continues was turned against him by right-wing ministers who criticized the premier for letting Peres meet with Arafat.

Sharon defended the Cairo meeting — as he had defended a previous Peres-Arafat encounter in Lisbon last month — by saying the foreign minister had not engaged in negotiations, but had reiterated Israel's demand for an end to all violence, terror and incitement.

Peres' meeting with Arafat "dealt with one issue: an end to terror and return of security for Israeli citizens," Sharon said Monday.

"In this area, I think we can make every effort."

Sharon dispatched Omri to meet with Arafat on July 12 and deliver a personal message reassuring him that Israel has no plans to assassinate or unseat Arafat.

Omri Sharon also was directed to reiterate that there would be no negotiations until there was a complete halt to violence.

Sharon's meeting followed a report in the London-based publication *Foreign Report* that Israel has a military plan to destroy the Palestinian Authority and expel Arafat from the territories. Israel denied the report. On Sunday, Peres assured Mubarak that Israel has no such plan.

Palestinian Authority official Saeb Erekat reportedly expressed concerns about the report during a meeting last Friday with the deputy U.S. secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs, David Satterfield.

Satterfield also met Saturday with Arafat.

The State Department said the Bush administration has no knowledge about an Israeli plan to overthrow the Palestinian Authority.

At a news conference with Mubarak on Sunday, Peres said Israel is seeking a political solution to the current conflict, and that it must continue the dialogue with Arafat, "the elected leader of the Palestinian people."

At the same time, Israel has indicated that despite its ongoing policy of restraint, it will not tolerate continued violence and attacks.

At the weekly Cabinet meeting Sunday, Defense Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer said Israel will not allow any attack to pass without a response.

Sharon was quoted as saying that even those attacks that do not result in Israeli casualties will not go unanswered.

At Sunday's meeting, the Cabinet agreed to build new towns in a southern part of the country it offered the Palestinians last year in exchange for land in the West Bank.

Cabinet Secretary Gideon Saar said all but one minister at the meeting supported the decision to build towns in the unpopulated Halutza Sands area of the Negev Desert near the Gaza Strip.

During talks with the Palestinians last year, no agreement was reached on the land-swap proposal.

In addition to the fighting in Hebron, two Israelis were slightly wounded Monday by glass shards when shots were fired at their car as they passed an Arab village in the West Bank. An Israeli was killed in a Palestinian shooting attack in the same area earlier this month.

Also on Monday, the head of the Palestinian preventative security force in the West Bank called on Palestinians to refrain from carrying out attacks inside Israel.

Israel Radio quoted Jibril Rajoub as telling Voice of Palestine Radio that the Palestinians must be aware of world opinion when planning their attacks.

He did not rule out attacks on Israelis in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

In another development Monday, Israeli security forces arrested another Palestinian in connection with the lynching last October of two Israeli reserve soldiers in Ramallah. Last month, the security forces disclosed they had arrested a Palestinian who was photographed waving his blood-soaked hands after the lynching.

Monday's fighting in Hebron erupted days after Palestinians killed two Israelis in the area. Yehezkel Mualem, a member of the city council in the West Bank settlement of Kiryat Arba, was shot last Friday while protesting a previous terror attack.

A day earlier, terrorists shot and mortally wounded David Cohen, 31, of Betar Illit, who later died in a local hospital.

Last Friday, a Hamas militant was killed in a car bombing that Palestinian officials blamed on Israel. Israel gave no formal comment, but Israeli security sources noted that Fawwaz Badran was linked to two suicide bomb attacks in Netanya this year and had been on Israel's list of wanted terror suspects. □

JEWISH WORLD

Swiss bank official won't recant

An executive with Credit Suisse refused to back off comments he expressed in a letter to a newspaper last week that Jewish officials who pressed Switzerland to confront its World War II past were responsible for the atmosphere that led to the recent murder of a rabbi in Zurich.

While acknowledging that there are "good Jews and bad Jews," Roger Schaerer said that he stands by his opinion of World Jewish Congress officials and Jewish politicians.

Credit Suisse officials told JTA on Monday that they plan to discuss Schaerer's future with the banking firm, but currently have no plans to fire him.

Last week, the chairman and CEO of Credit Suisse apologized to the WJC and gave the assurance that "there is no place in this institution for bigotry or anti-Semitism."

Tycoon to buy Goussinsky stake

A Ukrainian Jewish leader said he would buy the remaining 30 percent stake in the NTV television station still owned by Vladimir Goussinsky, a Russian Jewish tycoon now living in exile.

Vadim Rabinovich told reporters that he wants to make money and not "play political games" with the station.

