

## Mounting violence

# ISRAEL BARS PALESTINIANS FROM JERUSALEM OLD CITY

### Jerusalem

**I**srael took the rare and drastic step of barring Palestinians from Jerusalem's Old City yesterday as fears of a further escalation in violence mounted after attacks killed two Israelis and wounded a child.

A series of clashes involving Israeli security forces, Jewish settlers and Palestinians also broke out in east Jerusalem and the West Bank, and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with security chiefs to discuss the situation.

The Old City restrictions will be in place for two days, with only Israelis, tourists, residents of the area, business owners and students allowed, police said. Worship at the sensitive Al Aqsa mosque compound



A Palestinian youth kicks a burning tyre during clashes with Israeli security forces in the West Bank town of Hebron

will be limited to men aged 50 and above. There will be no age restrictions on women.

The Palestinian government denounced "Israeli escalation"

after the announcement of the ban, which Israeli Public Security Minister Gilad Erdan called unprecedented.

The usually bustling

alleyways of the walled Old City were mostly quiet yesterday morning, with hundreds of police guarding entrances. Around 300,000 Palestinians live in Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem, where the Old City is located.

The latest attacks came with Israeli security forces already on alert after recent clashes at the Al Aqsa compound and surrounding Old City, as well as the murder in the West Bank of a Jewish settler couple in front of their young children.

On Saturday night, a Palestinian said to be an Islamist militant killed two Israeli men and wounded a woman and a toddler in a knife and gun attack in the Old City. Police shot dead the attacker. In a

separate incident early Sunday, a 19-year-old Palestinian stabbed and wounded a 15-year-old passerby in west Jerusalem before being shot dead by police while fleeing.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called for calm, saying he was "deeply concerned that

these latest incidents signal a dangerous slide toward escalation".

There have been fears that the sporadic violence could spin out of control, with some warning of the risk of a third Palestinian intifada, or uprising. (AFP)

## Tear gas and rubber bullets

### Jerusalem

**T**here were clashes elsewhere overnight and yesterday, and the Red Crescent reported 77 Palestinians wounded from both live rounds and rubber bullets. Another 139 had been treated for tear gas inhalation and six for injuries sustained

in beatings by soldiers or Jewish settlers, a Red Crescent spokeswoman said.

Clashes broke out in areas including Jenin in the West Bank and the east Jerusalem neighbourhood of Issawiya, where the attacker in yesterday morning's stabbing, was from.

## Myanmar to sign peace deal with 8 rebel groups

### Yangon

Myanmar's government will sign a long-negotiated ceasefire on October 15 but with only eight rebel forces, officials said yesterday, as several major insurgent groups declined to ink an agreement that excludes some factions. More than two years of talks to end decades of civil war in the nation's rugged borderlands have gained momentum in recent weeks, with the government eager to reach a deal before November's general election.

But hopes for a nationwide ceasefire have crumbled after several rebel groups refused to sign an agreement without the inclusion of all insurgent forces.

## Bangladesh PM rejects IS link to foreigners' murder

### Dhaka

**B**angladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday dismissed the Islamic State group's claim to have killed two foreigners, saying police still had no evidence to confirm the jihadist group was behind the murders.

Her remarks came a day after 66-year-old Japanese citizen Hoshi Kunio was shot dead in northern Bangladesh, the second foreigner to be murdered in the South Asian nation in less than a week.

A 50-year-old Italian, Cesare Tavella, was shot dead last week near Dhaka's diplomatic zone in another attack claimed by IS.

"We have still not found any involvement (of IS). We have to investigate," Hasina told reporters at a press briefing in

her office. "We've got no clues. If someone claims responsibility, why should we have to accept it?" she said.



Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

The prime minister added groups such as IS do not operate in the country, saying "our intelligence agencies are

active... we will not allow any such activities in Bangladesh".

Tavella was shot three times on September 28 by attackers



who fled on a motorcycle -- an attack the Bangladesh government described as an "isolated incident".

## Guatemala landslide death toll climbs to 69

### Santa Catarina Pinula

**A**t least 69 people were killed when massive mudslides buried scores of homes on the outskirts of Guatemala's capital city, officials said Saturday, as the death toll continued to climb.

An estimated 300 people were still missing, two days after the landslides suddenly hit, raising the prospect that the number of people who perished in the disaster could rise much higher.

Julio Sanchez, a spokesman for firefighters who are leading the painstaking search for survivors, told reporters that several young children, including newborn babies, were among the dead in Santa Catarina Pinula.

On Thursday night, following heavy rain, waterlogged earth and debris tore through the

village of El Cambray II, in the municipality of Santa Catarina Pinula, destroying or damaging 125 homes.

At dawn Saturday, rescue workers, police, soldiers and volunteers began a second day of clawing away at the debris with picks and shovels. Two firefighters were injured later in the day when a wall collapsed as they were trying to extract a body from the rubble. Nearby, relatives of the missing checked in at a makeshift morgue set up next to the buried homes.

Municipal authorities had urged the community, about 15 kilometres (10 miles) east of the capital Guatemala City, to relocate several times, most recently in November of last year. But many families have refused, saying that they have nowhere to go.

## Tardy man fakes bomb scare to delay plane, still misses it



Picture for representation

### Rome

**A**n Italian man has been arrested after he delayed his flight by calling in a bomb scare because he was running late.

The unidentified 46-year-old man still managed to miss the Alitalia flight from Turin to Rome on Thursday evening despite keeping the plane on the tarmac for two and a half hours. The flight was only minutes from take-off when

the warning came through and was promptly grounded, Italian newspaper *La Stampa* reported.

"I heard two Arabs say that they had put a bomb on board," the businessman is reported to have told the emergency services.

After the passengers had been evacuated, the luggage search, and the threat established as a fake, it eventually left Turin and

arrived in Rome two and half hour behind schedule.

Despite his best efforts, the man - who was reportedly in Palermo on business - still missed his plane as police

officers immediately arrested him when he arrived at the airport. He was held overnight and released the following morning, according to local police.

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