

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update March 15, 2018 (28th of Adar, 5778)



ISRAEL PROVIDES 40 GENERATORS TO PAPUA NEW GUINEA: In the wake of a devastating earthquake in Papua New Guinea, Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has delivered 40 electricity generators to affected communities. The generators were delivered on 8 March 2018 at the Israeli Embassy in Australia. On 26 Feb. 2018, a 7.5 magnitude earthquake left 100 people dead and cut off electricity to 150,000. Israel was one of the first countries to send aid. On 8 March 2018 the country was rocked by a 6.8 magnitude aftershock. Papua New Guinea PM Peter O'Neill thanked Israel for its friendship and support. "Relations between Papua New Guinea and the State of Israel are strong, and our government and the people of PNG appreciate the support and friendship of Israel during these challenging times," O'Neill said. "We look forward to further cooperation and the enhancement of the close ties between our countries and our peoples." (Algemeiner)

ISRAELI RESEARCHERS DEVELOP INFRARED FILM FOR SMARTPHONES, SELF DRIVING CARS: Researchers at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev have developed low-cost infrared sensors that can be used to create the world's thinnest night-vision glasses as well as revolutionize smartphones and self-driving cars. Prof. Gabby Sarusi has developed a stamp-like device of which one side reads 1,500-nanometer infrared wavelengths, and converts them to images that are

visible to the human eye on the other side of the stamp. The film can be put in front of normal glasses or telescopes, Sarusi said, transforming them into infrared devices. Or it can be placed onto simple vision sensors, transforming them into infrared sensors with the ability to see objects that the human eye cannot. The technology could help replace the heavy night goggles used by soldiers with lightweight, low-power consumption glasses, he said. There are wider and even more interesting applications to the technology, Sarusi said — for example, in the area of autonomous cars. Such a device could be used on sensors for autonomous cars to improve vision, by converting infrared light into visible light and allowing better vision in fog and darkness. The film could be used on the cameras that help autonomous cars to “see” better as well as on the LIDAR sensors that are used by these cars navigate the streets. Sarusi exhibited his technology last week, in which researchers showcased their coolest developments, which included small pollinating drones to make up for a lack of bees; wall-climbing, spiderlike robots for search and rescue operations and fruit-picking robots. (Times of Israel)

RAMBAM, STANFORD TO COOPERATE ON FUTURE OF MEDICINE: Rambam Health Care Campus in Haifa and Stanford Medicine signed a cooperation agreement to work together on the future of medicine. The institutions announced last week that they will cooperate in areas including medical innovation; research in collaboration with Big Data and Machine Learning; cutting-edge drug development; and trauma and emergency preparedness. The announcement came in California during the Stanford Medicine-Rambam Symposium on Planning for the Next Generation, an event where the two institutions explored ways to share resources and collaborate. “During the conference we discussed precise, personalized health issues and the issue of health in Israel, including the complex relations in Israel between its local diverse population and with its neighbors,” said Prof. Rafi Beyar, director of Rambam. (Arutz-7)

NY MEGA-EVENT PREPARES PROSPECTIVE IMMIGRANTS FOR ISRAEL: Nearly 1,500 prospective immigrants to Israel attended a mega-event to learn about what it takes to make aliyah. The Mega Aliyah Fair held in New York City at John Jay College drew singles, families and retirees looking to prepare themselves for such a big move. The event provided information and workshops on subjects such as financial planning and budgeting, choosing a community, building a strategic job search plan, navigating the Israeli health care system, and buying or renting a home in Israel. There also was programming for children, visits by Israeli vendors and service providers and an Israeli-style market. Some attendees were in the beginning stages of planning their moves, while others were gathering information to help them decide whether to make the move. Additional Aliyah Fairs are planned this month in Los Angeles, Montreal and Toronto. (Times of Israel)

FINANCE MINISTER: PROGRAM FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING TO CONTINUE: Finance Minister Moshe Kahlon on 12 March 2018 promised that the government-funded projects to enable young couples to purchase homes would not end prematurely due to political tensions. "We have received hundreds of questions from parents and young couples, asking whether the Mechir Lamishtaken project will continue if there is a political crisis," Kahlon wrote on his Facebook page. "At the end of the month, there will be approximately 53,000 young couples who have the right to own an apartment at a decent price in the area they chose. I want to reassure you: As long as we are in the government - whether this government or the next government - we will not allow anyone to torpedo

this plan, which we worked so hard on. Mechir Lemishtaken offers eligible first-time buyers the opportunity to enter a lottery and win the right to a brand-new, subsidized apartment. According to Kahlon, the program aims to "put an end to the building companies' and contractors' ability to run Israel's housing market." (INN)

