

FINAL SCORES

NASCAR: Stewart wins again ■ 1, 11C



Mickelson: Will finish final round today

Mickelson — for now

Phil Mickelson is the leader on the course after PGA Championship's final round suspended by weather ■ 1-2, 6-7C

USA TODAY

NO. 1 IN THE USA



TV bosses: Martha Stewart and Donald Trump

What will Martha dish out?

'You're cooked,' perhaps? Our readers suggest a catchphrase for Martha Stewart's Apprentice spin-off ■ 1D

Monday, August 15, 2005

Newsline



President's USA TODAY reporter rides with President Bush on a grueling, two-hour mountain bike tour in Crawford, Texas ■ 3C



Man charged in S.C. case

Disappearance of Tamika Huston led to the debate on whether there is bias in media's coverage of missing persons; acquaintance is charged with murder ■ 2A

What's cooking at White House: New chef

Cristeta Comerford is the first woman and first minority to hold the position; the native of the Philippines topped hundreds of applicants. 4A

Oil refineries struggle to boost output

U.S. operations are stretching limits to increase production as gas prices soar; some are running at 99% capacity after series of refinery mishaps. 1B

Money: Biometric IDs closely watched

System used to speed up secure travel could get turned into for-profit business that has privacy advocates and others concerned. 1B

Sports: USA tops at track Worlds

Youth is key in winning 25 medals at track and field championships end in Helsinki. 1 10C

Life: Meet the new workers

Interns are teaching employers a thing or two about changing workplace fashion and etiquette. 1D

Volunteers help Canine Companions for Independence

Program helps people with disabilities. "We're two peas in a pod," Shea Megale, 10, says of her service dog, Mercer. 7D

Tuesday: Putting cellphones on ICE

Exploring trend that taps mobile phones' use as life-line. Programming "in case of emergency" numbers.

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USA TODAY Snapshots®

Many adults lunch at home. Where people say they eat lunch during a typical workweek. School lunch 50%, In-school 25%, At home 14%, Other 11%.

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Return of Mean Green



Rushing leaders rule University of North Texas ■ 1C

Starting today College football PREVIEW

Running backs Patrick Cobbs, Jamario Thomas

Historic pullout begins

9,000 settlers being forced out of Gaza, West Bank



In protest: Jewish settlers opposed to the forced withdrawal start a fire Sunday near Neve Dekalim, Gaza.

Some vow to resist move: others just hope for peace

By Andrea Stone USA TODAY

NETZER HAZANI, Gaza — As the sun slipped below the horizon, thousands of men overflowed the synagogue here, where they had just concluded their last Sabbath in Gaza.

It was the start of the fast of Tisha B'Av, when Jews mourn a series of catastrophes that happened on that day over more than two millennia, from the ancient destruction of the first and second temples in Jerusalem to their expulsion from Spain in 1492.

But many of the deeply religious worshippers said the events of this week — Israel's withdrawal from Gaza — will rank among the worst disasters to befall the Jewish people.

"Even though we mourn the destruction of the temple 2,000 years ago, that was by the goyim," said Rafi Peret, 51, using the Hebrew word for non-Jews. "Today, the destruction is by Jews and our government. Of course, it makes it harder."

The parliamentary decree that ordered 9,000 settlers to leave all 21 Gaza settlements and four in the northern West Bank starting today is a major shift from a policy that for nearly 40 years encouraged Jews to move to areas once under Arab control. The settlers, who have tried every legal means to reverse the decision, pray for divine intervention.

"With God's help, there will be redemption," said Inbal Shirut, 26. She came from a West Bank settlement that is unaffected by the pullout to be with her parents, who live here. "Maybe the Messiah will come."

121 die in plane crash in Greece



Crashed jet: Firefighters extinguish a blaze near the tail fin of Helios Airways Flight ZUS22 on Sunday.

Signs hint at loss of cabin pressure

From staff and wire reports

A passenger jet slammed into a mountain in Greece on Sunday, killing all 121 people on board, shortly after at least one of its pilots appeared to have passed out and other people tried to take over the controls.

