

## IN THE NEWS

## Israeli wins first gold medal

Windsurfer Gal Friedman won Israel's first-ever Olympic gold at the Athens Games.

Friedman finished second in the final leg of the men's Mistral race Wednesday, taking the top overall score.

"Thank you, thank you to the entire State of Israel," Friedman told Israel's Army Radio by telephone.

It was the second Olympic medal for Friedman, who won a bronze at the 1996 Games in Atlanta — making him Israel's first two-time medalist — but the first gold for Israel, which began competing in the Olympics in 1952. Friedman joins Arik Ze'evi, who won a bronze in judo, as an Israeli medalist in Athens. [Story, Pg. 3]

## Rebbetzin Jungreis to address convention

A popular female Jewish leader will deliver a benediction at the Republican National Convention.

The Rebbetzin Esther Jungreis, an Orthodox woman and Holocaust survivor, will give the closing prayer Aug. 31 at the GOP convention in New York.

Jungreis, 68, is a well-known author and speaker in the Jewish world.

## British journalist banned from Israel

A British journalist and pro-Palestinian activist faces deportation from Israel.

Tel Aviv District Court on Wednesday ordered Eva Jasiewicz, who has been in custody since landing in Israel on Aug. 11, deported as a security threat. The court said Jasiewicz, a member of the pro-Palestinian International Solidarity Movement, could be exploited by terrorist groups if allowed into Israel or the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The 26-year-old freelance writer can still challenge the deportation with an appeal to the Supreme Court.

# WORLD REPORT

PUBLISHED WEEKDAYS BY JTA—THE GLOBAL NEWS SERVICE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE · WWW.JTA.ORG

## Largely Russian and young, Israel's homeless often go ignored

By GIL SEDAN

**T**EL AVIV (JTA) — As evening falls on Tel Aviv, the city vibrates with a pulsating energy unlike anywhere else in Israel.

The beach-front promenade is abuzz with pedestrians of all ages, both Tel Aviv locals and those who've traveled here to bask in the fresh sea breeze and the symphony of lights coming off the cars, street lamps, restaurants, cafes, pizzerias and ice cream parlors dotting this cosmopolitan hub.

But nestled among the blissful crowd, amid the eating, drinking and general merriment, is a group that often goes ignored: Israel's homeless.

Welfare authorities have registered some 1,200 homeless in Israel, but there are no hard numbers.

Some estimates run as high as 10,000 Israelis living without homes.

Half of the 1,200 live in Tel Aviv, a quarter in Jerusalem and the remainder scattered throughout the country, according to welfare authorities.

Though the exact numbers are fuzzy, one thing is clear: Younger and younger people are becoming homeless.

A year ago, a family crisis forced Miri Hatuel, 18, onto the streets.

After several days wandering, sleeping on the streets and the beach, she found shelter at south Tel Aviv's Shanti House, a youth shelter just minutes from the pedestrian mall by the beach.

"Never in my life would I have dreamed that I would not be wanted at home," says Hatuel, who declined to elaborate on the

nature of the crisis that forced her into the streets. "After I left home, I sometimes had suicidal thoughts, asking myself, 'Why was I brought to the world if my family didn't want me?'"

Though still a teenager, Hatuel radiates maturity and self-confidence.

"Why did it happen to me?" she wonders aloud.

"I don't know. It just happened, just as a girl becomes a prostitute or turns into a famous model overnight."

During her year at Shanti House, Miri has completed her high-school studies and now works as a waitress and an apprentice to a fashion designer. She will begin her compulsory military service shortly.

According to statistics from the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, some 80 percent of Israel's homeless are immigrants from the former Soviet Union.

According to the figures, most have at least 10 years of schooling under their belts.

Many of them are alcoholics, an affliction that is more prevalent than it was 10 to 15 years ago.

Among the homeless are hundreds of runaways and other youngsters who have left youth dormitories for summer vacation, but have nowhere to go.

On one recent night, thousands of people streaming along the beach promenade ignored a young, bearded man who was lying on the sidewalk, asleep — or drunk or on drugs. His head rested on his outstretched arm and his hand was open, begging. Every

*Continued on page 2*

BEHIND  
THE  
HEADLINES

## ■ The number of homeless people in Tel Aviv increases during the summer

*Continued from page 1*

now and then, someone stopped for a moment to drop a coin into a small cardboard box.

During the summer, the ranks of Tel Aviv's homeless grow.

They come from all over the country to try their luck in the big city, seeking company, booze and drugs.

"Israeli homeless are different than homeless in other countries, in that by and large they are not mentally affected," says Dr. Avi Uri of the Golden Tower rehabilitation hospital in Bat Yam.

"Their behavior is usually considered normal."

Uri has treated several homeless who were heavy drinkers.

During their hospitalizations they gave up alcohol altogether, he said, but they returned to the bottle as soon as they were released.

