

Arafat's travel to be prevented from Gaza Strip to West Bank

# Rebels, Lebanese troops kill 12 Israeli soldiers

INSARIYEH, Lebanon, Sept 5: Guerrillas and Lebanese troops intercepted an Israeli commando raid deep inside Lebanon early Friday, killing at least twelve Israeli soldiers. Lebanese security officials said. reports AP.

One civilian also died and several Lebanese fighters were wounded in the confrontation, the officials said.

There was no immediate comment from Israel about its fatalities which, if confirmed, were believed to be Israel's highest death toll in a single confrontation in Lebanon more than a decade.

Israeli jet fighters, helicopter gunships and a gunboat joined the nighttime battle against Shiite Muslim guerrillas and Lebanese army troops, who apparently spotted the raiding party and thwarted a commando operation.

At daybreak, smoke from smoldering bushes in orange groves off the road just outside the village of Ansariyeh clouded the combat zone. Guerrillas collected abandoned military gear.

One of the guerrillas packed in a cardboard box a blackened military boot with the right leg, severed from below the knee, still stuck inside it.

A BMW sedan, its windows blown out by bullets and shrapnel rested on the side of the road, a 35-year-old woman dead on the back seat. Soldiers at the scene said the driver of the car, which was driving on the road at the time of the confrontation, survived with injuries.

The Israeli operation came hours after a triple suicide bombing in Jerusalem killed seven people, including the three bombers, and injured 200. The Palestinian militant group Hamas claimed responsibility.

The latest cycle of violence struck a new blow to Middle East peace efforts.

There had been hopes that next week's scheduled visit by US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright would revive the faltering peace process. The chief American diplomat said her trip to the Mideast would go ahead despite the Jerusalem attack.

It was not immediately clear what was the target for the helicopter-borne Israeli commandos. But Sheik Abdul-Amir Kabalan, deputy spiritual leader of Lebanon's 1.2 million Shiite Muslims, the country's largest sect, may have been a possible target. Beirut radio stations said the moderate cleric, who is influential with the pro-Syrian Amal militia, has a house in Ansariyeh, where the Israelis landed by helicopter during the night. It was not known whether he was there at the time.

Ansariyeh is on a hill just off the coastal highway, about halfway between the main southern port cities of Sidon and Tyre.

The combat zone was about 25 miles (40 kms) from an Israeli occupied border enclave in southern Lebanon and some 30 miles (45 kms) north of the Israeli border.

Israel reimposed a strict closure of the Palestinian territories following the bombing but senior Palestinian officials are usually allowed to pass through.

Last month, helicopter-borne Israeli commandos landed behind the front-line and set off bombs, killing three guerrilla commanders. More than 30 people, most of them Lebanese civilians, were killed in southern Lebanon in August in attacks and reprisals.

AFP adds: Israel will prevent Palestinian President Yasser Arafat from traveling from the Gaza Strip to the West Bank after the triple suicide bombing in Jerusalem on Thursday, Israeli public radio said.

Arafat was to have taken his helicopter from Gaza to the West Bank town of Ramallah to participate in a cabinet meeting today, the radio added.

The travel ban on the Palestinian leader is in retaliation for the suicide bombings in a busy pedestrian mall in Jerusalem that killed at least 30 people and injured 172.

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A Lebanese policeman inspects a car in which a Lebanese woman lies dead in Ansariyeh, where Israeli forces clashed with Lebanese guerrillas yesterday. Eleven Israeli soldiers were reported killed, 4 injured and one missing during a marine commando raid against guerrilla bases inside Lebanese territory.

— AFP/UNB photo

## Diana was a happy woman in the last weeks of her life

LONDON, Sept 5: In the last weeks of her life, Princess Diana was a happy woman, reports AP.

Her acrimonious 16-year marriage to Prince Charles was behind her. She was more confident about her public role.

Friends say she was deeply in love — and, according to one tabloid report, boyfriend Dodi Fayed had just spent tens of thousands on a custom-made diamond ring to prove it.

"I know that she was happy — happier than she had been in a long time," Carolyn Bartholemew, Diana's former roommate and the godmother to her son, Prince Harry, told The Sun newspaper.