About a half-hour after the Helios Airways Boeing 737 took off from the Mediterranean island of Cyprus, the pilots reported that something was wrong with the air conditioning system. Soon after the jet crossed into Greek airspace, all radio contact was lost.

Two Greek F-16 fighter jets were dispatched and met the airliner at 34,000 feet. The fighter pilots saw the 737 co-pilot slumped in his seat. The captain was nowhere in sight, and oxygen masks dangled in the cabin, government spokesman Theodoros Roussopoulos said.

The F-16 pilots said they saw two people apparently trying to take control of the aircraft, Roussopoulos said. It was unclear whether they were crewmembers or passengers.

It was possible no one on board was alive when the plane smashed into a small mountain near the city of Grammatiko. "It appeared that the pilot was already dead, as was, possibly, everyone else on the plane," Cyprus Transport Minister Haris Thirasou said.

Marios Konstantinidis, a spokesman for the Cyprus-based airline, said it appeared that the plane was flying on automatic pilot when it hit the mountain.

The crash left flaming debris and luggage strewn across a ravine. It touched off a huge wildfire in the surrounding hills. Dozens of bodies were found still strapped into their seats, some with oxygen masks on their faces. Two charred bodies were still hugging each other, Reuters photographer Yannis Behrakis reported.

The jet's "black boxes," its data and voice recorders, had been found.

"The first indications ... are that it was not caused by a terrorist act," said Marios Karoyian, a spokesman for Cypriot President Tassos Papadopoulos.

A man whose name was a passenger told Greece's Alpha television that he received a cellphone text message minutes before the crash. "He told me the pilots were unconscious. He said, 'Farewell, cousin, here we're frozen,'" Sotiris Voutas said. A cold plane can be a sign that the aircraft has lost cabin pressure. Pilots are trained in dealing with a loss of pressure, but at 35,000 feet, they would have had only seconds to act.

Akrovo's Tsolkakis of Greece's airline safety committee said there appeared to be a lack of oxygen, "which is usually the case when the cabin is depressurized."

Sudden loss of cabin pressure was blamed for a crash in South Dakota in 1999. A Learjet 35 lost pressure, leaving professional golfer Payne Stewart and four others unconscious. The twin-engine jet crashed after flying halfway across the country on autopilot.

Among the passengers on the Helios flight were 48 children, airline spokesman Giorgos Dimitriou said.

Last words

"He told me the pilots were unconscious ... He said, 'Farewell, cousin, here we're frozen.'"

— Sotiris Voutas, describing a text message he said he got from a cousin on the doomed plane

Flight ZUS22 ■ Questions after crash, 11A

Cover story

to help the Jewish people. "Even though we mourn the destruction of the temple 2,000 years ago, that was by the goyim," said Rafi Peret, 51, using the Hebrew word for non-Jews. "Today, the destruction is by Jews and our government. Of course, it makes it harder."

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Israel military forces started early today to

Hunt still on in U.S. deaths

■ 20 Marines killed, 7A

It said most of the drafters agreed by Sunday that Islam would be a main source of Iraqi law, but the constitution also would guarantee women's and human rights, Saghir said. Discussions would continue even after the draft is passed to ease outstanding issues among religious and ethnic factions. The document needs simple national majority to be ratified in October, but it would be rejected if fewer than a third of voters in three or more provinces vote to ratify. Sunni Muslims, who are strong in four of Iraq's 18 provinces, could block it.

Sunnis object to a proposal to create a semi-autonomous Shiite Muslim state in the oil-rich south. Many Sunnis live in central Iraq between the Shiite south and the oil-rich Kurdish regions in the north. They fear they could be left with a resource-scarce piece of land.

Iraq officials vow constitution today

But talks will continue on outstanding disputes

By Jill Carroll Special for USA TODAY

BAGHDAD — Iraq's National Assembly will approve a constitution by today's deadline, even if it doesn't resolve disputes over women's rights, control of oil revenue and the imposition of Islamic law, Iraqi and U.S. officials said Sunday.

