

SUNDAY, JULY 14, 2024 ■ 8 TAMUZ, 5784



Bring them home

Eliya Cohen, age 26, kidnapped from the Nova music festival

Sex icon dies

Dr. Ruth Westheimer passes away at 96
Page 3



Soccer bonanza

English pubs, shops gear up for Euro final today
Page 5



Fate of Deif unclear after IDF targets him in Gaza

Dozens of Palestinians killed in Khan Yunis as Israel goes after Hamas's top military commander

• By YONAH JEREMY BOB, DANIELLE GREYMAN-KENNARD and SAM HALPERN

The IDF targeted Hamas's elusive supreme military commander Mohammed Deif on Saturday in the al-Mawasi humanitarian zone near Khan Yunis in southern Gaza. He has been one of the terrorist group's leading military figures for years.

There are many signs that Deif could be dead, with some coming in over the day on Saturday, but due to the long-range attack, the number of structures obscuring the area, the number of casualties, and the many times Deif has been thought to be killed only to survive in the past, the situation is far from clear.

Further, all of the above factors mean that there may be no clarity on the issue for an extended period.

Since the current war started, Deif has emerged as Hamas's No. 2 in command; if he has been killed, he would be by far the most important Hamas leader to have been eliminated since the start of the war.

Previously, the IDF killed Deif's deputy Marwan Issa and Saleh al-Aroui, the deputy of Hamas's leader outside of Gaza, Ismail Haniyeh.

But Deif has been the Hamas leader Israel has most sought to eliminate for years, at least until October 7.

Besides Deif, it is highly likely that Rafa Salama – the commander of Hamas's Khan Yunis Brigade, who has also been one of the few intermediaries for Gaza Hamas Chief Yahya Sinwar regarding hostages – was killed in the same strike.

Sinwar became the No. 1 target for Israel following October 7.

The location of the strike was an open area surrounded by trees, several buildings, low sheds, and with tunnels



ONE OF the most recent photos of Mohammed Deif released by the Israeli military. (IDF)

not far away, but not in the immediate vicinity.

IDF intelligence believes that Salama and Deif were not in a tunnel.

The military also believes that Salama spent more time at the location with it being one of his primary areas of operation, whereas Deif likely arrived at the location on Saturday on a more transient basis.

IDF intelligence and the Shin Bet (Israel Security Service) had only a matter of hours to act on what they considered highly precise intelligence tracking Deif's location.

Army Radio correspondent Doron Kadosh reported that a security source noted that, as far as was known, no hostages were held at the scene of the strike. An additional two security sources reportedly stated that the attempted elimination of Deif occurred while the Hamas leader was above ground, as opposed to being inside a tunnel.

Army Radio added that Deif and Salama had been hiding in a building near tents of displaced persons in the area.

Dozens to 90 Palestinians were killed in the strike, with the IDF estimating that most of those killed were Hamas terrorists, but not denying

PM says won't budge a millimeter amid reports of hostage talks frozen

• By TOVAH LAZAROFF

Egyptian sources said that hostage talks had been halted until Israel can demonstrate it is serious after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rejected Hamas attempts to change the deal and the IDF targeted Mohammed Deif, who heads the Izzadin al-Qassam Brigades in Gaza. "I am not moving one millimeter from Biden's agreement. I am not adding conditions and not taking them out," he told reporters during a press conference.

"I am also not letting Hamas move one millimeter," he said. "You should know that Hamas asked for 29 changes to the proposal," Netanyahu stressed.

"I told the negotiating team and the Americans that there can't be even one change," the prime minister said. He held up one finger to underscore the message.

Two Egyptian security sources said on Saturday night that Gaza ceasefire talks had been halted after three days of intense negotiations failed to produce a viable outcome.

The sources, who spoke to Reuters on condition of anonymity, said that the behavior of the Israeli mediators revealed "internal discord."

According to the sources, the Israeli delegation would

See HOSTAGE, Page 7



GAZANS CARRY a casualty from the tent camp that Palestinians say was attacked by an Israeli air strike in Al-Mawasi west of Khan Yunis yesterday. (Hatem Khaleel/Reuters)

The continuing Deif problem

ANALYSIS

• By SETH J. FRANTZMAN

Israel targeted Hamas commander Mohammad Deif in an airstrike on Saturday in the Mawasi area of southern Gaza, designated a humanitarian zone early in the war.

Whether or not Deif is dead may not be that important.

If he is dead, it will have removed a key commander who has had the unique ability to elude targeted strikes in the past. Al-Ain media in the UAE referred to him as a "ghost" with nine lives.

The problem with Deif is that he was able to become so powerful in the first place. Israel has eliminated several Hamas commanders and leaders in the past, including Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, Dr. Abdelaziz Rantisi, Salah Mustafa Muhammad Shehadeh and others during the Second Intifada (2000-2005).

Salah Aroui and Marwan Issa were eliminated after October 7. It's not entirely clear how much of a setback this has been for Hamas. The organization has replaced leaders in the past and it also assumed after October 7 that it would lose most of its leaders in Gaza.

However, Hamas has insulated itself well. This is the wider problem that Deif represents. Because he is never seen in public and has existed as a "ghost" for so long, it's possible to assume that the real story of Hamas is not to be found in its murderous Gazan leaders or in their battalion and brigade commanders.

Israel already believes it has eliminated 60% of the Hamas fighters who were operational on October 7. Most Hamas battalions have supposedly been defeated, yet the organization persists. Its leadership lives in the Qatari capital of Doha, a key US ally in the region.

The fact that Hamas was able to murder almost 1,200 Jews in a single day, and Hamas leaders live in luxury under the protection of a US ally, tells us a lot more about Hamas than Deif's death might tell us.

This is because Hamas planned October 7 as part of a wider war on Israel. It is a war backed by Turkey, a NATO member, and also by Qatar, Iran, Russia, China, and many other countries. Hamas has systematically exploited UN facilities in Gaza.

Its members work for international NGOs and partner with them. Hamas has bought

See PROBLEM, Page 7

Deif has long been a target for Israel

• By SAMIA NAKHOUL and LAILA BASSAM

DUBAI (Reuters) – Hamas's military leader Mohammed Deif, one of the masterminds behind what Israel termed its 9/11 moment, is an elusive figure who has rarely spoken and never appeared in public, and who has survived at least seven Israeli assassination attempts.

Deif was the target of an Israeli strike on Saturday near the Gaza town of Khan Yunis, the Israeli military said. It was unclear whether Deif was killed, a security official said.

In the months since Israel launched its retaliatory campaign after the Hamas-led raid on southern Israel on October 7, Deif is believed to have been directing military operations from the tunnels and back streets of Gaza, alongside senior colleagues.

Rising up the Hamas ranks over 30 years, Deif developed the group's network of tunnels and its bomb-making expertise. He has topped Israel's most wanted list for decades, held personally responsible for the deaths of dozens of Israelis in suicide bombings.



PALESTINIANS SEARCH through the rubble following an Israeli strike that targeted Mohammed Deif in Gaza yesterday. (Mohammed Salem/Reuters)

He and two other Hamas leaders in Gaza formed a three-man military council that planned the October 7 raid, in which 1,200 people were killed and more than 250 taken hostage, according to Israeli tallies, in the bloodiest attack in Israel's 75-year history.

After the attack, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government vowed to kill the three: Yahya Sinwar, Hamas's leader in Gaza, Deif, head of the military wing, and Marwan Issa, his deputy, who was reported killed by Israel in March.

In an audio tape broadcast as Hamas fired thousands of rockets on October 7, Deif

named the raid "al-Aqsa Flood," signaling the attack was payback for Israeli raids at Jerusalem's al-Aqsa Mosque.

A source close to Hamas said Deif began planning the operation in May 2021, after a raid on al-Aqsa that enraged the Arab and Muslim world.

"It was triggered by scenes and footage of Israel storming al-Aqsa Mosque during Ramadan, beating worshippers, attacking them, dragging elderly and young men out of the mosque," the source said. "All this fueled and ignited the anger."

At the time, Israel accused Palestinians of trying to incite violence in Jerusalem. Palestinians rejected the allegation.

The storming of the mosque compound helped set off 11 days of fighting that year between Israel and Hamas.

There are only three images of Deif: one in his 20s, another of him masked, and an image of his shadow, which was used when the audio tape was broadcast on October 7.

Deif, 58, rarely speaks and never appears in public. So when Hamas's TV channel announced he was about to speak that day, Palestinians knew something significant was afoot.

"Today the rage of Al-Aqsa, the rage of our people and nation is exploding. Our mujahedeen (fighters), today is your day to make this criminal understand that his time has ended," Deif said in the recording.

The United States and other Western nations designate Hamas – which is sworn to Israel's destruction – a terrorist organization.

The source close to Hamas said the decision to prepare the October 7 attack was taken jointly by Deif, who led Hamas's armed wing, known as Al Qassam Brigades, and Sinwar, but it was clear that Deif was the architect.

"There are two brains, but there is one mastermind," the source said, adding that

See TARGET, Page 7



FAMILIES OF hostages and their supporters gather in Jerusalem yesterday after marching from Tel Aviv for days to demand the immediate release of the hostages held in Gaza. (Ronen Zvulun/Reuters)

Protesters urge gov't to seal deal for immediate hostage return

Demonstrators arrive in Jerusalem after four-day march

• By DARCIE GRUNBLATT and EVE YOUNG

Thousands of people demonstrated in Tel Aviv on Saturday night and across the country to press the government to support an immediate deal to bring back the hostages.

As part of the rallies, thou-

sands gathered in Jerusalem after finishing a four-day march from Tel Aviv to the capital.

Family members of hostages, joined by thousands of Israelis, gathered outside the prime minister's Jerusalem office Saturday night, calling for a hostage deal.

Many Israelis joined the

march in its last leg, walking from Motza to the Prime Minister's Office, and protest organizations bused Israelis in from around the country to join the march and rally planned at its end.

"The prime minister has seen that we are not alone,"

See DEAL, Page 7

Biden: Arab forces would keep peace in Gaza, not IDF

• By TOVAH LAZAROFF

US President Joe Biden appeared to indicate that the IDF would have to withdraw from Gaza as part of a peace plan, which he told reporters would initially place Arab forces – including the Saudis – in the enclave.

“We get the Arab nations – particularly from Egypt all the way to Saudi Arabia – to be in a position where they would cooperate in the transition so that they could keep the peace in Gaza... without Israeli forces staying in Gaza,” Biden said.

He spoke during a press conference on Thursday night that marked the end of the three-day North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Summit in Washington.

“The question has been from the beginning: What’s ‘the day after’ in Gaza? And the day after in Gaza... has to be no occupation by Israel in the Gaza Strip,” as well as the rapid entry of humanitarian aid, the president explained.

He referenced the US decision to remove the temporary pier it had placed on the Gaza shoreline to allow for the entry of goods into the coastal enclave by sea during the war.

“I’ve been disappointed that some of the things that I put forward” to accelerate humanitarian aid into Gaza, “have not succeeded, like the port reattached from Cyprus: I was hopeful that would be more successful,” Biden said.

He linked the end of the Gaza war within the context of the Saudi deal his administration is advancing. It would include a security pact between Riyadh and Washington, a normalization deal between Saudi Arabia and Israel, and a pathway toward Palestinian statehood.

“I put together a process for a two-state solution,” which is the only way to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, he explained.

Biden compared Israel’s warfare strategy in Gaza, which seeks full victory over Hamas, with the US entry into Afghanistan in 2001 to destroy Al-Qaeda as well as to remove the Taliban from power.

The US president recalled that he had told Israel from the start, “Don’t make the same mistake America made” after Al-Qaeda attacked the Twin Towers in New York on September 11, 2001.



US PRESIDENT Joe Biden addresses a press conference during NATO’s 75th anniversary summit, in Washington Thursday. (Leah Millis/Reuters)

The US entry into Afghanistan was a mistake, and even more so after the US assassinated Al-Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden in Pakistan in 2011, Biden said.

“There is no need to occupy anywhere. Go after the people who did the job. You may recall... I was totally opposed to the occupation and trying to unite Afghanistan. Once we got Bin Laden, we should have moved on, because no one is ever going to unite that country,” he said.

With respect to Gaza, Israel shouldn’t be doubling down on totally destroying Hamas, Biden said.

He referenced the negotiations going on now in Egypt and Qatar for a hostage and ceasefire deal.

“We have a chance now. It’s time to end this war,” but that doesn’t mean that Israel has to “walk away from going after” Hamas leaders such as Yahya Sinwar, the president said.

“We’ll help you find the bad guys: Sinwar and company.”

Hamas is losing Palestinian public support, Biden said. “There is a growing dissatisfaction in the West Bank from the

Palestinians about Hamas. Hamas is not popular now.

“So there’s a lot of moving parts. I just have to keep moving to make sure that we get as much done as we can toward a ceasefire,” he stressed.

Biden also dismissed criticism that he had withheld arms from Israel, explaining that his issue was just the 2,000-pound bombs.

The United States had withheld a shipment of bombs designated for use in Gaza, which it lifted this week for the 500-pound bombs, but not the larger ones.

Biden underscored that he did not intend to ship those larger ones to Israel.

“I’m not providing them, 2,000-pound bombs. They cannot be used in Gaza or in any populated area,” because “they cause great human tragedy and damage,” Biden said.

During his speech he emphasized his long historical support for Israel, joking that he was more popular there now than in America.

“Look at the numbers, and in Israel. I mean, my numbers are better in Israel than they are here.”

Soldier dies of wounds sustained in drone attack

• Jerusalem Post Staff, AVI ASHKENAZI and SHAKED SADEH

St.-Sgt.-Maj. (res.) Valeri Chefonov was killed in combat in the North, the IDF announced on Friday.

Chefonov, 33, from Netanya, served in the 9308 Battalion, 228th Alon Brigade.

He was buried on Friday at the military cemetery in Netanya.

On Thursday, three drones infiltrated Israeli territory and exploded at the Kabri intersection near Nahariya. The Israel Air Force did not intercept the drones and one of them hit a populated area.

The explosion wounded Chefonov, who was in critical condition and was evacuated by a Magen David Adom team to the hospital. Simultaneously, IDF artillery fired at targets in Southern Lebanon.

The director of the emergency department to which Chefonov was brought, Dr. Khaled Atallah, said, “The wounded [individual] was brought with shrapnel wounds on his upper body, while



MST.-SGT (RES.) VALERI CHEFONOV (IDF)

advanced resuscitation operations began in the field. Upon his arrival, he was admitted to the trauma unit, where we continued the resuscitation operations, and later we unfortunately had to pronounce him dead.”

Argentina officially designates Hamas as a terrorist organization

• Jerusalem Post Staff

Argentina officially designated Hamas as a terrorist organization on Friday, the office of President Javier Milei announced.

“The Hamas group has been declared by the Argentinian state as an international terrorist organization,” the statement read. “Furthermore, in recent years, its link with the Islamic Republic of Iran, whose leadership was found responsible for the attacks against the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires and the Argentine Israelite Mutual Association by the Federal Chamber of Criminal Cassation on April 11, has been exposed. These attacks cost the lives of over 100 Argentinian civilians,” it further announced.

“President Javier Milei has an unwavering commitment to recognizing terror-

ists for what they are. This government has reiterated on multiple occasions its convictions that Argentina, once again aligning itself with Western civilization, is respectful of individual rights and its institutions. For this reason, it must be acknowledged that those who attack such values are declared to be terrorists,” the statement detailed.

The Associated Press reported that the official designation was made as a show of support for Israel, while also stating that Argentina, which is home to the largest Jewish population in Latin America, has “ordered a freeze on the financial assets of the Palestinian group.”

Milei arrived in Israel earlier this year to show support for its war against Hamas and stated that he would move the Argentinian embassy to Jerusalem.

US may hold military aid over IDF’s promotion of soldiers suspected of human rights violations

• Jerusalem Post Staff

Former commanders from the Netzah Yehuda Battalion have been allowed to climb the IDF’s ranks despite the US State Department’s findings in April that five units within the battalion violated human rights in events pertaining to incidents predating the October 7 massacre, CNN reported on Saturday.

Further, current and former US officials said that the department was examining other IDF units in this regard as well. An additional three units were found to have committed human rights violations prior to October 7, they claimed.

Resultingly, the US is considering sanctioning some units in the form of withholding military aid.

As follows, four of the five Netzah Yehuda units had, according to the department’s findings, “effectively remediated” themselves.

Nevertheless, the US reportedly considered withholding military aid from the remaining unit, which did not correct itself following the discovery of the violations, but no decision has yet been made.

Awaiting the decision, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said, “If anyone thinks that they can impose sanctions on an IDF unit, I will fight with all my strength” against such an attempt.

A department spokesperson told CNN that it had “concluded that several Israeli security force units were credibly implicated in gross violations of human rights” and that for four of these, the Israeli government had “taken effective steps to bring those responsible to justice.”

“We continue to assess reports of GVHRs by Israeli security forces in accordance with the law, and all US security assistance to Israel is provided consistent with domestic and international law,” the spokesperson added.

Importantly, the term GVHR refers to acts of gross violations of human rights whereby, in adher-

ence with the US’s Leahy Laws, its government refrains from aiding foreign bodies should they be found guilty of GVHR offenses.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken wrote to House Speaker Mike Johnson, in a letter seen by CNN, that the US was working with Israel “on identifying a path to effective remediation” for the Netzah Yehuda Battalion. Blinken did not specify which remaining unit, in the department’s opinion, has yet to rectify its conduct.

The battalion was created in 1999 to facilitate ultra-Orthodox religious requirements while haredim fulfilled their military service duty.

Specifically, the battalion has been accused of abuses in the West Bank over the last 10 years, and in one case, this led to the death of an elderly Palestinian-American man, CNN reported. Omar Assad, 78, was reportedly gagged and bound. After freeing Assad, he was reportedly abandoned while unresponsive, after which he died of a heart attack.

After investigating Assad’s death, the IDF concluded that the incident was the result of “a moral failure and poor decision-making on the part of the soldiers.” It promised to see Lt.-Col. Mati Shevach, who commanded Netzah Yehuda at the time (from July 2020 to August 2022), reprimanded, and the platoon commander and company commander were removed from their positions.

Shevach, despite being reproached for the incident, was later promoted to deputy commander of the Kfir Brigade, which oversees Netzah Yehuda. After two years in this role, he was then transferred to a position allowing him to train forces at the military’s Urban Warfare Training Center.

In a similar case beforehand, Lt.-Col. Nitai Okashi, who oversaw the battalion from 2018 until 2020, received several promotions that led him to commanding roles. These promotions were given despite 14 soldiers from his unit being arrested for assaulting

a Bedouin man in the West Bank in 2019.

In an earlier incident, Okashi supported some of his soldiers in court in January of that year after they were filmed beating and verbally abusing a father and son in the West Bank, CNN reported.

Asked to comment on the leadership mentioned in the above incidents, the IDF told CNN, “It should be noted that in relation to the events that took place in 2015 and 2019... those involved had been indicted and a military court had imposed prison sentences in both cases, along with additional punishments.”

SEPARATELY, A FORMER unit member told CNN that Palestinians were subjected to excessive and violent treatment by Netzah Yehuda soldiers. The anonymous member also claimed that commanders encouraged vigilante violence against Palestinians.

The whistleblower feared that the promotion of commanders from Netzah Yehuda into other battalions and roles would encourage criminal behavior throughout the IDF.

“A lot of us probably did not see Arabs – Palestinians in particular – as people with rights. Like, they are really just the occupiers of some of our land, and so they need to be removed,” he said, explaining the mentality within the units.

He added that his unit was well exercised in performing acts of “collective punishment [against] Palestinians.”

Responding to CNN’s request for comment on the alleged abuses, the IDF asserted that the battalion “operates in a professional and ethical manner” and that its soldiers and commanders “act according to the orders and protocols expected of soldiers in the IDF.”

The army also assured CNN that it would investigate “every exceptional incident” and would hold violators accountable.

Indeed, the IDF accused the Yamam Unit of violations over the killing of Ahmad Jamil Fahd, who was shot by counterterrorism forces in 2021 near Ramallah,

an interrogator from the Internal Security Forces for raping a teenager at the Russian Compound in Jerusalem in 2021, and the Israel Border Police for shooting a Bedouin, Sanad Salaam al-Harbad, in Rahat in March 2022.

Turning back to the Netzah Yehuda controversy, the former director of the State Department’s political-military affairs bureau, Josh Paul, told CNN that there was “not even the slightest basis” to believe that the three aforementioned units had made efforts to reform.

Speaking on the alleged rape of a teenage boy in custody during a previous interview, Paul said that the allegation was credible. He alleged that a charity had informed the US State Department of the allegation and that Israel proceeded to shut down the charity’s base shortly after.

“Do you know what happened the next day? The IDF went into the [charity’s] offices and removed all their computers and declared them a terrorist entity,” Paul told CNN.

Additionally, the news agency cited three examples of presumed violations conducted by the IDF after October 7.

While admitting that it could not verify the civilian death count provided by Hamas or Israel, CNN cited the successful hostage rescue mission, which saw four hostages released from captivity in June. Paul noted in response that, under the 1997 Leahy Law, the US would indeed be prohibited from supplying military aid to foreign security units credibly implicated in human rights violations.

“Had the US used the leverage that Leahy Laws provided over the years to encourage the IDF to crack down on misbehavior and to snuff out its current culture of impunity, we would have seen at the very least a much stronger unit discipline at a tactical level,” said Paul.

Significantly, commanders, such as those promoted from the Netzah Yehuda Battalion, would also be subject to vetting under the Leahy Laws.



UN SECRETARY-GENERAL Antonio Guterres has called to protect UNRWA staff and its mandate, including through funding. (Eduardo Munoz/Reuters)

UN chief Guterres: There is no alternative to UNRWA

• By MICHELLE NICHOLS

UNITED NATIONS (Reuters) – United Nations chief António Guterres declared on Friday that there was no alternative to the UN’s Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, and that 118 countries backed the relief organization as indispensable amid stepped-up efforts by Israel to dismantle it.

UNRWA provides education, health, and aid to millions of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon.

Since the war erupted nine months ago between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, UN officials have stressed that UNRWA is the backbone of aid operations.

“My appeal to everyone is this: Protect UNRWA, protect UNRWA staff, and protect UNRWA’s mandate, including through funding,” Guterres told a UNRWA pledging conference in New York on Friday. “Let me be clear: There is no alternative to UNRWA.”

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has long called for UNRWA to be dismantled, accusing it of anti-Israeli incitement, and the Knesset is currently considering designating UNRWA as a terrorist organization.

Several countries halted their funding of UNRWA following accusations by Israel that some of the agency’s staff were involved in the October 7 massacre that triggered the Gaza war. Most donors have since resumed their

funding, while the UN is conducting an internal investigation.

UNRWA has been hit hard during the conflict in Gaza – 195 staff have been killed.

“UNRWA is also being targeted in other ways,” Guterres said. “Staff have been the subject of increasingly violent protests and virulent misinformation and disinformation campaigns.”

“Some have been detained by Israeli security forces and subsequently reported mistreatment and even torture,” he said, adding that in the West Bank, the presence and movements of UNRWA staff have also been severely restricted by Israel.

The IDF has said that it acts according to Israeli and international law, and those it arrests get access to food, water, medication, and proper clothing.

Israel accuses UNRWA of complicity with Hamas, claiming that the terrorist group was embedded within the UN agency’s infrastructure.

UNRWA was created by the UN General Assembly in 1949 following the first war between Arabs and Israelis. Jordan’s UN Ambassador Mahmoud Daifallah Hmoud said on Friday, ahead of a pledging event, that 118 countries had signed on to a joint statement supporting UNRWA and its work.

The statement underlined “that UNRWA is the backbone of all humanitarian responses in Gaza and recognized that no organization can replace or substitute UNRWA’s capacity.”

Sex therapist Ruth Westheimer dies at 96

Says she lost her virginity in a kibbutz barn at age 17, became a sniper in the Haganah and went on to become an international pop culture figure

• By BILL TROTT

Dr. Ruth Westheimer, the chirpy, diminutive therapist who became a pop culture figure as she encouraged Americans to have sex safely, frequently and creatively, died at the age of 96, *The Washington Post* reported.

Westheimer died on Friday at her home in Manhattan, the newspaper reported citing her publicist.

Westheimer, who fled Nazi Germany as a child, said she first learned about sex when she was 10 years old and took her parents' "marriage manual" out of a locked cabinet.

What she saw on those pages would lead to a career that included international fame, books, instructional videos, lectures, teaching jobs, a radio show, countless television appearances, a syndicated column and even a "Good Sex" board game.

Known universally as "Dr. Ruth," the 1.4 meters tall lady with a distinctive German accent and perpetual cheerfulness preached the joys of good sex, great sex and, especially, safe sex.

The woman who would become one of the world's best known sex gurus lost her virginity at 17 on a starry night in a hayloft on a kibbutz.

"We spent many nights in that barn ... but I remember that first time most vividly of all because it shows that when two people are in love, the first experience can be very enjoyable," she wrote in her 2001 autobiography, *All in a Lifetime*.

Westheimer, a great proponent of contraception, chided herself in the book for not being concerned with birth control in those first encounters. She also declined to say who her partner was because she remained friends with the man, as well as his wife.

Westheimer herself was the product of an unplanned, out-of-wedlock pregnancy. Her mother was working as a housekeeper for the family of Westheimer's father in Frankfurt, when she became pregnant. The young couple eventually married and Karola Ruth Siegel was born on June 4, 1928.

Westheimer was 10 when the Nazis came to her Frankfurt home and took away her father. Six weeks later her mother sent her to an orphanage in Switzerland. In 1941, Westheimer stopped receiving letters from her parents and she later learned they had been murdered in the Holocaust.

At 16 she emigrated to Eretz Yisrael and joined the Haganah. "I learned to assemble a rifle in the dark and was trained as a sniper so that I could hit the center of the target time after time," she wrote in a 2010 *New York Times* opinion article that called for women to be allowed to serve in combat in the US military.

Westheimer never tested her sniping skills against an enemy but was injured in a bombing in Jerusalem. She married an Israeli soldier and they moved to Paris and went to college. They later divorced, and she headed to New York with a boyfriend, married him, had a daughter and continued her education.

After another divorce, she wed Manfred Westheimer, an engineer she met in 1961. That marriage produced a son and lasted until Manfred's death in 1997.

After earning a doctorate in education, Westheimer went to work for Planned Parenthood and caught the attention of a New York radio station executive when she lectured broadcast officials on contraception.

That led to a weekly 15-minute midnight radio program in 1980 called *Sexually Speaking*. It was an advice show that took questions from listeners about orgasms, condoms and sexual dysfunction - very

sensitive subject matter for the time - and quickly won Westheimer a following.

She said it was a combination of her experience, training, and her quirky voice and accent that gave her credibility with listeners. They also liked the way she would cheerily wish them "good sex!"

Westheimer became a popular guest on TV talk shows, which ultimately led to her own show.

"I'm like a Jewish mother," she was quoted as saying in *People* magazine. "A Jewish mother who talks explicitly."

Westheimer believed in peo-

ple doing whatever they were comfortable with in bed - or elsewhere - and that sex was better when accompanied by intimacy and communication. If it was between consenting adults and done with proper consideration of contraception, it was OK with Dr. Ruth.

But personally, she was no libertine.

"I am very old fashioned... and a square," Westheimer said in a *National Geographic* interview in 2003. "I believe in love. I believe in relationships. I believe in people staying together for a lifetime or as

long as possible."

In addition to her autobiography, Westheimer wrote nearly 40 books, including *Sex for Dummies*, *Dr. Ruth's Sex After 50*, *Heavenly Sex: Sexuality in the Jewish Tradition*, *Dr. Ruth's Encyclopedia of Sex* and *Dr. Ruth's Top Ten Secrets for Great Sex*. (Reuters)

DR. RUTH WESTHEIMER lights a candle during the Annual Gathering of Remembrance in New York in April 2006 which brought together nearly 2,000 Holocaust survivors. (Keith Bedford/Reuters)



- Communicated -

Batiste, the leading dry shampoo brand in the world, is currently launching an XXL dry shampoo that gives hair volume, presence, volume, chic, care and nourishment.

The beloved children's star Naama Superhero presents the summer 2024 production starring Naama in the Kingdom of Heroes of the Sun.