35,000 RACE THROUGH JERUSALEM IN CAPITAL'S LARGEST EVER MARATHON:

More than 35,000 runners, including some 4,000 from 72 different countries, joined the Jerusalem Marathon on Friday morning, 9 March 2018, the largest-ever number to take part in the annual race. The winner, it was announced shortly after 9:30 a.m., was Kipkoge Shadrack, 27, of Kenya. Shadrack finished the race in 2:21.26. The half-marathon race kicked off at 6:45 a.m., followed by the full marathon at 7. The 10-kilometer race began at 9:30. The guest of honor at the marathon was Olympic medalist and long-distance running world champion Haile Gebrselassie from Ethiopia. International runners came from 72 countries — including China, the USA, Germany, Poland, Portugal, and Lithuania. The city of Hong Kong sent the greatest number of runners from outside Israel, followed by Los Angeles, Beijing and London. But, perhaps befitting an event that marks 50 years since the reunification of the city, the vast majority of runners in the full, 42.2-kilometer marathon were Jerusalemites, the Jerusalem municipality said. (Arutz-7)

USA AND IDF TROOPS, IN MAJOR JOINT DRILL, SIMULATING BATTLE ON 3 FRONTS:

Juniper Cobra, the largest joint USA-Israeli air-defense exercise, is under way, with thousands of troops deployed across the country simulating scenarios where Israel faces missile barrages simultaneously on various fronts. In the two years since the last Juniper Cobra exercise, Israel's enemies have changed. And while 2017 was a relatively quiet year for Israel, the IDF's Aerial Defense Division successfully intercepted drones in the North, as well as rockets fired from the Gaza Strip and Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. The environment in which Israel finds itself is "explosive," said Brig.-Gen Zvika Haimovitch, head of the Aerial Defense Division, adding that "at the beginning of the next war the enemy will use more fire in the opening barrage." Some 2,000 IDF Aerial Defense troops will be participating alongside 2,500 USA troops – some 1,400 Marines and 1,100 sailors – in the largest joint exercise with the USA military's European Command. Over the course of the two-week-long exercise troops will practice challenging and complex scenarios adapted to Israel's operational reality such as missile threats in various sectors simultaneously as well as the threat posed by precise missiles that Iran is trying to produce for Hezbollah. While "the exercise demonstrates the close and strategic cooperation between the IDF and the USA armed forces," Haimovitch continued, Israel has the capabilities to protect the country from threats posed by its enemies. Nevertheless, "you want to have all the capabilities and the Americans bring additional strengths." (J.Post)

HEZBOLLAH IN LEBANON FEARS ISRAELI ATTACK, DECLARES STATE OF EMERGENCY:

Hezbollah in Lebanon has declared a state of emergency for fear of an Israeli attack approved by the USA. "Hezbollah declared its ranks in readiness for the past two days, for fear of Israeli aggression on Lebanon," media sources reported on 8 March 2018. "High alert was declared in light of information received that the Israeli army is conducting secret military maneuvers jointly with the United States, which are currently taking place in the country and in the Mediterranean," said journalist Kamal Halaf, who is close to the Hezbollah terrorist group. (J.Post)

NAFTALI BENNETT: 'IN THE ERA OF TRUMP, TIME IS NO LONGER ON PALESTINIANS' SIDE': According to the Jewish Home chief, President Trump's historic December 2017 declaration recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital and announcing plans for the relocation of the USA embassy removed any incentive for the Palestinian Authority leadership to delay final status talks. The declaration, argued Bennett, has the potential to "allow or enable peace." The Palestinians, continued Bennett, "over the past 50 years, had a very simple strategy. Time was on their side, so they'll just wait. And every time they wait, they get a better deal. If you look through '93, through 2000, in 2007 the deal just got better. So why not wait? What Trump has actually done is to reverse that trend, and suddenly, the Palestinians realize that time is not necessarily on their side, and maybe they should start moving." Following Trump's Jerusalem announcement, Palestinian Authority officials declared Trump administration officials, including VP Mike Pence, persona non grata in the PA. They snubbed him during his Jan. 2018 visit to Israel. PA chief Mahmoud Abbas has sought an alternative to direct talks with Israel and has refused to consider the Trump administration an honest broker for negotiations since Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. "They're not talking to the Americans; not talking to the Israelis," Bennett said of the PA leadership. "They've sort of fell in love with being the victim, the eternal victim, even though there's so much good stuff that we can do together." (Arutz-7)

