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86th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Israel nixes demand on prisoners

Israel's justice minister rejected a request for a broader release of Palestinian prisoners.

Yosef "Tommy" Lapid, who made the comments following a meeting Monday with Palestinian ministers, said the request cannot be fulfilled because Hamas has said it would return to violence once the three-month cease-fire has ended.

On Sunday, Israel approved criteria for releasing Palestinian prisoners that restrict the releases to those who have not killed Israelis.

Explosion in Israel kills 2

An explosion in Israel that appears to be a terrorist attack killed two people.

Monday's explosion at Moshav Kfar Yavetz near Kfar Saba was "almost certainly a terror attack," a senior police official told Ha'aretz.

A few people were also injured in the explosion. Initial reports suggested that the attack may have been due to a gas explosion.

But later reports suggested that the explosion came from inside the house and that the gas canisters are outside. In addition, local residents were unable to identify the man whose body was found, along with a woman, in the rubble.

Meanwhile, Palestinians fired shots at workers building a security fence near the West Bank town of Kalkilya on Monday.

In the Gaza Strip, experts destroyed a mortar shell that was found near an Israeli settlement.

It was not known when the shell was fired, Israel Radio reported.

Concern over Iranian missile

Iran has tested a missile that could reach Israel. "This is very bad news for us," a senior Israeli source told the Jerusalem Post on Monday.

The U.S. State Department said it has "very serious concerns" about the Iranian missile tested Monday.

"We've seen Iran's efforts to develop its missile capabilities, including flight testing, as a threat to the region and a threat to U.S. interests in the region," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said Monday. Iran says the long-range, surface-to-surface missile, which military analysts say could reach the Jewish state, is solely a deterrent.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

After 33 months of clashes, joint security patrols resume in Gaza

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM (JTA) — For the first time in three years, Israeli and Palestinian troops are once again sharing responsibility for security in the Gaza Strip.

The revival of the joint security arrangements is already visible. Since last week, Palestinians were driving without interference from the Israel Defense Force on Road No. 4, the main traffic route running through the Gaza Strip, following security arrangements between IDF and Palestinian Authority officers.

Come evening, thousands of Palestinian vehicles were using the road, which until last weekend was off limits for Palestinians.

At times, it seemed as if the clock had been turned back to the days when joint Israeli-Palestinian patrols seemed the first step toward peaceful relations along a joint border. As Palestinian policemen took over responsibility at strategic points like the settlements of Kfar Darom and Netzarim, armed Palestinian and Israeli officers stood side by side — talking for a change, rather than shooting.

Israel will have security control over the entire region, with special emphasis on the security of Jewish settlements. There will be a separation of several hundred meters between Israeli positions and Palestinian positions, and Palestinian policemen will be expected not to leave their positions at night, so that they aren't mistaken for terrorists and fired on.

The entire operation will be supervised through intensive daily contacts between the Palestinian and Israeli officers.

But the atmosphere has changed drastically since the earlier times: Joint security apparatuses have not always worked, but until September 2000 there was a basic air of understanding that such patrols were the optimal channel for security arrangements between Israel and a future Palestinian state.

Now neither party dares to think about the future, hoping to maintain quiet for a few days, or possibly for the entire three month cease-fire declared this week by the main Palestinian terrorist groups.

The coordination in the field reflects higher-echelon coordination within the two sides' defense establishments.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and his Palestinian Authority counterpart, Mahmoud Abbas, agreed July 1 to set up four joint committees, including a joint security committee.

The Palestinians claim they already have prevented a number of terrorist attacks, and Israeli security sources confirm that for the first time in years, a Palestinian security presence is felt on the street.

Ideally, the parties would return to the patterns of the Oslo accords, which went into detail regarding the sharing of security arrangements in the region. The provisions first applied to the Gaza and Jericho regions, but later to all of "Area B" — parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip that were under Palestinian civilian control but Israeli security control.

Overall security was coordinated by District Coordination Offices, or DCOs, where Palestinian and Israeli barracks were adjacent to each other, allowing officers to consult in real time.

Palestinian authorities had the power to take necessary measures related to Israeli vehicles or personal belongings if they suspected that they were unlawfully obtained —

MIDEAST FOCUS

P.A. arrests, frees, suspect

Palestinian forces said they arrested, and later released, a woman suspected of planning a suicide bombing in Israel.

A Palestinian security official said the 18-year-old woman was arrested Monday in an area used by Palestinians to sneak into Israel, Reuters reported. She was later released to her family while the investigation continued, the report said.

Israel: Hamas making rockets

Hamas' military wing is reportedly using a truce to increase its production of Kassam rockets.

Israeli security sources were quoted Monday as saying that Hamas members have stepped up their production of rockets since a partial Israeli redeployment from the Gaza Strip last week.

