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86th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Russian Jew wins Nobel

A Russian Jewish scientist was awarded the Nobel Prize in physics.

Vitaly Ginzburg was honored "for pioneering contributions to the theory of superconductors and superfluids," the Nobel Prize committee said. He shares the 2003 prize with another Russian scientist, Alexei Abrikosov, now working in the United States, and with British-born American researcher Anthony Leggett.

Ginzburg, 87, who is affiliated with the Lebedev Physical Institute in Moscow, has been a member of the board of the Russian Jewish Congress since the umbrella organization was founded in 1996.

Bush: Israel has right to defense

President Bush supported Israel's right to self-defense after an airstrike Sunday on a suspected Islamic Jihad camp in Syria.

"I made it very clear to the prime minister, like I have consistently done, that Israel has got a right to defend herself, that Israel must not feel constrained, in terms of defending the homeland," Bush said Monday of his call to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon after the air raid.

The raid was in retaliation for a suicide bombing Saturday that killed 19 people in Haifa. Bush's spokesman, Scott McClellan, said the administration accepted Israeli claims that the target in Syria was a terrorist training camp and not a civilian site, as Syria said.

The Haifa bombing was carried out by Islamic Jihad, which is headquartered in Syria. [Page 1]

Syrians struggle at U.N.

A Syrian-led resolution condemning Israel is not getting support at the U.N. Security Council.

Syria has been unable to convince Security Council members to vote on the resolution. Introduced Sunday, it criticizes Israel's attack that morning on a terrorist training camp near Damascus.

Several Security Council members view the resolution as one-sided in the wake of Saturday's terrorist bombing in Haifa, which killed 19.

Because of the Sukkot holiday, the JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN will not be published Monday, Oct. 13.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Bush support for Israeli raid shows depth of his exasperation with Syria

By Ron Kampeas

WASHINGTON (JTA) — If Israel's air raid on a terrorist camp in Syria came as a shock to Damascus, the awe followed closely when President Bush said, "We would be doing the same thing."

Bush's sympathy Tuesday with an Israeli strike on terrorists outside its borders was unprecedented, analysts said. But, they added, Syria should have anticipated it, given the United States' own post-Sept. 11 operations to combat terrorism far beyond U.S. borders.

"Syria had some opportunities to get on the right side of the United States after Sept. 11," said David Mack, a former deputy assistant secretary of state for Near East affairs. "Instead, they've shown poor statesmanship."

Israel's awareness of U.S. anger toward Syria was a factor in the decision to bomb the terrorist training camp some 10 miles from Damascus, Israeli officials said.

"As much as Israel has had problems with Syria, the Americans have had problems," an Israeli official said. "And when our intelligence agencies say these people are using these camps to train, Americans through their own resources know it's 100 percent true."

The attack Sunday on what Israel said was an Islamic Jihad training camp came a day after the terrorist group, which is headquartered in Syria, claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing in Haifa that killed 19 people.

Bush, who has made state sponsorship of terrorism a red line since the Sept. 11 attacks, considered the camp a legitimate target, analysts said.

"Given the similarity of what Israel did to the Bush doctrine of hitting state sponsors of terrorism, he would be hard pressed not to endorse it," said David Makovsky, an analyst with the Washington Institute for Near East policy.

Bush more than endorsed it.

"The prime minister must defend his country," he said Tuesday, referring to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. "It's essential."

Shortly after the terror attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, Syria shared intelligence with the United States that helped thwart an attack on Americans in Bahrain, Mack said.

But the goodwill dissipated during this year's Iraq war, when Syria allegedly gave refuge to senior officials of Saddam Hussein's regime.

A low point was a firefight between U.S. troops and Syrian border guards, apparently triggered by the Americans' hot pursuit of Iraqis fleeing into Syria.

It didn't help matters when Syria humiliated U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell on a visit in May by breaking promises to close the offices of anti-Israel terrorist groups.

The Syrians could not have missed the administration's recent signals.

