

# Airstrike wounds 35, including 15 children, misses bombmaker

By the Associated Press INTERNATIONAL

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip — Israel confirmed today that a top Hamas bombmaker survived an Israeli airstrike aimed at killing him, an operation that wounded 35 bystanders, including 15 children, and drew international criticism.

Mohammed Deif, the intended target, was wounded and quickly treated at a Gaza City hospital before being whisked into hiding, Palestinian medical officials said. The strike obliterated Deif's green Mercedes and killed two bodyguards.

Hamas, an Islamic militant group responsible for scores of suicide attacks in Israel, said it would avenge the airstrike.

Israeli Cabinet minister Matan Vilnai, a former deputy military chief of staff, confirmed today that Deif had survived. "He was indeed wounded, not an injury that he won't recover from," Vilnai, the science minister, told Israel Army Radio.

The attack was the latest example of what the Israeli military calls "targeted killings," a practice the United States has criticized. At least 78 wanted Palestinians and 52 bystanders have been killed in dozens of such attacks in the past two years of fighting.

Human rights groups have condemned the killings, many of which have been carried out from the air, often in crowded Palestinian neighborhoods.

HAVANA — Signaling he's serious about bringing American business back to communist Cuba, President Fidel Castro has signed more than \$17 million in contracts to buy food from the United States.

Castro signed the deals at a food fair attended by numerous U.S. food producers, so far the only type of American company allowed to do business with the communist country. Cuban officials hope the contracts Thursday will lead to more exceptions to the longstanding U.S. trade embargo on Cuba.

To illustrate that, Castro spent much of the day at the exhibition, where he strolled past displays of Gerber baby food, Sara Lee cakes, soy burgers served up to passers-by by agri-business giant Archer Daniels Midland of

## around the world

Illinois. Later, he presided over the signing of a \$10 million contract with ADM, a Fortune 500 company, for Cuba's purchase of rice, cooking oil and soy.

Also signed Thursday were contracts by Cuba's food import concern Alimport to buy \$10,000 of red apples from Bowman Apple Products of Virginia; \$1.9 million of shipping services from Crowley Liner Services of Jacksonville, Fla.; and 30 million chicken eggs from Radlo Foods of Massachusetts for \$1.5 million.

In addition, Alimport signed contracts to buy \$1.4 million in frozen chicken from Louis Dreyfus Corp., of Atlanta; and \$2.5 million in rice from the Rice Company of California.

### NATIONAL

NORFOLK, Neb. — The search for three men wanted in one of the nation's deadliest bank robberies ended at a gas station a few hours after the holdup that left five people dead, but police said a fourth man remained at large.

Holdup men shot five people to death in the bank robbery Thursday. Three of the suspects then fled into the Nebraska countryside in a stolen car.

The suspects were surrounded by police when they stopped for gas and food in O'Neill, 76 miles northwest of the robbery in Norfolk.

Late Thursday, authorities said another man, 26-year-old Gabriel Rodriguez of Madison, was wanted in the shootings.

The three men were identified by police as Jose Sandoval, 23, of Norfolk; Jorge Galindo, 21, and Erick Fernando Vela, 21, both of Madison. They were later charged with five counts of first-degree murder, which carries a potential death sentence in Nebraska.

Four employees and a customer were killed at the U.S. Bank branch in Norfolk, a one-story, tile-roofed stucco building with twin glass doors in the middle of a strip mall parking lot. Another customer was wounded in the shoulder by gunfire.

Authorities would not say whether the gunmen got away with any money.

DELACROIX, La. — Tropical

Storm Isidore's sweep across Louisiana wrought an estimated \$18 million in flood damage and left thousands of residents without power as they looked ahead to long days of bailing water from cars and homes.

Residents were spared hurricane-strength winds, but not by much. The sprawling storm's ill-defined eye passed over the Louisiana coast packing 65-mph winds — 9 mph shy of hurricane speed. As it moved west, the storm spawned tornadoes from Louisiana to Florida.

Forecasters said the storm, downgraded to a tropical depression, would slide into the Ohio Valley by the weekend, bringing heavy rain to the Midwest and the Northeast.