Islamists to stay in custody

An Israeli court extended by another 10 days the detention of five senior members of the northern branch of the Islamic Movement.

The five face charges of belonging to a terrorist group and channeling illegal funds to Hamas-linked groups in the territories.

Terror victim recovers

An Israeli child critically wounded in an attack two years ago has recovered.

Ariel Yered was 15 months old when he was critically wounded in a mortar attack on the Gaza Strip settlement of Atzmona two years ago. As part of efforts to save him, doctors removed a part of his skull, and placed it in deep freeze.

For the past two years, he wore a special helmet to protect the exposed area.

He recently underwent successful surgery to reattach the bone, the Israeli dailies Yediot Achronot and Ma'ariv reported Monday.



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provided they immediately notified Israeli authorities through the DCO.

That applied only to Israeli assets; the Palestinians were unauthorized to arrest Israeli citizens in their territory. In such cases, they were expected to ask the Israeli military forces to take punitive action against the suspects.

Similarly, when a Palestinian committed an offense inside a Jewish settlement, the Israeli military forces would notify the Palestinian police immediately. They were supposed to hand over the offender and any evidence collected to the Palestinian police, unless the offense was security-related.

Joint security committees supervised the implementation of the accords, with each committee comprising between five and seven members from each side.

The DCOs' most effective tools were the joint patrols and joint mobile units. Each DCO was to notify the relevant Israeli and Palestinian headquarters, as well as the joint patrols and joint mobile units operating in the relevant district, if public order was disrupted.

The mission of the joint patrols was to ensure free, unimpeded and secure movement along the roads. The joint patrols usually included two four-wheel drive vehicles, one Palestinian and one Israeli, with four persons in each: an officer, a signal operator, a driver and a guard.

The joint patrols operated 24 hours a day, in vehicles and on foot. In roads under Israeli security responsibility, the Israeli vehicle was the leading vehicle. In roads under Palestinian security responsibility, the Palestinian vehicle was the leading vehicle.

The Israelis reserved special security privileges for themselves regarding the settlements, the three lateral roads connecting the Israeli settlements in the Gaza Strip to Israel and the main road running along the Gaza Strip, which was reopened this week to Palestinian traffic.

As in the past, under the new arrangements Israel will continue to conduct independent security activity along those roads, including Israeli patrols. □

Slovakia celebrates Jewish culture with launch of Hebrew poetry book

By Magnus Bennett

PRAGUE (JTA) — An 11th-century Jewish poet-philosopher, a Slovak professor and a London rabbi may appear at first glance to have little in common.

But this unlikely alliance could help revive Jewish life in Slovakia and broaden understanding of Judaism in the country.

Late last month, Slovak Jewish representatives and local politicians gathered in a public library in the city of Kosice, Slovakia, to celebrate the launch of a book, "The Crown of the Kingdom," by 11th-century Spanish poet and philosopher Rabbi Solomon ben Judah ibn Gabirol.

The event drew wide publicity in Slovakia because it represented the first time a classic Hebrew work has been translated into the Slovak language.

The launch was a proud moment for Maria Micaninova, an associate professor at the Pavol Jozef Safarik University in Kosice, who started working on the book several years ago after developing an interest in Jewish philosophy of the Middle Ages. She was encouraged and helped in her endeavors by the former rabbi of Kosice, Dov Goldstein, who now lives in Israel.

Micaninova believes that the poetic masterpiece could break down barriers between the Jewish community and the wider population.

"I am very pleased that I could do something for the Slovak people, especially for students at Slovak universities because there are no works in the Slovak language on Jewish philosophy.

"The idea is to bring with this translation the idea of tolerance and understanding."

A key player in the project was London Rabbi Herschel Gluck, a regular visitor to Slovakia, who provided the bulk of the funding through the A.Y. Gluck Charitable Trust. He is hopeful that the publication of the book will help to restore a sense of vitality to Slovakia's wider Jewish community, which was battered and all but destroyed during the Nazi and Communist eras. □

JEWISH WORLD

Collaborator arrested in Michigan

A Nazi collaborator was arrested after he was found hiding in Michigan despite a U.S. judge's 16-year-old deportation order.

Johann Leprich was arrested July 1 hiding in a secret compartment below some stairs at his former home.

In 1987, after a judge revoked Leprich's citizenship because of his service as a concentration camp guard at Mauthausen, his attorney told U.S. authorities that he had moved to Canada.

Last week's arrest was the result of an investigation of both local and national law enforcement authorities, including the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations.

France pressed on Papon

The Simon Wiesenthal Center called on the French government to use a new law to seize the pension payments of convicted Nazi-era war criminal Maurice Papon.