However, Uri noted, few of Israel's homeless go hungry.

If they want food, he says, they can go to restaurants where someone often will help them out.

Some live on social security and some have bank accounts.

And some, like Nir Shaul, even own cellphones — though budget concerns

allow him only to receive phone calls, a service that is free of charge in the Jewish state.

Shaul, 51, is the exact opposite of common stereotypes about the homeless: He is neatly dressed and the beard on his face is hardly a day old.

Yet he is never sure where he will spend the next night.

Up until six months ago, he says, he never would have dreamed that he might find himself living on the street.

But last February, he discovered "within a matter of 24 seconds" just

how easy it is to lose everything.

Until the death of his wife Nicole nine years ago, Shaul, a member of the haredi community in Bnei Brak, somehow made do.

"We adjusted to the culture of poverty in the haredi community," he says. "We managed."

He took every possible job, from repairing tefillin to washing dishes in restaurants.

When Nicole died, he was left with their six children, until local welfare services sent them to live with foster families.

When Shaul failed to make mortgage payments on his apartment, the bank took it over.

He worked at a local grocery shop, where he was given a small room to live. But last February he was fired and found himself on the street.

Shaul says the haredi community turned its back on him when he began to criticize the haredi lifestyle, and he moved to the other end of the Israeli social spectrum, Dizengoff Square, the heart of secular Tel Aviv — though he retains some of his previous religious practices.

This area has been his home for the past six months, during which he has spent nights in buildings under construction, on street benches and in a local syn-

agogue where he sneaks in after evening prayers. But Shaul says he does not pity himself.

If he has made mistakes, he says, chief among them may have been abiding by the haredi lifestyle, which he says "cultivates poverty" by encouraging large families and favoring Torah studies over work that pays a living.

Shaul has no accounts to settle with God.

"I cannot understand him, but who can?" he muses.

Shaul bathes daily at a nearby mikvah, washes his clothes regularly at the laundromat and hopes the municipality soon will find him some sort of temporary housing.

Israel's homeless can be seen everywhere — covered with disintegrating blankets on the steps of synagogues, asleep on benches in public gardens, living in tunnels or panhandling on city sidewalks.

The Tel Aviv city department that cares for street dwellers strives to keep track of the homeless, offering them medical care, shelter and — for those who are fit to cope with the rigors of work — jobs.

"However, the problem is not just economic," says Asnat Cohen, director of the municipality's street dwellers department. "Often the problem lies in their mind: Often they adopt not only a homeless way of life but a homeless state of mind."

Asked about the dangers of slipping into such a frame of mind, Shaul said: "Yes, I am aware of the danger and I am fighting against it."

As evening falls and he watches the summer evening crowd, Shaul notes that last night the sun set later, and that tomorrow the day will be slightly shorter. Soon it will be winter.

"I really don't want to spend another winter in the street," he says.

He then entered a sidewalk kiosk, bought a cigarette for one shekel — "I can't afford the whole pack," he says — and mingled with the crowd.

By midnight, he would try and sneak into the nearby synagogue.

If he couldn't, he'd spend another night on a bench. ■

**'Never in my life would I have dreamed that I would not be wanted at home. After I left home, I had suicidal thoughts.'**

**Miri Hatuel**

Homeless woman in Tel Aviv

**Y**ounger and younger people are homeless and living on the streets in Israel.

### JTA WORLD REPORT

**Howard E. Friedman**  
President

**Mark J. Joffe**  
Executive Editor and Publisher

**Lisa Hostein**  
Editor

**Michael S. Arnold**  
Managing Editor

**Lenore A. Silverstein**  
Finance and Administration Director

**Paula Simmonds**  
Marketing and Development Director

JTA WORLD REPORT is published five days a week, except holidays, by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency Inc., 330 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10001-5010. For more information about how to subscribe by e-mail, fax or regular mail, call (212) 643-1890, or visit our Web site at [www.jta.org](http://www.jta.org).  
© JTA. Reproduction only with permission.

# Israelis do the wave after first gold medal

By DAN BARON

TEL AVIV (JTA) — Television and radio stations in Israel cut away from their mid-day programming. News Web sites were updated faster than even the nimblest of fingers could press “refresh.”

It wasn't another terrorist attack in Israel, but some good news for a change: On Wednesday, the Jewish state entered the fraternity of Olympic gold-medal winners.

“I felt as though the whole country was pushing me from behind,” Gal Fridman told reporters after he took the top score following the last windsurfing race at the 2004 Athens Games.

It was the first gold medal taken by an Israeli since the country began participating in the Games in 1952.

The medal was Israel's sixth overall, and the second of Fridman's career: He won a bronze at the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta.

“Our No. 1!” announced the Web site of the Israeli newspaper Yediot Achronot, in its caption to a picture of Fridman, 28, on his board at the end of the mistral race.

