



Shalom

Tanazanian Salim Ahmed Salim, new president of the U.N. General Assembly, says peace talks in the Middle East will never succeed unless Palestinians participate as a people and not as refugees.

California residents flee Fires endanger homes

VENTURA, Calif. (UPI) — An 18,000-acre brush fire swooped down a mountain slope towards hundreds of homes in Ventura yesterday, but lack of wind helped firefighters stabilize the flames.

Several other communities also were badgered by flames as hot temperatures and warm winds stirred up nearly a dozen fires throughout California, charring thousands of acres of brush and timber and burning some structures. Help came in from 28 states to contain the blaze.

In Ventura, about 60 miles up the coast from Los Angeles, the flames from a blaze that began Tuesday near Ojai, 10 miles away, moved to the edge of the city limits, but no structures had yet burned and no major injuries were reported.

When the blaze broke out on Sulphur Mountain near Ojai, many residents fled from homes in the Mira Monte and Oak View districts. One observer said hundreds of homes were temporarily abandoned in the face of a "mass of flames."

The blaze also damaged about 85 acres of citrus groves, some of which were bulldozed to make a fire break.

Farther up the coast in Santa Barbara County, a 4,000-acre fire in Eagle Canyon near Goleta jumped the Pacific Coast Highway and burned to the beach, destroying four ranch structures in Eagle Canyon and one house in Winchester Canyon.

The blaze also roasted 38 head of cattle, valued at \$40,000 and put residents of three areas — the San Miguel and Rancho Embarcadero housing tracts and Santa Barbara West Mobile Home Park — into flight.

Firefighters had 35 percent of the blaze contained but were also worried about afternoon winds. The worst area of the fire was the northern flank, which was burning in an inaccessible,

uninhabited terrain.

A section of coastal Highway 101, one of the two major highway links between metropolitan Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area, remained closed.

Firefighters contained a 200-acre blaze in the nearby Lake Cachuma area.

Although only about 100 to 150 acres were burned in Box Canyon in the Simi Valley near the Ventura-Los Angeles County line, the blaze was considered the second most important fire in the state because of the threat to homes.

Sheriff's officials said the flames threatened about 60 homes in Santa Susanna Knolls on the west and another string of homes at the top of Box Canyon to the east.

Air tankers dropped water on the blaze in the hopes of getting a quick containment.

Crews from as far away as Florida, Louisiana, Texas, Georgia and South Carolina helped battle the three-day-old Chili Bar fire near Placerville in the historic Mother Lode country of Northern California.

The 8,200-acre brush and timber blaze was 60 percent contained yesterday morning. Property loss to four homes, a bulldozer, a barn and five outbuildings was estimated at \$280,000 and three firefighters were treated for burns.

About 300 homes in Swansboro on the northwest flank of the blaze were evacuated.

Elsewhere in the state, warm winds were still a threat to the six-day old, 31,000-acre Sage fire in the Angeles National Forest in the mountains north of Los Angeles.

A companion blaze, the 4,800-acre Monte Fire, was 85 percent contained yesterday and reseeded — to replenish the hillsides — was already started in some areas.

Blocked air lines may have contributed to failure

WASHINGTON (AP) — Blocked air lines may have caused a valve failure that contributed to the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant accident, a congressional panel was told yesterday.

Edwin L. Zebroski, director of the Nuclear Safety Analysis Center of the Electric Power Research Institute, made the statement in testimony to the House subcommittee on energy research.

The center, based in Palo Alto, Calif., was formed by a group of public and

private utilities in May to study the causes of the Three Mile Island accident and recommend safety measures.

Rep. Mike McCormack, D-Wash., chairman of the subcommittee, asked Zebroski why it was that auxiliary cooling water failed to flow to the Pennsylvania reactor for eight minutes after the main cooling system failed on March 28.

"I think there is a strong surmise, but it's circumstantial," Zebroski replied. "There apparently was a possibility of

getting the air system contaminated with something that should not be there — possibly bits of resin, possibly water or oil."

Zebroski said resin was used to purify the air around the instruments in an auxiliary building which housed the secondary water system valve.

He said particles from the impure air used to aerate the resin may have somehow been shifted to the supposedly pure air in the instrument chamber.

He said the particles could have

choked a tiny opening in the valve, "causing it to shut when it shouldn't shut."

Zebroski said the stuck valve "was a factor but not the most fundamental factor in the initiation of the accident."

McCormack, however, speculated that the valve failure "confused the situation," causing operators in the control room to miss other conditions and fail to take actions that might have averted the mishap.

Warren H. Owen, testifying on behalf of an Atomic Industrial Forum committee following up on the Three Mile Island accident, said the loss of secondary cooling water was "at least a hassle factor."

"That is the last thing you need in a control room when an accident or a crisis occurs," Owen, a senior vice president of Duke Power Co. in Charlotte, N.C., told the subcommittee.

Owen said that apparently "things

went on there for a long time that from a management standpoint I believe should have been corrected." He said the instruments for the secondary system "needed clean air."

Zebroski said the analysis of the event by the industry-supported center was based on "the instrument charts and the computer records ... together with a data logger something like a flight recorder, which provides a more complete record of what was happening than the operators had."

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