

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update February 23, 2018 (8th of Adar, 5778)



STORKS ENJOYING ISRAEL'S HULA LAKE: Nearly half a million storks stop annually in Israel for food and rest, nearly all the ones from Europe and Asia. 40 storks arrived in Israel this week and briefly rested at the Hula Lake to eat and gather strength before the next leg of their journey to Europe. This is the first flock of storks to arrive in Israel this winter. Hula Lake is the place to watch thousands of migratory birds and birds of Israel. The Hula Valley in the Upper Galilee has developed an internationally acclaimed bird watching park. Twice a year, no less than 390 species of birds pass through the area; water fowl, birds of prey and songbirds. Conditions are so good for these visitors that increasing numbers stay for the winter season rather than continuing their migratory flights. Water buffaloes and wildcats, unique flora and fauna also flourish in the area. The Hula Lake is visited by more than half a billion birds during the migrating season and was selected by Wildlife as one of the ten most important nature observation points on earth in 2009. The stork is often mentioned in the bible where it is admired for its wing-span and feats of flight. (J.Post/JNN)

'ISRAEL – USA RELATIONS ARE FLOURISHING': Speaking at news conference in Jerusalem, Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked said that the current period is a “flourishing” one for Israel-USA relations. “In Israel we try to maintain a bipartisan strategy and work with any administration that the American people choose, but that being said there is very good cooperation with the current administration.” Regarding how she sees Israel’s relationship with the USA affecting negotiations with

the PA, she said that “There is no partner, there are no negotiations. We think that the gap between the Israelis and Palestinians is far too great to be bridged, and if the Prime Minister decides to have negotiations, I don’t think there will be any outcome”. Regarding efforts of the Justice Ministry to advance sovereignty in Judea & Samaria, Shaked said that “For every law the government supports, we are making efforts to implement it in Judea & Samaria as well, in order to normalize life there. In addition, we are developing judicial tools that will enable official recognition of 'settlements' and buildings in Judea & Samaria, something which the government has neglected for a long time. When I entered office, I established a team to find judicial solutions to problems that we have there.” (INN)

ISRAEL, EGYPT SIGN LANDMARK \$15 BILLION NATURAL GAS DEAL: The Israeli company Delek Drilling and its American partner Noble Energy have signed a \$15 billion deal to supply the Egyptian company Dolphinus Holdings with 64 billion cubic meters of natural gas over the next ten years. The transaction is the largest so far for Israel’s new gas export industry. Observers report that although the bulk of the gas will be earmarked for Egyptian domestic consumption, it is expected that the agreement will ultimately lead to Egypt becoming an export hub for the Israeli gas. There are two major gas fields being worked in Israel, the Tamar field which is already operative and the huge Leviathan field which won’t go operational for another year. The Egyptian-Israeli agreement deals with gas from the Tamar field. The Israelis already have a massive contract in place: a \$10 billion deal to supply Jordan with 45 billion cubic meters of gas that was signed in 2016. Notably, the first two massive contracts are with the two Arab states that have signed peace treaties with the Jewish state. (Medialine)

70,000 HINDUS RALLY FOR ISRAEL IN INDIA: Over 70,000 Hindus held a pro-Israel rally in Kolkata (Calcutta), India last week. There were calls for India to stand by Israel and move its embassy to Jerusalem. For many in India, Israel has become synonymous with survival, creativity and prosperity. One of the key goals of the rally was to urge the Indian government to move its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Hundreds of rally participants carried signs stating, “Jerusalem is the eternal capital of Israel.” “Moving our embassy to Jerusalem will honor Israel’s long-standing commitment to peace and strengthen the bond between our two ancient peoples,” said Tapan Ghosh. (J.Post)