President Moshe Katsav congratulated Fridman on his achievement — and judo competitor Arik Ze'evi, who earlier won a

bronze medal in Athens, expressed a pride felt throughout Israel.

“Like all Israelis, I was delighted to hear Hatikvah and see the flag raised. I did not manage to get the gold, but I am glad he did,” Ze'evi told Channel 10 television.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon called Fridman to congratulate him in a phone call carried live by Israeli media.

“It was a joy to see you win and raise the Israeli flag,” Sharon said. “The confidence and composure you evinced throughout the competition were extraordinary and earned you an honorary place in the chronicles of Israeli and international sport. You really are a grand sportsman, and the whole country rejoices with you today, and is proud of you — very, very proud of you.”

But the nation's excitement took a while to crest, perhaps because windsurfing's almost leisurely pace and lack of an adversarial dynamic makes it less of a spectator sport.

By contrast, when Ze'evi took the bronze medal for Israel last week, cries of joy could be heard from living rooms and cafes across the country. As the news of Fridman's triumph spread in Israel, so did a sense of satisfaction.

“It's about time,” said Dedi Cohen, a Tel Aviv lawyer whose office spent much of the day watching live television coverage of the race. “Any sport that has Israeli involvement is of interest, but to get the gold is a matter of pride for Israel and Jews worldwide.”

Fridman, whose first name means wave in Hebrew, never finished lower than eighth in the 11-race event. After the final race, he jumped into the water and then draped himself in the Israeli flag.

Fridman's family watched the race from its home in Karkur, surrounded by press. His parents, Dganit and Uri, clutched a Book of Psalms.

“I don't have my glasses to read Psalms, but it's enough to keep it close to our hearts,” Uri Fridman said.

Uri Fridman said he trained his son from age 6. “I took him out first in boats, then on a surfboard, then on a windsurfer. I would throw him into the water, and pull him out again,” he said.

On a somber note, Fridman said he would dedicate his medal to the 11 Israeli athletes killed by Palestinian terrorists at the 1972 Olympic Games.

“I'm sure they're watching us,” he said. “And I'm sure their families in Israel will be very happy.”

## Synagogue donor among Russian plane crash victims

By LEV KRICHEVSKY

MOSCOW (JTA) — One of the main funders of a renovation project at a Moscow synagogue was among at least 89 people killed in a plane crash this week in Russia.

“Who was he? He was a good Jew,” Yitzhak Kogan of Moscow's Bolshaya Bronnaya Synagogue said of Tengiz Yakobashvili of Moscow.

Yakobashvili's friend and business partner, David Cohen of St. Petersburg, also died in Tuesday night's crash of a flight bound from Moscow to the southern Russian city of Volgograd.

A second flight, from Moscow to the Black Sea resort of Sochi, crashed a few minutes later.

The cause is still to be determined, but officials were not ruling out a possible terrorist connection — perhaps to separatist Chechen rebels, who have been fighting a prolonged war with Russia.

Both of the confirmed Jewish victims were of Georgian descent, and both reportedly held Israeli citizenship.

Cohen reportedly had lived in Israel for several years. Yakobashvili's wife and children are believed to live currently in the Jewish state.

Cohen was a well-known, active member of the Georgian Jewish community here, Menachem Mendel Pevzner, St. Petersburg's

chief rabbi, told JTA. He was in his early 50s.

The two passenger liners vanished from radar screens at the same time, around 11 p.m. on Tuesday. Several hours later, the remains of the Volgograd-bound plane were discovered near a village in Central Russia's Tula region.

The remains of the second plane were recovered later near Rostov-on-Don.

A lucky coincidence spared the life of Zalman Yoffe, a Chabad rabbi in Volgograd who said he was supposed to be on one of the flights that crashed.

Yoffe had a meeting with a donor in Moscow scheduled for Tuesday, and then was due to return home. He rescheduled his return flight when the meeting was postponed by a day. “Thank God I was saved, but this doesn't make the tragedy any smaller, because dozens were killed, including two Jews,” he told JTA.

Yoffe said he would take the same flight Wednesday night so he could console victims' relatives, Jewish or non-Jewish.

“This is our common tragedy,” he said. “We as Jews shouldn't be indifferent to other people's tragedies.”

Arieh Edelkopf, a Chabad rabbi in Sochi, said the city's mayor has asked him to help console victims' relatives. “As a rabbi of this city, I have an obligation to do whatever is needed to help those who need help,” he told JTA in a phone interview.

# NEWS IN BRIEF

## MIDDLE EAST

### Gaza intel chief hit

Palestinian gunmen ambushed a Gaza Strip security chief.

Tarek Abu-Rajeb, deputy head of the Palestinian Authority's general intelligence service in Gaza, was seriously wounded by shots fired at his car outside the Bureij refugee camp Wednesday. Two bodyguards were killed.