If the U.S.-backed deadline is met, a referendum on the document, which would set up a permanent government and guarantee rights of the people, will be held Oct. 15. A general election would follow in December. President Bush calls the constitution a critical step toward an Iraq that can defend itself without U.S. troops.

"Zalmay Khalilzad, U.S. ambassador in Baghdad, said the status of women, which could be lowered if

Islamic fundamentalists carry the day, was a key issue to the United States. "America has invested blood and treasure here, and we stand for certain values, and one of them is equality for men and women," he said on Fox News Sunday. "I believe the new constitution will embrace equality for men and women before the law."

Speaking Sunday on CBS Face the Nation, Howard Dean, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, said, "It looks like women will be worse off in Iraq than they were when Saddam Hussein was president of Iraq. Shiite Muslims on the drafting committee had demanded that the country be guided by religious edicts. The secular and pro-U.S. Kurds warned that would lead to limits on women's rights. Shiite negotiator Jalal Aldin Saghir

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AUG 15 2005

Police on high alert

Continued from 1A

teel Sherrit, her family and thousands of others that they must leave by midnight Tuesday. The troops' mission to implement Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's unilateral "disengagement plan" to reduce political tensions with the Palestinians and the violence that has killed more than 1,000 Israelis since September 2000.

It's a plan supported by most Israelis. A Tel Aviv University poll released Wednesday found that 57% of Jewish Israelis support the withdrawal, while 36% are opposed. When Israeli Arabs — about 23% of the population — are included, support rises to 60% and 34% opposed. Israelis have decided that "9,000 people cannot set the political agenda," said Reuven Hazan, a Hebrew University political scientist who calls himself a political centrist. "They cannot have thousands of soldiers jeopardizing their (own) lives in order to protect them."

Many settlers also acknowledge that it's time to leave. On Saturday, Meir Cohen videotaped for the last time the streets of Rafiah Yam, the

Cover story

southernmost Gaza settlement that he helped found in 1984. A former army officer who fought in three wars, he accepts the government's order to leave.

"I see the big picture," said Cohen, 53. "There comes a time in life when you have to make a sacrifice for your country."

Protests and a resignation

Others disagree. Israeli Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu resigned from his Cabinet position to protest the pullout, which he said "ignores reality and proceeds blindly creating a base for Islamic terror" — a reference to the Palestinian groups including Hamas and Islamic Jihad that have waged a violent campaign against Israel.

Whatever the outcome, the withdrawal will go down as one of the most traumatic chapters in Israel's 57-year history. It ends part of a 38-year occupation that began when Israel captured East Jerusalem, Gaza, the West Bank and the Sinai Peninsula from Arab armies in the 1967 Six-Day War.

"We are witnessing the struggle for Israel's soul," said Aharon Klieman, a Tel Aviv University political scientist. "This is a wrenching experience."

The move has sparked massive protests from Jerusalem's Western Wall to Tel Aviv's Rabin Square, where in 1995 Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated by a right-wing extremist angry over what many say was an earlier concession to the Palestinians. The police and the Israeli army have been riven by militant rabbis' calls to disobey orders to remove fellow Jews from land religious Zionists believe was given to them by God.

Police Commissioner Moshe Karad acknowledged the upheaval in a letter to his officers. He said while the withdrawal "strikes an open nerve and questions our very ideals, faith and way of life," the operation "is the ultimate test of a law-abiding, democratic Israeli society."

To Sasha Shnaikin, 24, the formula is simple: "We'll be here, the Palestinians will be there," said the resident of Maaleh Adumim, a West Bank settlement bloc that

Settlers facing deadline

About 9,000 Jewish settlers living in all 21 settlements in Gaza and four in northern West Bank must leave by midnight Tuesday. Those who cooperate will receive money and financial help from the Israeli government. Those who don't will be forcibly removed.