INTEL TO BUY MOBILEYE FOR \$15 USA BILLION IN LARGEST PURCHASE OF ISRAELI TECH. USA: USA giant Intel Corp. said that it has agreed to buy Mobileye, a Jerusalem-based developer of advanced vision and driver assistance systems, for \$15.3 billion. The American chipmaker hopes the purchase will position it as a leading technology player in the fast-growing self-driving car market. Mobileye develops the sensors and artificial intelligence that allow a vehicle’s on-board computer to essentially know where it is in relation to other vehicles, pedestrians and the surroundings, the key technologies needed for cars to eventually safely drive themselves. The deal, the largest ever purchase of an Israeli high-tech company, was hailed across Israel as a sign of the country’s technological prowess. “Congratulations to Mobileye! Israeli genius, Israeli pride,” PM Netanyahu tweeted. “Israel is a superpower in knowledge, technology and innovation,” said Science and Technology Minister Ofir Akunis. “The fact that large international companies see potential in Israel and are seeking to acquire Israeli companies that lead their prospective fields is a source of national pride for our technological strength,” he said. (Times of Israel)

HEBREW U. RESEARCHERS SHOW WHICH FOODS PREVENT, PROMOTE DEMENTIA: Foods can determine whether someone will suffer from dementia in later years, according to

researchers at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's Faculty of Agriculture, Food and Environment in Rehovot. A large-scale international study that included the university recently examined how food affects brain health for people aged 50 and older. The researchers were able to show that diet affects the risk of dementia. Among the foods proven to prevent dementia are: blueberries (not just the juice), healthful fats (as in olive oil), nuts (in small amounts to avoid excess calories), and fish. Other beneficial foods include: beans and legumes, fruits, low-calorie dairy products like yogurt, chicken and whole-grain cereals. Among the foods that have been shown to promote dementia are: fried foods, sugary foods, processed foods, red meat, fat, cheese and salt. (J.Post)

HUMAN BONE TISSUE GROWN IN LAB USED TO REPAIR ISRAELI MAN'S LEG: "Game changing" surgery to regrow part of a legbone using human tissue created in a lab has been undertaken at Emek Medical Center in Afula, Israel. The man involved lost two inches (five cm.) of his shinbone in a serious car accident. For the experimental tissue-engineering technology, fat cells extracted from the patient were used to create constituent parts which were then grown on a biodegradable scaffold over the course of two weeks. Semi-solid live bone tissues that resulted were then placed back into the patient's body. Because the cells used to grow the bones are from the patient, this helps to minimize the risk of rejection. (UK Daily Mail-UK)

ISRAELI HOUSEHOLD DEBT LOW BY DEVELOPED WORLD STANDARDS: The rate of household debt in Israel is lower than in developed countries, and definitely in comparison with countries like Switzerland and Australia. According to the Bank of Israel's financial stability report for the second half of 2017, household debt in Israel totaled 42% of GDP. This means that this debt can grow by 50% before reaching what is defined as high by international standards. What explains the relatively low level of debt? Israelis are not as big savers as the Germans, for example, and spending on private consumption is rising rapidly. In recent years, spending on private consumption has even taken the place of exports as the economy's growth engine. Given both the growth of private spending and the negligible prevailing interest rate for the past three years, household debt could have been expected to balloon, but this did not happen. The Bank of Israel believes that the reasons for the absence of a credit bubble lie in the rapid rise in wages in recent years, which has enabled Israelis to pay for their shopping sprees from their own resources, without any need to increase leverage. Some also attribute the low level of debt to relatively undeveloped state of the credit market in Israel, owing to the fact that there is no real competition to provide credit. (J.Post)

IDF STRIKES 18 HAMAS TARGETS IN THE GAZA STRIP: IDF forces struck 18 Hamas targets Saturday night, 17 Feb. 2018. Among these targets were two Hamas outposts and weapons manufacturing facilities. The attack was carried out by the Israeli Air Force as well as other army units, and the figure includes the targets struck earlier in the day. Air sirens were heard in Israeli cities and towns nearby, but no rockets were fired on Israel during the night. The IDF holds Hamas responsible for all that happens in the Gaza Strip and is determined to ensure the security of the people of Israel by any means necessary, the IDF spokesperson's unit stated. The IAF struck various Hamas targets in the Gaza strip in response to a bomb detonation that wounded four Israeli soldiers as they patrolled the border fence. Two soldiers were in serious condition, one was moderately wounded and one was lightly wounded, the army said. The condition of the two seriously injured soldiers was said to be significantly improved after they were treated at the Soroka Hospital in Beersheva. (J.Post)