In recent weeks, P.A. officials have come under attack from vigilantes seeking to stamp out corruption in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Israel was not involved in the incident, security sources said.

### Cop turns terrorist?

An ax-wielding Druse man slain outside an Israeli army base was identified as a former border policeman.

The man, at first presumed to be a Palestinian terrorist, was shot dead outside Amiad base in the Galilee on Tuesday night.

According to witnesses, the man tried to talk his way into the base, but the guard at the front gates demanded to see his identification card.

The assailant pulled an axe, seriously wounding the guard, and was shot dead by another soldier who ran to the scene. Although he was dressed in a Border Police uniform, authorities were not sure until Wednesday whether it was his own or a disguise.

### Tiff with immigrants

An Israeli mayor drew fire for criticizing Ethiopian immigrants. Several hundred Ethiopians housed at immigrant facilities in the Jerusalem suburb of Mevasseret Zion walked out of a meeting arranged with Mayor Carmi Gillon on Wednesday, protesting his allegations that members of the community exercised poor sanitation and were considered a nuisance by many townspeople.

"If I have caused offense to the community, I apologize. But I do not withdraw what I said. We have to identify problems and address them," Gillon said.

According to municipal sources, Mevasseret Zion plans to close down the immigration lodgings in the near future.

## WORLD

### Shalom praises Paris

Israel praised France for fighting anti-Semitic attacks on its citizens, but said more action was needed.

"We are very happy that France is now leading the combat against anti-Semitism, but we would like to see it translated to actions in schools and universities," Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom said Tuesday during a visit to a Jewish community center in Paris that was torched over the weekend.

Experts believe Jews in Europe are increasingly being targeted by local Muslim youth who have been swayed by anti-Israel propaganda. French officials vowed to crack down.

### Uruguayan opposes anti-Semitism

Uruguay's president became the third Latin American leader to sign a petition against anti-Semitism to be presented at the United Nations. Argentine President Nestor Kirchner and Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva already signed the petition promoted by the World Jewish Congress.

The general secretary of the Latin American Jewish Congress, Saul Gilvich, was among the Jewish delegation at Tuesday's meeting with Jorge Battle in Montevideo.

It was "a complete success," Claudio Epelman, assistant director of the WJC's Latin American branch, told JTA.

### AMIA turns 110

Argentina's main Jewish institution celebrated its 110th anniversary Tuesday night.

The celebration for the AMIA community center, hosted by Israel's new ambassador to Argentina, Rafael Eldad, and AMIA President Abraham Kaul, drew hundreds of people.

The event told the history of the institution, created initially to found a Jewish cemetery.

The evening's emotion was heightened by the fact that a trial of suspects in the 1994 AMIA bombing is expected to end in coming weeks.

### South Africans celebrate centenary

The Cape Council of South Africa's Jewish Board of Deputies celebrated its 100th anniversary.

Speaking at the group's centenary conference over the weekend, the Muslim premier of the Western Cape region, Ebrahim Rasool, congratulated the council for persevering through "many acts of bigotry, including from the community in which I was born."

Though the board of deputies has been sharply criticized for not taking a stand against apartheid until relatively late in the day, Solly Kessler, honorary life vice president of the Cape Council, said leaders had acted in what they believed was the best interest of the Jewish community.

"I believe we should stop beating our breasts. We were effectively prevented by a pernicious system from being ourselves," he told the conference.

But not all was rosy at the celebration: Nathan Geffen, a Jewish AIDS activist, slammed the Board of Deputies and the South African Zionist Federation for their "unconditional support" of the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians, saying it could lead to the Jewish community's "marginalization" in South Africa.

## NORTH AMERICA

### Survivors' child nominated to Canadian court

A Canadian judge who was born in a displaced persons camp in Germany was nominated to sit on Canada's Supreme Court.

Rosalie Abella, the child of Holocaust survivors who presently sits on the Ontario Court of Appeal, is one of two women judges from Ontario who were named for the country's top court Tuesday by the government of Prime Minister Paul Martin.

Both appointments to the nine-person court still have to be confirmed.

### School cheered for firing coach

The Anti-Defamation League applauded the University of Georgia for firing a cheerleaders' coach who pushed Christian activities on her team.

The group said the university did the right thing in firing Marilou Braswell after investigating a complaint that she discriminated against cheerleaders who refused to participate in Bible study and other Christian activities.

### Jewish composer dies

Oscar-winning film composer Elmer Bernstein died Aug. 18 at the age of 82.

Bernstein, whose first language was Yiddish, won an Oscar for his score for the 1967 film, "Thoroughly Modern Millie."

He scored a range of pieces in his career, including "The Ten Commandments," "Animal House," the video for Michael Jackson's "Thriller" and Army Air Corps radio shows during World War II.

Bernstein also received two Golden Globe awards and an Emmy.