The process

Today teams of 17 people each — including Israeli military, police and civilians — will go door-to-door to tell settlers of the deadline. Starting Wednesday and for several weeks after, officials will remove registers and protesters.



Some settlers are more fervent in their religious and ideological beliefs than others:

- Settlements that are home to religious Zionists, some of whom oppose the pullout.
- Settlements home to some of the most extreme opponents of the withdrawal.
- Secular settlements already mostly abandoned.



Moving memories: Avi Sherr loads his belongings Thursday ahead of Israel's withdrawal of its settlers from Gaza. Sherr, a U.S. citizen and an Eagles fan, is leaving his home of 26 years in Netzer Hazani, southern Gaza.

won't be affected by the plan. "That will reduce the friction."

That remains to be seen. The Israeli military said Sunday that five soldiers were injured by "friendly tank fire" after Palestinian gunmen began shooting near the central Gaza settlement of Kar Darom.

The withdrawal began officially at midnight Sunday when the Israeli army sealed off the entrances to the Gaza towns. In Kar Darom, home to about 85 families, about 55 residents came out about 2 a.m. to march. They walked toward a bridge, danced, sang, laid down nails and spikes on the road and went back into town under the gaze of Israeli soldiers. Several tanks, jeeps and armored personnel carriers stood by.

Roadblocks were set up across southern Israel and bus service to the settlements in Gaza was cut off. "We are on our highest alert," Karad said.

Palestinian security forces also deployed near the settlements to prevent looting and to stop Palestinian militants from attacking the

departs Israel and the troops escorting them out during the withdrawal, which is expected to take several weeks to complete.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and other Palestinian officials have expressed concern that the unilateral pullout is a ruse to tighten Israel's grip on the larger West Bank. But many of Gaza's nearly 1.4 million Palestinians eagerly awaited the settlers' departure. "This is the end of the occupation and the first step to realizing an independent Palestinian state," said Ahmed Laham, 32, a Khan Younis construction worker.

Resistance from 'guests'

Despite the looming deadline for withdrawal, residents were still inside most of the settlements. Army Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Dan Halutz said Sunday that about 5,000 people, some armed, had illegally sneaked inside the settlements.

A Jewish extremist group calling itself the National Home Movement claims there are "10,000

guests" inside Gaza. It called on them to "create havoc any way you can." Most were Zionists who believe Gaza is part of the land God promised to Israel in the Torah.

Dozens of mostly secular settlers already have moved to temporary housing inside Israel. The three northernmost Gaza settlements were nearly empty Sunday.

After a tearful farewell ceremony Friday, most of the 22 families in Pe'at Sadeh in the main settlement bloc of Gush Katif moved out. On Saturday, a few plainclothes Israeli Defense Forces will guard the settlements until they are turned over to the Palestinians in December.

Israeli police began to fan out to every settlement this morning. They said they were knocking on doors and ordering everyone to leave by the end of the day Tuesday or face forcible removal.

In five settlements the police agreed to deliver eviction notices to the heads of those towns and no go door-to-door, according to army spokesman Capt. Jacob Dallal. But



In Gush Katif, Gaza: A Jewish settler weeps over a grave at the cemetery Sunday. Authorities will relocate the graves at the cemetery to Israel.

the eviction of Israelis who were non-residents could take place immediately, said Army Lt. Eli Ovit.

Once the last settler is gone, movers will pack any remaining property before Israeli contractors and Israeli Arab workers partially demolish about 2,000 residential buildings. Israel will pay \$25 million to the World Bank, which will hire Palestinian and Egyptian companies to finish the job.

Schools, community centers and other public buildings are supposed to be left intact for the Palestinians, although individual settlers could damage them. Gaza's 38 synagogues will be blown up after their sacred objects are removed.

On Sunday about 1,000 people gathered at Gaza's small Jewish cemetery for an emotional memorial service as relatives clung to stones atop some of the 48 graves that will be relocated.

