

International

Gunman wounds two near Jewish site in east Jerusalem: Police

Zionist security forces conduct manhunt for the perpetrator

JERUSALEM: A suspected Palestinian gunman wounded two Zionist men near a Jewish site in annexed east Jerusalem on Tuesday. Zionist authorities said, with security forces conducting a manhunt for the perpetrator. The shooting comes amid a period of deadly attacks and military raids across the occupied West Bank, along with killings in Zionist territory.

Zionist police announced a suspected "shooting terror attack" in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of east Jerusalem targeting two motorists, who according to medics were rushed to hospital. "Police officers are at the scene conducting searches for the suspect who fled," the force said in a statement.

Zionist security forces closed off streets in the neighborhood, where an AFP journalist saw officers entering a Palestinian home, with a drone and helicopter as well as police dogs aiding the search. Officers enforcing the shutdown prevented cars and people from moving in the centre of the neighborhood, as heavily armed forces combed the area.

Police announced they had found the perpetrator's gun near the scene of the attack, which took place near the tomb of Simeon the Just—Shimon Hatzadik in Hebrew — a site frequented by religious Jews. The weapon was identified as a Carlo make-shift submachine gun, which Palestinians manufacture in the West Bank.

Hadassah hospital said they received a 48-year-old gunshot victim lightly wounded, and Shaare Zedek medical centre said it was treating a man in his 50s in moderate condition.

The search was punctuated by the 10:00 am (0700 GMT) two-minute siren marking Zionist's Holocaust Remembrance Day, honoring more than six million Jews killed by the Nazis during World War II. Jerusalem mayor Moshe Lion, speaking at a city hall ceremony, said one of the Holocaust's main lessons was "to never be helpless in the face of those seeking to harm us".

Later in the morning, most of the security forces had left Sheikh Jarrah, with roads reopened and traffic flowing as normal, the AFP journalist said. Sheikh Jarrah was the focal point of protests against the eviction of Palestinian residents by Zionist settler organizations in the build up to and during the May 2021 war between the Zionist entity and Gaza militants. It is also



JERUSALEM: A Palestinian family waits outside as Zionist security forces search for suspects following a shooting attack in the neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah in annexed east Jerusalem, on April 18, 2023. — AFP

the site of a weekly Zionist demonstration against the occupation of the Palestinian territories. The attack took place a day after a Palestinian woman stabbed and moderately wounded a Zionist man at the Gush Etzion junction in the southern West Bank.

opposition figures held. Ennahdha was the largest party in Tunisia's parliament before President Kais Saied dissolved the chamber in July 2021. Since early February, authorities in the North African country have arrested more than 20 political opponents and personalities.

They have included politicians, former ministers, businessmen, trade unionists and the owner of Tunisia's most popular radio station, Mosaïque FM. Saied, 65, claims those detained were "terrorists" involved in a "conspiracy against state security".

Ennahdha vice-president Mondher Lounissi told a news conference late Monday that Ghannouchi had been taken to a police barracks for questioning and that his lawyers had not been allowed to attend. His arrest came after media reports in which he allegedly said Tunisia would be threatened with "civil war" if political Islam, from which his party originated, were eradicated in the country.

The woman was shot by security forces and taken to hospital in moderate condition. The conflict has this year claimed the lives of at least 96 Palestinians, 19 Zionists, one Ukrainian and one Italian, according to an AFP count based on Zion-

A source at the interior ministry quoted by Tunisian media confirmed that Ghannouchi's arrest was linked to these statements.

Ghannouchi was the speaker of Tunisia's parliament before Saied dissolved it and went on to seize wide-reaching powers through a series of moves opponents have dubbed a "coup". Opponents of Saied accuse him of reinstating autocratic rule in Tunisia, which was the only democracy to emerge from the Arab Spring uprisings in the Middle East region more than a decade ago.

After his dramatic power grab, he has ruled by decree, and last year rammed through a constitution that gave his office unlimited powers and neutered parliament. Human rights groups have criticised the arrests, which targeted leading figures of the National Salvation Front (FSN), the main opposition coalition, which

includes Ennahdha. "The arrest of the leader of the most important political party in the country, and who has always shown his commitment to peaceful political action, marks a new phase in the crisis," FSN head Ahmed Nejib Chebbi told AFP late Monday. "This is blind revenge against opponents," he added.

