



# Daily News Bulletin

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85th Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Israel thwarts two attacks

Israeli soldiers thwarted two attempted Palestinian terror attacks over the weekend.

Soldiers captured a suicide bomber Saturday night after he opened fire at border police near Umm el-Fahm in northern Israel. The Palestinian said he had been instructed to carry out a shooting and suicide bombing in Afula, Israel Radio reported.

Another attack was thwarted last Friday night, when Israeli troops operating near Kalkilya spotted a suspicious-looking car whose occupants fled when the soldiers fired warning shots. The vehicle, which was booby-trapped, contained four bombs and cylinders packed with nails, screws and sharp metal objects.

### Israel targets Gaza building

At least five Palestinians were wounded when Israeli aircraft fired missiles Sunday at a building in the southern Gaza Strip.

A Hamas leader who lived in the building escaped when he heard Israeli jets approaching, Palestinian witnesses told Reuters. Israeli officials said the target was a bomb-making factory in the building.

In another development, a Palestinian on trial for helping Israel was killed after the Israeli airstrike disrupted the court proceedings. Pandemonium broke out in the court as Palestinians feared the building would be hit.

During the chaos, some members of Hamas broke into the detention room where the defendant was being held and shot him, a court official said.

### Israeli murdered in Toronto

A 48-year-old Jewish father of six was fatally stabbed Sunday morning in Toronto. Toronto police said they are investigating the incident as a possible hate crime. [Page 4]

### Land bill stand reversed

Israel's Cabinet retracted its support for a bill that could bar Israeli Arabs from owning homes on state-owned land.

The Cabinet voted 22-2 Sunday to refer the bill for review by a governmental committee on constitutional affairs. Prime Minister Ariel Sharon defended the decision, saying it could harm Arab-Jewish relations. Last week, the Cabinet created a furor when it voted to back the bill.

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

### Longtime Israeli fighter pilot poised to soar into space with NASA

By Irene Brown

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (JTA) — For 25 years, Ilan Ramon strapped himself into fighter jets to help protect Israel.

Soon, the Israeli air force colonel will have a chance to view his embattled homeland from a perspective never before seen by a sabra. Ramon, a 48-year-old father of four, is going into space.

"Every time you are the first, it's meaningful," Ramon said during a recent interview at the Johnson Space Center in Houston.

"Probably the fact that I'm the son of a Holocaust survivor is even more symbolic" than usual. "I'm proof that even with all the hard times we are going forward."

Ramon, who is flying as a guest research scientist aboard the space shuttle Columbia, is scheduled to spend 16 days orbiting Earth with six career U.S. astronauts, including an Indian-born engineer and an African-American payload commander.

A launch date for the five-man, two-woman crew, originally scheduled for the middle of this month, is pending, following the discovery of cracks in propulsion system equipment aboard two sister shuttles. Analysis is under way to determine if the ships are safe to fly as is, or if repairs are needed.

Ramon and his crew mates have learned patience.

In the two years since they began training, NASA has had to delay their mission several times to accommodate more pressing flights.

Although Columbia remains at the top of the launch queue, space station assembly missions may take priority if shuttle repairs extend NASA's launch hiatus into August and beyond.

NASA's caution, however, sits well with Ramon, who has made a career in risky endeavors.

Upon graduation from high school in Tel Aviv, Ramon was drafted into the military and attended flight training school.

When he was just 19 years old, Ramon was tapped to serve in the 1973 Yom Kippur War.

The danger, however, did nothing to quench his desire to fly.

"I love to fly," said Ramon, who moved on to A-4 and Mirage III-C aircraft training and operations before becoming part of Israel's first F-16 fighter squadron.

"Flying aircraft — fighter aircraft — is great, and I was very happy."

Ramon served two stints as deputy commander for F-16 and F-4 squadrons, sandwiching four years of college at Tel Aviv University in between his command posts.

He studied electronics and computer engineering, earning a bachelor's degree.