The British princess and the Egyptian millionaire met at a polo match in Windsor 10 years ago. But their romance only began this summer as they cruised again and again in the sun-drenched Mediterranean, occasionally stopping in the haunts of the rich and famous.

Beatrice Flecha de Lima Nasr, who became of close friend of Diana's when her husband was Brazilian ambassador to Britain, told The Express she spoke to the princess Aug. 25, during her last vacation with Dodi.

"She said for the first time in years everything was going well for her and that her life was great. She couldn't wait to let her closest friends know," said Mrs. Nasr, who considered the princess to be like a sister. "The tragedy is that Diana was at last finding true happiness."

Debbie Frank, Diana's per-

sonal astrologer for the last eight years, wrote in The Sun that the princess phoned her Aug. 12 "breathless with excitement" as she headed off by helicopter with Dodi to visit clairvoyant Rita Rogers.

"I was so happy for her after all the years of emptiness," Frank said. "The power of her emotions was huge, and the power of her love matched them. Sadly, it was the public who fed her love, and in her private life she was often lonely. But with Dodi, all that changed."

Just before her final vacation with Dodi in Sardinia, Diana spent five days cruising the Greek islands with Rosa Monckton, president of Tiffany and Co and a close friend.

"She was relaxed and very happy and seemed to have found a sort of peace in her life," Ms Monckton said.

According to those who knew her, the princess had two different views of her future life.

Ms Monckton said Diana talked a lot about involving herself with more children's charities. The princess was godmother to Ms Monckton's two-year-old daughter, Domenica, who has Down's syndrome.

"I think she was feeling clearer about her public role. She was more confident. It had been a year since her divorce and she could see a way forward for her and for her sons," Ms Monckton said.

But Richard Kay, The Daily Mail's royal correspondent,



said Diana phoned him from Paris six hours before she died and said she planned to withdraw completely from her formal public life around November and live as a private person.

As someone who had been close to Diana for five years, Kay said he believed she meant it, and that Dodi was a significant factor in that decision.

At the Ritz, Dodi discovered that Saudi millionaire Hassan Yassin, his stepfather's brother, was a guest.

According to The Mirror, Dodi phoned Yassin just before he went to dinner with Diana.

"I said, 'You seem happy. This relationship with Diana has advanced very quick. You should declare it.' He said, 'It's serious. We're going to get married.' I told him, 'The sooner the better and he said, 'You'll hear it very soon,'" the paper quoted Yassin as saying.

Over dinner at the Ritz, The Sun said Dodi gave Diana the ring.

They were supposed to meet Yassin afterwards, but he told the paper that Dodi said to many photographers were around and suggested they meet Sunday.

Dodi and Diana left the Ritz in a Mercedes, pursued by paparazzi, and died after it crashed in a tunnel under the Seine. The diamond solitaire ring was found in the wreckage, according to The Sun.

"I think it was a very, very serious relationship," Yassin told The Daily Mail. "It was going to be a great adventure. But now it is all so tragic. This is the Romeo and Juliet of the 20th century."

According to The Sun, Dodi then went to see jeweler Alberto

## Picture agency didn't spare Di even at her last moment

HONG KONG, Sept 3: A Hong Kong-based magazine has reportedly offered to buy pictures of Princess Diana taken just after the car accident in Paris that killed her, her companion Dodi Al-Fayed and their driver, a report said today, says AFP.

The report published in the South China Morning Post said a small Paris-based picture agency has been reported trying to sell the photographs worldwide while doctors were still trying to save Diana following the crash on Sunday.

LS Presses Diffusion Director Laurent Sola told that English-Language newspaper that a Hong Kong magazine offered "any price he wanted" for the pictures on Wednesday.

Sola said he had sold the photos to a US magazine for 250,000 US dollars but stopped the sale when he heard Diana had died.

His assistant, Dominique Petit, told the post the Chinese-language oriental daily news had contacted them about buying pictures of Diana's last day, but not of the crash.

"There are no photos after the accident," Petit said, adding "we withdrew them when we learned of Diana's death."

Oriental Daily News could not be immediately contacted to confirm the report. Eastweek, a magazine published by oriental daily. Would not comment.

The Oriental Daily News was in response to a reporter's question during a tour of a new pedestrian street in Moscow.

At a time when we are thinking of ways to ban capital punishment they are doing this in the most outrageous public way," he added.

