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THE JERUSALEM POST

Volume XCIV, Number 28528 FOUNDED IN 1932 NIS 13.00 (EILAT NIS 11.00)

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Bennett unveils 'Israeli Renaissance' plan, says alliance will oust Netanyahu

INTERVIEW

• By KESHET NEEV

Former prime minister Naftali Bennett said his new alliance with opposition leader Yair Lapid will hold and enable the opposition bloc to form a long-lasting government to unseat Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, unveiling in a Wednesday interview with *The Jerusalem Post* his "Israeli Renaissance" plan to bring one million *olim* (new immigrants) to Israel over the next decade.

Bennett spoke to the *Post* after the recent announcement that his and Lapid's parties, Yesh Atid and Bennett 2026, will merge into a single list named Together, led by Bennett.

The move to run together could reshape the direction of the elections, which are scheduled for no later than October.

"Lapid accepts my leadership. I will serve as prime minister, as a man of the Right, a man of the Land of Israel, a liberal. I will lead this government, and behind me there will be people from the Center and from the Right," Bennett told the *Post*.

The alliance is said to unite the opposition bloc and boost its chances of unseating Netanyahu. It remains unclear how the opposition bloc will secure a majority without the Arab parties, with whom they have pledged not to form a government.

Bennett said that the plan would be to invite any Zionist party that accepts their basic guidelines to join. Bennett added that by doing so, he believed it would be possible to form a government with a large majority of 85 Knesset members, or 80 members.

"And that will usher in a golden age, the golden age of the Israeli renaissance," he said.

Bennett revealed to the *Post* that he has been developing a plan to bring one million olim to Israel over the next decade.

He said that the plan would bring olim with a focus on those from the United States, Britain, and Australia.

"We are about to open a new chapter for Israel, leaving behind the incompetence of government ministers, the corruption, and the infighting," Bennett said.

"A regional renaissance with moderate Arab states, a renaissance in the Jewish world by strengthening our ties with the Jewish people, and a renaissance in Israel's global standing."

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NAFTALI BENNETT
(Chaim Goldberg/Flash90)

SHOMRIM VOLUNTEER TELLS 'POST':

'I wanted to protect the community'

INTERVIEW

• By MICHAEL STARR

North West London Shomrim volunteer Yonaton El-Kouby's only thought was protecting the community when he received a report about an incident in the Golders Green neighborhood.

Speaking to *The Jerusalem Post*, El-Kouby recounted how he helped Metropolitan Police officers subdue a man who stabbed two Jewish London residents earlier that day.

El-Kouby had been in Hendon when he got the emergency call, but wasn't aware of the stabbings and wounded community members. The Jewish neighborhood watch volunteer raced over to find the suspect being chased by police officers.

El-Kouby said that he pulled up his vehicle to block off the path of the knifeman, forcing him to turn back toward the officers giving chase, and also that he, another volunteer, two officers, and civilian good Samaritans kept the man contained, moving back and advancing on him when they could.

They had to balance stopping him, protecting others, and keeping out of range of the knife. Faced with the attacker, El-Kouby thought to himself that the man was willing to attack anyone in his way.

"He's got one thing on his mind," El-Kouby recalled thinking. "He's here to kill."

The officers had to taser the 45-year-old attacker multiple times, falling back with each discharge that failed to bring him down. Eventually, the attacker dropped, and the group jumped onto the knifeman.

El-Kouby said that when he saw his chance, he jumped onto the suspect's legs. After all of the taser discharges, the

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Terrorist wounds 2 Jews in London terrorist stabbing, HAYI claims attack

• By MICHAEL STARR and MATHILDA HELLER

Two London Jews were wounded in a knife attack in the heavily Jewish-populated Golders Green neighborhood on Wednesday, according to North West London Shomrim, Community Security Trust, and the Metropolitan Police.

The perpetrator was arrested under suspicion of attempted murder.

The 45-year-old attacker ran along a road attempting to stab Jewish residents, according to the Shomrim neighborhood watch, before its volunteers and police apprehended him.

When police arrived, the Met said that the suspect attempted to stab officers and was tasered before arrest. A Shomrim volunteer told *The Jerusalem Post* that it took multiple taser shots before the suspect could be subdued.

"These were not armed officers, and they feared he was carrying an explosive device," said the head of London's Metropolitan Police, Mark Rowley. "Without their bravery, I doubt to think what the outcome could have been."



CLOTHING ITEMS lie strewn in the road between police cars on Golders Green Road where a suspect stabbed two people before he was apprehended. (Justin Tallis/AFP via Getty Images)

The two victims, Nachman Moshe ben Chaya Sarah, 76, and Moshe Ben Baila, 34, were treated by Hatzola at the scene and are in stable condition in hospital. No officers were hurt.

The suspect suffered cardiac arrest, according to a volunteer, and was treated at the scene. Rowley said the suspect has a history of serious violence and mental health issues.

Counter Terrorism Police are leading the investigation to establish the circumstances, and Assistant Met Commissioner for Specialist Operations Laurence Taylor confirmed that it has formally been declared a terrorist incident.