Ramon's last bout of schooling was a squadron commanders course, which prepared him to lead a F-16 squadron and then move up to head the aircraft branch in the Air Force's Operations Requirement Department.

Ramon earned the rank of colonel in 1994 and took over control of the Weapon Development and Acquisition Department — a post he held until 1997 when a colleague called and asked him if he'd like to become an astronaut.

At first, Ramon thought the offer was a joke.

But with the blessings of the Clinton administration, former NASA administrator Daniel Goldin and the Israeli government ironed out an agreement for cooperative space ventures between the two countries, including the training and flight of an Israeli

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Israel may remain in West Bank

The Israeli army may be planning for an extended stay in population centers in the West Bank.

A senior Israeli security official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told The Associated Press on Sunday that the army could remain for up to a year while Israel erects a fence along its border with the West Bank. Last week, the outgoing head of the army, Lt. Gen. Shaul Mofaz, told an Israeli newspaper the army would stay "at least" for months.

### Sharon cancels Palestinian talks

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon canceled a meeting Saturday night between Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Palestinian officials. Sharon and Peres were expected to hold further discussions on how to proceed with the Palestinians.

Meanwhile, a planned visit to the United States by the director general of the Prime Minister's Office, Dov Weisglass, and the prime minister's military adviser, Maj. Gen. Moshe Kaplinski, was canceled. The two were due to meet with senior U.S. officials, but Sharon instead sent a telegram to Secretary of State Colin Powell outlining the Israeli position.

Israeli media reported that the trip was canceled after Peres protested that the Foreign Ministry had been left out of the loop.

### Arafat undecided on elections

Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat says he has not decided whether to run for re-election in January.

In an interview last Friday with The Associated Press, Arafat said reforms demanded by the Bush administration have begun and that he is seeking international support and participation in the process. He also said he would not step down from his post. "I am not a coward," he said. "I'm not ready to betray the people who elected me."



## Daily News Bulletin

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astronaut. "When I was a kid growing up, nobody in Israel ever dreamed — well, most people wouldn't dream — of being an astronaut because it wasn't on the agenda. So I never thought I would have been an astronaut. When I was selected, I really jumped almost to space. I was very excited," Ramon said.

In 1998, Ramon, his wife, Rona, and their four children, who were between 2 and 10 years old at the time, packed up and relocated to Houston, leaving behind a close extended family.

A few of Ramon's relatives and friends plan to travel to Florida to watch his launch, including his 79-year-old father. Ramon's mother, a survivor of Auschwitz, is too ill with Alzheimer's disease to travel.

"I'm not expecting a lot of people from Israel," said Ramon, who speaks fluent, slightly accented English. "The hearts and the souls of the people from Israel will be with me, but maybe not the bodies."

Keenly aware that he is flying as a representative of Israel, Ramon, who describes himself as a secular Jew, asked NASA if kosher meals might be available for his flight. Although several Jewish American astronauts have flown in space before, none had ever requested kosher meals.

"I was amazed how they made the effort to supply me," said Ramon, whose lunch and dinner menus will include such delicacies as kosher old world stew and kosher chicken Mediterranean.

While Ramon won't keep strictly kosher, he won't mix meat and dairy foods, and will avoid shellfish and pork while in space.

Shabbat observance is another matter. Ramon said he never even thought about marking the day of rest and was surprised when some rabbis raised the issue with him. The discussion, however, became largely academic, he said, as the impact on Ramon's crew mates would be too great a burden if he didn't work on Shabbat.

A small debate began, however, about how to mark the seventh day, when sunsets are occurring every 90 minutes in orbit.

"I think the solution was that since we, the astronauts," go by "Houston time, Central time, then that's when Shabbat will be for me also," Ramon said.

Rather than lighting candles, however, Ramon may have to content himself with running one of the combustion experiments planned during the Columbia mission.

Ramon will be working with about 140 payloads in all, including an Israeli-sponsored experiment to study dust particles and how they affect Middle East weather.