If the world has accepted the inevitability of the handover, some militant opponents remain in denial. Residents in Netzarim planted 10 acres of cherry tomatoes Aug. 8. More ominous, on Aug. 4, a renegade Jewish soldier upset by the withdrawal killed four Israeli Arabs on a bus in northern Israel before he was beaten to death by a mob.

Avraham Shapira and other right-wing rabbis have issued religious rulings ordering security forces to disobey orders to "expel" other Jews. So far, more than 100 soldiers involved in the pullout have refused to take part.

The Yeshiva Council of Jewish Settlements is urging non-violent civil disobedience across Israel, including a call for 3,000 drivers to form a 5-mile convoy to block the entrance to Ben-Gurion Airport near Tel Aviv today. It also urged demonstrators to "join their brothers in besieged Gush Katif," which at midnight became a closed military zone off-limits to all Israelis.

Ranuch Ben-Shahar, 28, sneaked into the devoutly religious settlement of Kar Darom from the West Bank hilltop settlement of Givat Ronen. He said his allegiance is to the land and people of Israel, not to the state. Ben-Shahar brought wirecutters so he can cross between fenced-in settlements after the army seals them. He said some have personal weapons, although he said they will likely not use them.

Tugging pensively on his red beard, Ben-Shahar said if there is violence, it will not be "for violence's sake itself, but to brand the trauma of this explosion on the minds of all Jews."

'Humiliating' treatment

Cohen, one of the founders of the Rafiah Yam settlement, was forced to shut his designer fashion clothing factory and lay off 70 Palestinian workers. He appreciated the militants "identifying with our struggle, but they are damaging and tarnishing the reputation of the people who live here, who are moderates."

Avi Sherr said it is the Israeli government that has acted badly. "It's gotten to be like Nazi Germany," he said, especially since Gaza was closed to non-residents more than a month ago. Since then, settlers have had to wait at checkpoints and show identity cards. It's a taste of the kind of treatment Palestinians have chafed under for years.

"It's humiliating," said Sherr, 57, a Philadelphia native who moved to the Netzer Hazani settlement in 1979. "When they do it to the Palestinians, it's necessary. But they're acting like I'm a terrorist."

Last spring, as he contemplated leaving, Sherr was so angry that he vowed to make his home unfit to live in by ripping out the electric wires and pouring cement down the drains, though in the end he did not. The man who flies an upside-down American flag to signify he is a U.S. citizen in distress once said, "I don't want to see my house on TV with a Palestinian flag flying on it."

Saturday, with all his furniture moved to his daughter's home up the coast near Ashkelon, he sat on the concrete patio outside the house where he celebrated his son's ritual circumcision, two bar mitzvahs and three weddings and recognized. "It's a seventh member of my family," he said of the modest stucco house. "If I destroy it, it's like destroying a member of my family."

So, the night before, he literally left his mark on the walls. In the living room Sherr wrote the names of his wife, four children, six dogs and two pet birds. In the kitchen, he scribbled, "Gush Katif forever: 1979-2005." In the hallway, "26 years we lived here." And, in a humorous nod to his favorite football team, "Go Eagles!"

Farther south in Rafiah Yam, the main emotion was nostalgia. Seventeen of the 26 families plan to move together as a community to temporary housing near Ashkelon. In the settlement's clubhouse, five women spent their last Sabbath here reminiscing together while their young children assembled moving boxes outside.

The women had taped up on a wall photos documenting their lives in a community that in a few days no longer will exist. The championship soccer team. The Purim parties. The school field trips. The day Sharon — the man who orchestrated this dramatic change in their lives — came to inaugurate "permanent" houses here to replace the trailers that once overlooked the Egyptian border.

"We started in caravans (trailers) without water, without nothing," said Cohen's wife, Nitza, 48, who posed in one of the pictures with Sharon. "I feel we created our life dream here, and now we're taking it apart with our own hands."

Contributing: Michele Chabin in Jerusalem, Matthew Gutman in Kar Darom, Martin Palencia in Khan Younis and Michael Schonbrun in Neve Dekalim

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