In a letter sent Monday to Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin, the center's international liaison director, Shimon Samuels, said the reinstatement of Papon's pension rights last week "gave a moral lesson to the youth of France that by deception and longevity you can get away with murder." Samuels said the money should be used as compensation for Papon's Jewish victims.

Papon has been convicted for his role in the deaths of more than 1,500 Jews who were deported from southwest France when he was an official with Vichy France.

Tel Aviv, Jewish Prague honored

Tel Aviv's architecture and Prague's Jewish Quarter were designated as historic sites by UNESCO.

The two Jewish sites were among 24 added to the organization's list of such sites.

Tel Aviv was recognized for its white, Bauhaus-style architecture.

A story made for Hollywood

A U.S. man who made headlines when he held up a sign at the 2001 Maccabiah Games in Israel looking for a wife got married.

Todd Schayes married Diane Lipner on June 29 in Denver.

The two were fixed up after Lipner's aunt saw a story about Schayes' public personal in a Connecticut newspaper.

The two, who communicated by e-mail before they met in person, are both teachers and basketball players.

Schayes is the nephew of Hall of Fame basketball player Dolph Schayes.

Holocaust survivor withdraws lawsuit against Belzec memorial

By Joe Berkofsky

NEW YORK (JTA) — A Holocaust survivor has dropped his lawsuit against the American Jewish Committee over a \$4 million memorial the group is building at one of the deadliest Nazi concentration camps.

Norman Salsitz of Livingston, N.J., said he decided to withdraw his lawsuit, which was filed in U.S. District Court in Washington and had sought an injunction blocking a memorial at the Belzec concentration camp in Poland, because his wife is gravely ill and he "cannot fight" this battle now.

But Salsitz, who lost 23 close relatives at the camp, including his mother, and has written several Holocaust-related books, told JTA that he remains opposed to the memorial.

He objects to a pedestrian path slated to go through the death camp grounds that he fears will unearth ash and bones of Jewish corpses that the Nazis tried to destroy and bury in order to hide evidence of the 600,000 murdered there.

"A monument is a flag, a wall, a sculpture. To make a pleasure walk? This isn't a monument!" said the 83-year-old Salsitz.

The AJCommittee trumpeted the reversal as a victory for the memorial's virtues and said it was "gratified" over the dismissal.

Rabbi Andrew Baker, the AJCommittee's project director for the monument, said that rather than disturb Jewish remains, the path will protect them because it will prevent people from walking around the camp's 33 mass graves, in an area that until recently pedestrians roamed freely.

As part of the construction work, he added, any body parts that get unearthed will be re-buried in the mass graves and sealed, Baker said.

"This is a terrific improvement," Baker said. "It will allow mourners to visit the graves by walking along a descending path while preventing them from straying on the mass graves themselves."

Though short-lived, the lawsuit — which was filed on June 23 and withdrawn on July 3 — was the latest development in a long campaign to memorialize Belzec, one of six death camps among the 3,300 Nazi concentration camps of the Holocaust.

The memorial, which is being co-sponsored by the Polish government, is expected to be completed later this year.

For more than a year, activist Rabbi Avi Weiss of New York and his organization, Amcha-Coalition for Jewish Concerns, campaigned publicly against what he called a "trench" being dug for the path through the camp.

Weiss was out of the country and unavailable for comment this week, but the executive director of Amcha, Josh Chadajo, said his group remains "very much against the trench."

"We would hope the AJCommittee's fixation on this trench would give way to a more open process to decide what this memorial should be," he said.

Amcha has criticized the AJCommittee's executive director, David Harris, for rebuffing requests to meet, though the AJCommittee's Baker said he has repeatedly met with Amcha members.

Both AJCommittee and Rabbi Michael Schudrich, the chief rabbi of Lodz and Warsaw who is volunteering his time to oversee construction of the project, believe that Salsitz changed his mind after recently meeting with Schudrich.

Schudrich said he explained to Salsitz that several leading rabbinical authorities have given the memorial their blessings, including the Committee for the Preservation of Jewish Cemeteries in Europe and the office of the former Ashkenazi chief rabbi of Israel, Yisrael Meir Lau.

A letter from Lau's office indicating he supported the project was signed by his assistant, Rabbi Rafael Frank, though Lau himself has said he was unaware of the document.

For his part, Salsitz said he felt he was caught up in a struggle of "politics."

"I want" Belzec "to be remembered," he said. "But a monument could be made in a way that I wouldn't be hurt." □

16 years after deportation, Nazi guard found hiding in U.S.

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA)—U.S. federal officials have arrested a Nazi guard who escaped deportation 16 years ago and was found hiding out in a secret compartment underneath the stairs of his former Michigan home.