Most significantly, the administration last month dropped its efforts to block the Syria Accountability Act, which would ban military and dual-use exports to Syria and financial assistance to U.S. businesses that invest in Syria.

The bill is likely to be approved this week by the House of Representatives' International Affairs Committee, and it could come to a full House vote by next week. It has assured majority support in the House.

Still, Bush's endorsement of the Israeli attack marks a change. Bush spokesman Scott McClellan suggested that the United States accepted without question Israel's

MIDEAST FOCUS

Assad slams airstrike

Syrian President Bashar Assad said Israel's airstrike in Syrian territory escalated Middle East tensions.

"This is an attempt by the Israeli government to extract itself from its big crisis" with the Palestinians "by trying to terrorize Syria and drag it and the region into other wars," Assad told the Al-Hayat newspaper, in an interview published Tuesday.

Israeli soldier killed

Israeli troops along the Lebanon border were on high alert after suspected Hezbollah militants killed a soldier.

Monday's clash near Metulla claimed the life of Sgt. David Solomonov, 21, and was followed by mortar fire on nearby Israeli communities.

The U.S. Consulate in Jerusalem said Solomonov, a U.S. citizen, had emigrated from Pennsylvania 13 years ago, The Associated Press reported.

Solomonov lived in the Tel Aviv suburb of Kfar Saba.

Hezbollah, which in the past has employed Palestinians for cross-border attacks on Israel, denied responsibility for the attack.

Authorities in Beirut said a boy was killed in the Lebanese village of Houla, apparently when a shell fired from Lebanon toward Israel fell short and struck the boy's house.

Sharon marks Yom Kippur War

The lesson of the 1973 Yom Kippur War is that Israel should always be prepared for war, Ariel Sharon said.

The Israeli prime minister made his comments Tuesday at Israel's main memorial service marking the 30th anniversary of the war.

Israel was caught unprepared when Egypt and Syria attacked on Oct. 6, 1973.



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claim that the camp was a terrorist training center, and not a civilian site, as the Syrians said.

John Negroponte, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, hardly mentioned the Israeli retaliation when he suggested that he would veto a Syrian-sponsored resolution condemning the air raid. Instead, he emphasized the Haifa suicide bombing.

"Any resolution on the Middle East, to enjoy our support, is going to have to include a condemnation — a robust condemnation — of terrorism," Negroponte said. "And I think, in this particular case, the situation is particularly poignant, because on Saturday night a suicide-bombing incident in Haifa killed 19 people and wounded 50 persons."

The lack of equivocation had bipartisan support. Howard Dean and Joseph Lieberman, both running for the Democratic nomination for president, said they would have reacted as Bush did.

One factor in U.S. support for Israel might be a reluctance to appear weak, said Shibley Telhami, a Middle East expert at the University of Maryland.

By condoning Israel's actions, the Bush administration allows itself to appear in control, when in reality it is overwhelmed by other diversions, including Iraq, the U.S. economy and next year's elections, he said.

"Once you reach the conclusion that you can't make Arab-Israeli peace a top priority, you can't criticize Ariel Sharon because it would make you look ineffective," Telhami said. "So you rationalize his view as consistent with your own worldview."

That presents dangers, Telhami said.

"Syria won't look for a fight because they are weaker, but they're under political pressure to show they're not weak and vulnerable," he said. "So they walk a fine line, and sometimes you can miscalculate."

Syria already appears to be walking that line. Ammar Alarsan, press secretary at the Syrian Embassy in Washington, told The Associated Press that Syria's decision to go to the U.N. Security Council is not a sign of weakness.

Syria "is not incapable of creating the kind of balance that would deter Israel, and not the kind that would lead the region to war," he said.

Another concern is that Israel might have bombed itself into a corner.

"What happens if you have another tragic attack tomorrow, also claimed by Islamic Jihad, and you've already pointed the finger at Syria, how do you raise the bar?" Telhami said.

Another analyst, Gal Luft, was more sanguine, saying that Israel's image of unpredictability was in fact carefully calculated.