Ghannouchi appeared in court at the end of February on terror-related charges after being accused of calling police officers "tyrants". He had already been in court last November over allegations his party had helped jihadists travel to Iraq and Syria. Before that, he was interrogated over alleged money laundering in relation to foreign donations for an Ennahdha-linked charity. Ghannouchi was exiled for more than two decades under late dictator Zine El Abidine Ali, but returned following the country's 2011 uprising to become a dominant figure in Tunisian politics. — AFP

Tunisia shuts offices of oppn party

TUNIS: Tunisian authorities closed the offices of Islamist-inspired opposition party Ennahdha on Tuesday, a day after arresting its leader Rached Ghannouchi, a senior party official said. "A police unit showed up at the party's main headquarters (in Tunis) and ordered everyone there to leave before closing it," Riadh Chaibi said.

"The police also closed the other offices of the party elsewhere in the country and prohibited any meeting in these premises," he told AFP. The move came after Ennahdha's veteran leader Ghannouchi was arrested at his home in the capital Tunis, the latest in a string of

Body and soul in Islam...

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cater for their spiritual needs. Allah says what can be translated as: "And by the soul and Him who fashioned it, and informed it (with consciousness) of its wickedness and righteousness. Truly, whoever purifies it succeeds. And truly, whoever defiles it, fails." (Ash-Shams 91: 7 - 9)

Anyone who contemplates the Islamic religious teachings conveyed from Allah (SWT) through Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) will notice a balance in the various aspects of human life between the needs of the physical body for food, drinks, marriage, and personal rights - among others, the need of the soul for worship and moral purification - among others - and the need of the intellect for knowledge, research and discovery, etc. The Majestic Allah says what can be translated as: "Allah is the One Who has subjected the sea for you so that ships may sail upon it by His command, and that you may seek His bounty, and that perhaps you will be grateful. He (also) subjected for you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth, all by His grace. Surely, in this (miraculous) signs for people who reflect." (Al-Jathiyah 45: 12 - 13)

So Allah (SWT) did not create this universe to remain neglected without yielding benefits or for its inhabitants to be indifferent to it. The phrase "subjected to you" expresses the meanings of empowerment, facilitation and discovery in this universe in order to benefit from its elements and its abundant wealth. Almighty Allah says what can be translated as: "Rather, seek the (reward or abode) of the Hereafter by means of what Allah has granted you, without forgetting your share of this world. And be good (to others) as Allah has been good to you. Yet do not seek to sow corruption in the land. For, indeed, Allah does not like the sowers of corruption." (Al-Qasas 28: 77)

Allah's description of His righteous servants: Even when involved in business, they do not forget spiritual and moral duties due to the fear and concern of being accountable before Allah in the Hereafter. Imagine the conduct of businessmen with this kind of belief and moral character, and how life in its every aspect would be among such people! Almighty Allah says what can be translated as: "Then in the footsteps of these (prophets), We sent Our messengers, and (after them), We sent Jesus, son of Mary, and granted him the Gospel, and instilled compassion and mercy in the hearts of his followers.

As for monasticism, they invented it (by themselves), never did We prescribe it for them, but only that they seek Allah's pleasure. Yet they did not strictly observe (this ordinance). So We gave those who believed among them their reward. But many of them were disobedient." (Al-Hadeed 57: 27)

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) presented the most splendid examples and directives concerning the balance between spirituality and materialism. He was annoyed by those who opposed the inborn human nature

and traditions of the prophets and messengers. Once, he heard that some people, out of keenness to worship Allah (SWT), had taken an oath to refrain from sleep, marriage and from food and drinks.

His position toward them was strict determination to uphold the balance between the physical and the spiritual needs. From the Islamic point of view, the religious man should be more active than the materialistic man who neglects his spiritual needs in his domestic and social life, which extends from the confines of the household to the market square, and even to international conferences. (Refer to Islamreligion.com)

Find balance

When we think about health, diet and exercise, are typically the first things that come to mind. However, good health isn't just about the physical body. Our mind and body are interconnected and affect each other tremendously. For example, a stressful situation causing negative thoughts can lead to physical pain or illness. It's important to maintain a healthy balance between your mind, body, and soul by nurturing your whole self, including your physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs.

There are many things you can do in your daily life to achieve overall wellness. Here are some of the ways to begin cultivating a mind-body-soul balance. (1) Read and learn often. Your education shouldn't stop once you're out of school. Open your mind to new possibilities, beliefs, and interests by reading, taking online classes, watching documentaries, and attending workshops. Education does not end until you die. Try your best to translate what you learn into action where necessary and possible.

(2) Meditate regularly - Meditation improves memory, attention, mood, immune system, sleep, and creativity - among others. All it takes is a few minutes a day to start reaping the benefits. Almighty Allah says what can be translated as: "Say, [O Muhammad], 'Travel through the land and observe how He began creation. Then Allah will bring forth the creation of the Hereafter (i.e. resurrection after death). Indeed, Allah, over all things, is Omnipotent.'" (Al-Ankabut 29: 20) (3) Avoid sitting for extended periods of time - Try to stand or move around while at work, if possible. Too much sitting is linked to heart disease, diabetes, and a shortened lifespan - among others.