Goussinsky left Russia after a Kremlin investigation of his alleged fraud and embezzlement that many believe was prompted by NTV's criticism of Russia's war against Muslim separatists in Chechnya.

Shoah monument vandalized

Vandals recently spray-painted swastikas and anti-Semitic slogans on a Russian monument to 3,000 Jews killed in the Smolensk Ghetto in 1942, according to the Moscow office of the Anti-Defamation League.

Swiss army to target racists

The Swiss army said it will no longer tolerate anti-Semites or extremists within its ranks.

"We are preparing legal steps to exclude such elements from the army," a Swiss official told JTA.

In past years, members of the army have made anti-Semitic statements, prompting outrage in the local Jewish community.

Jerusalem voted top destination

Readers of Travel and Leisure magazine voted Jerusalem the best city in the Africa and Middle East category for 2001.

Other first choices were Sydney for the Pacific region, Florence for Europe and Hong Kong for Asia. New York was selected as the best city in North America, defeating San Francisco, the No. 1 choice for the past five years.

Swiss whistle-blower claims poverty after he's asked to support his mom

By Fredy Rom

ZURICH (JTA) — A former security guard who prevented the shredding of vital Holocaust-era bank records four years ago now claims he is going broke.

In an interview with the Swiss news magazine Facts, Christoph Meili described his financial situation as dire.

Meili says he has not yet received a single dollar of the \$1 million he says he was promised as part of a historic 1998 settlement in which two major Swiss banks agreed to pay \$1.25 billion to settle all claims surrounding Switzerland's handling of Holocaust victims' assets.

By his own admission, however, Meili may have gotten into financial difficulties as a result of lavish spending habits.

Meili became something of a celebrity in Jewish circles after he blew the whistle on a leading Swiss bank. Meili was making his rounds as a night watchman at the Union Bank of Switzerland in January 1997 when he discovered the Holocaust-era documents headed for the shredder.

Meili later stated that he was shocked to discover that the documents included financial records regarding bank accounts and other assets belonging to European Jews, many of whom had perished in the Holocaust.

He secretly turned over some of the records to a Jewish organization in Zurich — a move that created a storm of controversy in Switzerland, cost Meili his job and forced him to flee the country because of threats on his life.

In May 1997, Meili testified about some of the documents he had saved at a hearing of the U.S. Senate Banking Committee.

Two months later, President Clinton signed into law a bill unanimously adopted by Congress granting permanent U.S. residency status to Meili, his wife and their two children.

In December 1999, a panel probing Swiss banks' handling of Holocaust-era dormant accounts said it found several instances in which individual banks destroyed records pertinent to its investigation.

In addition to the Meili case, the report issued by the Volcker Commission detailed three other instances in which the Union Bank of Switzerland destroyed documents that may have been relevant to the investigation.

In 1998, Meili accepted a full four-year scholarship at Chapman University, a private university in Southern California.

In addition, a group of Holocaust survivors known as the 1939 Club provided Meili with a \$5,000 check each month to help him and his family with living expenses.

Meili also found a substantial source of income on the lecture circuit. At one such appearance last year at the Beverly Hills Hilton, Meili was presented with a \$125,000 check.

But, he lamented in the Facts interview, "most of the money is already gone."

In a hint that his spending habits have not exactly been frugal, Meili told the magazine that during a trip to Italy last year, he spent more than \$25,000.

His financial situation came into question earlier this year, when Hans Peter Meier, the director of social welfare in the village of Gebenstorf near Zurich, sent Meili a letter saying that local authorities believed his financial situation enabled him to cover the needs of his mother, who was receiving welfare checks from the village.

Under Swiss law, family members are required to pay back all welfare payments made to close relatives if they can afford to do so.

In April, Meili wrote back to Meier saying it was not financially possible for him to cover his mother's welfare payments.

He also said that he had no objections to Jewish groups supporting his mother.

Meier subsequently asked the Swiss Consul in Los Angeles to investigate Meili's financial situation.

But the Swiss Foreign Ministry promptly rejected the idea.

"We strongly recommend not to investigate this case because the reputation of Switzerland can be further damaged," Bernhard Marfurt, a senior adviser to Foreign Minister Joseph Deiss, wrote to Meier. □

THE 2001 JEWISH OLYMPICS

After failed bombing attempt, Maccabiah Games get under way

By Jessica Steinberg

JERUSALEM (JTA) — If the Super Bowl ever were held here, it might look something like the opening night of the 16th Maccabiah Games.