Gov. Mike Foster said the storm caused at least \$18 million in damage in Louisiana, including \$3.7 million in lost sugar cane. Foster said the damage estimate will grow, and he was seeking a federal disaster declaration.

More than 140,000 people lost electrical service.

The storm lost its punch and was downgraded to a tropical depression as it moved past Jackson, Miss., late Thursday afternoon.

The wind toppled trees in Alabama and gusts of 40 mph hit Birmingham, more than 200 miles from the coast. Up to 10 inches fell in Mississippi and 6 inches fell in parts of Tennessee.

NEW YORK — WorldCom's former controller pleaded guilty to securities fraud Thursday, saying he was told by senior management to falsify records in what became the largest cor-

porate accounting scandal in U.S. history.

David Myers, 44, entered the plea after telling U.S. District Court Judge Richard Casey he wanted to waive his right to be indicted on the charges. It was the first admission of guilt in the multibillion-dollar scandal.

"I was instructed on a quarterly basis by senior management to ensure that entries were made to falsify WorldCom's books to reduce WorldCom's reported actual costs and therefore to increase WorldCom's reported earnings," Myers told the judge.

"I combined with others ... to assist in the commission of fraud," the former executive said.

WorldCom, which owns the nation's No. 2 long-distance telephone company MCI, became the biggest corporate bankruptcy in U.S. history in July.

### WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON — Moving aggressively to steel the nation against bioterrorism, the Bush administration is preparing to offer the effective but risky smallpox vaccine to every American before an attack ever occurs.

The decision, which goes well beyond earlier thinking, stems from practical and philosophical concerns including the looming war with Iraq and the fact that, for the first time in decades, the government will have enough vaccine on hand to inoculate everyone.

Just three months ago, federal advisers were recommending that only select hospital workers get the smallpox vaccine, maybe 20,000 total. Now Bush administration officials say that

eventually, it will be offered to all 280 million Americans. The questions being debated are how fast and under what circumstances, according to three officials involved in the planning. The Bush administration has yet to make final decisions or announce plans for what is called "pre-attack" smallpox vaccination.

WASHINGTON — The House passed a measure to cap the pain-and-suffering damages that juries may award in medical malpractice suits as lawmakers struggled for a way to curb escalating malpractice insurance rates.

The 217-203 vote came after a lengthy debate that included stories of doctors forced to quit their practices or relocate because of rising insurance costs.

"With greater and great frequency doctors are not there ... because they've been priced out of the healing profession," said Rep. James Sensenbrenner, R-Wis., chairman of the House Judiciary Committee.

The bill faces an uncertain future in the Democratic-controlled Senate, which has already rejected a similar measure.

The House legislation would limit noneconomic damages, such as pain and suffering, to \$250,000. Punitive damages would be limited to twice the amount of economic damages awarded or \$250,000, whichever is greater.

Patients' ability to file lawsuits over

old cases would be limited under the legislation, which would also curtail lawyers' fees.

WASHINGTON — Global finance leaders remain confident that the world economy is recovering even though stocks are sagging, crises persist in Latin America and the threat of a U.S. war with Iraq looms.

Starting their annual meetings this weekend, officials at the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank also will grapple with poverty reduction in developing countries, crisis prevention and the fight against money laundering and terrorist financing.

Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill said his message to his fellow finance ministers would be, "The U.S. economy is on the bumpy road to recovery."

Thousands of protesters have threatened to disrupt the meetings and try to shut down the nation's capital by tying up traffic. They oppose the potential U.S. war with Iraq and the capitalist policies of the international lending institutions.

District of Columbia Police Chief Charles Ramsey told reporters that today "is going to be a traffic nightmare between the rain and the protesters."

Iron crowd-control barriers were placed in a perimeter around the headquarters of the IMF and World Bank. Local authorities have assembled a force of 3,200 police.

## public notice

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Published in The Goodland Daily News Friday, September 27, 2002.

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Published in The Goodland Daily News Friday, September 27, 2002.

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