"Israel has demonstrated that it is a mad dog," said Luft, a colonel in the Israeli reserves, and "that its response varies — it can use either military or diplomatic tools, without inherent logic. That makes the Syrians wary: They will never be able to predict the response." □

Jewish history makes Russian TV

MOSCOW (JTA) — Russian state television is airing a weekly show devoted to Russian Jewish history. "Jewish Question: Russian Answer," which will be arranged in chronological order from ancient times to the present, was launched in late September.

The 30-minute episodes are aired in prime time on Mondays on the Russian State Television Company's Kultura channel. The show will run for at least several months, producers said. □

Brazilian mogul: I'm Jewish

RIO DE JANEIRO (JTA) — A Brazilian media mogul came out of the closet about his Jewish background. Silvio Santos, a pseudonym for Senior Abravanel, discussed Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur for some 10 minutes during a live weekend broadcast of a program he presents on his SBT channel.

"Since I am a Jew, I'll start to fast tomorrow until Monday. It's a full fast, no water or food," he said. Abravanel also explained Jewish views on sin and tzedakah, or charity. Abravanel is married to an evangelical Christian, and his daughters go to church. □

JEWISH WORLD

FBI funneled cash to Hamas

The FBI funneled up to \$5,000 to Hamas in 1998 to track how funds get to terrorist groups.

The agency used Arizona businessman Harry Ellen to get the money to the terrorist group in an attempt to see whether cash earmarked for charities was going to terrorists.

Ellen, a convert to Islam who later had a falling out with the FBI, said that as far as he could ascertain, the cash went to charitable groups.

The FBI confirmed the cash transfer. Israel was informed of the operation, which was curtailed without leading to any prosecutions, The Associated Press reported.

Dean defends Israel's rights

Democratic presidential candidate Howard Dean defended Israel's right to attack terrorist camps.

If the camp Israel struck Sunday outside Damascus was a terrorist camp, then the Jewish state had the right to act as it did, Dean told CNN on Tuesday.

Dean previously has come under fire for saying the United States should not tilt toward Israel in its efforts to bring peace to the Middle East.

Pro-Palestinian rally nixed

Paris police banned a pro-Palestinian rally.

The ban follows a call by 10 French pro-Palestinian organizations to hold a counterdemonstration Tuesday evening outside the Palestinian representation offices, at the same time as Jewish groups were to hold a demonstration protesting the Palestinian Authority's failure to combat terrorism.

Another pro-Palestinian protest, scheduled for the same time outside the Israeli Embassy, has been allowed to proceed. Jewish groups had warned that simultaneous demonstrations at the Palestinian offices ran the risk of leading to violence.

New count of Russian Jews

There are 259,000 Jews in Russia, according to an unofficial overview of the 2002 national population census.

The number that appeared in the Novoye Izvestiye Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat newspaper is close to some of the lower estimates given by Russian Jewish demographers and sociologists last year, before the first post-Soviet census was taken.

Some Jewish leaders are questioning the validity of the data. The most recent previous census, conducted in 1989 when the Soviet Union still existed, counted 551,000 Jews within the borders of what later became Russia. The unofficial results published last week ranked Jews as the 28th-largest ethnic group in Russia. According to the results, more than 78 percent of the Jews live in Moscow or St. Petersburg.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

In its wake, Haifa bombing leaves families devastated

By Dan Baron

TEL AVIV (JTA) — For Israeli newspaper editors, it's a macabre convenience. Most terror attacks require gathering up head-shot photographs of the victims in time for publication. But sometimes, as was the case in Saturday's suicide bombing at the Maxim restaurant in Haifa, the dead come prearranged in family photographs that show several victims together.

Two families were devastated in the blast — the Almogs of Haifa and the Zer-Avivs of nearby Kibbutz Yagur. Each family lost five members from three generations.

Ze'ev Almog, 71, a former submarine captain and commander of the Israel Navy Academy, was a regular at the beachfront steakhouse, at peace among Maxim's mixed Jewish-Arab staff and clientele.