HALEY: I'M CONCERNED FOR ISRAEL: Israel's PM Netanyahu met with USA Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley in New York on 8 March 2018, following Netanyahu's visit to Washington last week, where he met with President Donald Trump and gave the headline address at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee conference. During the meeting, Netanyahu thanked Haley for her efforts and the work of the Trump administration to combat anti-Israel sentiment at the UN. "Everything is fine and you're making it better," Netanyahu said. "I wanted to tell you how much we appreciate the defense of Israel and the truth that the president and you bring into these cloistered halls that are so damp with anti-Israel venom," Netanyahu said of the United Nations headquarters in Manhattan. He called the Trump administration's attempts to change UN behavior vis-à-vis the Jewish state "a tsunami of fresh air."

Haley accused the UN of "abusive" treatment of Israel, but said she was optimistic about the possibility for change, noting that the tone had already softened. Haley, added that she "felt bad" for Israel's Ambassador to the UN Danny Danon "and what he had to put up with". Turning to Iran, the USA Ambassador said she was "concerned" about Israel in the face of Iran's increasingly aggressive behavior, hinting at the possibility of a wider conflict between Israel and Tehran. "Iran is a big focus right now. We're very concerned – I'm very concerned for Israel. I think that they're feeling more and more threatened. That's something that we're very focused on." PM Netanyahu discussed his recent meeting with President Trump, saying that the president was "completely focused" on the threat posed by Tehran. (Arutz-7)

FARRAKHAN: JEWS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR STOPPING BLACK ADVANCEMENT: Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan released a video statement via Twitter last week accusing Jews of "controlling" the USA government, and actively conspiring to use the levers of government to bar

“black advancement”. The 84-year-old black supremacist leader publicized comments made earlier claiming that “the Jews” were responsible for a recent wave of criticism of Farrakhan, as well as alleged efforts by the USA government to block “black advancement”. “The FBI has been the worst enemy of black advancement. The Jews have control over those agencies of government,” Farrakhan tweeted. In the attached video clip, Farrakhan referred to American Jewry as “This enemy”. The tweet drew criticism from some Democratic lawmakers, who have largely remained silent following a wave of revelations regarding the ties between senior Democrats and the controversial Chicago figure. “This is unacceptable in a progressive coalition or any political coalition,” tweeted Hawaii Senator Brian Schatz last week. “Anti-Semitism has no place in American society. We must reject this, left right and center.” Over the past few months, a number of senior Democratic officials have been cited for ties with Farrakhan, including former President Barack Obama, who met with the Nation of Islam leader on Capitol Hill in 2005 and posed for a joint photograph. (Arutz-7)

CZECH PRESIDENT WANTS EMBASSY MOVE TO JERUSALEM EXPEDITED: Milos Zeman, recently elected to his second five-year term as President of the Czech Republic, would like to speed up the process of moving his country’s embassy to Jerusalem. After the USA announcement that their Jerusalem consulate would become an embassy on 14 May 2018 for Israel’s 70th anniversary, Israel’s Ambassador to Prague, Daniel Meron, tweeted last week that, Zeman would like his country to follow USA President Donald Trump’s lead. “It makes me truly happy because, as I said during my visit to Israel four years ago, I would like to transfer the Czech Embassy to Jerusalem, and had it happened, we would have been the first to do so,” he noted. (INN)