This is the second declared terrorist attack on Britain's Jewish community in seven months, following the Islamist terror attack at Heaton Park Synagogue in October, in which Melvin Cravitz and Adrian Daulby were killed.

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Behind Tehran's calm, Iran faces economic collapse

• By AMICHAI STEIN

On the surface, the streets of Tehran appear to have returned to normal. Cafés are open, and traffic jams in the capital have resumed their usual pace. However, beneath this routine lies a nation on the brink of financial collapse, one that even the most brutal crackdowns may not contain.

While the streets are full of people, their pockets are empty. Iran's currency, the rial, has become a liability that citizens are desperate to offload.

"There is simply crazy inflation in the market because nobody wants to hold the Iranian currency," explains Prof. Amos Nadan, head of the Dayan Center at Tel Aviv University, adding, "This currency is fundamentally unstable."

Even before the recent military escalations, Iran was grappling with an inflation rate of approximately 70% – the highest since World War II.

Today, the numbers tell the story of a struggling middle class. The new monthly minimum wage stands at over 160 million rials, a figure that sounds astronomical until it is converted to its actual value: just over $100.

"The truth is that this might not be the end. Because when there isn't much economic activity in Iran – as there wasn't during the war – there isn't much opportunity for the currency to weaken dramatically," says Eyal Hashkes, a strategic consultant and author of The Swords of the Economy. "The moment life returns to full normality, we will see an even more significant weakening of the rial."

The human cost of this devaluation is staggering.

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IDF BRIGADE 7 COMMANDER TO POST:

'We gained deeper penetration against Hezbollah with less IAF support'

• By YONAH JEREMY BOB

The IDF has achieved deeper penetration against Hezbollah during the current war with much less IAF support than it had during the invasion of Lebanon in 2024, OC Brigade 7 Col. Shaul Yisraeli told *The Jerusalem Post* Tuesday night.

"We saw that the enemy had reestablished itself after Operation Northern Arrows [in 2024]," he said in an interview. "We found large amounts of weapons and terrorists on that defense line... with less IAF support, we killed many terrorists with the help of artillery fire."

Although the IAF has given some air support to IDF forces in Lebanon throughout the current war, the vast majority of its resources were focused on Iran until the April 7 ceasefire with Tehran.

In contrast, during the fall 2024 invasion of southern Lebanon, the full power of the IAF was used alongside IDF Ground Forces.

This may be one of the reasons why Yisraeli said Hezbollah has fought back harder on the ground during this round than it did in 2024.

"It is good to know we could do this even without less air support," he said.

Brigade 7 is one of the IDF's premier tank units. It has accompanied Division 36 in a variety of critical battles in both Gaza and Lebanon in recent years.

Division 36, including Brigade 7, the Golani Brigade, commandos, and the Yahalom special forces, were all involved in extended fighting moving from east to west in Lebanon from Rav Talatin to a-Taibah and eventually to Kantara.

This earlier stage of fighting along Hezbollah's first defense line took about two to three weeks in March.

Brigade 7 continued with attacks on a Western vector toward Kantara with the goal of locating and destroying a two-pronged enormous underground tunnel city net-

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Ukraine asks Israel to seize ship with grain 'stolen by Russia'

KYIV (Reuters) – Israel should seize a vessel that is carrying grain stolen from areas occupied by Russia, Ukrainian Prosecutor General Ruslan Kravchenko said Wednesday.

The shipment has sparked a diplomatic tussle. Ukraine and Israel traded accusations on Tuesday, with Ukraine saying it had repeatedly urged Israel via diplomatic channels to take measures regarding the vessel. Israel accused Kyiv of "Twitter diplomacy."

The vessel, the *Panormitis*, was headed to the Haifa Port with grain, "some of which was shipped" from Russian-occupied regions of Ukraine, Kravchenko said. The grain had earlier been loaded from another vessel, he said.

"The Ukrainian side is asking its Israeli partners to seize the vessel and its cargo, conduct a

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COORDINATED PROTEST

Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) protesters block the main entrance to Jerusalem near Chords Bridge yesterday afternoon over the detention of draft dodgers from their community. When the demonstrators began to throw objects at passersby and police officers, the police used force and a water cannon to disperse them. (Jerusalem Post Staff; Marc Israel Sellem/The Jerusalem Post)

Hezbollah drone kills contractor in southern Lebanon

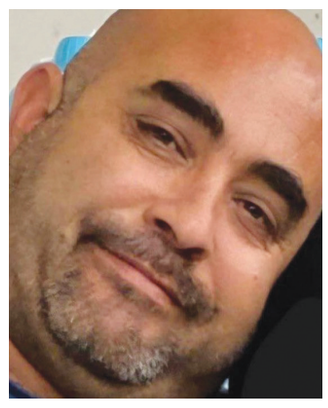
• Jerusalem Post Staff

Amer Hujirat, a Defense Ministry civilian contractor in southern Lebanon, was killed in a drone strike on Tuesday, Ziv Medical Center in Safed reported Wednesday.

Hujirat, 44, from Shfaram, was killed when a Hezbollah drone exploded near him. It also lightly wounded his 19-year-old son, who was working with him.

The incident was the latest

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AMER HUJIRAT
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