Discussions to continue the experiment aboard the space station after Ramon's flight are under way. "We have a lot to offer," Ramon said, referring to Israel's budding aerospace program.

As for his own future, Ramon is too focused on his upcoming spaceflight to dwell much on what lies ahead.

"I would like to see my mission as my first one, not my last," he said.

Tucked into Ramon's personal possessions when Columbia blasts off will be a drawing made by a 14-year-old boy named Peter Ginz, a Holocaust victim.

The boy drew his vision of what the Earth would look like from the moon.

"It's related to space, of course, and I feel like I'm taking his vision and his spirit of space," said Ramon, who selected the drawing from Israel's Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial after talks with museum directors.

Ramon acknowledges that his own view of the world may change after his flight.

"When we go up to space, Earth is one unity, and no borders are seen from there," he said. "That's the vision that NASA carries and that is my vision, too." □

## Group wants P.A. official fired

NEW YORK (JTA) — The Simon Wiesenthal Center is calling for the firing of the Palestinian Authority's counsel general in Dubai after he said the United States organized the Sept. 11 attacks. The center urged the Bush administration to cut all ties with the Palestinian Authority until Saleem Abu Sultan is fired.

"America plans things and knows what it exactly wants from a certain area," Sultan said in an interview with Gulf News. "They always plan, like they planned the case of the recent Sept. 11 attacks and blamed bin Laden and the Muslims." □

## JEWISH WORLD

### Vandals attack British synagogue

Vandals destroyed a Torah scroll in a British synagogue. In the July 11 attack in the town of Swansea, vandals also drew a swastika on a wall and tried to burn the building down.

The attack appeared similar to an April assault on a synagogue in London, police said.

### 2 Swiss firms excluded from case

A Manhattan judge dismissed two Swiss insurers as defendants in a class-action lawsuit against European insurance firms. The judge last Friday granted motions by the two firms, Baloise and Winterthur, to be dropped from the law suit because they do not conduct a substantial amount of business in New York. Plaintiffs allege that the European insurers refused to honor life insurance and property policies issued during the Holocaust era.

### Paris exhibit vandalized

An exhibition in Paris about children who were deported in 1942 by the Nazis was vandalized by a 55-year-old woman.

Christiane Castillon, who had no prior police record and is not believed to belong to any extremist organization, explained the July 7 incident by saying that "people make too many allowances for Jews where the Holocaust is concerned."

### Shabbat law vetoed in Brazil

A law that would have recognized Saturday as a day of rest was vetoed by the governor of a Brazilian state. The bill would have given official recognition to the beliefs of some 12,000 Jews who live in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. Following the governor's veto, a movement has been launched in an effort to reverse that decision.

### Victims' families to be honored

Families of the victims of a June 2000 disco suicide bombing in Tel Aviv will be honored in New York on Monday.

Some of the survivors of the attack will attend the ceremony at the UJA-Federation of New York, where Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert and New York Gov. George Pataki will be the main speakers. The blast at the disco killed 21 and injured more than 100.

### Ex-Israeli air force chief dies

Benny Peled, who commanded Israel's air force during the 1973 Yom Kippur War, died Saturday at 74. Born in 1928 in Tel Aviv, he was one of Israel's first jet pilots. Peled, who commanded the air force during the 1976 during the hostage rescue at Entebbe, is survived by three children and eight grandchildren.

## Russian Jews of the world unite, but new group already has dissidents

By Lev Gorodetsky

JERUSALEM (JTA) — An unusual procession slowly moved along King George Street in the downtown section of the Israeli capital earlier this month.

Some 200 people, mainly middle-aged, wearing white T-shirts with the inscription "World Congress of Russian Jewry," waved Israeli flags, carried posters calling for the unity of the Jewish people, and chanted "Haveinu shalom aleichem."

At Zion Square, the heart of Jerusalem's downtown, the marchers, part of a new group dedicated to representing Russian Jews around the world, stopped for a rally.

