



## 12 Palestenians killed in Israel

BY KARIN LAUB  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

**JERUSALEM** — Israeli troops battling several gunmen and thousands of rock-throwing Palestinians opened fire Saturday, killing 12 Palestinians in the bloodiest clashes in the West Bank and Gaza Strip since 1996. More than 500 Palestinians were injured, the Palestinian health minister said.

Among those killed was a 12-year-old boy who was caught in the cross fire. Cowering behind his father, he screamed in panic as shots hit a wall just inches above their heads. Seconds later, the boy was fatally shot in the abdomen.

The trigger for the violence was a visit by Israel's hard-line opposition leader, Ariel Sharon, last

week to a bitterly contested Jerusalem shrine sacred to Muslims and Jews. Sharon said he toured the compound to show Israel was in control there.

On Friday, six Palestinians were killed and close to 200 wounded in clashes in the walled compound. "The battle over Jerusalem has begun," said Bassem Naim, a Palestinian activist, as thousands of protesters chanting the Muslim battle cry "Allahu Akbar," or "God is Great," marched toward an Israeli army position.

Further dimming prospects for an Israeli-Palestinian peace treaty, the two sides traded angry accusations Saturday.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak spoke to Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat by phone late Sat-

urday. "The prime minister warned Arafat that he (Barak) will not let violence be a tool in the negotiations," Barak's office said in a statement.

Israel's army chief, Lt. Gen. Shaul Mofaz, said the Palestinian Authority did nothing to stop the violence, and that Palestinian police officers in some cases even participated in the clashes.

Palestinian peace negotiator Nabil Shaath called the deadly confrontations at the Jerusalem shrine a "premeditated massacre" by Israeli security forces, aimed at proving that Israel is sovereign there.

From the town of Jenin in the northern edge of the West Bank to Jerusalem's Mount of Olives and the dusty refugee camp of Khan Yunis at the end of the Gaza Strip, similar scenes were replayed over and over Saturday.

Palestinian youths hurled rocks, some twirling slingshots for a longer aim. Others stuffed gasoline-soaked rags into bottles and threw them at Israeli soldiers who fired rubber-coated steel pellets and live rounds from behind walls and jeeps.

Streets were littered with rocks, garbage bins were overturned and plumes of black smoke from burning tires rose into the sky. In Hebron, rioters running out of rocks had them ferried to the scene in taxis.

The Palestinian Authority, providing a list of names and ages, said 12 Palestinians were killed and four were brain dead as a result of army fire. The Palestinian health minister, Riad Zanoun, said 523 Palestinians were injured. The Israeli army said 11 soldiers were injured.

### NEWS BRIEFS

#### ■ Tropical storm gaining strength

**MIAMI (AP)** — Tropical Storm Keith promised to become a hurricane Saturday as it gained strength and moved west toward Mexico, forecasters said.

A hurricane watch — which may be stepped up to a warning as the storm progresses — remained in effect along the Yucatan peninsula's eastern shore, as far south as Belize, according to the National Hurricane Center in Miami.

At 5 a.m. EDT, Keith was centered about 165 miles south of Cozumel with top sustained winds of 70 mph. It was heading west-northwest at an increased clip of 7 mph. The threshold for a tropical storm to become a hurricane is 74 mph.

Keith was expected to maintain its path and pace through Saturday morning, then turn northwest, toward land, at nightfall.

#### ■ NHTSA looks into another Firestone tire brand

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has received more than 160 complaints about another Firestone brand of tires. They reportedly have been involved in accidents in which two people died and a dozen were injured. "The majority of the complaints occurred at highway speeds and allege a blowout, tread separation or other major failure," NHTSA said in its investigation report about the Steeltex R4S and AT light truck tires. Those tires are original equipment on Ford F250 and F350 pickups, the Ford Excursion, General Motors' Suburban and G Van, a commercial vehicle. Similar reports led Bridgestone/Firestone Inc. to issue its recall of 6.5 million Firestone ATX, ATX II and Wilderness AT tires last month.