But he was felled by a 29-year-old Palestinian woman wearing a bomb belt — along with his 70-year-old wife, Ruth; his son, Moshe, 43; and his grandsons, Tomer, 9, and Assaf Staier, 11. Almog's daughter, Galit, was seriously wounded.

The loss drew an uncharacteristically emotive eulogy from a relative and fellow career soldier.

"At family gatherings, Ze'evik was the center of it all, like a lighthouse," Maj. Gen. Doron Almog wrote in the Yediot Achronot newspaper, using a term of endearment for his friend Ze'ev. "If Ze'evik were standing here now among the living, he would command us to continue living and creating and rejoicing and fighting for what is ours — and never to be broken."

The flowers piled high on the fresh graves dug side by side in a Haifa cemetery were mirrored in nearby Yagur, a kibbutz that had lost 46 of its sons in Israel's wars.

Bezalel Zer-Aviv, 30, and his wife Keren, 29, were killed at Maxim's — along with their baby daughter, Noya, 1; their son, Liran, 4; and Bezalel's mother, Bruria, 59.

Reporters' access to the funerals was restricted. But those who had watched television coverage Saturday of the bombing's aftermath already had seen one of Bezalel Zer-Aviv's sisters interviewed as she desperately searched hospital emergency rooms for her loved ones.

"I don't have any grandchildren left," Keren Zer-Aviv's mother, Margalit Almakias, told reporters.

Her grieving son, Shai, demanded an explanation from Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in the name of an anguished nation. "Are you listening, Sharon? Tell me, what will happen?"

Student Nir Regev, 25, was laid to rest with what appeared to be military honors, but it actually was a group of colleagues who came to support his father, a naval officer.

Mark Bianco, 29, a television reporter, was buried along with his wife of one year, Naomi, 25. Bianco's colleagues at Haifa's local station, Matav, scoured archives for stories of Bianco's that might serve as a memorial.

Four Arabs who worked at Maxim's — Osama Najar, 28; Mutanus Karkabi, 31; Hana Francis, 39; and Sharbal Matar, 23 — were laid to rest in their communities amid calls for continued coexistence.

They left wives and children behind, as did Zvi Bahat. Bahat, 35, died in the blast, but his daughter Hadar, 3, was left in critical condition. Another daughter, Inbar, escaped with light injuries.

One of the mourners at the Bahat funeral was Avi Ohayon, a friend who lost his own wife and two children to a Palestinian shooting spree last year in Kibbutz Metzger.

In an odd twist of fate, Israeli special forces killed the terrorist responsible for the Metzger attack only hours before the Maxim bombing.

But Ohayon refused to become vindictive.

"It did not bring me comfort, only a sense that justice had been done. And then — this terrorist attack," he said. "Fate has brought us together. This is the first time I am allowing myself to deal with someone else's pain." □

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

U.S. Supreme Court poised to rule on government funding of religion

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — The U.S. Supreme Court is expected to hear a case this term that could have lasting ramifications on government funding of religious programs.

The high court, which opened Tuesday — a day later than normal because of Yom Kippur — is expected to take up the case of state scholarships for religious education in December.

A Washington man is suing the state for denying him access to a college scholarship because he was planning to major in pastoral studies. Washington's legislature decided that students studying theology were ineligible for the aid, saying the state constitution prohibits public money for religious instruction.

Locke v. Davey focuses on education funding, but legal scholars say it could upend cases on the separation of church and state because Davey's argument presumes that access to state money for religious programs is a right, not a benefit.

Jewish court watchers believe the case could have implications for a wide variety of state funding initiatives, including faith-based initiatives and school vouchers.

As in most church-state cases these days, Jewish groups have lined up on both sides of the debate.

Jewish groups also are watching several other cases on the Supreme Court docket, including one that could decide whether a California woman can sue Austria in U.S. courts to recoup Nazi-looted art.