Yossi Schwartz, one of the owners of the City Market chain, the largest private supermarket chain in Israel, celebrated this week for his twins Liroy and Uri a festive bar mitzvah held at the chef's restaurant Tzipi Primo. The festive and exciting event was attended by many of the leaders of the economy in the retail sector and they enjoyed a rich chef's dinner. The guests were treated to an intimate performance by singer Shlomi Saranga and the Revivo Project.

What's new?

For International Ice Cream Day on July 17, Tasa Candy House and the Tasa+ chain are having a one-time summer sale event: international ice cream brands will be sold for only NIS 5.90 instead of NIS 13.90. The sale will be held across the chains from July 2 until August 21 or while supplies last.

The GA-DE beauty brand launches: Selfie Lash Stretch Effect Mascara, a mascara that lengthens and lifts the eyelashes, giving an eyelash a stretching effect that lasts up to 24 hours without smearing or crumbling.

Madame Perez continues to surprise, launching Restaurant Noodles, which joins the series of stews in the concept of a meal for two. The noodles are fresh and ready to stir-fry, without the need for pre-cooking and the taste is just like in Asian restaurants

Skechers launches a collection of back-to-school bags, including bags with space for a laptop.



Presenter, writer and online culinary star Adi Shilon (114K) was chosen as the new face of the underwear chain JACK KUBA for summer 24.

Sacara is launching a series of deodorants based on natural ingredients and providing full protection.

New brands landed at the Mashbir. The Italian shoe brand CALL IT SPRING will be sold exclusively at the Mashbir, as will a variety of products from the American children's brand Baby Gap.

Luxury brand Michael Kors launches two new perfumes for him and her: Michael Kors Pour Femme and Michael Kors Pour Homme.



The board of directors of the Ayalim association approved the appointment of Sigal Barzilai as the CEO of the association.



The TLV Mall launched the photography exhibition "9 Months" by photographer Sharon Beck, nine months after the tragic events of October 7. Entrance to the exhibition is free. Open until July 21.



The BBB hamburger restaurant chain comes out in collaboration with the YOLO brand. In this framework, it is launching new gifts for children's meals, a product kit of the popular children's brand YOLO.

Magic Kass, the largest indoor amusement park in Israel, will offer unlimited air-conditioned indoor entertainment in July and August in all the unique extreme facilities in the park, including Looper, Sky Tower, Air Race and Discovery 360 alongside Genesis, an outdoor roller coaster over 20 meters high, located on the roof of the building, Piratos and Spider. In the park there is a whole floor of arcade games with over 100 games and a simulator complex. Even the little ones will enjoy a variety of activities such as trampolines, an innovative and large soft play area, and inflatables in a variety of shapes scattered throughout the park. Visitors will enjoy two additional unique attractions: a 100-meter-long mirror maze, containing 18 twists and turns, and "Magic Ghost" - an innovative and unique horror maze, which is approximately 120 meters long and contains props and elements that evoke horror and fear. Magic Kass will be open to visitors in July and August - check the website for opening hours.



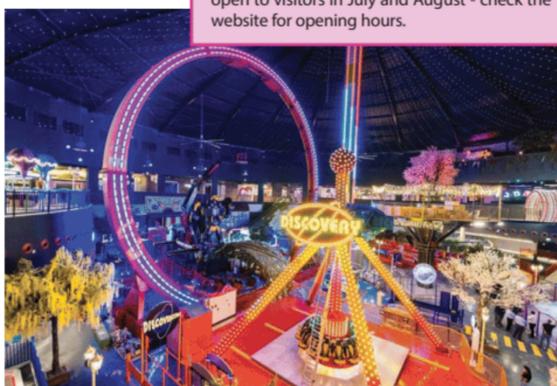
The international natural cosmetics brand Weleda is currently launching a rich anti-aging night cream, based on pomegranate seed oil and peptides from acacia root.



Children's fashion chain Lee Cooper Kids is launching on the occasion of the Paris 2024 Olympics a sports capsule collection, in a limited edition, intended for ages 4 to 14.



The temperature insulated bottle with a cool design: Hydro Flask is now in Lametayel stores. The right bottle to walk around with today, it's a fashionable thermal drinking bottle, suitable for sports as well as for everyday use. Guarantees to maintain insulation from cold for 24 hours and heat for 12 hours, with TempShield technology. The bottle can be found on Lametayel's website: www.lametayel.co.il/stores/



'You realize that you're next in line to die': Hostage rescued from Gaza recounts Hamas captivity

Andrey Kozlov still hasn't fully taken in his return to freedom, saying that 'coming home is the best feeling I've felt in my life. It's the greatest gift'

• By URI SELA/Walla and Jerusalem Post Staff

It is not easy for Andrey Kozlov to speak about the long period he spent in Hamas captivity; the memories are both fresh and painful.

Only a month after he was rescued in an operation by security forces, the freed hostage decided that he had no choice but to share everything he had been through – he owed it to those who were left behind.

In his first interview with Walla, he described last week the terror he felt on October 7, the mental and physical abuse he went through, what kept him going during the eight months in Gaza, how he learned of the developments of the war and various ceasefire deals and how he was left disappointed every time. Now, he demands the government do everything possible to return the remaining 120 hostages.

Kozlov still hasn't digested his return to freedom. "Coming home is the best feeling I've felt in my life. It's the greatest gift. I pinch myself every day to understand if I'm dreaming," he admitted, laughing. "I'm probably not."

Did you hear about the efforts to get a ceasefire-hostage deal while you were there?

"The kidnapers kept us informed all the time, but not about everything. We weren't told about the release of Fernando and Luis, for example. Some of them spoke to us in English and told us about the news and developments between Israel and Gaza. We knew that there would be a deal at the end of November. We had hoped that we would be released, but that didn't happen."

Did they tell you that you wouldn't be released?

"They told us that every day, one of the hostages would be released. In the end, they only released one that was with us in captivity. Me, Shlomi, and Almog were sure that tomorrow or the day after, we would be released and be back home. When we realized that this wouldn't happen, it devastated us emotionally."



ANDREY KOZLOV arrives in Ramat Gan after his rescue with three other hostages from Gaza captivity on June 8. (Marko Djurica/Reuters)

How did you feel when you realized you wouldn't be coming back, because Israel and Hamas couldn't reach an agreement?

"The best word is disappointment. I was crushed by this news. I know words that describe it, but I won't say them. After the deal, we kept hearing a lot about another deal taking shape, each time we thought we might be able to be released soon. Expectations kept developing."

Kozlov demonstrates how he was breathless with excitement every time he heard positive news.

"Blinken has arrived; surely he will solve the problems," he recalled in some of the updates he received. "Israel sent representatives to Qatar; they will probably resolve it, and we can return home. Biden said that the Israeli government should end the fighting. Egypt sent representatives to Israel, Israel sent representatives to Egypt. Every day we heard something and expected something good to come."

But every time it fell apart."

Were you angry?

"There were many emotions together: Anger, disappointment. Obviously, we wanted to get home. We didn't know who was to blame; they told us one thing, and after we returned to Israel, we heard another. When you're there, you don't have all the information, and you don't know who is responsible for not being able to go home. We believed what they told us."

"They showed us a lot of the demonstrations in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. We saw the anger of the people. The first time, it was, 'Wow, it's full of people.' And they (Hamas) said, 'Yes, a lot of people,' (he mimics their response in a robotic voice).

"You see it and understand that people are fighting for you, but nothing changes. You don't see results. You know that hostages were released in November, but they forgot about you."

"The decision-makers are responsible. 120 hostages there. Some are already dead, and we don't know how many of them

are alive. They are citizens of Israel. It could have been anyone. It could have been you. They are alive and waiting for a decision, a solution. Some still have hope and strength, others have lost it. They are just in tunnels without enough food."

"We were told that some only eat five dates a day. I remember how I felt, and I can't imagine them in the tunnels for nine months, 40 meters underground. You can't imagine how terrible it is. Those were the worst days of our lives. Try to understand. We need to bring them home as soon as possible."

You mentioned the conditions in captivity. What moments were the most difficult for you?

"October 7 was the hardest day of my life. I couldn't believe that this was happening to me. It was a nightmare. At some point, our guards and other people left the compound we were in, probably because they received a signal that it would be bombed. Only one guard, a terrorist, remained with us,

holding a knife. He was reading the Quran, and we were just waiting for the house to be bombed. After an hour, someone came back and asked: 'Why are you afraid of being bombed?' I was sure that in a short time, my life would be over."

"In November we were in an abandoned building, we were locked in a room. People from the outside could find us, and throw a burning object at us when we are tied up. We were just waiting for it to arrive. The guards brought us food during the day and left at night."

"Some guards were the worst people I've ever met. I remember that for two days, I lay under three thick blankets in the middle of May for an hour and a half, because I had done something wrong in their eyes. For two days, I lay there on the mattress, unable to stand or speak, and at the same time, they showed Almog and Shlomi movies in English on Arabic channels."

"There was also violence at the beginning, on October 7.

We were beaten. One of them signaled to me with his hands that he would kill me tomorrow and take a picture of it. The next day, he came to me and said he loved me. There was a lot of psychological abuse. We were told that Israel would kill us. Each time we were updated that three were killed in the bombing, one was killed in the bombing, and you realize you're next. Maybe in a minute, or a day, or a month, but it will happen."

"You understand that every day is a gift. You start praying in the morning, begging the guard to let you go. One time, I had a problem, and they called a doctor who gave me medicine. To this day, I don't know if he was really a doctor."

In an interview with Walla after his return, Andrey's parents said he told them he would never tell about some of his experiences in captivity.

"Since then, I have told everything. Who cares?" he continued when asked about it. "They already felt the worst possible. To everyone who called me strong, king, champion, and hero, I replied that I appreciated them and thanked them, but on October 7, I didn't see dead bodies. I only heard about it. I kept myself alive for my family. The only goal was to return home healthy. That was my mantra. I wasn't a hero; I just wanted to be able to tell my mom that I love her again."

How did you spend your time there?

"Part of the time, we did nothing. We just waited. They asked us, 'Are you soldiers? Do you have GPS chips under your skin? How much do you earn in Israel?' Everyone who came asked us the same questions."

"I also did stretches, yoga, and breathing. I thought: 'One more day, a little more. I'll be free, I'll be back, I'll survive.'"

Andrey and the other hostages moved between seven different hiding places. They stayed in the last of them from December to June. Some of them met other hostages. "I saw hostages and informed their families when I returned," he said.

At the end of August, a month and a half before he was

kidnapped, he started dating his partner Jennifer. "I didn't expect her to stay, to fight for me. I would have understood if she would have stopped waiting for me. We only dated for a month and a half. But she continued and fought for me, and I have no words to describe how much I appreciate it."

The joy of the return was also mixed with the news of the death of the mission commander Arnon Zmora during the rescue operation, which was later named after him. "We saw him when he was wounded. The soldiers told us: don't look at him; you don't need to see it. But when an injured person is lying a meter away from you, you can't help but look. I want to say to all the soldiers who took part in the operation: you are my heroes."

"Arnon Zmora was an amazing person and soldier. He is a hero. He went on an operation that you know you could lose your life in, and I have no words to express my feelings for him. I so appreciate what he did for me. I met his family and they are amazing too. We spent a holiday with his mother. It was one of the hardest moments of my life."

Kozlov also conducted a separate interview with KAN on Friday, where he repeated much of the trauma he underwent, in his interview with Walla.

"I ran 300 meters," Kozlov said, while recounting events from October 7. "I saw a big car full of bad guys. They started shooting in the air and then started shooting at us from all sides."

He initially met hostage Shlomi Ziv then and tried to escape together, he told KAN. They ran into an individual whom they thought was an IDF soldier, and they got into a car to escape the area, but then realized he lied about his identity.

"We were not driving towards Tel Aviv, but towards Gaza," he recounted, which was the moment they realized they had been kidnapped. Two hours after they had crossed the border to Gaza, Almog later joined them in captivity, Kozlov said.

'Ben-Gvir gets most support among right-wingers to succeed Netanyahu'

• By MOSHE COHEN

National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir received the greatest support among coalition party voters to lead the right-wing bloc in a post-Netanyahu era, according to a new *Maariv* survey.

The poll, on July 10-11, included 500 respondents who represented a sample of Israel's adult population, both Jews and Arabs. The maximum sampling error is 4.4%.

Ben-Gvir receives 24% support among coalition party voters, followed by Yossi Cohen (14%) and Bezalel Smotrich (11%), according to the survey, led by Dr. Menachem Lazar from Lazar Research and in collaboration with Panel4All.

When asked who they would vote for if the Knesset elections were held today, National Unity won 24 seats (23 in previ-

ous poll), the Likud 20 seats (21), Yisrael Beytenu 14 seats (14), and Yesh Atid 13 (13).

The Democrats party (Labor and Meretz combined) would receive nine seats (10), as would Shas, holding steady, while Otzma Yehudit would strengthen to 10 seats (9).

United Torah Judaism, at 7, Hadash-Ta'al at 5, and Religious Zionism at 4 would all remain unchanged. Ra'am would garner five seats (up from 4).

According to the results, the bloc breakdown remains with 50 seats for the coalition, 60 for the opposition, and 10 for the Arab parties.

When asked who they would vote for if a unified right-wing party – including Avigdor Liberman, Naftali Bennett, Yossi Cohen, Ayelet Shaked, and Gideon Sa'ar – were to run in the next Knesset elections,

and the other parties remain unchanged, the Unified Right Party would get 27 seats (compared to 29 in the previous survey), Likud would drop to 18 (from 19,) while National Unity and Yesh Atid would remain unchanged at 16 and 12 seats respectively.

Shas and Otzma Yehudit would also remain unchanged at nine each. The Democrats will drop one seat to eight, while Hadash-Ta'al will receive four.

Former Prime Minister Naftali Bennett should lead the unified right-wing party, with 34% of the respondents voting for him. Liberman follows him with 11% of the votes.

National Unity's Benny Gantz leads Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as the more suitable candidate for prime minister by 43% to 38%. Bennett, however, leads Netanyahu 48% to 35%.



MENACHEM MENDEL SCHNEERSON remembered in one of the events across Ukraine last week commemorating the 30th anniversary of the passing of the Lubavitcher rebbe. (Courtesy of JRNU)

Ukraine honors Lubavitcher rebbe 30 years after his death

• Jerusalem Post Staff

Thousands of Jews across Ukraine participated last week in public events to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the passing of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Menachem Mendel Schneerson.

Organized by Chabad emissaries and city rabbis, these events underscored the crucial role these emissaries have played in maintaining Jewish life during Ukraine's ongoing war.

Schneerson, known as "the rebbe," was a prominent Hasidic rabbi and leader of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement.

Born in 1902 in what is now Ukraine, he became the rebbe in 1950 and led the movement until his death in 1994. Schneerson is renowned for promoting Jewish education, observance,

and community building. Under his leadership, a global network of Chabad centers was established to serve Jewish communities worldwide.

The Jewish Relief Network Ukraine (JRNU) launched a unique branding campaign for this milestone anniversary. This campaign accompanied events held in cities across the country, which has been embroiled in conflict with Russia for 10 years and in active war for two.

During these events, informational leaflets were distributed detailing the major projects the rebbe promoted, including the observance of mitzvot such as laying tefillin (phylacteries), kashrut (Jewish dietary laws), lighting shabbat candles, and Jewish education.

This year, particular emphasis was placed on the role of the

rebbe's emissaries in preserving Judaism in Ukraine. According to a JRNU spokesperson, "Today we can unequivocally say that the rebbe's emissaries saved Ukrainian Judaism. When all the leaders fled the country at the outbreak of the war, it was the emissaries who remained under fire and continued to manage Jewish life under very challenging conditions. In some places, these difficulties persist."

In the coming days, special Chabad "tanks" (mobile outreach vehicles) will travel to the most remote Jewish communities in Ukraine, bringing Jewish books and essential items for maintaining Jewish life. These hassidic "tanks" will be accompanied by Chabad yeshiva students after they complete their summer studies.

More than 70% of Israelis say Netanyahu should step down, N12 survey shows

• Jerusalem Post Staff

More than two-thirds of the Israeli public says that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu should resign immediately or at the end of the war, according to a poll conducted by the N12 news site.

Forty-four percent said that he should resign immediately, while an additional 28% thought that he should resign after the war, combining 72% that supported his resignation.

In contrast, 22% of those surveyed by N12 said that Netanyahu should remain in office. Notably, even among Netanya-

hu's supporters, opinions were divided, with 50% agreeing that he should resign immediately or post-war, while 42% felt that he should not.

Alongside these figures on Netanyahu, the poll also highlighted strong public support for a hostage deal, despite some controversial terms that have been raised in light of the most recent negotiations.

The poll also addressed Israeli public perceptions regarding responsibility for the October 7 attacks.

Nearly 40% of respondents primarily held Netanyahu responsible for mishandling the situation. N12's poll also noted

other figures that the public perceived as bearing responsibility, including former IDF Military Intelligence Directorate head Aharon Haliva, who was blamed by 18% of respondents, IDF Chief of Staff Lt.-Gen. Herzl Halevi by 10%, Shin Bet (Israel Security Agency) Director Ronen Bar by 7%, and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant by 4%.

N12's poll, conducted by Midgam Consulting and Research on Thursday, included a representative sample of the Israeli adult population, with 502 respondents participating. The poll had a margin of error of ±4.4%.

English pubs, shops gear up for Euro final today

Major soccer event falls on same day as Wimbledon men's final in splendid sports bonanza

• By JAMES DAVEY
and RADHIKA ANILKUMAR

LONDON (Reuters) – English pubs, supermarkets and restaurants are set for a bonanza as fans prepare to tune in on Sunday to watch England play Spain in the final of the Euro 2024 soccer championship in Germany and before that the Wimbledon tennis men's singles final in London.

The events will provide a much-needed fillip to the hospitality and retail sector after wet weather meant a subdued start to summer trading.

Items from beer, wine and snacks, barbecue food and pizzas to large screen TVs and England shirts, were being snapped up ahead of the major sporting weekend, supermarkets Tesco, Sainsbury's and Asda said, and data from Adobe showed.

Sainsbury's, Britain's No. 2 grocer, forecast weekend beer sales would increase 200% year-on-year, with sales of sparkling wine and ready-to-drink cocktail cans both up 30%.

Britain's third-biggest supermarket Asda has sold over 20,000 large screen ultra-high-definition TVs during Euro 2024, with more sales expected ahead of Sunday, it said, after England beat the Netherlands 2-1 in the semi-final on Wednesday thanks to a dramatic last minute winner.

England face Spain on Sunday for

a chance to become the first England men's team to win a major tournament since the 1966 World Cup and the first on foreign soil.

"Victory for England would certainly be one of the biggest football payouts of all time for the business, deep into seven figures," bookmaker William Hill spokesperson Lee Phelps said.

A spokesperson for JD Sports said its England merchandise sales jumped over six-fold for the semi-final, having already risen by almost three times around last Saturday's quarter-final victory on penalties against Switzerland.

Data from Adobe forecast England fans' spending on team merchandise will have spiked by as much as 1,500% above normal levels the day after the semi-final.

US online sports retailer Fanatics said that the Euro 2024 was the best-selling ever for official England merchandise and expects a huge spike in sales if England takes the cup home.

British pubs and bars are set for a £120 million sales boost from the final, trade body UKHospitality said.

Bars and restaurants in Spain are also set to see a boost, with Spanish Hospitality Association forecasting sales of €117.6m. on Sunday, up more than 15% compared to Sundays this year.

Britain's biggest supermarket group

Tesco said it would shut its more than 1,800 Express stores across England early on Sunday to allow its staff to get home or to the pub in time for the kick-off.

"Based on our learnings from England reaching the final last time round (in 2021), and also from increasing demand through this tournament, we have a well-rehearsed supply plan in place to make sure all our stores are stocked for the extra demand," Jason Binks, store ordering manager at Tesco, said.

The Wimbledon men's final will start several hours before the Euro final on Sunday.

Surveys published on Tuesday showed British consumer spending contracted in June, with wet weather hitting sales of key seasonal items. However, the consumer outlook is improving, with lower UK inflation, rising real living standards and the promise of a period of political stability with a new Labour government.

Young & Co. Brewery said its pubs were "nearly" fully booked but it still had the option for walk-ins and London-based Fullers had seen a jump in advance bookings.

JD Wetherspoon, which would not regularly show games at their pubs except the big tournaments, have been screening the Euros from the start of the tournament.

A Domino's spokesperson said the



ENGLAND PLAYERS attend a training session at the team's base camp in Blankenhain yesterday, ahead of the UEFA Euro 2024 final. (Adrian Dennis/AFP via Getty Images)

pizza chain was stocking up on its cheese & tomato and pepperoni pizzas and will be offering a 50% discount on web and app orders from

Friday through to Sunday.

Not all retailers will be happy though. Away from the supermarkets spending could be compressed

as people stay at home ahead of the match instead of visiting the high street, shopping centers and retail parks.

Pakistan's Imran Khan to stay in jail despite acquittal in marriage case

• By ASIF SHAHZAD

ISLAMABAD (Reuters) – Former Prime Minister Imran Khan and his third wife were acquitted on charges of marrying unlawfully by a Pakistan court on Saturday, yet he will not be freed after authorities issued fresh orders to arrest him.

The ruling came a day after his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party won more seats in parliament, ramping up pressure on the country's fragile ruling coalition, which is grappling to stabilize a broken economy.

The couple were sentenced to seven years in February when a court found them guilty of breaking Islamic law by failing to observe the required interval between the divorce from a previous marriage of Bushra Khan, also known as Bushra Bibi, and her marriage to Khan.

They had filed an appeal against their convictions.

"Both the appellants are acquitted of the charges," said an order by the appeal court seen by Reuters.

"They are directed to be released forthwith if not required to be detained in any other case."

It said the prosecution failed to prove its case against the couple.

Khan's PTI party said authorities have issued fresh arrest warrants for him in three cases linked to violence against the military and other state installations that erupted following his brief arrest in May 2023.

An anti-terrorism court last week canceled his bail in one of the May 9 cases registered against him and thousands of his supporters.

The party called it a "gimmick" aimed at prolonging his imprisonment.



FORMER PAKISTANI Prime Minister Imran Khan. (Akhtar Soomro/Reuters)

Bibi is on bail in a land corruption case in which she is also co-accused with Khan, who should be a free person after the latest acquittal, the party added.

All four jail sentences Khan received ahead of a February national election have now been overturned or suspended.

Jailed since last August, he was acquitted last month of charges of leaking state secrets. Two other corruption sentences have been suspended.

The PTI has warned that keeping Khan in jail despite Saturday's decision will deepen a political crisis which has crippled the country of 240 million people since he was ousted in a parliament vote of confidence in 2022.

Khan blames his ouster on the country's powerful military generals. No prime minister of Pakistan has completed a full five-year constitutional term since the country gained its independence in 1947.

Judge ends bankruptcy for Giuliani, exposing legal risks

• By DIETRICH KNAUTH

A US judge on Friday ended Rudy Giuliani's bankruptcy, allowing lawsuits for defamation, sexual harassment and other claims to proceed against Donald Trump's former lawyer.

US Bankruptcy Judge Sean Lane in White Plains, New York, also banned Giuliani from seeking bankruptcy for one year.

Giuliani, 80, filed for bankruptcy protection in December after a Washington, DC, court ordered the former New York City mayor to pay \$148 million to two Georgia election workers who he falsely accused of rigging votes in the 2020 presidential election which was won by Democrat Joe Biden.

The bankruptcy prevented the former Georgia election workers, Wandrea "Shaye" Moss and her mother Ruby Freeman, from collecting on that judgment, while freezing other lawsuits stemming from Giuliani's work for Trump, the former Republican president, as he sought to overturn his loss in the 2020 election.

The dismissal allows Giuliani's creditors to resume lawsuits against him, but it frees Giuliani to appeal the \$148 million defamation judgment that forced him to seek bankruptcy protection.

Now that he is no longer in bankruptcy, Giuliani intends to appeal the judgment, his lawyer Heath Berger said on Friday following the ruling.

As detailed by a Reuters investigation, Moss and Freeman's

lives were upended by a barrage of threats after a hearing of Georgia lawmakers in December 2020, where the Trump campaign falsely claimed surveillance video from a ballot-processing room at State Farm Arena in Atlanta amounted to "shocking" evidence of fraud.

Giuliani later showed snippets of the video and repeatedly identified Moss and Freeman by name, calling them "crooks" who "obviously" stole votes.

Rachel Strickland, a lawyer for Moss and Freeman, said her clients would immediately move to enforce their judgment against Giuliani.

"We are pleased the court saw through Mr. Giuliani's games and put a stop to his abuse of the bankruptcy process," Strickland said.

In dismissing the bankruptcy case, Lane cited Giuliani's "continued failure to meet his reporting obligations and provide the financial transparency required of a debtor."

Giuliani's personal disclosures were late and incomplete, and Giuliani's businesses never made financial disclosures in bankruptcy court.

Giuliani's own bankruptcy lawyers appeared unaware that Giuliani was promoting a coffee brand until his creditors raised concerns about media reports, Lane wrote.

After seven months in Chapter 11, Giuliani had made no progress on a potential bankruptcy settlement with the people who have sued him,

Lane wrote. Ending the bankruptcy made more sense than continuing to spend money on bankruptcy fees that would ultimately reduce his ability to pay creditors, Lane said in Friday's ruling.

Giuliani's creditors have alleged that he flouted bankruptcy disclosure rules and continued to spend lavishly after filing for Chapter 11.

Giuliani paid salaries to his girlfriend Maria Ryan and her daughter, failed to report income from his businesses, and made defamatory statements that caused the cancellation of his WABC radio show, creditors said.

In addition to Moss and Freeman, Giuliani's creditors include former employee Noelle Dunphy, who has accused Giuliani of sexual assault and wage theft, and the voting machine companies Dominion and Smartmatic, who have also sued Giuliani for defamation. Giuliani has denied the allegations.

Giuliani separately is facing criminal charges in Georgia and Arizona for allegedly aiding Trump's efforts to subvert the election. Giuliani has pleaded not guilty and called the allegations politically motivated.

The onetime Manhattan US Attorney was stripped of his New York law license earlier this month when a court found he "baselessly attacked and undermined the integrity of this country's electoral process" by spreading false election fraud claims. (Reuters)

SpaceX's Falcon 9 grounded after failure dooms batch of Starlink satellites

Rocket suffers first failure in more than seven years, after more than 300 consecutive successful missions

• By JOEY ROULETTE

WASHINGTON (Reuters) – SpaceX's workhorse Falcon 9 rocket was grounded by the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) on Friday after one broke apart in space and doomed its payload of Starlink satellites, the first failure in more than seven years of a rocket relied upon by the global space industry.

Roughly an hour after Falcon 9 lifted off from the Vandenberg Space Force Base in California on Thursday night, the rocket's second stage failed to reignite and deployed its 20 Starlink satellites on a shallow orbital path where they will eventually reenter Earth's atmosphere and burn up.

The attempt to reignite the engine "resulted in an engine

RUD for reasons currently unknown," SpaceX CEO Elon Musk wrote early on Friday on his social media platform X, using initials for the industry term Rapid Unscheduled Disassembly, which usually means explosion.

The Falcon 9 will be grounded until SpaceX investigates the cause of the failure, fixes the rocket, and receives the FAA's approval, the agency said in a statement. That process could take several weeks or months, depending on the issue's complexity and SpaceX's plan to fix it.

The botched mission of the world's most active rocket ended a success streak of more than 300 straight missions during which SpaceX has maintained its dominance of the launch industry. Many countries and space companies rely on privately owned

SpaceX, valued at roughly \$200 billion, to send their satellites and astronauts into space.

Musk said SpaceX was updating the software of the Starlink satellites to force their onboard thrusters to fire harder than usual to avoid a fiery atmospheric reentry.

"Unlike a *Star Trek* episode, this will probably not work, but it's worth a shot," Musk said.

The satellites pose no threat to the public, SpaceX wrote on Friday evening on X. The company did not estimate when they would make their reentry, which would appear as streaks of light across the sky.

"Shooting stars," Musk said, replying to the SpaceX post.

Their altitude is so shallow that Earth's gravity is pulling them 5 kilometers closer toward the atmosphere with each orbit, SpaceX said earli-

er in the day, confirming they would "reenter Earth's atmosphere and fully demise."