#### ■ Friends stunned at gay student's beating death

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — People who knew Gallaudet University freshman Eric Franklin Plunkett say he had no enemies. That's why the beating death of Plunkett, 19, who was deaf, had cerebral palsy and was a leader of a gay campus group, is that much harder to accept. "The biggest question here now is, 'Why?'" Chester Virmig, Plunkett's mentor and a math teacher at the Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf, told the St. Paul Pioneer Press. Plunkett, of Burnsville, Minn., was found in his dormitory room Thursday night, according to police Cmdr. Jennifer Greene.

#### ■ Armstrong celebrates despite missing gold goal

**SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA (AP)** — Lance Armstrong won bronze, not gold. He'll celebrate anyway. Two days before he marks the fourth anniversary of his cancer diagnosis with his customary party, Armstrong finished third in the 33-mile Olympic time trial Saturday. The two-time Tour de France champion lost to Viacheslav Ekimov of Russia, who races with Armstrong on the U.S. Postal Service trade team. Ekimov won the gold with a time of 57 minutes, 40 seconds.

#### ■ Peter Gennaro, choreographer of 'Annie,' dies at 80

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Peter Gennaro, whose choreography for the 1977 musical "Annie" won him a Tony award and whose dance sequences and dancing entertained millions on Perry Como's "Kraft Music Hall" in the 1960s, has died at age 80. As a performer, Gennaro captivated the critics in shows like "Pajama Game" in 1954 and "Bells Are Ringing," with Judy Holliday, in 1956. As a choreographer he left his mark on musicals from "West Side Story" (1957).

## Tax break extension given to U.S. businesses

BY MARTIN CRUTSINGER  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

**WASHINGTON** — A last-minute agreement Saturday with the European Union gives the United States until Nov. 1 to replace a \$4 billion annual tax break for American companies that sell goods abroad, from giants Microsoft and Boeing to small businesses.

The Clinton administration was negotiating against a Sunday deadline for bringing U.S. tax laws into compliance with an adverse ruling from the World Trade Organization. The dispute involves the biggest case the United States has lost before the Geneva-based arbiter of world trade rules.

Congress now has until Nov. 1 to pass the legislation. The EU agreed not to impose any economic penalties until a WTO panel determines whether the new tax system complies with WTO rules.

A top Senate Republican, Finance Committee Chairman William Roth of Delaware, said he was hopeful Congress

would approve the legislation "in very short order."

At issue is a U.S. tax program that grants \$4.1 billion in annual tax breaks to 6,000 American companies which set up export subsidiaries in offshore tax havens such as the Virgin Islands and Barbados.

The WTO in February ruled that it was an illegal export subsidy.

"The United States and European Union today demonstrated a commitment to avoid escalating trans-Atlantic trade tensions and managing this WTO trade dispute responsibly," U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky said in a statement.

In a separate statement, Pascal Lamy, Europe's top trade negotiator, said, "Our priority is to resolve disputes, not exacerbate them."

Lamy, however, repeated the EU position that the legislation, which has passed the House, still would violate international trade laws.

## Abortion opponents want government to limit pill use

BY PAULINE JELINEK  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

**WASHINGTON** — Abortion opponents contended Sunday that the new abortion pill may be unsafe and raised the possibility of government action to limit its use.

Reform Party presidential candidate Patrick Buchanan called RU-486, the early-abortion method approved Thursday by the Food and Drug Administration for use in the United States, "a human pesticide."

As president, "I would use all the power of my office, including appointments at the FDA, to prevent its being put on the market," Buchanan said on NBC's "Meet the Press."

Green Party candidate Ralph Nader, also on NBC, countered that use of the drug is "up to the woman, not the government."

"This is a pill that's been shown to be safe in Europe for numerous years," Nader said. "And it's preferable to surgical procedure."

Sen. Tim Hutchinson, R-Ark., said on ABC's "This Week" that there are "a lot of questions" surrounding the safety of the pill — and that the outcome of next month's election will determine whether Congress has

enough votes next year to put limits on its use.

Eleanor Smeal, president of the Feminist Majority Foundation, also on ABC, said the drug had undergone "tremendous review" by the FDA.