TRUMP'S ENVOY BLAST 'COWARDLY' HAMAS: Jason Greenblatt, President Donald Trump's Special Representative for International Negotiations, on Sunday evening 18 Feb. 2018 condemned

Gaza's Hamas leaders in the wake of the recent attacks on Israel. "HAMAS hides improvised explosive device to attack Israeli soldiers and is shooting rockets at Israel again! Such cowardly acts will only escalate violence, not build the prosperous society the people of Gaza deserve!" he tweeted. His comments follow the previous day's incident in which four IDF soldiers were injured when an explosive detonated as they patrolled near the Gaza border fence. On Saturday evening 17 Feb. 2018 a rocket was fired from Gaza and hit a home in one of the communities in the Shaar Hanegev area. There were no injuries but the house was damaged. Greenblatt's tweet also came several hours after a rocket fired from Gaza exploded in an open area in the Shaar Hanegev Regional Council in southern Israel. There were no physical injuries or damages. (Arutz-7)

ISRAEL WARNS GAZA RESIDENTS: WAKE UP, HAMAS IS USING YOU! Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories, Major General Yoav Mordechai posted a message to Gaza's citizens on his Arabic-language Facebook page. "Like we promised - we keep our word!" he wrote. "We attacked important terror targets belonging to Hamas, who is responsible for Gaza. Gaza residents, stay away from the border and do not allow Hamas to take advantage of you. Your hope is not with disturbance of order near the security fence on the Gaza's border. Unfortunately, your money, which could have been a source of hope for you, is being invested in Hamas' tunnels and military bases, and in fancy homes for its officials. Every additional deterioration in the situation is Hamas' responsibility. Don't let them lead you to hell." Earlier on Saturday evening, 17 Feb. 2018 Mordechai posted, "This incident, in which a bomb wrapped in a Palestinian Authority flag was placed on the security barrier, shows cowardice. Hamas is using the population, which is suffering as a result of Hamas' rule. "Residents of Gaza, wake up! Hamas is using you!" (Arutz-7)

‘IRAN POISED TO REPLACE ISIS ACROSS MIDDLE EAST’: Public Security Minister Gilad Erdan warned that Iran is poised to supplant ISIS across Syria following its military defeats over the past year, and urged the USA to intervene to prevent Tehran from cementing its foothold in the war-torn state. "There's a need for greater American involvement in making sure that Iran does not turn Syria into a puppet state. Every day that Iran entrenches itself in Syria brings war closer." Without Western intervention, Erdan added, Syria would be dominated by Iran, leading to the establishment of a "Shia crescent" across the Middle East. "There's no vacuum.

If the USA chooses not to be a major player in shaping the future of Syria, then others will - and trust me, it won't be the democratically elected representatives of the Syrian people. The Islamic Republic of Iran will replace ISIS, and will try to set up a Syrian Hezbollah made up of Shia militias. It's crucial that American policy-makers and opinion-leaders understand how explosive the situation really is. And that they understand that Iran and Hezbollah have hidden their missiles in the heart of Lebanese and Syrian villages, and have turned state infrastructure into a support system for their military machine. Should Iran continue to deepen its involvement in Syria, Erdan predicted, conflict between Israel and Tehran's proxies will become inevitable. "If we want to prevent such a conflict, then the time to act is now." (Arutz-7)

NETANYAHU TO IRAN: ‘NOT ONLY IRAN’S PROXIES, WE’LL ALSO ATTACK THE COUNTRY ITSELF’: Israeli PM Netanyahu warned Tehran on 17 Feb.2018 over aggressions by what he called Iran and its "proxies" in Syria, while showing a piece of an Iranian drone shot down in Israeli airspace. "I have a message to the tyrants of Tehran: Do not test Israel's resolve," Netanyahu said at the Munich Security Conference. "The Iranian regime is hurting its own people. Iran is not Nazi Germany and there are many differences between the regimes, but there are also many similar points: Iran has repeatedly said it wants to destroy Israel and is threatening the world with violence. Iran has to

decide whether it is a country or a problem. As far as I'm concerned, Iran is the greatest threat to the entire world, not just to Israel," Netanyahu said. He declared that Israel would prevent Iran from approaching its border. "We said we have red lines, we are preventing Iran from establishing itself in Syria, but Iran is trying to cross these red lines, and last week they sent a drone to Israel, which we downed. We will not allow Iran to establish a force on our border. We will attack not only Iran's proxies, but also the country itself." (Arutz-7)