Flying acrobats, floating nymphs, pre-teens in pink stripes simulating synchronized swimmers, dancing mascots and more than 2,000 athletes paraded up and down the playing field of Jerusalem's Teddy Stadium on Monday night, celebrating the opening of this year's Jewish Olympics.

And the locals loved it.

They cheered for every country, whether it was Ukraine, Uruguay or the United States.

Clapping as each of the 45 countries was announced, they rose to their feet only when the blue-and-white Israeli contingent emerged at the end.

The estimated 20,000 people in attendance munched on boureka pastries and cracked open bagfuls of sesame seeds, the Israeli version of hot dogs and popcorn.

Many were immigrants from the countries represented in the Maccabiah, wearing their native countries' colors or waving their flags.

Swigging bottles of water and Coke, they boogied to the Israeli music piped in through the loudspeakers.

When the stadium lights went off, they swung the flashlights provided by El Al Israel Airlines, oohing and aahing at the fireworks that lit the sky.

Beyond the stadium, the view was of Gilo and Beit Jalla, the Jerusalem community and the neighboring Arab Christian village from which Palestinian snipers have fired at Israeli civilians for much of the past year.

But the violence of the past nine months wasn't foremost in the fans' minds — they were ready to celebrate the presence of more than 2,000 Jewish athletes from around the world.

They didn't mind leaving their cars in parking lots at the entrance to the city and taking Egged buses to the stadium, which is located at the southern end of Jerusalem.

"These people are coming from all over, from Netanya to Nahariya," said Motti, a Jerusalem policeman directing traffic near the ceremonies.

Security was tight in Jerusalem in preparation for the opening of the games in the open-air stadium named for longtime former Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek.

Early Monday, two would-be Palestinian bombers blew themselves up less than a mile from the heavily guarded stadium in what appeared to be a "work accident."

Jerusalem Police Commander Mickey Levy said the bomb was intended for the Maccabiah opening.

There were more than 1,000 security personnel guarding the stadium for Monday night's event.

During the day, Israeli teen-agers waiting for permits to work at the Opening Ceremonies stood impatiently in line as two harried Maccabiah staffers checked the lists provided by the production team.

"If your name's not on the list, I can't let you in," explained Michal, a staffer, for perhaps the 10th time. The scenario was little changed later in the day as thousands of ticket holders stood in line,

waiting for security to check their bags and wave them through the metal detectors.

The crowds were surprisingly complacent about being herded to their seats.

Perhaps it was the knowledge that this year's Maccabiah was more than just a quadrennial Jewish sporting event.

Until mid-June, the security threat posed by the ongoing Palestinian uprising caused Maccabiah officials to consider canceling the event.

There also was the specter of the last Maccabiah Games in 1997, when a bridge collapsed, sending the Australian team tumbling into the Yarkon River in Tel Aviv.

Four Australian athletes were killed in the bridge collapse, and dozens injured, some seriously.

Australia's Maccabiah team gathered Sunday at the site of the collapse for an official memorial service.

At Monday night's opening, there was a short memorial service commemorating the Australian athletes.

The service also commemorated the Israelis killed in the 1972 Munich Olympics and Jewish soldiers who died in World Wars I and II.

For the most part, though, spirits were high as the athletes marched into the stadium in their uniforms.

Due to the security situation, fewer athletes are competing this year than in past Games.

But Maccabiah officials and local leaders applauded those who came.

"You have done it, thank you," said Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. "This is the kind of solidarity we need now, more than ever."

This year's Games have been shortened to seven days from the usual 10.

Several Olympic gold medalists are competing, including American swimmer Lenny Krayzelburg, who won three gold medals in the 2000 Olympic Games, which were held in Sydney, Australia.

Born in the Soviet Union, the 25-year-old Krayzelburg told the Israeli media that he sees the Maccabiah as an opportunity to show how important the Jewish state is to Diaspora communities.

"I've wanted to go to this for a year and a half," Krayzelburg said.

"It's not just about a swimming competition."

This year's sporting event has become more than just the Jewish Olympics, according to Maccabiah officials.

"We are one people, with one dream," Maccabiah World Union President Jean Feterer said at the Opening Ceremonies. "Be strong and be courageous." □

Groups withdraw support of Muslim

NEW YORK (JTA) — The American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress and the Anti-Defamation League have withdrawn their legal support of a Muslim woman in her employment discrimination claim after an extremist Muslim group joined in the friend of the court brief.

The Council on American Islamic Relations joined the case of Zeinab Ali, an employee at Alamo Rent-A-Car who was asked to remove her headscarf at work.

The Jewish groups say they champion religious liberty in the workplace but cannot work with or lend legitimacy to CAIR, which condones terrorism against Israel. □