

This newsletter is a nonpolitical, informational and educational publication. Informing about news that does not always make the US headlines. We aim to educate about institutions, constitutions, organizations, history and other small things that makes Israel, Israel Shelanu - Our Israel.

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News

חדשות

Shabbat Start/End Jerusalem: 4:32 / 5:51 Tel Aviv: 4:52 / 5:53

The Energizer Bunny's new relative

Israel's government has endorsed an ambitious plan of a private entrepreneur to install the world's first electric car network here by 2011, with half a million recharging stations to crisscross the nation. The state will offer tax incentives to purchasers of the new cars. (Ynet)

Is Wimbeldon next?

Jonathan Erlich and Andy Ram won Israel's first Grand Slam doubles tennis title at the Australian Open last week. Ram and Erlich returned to a hero's welcome at Ben-Gurion Airport 2 days later. (Jerusalem Post)

Yad Vashem

The Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem on Thursday launched an Arabic version of its website, including vivid photos of Nazi atrocities and video of survivor testimony, to combat Holocaust denial in the Arab and Muslim world. Last year, Yad Vashem presented a similar version of its website in Persian, aimed at Iran. (AP/Ha'aretz)

How many and who?

According to the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies research team, the population of Jerusalem at the end of 2006 was 733,300, or 10% of the nation's population. 469,900 were Jewish, 239,800 Muslim, 12,400 Christian Arab, 2,600 non-Arab Christian and 8,500 unaffiliated. The 3.5% rate of unemployment in the city in 2006 was among the lowest in the country. (Jerusalem Post)

(Not So) Secret meeting

Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak secretly met last week with Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf, Israel's Channel 2 reported. The two met in Paris and discussed the Iranian nuclear threat and the situation in the Middle East. Musharraf reassured Barak that his country's nuclear weapons were well-secured and that there was no risk they would end up in the wrong hands. (Ynet)

We put you to work

Israel's unemployment rate dropped to 6.6% last November - a 10-year low - down from 8.1% in November 2006, the Central Bureau of Statistics reported. (Ynet)



Did you know?

הידעת?

Who was Moshe Sharett?

Moshe Sharett (1894-1965) First foreign minister and second prime minister of Israel. Born in Kherson, Ukraine, then part of the Russian Empire, Moshe Sharett emigrated to Palestine in 1908. His family was one of the founders of Tel Aviv. He was a member of the first graduating class of the Herzeliya Hebrew High School.

Sharett went to study law in Constantinople, but the university closed on the eve of World War I. He enlisted and served as an officer in the Turkish army. After the war he studied at the London School of Economics and upon his return in 1923 was appointed one of the editors of Davar, the newly established daily of the Trade Union Federation. In 1931 he began his career in Zionist and Israeli diplomacy by joining the Jewish Agency's political department. In 1933 he became the head of the Jewish Agency's political department.

He was noted for his moderate and cautious policy, calling for cooperation with the British Mandate. He was one of the leaders in the establishment of the Jewish Brigade in World War II. Sharett led the successful diplomatic effort in the historic United Nations General Assembly, which resulted in the 29 November 1947 Partition Resolution, giving the State of Israel international legitimacy. From 1948 to 1956 he was Israel's first foreign minister. Moshe Sharett succeeded Ben-Gurion when the latter retired to work in a Negev kibbutz. His time as prime minister (1953-1955) was a difficult time. His colleagues continued to consult Ben-Gurion and he was unable to control the Israel army under Moshe Dayan. Sharett yielded the premiership to Ben-Gurion in November 1955.

From 1960 to 1965 he was chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive. He was one of the most cultured Israeli leaders, fluent in seven languages, an excellent writer and orator. He published a number of works, including poems and a political diary.



Source: Encyclopedia of Judaism



ערי מקלט - Cities of Refuge

Rav Benjy Myers

In this week's parasha we learn many of the מצוות בין אדם לחברו—laws that are between one and his fellow.

One of the laws discussed in brief detail here, and in much greater detail at the end of the Book of Bemidbar, is the law governing the unintentional murderer.

One who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death. But one who did not stalk [him], but God brought [it] about into his hand, I will make a place for you to which he shall flee (Shmot 21:12-13).

Yehoshua set aside three cities on the western side of the Jordan after entering the Land. These were evenly dispersed in the north, center and south of the land and clearly signposted, to allow for quick and easy access for the murderer.