NETANYAHU TO UN: THE GOLAN HEIGHTS WILL REMAIN IN ISRAEL'S HANDS FOREVER: PM Netanyahu on 16 Feb. 2018 met with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres at the Munich Security Conference. Netanyahu told Guterres, "The Golan Heights will remain in the hands of Israel forever. He further said that Israel would not allow Iran to establish itself militarily in Syria and that Iran "should not build their bases in Syria - we will act against this." Netanyahu thanked the UN Secretary General for his assistance in holding a meeting of the Security Council on the subject of IDF soldiers and Israeli civilians held by Hamas, and said that decisive action must be taken on this issue. (INN)

SWASTIKAS DRAWN ON POLISH EMBASSY IN ISRAEL: The Polish embassy in Tel Aviv was daubed with swastikas on Sunday, 18 Feb. 2018 a day after Polish PM Mateusz Morawiecki caused outrage by claiming Jews were among the perpetrators of the Holocaust. Profanities were scrawled across a noticeboard outside the embassy and a swastika had been drawn on the entrance gate. Israeli police have opened an investigation into the incident. Tensions between the two countries have spiraled since Poland passed a controversial new Holocaust-related bill earlier this month. The law, which makes it illegal to accuse the Polish nation of complicity in crimes committed by Nazi Germany, including the Holocaust, also bans the use of terms such as "Polish death camps" in relation to Auschwitz and other such camps located in Nazi-occupied Poland. Violations would be punished by a fine or a jail sentence of up to three years. Israel has been vociferous in its criticism of the new law, accusing Poland of attempting to rewrite history. But Morawiecki's comments on at a security conference in Munich prompted a fresh wave of anger.

Replying to an Israeli journalist when questioned about whether a person could be imprisoned for claiming there were Polish collaborators in the Holocaust, Morawiecki replied saying, "Of course it's not going to be punishable to say that there were Polish perpetrators, as there were Jewish perpetrators, as there were Russian perpetrators, as there were Ukrainian, not only German perpetrators." The comments sparked an outcry from Israeli leaders, including PM Netanyahu, who phoned Morawiecki to register his disgust. Netanyahu labeled the comments as "unacceptable" and insisted "there was no basis for comparing the actions of Poles during the Holocaust to those of Jews." Israel's President Rivlin described Morawiecki's remarks as a "new low." (Reuters/CNN)

PALESTINIAN LEADERS ANGRY THAT ISRAEL WON'T PAY TERRORIST SALARIES: The government of "moderate" Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas on 18 Feb. 2018 condemned Israel for deciding to no longer help it pay the salaries of jailed Palestinian terrorists. Under the terms of various signed peace agreements, Israel is obligated to collect tax revenues on behalf of the Palestinian Authority, and transfer those funds accordingly. At the same time, the Palestinian Authority is obligated to cease all incitement to violence against Israel. And Israel considers providing handsome salaries to those who attack and kill Jews to be incitement. As such, Israel's Ministerial Committee for Legislation has approved a bill promoted by Defense Minister Avigdor Liberman to deduct any amount the Palestinian Authority pays to terrorists from future tax revenue transfers. The Palestinians called the move an act of "piracy, a theft of money, and yet another crime added to the Israeli occupations' ongoing crimes against the Palestinian people." (Israel Today)

USA SANCTIONS HAMAS' HUMAN SHIELDS PRACTICE: Hamas is condemning a USA bill that sanctions the Islamic terrorist group for using civilians in Gaza as "human shields." The House unanimously passed the Hamas Human Shields Prevention Act on Wed. 14 Feb 2018. Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum said the following day that the bill sides with "the Israeli narrative." The bill steps up USA pressure against Hamas, which Washington and much of the West already considers a terrorist organization. Echoing Israeli complaints, the bill says Hamas routinely instructs Palestinians not to flee from Israeli airstrikes, forcing them to act as "human shields." Sanctions include denial of entry into the USA, revocation of any visas, and the "blocking of property," which outlaws "all transactions" in USA property. These sanctions affect all "foreign persons" found to be "responsible for, complicit in, or responsible for ordering, controlling, or otherwise directing the use of human shields by Hamas," as well as those facilitating such activities. Last month, the USA designated Hamas' leader Ismail Haniyeh as a "global terrorist". (Algemeiner/INN)