Mikhail Chlenov, the leader of Va'ad, the oldest umbrella organization of Russian Jewish groups, said the time has come for Russian Jewry to unite and help Israel.

Israeli Deputy Absorption Minister Yuli Edelstein, a former Soviet dissident, echoed that call during the Moscow portion of the conference, saying "We need to organize the unique energy hidden in Russian Jewry."

Some of the groups speakers took a hard-line view of the Middle East crisis.

Dmitry Litvak, an Estonian Jewish leader, drew significant applause when he said, "We should help Israel throw the Arabs out of the West Bank."

The group's goals remain unclear to many participants, who said they themselves didn't fully understand what they want out of the new group except the general idea of somehow unifying the roughly 4 million Russian-speaking Jews now scattered around the world.

"I can't understand how from Moscow or Jerusalem they can help us integrate in Boston. It all seems to be a P.R. action," said Yelena Shur, 25, a Moscow-born Harvard post-graduate student.

Despite her ambivalence, Shur attended the Moscow part of the conference.

The rally capped a four-day inaugural effort in both Moscow and Jerusalem.

Some 350 people from 22 countries, including Russia, Israel, the United States, England, Germany and Australia met at a Moscow Lubavitch-run JCC and then at a Jerusalem hotel to establish the World Congress.

The gathering was sponsored by the Federation of Jewish Communities in Russia, the leading Russian Jewish umbrella organization, which is also providing the initial funding for the group.

According to Valery Engel, a federation official who was appointed chief executive of the new group, the congress will "support Israel, fight terror and anti-Semitism, improve Jewish education and help FSU-born Jews integrate into their new host countries."

Engel dismissed the accusation that the new group is simply a public relations effort, noting that the group already has concrete projects, such as creating university and high-school textbooks of Jewish history in Russian for Russian-speaking communities across the world and organizing campaigns to fight anti-Semitism, particularly in Europe.

At a reception for rally participants at the home of Israel's president, all of the speakers, including Israeli President Moshe Katsav, spoke about the need for Jewish unity. But as is often the case, unity was more manifest in words than in actuality.

The Russian Jewish Congress, another Russian Jewish umbrella group, ignored the founding conference — as did some U.S.-based Russian activists.

It is not clear why these people boycotted the gathering, but Engel believes they are motivated by personal animosities.

And some communities in the Baltics — Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia — sent representatives to the conference, but refused to join the group, arguing that the Russian language shouldn't serve as the main unifying factor and that the title "Congress of Russian Jewry" has undesirable political connotations for people who live in countries that were controlled by Russia during the Soviet era.

Yuri Shtern, a member of the Israeli Knesset from one of the country's Russian immigrant parties, addressing some of the criticism of the new initiative, said: "It's probably as impossible to unite Russian Jewry as the Jewish world on the whole, but we must try." □

## Relatives of kidnap victims visit U.S. amid release efforts

By Rachel Pomerance

NEW YORK (JTA) — The agony of losing his brother in the Yom Kippur War is back for Chaim Avraham.

His son, Benny, was one of three Israeli soldiers kidnapped in Lebanon in October, 2000. "It's the same," he said, turning away to stifle tears.

Avraham joined the parents of the other missing soldiers — Adi Avitan and Omar Souad were kidnapped along with Avraham — and the wife and son of Elhanan Tannenbaum, an Israeli businessman kidnapped abroad by Hezbollah one week later, to meet New York Gov. George Pataki in New York on July 11. The families pressed Pataki to do what he can to urge Iran, Syria and Lebanon, Hezbollah's international supporters, to get the captives released.

Pataki will deliver a letter from the families to the secretary-general of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, and the presidents of Iran, Syria and Lebanon, which fund or permit Hezbollah activity within their borders.

The delivery of the letter came amid increased efforts to secure the release of the four captives.

During the group's lobbying visit, Hezbollah reportedly offered to free Tannenbaum in exchange for the release of 100 Palestinian prisoners. However, Israeli Cabinet minister Dan Naveh said the report could not be confirmed.