The cities on the eastern side of the Jordan are:

1. **Kedesh** in the Galilee, in the biblical portion of Naftali. Naftali was buried in this town. It was here that Barak gathered his troops and went off with Devora to fight Sisera and the Canaanite army.
2. **Shechem** in the biblical tribe of Ephraim, and was centrally located. This town has Jewish history coursing through its veins. Yosef is buried here, and Yerovam, the first king of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Established his capital city here.
3. **Hevron** is the third city chosen. It is located in the south, in the biblical portion of Yehuda. It is home to the Cave of Machpela, where the Patriarchs and Matriarchs are buried, and where King David established his capital for 7.5 years before moving it to Yerushalayim.

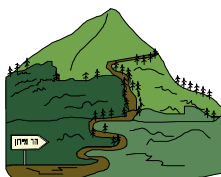
The three cities on the western side of the Jordan set aside by Moshe are **Betzer**, in the portion of Reuven, **Ramot** in the portion of Gad and **Golan** in the portion of Menashe.

...And speak of them

...וזכרתם בם

If you teach your children 2 facts a week for the next 120 years they will know 12,480 facts about Israel.

- Israel is approximately 290 miles in length and 85 miles in width at its widest point.
- Although small in size, Israel encompasses the varied topographical features of an entire continent.



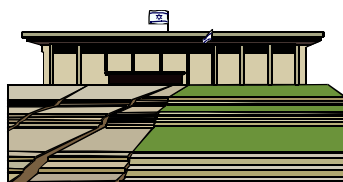
A good laugh

שמח ומבדח

Four years ago, my cousin ran for the Knesset."

"What's he do now?"

"Nothing. He got elected..."



There is nothing like synthetic aperture radar technology.

The TecSar reconnaissance satellite, developed by the Israel Aerospace Industries, was successfully launched Sunday (1/20) from India. Israel's most advanced satellite, TecSar has the ability to create images of objects on Earth day and night, even in cloudy weather, using synthetic aperture radar technology. Israel is one of the world's six superpowers in space, with three reconnaissance satellites as well as three communications satellites. (JPost & Ha'aretz)

Bright ladies

The education of Israeli Bedouin girls is going through an unprecedented and dramatic transformation. For the last decade, non-governmental organizations and Ben-Gurion University have coached bright girls in the skills they need to secure a university place and then offered them scholarships. In 2007, almost 250 Bedouin women were on degree or teacher-training courses. (Guardian-UK)

New stamp

The United Nations and Israel have jointly issued an International Holocaust Remembrance Day stamp. The stamp, designed by internationally known graphic artist Matias Delfino, will be sold for NIS 4.60 in Israel. The stamp was a joint project of the Israel Postal Company's Philatelic Service and the UN's philatelic service. The image is of two white-and-yellow flowers, the stems of which meld into barbed wire like that on the fences in concentration camps. The postal sheet, has a quote from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon relating to Iranian President Ahmadinejad, saying that "one can never allow the denial of historical facts, especially when it relates to such an important matter as the Holocaust. One can never permit a call for the destruction of a nation or a state." (Jerusalem Post)

On a more serious note

Israeli security forces thwarted an Islamic Jihad cell's plan to place a bomb on the railroad tracks leading from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem near the Palestinian village of Batir, according to information made public Thursday. The members of the cell were captured a month ago near Bethlehem. The investigation revealed that the suspects learned to make bombs via the Internet. (Ha'aretz)

What other country would do that? – Part I

More than 7,000 Palestinians were allowed to travel to hospitals in Israel and the West Bank in 2007 - an increase of 50% over 2006, the Gaza Coordination and Liaison Administration reported Sunday. Close to 8,000 more Palestinians were allowed to accompany them. (JPost)

What other country would do that? – Part II

The Jerusalem Center has launched infoelarab.org - a new Internet website in Arabic to provide Arab readers with highlights from articles published in the Western media dealing with Middle East and terrorism issues. Site editor is Zvi Mazel, former Israeli Ambassador to Egypt and Sweden. (Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs)

And the Oscar goes to.....

Israeli actor Sasson Gabai was named the 2007 European Film Academy's best actor for his role in the film "The Band's Visit". Eran Kolirin, the film's director won the year's European discovery award. (Ynet)