YAD VASHEM LAUNCHES FREE ONLINE COURSE ON ANTI-SEMITISM: With an onslaught of anti-Semitic themes prevalent on today's social media, anti-Semitism is currently entering the private sphere of millions, and acts and rhetoric targeting Jews are still prevalent. Yet for a phenomenon so widespread, its boundaries and expressions often come into debate. As such, Yad Vashem has partnered with FutureLearn to provide a free online course which analyzes the history of anti-Semitism as well as its current nature and expressions. Titled "Anti-Semitism: From its Origins to the Present," the six-week course investigates over 2,000 years of history, explaining how anti-Semitism has manifested itself through various eras of the past – including, of course, its ultimate articulation during the Shoah – and its new forms to be grappled with in modern society. The course is centered on video clips by 50 prominent intellectuals and historians, such as Prof. Irwin Colter, EMET prizewinner Prof. Yehuda Bauer and Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks. For Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center, the course exemplifies the relevancy of the Shoah for generations to come. The course, now open to for registration, will be available to the public from 19 March 2018. (J.Post)

NETANYAHU RECEIVES HERO’S WELCOME AT AIPAC: PM Benjamin Netanyahu, embroiled by evolving scandals at home, received a hero's welcome by more than 18,000 attendees at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee on Tues. 6 March 2018. Netanyahu, who was greeted alongside his wife Sara with standing ovations, saluted Trump on his stance on Iran, repeatedly saying "we must stop Iran, and we will stop Iran" to thunderous ovations from the crowd. The prime minister said that "darkness is descending on our region," adding that "Iran is building an aggressive empire."

He noted that Trump has made it clear that he, too, will never accept a nuclear Iran. "If the flaws of the nuclear deal are not fixed, he will walk away and restore sanctions," he said. "Israel will be right there by America's side, and so will other countries in the region." Netanyahu added that he appreciated the efforts of the Trump administration's delegation, including Jared Kushner, working on his Middle East peace plan, but said that Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas must stop supporting terror before there can be peace. "I have a message for President Abbas: Stop paying terrorists," Netanyahu said. Israel's prime minister said the Israeli military has never been stronger and thanked American presidents, Congress and AIPAC "for helping bring this about." Netanyahu went on to say that Israel's intelligence agencies "have foiled dozens of major terrorist attacks across the world in dozens of countries." (Ha'aretz)

“FIX THE IRAN DEAL OR CANCEL IT”: Israel's PM Netanyahu on Tues. 6 March 2018, held a series of meetings on Capitol Hill following his speech at the AIPAC Policy Conference. The prime minister met with leaders including Senate Majority Leader Sen. Mitch McConnell and Senate Minority Leader Sen. Chuck Schumer. Later, Netanyahu met with members of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee. He also met with House Speaker Paul Ryan and with members of the leadership of the House of Representatives from both parties. Netanyahu told the lawmakers, "This place represents the American people, the great friends of the people of Israel, who give thanks to all of you." Speaker Ryan responded, "In the name of the bipartisan leadership here in the House of Representatives, we welcome you, Prime Minister, you are a great friend and a great ally, we are very excited by the ongoing dialogue between us." The prime minister described Iran's aggression in the region and its attempts to establish a military base in Syria, and noted Israel's determined position to prevent it. Netanyahu also presented the dangers in the Iranian nuclear deal and said that there was a need to fully correct the failures of the agreement or to cancel it. (Arutz-7)

"TRUMP MADE ‘HISTORIC’ CHANGES TO USA-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP”: Addressing close to 20,000 attendees at the 2018 AIPAC conference in Washington DC, Friedman hailed President Trump's "historic" recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, adding that it capped off a year of "historic firsts", including the first visit to the Western Wall in Jerusalem by a sitting USA president. "I am so proud of what the Trump administration has accomplished this past year in regards to Israel. We owe Trump a tremendous debt of attitude. We entered historic territory when Trump declared Jerusalem as the capital of Jerusalem. Friedman also used his address Tuesday to lambast what he called "disingenuous" supporters of Israel, a veiled reference to self-described peace organizations. "Using that phrase suggests Israel is not pro-peace. Saying pro-Israel and pro-peace is a redundancy. If you support Israel, you support peace and it is dangerous to suggest otherwise." (Arutz-7)