"They can protest as much as they want," she said of abortion foes. "This is a safe, effective method."

One lawmaker, Rep. Tom Coburn, R-Okla., said after the FDA's decision that he would promote legislation calling for severe limits on which doctors could administer mifepristone, the pill's chemical name.

The Christian Coalition's Pat Robertson said on CBS's "Face the Nation" that the drug's approval was a "political ploy" by Democrats to corner Republican presidential nominee George W. Bush on the subject.

Bush, whose father's administration banned RU-486 imports in 1989, opposes abortion. Vice President Gore supports the pill option.

Robertson said the pill should be reviewed to determine if it's a "danger to women."

The pill blocks action of a hormone essential for maintaining pregnancy. It has been used by millions of European women since it was approved nearly a decade ago. Anti-abortion advocates have fought hard to keep the drug out of the United States since it first appeared in France.

## Truckers support Milosevic's opposition

BY KATRINA KRATOVA  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

**BELGRADE, YUGOSLAVIA** — Encouraged by cheering crowds, a convoy of 60 trucks blocked a key highway Sunday as opposition forces sought to gather support for a nationwide strike aimed at showing President Slobodan Milosevic he must relinquish power.

The trucks — taking part in a "dress rehearsal" for a series of full-scale blockades planned for Monday — were greeted by jubilant supporters as they passed through the opposition stronghold Cacak in central Yugoslavia. Some people tossed flowers as the trucks headed to an important highway linking Belgrade with southern Yugoslavia.

The truckers brandished banners and posters of Vojislav Kostunica, whom the opposition and Western leaders insist trounced Milosevic in Sept. 24 elections. Milosevic rejects the claims and says a run-off election is needed Oct. 8.

Smaller, traffic-snarl blockades were held at main intersections in the capital Belgrade. Drivers honked horns and pedestrians blew whistles and shook toy rattles — playing on a local expression for something broken beyond repair.

"No way are we going to settle for a run-off and that is now the law for everyone in this country," said Velimir Ilic, the mayor of Cacak, an industrial town of 80,000 people. Later Sunday, about 10,000 opposition supporters gathered at the main town square for a seventh consecutive night of anti-

ti-Milosevic rallies there.

"Our victory is as pure as a diamond," Ilic told the crowd. "Kostunica is the elected president and we must persist in our resistance." He called for a total blockade of the town Monday.

Opposition leader Milan Protic urged people to come out into the streets Monday, stay away from their jobs and keep their children away from school. Protic acknowledged that it would take time to build momentum among a public drained by years of conflict and economic misery.

Protic, the opposition candidate for Belgrade mayor, said the protest leaders would try to escalate the tempo systematically "until Milosevic realizes that he is no longer president."

In Washington, the National Security Council spokesman P.J. Crowley said the Milosevic opposition is "getting stronger."

"They are sending a strong message to Milosevic: 'Your time in office is over,'" he said.

But the cautious pace of the opposition's campaign raises questions about whether they will have the momentum to carry out their threats of bringing the entire country to a complete standstill.

Authorities in Yugoslavia's main republic, Serbia, warned students against joining the Monday strike, saying "events disrupting school activities" for political purposes "are illegal." Students in Nis and other cities walked out of class during protests last week.

Workers have also walked out in vital sectors: the largest coal mine, a key oil refinery, railway

lines. The strikes raised the prospect of power and fuel shortages. The independent Beta news agency said about 1,000 workers in another coal mine in Kostolac joined the strikes Sunday.

The government urged miners Sunday to return to work because a prolonged stoppage could effect electricity supplies since the country relies heavily on coal-fired power plants.

International pressure continued to build on Milosevic, who had rejected an offer of high-level mediation by close ally Russia.

The president of neighboring Romania, Emil Constantinescu, urged Milosevic to concede defeat and congratulated Kostunica for his "historic victory."

Opposition leaders, using figures from their poll watchers, claim Kostunica won the election with 51.34 percent to 36.22 percent for Milosevic. But the Federal Electoral Commission, in a tally criticized by the United States and other countries, says Kostunica fell short of the majority needed to avoid a runoff.