Also under scrutiny are several cases that the court may yet decide to hear, including a ruling related to the Pledge of Allegiance and a case determining whether a state has the right to remove the Boy Scouts of America from a group of charities eligible for a state employees' charity campaign because the group discriminates against homosexuals.

In the state scholarship case, Joshua Davey lost his lawsuit in trial court, but the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit reversed the ruling, saying Davey's right to the free exercise of religion was violated.

Proponents of church-state separation say that in the worst-case scenario, the ruling could determine that states cannot themselves choose the boundary between religion and government.

Several Jewish groups, including the Anti-Defamation League and American Jewish Congress, are supporting Washington state in the suit, arguing that the law does not prevent free expression of religion and that Davey was not harmed because he was not forced to give up his pursuit of religious study.

"Is it neutrality or is it hostility towards religion?" asked Michael Lieberman, ADL's Washington counsel. "It's not hostility, we argue, if you deny someone a benefit."

Orthodox groups, including the Orthodox Union and Agudath Israel, argue that students studying religion should not be denied access to state aid available to students in other disciplines.

"The state has decided to discriminate against students because they choose to spend part of their time studying religion," said Nathan Diament, director of the O.U.'s Institute for Public Affairs. He noted that the scholarship did not cover full tuition and could have gone toward financing Davey's other major, business

management and administration.

Like many Americans, Jewish groups also are watching whether the Supreme Court will review the phrase "one nation, under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance.

In a case brought by a California man, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled last year that the phrase violates the separation of church and state, and therefore could not be supported in public schools. But the ruling has been on hold ever since, awaiting clarification from the high court.

When the appeals court reached its decision, the ADL called the decision "wrong" and said "it goes against the culture and traditions of this country, which was founded on principles respectful of faith." Other Jewish groups are struggling with how to deal with the issue. While many are concerned about religious statements in public forums, especially public schools, there is a feeling that what is called "ceremonial deism" — like the pledge phrase, or the words "In God we trust" on currency — is harmless.

People also do not want the Jewish community to be viewed as unpatriotic, said Marc Stern, a lawyer for the American Jewish Congress.

But Stern and others said they were surprised the court has not yet announced it will hear the pledge case, and justices may be seeking a way to avoid ruling on the case's key issue.

In the Nazi-looted art case, Maria Altmann, an 87-year-old Californian who fled Austria, is seeking \$150 million worth of paintings stolen 65 years ago. At issue is whether foreign governments shielded from prosecution in the United States can be sued for actions taken before the immunity was granted in 1952.

Austria appealed the case, questioning California court rulings allowing Altmann to sue Austria and the Austrian Gallery in the United States. Altmann is seeking six paintings by Gustav Klimt. The case is likely to be heard early next year.

In the Boy Scouts case, which may or may not be heard this year, the group was eliminated from the annual state employees' charity campaign because it violates Connecticut's non-discrimination policy — even though the Supreme Court earlier ruled that the Boy Scout's policy on gays is constitutional.

Several Jewish groups have raised concerns about the policy, and Jewish observers are monitoring developments to see how such a ruling would affect Jewish federations, which participate in such charity campaigns. Like the Boy Scouts, federations also discriminate in favor of a specific group — Jews — and could be subject to the same restrictions.

Another case that may be heard could decide whether states can be sued in federal court. Several disabled plaintiffs sued Tennessee, arguing the state violated the Americans with Disabilities Act by not providing elevators in some courthouses. The state contends it is shielded from lawsuits relating to the act.

It is another in a series of federalism cases that Jewish groups are concerned about in light of enforcement of civil-rights and anti-discrimination laws.

A ruling on campaign-finance laws also could be forthcoming. While it's unclear how the court will rule on the case, any decision is likely to affect Jewish participation in the political process.

Many court watchers assumed that either Chief Justice William Rehnquist or Justice Sandra Day O'Connor would retire at the end of last year's session.

That did not happen, and now observers say it's unlikely that any justices will retire this year, because that would leave a vacancy heading into the 2004 presidential election. □