NASA said in a statement on Friday that it monitors all of SpaceX's Falcon 9 missions.

"SpaceX has been forthcoming with information and is including NASA in the company's ongoing anomaly investigation to understand the issue and path forward," a US space agency spokesperson said.

SpaceX said the second stage's failure occurred after engineers detected a leak of liquid oxygen – a propellant.

The mishap occurred on Falcon 9's 354th mission. It was the first Falcon 9 failure since 2016, when a rocket exploded on a launch pad in Florida and destroyed its customer payload, an Israeli communications satellite.

"We knew this incredible run had to come to an end

at some point," Tom Mueller, SpaceX's former vice president of propulsion who designed the Falcon 9's engines, replied to Musk on X.

The team will fix the problem and start the cycle again.

This failure will likely stymie SpaceX's intensifying Falcon 9 launch pace. The rocket's 96 launches last year were its most to date and exceeded the annual launch total in any country. By comparison, China, a space rival to the United States, launched 67 missions to space in 2023 using various rockets.

"It's extremely rare for Falcon to fail. They have a much better rocket developed in terms of the success of their mission," said Will Whitehorn, chair of the venture capital firm Seraphim Space Investment Trust.

Although Thursday night's

Falcon 9 flight was an in-house mission, the rocket's grounding is likely to impact upcoming SpaceX customer missions.

FALCON 9 is the only US rocket capable of sending NASA crews to the International Space Station. NASA was expecting to launch its next astronaut mission in August, with SpaceX's Crew Dragon astronaut capsule launching atop the rocket.

NASA has been trying to help fix unrelated problems with Boeing's Starliner spacecraft, which is in the midst of a test mission to prove that it can become NASA's second astronaut ride to orbit alongside Crew Dragon.

SpaceX was poised to launch as early as July 31 its Polaris Dawn Crew Dragon mission, sending four private astronauts into orbit for a few days to conduct the first commer-

cial spacewalk using the company's newly designed spacesuits.

Jared Isaacman, head of the Polaris program and a mission crew member, said that he expects SpaceX to quickly recover from the failure.

"As for Polaris Dawn, we will fly whenever SpaceX is ready and with complete confidence in the rocket, spaceship, and operations," Isaacman wrote on X.

Musk replied, "We will investigate the issue and look for any other potential near-misses."

SpaceX has launched about 7,000 Starlink satellites of various designs into space since 2018 for its global broadband internet network. Industry analysts have said that the satellites on Thursday's mission could be worth at least \$10 million combined.



Cuckoo clocks and comic book superheroes blend in Baden-Baden



HOTELS

• BY MOTTI VERSES

A little while before COVID, a delegation of WIZO Germany members visited Hadassim Youth Village in Even Yehuda, east of Netanya, an institution inaugurated in 1947 to provide a home to orphaned children following World War II.

Students who now live within the community told the guests from Germany how Hadassim transformed their lives. A special ceremony to honor two leading supporters who joined the delegation was the highlight of the visit. Alex Urseanu and Micky Rosen were the guests who received the warm and generous appreciation.

Not many know but Urseanu and Rosen are the developers of a brand in the hospitality and gastronomy industries in Germany – Gekko Group. Their business motivation is apparently a passion for life, and their portfolio includes real estate, hotels, gastronomy, and events. With a high-class lifestyle conception and design, the group has been expanding in Germany with its own boutique-style hotel brand, under the name Roomers.

Intrigued by their activities, I returned to the Schwarzwald, Germany's Black Forest. This picturesque enchanting region offers tons of activities and destinations to capture. Reading in our car the Brothers Grimm folk tales, we programmed the vehicle GPS to the area's ultimate destination – the curative waters and air of old-world luxury of Baden-Baden. This Black Forest town boasts grand colonnaded buildings and impressive Art Nouveau villas spread across the hillsides and framed by forested mountains. However, our main goal was to discover Urseanu and Rosen's pampering urban hotel.

Located in one of the most prestigious areas of Baden-Baden, this lifestyle property blew our minds from the moment we entered. The receptionists sit at separate low coffee tables with their laptops and invite customers to join. While they scan the passports,



BADEN-BADEN, in Germany's Black Forest. (Baden-Baden Tourism Office)

you notice famous French photographer Sacha Goldberger's portraits, which reimagine iconic comic book superheroes with a Flemish Renaissance flair, are the main artworks. Superman Christopher Reeve's face and Lynda Carter, the original Wonder Woman, flank you during check-in. On the other side, an impressive collection of cuckoo clocks, symbolizing a Black Forest ambiance, is also noticeable. At that moment, I wasn't sure if I was checking into a hotel or a museum.

On our way to the room, we noticed that there were no floor numbers. Each floor is characterized by a different portrait of German photographer Kai Stuh's works. The figures reinterpret the Black Forest costumes with dark-skinned models in regional costumes – a clear message to those who propagate racism and do not see human diversity as inspiration.

This unique concept dominates guests' rooms and, in fact, all the hotel's facilities. Charming general manager Dieter Ulbricht reveals after a magnificent breakfast that this is all thanks to Piero Lissoni, the renowned Italian architect-designer – Urseanu and Rosen's choice.

It struck me that Lissoni is the very same personality behind the

Mamilla Hotel in Jerusalem.

Ulbricht, a German hotelier with a rich international experience of 36 years, is the way I imagine a boss. His mission is to make his guests happy. Certainly not a manager behind a desk and a computer.

The Roomers in Baden-Baden opened in 2016 with 130 very spacious rooms, 50 of which are suites and about 30 apartments. Its main attraction and happenings are undoubtedly the bar on the top fifth floor with the adjacent open-air terrace and heated infinity pool, together with a spectacular view of Baden-Baden.

A magnificent spa and an exercise fitness room are also close by on the very same floor, making the roof floor full of guests and positive energy. Roomers and Grey Goose vodka have joined forces and the alcoholic drink is dominant in the hotel, including the spa. One can better imagine now the energy transformed by the guests.

Moriki is the top restaurant in the hotel. The rich elegant breakfast is a jewel, however dinner there is a must. Executive chef Stefan Walter's pan-Asian gastronomic creations are an experience to cherish. Even the German wines were of the highest quality. The hotel is part of the Marriott

Autograph Collection of hotels. A global collection of distinctive independent hotels carefully chosen by the strongest hospitality brand in the world and crafted to leave a lasting imprint. Over 196 million members of the Marriott Bonvoy loyalty program for 30 brands are exposed to Roomers via the marketing channels. Who needs a better tool?

According to Ulbricht, every third guest of the hotel arrives via this program.

The Roomers is within walking distance of Baden-Baden's main attractions. A significant part of the city center is the pedestrian street called "Lange Strasse" and it is indeed long and lined with beautiful buildings. One can find luxury fashion and art stores. Picturesque restaurants and cafes are available on every corner. We wandered along the pedestrian street and the stream that runs through the city center, crossed beautiful and scenic bridges, and observed with great appreciation the classy-style buildings. The Kurhaus palace-style structure with a garden is the main architectural masterpiece and a landmark here since the 18th century. Observing the Israeli flag hanging in it with numerous others provided us with positive energy.



THE BADEN-BADEN casino, one of the oldest in Europe. (Motti Verses)



ICONIC COMIC BOOK superheroes with a Flemish Renaissance flair dominate the lobby of the Roomers Hotel. (Roomers Hotel)

Next to it is the Baden-Baden casino, one of the oldest in Europe. Surely the most impressive in the world. Two-hundred years of roulette, blackjack, and poker have been played in the richly Parisian interior-decorated rooms, designed by experts that entrepreneur Edouard Bénazet commissioned with all his heart.

The Romans discovered the special effects of the thermal water and Emperor Caracalla led the bathing culture in Baden-Baden and paved the way for the spa and bathing town. Today's modern Caracalla

Spa here offers a great ambiance for relaxation. Stay there for hours for maximum relief.

Baden-Baden can be a great base for the Black Forest daily tours, however staying within its boundaries is making visitors go back in time. I would recommend slowing down. Take your time. Just focus on three days in this aristocratic environment before living and encountering the daily challenging reality again.

The writer is the Travel Flash Tips publisher and was a guest of Roomers Hotels.

On the wings of... vultures?!

HIKING THE HOLYLAND

• BY SUSANNAH SCHILD

Old habits die hard. It's been some time since I equated the Hebrew term *neshar* with the English "eagle." I've learned that vulture is a more accurate translation. But I still find myself translating the biblical phrase "al kanfei nesharim" into "on the wings of eagles."

Back as a child in New Orleans, I imagined that one day, the Jews would soar back to Israel on kanfei nesharim, the wings of eagles. There was no question in my mind that the eagle was the king of birds, the most majestic feathered creature on the planet.

Returning to our Holy Land atop the magnificent bird's wings seemed fitting. After all, it was the eagle that was featured on the president's flag, military insignia, and one-dollar bills in my country of birth. According to John F. Kennedy, the eagle was chosen by the founding fathers for a reason: "The fierce beauty and proud independence of this great bird aptly symbolizes the strength and freedom of America."

The eagle has long been synonymous with grace and majesty for Westerners. So, it should come as no surprise that the biblical word *neshar* (which seems to refer to a large, stately bird) was thought to be an eagle.

But eagles are rather hard to come by in the Land of Israel, which after all, was the backdrop for all things biblical. Years of hiking through Israel's outdoor spaces taught me that. Vultures, on the other hand, (and more specifically, griffon vultures) are quite commonly found in parks and nature trails all over the country.

Near Haifa, the Carmel Mountain Nature Reserve is one of the most beautiful landscapes in Israel. It is especially treasured by hikers. There, shady, green mountains sit against the aqua-



THE GRIFFON VULTURE Lookout at the Carmel Hai-Bar wildlife reserve is the perfect spot to watch vultures soar out over a deep valley, then return to roost on their perches in the reserve. (Susannah Schild)

blue waters of the Mediterranean Sea, resulting in jaw-dropping views, perfect to gaze at with a thermos of coffee in hand mid-hike. My favorite thing about the Carmel is the varied stone formations, which include craggy cliffs and rocky outcrops. Spending time on any Carmel Mountains trail means climbing over great boulders and giant tree roots, underneath a canopy of thick shade. The scenery is simply spectacular.

On the edge of the Carmel Forest, right near a trail called "Little Switzerland," is Carmel Hai-Bar (wildlife reserve). This refuge for Israel's animals was created in 1970 to bring Persian fallow deer back to the country; before that time, the species had been almost completely hunted out of its natural habitat. At Hai-Bar, fallow deer graze freely with other animals. They share the space with their feathered friends, the griffon vultures.

The Griffon Vulture Lookout is one of the most captivating parts of Hai-Bar. At the lookout, spectators can watch vultures

soar out over a deep valley, then return to roost on their perches in the reserve. The sight of these giant birds coming to rest right overhead is impressive.

FURTHER SOUTH in the Ramon Crater, griffon vultures live in a landscape just about as different from the Carmel Mountains as one could imagine. The terrain around the Vulture Lookout at the crater looks more like a martian landscape than a lush nature reserve.

Multicolored rocks form a deep chasm in the place where our *neshar*, the beautiful griffon vulture, is known to nest. One might think that birds would prefer lush greenery, for the food and shelter that such a landscape offers. But these vultures don't need trees or berries to survive; they make their shelters in rocky outcrops, and their diet consists of small mammals and other carrion. Ramon Crater has its share of animal life, including ibex, small rodents, and reptiles; there's a wide and varied buffet for griffon vultures to choose from.

I'll always remember how vultures were portrayed in old cartoons and movies growing up. These menacing birds always seemed to appear just when a character was stuck in the desert with no water, facing certain death. At least in Western pop culture, vultures were portrayed as evil creatures who turned the misfortune of others into their daily sustenance.

Although we may turn our nose up at such a means of survival, the Bible is clear about the eating habits of the *neshar*. As it says in the Job, "It [the *neshar*] dwells and abides on the rock, upon the crag of the rock and the strong place. From there it seeks the prey, and its eyes behold from far away. Its young ones gulp blood; and where there are carcasses, there it is."

Or in Proverbs, "The eye that mocks his father and scorns his mother will be picked out by ravens of the valley, and the young *neshar* shall eat it."

These verses are further proof that "neshar" does not mean eagle. As opposed to vultures, eagles never eat carrion, preferring to hunt their prey live. For this and many other reasons, modern-day scholars and zoologists have identified the *neshar* as Israel's local resident griffon vulture.

It may come as no surprise that in Middle Eastern societies past, the vulture was an esteemed bird. There was the vulture-deity of ancient Arabia (Nasr), and the griffon vulture was a symbol of royalty in Egypt and Mesopotamia. Nekhbet, the goddess of the early Nile, was almost always depicted as a griffon vulture.

Only by spending time in Israel can one truly appreciate biblical animals and their metaphorical importance. As opposed to the bald eagle so venerated by citizens of the United States, our local griffon vulture was the bird that symbolized strength, beauty, power, and protection in the Hebrew Bible.



THE FAMOUS BALCONY at Buckingham Palace last month. (Hollie Adams/Reuters)

Buckingham Palace's famous balcony open to visitors

• BY SARAH MILLS

LONDON (Reuters) – Visitors to Buckingham Palace in London this summer will get to stand behind the famous balcony that the British royal family often poses on.

For the first time, the palace is opening the building's East Wing, which includes the Centre Room, where the iconic balcony is located.

"This room was part of the edition of the East Wing, made by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. And it was Prince Albert who suggested the balcony," said Nicola Turner Inman, curator of Decorative Arts at Royal Collection Trust. "It was first used in 1851 for waving off the troops for the Crimean War. So, it's been in use for quite a long time," she said.

Visitors will not be allowed to stand on the balcony.

But as well as being able to look through the net curtain down The Mall, there is also a newly restored 19th century glass chan-

delier shaped like a lotus flower to admire.

"For the public to be able to see the chandelier, not a glimpse of it from the mouth, but actually be in the room where it hangs is an exciting prospect," said Turner Inman.

Ticket holders will also be able to go inside the Yellow Drawing Room, which features 18th century items such as recently restored hand-painted Chinese wallpaper and a Kylin clock.

Other highlights include Chinese imperial silk wall hangings presented to Queen Victoria, as well as artwork from the likes of 18th century British painter Thomas Gainsborough on display in the Principal Corridor.

The summer opening of the State Rooms and the East Wing rooms is from July 11 to September 29. Cheaper tickets are available to the State Rooms only, but anyone keen to see the newly opened wing will have to wait until next year, as those tickets have sold out.



'I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE'

Biden defies critics, vows to continue reelection bid

• By JEFF MASON
and MAKINI BRICE

DETROIT (Reuters) — Seeking to revive his struggling reelection campaign, President Joe Biden held a rare rally in Detroit on Friday, telling a cheering crowd he wasn't going to leave the race and warning that Republican Donald Trump poses a serious threat.

Biden, 81, is trying to shift the conversation from his mental sharpness, and a growing number of Democratic defections, to the impact of another Trump presidency, as he tries to reboot his campaign after a shaky debate performance on June 27.

"I am running and we're going to win," he said to a crowd that carried "Motown is Joetown" signs and chanted: "Don't you quit."

"I'm the nominee," he said. "I'm not going anywhere."

Pointing to the press area in the gym, Biden said: "They've been hammering me," to which the crowd boomed. "Guess what: Donald Trump

has gotten a free pass," he added.

"Hopefully with age comes a little wisdom," Biden said, in a defiant and sometimes gleeful performance. "Here's what I know — I know how to tell the truth, I know right from wrong... and I know Americans want a president, not a dictator."

Biden also laid out what he intended to do with his first 100 days of a second term, including codifying abortion rights, signing the John Lewis Voting Rights Act, ending medical debt, raising the minimum wage and banning assault weapons.

These sweeping changes would be difficult or impossible without Democratic majorities in both houses of Congress.

While union and religious leaders attended, Michigan's Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and its Democratic senators, Debbie Stabenow and Gary Peters, did not.

Earlier on Friday, Biden made a surprise stop at a restaurant

in a Detroit suburb, where he told diners he planned to "finish the job," and said: "I promise you... I'm okay."

Biden got a boost on Friday when two prominent Democrats — Rep. James Clyburn and California Gov. Gavin Newsom — said he should stay in the race.

On Friday afternoon, United Auto Workers president Shawn Fain, who had previously said he was worried about the president's chances, praised Biden for standing "with the working class," without using his name.

But there were signs that his support was weakening elsewhere, as two more lawmakers called on him to drop out.

"It is time to move forward. With a new leader," Rep. Mike Levin, from California, said in a statement. Levin, like many others who have called on Biden to leave the race, faces a competitive reelection battle of his own this year.

Since the debate, at least 19 lawmakers have urged Biden to step aside so the party can

pick another candidate, as have some donors, Hollywood stars, activist groups and news outlets.

Biden retains support from key figures in the party, however, less than five months from the November 5 election.

"I'm riding with Biden no matter which direction he goes," Clyburn said on NBC's *Today* program. Newsom likewise said he was sticking with Biden, in an interview excerpt released by CBS.

Clyburn, 83, is a respected voice among Black Americans whose support is essential to Biden's 2024 campaign, while Newsom, 56, is one of several younger governors who are widely seen as the future of the party.

While Biden courted Michigan voters, Trump challenged him on Friday to take a cognitive test, writing on Truth Social: "I will go with him, and take one also. For the first time we'll be a team, and do it for the good of the country."

Trump will be in the national spotlight this week, when

the Republican Party holds its convention in Milwaukee to award him the presidential nomination.

Democrats are worried that Biden's low approval ratings and growing concerns that he is too old for the job could cause them to lose seats in the House of Representatives and Senate, leaving them with no grip on power in Washington should Trump win the White House.

As he worked to stem further defections, Biden held separate phone calls with groups of Hispanic, Asian and Democratic lawmakers, according to aides. While the Hispanic group's top two leaders have endorsed Biden, some other members have not stated their positions.

Democratic officeholders, donors and activists are trying to determine whether Biden is their best bet to defeat Trump and serve another four-year term in the White House.

The *New York Times* reported that unnamed donors have told a pro-Biden Super PAC fundraising committee that

roughly \$90 million in pledges will remain on hold as long as he is in the race.

As Air Force One flew to the Motor City, campaign spokesperson Michael Tyler told reporters that donations "exploded" during Biden's Thursday night press conference to seven times the usual level.

Hakeem Jeffries, the Democratic leader in the House, said he met with the president on Thursday night to convey the range of thoughts his 213-member caucus held about Biden's candidacy. He did not say whether he personally thought he should stay in the race.

"I directly expressed the full breadth of insight, heartfelt perspectives and conclusions about the path forward," Jeffries wrote in a letter to colleagues.

Thursday's closely-watched press conference provided fodder for Biden supporters and doubters alike.

At one point, Biden referred to his vice president, Kama-

la Harris, as "Vice President Trump." Hours earlier he introduced Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky as "President Putin" at the NATO summit, drawing gasps from those in the room.

He also delivered detailed assessments of global issues that served as a reminder of his decades of experience on the world stage.

With most US voters firmly divided into ideological camps, opinion polls show the race remains close.

An NPR/PBS poll released on Friday found Biden leading Trump 50% to 48%, a slight increase from his position before the June 27 debate.

But some analysts have warned that the president is losing ground in the handful of competitive states that will determine the outcome of the election.

"If current trends continue, Mr. Trump could rack up one of the most decisive presidential victories since 2008," Democratic strategist Doug Sosnik wrote in the *Times*.

IDF

Continued from Page 1

On Saturday evening, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu gave a press conference on the event, saying, "We still do not have confirmation that he was killed, but we have accurate information that tells us that no hostages were in the area of the strike."

Earlier, a senior Hamas official said an Israeli Army Radio report that a strike on Gaza's Khan Yunis on Saturday had targeted Hamas military chief Mohammed Deif was "nonsense."

"All the martyrs are civilians, and what happened was a grave escalation of the war of genocide, backed by the American support and world silence," Abu Zuhri told Reuters, adding that the attack showed Israel was not interested in reaching a ceasefire agreement.

However, if Deif was killed, it would be a major morale blow to Hamas, which would have strong reasons to cover it up.

Absent proof of life from Deif, Israel's narrative that he may be dead will likely gain momentum over a period of weeks.

In the wake of the strike, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, IDF Chief of Staff Herzl Halevi, and Shin Bet head Ronen Bar convened an operational situation assessment.

Rotem Mai-Tal, the CEO of Asgard Systems, which develops military technology for defense industries, said that the aerial munitions used in the assassination were likely the advanced Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) bombs made in the US, which were the bombs Washington had been withholding a few months ago, *Maariv* reported.

"These are sophisticated kits that convert standard aerial munitions into advanced bombs guided by a laser and/or GPS-guided advanced seeker head based on advanced sensing and artificial intelligence technology produced by the USA and Israel," Mai-Tal told *Maariv*.

Following the attack on Deif, as well as IAF strikes on Hezbollah operatives in Lebanon, the Lebanese-based terrorist group fired dozens of rockets at the Galilee.

One IDF soldier was seriously wounded, another was moderately wounded, and two more were lightly wounded as the result of debris from rocket interceptions in the area of Kiryat Shmona, the military reported Saturday night. The soldiers were evacuated to a hospital for medical treatment, and their families have been informed.

The foreign ministries of Jordan and Egypt condemned the Israeli attack in Gaza. Jordan claimed that "the tents of the displaced persons in Khan Yunis, an area that Israel had already classified as safe," were attacked, and called on "the international community to act to provide protection for Palestinians, hospitals, and aid organizations operating in Gaza."

Egypt announced that it "strongly condemns the Israeli attack in the Al-Mawasi area, which resulted in the deaths and injuries of dozens of Palestinians. Egypt demands that

Israel stop harming civilian lives."

Deif was born Mohammad Masri in 1965 in the Khan Yunis Refugee Camp, a short distance from where Israel conducted the strike to eliminate the senior Hamas figure. He later became known as Mohammed Deif after joining Hamas during the first Intifada in 1987.

Jacob Eriksson, a specialist in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict at the University of York, told France24 that "Deif" translates to "guest" and refers to his constant travel — a tactic used to survive Israeli attacks. However, the *Washington Post* suggested in 2014 that he took his name from a character he played during a university production.

Only two years after joining the terror group, Deif was arrested but spent only 16 months in detention, a Hamas source told Reuters.

Deif developed the group's network of terror tunnels as well as his bomb-making expertise.

During the war, IDF intelligence found videos of Deif confirming that he had lost an eye and sustained serious wounds in one leg in previous assassination attempts, though he was not as crippled as they had thought.

Having escaped numerous assassination attempts, Gazan fans dubbed him "the man with nine lives," a play on the common saying that cats have nine lives.

Deif masterminded the military tactics of Hamas's October 7 attack on southern Israel in which terrorists murdered at least 1,200 people and abducted over 250.

Deif has been considered an international terrorist by the US since 2015.

HOSTAGE

Continued from Page 1

give approvals on several conditions under discussion, but then come back with amendments or introduce new conditions that risked sinking the negotiations.

The sources said the mediators viewed the "contradictions, delays in responses, and the introduction of new terms contrary to what was previously agreed" as signs the Israeli side viewed the talks as a formality aimed at influencing public opinion.

At his press conference on Saturday night, Netanyahu said that for months negotiations were halted, because the military pressure was not great enough, which is one of the reasons Israel had to enter Rafah in May.

"There was intense international and American pressure, not to enter Rafah."

"I told my friend, President Biden, we don't have a choice. We will enter Rafah. I will enter Rafah. Because if we leave Hamas there, we won't return the hostages and we won't be victorious over Hamas. And we entered Rafah," Netanyahu said.

After that, things began to move, he said.

The combination of military pressure and a firm adherence to "our principles" is what makes the difference, Netanyahu said.

Netanyahu repeated his five red lines for the negotiations, which he said were within the framework of the deal.

Two of those were his adherence to the Biden proposal of May 31 as well as his commitment to achieving the Gaza war's objectives: Destroying Hamas and ensuring the release of the 120 remaining Gaza hostages.

Top among the other three red lines was preventing arms smuggling from Egypt to Gaza. This means, Netanyahu said, that Israel must retain control of the buffer zone between Egypt and Gaza known as the Philadelphi Corridor and of the Rafah crossing along that border.

On Friday, Netanyahu dismissed a report in Reuters that he had considered such a withdrawal. His office stressed that he had made this clear to the negotiating teams, to the security cabinet, and to the United States.

During his press conference on Saturday night, he asked, "What does one expect — that we will let arms continue to flow in from Egypt? If so, then what have we achieved?" by going to war in Gaza?

The same is true for his red line of preventing the return of armed terrorists and weapons to the northern section of Gaza, Netanyahu explained.

Last, he said, he was committed to ensuring the return of the maximum number of live hostages during the first phase of the deal.

To the hostage families, he said, "I know how much you are suffering due to uncertainty, but I want to tell you one thing for certain: We are not giving up on anyone, and we will do everything to return everyone."

The best way to do this, Netanyahu stated, "is to stand firm on the principles. If we stand firm on these principles, we will reach an agreement that will free our hostages — the lives and the spaces — and allow us to continue the war until victory."

Hamas's deputy leader, Khalil al-Hayya, told Al Jazeera that Deif was not killed during the IDF's strike on him in Khan Yunis in southern Gaza on Saturday.

"We say to [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu that Deif is listening to you right now and mocking your lies," al-Hayya said.

He accused Netanyahu of attempting to assassinate Deif in the midst of intense negotiations for an agreement so that he could embarrass the mediating countries of Qatar and Egypt and pressure Hamas into making concessions.

"Netanyahu does not want an agreement" or to return the hostages, al-Hayya claimed. "Netanyahu's behavior is that of someone in crisis who has been cornered," he charged, adding that Hamas has presented its latest amendment to the deal to the mediators and is awaiting Israel's response.

Netanyahu, in his press conference, also addressed the situation in the North, where close to 60,000 Israelis have been unable to live in their homes since October 7 due to the cross-border violence there between the IDF and Hezbollah.

"I am aware of your great difficulty. I admire and appreciate

your steadfastness. We are not ready to accept the situation created in the North," he said.

"We will work to return you safely to your homes in full safety one way or another. We are committed and determined to change the security reality in the North not for a few days, not for a few months — but for generations, and we will do so," Netanyahu said.

Reuters and Darcie Grunblatt contributed to this report.

DEAL

Continued from Page 1

said Einav Zangauker at Saturday's rally, mother of hostage Matan Zangauker, who was one of the prominent family members leading the march. "He has seen that the family members of hostages are surrounded by the people of Israel who want a deal now!"

"A few days ago, I decided to walk to Jerusalem — a mother who just wants her son back. On the way, I met an incredible public."

"Apparently, I am not the only crazy one who understands that these are our most critical moments, that this is the most important fight, and that we deserve to get our families back now."

In addition to the two large rallies in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, hundreds of protesters gathered at locations around the country, also calling for a deal that would bring home the hostages.

At the Tel Aviv demonstration, Andrey Kozlov, who was rescued from Hamas captivity about a month ago in Operation Arnon, spoke publicly for the first time, in Hostages Square.

"I want to share that every day in Gaza was a living hell; every day felt like it could be my last on earth," said Kozlov, who was held in Gaza for 246 days.

"Watching the rallies at Hostages Square, like the one we're at right now, is part of what gave me the strength to survive — where 'Am Israel' comes together with good people from around the world, demanding to bring all hostages back home now!" he declared.

Kozlov said that he is speaking at the rally because there is "nothing more important than getting a deal to bring everyone home."

He continued his speech, thanking Chief Inspector Arnon Zmora 36 — the National Counterterrorism Unit (Yamam) fighter who was fatally wounded on June 8 in an intense hostage rescue operation — and the IDF soldiers and Special Forces who also rescued him. "Arnon, may his memory be a blessing, sacrificed everything to save us and bring us back to our families."

He said in a message to Arnon's family that he is "overwhelmed with gratitude" and that he doesn't "have enough words to describe [his] feelings for him and his family." He said that Arnon's loss is a big loss for the people of Israel. "His greatness will always be with me," Kozlov said.

"June 8 felt like a Hollywood movie, superheroes came to save us," he began as he described the feeling of being

rescued. He recalled that when the soldiers saw them, they said, "We saved you; this evening you will be back home." When they said that, he recalled, he "could not hold back [his] tears." Regarding his time in captivity, Kozlov said, "I may look OK to you from the outside, but the pain weighs on me more than anyone can see, more than anyone can imagine."