Even Russian President Vladimir Putin — one of Milosevic's last major allies — appeared to move toward the Western view that the Yugoslav leader was finished.

In Berlin, the German government said Putin and Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder spoke by telephone late Saturday and agreed that "Kostunica's election victory emphatically expresses the will of the Serbian people for a democratic change in Yugoslavia."

There was no comment from the Russians, and the foreign ministry Sunday repeated Moscow's position that Yugoslavs themselves should "decide for themselves" the outcome of the election.

Milosevic turned down an offer by Putin to send his foreign minister, Igor Ivanov, to Belgrade to meet with both sides. But two senior Russian diplomats — Vladimir Chizhov and Alexander Tolkach — arrived in Serbia late Saturday. The state Tanjug news agency reported Chizhov visited Kosovo on Sunday and was to have official meetings in Belgrade the following day.

Our victory is as pure as a diamond. Kostunica is the elected president and we must persist in our resistance.

Velimir Ilic

Mayor of Cacak, Yugoslavia

## Closing ceremonies of Olympics culminate with fireworks

BY MORT ROSENBLUM  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

**SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA** — Sydneysiders watched their beloved bridge spit red fire, as it foamed gold into the harbor below. Then, in a final blaze of luminous glory, the five Olympic rings exploded to blackness.

"Bring back the rings," screamed Malena Cordera, a law clerk who watched in rapt amazement Sunday night with a more than a million others. "I miss them already."

Across the water, real estate mogul Peter Kamper beamed with pride when Juan Antonio Samaranch pronounced Sydney 2000 the "best games ever." This time, he knew, the venerable Olympics czar was not exaggerating.

"I'm speechless," said Kamper, who is usually not. "In my wildest dreams I did not expect everything to go so well. People will go home, and they will remember us."

After seven years of preparation, Aussies had dazzled, charmed and — if medals are counted on a per capita basis — conquered a world that too often forgets about them.

"G'day," the introductory cliché, is widely replaced by the congratulatory: "Good on ya."

Tom and Louisa Shields, on a backpack honeymoon from San Francisco, came away as committed Oz lovers. "We were really impressed with everything," Tom said. "The people, the transport, the whole thing."

And the final flourish, an orgy of pyrotechnics that seemed to light up half the Southern Hemisphere, elevated them to gush mode.

"My God, you didn't know where to look," Louisa said. "Firework came from overhead, from the sides, from the tops of buildings."

She forgot to mention the streak of flame 1,000 feet up as an F-111 fighter bomber buzzed the harbor bridge trailing ignited fuel.

With every outsider's accolade, Australians seemed to lose more of the condition known here as "cultural cringe," a collective anxiety about what everyone else thinks about them.

"Australians now realize how good they can be, and this will inspire us in other areas," said Paul Vlagsma, a University of Sydney engineer. "As far as I'm concerned, the Olympics can go on forever."

But the games ended Sunday night, and newspaper headlines predicted psychologists would be overwhelmed with cases of post-rings letdown.

Traffic, miraculously free-flowing during the Olympics because so many Sydneysiders left town, will go back to its habitual snarl. Bar talk will be deprived of the butt of so many jokes: the Sydney organizing committee.

The games seemed to bring out the Aussies' best. Praise was heaped upon 47,000 volunteers who shepherded visitors, hauled supplies, solved

problems and, essentially, made the games happen.

Wry, irreverent wit pervaded the Aussie-style Olympics, making believers of the most cynical.

Each night at 11 p.m., Australia watched "The Dream," a sort of adults-only "Sports Night" with two commentators, Roy and HG, who reported on the day's action.

Their furry stuffed animal, Fatso the Wombat, eclipsed the three official cuddly mascots. Fatso was auctioned off for \$40,000.

After being turned away from the U.S. team's party venue, they giped at Yankee unfriendliness. In references to past games, they say "toilet" for Atlanta. New slang for visiting the men's room is "going to Atlanta."

Beneath the surface, there was bitterness and dispute. Ric Birch, who directed the smash-hit opening ceremony and the closing, announced he was moving to California with his American wife.