Chenchen staged its first public execution on Wednesday.

Atrocities during colonial rule of India

Hindu militant group asks queen to apologise

NEW DELHI, Sept 5: A militant Hindu group has asked queen Elizabeth II, who is to visit India in October, to apologise for the "wrongs committed by the British" during the Raj, the Asian Age said today, referring to a report in the newspaper.

The shelling occurred as the Nigerian-dominated West African peacekeeping force in the Liberian capital Monrovia said 11 of its troops were killed by an exploding mine Wednesday near Freetown's international airport, blaming it on the junta.

An AFP correspondent saw 31 bodies buried in a Freetown cemetery following the shelling. Other victims of the shelling, which hit a busy dockside marketplace, were brought to the city's mortuary as the funeral cortège left.

The army officers, who seized power in a May 25 coup, boosted security here Thursday, setting up anti-aircraft guns on the main road to state house and deploying soldiers armed with automatic weapons on the capital's streets.

Prayer meetings were held in

the streets of Freetown, the newspaper said.

It was the second criticism of

the Queen's proposed trip in two days.

On Wednesday, an Indian

nationalistic group warned the Queen not to visit India and accused her of trying to "bleed" New Delhi's economy.

The chairman of Russia's

State Duma (lower house of parliament) also condemned the public execution.

Villagers return

'black box' of

crashed Vietnam

Airlines jet

PHNOM PENH, Sept 5: A flight recorder believed to have been stolen by villagers from a crashed Vietnam Airlines plane was returned Friday following appeals on radio and television stations, reports AP.

Government spokesman

Khieu Kanharith said a peasant

family came forward with the

"black box" which may help

explain the cause of the

Wednesday crash that killed at least 65 people.

The instrument was appar-

ently "blown away" by the force

of the exploding Soviet-built

Tupolev 134 aircraft. Khieu

Kanharith said.

A family living near the

crash site, a stretch of rice paddies

about one kilometer (a half

mile) south of Pochentong

International Airport, recov-

ered the black box and brought

it to the TVK television station.

They were given a reward.

The station then made a

call to the authorities, and it is

now in our possession," Khieu

Kanharith said. "We are very

happy."

Vietnam Embassy officials

confirmed that a Vietnamese

boy, identified as Vu Hung

Thinh, about four, who was

shuttled between hospitals with

head injuries after the crash.

It was thought to be the second-

known survivor.

A one-year-old Thai boy,

Chanayuth Nim-Anong, also

emerged alive and returned

Thursday to Bangkok with his

father, who had been awaiting

the ill-fated plane when it

crashed. His mother was killed.

'Reagan strong in body, but losing memory'

WASHINGTON, Sept 5: Former President Ronald Reagan, his memory ravaged by Alzheimer's disease, often cannot identify members of his family, but he can still communicate with "that twinkle in his eye and smile," his son says, reports AP.

"You can't really carry on a conversation with him, but you're not going to carry on a conversation," Michael Reagan said. "But he's alert."

The younger Reagan, a conservative radio talk-show host, spoke to The Associated Press in opening a promotional tour for his latest book, "The City on a Hill: Fulfilling Ronald Reagan's vision for America."

The 264-page book outlines Michael Reagan's conservative agenda, criticizes today's Republican Party leadership and lambastes President Bill Clinton and former President George Bush.

It also offers brief glimpses at the life Ronald Reagan leads as a victim of Alzheimer's disease.

"These days, because of the Alzheimer's, he doesn't always know my name when I come to visit him but he knows who I am. 'I'm the guy who gives him a hug,'" Michael Reagan wrote.

## Temporary truce in Lanka for immunisation programme

COLOMBO, Sept 5: A temporary truce between government forces and Tamil Tiger guerrillas got underway today to allow a United Nations agency to carry out a nation-wide polio immunisation programme officials said, AFP reports from Colombo.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) said both the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and the government will honour today and tomorrow as "days of tranquillity."

The warring sides have also agreed to observe the truce on October 10 and 11 to again allow the immunisation campaign to go ahead across the country, UNICEF officials said.

There had been similar arrangements in 1995 and last year, the UNICEF said in a statement.

More than 50,000 people have been killed in the rebels' protracted Tamil separatist war.

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