Rep. Janice Schakowsky (D-Ill.) will be circulating another letter in Congress on behalf of the Israeli MIAs. Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.) said she would hold a hearing on the subject in the international relations subcommittee on human rights. And last month, Rep. Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.) offered legislation calling for the release of all Israeli hostages.

The letter Pataki is distributing, which is signed by the victims' families, reads, "As family members of Israeli MIAs, we are appealing to you from the depths of our hearts: Please do all you can to return our children.

"It is commonly said that all pain eases over time. We are living testimony to the fact that the greatest griefs do not grow lighter with the years; indeed, the loss of our children hollows a deeper and deeper hole inside us every day."

The letter adds that even "if they are no longer living, we yearn to have their remains brought home. By burying our dead, we can at least bring closure to our loss."

The Israeli government, Jewish organizations and the victims' families have raised the issue of Hezbollah's kidnappings — the whereabouts of other prisoners, including Ron Arad, an Israeli airman shot down over Lebanon in 1986, are still unknown — with Congress, U.N. secretaries-general and heads of state for years.

Naveh shuttled the victim's group between New York and Washington last week, where they met with members of Congress and the State Department.

Speaking July 11 in the governor's press room, Ori Tannenbaum warned that his father's kidnapping sets a "dangerous precedent." Elhanan Tannenbaum was the first foreign national kidnapped on Western soil, he said, and if the world is silent, he is likely not to be the last.

Tannenbaum is believed to be alive, according to Naveh. The fate of the others is less certain.

During the news conference, the families effusively clasped hands and cheeks and took the kisses of sympathetic observers.

After the conference, Avraham offered a laminated copy of a Hebrew prayer for the missing to a reporter, which Avraham signed.

As if to emphasize his personal connection to terror, he then underlined his name. □

## Murder of Jewish father of six shocks Toronto's Jewish district

By Bill Gladstone

TORONTO (JTA) — A 48-year-old Jewish father of six was fatally stabbed here this week as he helped his son fix a flat tire.

According to police, David Rosenzweig — a Chasidic man who was wearing a skullcap — was approached from behind by two men and a woman early Sunday morning.

After one of the men stabbed him in the back, all three assailants fled the scene.

The murder occurred outside the King David Pizzeria, within a block of one of the main intersections of Toronto's Jewish community.

The men were described as skinheads.

According to a police media relations officer, Sgt. Jim Muscat, the police have one man in their possession, but are currently treating him as a witness rather than a suspect.

Police are seeking a Canada-wide warrant for Christopher Steven McBride, 20, on a charge of first degree murder.

The female suspect has been identified as Mercedes or Sylvia Asante, 19. She is wanted for questioning, but is "not facing charges at this point," according to a police statement.

Toronto police said they are investigating the incident as a possible hate crime.

The main suspect and his associates were involved in an earlier altercation with the owner of the pizzeria, who threw them out of the store, police said.

The owner, David Chazan, told the Jerusalem Post they "looked like they were out for a fight," but added that "nothing they said was anti-Semitic."

One of the men produced a knife outside the restaurant, where Rosenzweig, an accountant, was fixing the car.

He had come to the scene in response to a call from his son for help with a flat tire. He had not been inside the pizzeria.

"Mr. Rosenzweig was outside the store on the street, basically an innocent bystander, and one of the men stabbed him in the back," Muscat said.

He "was basically in the wrong place at the wrong time," Police Chief Julian Fantino said at a news conference.

Fantino called the city's 16th murder of the year a "heinous and cowardly deed."

Police have been in close communication with officials of the Canadian Jewish Congress.

Congress officials expressed confidence that the police will apprehend the perpetrator and have pledged to assist the investigation in any way possible.

The group also extended its deepest condolences to the family of the slain man.

"The community is still in a state of shock and trauma," said Ed Morgan, chair of the Ontario region of the congress. □