Johann Leprich, 77, was stripped of his citizenship in 1987 after a federal court judge found that he served as an armed SS Death's Head guard at the Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria in 1943 and 1944. But Leprich's attorney said he had fled the United States for Canada before he could be deported.

After an exhaustive search, agents from the Department of Homeland Security's Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement found Leprich on July 1.

"We caught him on a visit," said Eli Rosenbaum, director of the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations.

Rosenbaum said federal officials had received numerous reports of Leprich's visits to the United States over the years, including one trip to Michigan to renew his driver's license.

Investigators believe that Leprich spent most of the time after his citizenship was revoked in Canada, and it was easy for him to cross the border back into the United States, even without a passport. Neighbors described Leprich, who apparently spent considerable time in the United States, as a man who gave tomatoes from his garden to people, according to The Associated Press.

Rosenbaum said he hopes Leprich will receive an abbreviated deportation trial because of his previous conviction, and that Canada will refuse him entry.

Investigators were aided by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Rosenbaum said.

"This arrest makes clear that those who participated in the atrocities of the Holocaust will not escape the determined reach of U.S. law enforcement, regardless of how much time has passed," Attorney General John Ashcroft said in a news release.

"Nazi collaborators will not find safe haven in the United States."

Leprich, who was featured on television's "America's Most Wanted" in 1997, immigrated to the United States in 1952, and became a naturalized citizen six years later.

The Office of Special Investigations and the Department of Homeland Security claimed in court papers filed last week that Leprich should be deported because of his service at Mauthausen and because he did not comply with a statute requiring aliens in the United States to report their addresses to federal authorities. □

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Russians see an Israeli parallel after terror bombings hit Moscow

By Lev Krichevsky

MOSCOW (JTA) — The first-ever suicide bombings to rock Moscow are causing Russians to draw parallels between themselves and Israelis.

"To Live Like in Jerusalem" read a large-print headline above the huge terrifying front-page photo of dead bodies taken at the site

of the Moscow tragedy and published on Monday in Gazeta, a Moscow daily newspaper.

The event that prompted the comparisons occurred Saturday, when two young women wearing explosive belts packed with scraps of metal blew themselves up outside a Moscow rock festival.

The blasts killed 13 victims and injured more than 60.

No one claimed responsibility for the attack, but Russian authorities immediately blamed the double suicide bombing on Muslim separatists from Chechnya.

Another Moscow daily newspaper, Vremya Novosti, ran an article by its Israeli correspondent describing personal safety tips that have become common in the Jewish state and that may now become relevant to Russia.

Many Russians, Jewish or not, strongly believe in Israel's image of a strong state leading an uncompromising war against terror.

Russian liberals have long criticized President Vladimir Putin's hard-line policy on Chechnya.

Yet an increasing number of Russians believe that a tough Kremlin policy toward the Muslim separatists in Chechnya is justified now that suicide bombings have come to Moscow.

Some point to Israeli policy toward Palestinian terror as an example. "The government should start doing serious things, and not play games with terrorists," said Leva, leader of Bi-2, a Russian pop group that played at the festival, held on a Russian airfield.

In 1991, he and another future bandleader emigrated to Israel, where Leva lived for seven years and completed a three-year term in the Israeli army.

"We lived in Israel for a long time," Leva said in an interview after the concert, "and we understand that these people," referring to terrorists, "should be destroyed, not talked to."

Not everyone agrees that the Israeli parallel works.

"Russia cannot be compared with Israel where terrorist attacks occur more often. Yet certain aspects" of Israel's "fight with terrorism may and should be adopted," Adolph Shayevich, one of Russia's two chief rabbis, was quoted as saying in an interview.

The Novye Izvestia daily wrote this week that Israel has a "smaller territory, more money and craftier special services" than Russia.

Some say the major difference in matters of terrorism between Russia and Israel lies in public reaction to such tragedies in the two countries. Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov and Russia's interior minister, Boris Gryzlov, made their first statements on Saturday, speaking over the uncovered bodies of the victims lying under the hot July sun, an act that surprised some people.

"This is something I wouldn't expect to happen in Israel," said Georgi Kapler, a middle-aged Jewish Muscovite who was browsing through the Judaica section at a bookstore when the television first aired the footage of the two officials on Saturday afternoon.

"Perhaps people here are less sensitive to the tragedies like this one, or are simply at a loss when such things happen."

Meanwhile, one Russian Jewish group said it may allocate some of its charity funds to help victims of the Moscow blasts.

Valery Engel, executive director of the World Congress of Russian Jewry, told JTA that his organization's charity arm will discuss this week whether they should launch a new campaign to benefit those who were injured in Moscow or earmark some of the funds raised to help Israeli victims of terror. □