He then said he was one of the "lucky ones" since he was not held within a tunnel. "So if I endured harsh conditions and abuse, what about the remaining 120 hostages? What about them?"

Kozlov concluded his speech by discussing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's brother, Yoni Netanyahu, who was killed in the Entebbe rescue operation 48 years ago.

"I could see the resemblance between that operation and the one that saved Noa [Argamani], Shlomi [Ziv] and Almog [Meir Jan], and me," Kozlov said.

He then called on Netanyahu to bring the remaining hostages held in Gaza back to Israel, asking him to sign a deal. "It's time to bring them all back home now!" Kozlov exclaimed in conclusion.

Speakers also included Sharon Kutz, sister of Aviv Kutz, who was murdered along with his wife Livnat and their three children in their Kfar Aza home on October 7.

In his speech, he criticized the government for not meeting with him and other families of those fallen on October 7, and for not taking responsibility for the attack.

"On that black Saturday, the contract between the state and its residents was broken. That same government, which today continues to divide and incite, takes the trouble to denigrate and humiliate those who oppose its views — even when it comes to the families of victims and hostages: the government of destruction and malice that discriminates between one blood and another," Kutz declared.

Other family members of those who were killed on October 7 and those who were taken hostage also criticized the government at the rally in Hostages Square for abandoning them, including Amit Soussana, who was the subject of a *New York Times* interview in March. The first former hostage to publicly say that she was sexually assaulted in Hamas captivity, she also called for a deal to bring the hostages home.

PROBLEM

Continued from Page 1

their silence to such a degree that they don't condemn the terrorist group or even mention it in statements. They call it an "armed group." When Deif was once thought dead, major media in the West called him a "military chief."

How can Deif be a "military chief" if he never appears in public and doesn't wear a uniform? Yet Western media gives him the same rank as the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the US.

When the US targeted Osama Bin Laden or ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the Western

press didn't call them "military chiefs." Only Hamas gets this privilege.

It is a unique privilege and represents another aspect of the Deif problem. Hamas members dress as civilians. When they are killed, the Hamas-run health ministry in Gaza calls them all civilians. Yet they are called "military chiefs" by Western media.

They are called civilians and military chiefs and militants and "armed groups" — all of these things.

At each juncture, Hamas is privileged: to hide in UN schools, to hide in a humanitarian zone, and to pretend to be a "military" force even as it systematically massacres civilians — including its own — and has, by its reckless and criminal rule, seen Gaza destroyed over the last two decades.

This is the Deif problem. If Hamas was just Deif, then it could be eliminated by killing off its commanders and destroying it bit by bit. But it is not just Deif. It is Deif the "military chief" and also Deif the civilian, and Deif the "armed group" leader. Hamas leaders abroad are backed not just by Western allies but also by Russia, China and Iran. Hamas is a proxy, not only of Iran, but a kind of proxy of Western progressives who hail Hamas as a "resistance" movement. Therefore, Deif is also the "resistance."

Israel also has a Deif problem because it allowed most of these Hamas leaders to thrive for so long. Most could have been eliminated decades ago. Many, like Yahya Sinwar, were in fact jailed in Israel for murder and then released in previous deals.

Israel has allowed the threat of Hamas to survive, due to negligence, ignorance, or cynical political decisions to pit the terrorist group against the Palestinian Authority — which it violently ousted from being in charge of Gaza even after the PA was democratically elected — enabling Hamas to become the massively powerful genocidal group that carried out October 7.

Deif enjoyed the space to plan and perpetrate this monstrous attack, safe from pursuit, unlike Bin Laden or Baghdadi. Even if Deif is dead, Hamas leaders in Qatar will still relax without fear of personal consequences.

The International Criminal Court applied for an arrest warrant against Deif, alongside Sinwar and Qatar-based Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh. It accuses them of bearing "criminal responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed" on October 7.

If Deif is dead, then someone will need to tell the ICC that one genocidal mastermind can be removed from the docket. Yet, the Deif problem will remain.

In nine months of war in Gaza, Deif should have been eliminated long ago along with the rest of the monstrous genocidal beast that Hamas became on October 7.

The tolerance that the international community has borne for Deif — and which Israel bears too by not removing him years ago — will always haunt us, whether he is alive or dead.

TARGET

Continued from Page 1

information about the planned operation was known only to a handful of Hamas leaders.

An Israeli security source said Deif was directly involved in the planning and operational aspects of the attack.

The plan as conceived by Deif involved a prolonged effort at deception. Israel was led to believe that Hamas, an ally of Israel's sworn foe Iran, was not interested in launching a conflict and was focusing instead on economic development in Gaza, where it took sole power in 2007.

But while Israel began providing economic incentives to Gazan workers, the group's fighters were being trained and drilled, often in plain sight of the Israeli military, the source close to Hamas said.

Speaking in a calm voice, Deif said in his recording that Hamas had repeatedly warned Israel to stop its crimes against Palestinians, to release prisoners and to halt its expropriation of Palestinian land.

"In light of the orgy of occupation and its denial of international laws and resolutions, and in light of American and western support and international silence, we've decided to put an end to all this," he said.

In May, the International Criminal Court's prosecutor said he had requested arrest warrants for Deif, Sinwar and another Hamas figure involved in the October 7 attack, and for Netanyahu and his defense minister Yoav Gallant for Israel's response. Netanyahu says the war against Hamas must eliminate it as a military and political force.

Both Israel and Hamas dismissed the ICC accusations and said they objected that by announcing the charges against both on the same day the ICC appeared to equate them with each other — though they faced different charges.

Born as Mohammad Masri in 1965 in the Khan Yunis refugee camp set up after the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, which brought Israel into existence, the terrorist leader became known as Mohammed Deif after joining Hamas during the first Intifada, which began in 1987. His acquired name in Arabic means "guest" possibly alluding to his nomadic existence.

He was arrested by Israel in 1989 and spent about 16 months in detention, a Hamas source said.

Deif has a science degree from the Islamic University in Gaza, where he studied physics, chemistry and biology. He headed the university's entertainment committee and performed on stage in comedies.

Hamas sources said Deif lost an eye and sustained serious injuries in one leg in one of Israel's past assassination attempts. His survival while running Hamas's armed wing meant he was viewed as a folk hero by some Palestinians.

His wife, seven-month-old son, and three-year-old daughter were killed by an Israeli airstrike in 2014.

How to make the West Nile virus bite the dust

• By JUDY SIEGEL-ITZKOVICH

It may be due to global warming, more humid weather, a larger number of migratory birds landing here to rest on their way to the North, or more standing water, but even the experts can't explain why the West Nile virus is worse this summer than in previous years.

What is certain is that so far this year, 299 people have been diagnosed in Israel, and with 31 people aged 70 and over or with weak immune systems having died from West Nile Fever (WNF), many Israelis have begun to panic. This can be compared to 23 cases of infection in 2020, 34 in 2021, 25 in 2022, and 53 in 2023.

People of all ages are running to buy electric mosquito zappers and chemical devices for their homes to spread repellents into the air. Some of the purchases are not merely ineffective; they may even attract the *Culex* female blood-sucking insects – vectors that have been infected by the virus. At least the virus doesn't pass from one person to another, or from the bitten individual to mosquitoes. The season usually lasts from June to October or even November.

Israel is not the only country to suffer from West Nile. It is regularly reported in parts of the US, throughout Africa, parts of Europe and the Middle East, west Asia, Australia, Canada, and Venezuela – typically along major migratory-bird routes, with the largest outbreaks having occurred in Greece, Russia, Romania, and the US, as well as in Israel.

Children are bitten somewhat more often than adults, and women more than men, because of short-sleeved blouses, shorts, and short skirts, while men are usually more covered up, so the mosquitoes have less opportunity to bite them, according to prominent Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HU) parasitologist Prof. Kosta Mumcuoglu.

WNF originates in wild birds, and it is transmitted to humans and animals through the bite of mosquitoes that feed on infected migrating birds.

Most people – 80% – are asymptomatic; 19% do have some light symptoms; and one percent con-



SOURCES OF stagnant water can be fertile ground for the reproduction and development of mosquitoes. (Tom Ervin/FEMA/Getty Images/TNS)

tract the disease, explained Mumcuoglu. When there are symptoms, in most cases it is a mild, flu-like illness characterized by fever, headache, joint and muscle pain, conjunctivitis, and sometimes nausea and diarrhea that go away without intervention. While most people with fever due to WNF recover completely, fatigue and weakness can last for weeks or months. Meningitis is a rare complication, and in even rarer cases, the disease is fatal.

MUMCUOGLU HAS been studying head lice, fleas, ticks, and other creepy crawlies for decades. With degrees from the University of Basel in Switzerland, he came to Israel in 1975 as a visiting scientist at HU's medical entomology department and even served as a visiting scientist at the pest-control department at the Agricultural College of Teheran University. Following a second stint in Zurich, he returned to Jerusalem, where HU appointed him as a research biologist in its zoology department. Fluent in English, German, French, Hebrew, Greek, and Turkish, he has served as a professor in Turkish universities since 2004 and, since 1985, as a parasitologist at the HU-Hadassah Medical School.

Among his Jerusalem team's projects is the treatment of patients with chronic wounds using disinfected fly larvae (maggot debridement therapy) and medicinal leeches to salvage compromised microvascular free-tissue transfers, replanted digits, ears, lips, and nasal tips due to venous congestion. He teaches entomology to physicians, nurses, pharmacists, veterinarians, and biologists.

The Environmental Protection Ministry regularly captures mosquitoes that are later diagnosed in the Health Ministry laboratories as being infected with the West Nile virus. This year, they have been found in several locations in the lowland area, between the southern coast of the Mediterranean; the Yavneh, Lod, and Ramle areas; Tel Aviv, Herzliya, Kiryat Ono, Petah Tikva, the Lev Hasharon Regional Council; Even Yehuda; Eilat; and in the Ayalot and Modi'in regional councils. The ministries have instructed the local authorities to take action, including spraying with insecticide and eliminating standing water, where mosquitoes breed.

Mumcuoglu warned, in an interview with *The Jerusalem Post*, that in the summer, sources of stagnant water – even a small amount

in courtyards, gardens, balconies, and plates under flower pots and planters – can be fertile ground for the reproduction and development of mosquitoes. He advises people to change the water or empty containers, such as flower vases and pet-drinking bowls, at least once a week; to cover swimming pools; and to clean and empty gutters. It is imperative to find, remove, puncture, or turn over any container that accumulates water, such as old tires, buckets, and barrels.

He insisted that only a joint effort by all the public and authorities will result in a quick, long-term solution that will make it possible to significantly reduce the nuisance of mosquitoes in the environment, thereby reducing the risk of being stung and getting infected.

The HU parasitologist noted that people living on lower floors are at higher risk of allowing mosquitoes inside. "Wear long-sleeved, light clothing and socks. Though mosquitoes bite mostly in the middle of the night, don't leave windows and doors open after 5 p.m., when they start being active – entering houses and biting those staying in the open air. Install mosquito screens on at least one window of

each bedroom, and use those windows for ventilation of the room. Leave on the fans and air conditioners in the bedrooms to try to prevent the bugs from settling on sleepers. If mosquitoes are still present in the bedroom, electric devices that slowly release insecticides and affect the activity of the mosquitoes can be used.

"Roll-on and sprayed-on insect repellent that should be used only in the open parts of the body may help, but due to perspiration, they are ineffective unless reapplied after a short time."

DEET insect repellent, used to prevent bites from insects such as mosquitoes, biting flies, fleas, and small flying insects, is a colorless liquid that has a faint odor and does not dissolve easily in water; it is the most effective. Most people, however, buy essential oils that are potent for only a short time and should be applied more frequently during the hours when mosquitoes are active, he added.

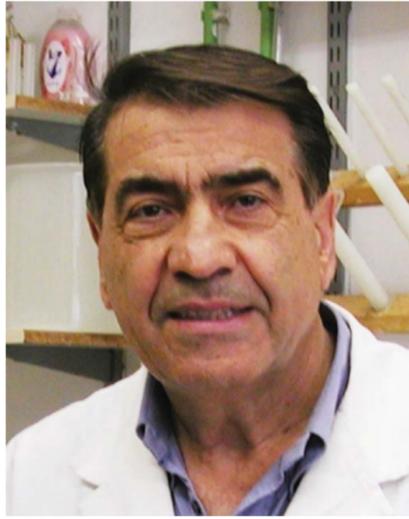
Mumcuoglu noted that various research institutes, including some at HU, have been working hard to develop technologies to prevent mosquitoes from biting – even natural insecticides and repellents, and changing the male mosquitoes' chromosomes so the females

they mate with will produce only males. However, while these may work under lab conditions, they haven't yet been proven in nature, so for now, they wouldn't be effective in fighting WNF, he said.

In Israel, there is a lot of discussion about the West Nile virus, but some people are also concerned about dengue fever, another viral infection that mosquitoes spread. However, Mumcuoglu assures them that they should not worry about dengue. "The Health Ministry has announced a handful of cases of infection with the potentially deadly virus – transmitted by the Asian tiger mosquito (existing also in Israel) – in people who returned from tropical countries (including Egypt). For the virus to be established in Israel, there must be large numbers of infected mosquitoes and lots of people with the virus," he said. "All those planning visits to affected areas, including southeast Asia, Latin America, and Africa, are examined and counseled by medical specialists in travel and tropical medicine who give them vaccinations and follow up with them when they return, to make sure they did not catch the disease. While travelers have come home with dengue, there has been no local infection."

He explained that "our native mosquitoes have not yet been infected with the virus, and even if they bite an infected person returning from tropical countries, most of the mosquitoes die after the first blood meal and egg laying; thus, the risk of them biting a second time and transmitting the virus is very small. However, the health and environment experts have to keep their eyes on it."

So at least that's good news. A study just published by Taiwan researchers in *PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases*, titled "Risks of anxiety disorders, depressive disorders, and sleep disorders in patients with dengue fever: A nationwide, population-based cohort study," has surprisingly concluded that dengue virus has been linked to a significant number of mental problems, including depression, sleep disorders, and anxiety. As it stands, since October 7, too many Israelis are already struggling with such emotional issues, even without the dengue virus in the country.



PROF. KOSTA MUMCUOGLU (Kosta Mumcuoglu)

Vaccinations and the haredi community

Researchers: Irreversible complications and even deaths reported as a result of unvaccinated infants and pregnant women who could easily have been immunized

• By JUDY SIEGEL-ITZKOVICH

Israeli epidemiologists and other public health experts are wringing their hands in fury and disappointment over more-extreme ultra-Orthodox (haredi) and even some secular women who are refusing to vaccinate their toddlers or get vaccinated during pregnancy against potentially deadly pediatric diseases.

Two Jerusalem infants have died in recent weeks from whooping cough (*Bordetella pertussis*), a disease that should have disappeared long ago but has returned in the last two years or so. There is currently a seven-week-old girl who was admitted a week ago to Jerusalem's Shaare Zedek Medical Center (SZMC) with severe brain seizures caused by meningitis because the haredi mother refused to be vaccinated against pertussis during her pregnancy.

Adults who get infected with pertussis cough violently for about three months but survive. Infants, however, can develop complications including mini-strokes, pneumonia, slowed or stopped breathing, dehydration or weight loss due to feeding difficulties, seizures, and even brain damage.

"The newborn on our ward will probably survive but she is at high risk of serious damage for the rest of her life and end up at public expense in the department of very damaged, ventilated children at Herzog Memorial Center," said Prof. Yechiel Schlesinger, director of the SZMC's Wilf Children's Hospital and an expert in infectious diseases.

In an interview, he explained that "infants can't themselves be vaccinated against pertussis during their first few months of life, but when their pregnant mothers get a shot in their third trimester, their antibodies against the disease are created passively."

Half a century ago, said Schlesinger, "The pertussis vaccine caused some complications, but more recently, a better, acellular vaccine replaced it, and a decade ago, it was decided that pregnant women should be advised to get the shot. The problem is that the vaccine still has a bad reputation among some haredi groups in various ultra-Orthodox neighborhoods, settlements, and cities who have an ideological



PROF. YECHIEL SCHLESINGER (right) and Prof. Nadav Davidowitch: The COVID-19 pandemic created a greater lack of faith in pediatric vaccinations among the haredi community. (Schlesinger/Davidowitch)



suspicion against vaccines – including that against COVID-19, especially after they were told by ignorant rabbis and even some doctors that it was dangerous and promoted only to benefit pharmaceutical companies that produced them."

Pregnant women in the community go to obstetricians and *tipat halav* (well-baby) clinics doctors for screening and testing, but even though the professionals speak out in favor of vaccination, they are often ignored, he added. Fewer shots given against diphtheria and tetanus for babies have also been recorded.

"Vaccine refusal exists among various haredi communities in the US, but it seems to me to be much less significant there, as they are more exposed to medical facts there. There is also a very small group of secular yuppies in moshavim in the Jerusalem area who also oppose vaccinations in principle," Schlesinger noted.

Ironically, Arab Israelis – including large Bedouin families – are much more compliant about taking their infants and toddlers for vaccinations in clinics and of pregnant

women getting the pertussis shot.

"They usually don't believe in such nonsense such as conspiracy theories about pharmaceutical companies," said the SZMC pediatrician. "They have other problems such as multi-resistant pathogens, excessive use of antibiotics, and diabetes. They usually do what their doctors tell them."

A RECENT REPORT by the European Union stated that "populations that come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds or migrant communities or belong to cultural or religious minorities usually achieve substantially lower vaccine uptake compared to the general population. There are some underserved populations, however, that manage to achieve vaccine coverage similar or higher than the general population. The Arab minority in Israel is one such example."

The report continued that Arabs, about 36% of whom live below the poverty line

compared to 18% of the Jewish population, live mostly in Israel's social and geographic periphery and make up 21% of the Israeli population.

"However, despite poorer health outcomes on many levels, including lower life expectancy rates and higher infant mortality among the Arab population, Arab children achieve higher coverage for routine vaccines than the general Jewish population. For example, in 2018, by the 13th month of their life, 82% of Arab children had received the first dose of the mumps, measles, and rubella (MMR) vaccine. In addition, the consent rate to the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine was 98.8% among Arab mothers compared to 54.3% among Jewish mothers."

The general level of public health in Israel is relatively high because of devoted care by the four public health funds, Schlesinger continued, but "it is declining, partly due to the reduction in public funding for preventing diseases."

Only recently was an amount of NIS 750 million approved for coalition needs, while nothing was left for public health. Now, the government has decided to make across-the-board state cuts that will harm the health system.

Dr. Ze'ev Feldman, chairman of the State Doctors Organization in the Israel Medical Association, told the Knesset Health Committee last week that "cutting the healthcare system during a war is a serious harm to the security of the country, and those who support such a cut endanger the lives of Israeli citizens and IDF soldiers. The healthcare system and especially prevention services need an additional budget and certainly not a cut."

PROF. NADAV DAVIDOWITCH, a leading epidemiologist, dean of the School of Public Health at Ben-Gurion University's Faculty of Health Sciences in Beersheba, and principal researcher and chair of the Taub Center for Social Policy Studies' Health Policy Program, is also very worried about the vaccine-refusal phenomenon. "It's not new, but it's more serious than before," he told *The Post*.

"We have known for many years that vaccination rates in the haredi community are lower than in the rest of the popula-

tion – especially after the fourth, fifth, sixth, and beyond child is born – but not all haredim are the same. Not all oppose vaccinations."

Forty years ago, when a woman delivered her first baby, a public-health nurse made a surprise visit to her home to see how she was managing and if she needed any help or advice. Today, such a service is non-existent.

Davidowitch urged that public health activities be boosted, but unfortunately, they are weakened. A recent Taub Center report blamed the state's privatization of *tipat halav* centers a few decades ago to save money for the decline and lack of uniform funding and professionalism of the clinics around the country.

The Israel Cancer Association (IC) funds mobile mammography vans that travel around the country to provide free breast exams. But there are no such mobile facilities to bring public-health nurses to haredi communities so women without private transportation and those caring for many young children can take them for shots.

There are some haredi rabbis who speak out on behalf of vaccinations, but there are others who ignore the issue or join the conspiracy theories and spread fake news. The Health Ministry should actively try to persuade the rabbis to encourage vaccination. This reporter personally suggested over a decade ago to then-health minister Ya'acov Litzman that lectures on a wide variety of public health issues – from smoking and diet to vaccinations and accident prevention – be provided by public health experts at ritual baths while women wait for their turn, but he ignored the idea completely.

"The COVID-19 pandemic created a greater lack of faith in pediatric vaccinations among the haredi community," said Davidowitch. If measles-vaccine compliance falls below the 95% mark, there is no effective herd immunity to protect those who are not vaccinated. We need real-time data, town by town, block by block, to know which families are getting vaccinated and which are not. Many families also don't go for vaccines on time. There are more ultra-Orthodox women in public health professions who should be utilized to spread the word on the subject."

COMMENT & FEATURES

THE JERUSALEM POST • SUNDAY, JULY 14, 2024

THE JERUSALEM POST

Founded in 1932 by GERSHON AGRON

ZVIKA KLEIN
Editor-in-Chief

TAMAR URIEL-BEERI, Deputy Editor-in-Chief

DAVID BRINN, Senior Editor

ALEX WINSTON, News Editor SARAH BEN-NUN, Night Editor

BENJAMIN GLATT and TOVAH LAZAROFF, Deputy Managing Editors

HERB KEINON and SETH J. FRANTZMAN, Senior Contributing Editors

ERICA SCHACHNE, Magazine Editor DAVID JABLONOWITZ, Op-Ed Editor

MARC ISRAEL SELLEM, Chief Photographer ELAINE MOSHE, Archivist

Stopping Iran

As the war against Hamas rages on, and attempts are made to reach a new hostage deal, we should never forget who the primary sponsor of terror against Israel is – Iran. Its proxies include “the 3H” – Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis.

We should also not turn a blind eye to the fact that Iran is edging closer and closer to becoming a nuclear power, which could pose an existential threat to Israel. This cannot be allowed.

After the latest NATO Summit in Washington, Foreign Minister Israel Katz posted Thursday on X that one of the main topics discussed by the foreign ministers attending the summit – including US Secretary of State Antony Blinken – was the need to increase pressure on Tehran.

“Israel, NATO and the entire world share a common enemy – the Iranian regime,” Katz wrote. “We must stop Iran now before it’s too late.”

No one seems to know the status of Iran’s nuclear weapons program, including the United States. On Wednesday, Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-South Carolina) wrote a letter to Avril Haines, the director of national intelligence, accusing the administration of being in violation of the law by failing to report to Congress, as required by legislation Graham himself drafted, every six months about Iran’s nuclear progress.

In the letter, Graham notes that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) recently censured Iran for failing to cooperate with it and escalating its uranium enrichment up to 60% purity in May. This, he says, is only “a small technical step away from weapons-grade 90% purity” and brings Iran that much closer to building a nuclear bomb.

In response, White House national security spokesperson James Kirby said on Thursday that President Joe Biden remained committed to make sure that Tehran would never develop nuclear weapons, but denied a claim by Iran’s acting foreign minister, Ali Bagheri Kani, that the US and Iran were holding indirect nuclear negotiations mediated by Oman.

“No active negotiations are going on right now with respect to Iran’s nuclear ambitions,” Kirby said. “I won’t speak or can’t speak to channels of communication with Iran one way or the other, but there are no active negotiations going to restore the [2015] nuclear deal.”

Kirby made it clear last Monday that the US would not resume nuclear talks with new Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, citing Tehran’s support of terrorism as a significant obstacle.

According to IAEA chief Rafael Mariano Grossi, Iran has exceeded uranium enrichment limits and is now “weeks, not months,” away from having enough enriched uranium to make a nuclear weapon.

Stopping a nuclear Iran, which has always been a top priority for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, will surely be high on the agenda of his visit to Washington later this month, when he is due to address a special joint session of Congress.

But Israel, and the US, cannot deal with the Islamic Republic alone. An international alliance is necessary to curb the Iranian regime’s nuclear program, led by the United Nations via bodies such as the IAEA and NATO. It must also enlist the support of the European Union and key players in the Middle East, such as Saudi Arabia.

Besides closer supervision of Iran’s nuclear program, the international community must enforce tighter economic sanctions against Tehran.

Ways must be found to stop it funding Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis. And its funding of anti-Israel protests in the US, as Haines warned last week, must be thwarted. But this is not enough. Only decisive action will show Iran that it cannot get away with terrorism.

“Candidate objectives [to be attacked] should include Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps installations, Iranian naval assets, critical energy infrastructure, and even nuclear weapons development facilities with strike packages that are more destructive than any launched by Iran’s proxies,” he said. “Iran’s religious leaders must feel the ground shake under their own feet, both politically and militarily. If this threat is not made manifest in their minds, they will continue to feel free to attack American interests wherever and whenever they wish.”

On the other hand, as Haines concludes, if the US – and the rest of the world – continue to appease the ayatollahs, “there will be no peace.”

INBAR ASHKENAZI, CEO Jerusalem Post Group

DROR RONEN, Director of Circulation

GALIT SASSON, Deputy CEO Commercial and Strategic Partnerships

EDITORIAL OFFICES AND ADMINISTRATION

The Jerusalem Post Building, PO Box 81, Jerusalem 9100002.

Telephone 02-531-5666, Fax 02-537-6553.

• CUSTOMER SERVICE *2421, 03-761-9056, 1800-574574, Fax 03-561-3699.

PO Box 9344, Tel Aviv 6109202

• ADVERTISING 15 Hatachim Mislavita, Tel Aviv 6701027.

Telephone 03-761-9000, Fax 03-561-0777.

• SUBSCRIPTIONS E-MAIL SUBS@POST.COM

• ADVERTISING E-MAIL TRAFFIC@POST.COM

• READERS LETTERS LETTERS@POST.COM

• OP-ED SUBMISSIONS OPEDED@POST.COM

• SALES SALES@POST.COM

• COMMERCIAL GALITE@POST.COM

Published daily except Saturday, in Jerusalem, Israel by The Jerusalem Post Ltd. Registered at the GPO. © All rights reserved to The Jerusalem Post Group Ltd. Do not copy, distribute, replicate, photograph, translate, store on a database, transmit in any way (writing, printing or other media) or by any electronic means, optical, mechanical or otherwise, any part of this newspaper (including text, drawings, photographs, pictures, maps and graphics) in textual form or on designed pages, including voice recording and typing, without the express permission, in writing, from the publisher The Jerusalem Post Group Ltd.

UNRWA and Israel’s government

Coalition problems prevent discussion of the day after

• By TOVA HERZL

A visiting alien will assume that the world’s major refugee problem concerns Palestinians. Other refugees, such as approximately one and a half million Vietnamese following the communist victory in 1975, were absorbed elsewhere and are barely mentioned. In “our” case, a huge effort is made to preserve refugee status, and UNRWA is a vital tool in enabling this. How did this happen? What should Israel do? What does it do?

Two UN agencies deal with refugees. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) has some 20,000 workers and is responsible for all problems but one. UNRWA, United Nations Relief and Works Agency, employs some 30,000 workers, mostly local Palestinians, and is entrusted with dealing with refugees from the War of Independence in 1948 and the Six Day War in 1967.

In 1949, when Israel supported the establishment of UNRWA, it was supposed to fulfill its goal and disband. Instead, it became a longstanding tool in the service of a different agenda. Hostile Arab countries acted to preserve the refugee problem in order to pressure Israel to enable them to return, thus eliminating the Jewish state by means of demographics. Western countries inadvertently lent a hand by contributing to humanitarian reasons, and this allowed the agency to become entrenched, while deviating from its goal.

It is enough to examine the definition of a refugee in order to understand how this works. UNHCR does not consider a person with citizenship, meaning one who has a country, to be a refugee, while for UNRWA there is no contradiction



JORDAN’S FOREIGN MINISTER Ayman Safadi (right) meets with UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini, in Amman, last week. In 1949, when Israel supported the establishment of UNRWA, it was supposed to fulfill its goal and disband. (Jehad Shelbak/Reuters)

between being a citizen and being a refugee. For UNHCR, transferring refugee status is unusual, whereas for Palestinians, it is inherited automatically, to the fourth generation (so far). If such definitions would apply to us, most Israelis would be considered refugees.