ISRAEL BLAMED FOR 'CATASTROPHE' IN GAZA: Bolivia's UN Ambassador, Sacha Llorentty Soliz, last week accused Israel of bearing the primary responsibility for what he called "the catastrophic situation in Gaza." Llorentty Soliz's comment came after the UN's Mideast envoy, Nickolay Mladenov, briefed the Security Council behind closed doors at the request of Kuwait and Bolivia on the humanitarian situation in Gaza. Llorentty Soliz said following the meeting that Mladenov had told the Council that drinking water is short, hospitals have been closed and "doctors stopped doing surgeries." Mladenov also cited Gaza's 47% unemployment rate, rising to 60% for young people, he said. The Bolivian envoy further said that Mladenov highlighted that the situation in Gaza has been worsened by the USA suspension of millions of dollars in funding for the UN agency for "Palestinian refugees", UNRWA. Llorentty Soliz added that he told the council the primary responsibility for "the catastrophic situation in Gaza" rests with Israel. Despite the accusations, Israel continues to regularly allow humanitarian aid and construction materials into Gaza, even though its terrorist rulers continue to attack southern Israel with rockets and openly threaten to destroy the Jewish state. Israel's UN ambassador, Danny Danon, told media sources on 14 Feb. 2018 that the responsibility for the situation in Gaza lies with Hamas. (Arutz-7)

WHO'S RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MESS IN GAZA: We know from both Israeli and Palestinian estimates that Hamas spends approximately \$100 million a year - about 20% of the budget of the government in Gaza - on preparing for and executing attacks against Israel. The NY Times reported last week; "Five concrete plants have been set up, supplying 20 digging sites, at a cost of nearly \$1 billion," all for the purpose of digging tunnels designed to facilitate the kidnapping and murdering of Jews. Given Hamas' steadfast commitment to destroy Israel, and given their dedication to spend every last shekel on tunnels, Qassam missiles, drones, and other weapons - if Israel isn't going to provide free electricity, sewage treatment, and hospital care to the terror group busy trying to kill it - we're looking at a deep humanitarian crisis. (Tablet)

GAZA'S MISERY IS NOT ISRAEL'S FAULT: Palestinian misery in the Gaza Strip portrays a harvest of hatred for all the world to see: Billions of dollars of humanitarian aid has been seeded into an endless pit of Islamic disdain for Israel and the Jewish people - has been spent on weapons instead of schools and sanitation facilities - squandered or siphoned into foreign bank accounts by terrorist leaders. The Palestinians could have had thriving orchards and green houses, businesses and homes built by Israelis forced to abandon the Gaza Strip "for the sake of peace." But Gaza is in ruins, racked with poverty and despair because her hate-filled Hamas terrorist leaders continue to shout out, plot, and

perpetuate violence and destruction against the Jewish nation. Instead of a new state, global assistance to prosper, a future for their young, Hamas leaders rule over a putrefying sore of human misery. Like madmen they are always preparing for the next war against Israel; building terrorist tunnels, better projectiles, targeting Israel's Negev communities - then complaining to the world they have no food, no fuel.... What Gaza is, is what Gaza Palestinians and their Israel-hating, jihadist leaders have chosen. All that was ever asked of them was to recognize the Jewish nation, stop terrorist violence, and abide by previous peace agreements. They choose instead; gall, destruction and chaos. Their harvest is bitter fruit, and it is not Israel's fault. (JNN)