REPORT: POLISH OFFICIALS NOT WELCOME AT WHITE HOUSE OVER HOLOCAUST LAW: A leading news site in Poland reported that it had obtained documents suggesting that the country's highest officials are not welcome at the White House over a law limiting discourse on World War II. The documents mean that President Andrzej Duda and PM Mateusz Morawiecki will not be received by President Trump or any other member of the administration in the United States, the report said. Staff from the USA Embassy in Warsaw also threatened to suspend funding for joint military projects between the United States and Poland. The alleged crisis in USA-Polish relations is over the

passing last month of a law that criminalizes blaming Poland for Nazi crimes. Critics of the law include Israeli PM Netanyahu, who called it “baseless.” Yad Vashem, the Holocaust museum in Jerusalem warned it is detrimental to debate and research of the genocide. And Israeli politicians, including the opposition lawmaker Yair Lapid, said it whitewashes what they called Polish complicity in the Holocaust – an allegation many Poles find offensive and that the Polish government reject. The USA Embassy in Poland last month warned that it was “concerned about the repercussions” for bilateral relations after the Polish Senate passed the legislation. (J.Post/JTA)

NETANYAHU: CONSCRIPTION CRISIS WITH HAREDIM MAY TOPPLE GOVERNMENT:

The coalition crisis revolving around Haredi conscription into the Israeli Defense Force could bring down the government, PM Netanyahu hinted on 5 March, 2018. Netanyahu, at a briefing with reporters after meeting with USA President Donald Trump, said, “I want to come to an agreement that will enable the government to fulfill its term until Nov. 2019, but at the present time I can’t say that this goal is achievable.” The prime minister said that he, and even more so his chief of staff Yoav Horowitz, have been dealing with the crisis since arriving in the USA on 4 March, and have had frequent conversations with United Torah Judaism chairman Ya’acov Litzman, as well as with other coalition partners. Netanyahu dismissed the notion that he is interested in a coalition crisis in order to give him a reason to call an early election before Attorney-General Avichai Mandelblit makes a decision to indict him in any of the various corruption investigations under way. “This is simply not true,” said Netanyahu. “We are trying to solve the crisis. If there is goodwill, we will solve it; if not, we won’t. I have goodwill.” (J.Post)

FOUR OUT OF FIVE ISRAELI JEWS WANT HAREDIM TO SERVE IN ARMY:

An overwhelming majority of the Jewish public opposes legislation being demanded by the haredi parties to reinstate blanket exemptions from military service for yeshiva students. Seventy-nine percent of the Jewish public opposes the legislation, compared to 21% in favor, the poll conducted by the Smith Polling Institute for the Hiddush religious pluralism lobbying group showed. The poll also demonstrated blanket opposition to the bill among every political party in the Knesset other than United Torah Judaism and Shas. The legislation being advanced by UTJ and Shas would create a Basic Law stipulating that Torah study is a supreme value of the Jewish state, and undertaking this endeavor for a lengthy period entitles a person to an exemption from military service. The haredi parties have demanded that the legislation be passed through all three readings in Knesset and into law before the end of the Knesset’s Spring Session, and condition supporting the state budget for 2019 on the Basic Law’s passage. “At stake is not only the principle of sharing Israel’s civic burden, but also the question of whether there is a limit to the obsequiousness of the civil parties in dealing with the ultra-Orthodox politicians’ blackmail (and the rabbis who pull their strings),” said Hiddush CEO Rabbi Uri Regev. “This is a test for both the coalition parties and for the opposition parties, in view of the broad public opposition to the demands of the ultra-Orthodox parties. Now it is clearer than ever that the public will call to account those who continue to treat equality of civic burden and blood as up for sale.” (J.Post)

NETANYAHU: SAUDI ARABIA NOW ALLOWING AIR INDIA TO FLY ACROSS TERRITORY TO ISRAEL:

When Air India begins direct flights from New Delhi to Tel Aviv in the coming weeks, it will take about as long to fly to the Indian capital as it currently takes to fly to

London, PM Netanyahu said on 5 March 2018. At a briefing with reporters after his meeting with USA President Donald Trump, Netanyahu said that Air India signed an agreement that day enabling the flights to and from Israel over Saudi Arabia. Up until now the Saudis have not allowed planes either bound to or coming from Israeli to overly their territory, something that has added a number of hours and more expense on flights from Tel Aviv to the East. The route over Saudi Arabia will cut down the flying time to India from some eight hours to about five and a half. If the flights over Saudi Arabia are finalized, it would be a small step toward normalized interactions between the two countries. It would mark a significant departure from past Saudi policies and is coming amid a steady stream of reports of security and intelligence cooperation between Israel and Saudi Arabia, as well as with some of the other Persian Gulf states. (J.Post)



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