(4) Get involved in a volunteer organization or activism group. Use your voice or talents to do good in this world. We're all connected, and it's incredibly beneficial to experience that connectedness when we work toward a common goal. When you use your abilities to help others, your soul certainly feels at peace. Communal based activities offer the best platform to voluntarily assist in whatever means within your capabilities.

Abu Huraira (ra) narrated that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said what can be translated as: "A believer enjoys others' company and others enjoy his, and there is no good in one who doesn't get along with others. And the best among the people is the most beneficial to them." (Al-Bukhari said that its chain of narrators is Hasan (good), see As-Silsila As-Saheeha # 426) — Courtesy of the TIES Center

Iran invites Saudi king to visit amid thaw in ties

TEHRAN: Iran said it has formally invited Saudi King Salman to visit Tehran, following a reconciliation agreement reached last month between the two sides. Saudi Arabia severed relations with Iran in 2016, after its embassy in Tehran and consulate in the northwestern city of Mashhad were attacked during protests over Riyadh's execution of Shiite cleric Nimr Al-Nimr.

The two Middle East powerhouses had held several rounds of dialogue in Iraq and Oman before reaching the agreement to mend ties on March 10 in China. On Monday, Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Nasser Kanani said President Ebrahim Raisi had "invited the

Saudi King to visit Iran". Kanani said the Iranian president had already received an invitation to visit the Sunni-ruled kingdom.

The spokesman also expressed hope that Iran and Saudi Arabia would reopen their respective diplomatic missions by May 9, as scheduled in the China-brokered agreement. "We and the Saudi side insist on activating the embassies in a very timely manner so that Iranian pilgrims can attend a calm hajj pilgrimage using the services provided by the embassy," he told a weekly press conference.

The annual hajj pilgrimage to holy sites in Saudi Arabia, one of the pillars of Islam, is expected to begin this year in late June. In recent days, delegations from the two countries have visited the embassies in Riyadh and Tehran and consulates in Jeddah and Mashhad to launch the process of their reopening. On April 6 the Iranian and Saudi foreign ministers, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and Prince Faisal bin Farhan, held talks in Beijing on the implementation of normalization of ties. — AFP

Toxic drink kills 27 in 'dry' India state

PATNA: Toxic hooch has killed at least 27 people in the eastern Indian state of Bihar where alcohol is banned, officials said Tuesday, with unconfirmed reports putting the death toll at 40. Selling and consuming liquor is prohibited in several parts of India, driving a thriving black market for potent and sometimes lethal backstreet moonshine that kills hundreds every year.

Initial investigations into the latest tragedy showed that poisonous methyl alcohol was mixed with spirit that proved deadly. Police official Jitender

Kumar told AFP that 27 deaths had been reported since Saturday. Kumar said most of the victims were from poor families and used to consume locally made cheap tittle known as "Desi Daru". Some local media put the toll at 40.

Police have arrested 174 people in connection with illegal manufacturing, sale and supply of liquor over the last three days. They have also seized and destroyed over 900 liters of toxic liquor during raids. Local authorities have been using drones, helicopters and motorboats to crack down on the black market, but the most recent incident is just the latest in a string of similar deadly cases. Last year in December, 37 people were killed after consuming illicit liquor in the same state. — AFP

Saudi and Syria end diplomatic...

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Assad himself has visited both Oman and the United Arab Emirates since the quake.

Syria's foreign minister visited this month Algeria and Tunisia on the heels of trips to Saudi Arabia and Egypt in a diplomatic push. Syria is to reopen its diplomatic mission in Tunisia and appoint an ambassador there, following a similar move announced by Tunis. Prince Faisal had said in February that a consensus was building in the Arab world that a new approach to Syria requiring negotiations with Damascus would be needed to address humanitarian crises.

Riyadh sent aid to both rebel-held and government-controlled parts of Syria, but the effort did not

involve direct contact with Assad's government. In March, Saudi state media had said that Riyadh and Damascus were in talks on resuming consular services. Regional rivals Shiite Muslim Iran and Sunni powerhouse Saudi Arabia have supported opposing sides in several regional conflict zones including Yemen, and also vie for influence in Lebanon, Syria and Iraq.

During a trip to Moscow last month, Assad told broadcaster Russia Today that "Syria is no longer a scene of Saudi-Iran conflict". Syria's war has killed more than half a million people, while around half of the country's pre-war population has been forced from their homes. Assad is hoping normalization with wealthy Gulf states could bring economic relief and money for reconstruction, as broader international funding remains elusive without a United Nations-backed political settlement to the conflict. Analysts say sanctions on Syria will likely continue to deter investment. — AFP