GAZA'S ONLY POWER PLANT SHUT DOWN OVER FUEL SHORTAGE: The sole electricity plant in the Gaza Strip stopped working Thurs. 15 Feb. 2018 because of a lack of fuel, officials said, as concerns grow over worsening humanitarian conditions in the Hamas-controlled area. The closure of the plant, which normally provides around a fifth of Gaza's electricity, will exacerbate an already critical power shortage. Gaza's two million residents receive a mere four hours of electricity a day, a situation for which they blame Hamas and the Palestinian Authority. Hamas leaders enjoy electricity 24 hours a day. However, they refuse to invest international aid money in infrastructure for Gaza's residents, preferring instead to invest in terror tunnels, rockets, and mortars, intended for use against Israeli civilians. Despite Hamas' attacks on Israeli civilians, and the fact that Gaza is no longer Israel's responsibility, Israel is set to increase the electricity supply to Gaza. (Arutz-7)

NO MORE PRISON VISITS FOR HAMAS MEMBERS IN ISRAELI JAILS, STATE TELLS COURT: The government has stopped visits to Hamas prisoners from Gaza by their families in Judea & Samaria over the past few weeks, said a lawyer representing the government to the High Court of Justice on Thurs. 15 Feb. 2018. The announcement came as part of the government's response to a petition submitted by the family of 1st Lt. Hadar Goldin, who was declared killed in action during Operation Protective Edge in Gaza in the summer of 2014 – but Hamas is still holding some of his remains. The Goldin family petitioned the High Court in November 2017 against the cabinet in an attempt to force the government to take action against Hamas to return the bodies of Goldin and Staff Sgt. Oron Shaul, who was also declared dead during the Gaza war and whose body Hamas still refuses to hand over. Shaul's family now refuses to accept his death.

The Goldin family asked the High Court to order the government not to return the bodies of any more Hamas terrorists and to make the conditions for Hamas members in Israeli prisons harsher. Thursday's hearing dealt mostly with the issue of allowing Hamas members and their families to enter Israel for humanitarian reasons. The Goldin family, represented by attorneys Prof. Aviad Hacoen and Oded Svorai, says the government should adhere strictly to a cabinet decision from January 2017 on the matter, which would completely ban any such visits to Israel, including those for medical treatments. Goldin's parents, Leah and Professor Simcha Goldin, said after the hearing, "The time has come to make it clear to Hamas and its people that the days of medical treatments in Israel are over and from now and until the soldiers are returned, these treatments will be provided in Qatar, Turkey, Egypt and Jordan." (Ha'aretz)

THE PALESTINIAN TEXTBOOK PROBLEM: Dr. Arnon Gross, formerly a senior Arabic language broadcaster at Voice of Israel Radio, read 200 Arabic textbooks to understand what Palestinian students are taught. He found that the school system drills into the heads of students that there is no entity called "Israel." And if it does exist, it should be called "the Zionist entity" that must be destroyed. He says the books clearly "demonize the Jews and Israel, and encourage the violent struggle to liberate Palestine from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea." The area in question

here is not just Judea & Samaria but the whole Land of Israel. Gross stresses that from year to year, Palestinian textbooks have not become more moderate - quite the opposite, in fact. (Israel Hayom)

HOW ISRAEL IS LEADING THE WAY IN SMART CITY TECHNOLOGY: More than eighty municipal delegations from around the world converged on Tel Aviv last week for the Muni-Expo Urban Innovation conference – meant to highlight smart-city technologies. It is a sign that foreign investors and mayors are increasingly clamoring for Israeli-developed technologies in urban waste, water and traffic management; from using smartphone app Waze for navigating traffic to relying on local cybersecurity tools. The market for smart-city technologies could be worth more than \$1.5 trillion by 2020, according to a study by business consulting firm Frost & Sullivan. That could provide Israeli smart city start-ups with lucrative opportunities, such as installing sensors on streetlights – to turn them off when not in use – or collect garbage based on when the bin gets full. “We save more than NIS 2 million a year on the new system with collecting garbage,” said Haim Bibas, mayor of Modi’in. “We’re using sensors and the sensor is part of the garbage truck and the garbage can. If the bin is empty, the collection services are reduced. If it’s not empty, we pick it up more.” The Muni-Expo International Conference was held on Feb. 13 and 14, 2018 at the Tel Aviv Exhibition Grounds. (J.Post)



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