It should be remembered that around the establishment of Israel, hundreds of thousands of Jews left their homes in Arab countries and were absorbed in Israel and elsewhere. At the same time, the descendants of a comparable number of Palestinians, many living in camps, remain a stain on the world’s conscience, which in turn points a blaming finger at Israel.

NO WONDER that an organization which aims to preserve the problem that it was established to serve has rotted. Many of its workers actively undermine Israel, including through direct involvement in terror. Problems like incitement and corruption have long been known and discussed, to little avail. It all blew

up, literally, on October 7.

True, UNRWA performs vital civilian tasks, but for the first time the organization was widely seen not only as part of the solution but also as part of the problem. Subsequently, many donor countries suspended their contributions.

In the meantime, while there was broad understanding for Israel’s response to the attack, the world asked and continues to ask about its plans for the day after the war. What are its aims, other than vague slogans? Who will control the area after they are achieved? Who will provide loans to small businesses? Who will maintain medical clinics, deal with sewage? These, after all, are not manna from heaven, to be picked up and used at will.

The threat of the disintegration of the current Israeli government coalition prevents discussion of the day after. The ongoing war, the humanitarian crisis and absence of vision, including any practical suggestions regarding the future of the organization and the ser-

vices it offers (Should UNRWA be fixed and if so how? Should it be replaced and if so, who is willing and able to do so? Which guarantees are required to ensure that aberrations do not recur?) persuaded most donors to release their suspended contributions.

The problems with UNRWA are not a new revelation. Even before the war, laws were proposed to limit it, and these are proceeding through the legislative channels. Statements by politicians imply that many will not be satisfied with limits and that they aim to close it entirely. In contrast, professionals on the ground seem to understand that there is currently no viable substitute for the services which the agency provides.

It would be an understatement to say that UNRWA is problematic. Current circumstances provide a unique opportunity for a change that will take into account Israel’s needs and its demands. But instead of providing practical suggestions, Israel is satisfied with condemnations. They may be completely justified, but they advance nothing, achieve nothing. Absent initiative and cooperation, we will be obliged to adapt to external decisions.

Foreign minister Abba Eban famously said that the Arabs never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity. This assessment can equally describe another player in the Middle East – Israel.

In the meantime, UNRWA survives, as does the Israeli government coalition.

The writer was Israel’s first ambassador to the Baltic states after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, ambassador to South Africa, and congressional liaison officer at the embassy in Washington. She is a graduate of Israel’s National Defense College.

The Gaza pier is a lesson for Americans

• By ALIZA PILICHOWSKI



The United States has differentiated itself from past empires by having no intention of colonizing other countries and people. Remarkably, it has helped billions of people with aid programs meant to feed, clothe, and heal the suffering nations of the world. While every country works out of self-interest, America has uniquely helped tens of other nations in all areas, including their national defense.

Without American aid, Germany could never have recovered from its World War II losses. Even though Germany had been an enemy, the US Marshall Plan helped it rebuild and turn into the healthy and functioning nation it is today. When the horrific AIDS plague rampaged through Africa, killing millions every year, the US generously donated billions resulting. In the 1973 Yom Kippur War, Israel was dangerously close to running out of ammunition and supplies. Disaster was averted by an emergency airlift that the US conducted for weeks.

America has changed the world through its innovation and creativity. Former president Barack Obama remarked, “The key to our success – as it has always been – will be to compete by developing new products, by generating new industries, by maintaining our role as the world’s engine of scientific discovery and technological innovation. It’s absolutely essential to our future.”

His White House released a strategy on innovation that declared, “The social gains from innovations typically greatly exceed the private return. For example, the inventions of the telephone, transistor, light bulb, dishwasher, laser, CT scan, web browser, and antibiotics have all had enormous, broad, and ongoing social benefits far in excess of any commercial profits enjoyed by the original creators. General estimates suggest that the private profits from an innovation typically account for a tiny fraction – a few percent – of the social value.”

The United States has been able to change the world with innovations researched and developed by its military. The best known of these world-changing inventions has been the Internet. Not far behind is the Global Positioning System (GPS) which has saved countless lives by helping deliver aid in more efficient ways and assists the average person in reaching their destinations without getting lost or asking for directions.

Inventor Eli Whitney (18th-19th century) created interchangeable parts and was financed by the American Congress to build muskets. Although the average person isn’t aware of the difference interchangeable parts made to the world as much as the Internet or GPS, it had as much of an influence on world events.

The United States has not used its military solely for defensive purposes. It was one of the first nations to repurpose its army as a social engine to help improve the world. American presidents have sent troops around the world to solve global problems. Many solutions require hundreds and even thousands of highly skilled people working in tandem and the military is perfect for these kinds of tasks. Another problem soldiers are perfect at solv-



A TRUCK carries humanitarian aid across the floating pier constructed to deliver aid to the Gaza Strip, last month. (Amir Cohen/Reuters)

ing is those that require a war to rid the world of a dictator who is terrorizing their people.

In both World War I and WWII, Europe faced a menacing threat from Germany. With fanatical leaders set on conquering all of Europe, Germany seemed on its way to victory and could even have become a world-dominating power. It was only US military intervention that stopped Germany. The same was true of Manuel Noriega, the Panamanian dictator who ruined his people’s lives and spread drugs around the world. American troops invaded Panama and arrested Noriega, and today it is a flourishing country. South Korea also owes its freedom and prosperity to tens of thousands of American soldiers.

Although until recently, America had never used its military to solve the Israel-Arab-Palestinian conflict, it has spent over seven decades trying to intervene and solve the conflicts that plague Israel and its neighbors. Even before declaring independence, Israel faced pressure from president Harry Truman not to declare their state as he tried to work out a peace deal with the Arab countries. Since Truman, every administration has intervened through pressure, incentives, and even begging for the improvement of relations between Israel and the Palestinians.

To date, all of these efforts have failed. Israel is grateful for America’s military aid, its past economic aid, and its diplomatic shield at the United Nations. However, the Israelis are less appreciative of the US’s constant pressure to give concessions to Arabs and Palestinians – who are clearly not interested in peace with Israel – in failed peace process after failed peace process.

In its most recent intervention in the region to improve the situation, the US has spent hundreds of millions of dollars to construct and repeatedly repair a pier its military built off the coast of Gaza to deliver humanitarian aid to Palestinians in Gaza. Recently, the Pentagon announced the

floating pier was being dismantled due to weather. Evidently, a pier built for the sea can’t handle rain, wind, and waves. Due to the security situation in Gaza – Hamas keeps stealing humanitarian aid and shooting Palestinians who want to eat – aid groups have stopped their work and might not return. This would make the pier pointless and American officials have said they wouldn’t rebuild it.

From the outset, when President Joe Biden and Secretary of State Antony Blinken started floating the idea (pun intended) of building a floating pier off the coast of Gaza, Israelis scoffed at the idea. The US vowed not to put any “boots on the ground,” which doomed the project before it even got underway. Israelis saw the pier as yet another bond-to-fail American intervention in the Middle East.

Whether or not the floating pier was waterproof was beside the point. Palestinians in Gaza have consistently demonstrated that they will resist attempts to help themselves. After years of watching Hamas siphoning off aid in Gaza to build terror tunnels and Palestinian Authority (PA) resident Mahmoud Abbas and his cronies embezzling foreign aid to enrich themselves, it was predictable that building a floating pier to bring aid into Gaza was going to fail.

The current and all future American administrations should learn a lesson from the failure of the floating pier. Successfully changing circumstances, whether to feed people or end a violent conflict, can only come by studying the issue from a local perspective. Projecting a Western mindset, based on Western values onto a people with a different perspective and values is doomed to fail.

Successful mediation of an end to the Israeli-Arab-Palestinian conflict will require US officials to understand the perspective of the players in the conflict and construct a strategy around the values of the people involved, not their own.

The writer is a certified interfaith hospice chaplain in Jerusalem and the mayor of Mitzpe Yericho, Israel. She lives with her husband and six children.

Israel's third front

The West Bank could explode this year

• By ERIC R. MANDEL

I recently visited with the new IDF Panther battalion created specifically to deal with the growing threat of Hamas and other jihadist groups on Israel's seam line, the boundary between the northern West Bank (Samaria) and Israel's narrow waistline, only nine miles to the Mediterranean Sea.

The seam line is part of the 1949 Armistice line (Green Line or 1967 line) that runs north to south on the western border of the West Bank, close to Israel's major coastal cities, including Tel Aviv. Two large Palestinian cities, Tulkarm and Kalkilya, are on the seam line.

These Palestinian cities are controlled in whole or part by Hamas operatives, not the Palestinian Authority. These cities have become terror centers, as close to Israeli towns on the other side of the Seam Line as Israeli communities were to Hamas terror centers in Gaza. Iran and Hamas's goal is to turn the West Bank into Gaza, in other words, Hamastan.

According to an officer in the Panther battalion I spoke with, Hamas completely controls the city of Tulkarm and is in a battle with the PA for control of Kalkilya. Both towns are within short-range rocket distance to Netanyahu, Hadera, Herzliya, and Tel Aviv.

I also spent time with the deputy battalion commander in Jenin and Nablus, two primary terror centers in Samaria (northern West Bank). As Meir Ben-Shabbat, Israel's former National Security Adviser and chief of staff for National Security, wrote in *Israel Hayom*, "Jenin is at risk of Gazafication. The West Bank is currently defined as a secondary arena in Israel's multi-arena campaign. Successfully addressing its challenges now will help maintain this definition and prevent the area from deteriorating into a situation that Iran, Hezbollah, and Hamas would like to see."

According to Steven Erlanger in an article in *The New York Times* headlined, "Palestinian Fighters in West Bank Seek to Emulate Hamas in Gaza," he said, "In Tulkarm and Jenin, armed militants are flocking to more hard-line factions, such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad... More weapons and explosives are being manufactured in the West Bank... Fatah-dominated Palestinian Authority... is losing ground to the more radical Palestinian factions, who are actively fighting Israel and gaining more support from Iran in the form of cash and weapons smuggled into the territory."

I confirmed during my visits to Judea and Samaria (West Bank) that Iran is trying to bring many more weapons and missile

technology to the West Bank to enable Hamas to create a missile threat close to Israel's major cities, like the missile arsenal. Hamas had in Gaza. This is all part of Iran's long-term strategy to create a ring of fire around Israel to tighten the noose while demoralizing the Israeli people.

MY COLLEAGUE Jonathan Spyer, writing in *The Jerusalem Post*, said, "The weaponry now trafficked included and includes C4, TNT, mines, anti-tank mines, RPG launchers, and missiles of various types, including anti-armor and anti-personnel missiles."

Tying the West Bank to the overarching geostrategic threat of Iran was explained to me by two of Israel's leading intelligence and military experts close to the prime minister. They told me that the reason for Israel's alleged targeting of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Brig.-Gen. Mohammad Reza Zahedi in the Iranian embassy annex in Damascus, which led to the Iranian attack of ballistic and cruise missiles from Iran targeting Israel, was that Iran had crossed two unspoken red lines.

One line Iran crossed was the increased flow of weapons into the West Bank via Jordan as well as expanding the missile threat there, which, to this time, has been nearly nonexistent. The other line crossed was Iranian-directed attacks from its Popular Mobilization Units PMU militias in Iraq targeting Eilat in southern Israel.

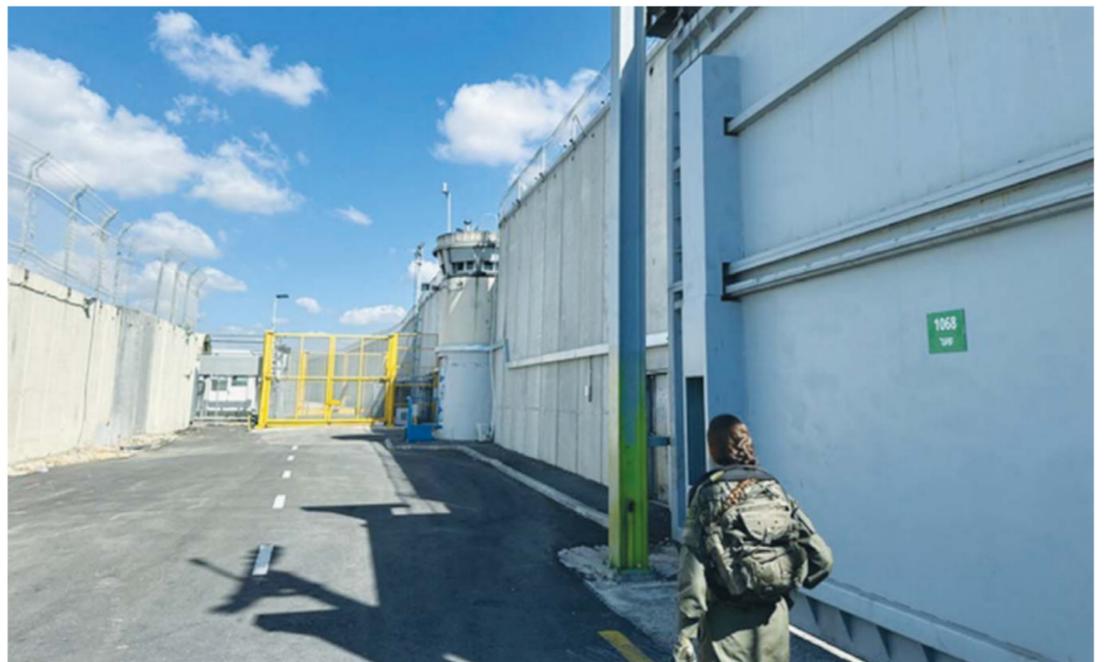
Zahedi was a senior commander in IRGC Quds Force, a US-designated terror organization, in charge of the Lebanon and Syria operations as well as the "Palestinian sphere."

A report in *The Times of Israel* said, "At the current rate of smuggling from Jordan, Palestinian terror groups in the West Bank will be able to launch rockets into Israel within a year."

I was able to independently confirm that Iran has been attempting and succeeding in bringing game-changing weapons like RPG (rocket-propelled grenades) and missile-building knowledge to the West Bank (Judea and Samaria) through Israel's longest border along the Jordan River Valley. Hamas and its jihadist affiliates, supplied and funded by the IRGC, are on the cusp of building the foundation for a missile arsenal similar to the rockets Hamas used to such devastating effect beginning on October 7.

The Jordan River Valley is Israel's longest border and seems far too porous, even with a sophisticated fence. One needs to look at October 7 to understand why barriers are not a failsafe to stop an invasion, let alone the smuggling of missiles and arms.

As for the direct threat to Israel's major



AN IDF soldier walks along the barrier surrounding Kalkilya, on the seam line. (Eric Mandel)

population centers from Palestinian cities along the seam line that have been radicalized, Israel does not have an underground border fence blocking tunnels from transiting into Israeli territory. The potential for a mass incursion and invasion overtaking Israeli communities that border the seam line is real.

I visited the largest Hezbollah tunnel on Israel's northern border with Lebanon six years ago. It was twenty stories deep and almost a half mile long, entering Israeli territory near border towns, and could have transited hundreds of Radwan fighters into borderline communities in minutes. Think October 7, but worse.

HAMAS WOULD like to create a tunnel system in the West Bank and has the knowledge from the 700-kilometer underground labyrinth they created in Gaza as well as the help of Iran's primary military division, Hezbollah, to build a West Bank terror tunnel system.

What will America do if the West Bank explodes with something akin to a third intifada?

Suppose America continues to use a Western outlook, not employing strategic

empathy to understand the mindset and patience of our Middle Eastern adversaries, as Lt.-Gen. H. R. McMaster counseled the US government. In that case, the patience of jihadists will win out. Israel must be given great latitude to continue to fight Hamas, Hezbollah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and every other Iranian-funded and directed jihadist movement, whether in the West Bank, Gaza, or Lebanon, to create real deterrence.

If we want to stabilize the rings of Iranian fire surrounding Israel, we need American foreign policy analysts who think in years and decades, not weeks or months.

Suppose Israel is forced to end combat operations prematurely, whether in Gaza, Lebanon, or the West Bank, before a significant deterrence is restored, condemning Israel to fight wars on Western timelines with Islamists who use our impatience for tactical and strategic advantage. In that case, the result ultimately will undermine US security interests by weakening our strategic allies.

Hamas and other Iranian allies have mastered the art of playing the West against Israel by using the images of their own people's suffering to manipulate a naive

Western audience and governments.

Just as in the North, the question of a major war is not if but when. In the West Bank, a major Iranian-inspired and controlled uprising is just a matter of time. It will also destabilize US allies in Jordan and Egypt and strain our moderate Gulf allies, another reason for this or the next administration to craft a long-range strategy based on Middle East time.

The answer is not putting out fires but finally dealing with the arsonist, Iran. Let's be pro-Iranian, that is, pro-Iranian people. Enforce sanctions, destabilize the economy of the government of terror, and support the Iranian people. That is how to address the root cause of instability in the West Bank, Gaza, and Lebanon. Otherwise, we will continue to put band-aids on a hemorrhage, hoping to kick the problem down the proverbial road to the next American election.

The writer is the director of MEPIN, the Middle East Political Information Network, senior security editor of *The Jerusalem Report* and a contributor to *The Hill* and *The Jerusalem Post*. He regularly briefs members of the US Congress and their foreign policy advisers about the Middle East.

Cooperating with Iran's new president

It far outweighs the risks

• By ALON BEN-MEIR

The victory of reformist Masoud Pezeshkian in Iran's presidential runoff election should not have surprised many observers of the Iranian political scene. President-elect Pezeshkian is well-known for his progressive ideas on domestic and foreign relations. He knows that he rose to power at a pivotal time in his country's domestic and foreign state of affairs.

Given the domestic cynicism, the lack of trust in any government, and the opposition of ultra-conservatives to any reformist, Pezeshkian is fully aware of the uphill battle he will have to wage, for which he needs the Khamenei's support to succeed. Finally, he recognizes that fixing the economy, which is in dire straits and directly linked to the sanctions imposed by the West due to the impasse over Iran's nuclear program, needs to be at the top of his agenda because of its immediate implications, both domestically and in relations with the West.

It is true that essentially, the role of any Iranian president is to carry out Ayatollah Khamenei's orders with limited leeway in implementing a socioeconomic agenda. The fact that Pezeshkian was tightly vetted by the Guardian Council and still allowed to run, despite his reformist stances, suggests that Khamenei will give him more room to maneuver for two reasons.

First, Khamenei desperately needs to assuage the public's outcry about the harsh socioeconomic conditions in the country, which Pezeshkian promised to make his top priority to improve. Second, Pezeshkian's election will signal that Iran is more amenable to mending its relations with the West, preventing another collision course with the US and Israel, reducing regional tension, and opening the door for a constructive dialogue, which would ultimately serve Iran's economic and political interests.

Had Pezeshkian's hardline rival Saeed Jalili won the election, Iran could have instead become even more determined to strengthen its military capabilities and aggressive posture while further bolstering the forces of its "axis of resistance," Hezbollah and the Houthis, and replenishing Hamas's crippled military capability should it manage to reconstitute itself in Gaza. Iran would have also continued more aggressively to seek regional hegemony, further strengthening its relations with Russia and China and advancing its nuclear threshold to become a nuclear power.

Many reasons justify some optimism about Pezeshkian's victory, not only because of what he said and promised to do, but also because many prominent Iranian politicians have openly expressed such optimism based on their knowledge and experience with Pezeshkian, who had served both as a member of Parliament and as a health minister. Former foreign minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, who served under



THEN-IRANIAN PRESIDENTIAL candidate Masoud Pezeshkian (right) and former foreign minister Mohammad Javad Zarif attend a campaign event in Tehran last month. (West Asia News Agency/Reuters)

the Rouhani government, campaigned for him, saying the choice was between "day and night."

Another prominent politician, Ali Akbar Behmanesh, a reformist and head of Pezeshkian's campaign in the province of Mazandaran, posted on X, "The end of the rule of the minority over the majority. Congratulations for the victory of wisdom over ignorance." Such a public statement strengthens the argument that Khamenei tacitly supports and approves of what is expected from Pezeshkian.

It is still legitimate to doubt Pezeshkian's ability to move quickly and unimpeded to implement his aggressive domestic agenda and improve Iran's relations with the West, chiefly the US. Nevertheless, the United States needs a new strategy to encourage Pezeshkian to move in the desired direction. Behind the scenes, the US should convey its willingness to work with the new president, assuring him that any measure of moderation he takes will be fully and correspondingly reciprocated.

PEZESHKIAN CAN demonstrate that Iran is ready to change course and constructively become a more

moderate player in three areas. First, Pezeshkian should signal that Iran is ready to resume its indirect negotiations with the US over its nuclear program. The new Iranian president will find the US more receptive to such openings, mainly because it is an election year in the US. Any improvement in bilateral relations between the two countries will be welcome.

Both sides are vested in improving the relationship. For the US, it is a win-win because regardless of the progress or lack thereof in the negotiations, it will not worsen. For Iran, any discernible progress in the talks could translate to lifting some of the sanctions, which is essential. The Iranian public is eagerly awaiting some relief from the horrendous economic hardship they have been experiencing for years. Any appreciable progress in this area will bolster Pezeshkian's standing and enable him to be more flexible in addressing other issues, such as the outcry of women against the mandatory wearing of the hijab, a law he supports relaxing.

Second, given the substantial influence that Iran exerts on Hezbollah and the likelihood that a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas could potentially be

consummated, Pezeshkian is in an improved position to lean heavily on Nasrallah, Hezbollah's leader, to lower the tension with Israel by substantially reducing the trading of cross-border fire to prevent an all-out war, which Iran wants to avoid by any means it can. The violence would end entirely as soon as an agreement on the ceasefire is reached; in any case, Nasrallah has already stated that he would comply. This would allow the more than 70,000 Israelis who left their villages and towns along the Lebanese border to return home after a painful nine months of being displaced.

Third, to demonstrate further willingness to calm the tension in the region, Pezeshkian is undoubtedly in a position to demand that the Houthis in Yemen desist from firing missiles and drones that disrupt commercial shipping in the Red Sea. Iran is the leading supplier of such weapons, and it is within the prerogative of the president to halt any future shipments. This will go a long way toward assuaging the Biden administration's concerns, especially at this juncture, when President Biden needs to focus on the election campaign and not be constantly distracted by the mounting tension in the Middle East.

The Biden administration should take several necessary steps to facilitate Pezeshkian's taking such moderating measures. To begin with, as soon as the negotiations over Iran's nuclear program recommence, Biden should instruct his negotiating team to show some flexibility, which would allow Pezeshkian to take some credit for his initiative and develop interest-based negotiating positions by identifying specific areas from which both sides can mutually benefit and on which they can build further progress.

Additionally, Biden must make it clear to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, when he meets him on July 24, that under no circumstances should he publicly criticize the resumption of the nuclear negotiations and that he must not allow any targeted assassination of Iranian nuclear scientists or high-level military commanders, regardless of how tempting the target may be. Indeed, any provocation by Netanyahu would be impossible for Pezeshkian to show any flexibility or take any initiative along the lines above.

I do not suggest that Iran will change its stripes overnight because of reformist Pezeshkian's election. I do believe, however, that his election provides a new opportunity to dramatically reduce regional tension and avert another war. The president-elect should be given every chance to succeed. The potential gains for the US and Israel far outweigh the risks.

The writer is a retired professor of international relations, most recently at the Center for Global Affairs at NYU. He taught courses on international negotiation and Middle Eastern studies.

Seeing through Iran's reformist rhetoric

Security implications for the West

• By FARHAD REZAEI

As newly-elected President Masoud Pezeshkian steps into his role, advocates of engagement with the regime in Iran are quick to label him a "reformist," poised to redirect Iran's path and revive nuclear negotiations in exchange for lifted sanctions.

Yet, a critical examination reveals different realities. Firstly, Pezeshkian has never self-identified as a reformist, contradicting the narrative being promoted. Secondly, the true reins of power, especially concerning foreign and military policies – nuclear and ballistic missile policies included – remain firmly in the hands of the Supreme Leader, reducing the presidential role to largely symbolic gestures. Finally, a review of historical trends shows that Iran's most significant progress in nuclear and missile capabilities has occurred under presidents dubbed as "reformists," not hardliners.

Western governments must be wary: The persistent dichotomy between reformists and hardliners is a calculated deception, crafted to manipulate the international community. With Iran nearing a critical threshold in its nuclear weapons development, falling for this facade could lead to irreversible consequences.

First of all, it is important to note that Pezeshkian is a strong supporter of the regime's headline policies. During the presidential campaigns, he said he fully adheres to the policies of Ali Khamenei. His record also shows that he has been a strong advocate of mandatory hijab and promotes gender segregation in education and healthcare. In one of his presidential debates, Pezeshkian noted that he "enforced compulsory Islamic hijab on women in universities and hospitals even before Ayatollah Khomeini formally made hijab compulsory for all women," and that he was responsible for "cleansing" universities of non-Islamic influences.

Pezeshkian is also a strong supporter of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and its terrorist proxy groups, such as Hamas and Hezbollah. When he was a member of the Islamic Majlis, he signed a bill supporting armed resistance against Israel and endorsing

the regime's participation in armed conflict against Israel on behalf of the Palestinians. After his election, in an open letter to Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah, Pezeshkian expressed unwavering support for Hezbollah and the Axis of Resistance against Israel. As he put it, "The Islamic Republic has always supported the resistance against Israel... and it will continue with strength."

Secondly, Pezeshkian's track record indicates that he will not advocate for altering the regime's policies. Even if he would want to make changes, it would be virtually impossible because the presidency in Iran does not hold actual power over the country's strategic direction, foreign policy, or its nuclear and ballistic missile programs. These are firmly controlled by Khamenei and the IRGC.

Khamenei holds extensive power that significantly influences the governance and strategic direction of the country. He has the ultimate say in the formulation and execution of foreign policy. While the resident and foreign minister manage day-to-day foreign relations and diplomacy, the Supreme Leader sets the overarching goals and principles. His control also extends to the regime's strategic military programs, notably its nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

Furthermore, even if Pezeshkian were to be considered a reformist, this should raise greater concern rather than reassurance, given historical evidence of nuclear and missile expansion under those labeled as reformists and moderates.

When Mohammad Khatami came to power in 1997 on a platform of liberalization and reform, many observers noted that he represented "a genuine break from the regime orthodoxy" and wanted to turn the Iranian regime into a normally-behaving state.

Building on this perception, George Tenet, then CIA director, testified to Congress that Khatami was sincerely trying to end his government's support of terrorism. More disturbing was that the US intelligence community concluded that Khatami would terminate Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile programs. As a result, the Clinton administration offered conciliatory gestures and "welcomed" Khatami's dialogue, making several concessions, including a plan to release Iran's assets that



MASOUD PEZESHKIAN greets supporters at a gathering following his victory in the second round of the Iranian presidential election, in Tehran, earlier this month. (West Asia News Agency/Reuters)

had been frozen since the embassy takeover in 1979.

However, the CIA assessment was off the mark entirely. Both nuclear and missile programs had their most significant progress during Khatami (compared to the Rafsanjani and Ahmadinejad periods), with critical parts of the nuclear and missile programs being achieved during his tenure. Under Khatami (and later under president Rouhani), the network of smuggling along old and new routes also flourished. A long list of intercepted cargo indicated Iran's continuous interest in dual-use materials and components required for non-conventional use.

Although many observers suggested that Khatami was "out of the loop" on nuclear and ballistic missile matters, subsequent revelations peg him as a loyal supporter of the clandestine projects. In other words, while touting the dialogue among civilizations, he was firmly engaged in the deception project.

Hamid Baedinejad, the head of arms control in the Foreign Affairs Ministry, argued that Khatami had known that the West lacked trust in the regime and used his dialogue to build up confidence. In Baedinejad's view, Khatami hoped that his smiling face would give Iran a chance to continue its clandestine program in a calm and secure atmosphere.

According to Baedinejad, the entire enrichment cycle was completed during Khatami's tenure.

Khatami himself confirmed Baedinejad's claim in a subsequent interview with the *Nasim-e Bidari* magazine. Claiming that the critical part of the nuclear program was accomplished during his tenure, he added: "We chose the path that, were it to continue, not only would we have a better and more extensive nuclear technology, but our nuclear portfolio would not go to the UN Security Council."

Mohsen Aminzadeh, Khatami's deputy

foreign minister, asserted that during the Khatami period, 65% of the work needed for the enrichment cycle was accomplished. Ahmadinejad added only 10% because sanctions had progressively slowed the work.

Even if this statistic was self-serving, Aminzadeh's general point that the Khatami government had made good progress by avoiding sanctions was credible. The auspicious international atmosphere eventually made it possible for Iran to master the enrichment cycle and experiment with military applications.

Additionally, with its deceptive tactics, the regime has successfully managed to split the American-European non-proliferation coalition. Rouhani wrote in his book that "from the beginning, the Americans repeatedly told the Europeans that the Iranians are insincere and misleading you, but the Europeans used to reply, 'We trust them.'"

In a similar vein, the label of "reformist" attached to Pezeshkian is yet another deceptive, manipulative tactic. It is likely that the regime anticipates the election of Donald Trump as the next US president, expecting that he will reinstate a maximum pressure campaign against the regime. Under these circumstances, a "reformist" president could provide the most effective means to create a rift in US-Europe policy towards Iran and to weaken the impact of maximum pressure.

The West should be cautious of this deceptive tactic and avoid negotiations that merely allow the regime to continue its destructive policies, while presenting a facade of readiness for change and concessions.

Iran is now approaching a critical threshold in its nuclear weapons development. The regime has made significant progress in essential components for building a nuclear weapon. According to the latest assessment by the IAEA, the regime has accumulated enough weapons-grade uranium (WGU) for seven nuclear weapons, in one month. At this juncture, playing into the regime's game could only enable Iran to breakout with an actual bomb, an outcome no Western country should desire.

The writer is a senior fellow at the *Philos Project*.

We are called to serve

Now more than ever

• By ROBB LIPPITT

Ending my four-year term as board chair of Repair the World has given me the opportunity to reflect back on my (very eventful) tenure. Those years have spanned a pandemic, inflation causing economic uncertainty, continued political polarization, the horrific circumstances of October 7 and its aftermath, and dramatically rising antisemitism both in the US and around the world. And, yet, despite all of these historic external challenges, Repair the World has thrived during this time in its pursuit of mobilizing Jews and their communities to take action to pursue a just world.

Since 2020, Repair the World has:

- More than doubled its annual operating budget (landmark grants from JCRIF and MacKenzie Scott helped spur this growth);
- Doubled the annual acts of volunteer service and learning the organization facilitates on the way to achieving our goal of 1 million acts earlier than anticipated;
- Created much richer Jewish learning experiences while maintaining our powerful impact in communities;
- Built deep partnerships with multiple national Jewish organizations including Hillel, BBYO, Jewish Federations of North America, and Alpha Epsilon Pi (among others);
- Voluntarily recognized a Union; and
- Completed one ambitious strategic growth plan, and began to embark on another.

So I had to ask myself why, during such a tumultuous period for the US, Israel, and Jewish people around the world, has Repair's mission resonated so widely and deeply? Why are people attending Repair the World programs in record numbers this year, with Repair far exceeding its acts of volunteer service and learning goals nationally?

Beyond the obvious answer of Repair's extraordinary executive team, led by President & CEO Cindy Greenberg, what is drawing so many participants, partner organizations, and funders to our work? What enables Repair the World to rise to these difficult moments, creating purpose and impact when it is needed most?

Optimism is hard right now. People are afraid to express hope that divisions in American society can be reduced, or that it's possible for antisemitism and bigotry to decline, or that social ills such as hunger and being unhoused can be greatly minimized. It's far easier to focus on the problems, the downside, how hard a challenge can be, and the pain of potential failure.

And, yet, while someone is engaging in volunteer service, it's impossible to be anything but optimistic. (If you don't believe me, just try it the next time you're volunteering.) It feels good. Really good. We are proud of ourselves and we are grateful to be connected to those we are serving. Being served, serving alongside others, or watching people serve,



REPAIR THE WORLD staff prepare items to be donated, in Detroit. (Repair the World)

immediately generates optimism even in a bleak situation.

WE OFTEN hear someone say "watching them serve alongside their neighbors gave me hope" or "that act of service restored my faith in people." Volunteer service is, by definition, a deeply optimistic act. It's a statement that things can get better. It says that our time is well spent in seeking to improve the condition of our community or to help individuals. It shows that the investment of time and emotion volunteer service takes does achieve progress and can make things better, even if only for one other person, and that alone is worth the effort. As Colin Powell wisely said, "Optimism is a force multiplier."

Our Jewish values call us to volunteer service, recognizing that none of us lives without need for the support and the kindness of others. Pirkei Avot 2:10 teaches: "Other people's dignity should be as precious to you as your own." Now, more than ever, we need that mindset and it is impossible to perform service meaningfully without it. And every one of Repair the World's programs teaches and instills this approach, this fundamental respect for the dignity of each human.

Repair has demonstrated over and over that volunteer service powerfully answers the question of "What can I do?" in an

uncertain moment that Americans and Israelis are both facing. We know that volunteer service connects people of all different backgrounds, perspectives, and opinions. It reminds us to focus on the humanity of others, giving us a shared sense of purpose that requires no debate, disagreement, or politics. For non-Jewish Americans, volunteer service elevates people's perspectives about Jews, as they come to understand our fundamental commitment to compassion and justice, *tzedek*.

Volunteer service enriches both the person serving and the community being served. Service reminds us that American society functions best when we are centering the best interests of others. Service helps us embrace our best selves. Repair the World is the Jewish home of the national service movement and an organization committed both to engaging Jews into embracing the joy and value of a Jewish life, and to making a meaningful impact in communities, addressing problems that affect all of us.

While my time serving in this particular role is coming to end, my lifelong commitment to volunteer service continues. As the ongoing growth of Repair the World demonstrates, service from each of us to others is needed now more than ever.

The writer recently completed his four-year term as board chair of Repair the World.

Cyber threat intelligence

We cannot rely only on after-attack security

• By MIKE ADMON

In today's digital age, cyber threats are escalating in both frequency and sophistication. The global cost of online criminal activities is expected to almost triple from \$8.44 trillion in 2022 to a staggering \$23.84 trillion by 2027, according to data from Statista, the FBI, and the IMF.

The shift to hybrid work, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has also significantly impacted cybersecurity dynamics. This shift has expanded the attack surface, as many employees now use their own devices for work and rely on less secure home connections. This rising tide of cyber threats underscores the critical need for cyber threat intelligence.

CTI involves collecting, analyzing, and disseminating information about threats to an organization's information systems. It provides actionable insights into the capabilities, intentions, and activities of cyber adversaries, helping organizations anticipate, prepare for, and mitigate threats.

Modern threat intelligence platforms centralize data from various sources, including open sources (OSINT), technical sources (sensors, logs) and human intelligence (HUMINT). Then, the platform aggregates it in one place and presents it in a usable format. This has become increasingly important due to the rising frequency and complexity of cyberattacks.

According to the Gartner technological research and consulting firm, organizations using threat intelligence for strategic decisions are 2.5 times more likely to detect breaches earlier than those not using CTI, while according to a 2023 SANS survey, 87% of respondents who evaluated their CTI programs reported improvements in security prevention, detection, and response.

Organizations that rely only on after-attack features often experience delayed responses to threats. This delay can lead to greater damage, prolonged downtime, and higher recovery costs. Responding to and recovering from a cyberattack is typically more costly than preventing one. Without proactive measures, organizations are more vulnerable to advanced persistent threats (APTs) and zero-day exploits. By leveraging CTI, they can significantly enhance their risk management strategies, ensuring they stay ahead of potential threats.

CTI creates unparalleled advantages and is crucial for the modern work world. Among the benefits effective CTI provides are:

- Early threat detection – identify potential threats before they can exploit vulnerabilities, allowing organizations to take preventive measures;
- Faster response times – real-time insights into active threats, enabling quicker detection and response;
- Efficient resource allocation – enhances the accuracy of threat detection, reducing false positives and helping security teams focus on genuine threats, and therefore helps organizations optimize their security resources;
- Collaboration and sharing – encourages information sharing among organizations, industry groups, and government agencies;
- Strategic planning – provides insights into long-term trends and emerging threats, aiding in strategic planning and future-proofing security measures.

To maximize the benefits of CTI, organizations should filter out the CTI sources according to their unique needs, considering risk profile, industry, and other criteria. This ensures that the intelligence gathered is both accurate and actionable.

There are four primary types, each catering to specific needs and audiences within an organization:

- Strategic intelligence – helps shape long-term security strategies and policies aimed at executives and senior management;
- Tactical intelligence – informs day-to-day security operations and enhances threat detection capabilities, benefiting security analysts and operations teams;
- Operational intelligence – supports immediate response to active threats and ongoing incidents, essential for incident response teams and security operations centers (SOCs);
- Technical intelligence – provides the granular details necessary for configuring and fine-tuning security tools to prevent or mitigate attacks, used mainly by security engineers and IT staff.

Most companies use a combination of these CTI types to cover different aspects of their security needs.

As the cybersecurity landscape evolves, it's crucial to inject corresponding solutions into the organization's infrastructure. Organizations should not rely only on after-attack tools but to invest in effective and strong CTI abilities.

The writer is CEO of Unipath, a cybersecurity company.

Winning hearts and minds at the Jewish Culture Festival in Krakow

• By DAVID ZEV HARRIS and MARK GORDON

A couple of hundred people gather under a large canopy in the sweltering June heat. They listen rapt as a young Israeli couple treat them to a virtuoso tour of the musical world in what they dub a “Kabbalat Shabbat concert.”

The weekend series of concerts in a variety of venues around Krakow’s Kazimierz district is the culmination of the week that is the Jewish Culture Festival in Krakow. The audience is a strange mix of tourists, Poles, people who’ve flown in from around the Jewish world for the concerts, and even people wearing their Shabbat best.

Maya Belsitzman and Matan Ephrat have come to Krakow with their two small children in tow and Savta, who takes equal pride in her daughter’s musical ability and her slumbering grandchildren. Belsitzman plays cello and sings. Ephrat is an accomplished percussionist. The rapturous applause spreads to onlookers outside the tent at the end of each piece. The audience is clearly engaged.

It’s the 33rd iteration of the festival founded and directed by Janusz Makuch, his staff, and a dedicated team of volunteers known as the *machers*.

Their headquarters is located in the back office of a former *beit midrash* now a Bohemian café called Cheder. The eatery offers a mix of Jewish and Israeli dishes with perhaps a surprising focus on the Middle East rather than traditional Polish fare. Finjan coffee pots adorn the space along with hanukkiot and Jewish books. Many diners opt to sit on cushions on the floor of an area that is sometimes used as a stage, while others sit in window seats studying or reading novels.



THE INDUSTRY MUSEUM creates the perfect venue for the inspiring rhythms of Safed-based Maqamat. (@MarkDavidPod)

“The theme this year is *Shema Yisrael*,” he says in perfect Hebrew. His Yiddishisms and quotes from rabbis make it hard to believe he isn’t a fully paid-up member of the tribe.

Some of the festival goers are real groupies. They’ve been coming to Krakow for years just to get a taste of this form of Jewishness.

Saturday evening. The audience fills a hangar in the nearby industry museum. Eight performers take to the stage with a variety of Middle Eastern instruments. They play pieces in styles from Morocco to Persia. This is Maqamat – straight from Safed in northern Israel. Polish grandmothers rub shoul-

ders with Jewish-American twentysomethings swaying and clapping along to the band’s hypnotic rhythms. It’s a big production and a swinging success.

Just down the road lies the Galicia Jewish Museum. It’s a remarkable collection of historical photographs of Jewish life in this region. Managed by a dedicated, highly knowledgeable non-Jewish team, the collection “challenges the stereotypes and misconceptions typically associated with the Jewish past in Poland and educates both Poles and Jews about their own histories, whilst encouraging them to think about the future.”

The museum uses the festival

as a great backdrop to launch a new temporary exhibit: *To Leave Something to the World. Beyond the Pages of Renia Spiegel’s Diary*. Spiegel wrote her diary in Przemysl (close to today’s border with Ukraine) from January 1939 to July 1942. The museum says the diary “is undoubtedly a valuable historical source, an important work of literature, a piece of personal document literature of Polish Jews, and a unique record of the last years of the life of this young, talented, ambitious woman, murdered by German Nazis in July 1942.”

BUT THE culture festival is a celebration of life, in the shadow of

the events in Israel – Belsitzman wears a yellow pin as she performs. American wife and husband duo Deborah Strauss and Cantor Jeff Warschauer speak to the audience in a mix of English and Yiddish, accompanied by a Polish interpreter. They’re big into klezmer and wordless *niggunim*, with easy-to-remember “la-las” or “bim-boms.”

Throughout the week-long festival they’ve been teaching this art to festival-goers – mainly young Poles with a penchant for instrumental music. The whole ensemble comes together for a full-on concert, sharing what they have learned with the packed audience. Strauss encourages the crowd to join a *heimishe* conga line, which twists and turns its way through the tent, encouraged by those who remained seated.

Californian Maurice Olsberg, who now resides in Manchester, England, has been coming to the festival for years. He loves the performers and their music but perhaps more so he enjoys rubbing shoulders with others who revel in cultural Jewishness.

“I never thought I’d come to Poland but then a friend invited me. She was DJ-ing a few years back and said I’d love it,” he says on the sidelines of yet another evening concert. “There’s so much to do at the festival. There are lots of non-Jews, which I find really important. I’ve met people from all over Europe who like music and are into Jewish culture.”

In addition to concerts, there are guided walks, thought-provoking lectures and just a sense of bonhomie in the streets of Kazimierz.

Of course, the festival has its critics. Anything Jew-ish in Poland is targeted by Israeli and/or Jewish skeptics but the organizers prefer to respond through their actions rather than words. The *machers*,

Chowing down

There’s an incredible variety of dining options in Krakow with an abundance of traditional Polish food and Italian cuisine: For fancy local delicacies: Copernicus or the cheaper Hevre. Bocconera is a great bet for Italian food. Fiorentina will set you back a few zloty but it’s an experience.

There are also lots of vegan and vegetarian restaurants in town.

As for kosher – remember that most of the Jewish-style eateries in the Kazimierz district are not kosher – but do pop into Cheder for a coffee. There’s a kosher store in the Chabad house, and Felafel Shelanu in the Jewish district offers a mix of dairy meals.

– D.Z.H. and M.G.

this year for instance, include a volunteer originally from Lebanon and a woman in a hijab from Azerbaijan who both want to learn about Judaism while having a thoroughly good time.

On the site of such horror just decades ago, the conga line brings together swarthy Middle Eastern Jews, youthful Ashkenazi Americans, and, yes, blonde-haired, blue-eyed Poles – young and old, dancing hand in hand, celebrating what once was, with the shared hope that Jewish traditions will be protected for years to come.

Mark and David host The Jerusalem Post Podcast – Travel Edition. They were the guests of the Polish Tourism Organisation, Malopolska Tourism Organisation, and the Municipality of Krakow.

Bibi and the Rebbe



GRAPEVINE

• By GREER FAY CASHMAN

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has come under a lot of criticism on many issues and from many directions this past year.

But one area in which he always gets it right is with Chabad, due to his great admiration for the late Lubavitcher Rebbe Menachem Mendel Schneerson whom he met on different occasions, and whose words influenced him greatly.

Their first meeting was forty years ago on Simchat Torah, 1984. During their conversation, the Rebbe told him: “You are going to the UN, an assembly hall that has falsehood and utter darkness. Remember that in a hall of perfect darkness, totally dark, if you light one small candle, it’s light will be seen from afar. Your mission is to light a candle for truth and the Jewish people...”

Netanyahu took the message to heart. In September 2009, on the day after the UN General Assembly had been addressed by hate-spewing Libyan president Muammar Gaddafi, and something in a similar vein but slightly less hysterically, by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Netanyahu spoke from the same podium. At that time he chose to focus on Auschwitz rather than Iran, and he surprised the full house by holding up the original construction plan for the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp.

The approved plan had been signed by Hitler’s deputy Heinrich Himmler. In one of the finest speeches that he had ever given, Netanyahu asked whether the death camp was a lie. The question was in response to the spate of Holocaust denial that the Iranian president had delivered from the same podium the previous day. Netanyahu praised those who had refused to come and hear such lies and those who walked out in protest when the lies were uttered.

Then, turning to those who gave the Holocaust denier a

hearing, Netanyahu declared: “I say on behalf of my people, and decent people everywhere: Have you no shame? Have you no decency? A mere six decades after the Holocaust, you give legitimacy to a man who denies that the murder of six million Jews took place, and who pledges to wipe out the Jewish state? What a disgrace, what a mockery of the charter of the United Nations.”

The speech received a standing ovation and headlines in the major American media.

Immediately after the speech when crowded by reporters who cover the UN, Netanyahu repeated what the Rebbe had told him.

At a subsequent meeting with the Rebbe only a few years later, he told the Rebbe that a lot had changed in the interim, to which the Rebbe responded: “One thing that has not changed is that the *moshiach* [messiah] has not come.”

Last week, on the 30th anniversary of the Rebbe’s passing, Netanyahu told a large delegation of Chabad emissaries from Israel and abroad who came to his office: “Don’t bend. Don’t cower, don’t surrender – not to antisemitic lies, not to fear, not to intimidation. You are our ambassadors in the spirit of the Rebbe.”

Netanyahu reviewed the present security situation and also shared reminiscences of his meetings with the Rebbe.

■ IT IS not uncommon for executive members of a social welfare organization or a business enterprise to distance themselves once they are no longer in office. Not so with Nava Barak, who after 28 years as president of Elem, the organization that seeks and saves at-risk youth, stepped down on April 1st. Last Sunday, she was an almost magnetic presence at the annual Elem fundraiser at the Smolarsz Auditorium on the Tel Aviv University campus.

Aside from her ongoing



PRIME MINISTER Benjamin Netanyahu with Chabad emissaries with whom he shared reminiscences of his meetings with the Lubavitcher Rebbe. (Kobi Gideon/GPO)

interest and loyalty, she was there because she was being honored with a life achievement award for all the work she has done and the projects she initiated over the years, and because Elem is this year celebrating its 40th anniversary.

Elem supporters contributed something in the range of NIS1.5 million.

Entertainment for the evening was provided by actor Lee Byrne and singer Hanan Ben Ari.

In addition to its regular projects, Elem employees and volunteers took on additional activities from the second day of the war, and continue to do so, with the main goal being to provide proper care for youth in trauma, especially those who are homeless. Since then, Elem teams have constantly been in evacuation centers, schools, online and in the streets.

In addition to being used for Elem’s regular activities, proceeds from the evening will also be distributed among the families of Lior Haddad Attias, Sigal Levy, and the late Yonatan Richter – Elem volunteers who were murdered at the Nova party while volunteering in Elem’s “Good People” project.

Among those attending were Elem Chairman Shai Piron, Elem CEO Tali Erez, youths evacuated from Kiryat Shmona, and long-time Elem supporters, including businesswomen and philanthropist Yodi Recanati, Harel Givon, the CEO of Amdocs Israel, Moshik

Theumim from advertising group Gitam, Shira Ruderman, CEO of the Ruderman Family Foundation, Shlomo Meir, CEO of the Movement Devices Group, attorney Zvika Agmon, Nadav Grinshpon, owner of Credito and former vice-chairman of Africa Israel, businessman David Forer and his wife who are owners of Neopharm, and Gad and Talia Zaevi, businessman and member of the Elem board of directors.

“This evening is a wake-up call, an evening of hope but also great concern for the future of the youth who will build this country,” said Piron.

“Since October 8, Elem, in cooperation with the Welfare Ministry, has stood by the youth. They are the ones who need us now, they are the ones who will build and rebuild the country from the big hole it is in today. The youth in the South and the North need urgent help, which will prevent them from descending into the abyss. The situation of all the youth in Israel also suffered a severe blow. This evening is dedicated to all those engaged in the holy work, those who fight for our youth, because in their hands our future is entrusted.”

■ IN A year in which the studies of so many university and college students have been disrupted, the Afeka College of Engineering produced its largest ever graduating class. More than 700 engineering students were awarded B.Sc. and M.Sc. degrees in engineer-



FROM LEFT, Tali Erez, Nava Barak and Shai Peron. (Itzik Biran)

ing and computer science. This milestone was achieved despite the fact that more than 40% of Afeka’s students were immediately called to military service, including some who were on the cusp of completing their degree.

These young engineers, who in all likelihood will be among the minds behind the next game-changing Israeli defense innovations such as the Iron Dome, managed to persevere and to graduate on time. They did so at a time when most needed by Israel’s hi-tech industry.

“I look at you and see the future – the future of the hi-tech industry, the future of the Israeli economy, the future of society, the future of the country,” president of Afeka College Prof. Ami Moyal, told them during the impressive graduation ceremony. “For us, you represent a significant part of the ‘victory picture’ for this country. I am filled with pride for each and every one of you.”

In response to this profound impact that war had on its students, Afeka developed a comprehensive support package to address their diverse needs. With the academic year beginning two and a half months late, Afeka began teaching all courses through its synchronous hybrid model. This innovative approach allows students who are able to attend in-person classes, while those who cannot be physically present can participate remotely.

The support package also provides additional course sections and summer courses so that students don’t fall

behind their classmates, academic counseling and tutoring, financial aid, and mental health services. The college’s approach keeps every one of its students on a path toward filling a vital role in Israel’s engineering industry and contributing to the Jewish state’s crucial hi-tech sector.

To secure the resources that will enable the college to maintain this comprehensive student support package, Afeka recently launched its AsOne fund-raising campaign, with NIS15 million as its initial goal. The college has committed NIS 5 million from internal resources to the student support initiative, and is now seeking external donations to fund various initiatives under the AsOne campaign.

■ OY VEY. In the country which east European Jews once regarded as ‘di goldene medina’ where they transitioned from paupers to philanthropists, they now have to enroll in self defense classes. Krav Maga, which is the Hebrew for Contact Combat, has been taught in New York for several years, and is now moving across the continent, where it is being taught by martial arts experts who are all veterans of the Israel Defense Forces.

On July 22, classes for both men and women will begin at the Nessah Culture and Education Center in Beverly Hills California under the direction of Jennifer Silverstein, who is a leading female Krav Maga expert.

■ CONTRARY TO the belief that a woman must never tell

her age, WIZO, the Women’s International Zionist Organization, proudly proclaims that it is celebrating its 104th anniversary. Though conceived in London, with Vera Weizmann, the wife of Israel’s first president Chaim Weizmann among its founders, it is headquartered in Tel Aviv with branches throughout Israel and in many countries abroad.

In honor of its triple digit birthday, WIZO held a modest, toned-down celebration at its headquarters in Tel Aviv. The event was attended by World WIZO President Anat Vidor, World WIZO Chairperson Anita Friedman, WIZO CEO Mira Mines, WIZO Israel chairperson Ora Korazin, WIZO Honorary Presidents Helena Glaser, Tova Ben Dov and Esther Mor, as well as volunteers and employees from WIZO’s programs around the country.

The event, held at the organization’s headquarters in Tel Aviv, recognized the dedicated efforts of many women, who were called by name and presented with awards WIZO, works to promote gender equality and strengthen social resilience in Israel. Since its founding WIZO has continuously been initiating significant social initiatives to meet the constantly changing needs of a young developing country, including services for women, youth, toddlers, immigrants and underprivileged populations.

WIZO is highly active in the United Nations, leading dialogues, advocating for women’s rights, and putting pro-Israel matters on the agenda. In 1959, WIZO was recognized by the UN as an NGO and became the first Zionist organization to receive consultative status in ECOSOC, the UN Economic and Social Council, which includes the Human Rights Council and the Commission on the Status of Women. WIZO also has representation in UNICEF, the UN International Emergency Fund for Children.

WIZO has approximately 250,000 members across 37 federations worldwide.

greerfc@gmail.com

'Time is running short'

Amid confusion among Democrats, Pelosi sends a loud message

• By NOAH BIERMAN

Americans experiencing a whirlwind of Democratic leaders' desire to nudge President Joe Biden out of his reelection campaign can be forgiven.

Just as it seemed Biden had beaten back congressional pressure to withdraw this week, former speaker Nancy Pelosi of San Francisco ushered in another wave of doubt Wednesday, warning Biden that "time is running short" to reconsider a decision he has said repeatedly and defiantly that he has already made.

The party has contorted itself over the past 13 days as it contends with competing forces: Biden's pride; the party's sinking poll numbers; fear of chaos; elected lawmakers' personal ambitions; and the overwhelming anxiety among Democrats of all stripes that former president Donald Trump will win a second term.

Democratic lawmakers have tried all manner of responses to their Biden dilemma – some evasive, some creative.

The Tuesday walkback from Rep. Jerrold Nadler of New York, who had called for a new candidate only two days earlier: "Whether I have concerns or not is beside the point."

The Wednesday double-reverse by Rep. Ritchie Torres of New York, who on Monday warned that the "drip-drip-drip" of public calls for Biden's withdrawal were wounding him: "An unsentimental analysis of the cold hard numbers – which have no personal feelings or political loyalties – should inform what we decide and whom we nominate."

The restatement of fact from Rep. Ro Khanna of Fremont during a *Washington Post* video interview: "The reality is that the president has said that he is running."

The optimistic quip from Rep. Lou Correa of Santa Ana: "80 is the new 60."

A predicted tsunami of Capitol Hill Democrats calling for Biden to withdraw from his reelection bid has



US PRESIDENT Joe Biden awards the Medal of Freedom to former speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, during a ceremony at the White House in May. (Kevin Dietsch/Getty Images/TNS)

instead given way to isolated flash floods of public dissent, held back by a thin seawall of support. Many lawmakers have dodged reporters, talked around the question or, when pressed, said what they needed to say in hopes of moving on from concerns about Biden's decline or whether he is equipped to defeat Trump.

They have largely left such calls to donors and other influential unelected leaders. George Clooney, who co-hosted a Hollywood mega-fundraiser for Biden last month, penned a brutal call for his withdrawal in a Wednesday op-ed in *The New York Times*.

"The one battle he cannot win is the fight against time," Clooney wrote. "None of us can. It's devastating to say it, but the Joe Biden I was with three weeks ago at the fundraiser was not the Joe Biden of 2020. He wasn't even the Joe Biden of 2010. He was the same man we all witnessed at the debate."

Pelosi, one of the most influential voices in Biden's sphere outside of his family, seemed to sense that Biden's efforts to stall for time were nonetheless pushing the party toward acceptance of a candidacy that is looking increasingly doomed, as polls and political handicappers push the needle toward Trump.

The respected Cook Political Report shifted six states toward Trump's column late Tuesday, including Arizona and Nevada, which it moved from the "toss-up" category to "Lean R," presaging the possibility that the election moves from squeaker to landslide.

Pelosi said in her Wednesday appearance on MSNBC's *Morning Joe*, Biden's favorite cable news show, that she preferred to keep the discussions behind closed doors – for now.

"Tell somebody privately, but you don't have to put that out on the table until we see how we go this week,"

she said.

But by appearing on the same show where Biden declared angrily on Monday that he would remain in the race – and then ignoring his declaration – she sent a very pointed signal.

"It's up to the president to decide if he is going to run," she said. "We're all encouraging him to make that decision because time is running short."

Pelosi sandwiched her comments between praise for Biden and his record. But Pelosi is notably careful and calculating in her public comments. She is no longer in Democratic leadership but remains in the House after one of the most consequential tenures in history.

At 84, she is three years older than Biden and served alongside him for most of his political career, working closely with him during the Obama presidency to pass the Affordable Care Act. She also had the experience of watching close friend sena-

tor Dianne Feinstein deteriorate before dying in office last year.

FORMER PRESIDENT Barack Obama, another influential voice, has been quiet since offering initial support. He believes he can be most valuable as a "sounding board and confidant" to Biden, according to a person who speaks with him regularly and requested anonymity to discuss the closed-door relationship.

The reluctance of most lawmakers to step out on their own says as much about their political motivations – as it does about Biden. Polls show majorities of voters want Biden to step aside and he has fallen further behind Trump in many head-to-head polls, including an AARP poll released Tuesday that showed him five percentage points down in Wisconsin, a must-win state.

"It's driven by caution,

political survival instincts. A lot of Democrats don't want to be out on a limb," said Tim Miller, who worked on communications strategy at the highest levels of Republican politics before becoming a vocal Trump critic and leaving the party.

"There's a lot of loud voices that are going to yell at you on social media and the phones in your office," he added, arguing that those voices do not represent the consensus among voters.

Behind the scenes, elected Democrats are deeply worried about Biden's declining stamina and his ability to defeat Trump, according to congressional aides and others who have spoken with them, along with public comments of some lawmakers. The mood at a meeting of House Democrats on Tuesday at the Democratic National Committee's headquarters was described as "sad and frustrated" by a person familiar with the closed-door meeting who would only describe it anonymously. Senate Democrats held a similar gathering later in the day.

But for now, at least, Biden appears to have avoided the kind of mass public defections that would force his hand. He could face a new round of doubts if fresh polls show him sinking further or he stumbles during a public event like his planned news conference on Thursday. But the longer he buys time, the less likely it is he will leave the race.

Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, the New York Democrat and leading progressive voice, appeared to be reckoning with that reality late Monday as she tried to close the book with yet another sort of semi-endorsement that evaded the question of whether he should remain in the race. "Joe Biden is our nominee. He is not leaving this race," she told reporters. "He is in this race and I support him."

Jim Manley, who spent decades in the Senate devising communication strate-

gies for Democratic leaders, said the reactions have surprised him, especially the unwillingness of many House Democrats to speak out when they normally rush for the cameras.

"The president feels correctly that time is his friend. Many members are unwilling to confront this. They're just stalling for time," he said.

But there's also a problem of collective action. Lawmakers such as Nadler and Sen. Mark Warner of Virginia stepped back from their calls for a new candidate after they failed to rally others.

"The president has probably benefited from the lack of a really organized opposition," said John Lawrence, who spent 38 years as a Democratic aide, eight of them as Pelosi's chief of staff.

But it's also not the nature of members of Congress, who tend to value their own reelection more than the presidency or even which party controls the House and Senate, said Lawrence, author of *Arc of Power: Inside Nancy Pelosi's Speakership, 2005-2010*. Going against an incumbent president, stirring chaos at the top of the ticket or shaking up an institution all cut against those goals, he said.

"Relatively few revolutions are launched by people in power," he said.

Republicans have been tested by Trump many more times than Democrats as their nominee has faced two impeachments, multiple indictments, a conviction, calls to suspend the Constitution and any number of startling statements that began before he became president in 2017.

"I don't want to compare thoughts about a candidate's age to not wanting to speak out about a candidate's racism or bigotry or lies or conspiracy mongering," Miller said. "The motivations come from the same place, which is political survival and not wanting to rock the boat." (Los Angeles Times/TNS)

Should Biden take a cognitive test?

This is what it would – and wouldn't – tell us

• By KAREN KAPLAN

It seemed like a sensible suggestion for assessing the capabilities of an 81-year-old man seeking voters' approval to remain in the White House until January 2029.

To reassure the American people, ABC's George Stephanopoulos asked President Joe Biden, would he be willing to take a cognitive test and share the results with the American people?

Biden demurred. In carrying out his duties as leader of the free world, he said, "I have a cognitive test every single day."

Though the president dismissed the suggestion, medical experts said the idea of having Biden – along with his 78-year-old challenger, former president Donald Trump – take some kind of cognitive exam had merit.

"Let's give it to both of them," said Dr. Louise Aronson, a geriatrician at UC San Francisco.

Kevin Duff, a neuropsychologist at the Oregon Health & Science University's Alzheimer's Disease Research Center, likened the proposal to the long-standing practice of asking presidential contenders to release their tax returns.

There would be several types of tests to choose from. A simple screening exam could involve just a handful of questions and be completed in minutes. An in-depth evaluation could take a full day.

When former White House physician Dr. Ronny Jackson evaluated Trump in 2018, he opted for the popular Montreal Cognitive Assessment, or MoCA Test. Over the course of about 15 minutes, patients are asked to recall a list of five words, draw a clock with its hands set to a particular time, do subtraction with double-digit numbers, and come up with the names of animals in a drawing, among other tasks. At the time, Trump scored a perfect 30 out of 30.

Whether long or short, a good test measures multiple "domains of cognition," Aronson said. There's short-term memory and long-term memory. There's the ability to communicate through both spoken and written language. There's attention, comprehension, judgment, reasoning, problem-solving, decision-making and more.

"If a person completely aces a test, that tells you something," said Dr. Laura Mosqueda, a professor of family medicine and geriatrics at USC's Keck School of Medicine. "And if they bomb a test, it tells you something."

A score that's somewhere in between can be trickier, experts say.

An abnormal result on a cognitive test doesn't necessarily mean that a patient has a true cognitive problem. In about 10% of cases, it can be chalked up to a side effect of medications, an infection, a thyroid problem, a vitamin deficiency, a mood disorder such as anxiety or depression, or something else that's reversible.

"The thing we see constantly as geriatricians are medication reactions," Aronson said. "I can't tell you how often we withdraw medications and then the person goes back to normal." Sometimes it's even simpler than that.

"I've seen people diagnosed with dementia who've actually had a hearing problem but didn't want to admit it," Mosqueda said. "They couldn't hear the questions and so they were giving weird answers."

SOME COGNITIVE changes are a normal part of the aging process. Thinking speed is a prime example.

"As we age, we will do things more slowly," Aronson said. That isn't necessarily a sign of cognitive impairment, she said, recalling a 101-year-old patient who missed only one point on a test but needed extra time

to complete it.

If a patient's cognitive problems persist, or if caregivers want to get a better handle on the subtleties of their condition, a more in-depth assessment may be in order.

The tasks are more challenging, Duff said. For instance, instead of seeing whether a patient can remember five words after five minutes, a neuropsychologist might give a patient 15 words and see how many they recall half an hour later.

On the MoCA Test, a score of 25 or lower is considered abnormal regardless of any other factors. With a more sensitive test, the results are compared with the performance of other people of the same age, educational background, career history and other characteristics, Duff said.

A person with Biden's background would probably perform well on a MoCA test even if his cognition has declined, experts agreed.

"In certain patients who are particularly verbal, they won't remember the word they want but they can work their way around it," Aronson said. In such cases, a normal score on the test "would not necessarily rule out cognitive impairment."

Duff said it would be like having an IndyCar driver who wants to compete in the Indianapolis 500 take the same behind-the-wheel test that the DMV uses for 16-year-olds.

"My concern is that a relatively easy test still doesn't mean you're up to the challenge of leading one of the most powerful countries in the world," he said.

This isn't an issue limited to presidential candidates. It may be appropriate to ask airline pilots, bus drivers, surgeons and other people with jobs that entail a high degree of responsibility to take cognitive tests as they get older, experts said.

"I think you can argue this is a job

where your brain should be working pretty well," Aronson said.

There is no expert consensus on whether to screen all older adults for cognitive impairment. The US Preventive Services Task Force weighed the issue in 2020 and determined there wasn't enough evidence to make a broad recommendation one way or the other.

One of the reasons for the hesitation is that screening tests aren't good enough, said Dr. Colleen Christmas, a geriatrician at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine.

"You're going to catch a lot of people who don't have issues, and you're going to miss a lot of people who do," she said.

There's also the fact that the aging process varies greatly from person to person.

"It's incredibly heterogeneous," Christmas said. "There's no way to say 80 equals old whereas 75 equals young."

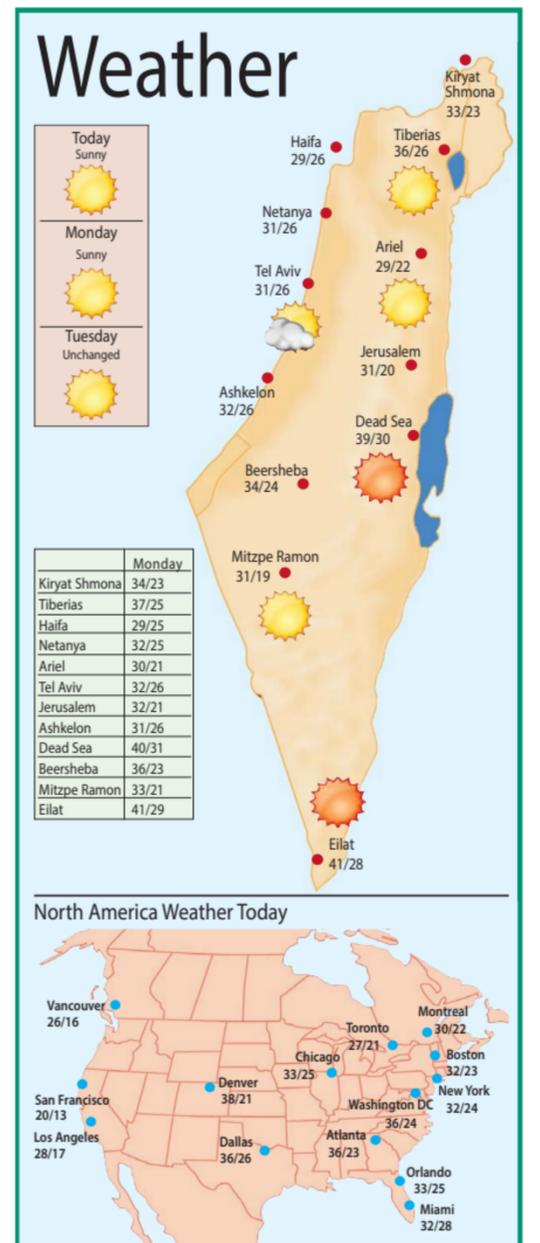
Besides, no test, no matter how sensitive, can provide a full picture of a patient's cognitive function. Doctors also need the results of blood tests, brain scans, and information from family members, among other things. If an MRI revealed evidence of several small strokes in parts of the brain that align with the patient's cognitive deficits, for example, it would suggest a diagnosis of vascular dementia.

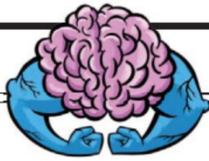
"It's like putting a puzzle together," Mosqueda said.

Biden may be in a unique position, but his bristling reaction to the idea of taking a cognitive test was pretty typical, Christmas said.

"I think people are so afraid of the diagnosis of dementia that it's upsetting to have your doctor or a family member suggest that you need cognitive testing," she said. "It's a really scary prospect."

(Los Angeles Times/TNS)





A FULL PAGE OF EXERCISE FOR THE BRAIN
EVERY SUNDAY AND WEDNESDAY

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS

- 1 Part of the healing process
- 5 Hiss source
- 9 Network, say
- 13 Giant automaton of Greek mythology
- 15 French pronoun
- 16 Number two
- 17 Lingo
- 18 Animal in the creation myth of the Achomawi people of Northern California
- 20 Hybrid pastries
- 22 Hazelnut
- 23 Range rovers?
- 24 Coastal birds
- 26 Stable diet
- 27 Revelation
- 29 Shepherder in a 1995 Oscar-nominated film
- 30 Yak
- 31 29-Across, for one
- 33 Sch. with the second-most NCAA team championships
- 34 One who spends a lot of time in cabs
- 39 Like a roller derby track
- 40 Cellular messenger
- 41 Letter abbr.
- 42 Shape-shifting prefix
- 43 Prevents an actor from getting a breakthrough role, perhaps

- 48 Demonstrate one's humanity
- 49 Pursued
- 51 Comedian Trevor
- 52 Turns the page?
- 54 Result of a successful collaboration
- 56 Conan O'Brien's first talk show
- 58 End
- 59 Avoids injury
- 60 Gin berry
- 61 Root used in perfumery
- 62 Wicker man, for one
- 63 Spree
- 64 Email folder

DOWN

- 1 Soup strainer, informally
- 2 "Dumb and Dumber" star
- 3 "An Inconvenient Truth" writer
- 4 Wasteful project
- 5 Reduce
- 6 Yale student
- 7 Completely on board
- 8 Flightless bird in "Up"
- 9 Low-__ diet
- 10 Shortcut, of sorts
- 11 Precious
- 12 Foo Fighters power ballad that was the theme song for the NBC sitcom "Ed"
- 14 R-V connection?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
13			14		15				16			
17					18				19			
20				21		22						
23				24		25				26		
27				28				29				
		30			31		32		33			
34	35	36			37			38				
39				40			41					
42					43		44			45	46	47
48				49	50				51			
52			53			54		55				
56						57			58			
59					60				61			
62					63					64		

- 19 Raised trains
- 21 Legal exam, familiarly
- 25 Do-overs
- 28 Tuba sound
- 29 Brady bunch, once
- 32 Like Midas
- 34 Labium inferius oris
- 35 Breakfast specification
- 36 David Attenborough, for one
- 37 Straighten out
- 38 Cousin's dad, casually
- 44 Nag
- 45 1957 Jimmy Dorsey hit
- 46 Takes over
- 47 Most reserved
- 49 "Marrakesh Express" band, for short
- 50 Raise
- 53 Football : juke :: hockey : __
- 55 Many a PX shopper
- 57 Residential community org.

SUDOKU

VERY EASY

		3		8		5	9	
8	9		2			4	3	
2	5			6				8
		7	8	9		2		
3			7					1
	2	4	1	3				
1		7				6	9	
	8	6		3		5	4	
4	2		1	8				

EASY

			8		4	9	5	
				6			7	
		2	9		6		1	
			4	9		5		
2			3	8			9	
	7			1	5			
3	8			9	2			
7			1					
4	1	5		2				

MEDIUM

		9	8			6		
				2	9			
3	2					9		5
	9		2	7				3
	7						6	
8			3	1			7	
7	1					5		6
			5	8				
	8				6	2		

HARD

	9	7						4	3
5				9					
	4			7		2			
	3		5			8			
		5				7			
		8			1		5		
		9		3		6			
				6					2
1	6						3	8	

WEDNESDAY'S HIDATO SOLUTION

	101	102	22	104	105	106	28	29	30	36	
100		21	103	23	24	27	107	31	35		37
98	99	20	17	16	25	26	108	34	32	40	38
95	97	136	19	18	15	14	110	109	33	39	41
96	94	135	92	116	114	13	112	111	9	42	43
133	134	93	91	115	117	113	12	10	8	45	44
132	130	129	89	90	124	118	11	120	7	46	47
131	87	88	128	125	68	123	119	121	6	50	48
84	85	86	127	126	69	67	122	5	55	49	51
82	83	72	71	70	64	65	66	4	56	54	52
81		79	73	76	63	62	59	57	3		53
	80	78	77	74	75	61	60	58	1	2	

SOLUTIONS

C	A	R	T		B	R	A	S		S	L	I	P						
A	G	U	A		B	O	C	A		A	I	R	E	S					
R	E	N	R	O	C	E	H	T		D	N	U	O	R	A				
A	L	L	O	W		E	A	U			N	I	L						
C	I	A			N	O	O	S	Y	A	D	E	M	O	S				
A	N	T			S	S	N			A	S	A	D	A					
S	E	E	N		L	I	P	S		L	P	N	S						
					E	M	O	C	O	T	T	E	Y						
					M	A	H	I		E	P	E	E		S	C	A	B	
					P	A	I	R	S		E	E	L		A	L	A		
					E	S	R	U	O	C	E	U	D	N	I	T	B	S	
					A	C	A			H	A	H			E	A	S	E	S
					B	A	C	K	T	O	T	H	E	F	U	T	U	R	E
					O	R	E	O	S		A	U	R	A		M	I	T	T
					A	S	I	A		T	H	A	N		S	T	A	T	

P	W		W	A	S		F		P						
D	E	L	E	T	E		P	U	R	P	L	E			
R	E		L				R	E	E						
P	I	N	K				F	R	E	E	D	M	A	N	
O							A	E	E					S	
A	D	J	O	U	R	N				G	R	E	E	N	
W			U			E	B			I				I	
W	H	I	T	E			B	O	Y	C	O	T	T		
U	B		H				T							R	
O	B	S	O	L	E	T	E			B	L	U	E		
E			U			M				A				L	I
O	R	A	N	G	E					C	H	O	O	S	E
T			D			N	A	H		T				M	

WORD-BUILDER

5551

T	D	S
E	B	

How many words of three or more letters, including plurals, can you make from the five letters, using each letter only once? No foreign words or words beginning with a capital are allowed. There's at least one five-letter word.

TODAY'S GOALS:
Good - 7 Excellent - 9 Amazing - 11

SOLUTION 5550: ewe, ewes, pee, pees, pew, pews, see, seep, sew, spew, sweep, wee, wees, weep, weeps.

QUICK CRYPTIC

	1		2		3		4		5		6	
7							8					
9					10							
11	12							13				
							14					
15			16				17			18		19
					20							
21									22		23	
24									25			
							26					

- Across**
- 3 Play a role (3)
 - 7 Sculptor's tool (6)
 - 8 Like some teas, remedies or medicine (6)
 - 9 Not a pro (4)
 - 10 Cosmetic applied with a pencil (8)
 - 11 What happened? (7)
 - 13 Founder of Zionism (5)
 - 15 "Little ___ Coupe" (1963 Beach Boys hit) (5)
 - 17 Region where Israel is (7)
 - 21 Latin American (8)
 - 22 "Our ___" (Spanky, Alfalfa, et al.) (4)
 - 24 Mama Cass's last name (6)
 - 25 Preference word (also, newscaster Dan) (6)
 - 26 Mass of grass (3)
- Down**
- 1 Montalban's "Star Trek" role (name screamed by Captain Kirk) (4)
 - 2 Souvenir shop purchase (1-5)
 - 3 High-school math subject (7)
 - 4 Dylan's "I ___ It All Away" (5)
 - 5 Appear, get there, show up (6)
 - 6 Aria passages (DAZE SCAN anagram) (8)
 - 9 ___ tray (butt stop) (3)
 - 12 Not fit for consumption (8)
 - 14 Strife, dissent, lack of harmony (7)
 - 16 Like some Egyptian churches (6)
 - 18 Number in a Verne title (6)
 - 19 Playground game (3)
 - 20 Fit to be untied (5)
 - 23 Nikita's refusal (4)

5x5

Insert the missing letters to complete ten words - five across the grid and five down.

5511

S	T	E	A	K
C	O	R	G	I
A	T	O	L	L
R	A	D	O	N
S	L	E	W	S

PREVIOUS SOLUTION (other combinations may occasionally be possible)

	E		K	
E		R		L
	D		R	
N		M		D
	W		N	

TELEVISION

PROGRAMS

KAN HD (Y/H11)

06:00 Morning News - Israel at War
07:00 This Morning - with Arieh Golan
08:00 Kalman Liberman
10:00 Daily Agenda - with Keren Neubach
12:00 Culture Agent - Yaniv Swissa
13:00 The Future is Here 2 - Episode 5
13:32 Fine Note 2 - Dori Ben-Ze'ev
14:03 Our Food Ambassadors 3 - Ezra Kedem
15:00 The World Today - with Yoav Zehavi
16:00 Game of Pockets - with Liel Klyzer
16:45 The Five O'Clock Edition - with Maya Rac
17:45 Through the Looking Glass - with Guy Zoh
17:58 Israel at War - Ayala Hasson
19:50 The Evening News - with Michal Rabinovich
20:55 Come Dine with Me 8 - Week North 1
21:25 UEFA Euro 2024 - Pre-Game Studio
22:00 UEFA Euro 2024 - Spain-England
23:55 UEFA Euro 2024 - Post-Game Studio

KESHET HD (Y/H12)

06:00 News Flash
06:10 The Morning Headlines
07:00 News Flash
07:08 The Morning News with Nir Raskin
09:30 News Flash
09:35 Special Broadcast - Nesli Barda
11:00 Feeling Great
11:40 Dancing with the Stars - The dramatic el
13:00 Special News Broadcast - Arad Nir
15:00 Today's edition - With Ofer Hadad
16:55 Five With Raffi Reshef
17:55 6:00 P.M with...
19:00 Special News Broadcast - Keren Macciano
19:55 Main Edition
21:30 Love is bigger than life - The Meeting A
23:10 Avri and Sherki

RESHET HD (Y/H13)

06:00 News Flash
06:05 Morning Fitness
06:17 This Morning with Omer and Rotem - Previ
07:00 This Morning - Omer Yardeni & Rotem Isra
09:30 News Flash
09:35 Starting the Day - Yarden and Elad
10:00 News Flash
10:05 Starting the Day - Yarden and Elad
11:00 News Flash
11:07 Starting the Day - Yarden and Elad
12:00 News Flash
12:05 Stethoscope - Episode 198
13:00 News Flash
13:05 Morning Fitness
13:16 The Tube - Guy Lerer
13:45 Vort - The Decision
14:00 News Flash
14:05 Vort - The Decision
15:00 News Flash
15:05 Vort - Episode 7
16:00 Showtime - Adi & Miki
16:58 Today's Talk - With Lucy Sharish
17:59 Almog at Six
18:59 War Zone - Raviv Druker
19:55 The Main News Edition
21:15 Blackspace 2 - You Ruined Everything
22:34 The Tube - Guy Lerer
23:05 The Past Day - With Tal Berman
23:45 New Love - Yuval and Nir's Crisis

HOT CHANNEL 3 (H3)

08:15 The Good Fight 3
09:08 Love Me 2
09:53 The Lovers
10:28 The Hostage
11:14 A Million Little Things 3
11:57 Love Me 2
12:42 The Lovers
13:07 Northern Exposure 6
14:03 The Good Fight 3
14:56 Days of Our Lives
15:35 The Young and the Restless, Yr. 46
16:13 The Bold and the Beautiful (2 eps)
17:00 Days of Our Lives
17:40 The Young and the Restless, Yr. 46
18:22 A Million Little Things 3
19:07 The Hostage
19:54 The Lovers
20:30 Blinded
21:14 A Million Little Things 3
22:00 Indul
22:45 Northern Exposure 6
23:34 Blinded
00:23 The Good Fight 3

HOT ISRAELI ENTERTAINMENT

06:00 Renewal of Broadcasts at 08:00
08:00 My Sister Jackie 3
08:23 Spin
08:47 The Sade Family
09:12 The Champ
09:48 Love Is Just around the Corner Season 2
10:21 The Game of Life
11:06 Psych Talk
11:37 The Sade Family
12:02 Refaeliz 2
12:35 Spin
13:15 Multiple 2
13:25 Multiple 2
13:53 The Champ
14:28 Love Is Just around the Corner Season 2
15:02 The Game of Life
15:47 Refaeliz 2
16:18 Spin
16:45 The Champ
17:20 Love Is Just around the Corner Season 2
17:55 The Game of Life
18:41 The Sade Family
19:07 Refaeliz 2
19:35 Spin
20:00 The Champ
20:37 Love Is Just around the Corner Season 2
21:10 The Game of Life
21:59 Desert Rose
22:22 Spin
22:48 Refaeliz 2
23:17 The Champ
23:56 Love Is Just around the Corner Season 2
00:29 The Game of Life
01:18 Spin
01:41 Desert Rose
02:37 Psych Talk
02:34 Psych Talk
03:05 The Sade Family
03:28 My Sister Jackie 3
03:52 Renewal of Broadcasts at 08:00

HOT HBO (H4)

07:20 My Brilliant Friend 2
08:20 Munich Games
09:08 Ten Percent
09:59 The Thief, His Wife and the

10:50 Bad Behaviour
11:49 My Brilliant Friend 2
12:49 Munich Games
13:37 Ten Percent
14:28 The Thief, His Wife and the Canoe
15:17 Bad Behaviour
16:14 Munich Games
16:58 The Night of
18:15 Fargo 5
19:12 Bad Behaviour
20:11 Wreck 2
21:00 My Brilliant Friend 2
22:00 Fantasma
22:33 Dear Vivi
23:20 Industry
00:12 Fantasma
00:41 Dear Vivi

HOT ZONE (H5)

07:11 FBI: Most Wanted 4
07:54 Law & Order: SVU 25
08:36 FBI: Most Wanted 4
09:18 The Rookie 3
10:01 Law & Order 22
10:42 Fire Country
11:25 S.W.A.T 7
12:07 Law & Order: SVU 25
12:49 FBI: Most Wanted 4
13:32 Chicago PD 7
14:14 FBI 5
14:56 The Rookie 3
15:39 Fire Country
16:22 Law & Order: SVU 25
17:04 Law & Order 22
17:45 FBI: Most Wanted 4
18:27 S.W.A.T 7
19:10 S.W.A.T 7
19:52 The Rookie 3
20:35 Fire Country
21:18 Law & Order: SVU 25
22:00 FBI 5
22:41 Law & Order 23
23:23 FBI: Most Wanted 4

YES TV DRAMA

06:00 Malkat Hayofi Shel Jerusalem
06:39 Grey's Anatomy 19
07:31 Station 19 6
08:21 Nancy Drew 4
09:10 Resort, The
09:49 Yes Man 2
10:27 Yes Man 2
10:57 Malkat Hayofi Shel Jerusalem
19:15 The Bold And The Beautiful 2020-2021
19:40 The Young And The Restless 49
17:13 The Resort
17:52 Nancy Drew 4
18:37 Malkat Hayofi Shel Jerusalem
19:15 The Bold And The Beautiful 2020-2021
19:40 The Young And The Restless 49
20:22 American Ninja Warrior 15
21:12 The Traitors
22:07 The Bachelorette 20
23:32 Fboy Island 3
00:42 The Idol (Hbo)
01:35 Rupaul's Drag Race: Uk 4
02:50 The Flatshare

YES TV ACTION

06:00 Law & Order: Organized Crime 2
06:45 Law & Order: Organized Crime 3
07:30 Resident Alien
08:15 The Ark
09:00 The Turkish Detective
09:55 Chicago Fire 9
10:40 The Equalizer 9
11:25 The Equalizer 9
12:10 Law & Order: Organized Crime 2
12:55 Law & Order: Organized Crime 3
13:40 Resident Alien
14:25 Resident Alien
15:10 Chicago Fire 9
15:55 Chicago Fire 9
16:40 Ncis: La 8
17:25 Ncis: La 8
18:10 The Turkish Detective
19:05 The Equalizer 9
19:50 The Equalizer 9
20:35 Law & Order: Organized Crime 3
21:18 Law & Order: Organized Crime 3
22:00 Ncis 21
22:45 Di Ray 2
23:33 Kvod 2
00:30 City On A Hill 3
01:30 House Of The Dragon 2
02:30 Irvin Welsh's Crime 2

YES TV COMEDY

06:11 Hot In Cleveland 3
06:36 The Neighborhood 5
07:01 The Neighborhood 5
07:26 Young & Hungry 3
07:51 Young & Hungry 3
08:16 Grown-ish 5
08:41 Grown-ish 5
09:16 The Goldbergs 10
09:30 The Goldbergs 10
09:55 The Goldbergs 10
10:20 The Simpsons 34
10:45 The Simpsons 34
11:10 The Simpsons 34
11:35 Knuckles
12:10 Animal Control 2
12:35 Colin From Accounts 2
13:05 Hot In Cleveland 3
13:30 Hot In Cleveland 3
13:55 Hot In Cleveland 3
14:20 The Nanny 3
14:45 The Nanny 3
15:10 The Nanny 4
15:35 The Office 2
16:00 The Office 2
16:25 The Office 2
16:50 Friends 9
17:15 Friends 9
17:40 Friends 9
18:05 Knuckles
18:40 Animal Control 2
19:05 Colin From Accounts 2
19:35 Schitt's Creek 3
20:00 Schitt's Creek 3
20:25 Married With Children 10
20:50 Married With Children 10
21:15 How I Met Your Mother 5
21:40 How I Met Your Mother 5
22:05 Young Sheldon 6
22:25 Young Sheldon 6
22:45 Friends 1
23:10 Friends 1
23:35 Married With Children 10
00:06 Animal Control 2
00:31 Colin From Accounts 2
01:01 Killing It
01:31 Fantasma

MIDDLE EAST TV (Y109/H150)

11:00 Kingdom Live Church
12:00 Show Me Your Glory
12:30 Joel Osteen
13:00 Real Life with Jack Hibbs
13:30 Life More Abundantly
14:00 Touched by an Angel
15:00 The Rifleman
15:00 The Rifleman
16:00 The Rifleman
17:00 The Faithful Galileans
17:30 The Jewish Voice
18:00 Discovering The Jewish Jesus
18:30 It's Supernatural
19:00 Jesus on Trial
19:30 David Jeremiah
20:00 Pinnacle Peak Pictures
21:30 One America News Network
22:00 It's Supernatural

22:30 Israel Daily
23:00 Wonders Without Numbers
23:00 David Rives
00:00 ILTV Weekly Review
00:30 The Rifleman
01:00 The Rifleman

HISTORY (Y37/H43)

06:00 Unexplained With William Shatner 3 - 35
07:25 The Food That Built The World 5 - 7
08:09 The Toys That Built The World 2 - 7
08:51 Beyond Oak Island - 3 - 1
09:33 Box For Life
10:37 Pawn Stars Do America 2 - 13
11:58 The Bermuda Triangle: Into Cursed Waters
12:40 Unexplained With William Shatner 3 - 35
13:22 Ancient Aliens - 14 - 14
14:04 The Food That Built The World 5 - 5
14:46 The Toys That Built The World 2 - 5
15:30 The Curse Of Oak Island 11 - 19
16:12 Pawn Stars Do America 2 - 13
17:33 The Bermuda Triangle: Into Cursed Waters
18:15 History's Greatest Mysteries 5 - 8
18:57 The Curse Of Oak Island 11 - 23
19:39 The Food That Built The World 5 - 8
20:23 The Toys That Built The World 2 - 8
21:06 Beyond Oak Island - 3 - 3
21:48 Pawn Stars 4 - 21
22:30 American Pickers 20 - 1
23:10 The Bermuda Triangle: Into Cursed Waters
23:57 Ancient Aliens - 14 - 16
00:39 American Pickers 20 - 7
01:24 American Pickers 20 - 8
02:09 American Pickers 20 - 9
02:52 History's Greatest Heists With Pierce Br
03:34 History's Greatest Heists With Pierce Br
04:16 The Curse Of Oak Island 11 - 20
04:58 The Curse Of Oak Island 11 - 21

CLASSICA HD

06:28 Escaïca: Trois motets
06:43 Chopin: Fantaisie in F minor, Op. 49
07:00 Mozart: Piano Concerto No. 6, K 238
07:25 Prokofiev: Peter and the Wolf (Aslop)
07:53 Sonatas by Franz Ignaz Beck
08:38 Final: Nils Wandlerer
08:58 Pierre Boulez - A Life for Music
09:56 Semi-final I: Chopin and Mozart
10:28 Classica Spotlight
11:02 Josquin: Missa fortuna desperata
12:00 Hearing the Silence
13:08 Beethoven: Triple Concerto, Op. 56
13:46 Scriabin, Berg and Beethoven
14:30 Semi-finals: Schubert, Ullmann et al.
15:02 Mozart: Le Nozze di Figaro (2009)
18:16 Pianomania: Daniil Trifonov
20:06 Beethoven: Symphony No. 2 (Blumstedt)
20:45 Chopin: Polonaise-fantaisie, Op. 61
20:58 England, My England. Part 2
21:18 Classica Spotlight
22:00 Donizetti: L'elisir d'amore (2012)
00:48 Classica Spotlight
01:00 Handel: Agrippina (Ostman)
03:34 Riccardo Chailly Conducts Mendelssohn

EVERYTHING (Y8)

08:20 The Legend of the 81 Point Game Kobe Bryant spent his entire 20 year career with the L.A. Lakers. Earning his nickname, the "Black Mamba" was a predator on the court, shredding his opponents' defenses, and scoring up to 81 points in a single game. 2022.
09:35 Italy's World Cup Triumph - 1 In May 2006, right before the World Cup, Italian football was covered by a wave of corruption scandal. No one expected that in just two months the national team would become the world champion. 2022.
10:30 Italy's World Cup Triumph - 2 In May 2006, right before the World Cup, Italian football was covered by a wave of corruption scandal. No one expected that in just two months the national team would become the world champion. 2022.
11:20 Italy's World Cup Triumph - 3 In May 2006, right before the World Cup, Italian football was covered by a wave of corruption scandal. No one expected that in just two months the national team would become the world champion. 2022.
12:10 Italy's World Cup Triumph - 4 In May 2006, right before the World Cup, Italian football was covered by a wave of corruption scandal. No one expected that in just two months the national team would become the world champion. 2022.
13:05 Colin From Accounts 2
13:30 Hot In Cleveland 3
13:55 Hot In Cleveland 3
14:20 The Nanny 3
14:45 The Nanny 3
15:10 The Nanny 4
15:35 The Office 2
16:00 The Office 2
16:25 The Office 2
16:50 Friends 9
17:15 Friends 9
17:40 Friends 9
18:05 Knuckles
18:40 Animal Control 2
19:05 Colin From Accounts 2
19:35 Schitt's Creek 3
20:00 Schitt's Creek 3
20:25 Married With Children 10
20:50 Married With Children 10
21:15 How I Met Your Mother 5
21:40 How I Met Your Mother 5
22:05 Young Sheldon 6
22:25 Young Sheldon 6
22:45 Friends 1
23:10 Friends 1
23:35 Married With Children 10
00:06 Animal Control 2
00:31 Colin From Accounts 2
01:01 Killing It
01:31 Fantasma
11:00 Kingdom Live Church
12:00 Show Me Your Glory
12:30 Joel Osteen
13:00 Real Life with Jack Hibbs
13:30 Life More Abundantly
14:00 Touched by an Angel
15:00 The Rifleman
15:00 The Rifleman
16:00 The Rifleman
17:00 The Faithful Galileans
17:30 The Jewish Voice
18:00 Discovering The Jewish Jesus
18:30 It's Supernatural
19:00 Jesus on Trial
19:30 David Jeremiah
20:00 Pinnacle Peak Pictures
21:30 One America News Network
22:00 It's Supernatural

world No. 1 for four consecutive years, all the while battling intense bo443 Hysteria and self-doubt. Dir. B.Douglas. 2022.
22:00 Faye Renowned actress Faye Dunaway reflects on her life and candidly discusses the triumphs and challenges of her illustrious career. Dir. Laurent Bouzereau. 2023
23:15 2000 Running With Our Eyes Closed In his own words, renowned singer and songwriter Jason Isbell takes us on an unexpected journey through his musical evolution and creative process as he goes into the studio to record his new album "Reunions". 2023.

CHANNEL 8 (H8)

06:02 Air force during Yom Kippur
07:05 Nezinin
07:58 Strangest things 2
08:43 Hitler and the Reichstag fire
09:35 We'll never say goodbye
10:21 77:78, On the Map: Macca-bi TA
11:41 Air force during Yom Kippur
12:45 Strangest things 2
13:30 Hitler and the Reichstag fire
14:22 We'll never say goodbye
15:09 77:78, On the Map: Macca-bi TA
16:28 Air force during Yom Kippur
17:32 Hitler and the Reichstag fire
18:24 We'll never say goodbye
19:11 77:78, On the Map: Macca-bi TA
20:30 Strangest things 2
21:15 The Man Who Stole Einstein's Brain
22:10 Faye
23:45 Harvey Keitel: Unafraid Of The Dark
00:45 The Man Who Stole Einstein's Brain
03:15 Harvey Keitel: Unafraid Of The Dark

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC (Y41/H46)

06:20 Primal Survivor: Escape The Amazon - 3.
07:07 Primal Survivor: Escape The Amazon - 4.
07:54 Primal Survivor: Escape The Amazon - 5.
08:41 Drift on the Oceans: Deep Dive - 2. Treasure
09:28 Drift on the Oceans: Deep Dive - 3. Sunken
10:15 World's Greatest Train Journeys Above -
11:02 Rocky Mountain Railroad - 2. Bridge Over
11:49 Science of Stupid 7 - Episode 9
12:13 Science of Stupid 7 - Episode 10
12:57 Survive the Tribe - 4. Blood Wars
13:23 Survive the Tribe - 5. Eagle Assassins
14:09 Survive the Tribe - 6. Arctic Endurance
14:55 Car S.O.S. 9 - 2. Fiat X1-9
15:41 Car S.O.S. 9 - 3. VW Wizard
16:28 Car S.O.S. 9 - 4. Jensen Interceptor
17:14 Car S.O.S. 9 - 6. Rolls Royce 1929 Docto
18:00 The Incredible Dr. Pol 4 - 9. Santa Paws
18:45 The Incredible Dr. Pol 4 - 11. Theopper
19:30 Secret Beasts Unearthed - 5. Secrets of th
20:16 Running Wild: The Challenge 2 - 6. Rita
21:00 Gordon Ramsay: Uncharted: Season 4 - 1.
21:44 Primal Survivor: Extreme African Safari
22:31 Ultimate Survival WWII - 6. Desert Island
23:17 Running Wild: The Challenge 2 - 6. Rita
00:05 Rocky Mountain Railroad - 2. Bridge Over
00:51 Inside: 21st Century Warship

MEZZO FULL (H195)

10:10 InterMezzo A selection of short musical clips and artmusic - enjoy a variety of genres from jazz to Classical music.
11:00 Sun Ra Arkestra - Lugano Jazz Festival Sun Ra Arkestra performs at Lugano Jazz Festival, 1985.
11:46 Manu Dibango - Lugano Jazz Festival Manu Dibango accompanied by Michael Alido, Jean Pierre Cocco, Elo Longue, Maria Lovensosse, Valerie Lobe, Michel Malencani, Adriam Rabenga, Florance Titti, Brice Wonassi, Hetti Sina. Lugano, 1983.
12:56 Jack DeJohnette - Lugano Jazz Festival Jack DeJohnette (Band leader, drums), Howard Johnson (Saxophone), Greg Osby (Saxophone), John Purcell (Saxophone), and Rufus Reid (Double bass) perform at Estival Jazz, Lugano, Switzerland, 1985.
13:47 InterMezzo A selection of short musical clips and artmusic - enjoy a variety of genres from jazz to Classical music.
14:30 Agents are Forever The Danish National Symphony Orchestra and Caroline Henderson (vocals) led by Hans Ek perform spy and detective film soundtracks, and the very best of James Bond film music. 2020.
15:54 Helene Grimaud: Woodlands and Beyond The concert project of the French pianist Helene Grimaud and her life partner, the German photographer Mat Hennek, leads into the field of tension between music and photography. 2017
16:53 Debussy: La Mer Debussy: La Mer. Orchestre dell'Accademia di Santa Cecilia, Leonard Bernstein (conductor) (Auditorio Pio, Rome, 1988)
17:23 InterMezzo A selection of short musical clips and artmusic - enjoy a variety of genres from jazz to Classical music.
18:20 Bloch, Piemontesi: Mozart, Schumann Orchestre nationale de Lille and Francesco Piemontesi (piano) led by Alexandre Bloch perform Mozart's Don Giovanni, Overture, and Schumann's Piano Concerto in A minor op. 54. Lille, 2022.
19:05 Puccini: Madama Butterfly - Green Opera in 3 acts. GNO Orchestra & Chorus led by Vassilis Christopoulos. Cella Costea (Cio-San), Andrea Care (B.F. Pinkerton), Alisa Kolosova (Suzuki), Dionysios Sourbis (Sharpless). Athens, 2023.
21:30 Yoav Levanon: Schumann, Rachmaninoff Yoav Levanon (piano) performs Clara Schumann's Variations on a theme by Robert Schumann Op. 20, Robert Schumann's Etudes symphoniques, Sergei Rachmaninoff's Etudes-tableaux Op. 39, 2023.
23:05 Kent Nagano: Getty, Rachmaninoff Rachmaninoff International Orchestra, Mikhail Pletnev (piano), Alexandra Armantrading (soprano), Lester Lynch (baritone) led by Kent Nagano perform works by Gordon Getty and Sergei Rachmaninoff. 2023.
00:10 Bernard Haitink - It Comes My Way Documentary. Together with Hans Hafmans - a Dutch radio and TV presenter, conductor

Bernard Haitink is reflecting on his long career. An interview interwoven with unique archival footage. 2019.
01:00 Bernard Haitink: Mahler's 3rd - Berlin Classics. Berliner Philharmoniker; Bernard Haitink (conductor); Mahler's symphony no. 3, in D minor. With: Florence Quivar (alto), Tolzer Knabenchor, Ernst Senff Chor, Philharmonie, Berlin, 1992
02:47 InterMezzo A selection of short musical clips and artmusic - enjoy a variety of genres from jazz to Classical music.
04:00 Berlioz's La Damnation de Faust Opera in 4 acts. MonteCarlo Opera Chorus; Rainier II Music Academy Children's Chorus, and Monte-Carlo Philharmonic Orchestra led by Kazuki Yamada. Au de Extremo (Marguerite), Pene Pati (Faust). 2022.

MOVIES

HOT CINEMA 1 (H16)

06:37 Miss You Already Drama. Two old friends keep in touch in spite of their differences. Their relationship is put to the test, however, when one of them contracts cancer. With Drew Barrymore (2015)
08:29 State of Play A team of investigative reporters work alongside the FBI director to try to solve the murder of a congressman's mistress. Cast: Russell Crowe, Ben Affleck (2009)
10:35 Conan A remake to the successful film about Conan, a legendary warrior who seeks revenge on a barbaric leader that has destroyed his village. Cast: Ron Perlman. Dir: Marcus Nispel. (USA, 2011)
12:27 Prizefighter: The Life of Jem Belcher At the turn of the 19th century, Pugilism was the sport of kings and a young boxer fought his way to becoming champion of England. Cast: Matt Hookings, Russell Crowe. Dir: Daniel Graham (UK, 2022).
14:14 The Book of Eli In a post-apocalyptic society, a drifter named Eli fights his way across America in order to protect a sacred book. Cast: Denzel Washington, Gary Oldman. Dir: The Hughes Brothers (US, 2010). Sub:Ar
16:11 The Jackal Action. An infamous terrorist nicknamed The Jackal is hired to kill the FBI director. Only a former IRA member can identify him. Cast: Richard Gere, Bruce Willis. Dir: Michael Caton-Jones (USA, 1997).
18:15 Pele Pele's meteoric rise from the slums of Sao Paulo to leading Brazil to its first World Cup victory. Cast: Vincent D'Onofrio, Adriano Aragon. Dir.: Jeff Zimbalist (USA, 2016).
20:02 The Monuments Men Drama. At the end of WW II, a special platoon is sent to locate and rescue art masterpieces stolen by Nazis thieves. With George Clooney, Matt Damon (2014)
22:00 Water for Elephants Set in the 1930s, this romantic drama depicts the story of a veterinary student who joins a circus and falls for a married circus performer. With Robert Pattinson, Reese Witherspoon (2011)
23:59 Neighbors 2: Sorority Rising Comedy. The problems of a young family are far from over when their new neighbors turn out to be a party-loving sorority. With Seth Rogen, Rose Byrne (2016)

01:33 End of Watch Thr

A life to celebrate in music

Late Holocaust survivor Marta Wise gets a worthy musical tribute

• By BARRY DAVIS

Delving into “what if” scenarios is, I suppose, a fundamentally pointless exercise. But, when somebody somehow gets through one life-threatening scrape after another to live a long life, one is entitled to consider the alternative denouements.

That Marta Wise (née Weiss) and the vast majority of her close relatives survived the Holocaust, is nothing short of miraculous. But survive she did, thereafter emigrating from her native Bratislava, Slovakia, to Australia, with her family in 1948. She married Harold Wise, an Englishman, had three daughters and, eventually, numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren, making aliyah in 1998. Her daughter, Michelle Shir, says there is much to celebrate in Marta's life to which the next slot in the *Into The Light* concert series is dedicated.

The event takes place at the Tel Aviv Museum on July 15 (8 p.m.), under the aegis of the Spectacular World of Jewish Music (SWJM) nonprofit established by Yaakov Fisher. The concert proffers an impressive roster of works, including scores by the likes of Jewish Dutch composer Henriëtte Bosmans, Galicia-born French composer Norbert Glanzberg whose varied oeuvre incorporates songs he wrote for French diva Edith Piaf, who helped protect him from the occupying Nazis forces. And there are charts by Jewish Italian composer and pianist Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Jewish Turkish composer and ethnomusicologist Alberto Hemsi, who specialized in Ladino music, and non-Jewish Hungarian composer Ernst von Dohnányi who actively opposed the Nazis.

Over the years SWJM has staged numerous concerts, predominantly in Jerusalem and also in Tel Aviv, with the expressed aim of unveiling the fruits of Jewish composers murdered during the Holocaust, and other who suffered but survived, and some were forced into exile. Much of this vast rich body of work was lost to the world for decades and, particularly since Fisher stepped into the scene, more and more scores have been unearthed in archives around the world and are being presented to audiences of people of all ages and cultural backgrounds.

The July 15 date, which goes by the apt header of *Memories of a Lost World*, sees Nir Cohen-Shalit once again take the conductor's podium, on this occasion to preside over the Israel Camerata Jerusalem. There



CELEBRATED PIANIST Ofra Yitzhaki will be featured at the tribute to Marta Wise at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art on Monday. (Miri Davidovitz)

is also a heavyweight soloist cast lined up, including celebrated pianist Ofra Yitzhaki and mezzo-soprano vocalist Reut Ventorero, with actor Eli Gornstein serving as MC and enlightening the patrons about the historical and musical backdrop to the event.

Australian-born Shir will also be on hand to share some of her mother's extraordinary life story with the audience, in English. “My mother was a survivor,” she says. “That encourages me. She was an incredible mother and an incredible person.”

THE ODDS against Marta surviving were well and truly stacked. Among her many close shaves with death there was the choice she made not to join a group of children who were due to sail to Palestine in 1944. She preferred to return home to Bratislava after spending two years in Hungary with distant relatives. That hideaway was curtailed when the Germans

invaded Hungary. The boat that left for Palestine sank en route. There were no survivors.

Eventually, Marta and her sister Eva, three years her senior, were betrayed and deported initially to the Séréd transit camp and, a few weeks later, to the Auschwitz-II-Birkenau death camp. There, too, it seemed that Marta's fate was sealed when she was directed to the group of Jews who were to be gassed on arrival while Eva, older and presumably thought by the Nazis to be of more use, went to the other side. At that very moment, Soviet planes flew overhead and, in the ensuing panic, the two groups closed ranks and Marta was saved from the gas chambers.

As all the works featured in the concert were written in the 20th century, folks who prefer their music on the melodic side might be forgiven for having concerns over the user-friendliness of the repertoire. Cohen-Shalit says there is no little cause for alarm.

“There are some works that are a little more musically complex, but there is no avant-garde here and no advanced atonal music.”

But, of course, Monday's event is not just about the music. There is a life, a long life, to be marked and celebrated. “I don't know if Marta defined herself as feminist, but she was certainly an inspirational character and she went through a thing or two during her lifetime.”

With that in mind, the conductor, who also wrote arrangements for the two Glanzberg songs in the program, was keen to include women in the venture. “In addition to Reut [Ventorero] and Ofra [Yitzhaki] there is also material by a female composer,” Cohen-Shalit notes referencing Bosmans's “Three Lieder on German Texts” arranged by 20th-century Dutch composer Joep Straesser.

German-born Israel Prize laureate composer Paul Ben-Haim also contributed to the *Memories of a Lost World* performance, with Cohen-Shalit opting for his 1971 work “Rhapsody for piano and strings.” “Ben-Haim falls under the category of the composers and musicians who were persecuted by the Nazis,” he observes. “I think of our repertoire as comprising cycles with, for example, composers like Pavel Haas who was murdered in the Holocaust, and wrote the work we play [“Study for Strings”] in Terezin [concentration camp in Czechoslovakia] that lies at the heart of our repertoire.”

The lineup is also quite variegated, arcing from German-language lieder through to Hemsi's Ladino-based “Four Songs from Coplas Sefardies,” op. 34, arranged by 74-year-old Menachem Wiesenberg. It is a multi-layered program that befits the cultural mosaic that is the state of Israel.

Marta, no doubt, would have enjoyed the salute. “In the videos she made my mum talked about her belief in God, which I think is incredible,” Shir says. “And she expressed her pride in being Jewish.”

Marta also felt a strong bond with Zionism, and her family. “My parents would have come on aliyah much earlier but she was completely devoted to her parents [in Australia]. So she only came here after they passed away. We got our education from somewhere,” Shir chuckles.

No doubt the Tel Aviv Museum audience will learn a thing or two on Monday too.

For tickets and more information: *6119 and www.GoShow.co.il

Mayim Bialik producing movie about Yeshiva U basketball's historic 50-game winning streak

• By JACOB GURVIS/JTA

From 2019 to 2021, the Yeshiva University men's basketball team embarked on a 50-game win streak – vaulting to the top of the NCAA's national Division III rankings and enrapturing Jewish fans across the country.

Now, the Y.U. Maccabees' historic run is headed to the big screen, courtesy of Mayim Bialik, the Jewish actress and former *Jeopardy!* host.

The Maccabees, a film by Bialik's Sad Clown Productions, will spotlight the team's coach, Elliot Steinmetz, a lawyer who has coached the team since 2014, according to entertainment industry site Deadline. It will focus on players' dedication to Judaism as they embarked on the streak.

In a statement to Deadline, Bialik spoke of announcing the film in what “has certainly been a complicated year,” adding that “what remains true is that stories of Jewish ingenuity, perseverance, and resilience are necessary more than ever.”

The film's writer, Matt Ritter, said he hopes *The Maccabees* dispels negative perceptions of Jews at a time of rising antisemitism.

“I too have been troubled by the barrage of antisemitism in the world and one thing that has always bothered me was the negative portrayals and stereotypes,” he wrote on Instagram. “It feels like we're either Holocaust victim or Schlub. Well this team of exceptional athletes and winners at Yeshiva University did something really special. They went on an epic winning streak led by a Coach who shares my determination to prove Jews can be whatever we want: including great athletes.”



MAYIM BIALIK attends a celebration for Jewish American Heritage Month at the White House last year. (Evelyn Hockstein/Reuters)

Steinmetz told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency he is aware of the project but is not heavily involved, and declined to comment further.

At the time, Y.U.'s streak was the longest active winning streak in men's college basketball, and garnered significant national attention for the flagship Modern Orthodox university.

Ryan Turell, a guard and the star of the team, went on to play two seasons with the Motor City Cruise, becoming the first Orthodox Jew in the NBA's minor league, called the G League. He is now headed to play professionally in Israel's top basketball league. Turell was also featured in an Amazon Prime documentary last year about the G League.

Mike Myers, Eddie Murphy, and Cameron Diaz to return for 'Shrek 5'

• By MALIA MENDEZ

Shrek is coming back to the big screen – really, really.

DreamWorks Animation announced Tuesday that a fifth installment in the *Shrek* franchise would arrive in theaters next summer, just in time for the 25th anniversary of the first *Shrek* film.

“Not too Far, Far Away... @Shrek 5 is coming to theaters on July 1, 2026,” the animation studio wrote in an X post. The announcement also confirmed that Mike Myers, Eddie Murphy, and Cameron Diaz would reprise their roles as the franchise's eponymous ogre, his plucky wife, Princess Fiona, and his partner-in-tomfoolery, Donkey.

Shrek 5 will be directed by Walt Dohrn, who served as a writer and artist on *Shrek 2* and *Shrek the Third* and as head of story on *Shrek Forever After*, *Variety* reported. *Trolls* producer Gina Shay

and Illumination founder Chris Meledandri will co-produce, and Brad Ableson will co-direct. Plot details have yet to be disclosed.

The first *Shrek* film, which premiered in 2001, is based on writer and cartoonist William Steig's 1990 picture book by the same name and tells the story of an ogre who leaves his childhood swamp to see the world. The beloved fantasy comedy went on to become the first-ever winner of the Oscar for animated feature and grossed more than \$484 million worldwide, according to Box Office Mojo.

Murphy previously leaked the news about a fifth *Shrek* film in a June interview with *Collider*, telling the outlet that the project was set in motion “four or five months ago.”

“I recorded the first act, and we'll be doing it this year. We'll finish it up,” Murphy said, also teasing a standalone film for his character, Donkey.

(Los Angeles Times/TNS)

Scarlett Johansson can't fully rescue space rom-com 'Fly Me to the Moon'

FILM REVIEW

• By MICHAEL PHILLIPS

In *Fly Me to the Moon*, a shiny, tinny hunk of speculative fiction with a lunar dust sprinkling of fact, Channing Tatum plays the NASA launch director in charge of the 1969 Apollo 11 mission. But it's Scarlett Johansson, as the Madison Avenue wizard selling that mission to the American public, who emerges as this movie's real launch director.

She has an ear for this stuff, and this *Mad Man*-adjacent era – the brio and energy, an easy facility with dialects (her character's a born deceiver) and an instinct for navigating the story's whiplash transitions from screwball to pathos to patter to angst to aggressively chaste romance. In theory, Tatum is along for the ride to provide the “va” in conjunction with Johansson's “voom.” But he seems lost here, and in any case is not really your man for quippy, fast-moving banter of any quality. The stars' chemistry feels tentative to the point of the opposite of liftoff: driftoff.

Miraculously, Johansson salvages whole flaming chunks of director Greg Berlanti's rom-com/political conspiracy/faked-moon-landing hybrid. Going for laughs one minute, solemn heartbreak the next, it's a movie about advertising and the ethical limits of deceiving the public in the name of space-racing against the Russians.

Fly Me to the Moon is also a movie about the narrative limits of cramming six movies into one, and the challenge of selling a luxe period romance (production budget: a reported \$100 million, much of it going to star salaries) without blatant deception regarding what *Fly Me to the Moon* is, and isn't.

Here's the fact part. The real NASA, clouded by the 1967 test launch fatalities incurred by the Apollo 1 disaster, turned around its public image and wavered political support with the help of public relations and marketing consultants. Screenwriter Rose Gilroy takes it from there, ginning up a push/pull attraction between Johansson's glamorous Kelly Jones and Tatum's straight-arrow Cole Davis. Jones more or less takes over the Apollo 11 project, in the weeks leading up to the summer '69 launch, with her aide-de-camp (Anna Garcia) in tow. Kelly has been recruited for the assignment by a shady



CHANNING TATUM and Scarlett Johansson in 'Fly Me to the Moon.' (Dan McFadden/Sony Pictures Entertainment/TNS)

government operator (Woody Harrelson) who is all too aware of her shady, blackmail-able past.

From there, the selling of Apollo 11 goes beyond marketing tie-ins (Tang, Omega watches, etc.) and into *Capricorn One* land. Doing her handler's bidding, Kelly is tasked with establishing a secret film set within the NASA facilities, where an artful pretend moon landing is prepared (without Cole's knowledge) under the direction of Kelly's temperamental gay cliché of an auteur (Jim Rash).

This complication puts the movie in a really tough bind, the tangling and untangling of which leads to at least 20 too many minutes. Ray Romano does nicely as Cole's right-hand NASA man, playing for sweet sincerity more than laughs. This is right alongside feline slapstick involving a presumably unlucky black cat running around the NASA facilities, to Cole's dismay.

Johansson sells all the disparate elements as well as possible, even the inevitable sour section of *Fly Me to the Moon* where Kelly must atone for her amorality. But the script never quite feels itself; it feels like contradictory impulses playing out in shuffle mode. And the scale of the movie does the putative romance no favors.

Is money the real enemy here? Maybe. When commercial entities as disparate as *The Fall Guy* (which I liked, for an hour), *Don't Look Up* (smug, shrill), and *Fly Me to the Moon* cost about \$100m. to make, it's because a significant percentage

of their budgets went to above-the-line movie star salaries. And suddenly you're talking about movies that should be a certain size becoming immense in terms of what they've gotta make to make any meaningful profit. (*Anyone But You*, meantime, made hay on a medium budget and only semi-expensive stars.)

Fly Me to the Moon director Berlanti and cinematographer Dariusz Wolski create a lush, spacious widescreen frame, with scads of extra room for the costly complement of visual effects. Meantime, weird little misjudgments undermine the visual quality of how the movie actually looks. Early on there's a sight gag, an explosion that sends Tatum hurtling through the air, that's too much of a jump scare to be funny. With all the convincing Apollo launch trickery, you'd think the effects teams could come up with better flames for a simple scene of a NASA test lab on fire. Also, what's with the mystery of the Tatum character's plastered-down hair? I checked, and there's not a real-life equivalent haircut in all of 1969-era America.

Ordinarily, one bum haircut doesn't merit mention in a movie review. But here the little things add up, and help explain why bigger things don't. When one of your stars periodically saves the movie's behind, while the other star can't get a characterization together or even breathe properly through a few lines of dialogue, what chance does the mission have, really?

(Chicago Tribune/TNS)*