

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update June 25, 2020 ***(3rd Tamuz, 5780)***

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Israel-Greece Pipelines: 'Gas, Electricity, Tourism'; Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his wife, Sarah Netanyahu, hosted a dinner Tuesday for Greek Prime Minister Kiriakos Mitsotakis, his wife Marva, and their son Constantine at the Prime Minister's Residence in Jerusalem. "We had excellent discussions today and I would say that we are promoting three pipelines: first, the gas pipeline; second, the electricity pipeline—it connects Israel, Cyprus, and Greece; and third, the tourism pipeline," Netanyahu noted. "We hope we can reopen flights between our two countries. We have set our deadline for August 1st. It depends on the corona. Currently, the number of cases is rising. We hope to control it and bring the number down again. We very much want to see Israelis flying to Greece and Greeks flying to Israel," Netanyahu added.

Greek PM in Israel Says Turkey a 'Threat to Regional Peace'; In his first foreign trip since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, Mitsotakis condemned Turkey's "aggressive behavior in the eastern Mediterranean." Along with Cyprus, Israel and Greece signed an agreement in January on building an undersea pipeline to carry gas from the eastern Mediterranean to Europe. Turkey stands opposed to the deal and has conducted an air and naval exercise in the eastern Mediterranean. The European Union (EU) is currently weighing retaliatory measures as Israel plans to annex parts of Judea and Samaria, a step included in a US peace initiative. The Greek delegation will not meet with Palestinian Authority (PA) officials, who have categorically rejected Washington's plan. But in an interview published by Israeli daily Yediot Aharonot, Mitsotakis said he would speak to PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas "once I return to Athens." "We want to see the Israelis and the Palestinians living alongside one another in peace and security," he said. More than 450,000 Israelis and 2.7 million PA Arabs live in Judea and Samaria.

Israel Aims to End Imports by Making Own Masks; At an industrial park in Sderot, a city abutting the Gaza Strip, factory staff this week started producing the first of millions of high-spec N95 masks. Sion Medical Company usually produces dressings, gauzes, and other medical products, only turning its attention to masks when the Israeli government ordered millions of them. Israel has requested 40 million regular sanitary masks, plus 11 million N95 models which offer a higher level of protection. "We have risen to the challenge that the state of Israel put forward, to make enough masks as quickly as possible so that Israel

doesn't need to import anymore," said Lev, barely heard above the whirl of machines. He said the firm can produce four million regular masks and two million N95 ones a month, the latter with machines imported from China by the defense ministry. Mask-wearing is mandatory in public and Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu has urged Israelis to stick to the rule to keep infection rates down.

Israeli Scientists Develop Self-Disinfecting Face Mask; Israeli scientists have developed a self-disinfecting, reusable face mask as the demand for protective masks has risen dramatically since the start of the coronavirus pandemic. The mask was developed at the Haifa-based Technion-Israel Institute of Technology's Faculty of Materials Science and Engineering by a team of scientists led by Professor Yair Ein-Eli. A patent application has been submitted in the United States, the Technion said in a statement. The research team is talking to industrial companies about mass producing the masks, according to the statement. In some countries, demand has far outstripped the supply of face masks amid the pandemic. Here's how the mask works: A layer of carbon fibers is heated using a USB port with a low current source, such as a phone charger, in a process that destroys viruses that may have accumulated on the mask. In Israel, wearing a mask in public is mandatory, and that not in compliance can be fined.

Netanyahu: The World is Realizing the Truth about the Iran Nuclear Threat; The International Atomic Energy Agency has begun to realize that Iran is lying about its nuclear ambitions, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said at the opening of Sunday's cabinet meeting. "Iran continues to lie to the international community in order to attain nuclear weapons," Netanyahu warned. "Today, the IAEA understands...what we have said for years." Netanyahu referred to the UN nuclear watchdog's resolution adopted over the weekend, which he said "speaks for itself," calling on Iran to cooperate with the agency and grant it access to suspected former nuclear sites. Defense Minister and Alternate Prime Minister Benny Gantz said, "Iran is, first of all, a problem for the world, then a regional problem, undermining the stability of the whole Middle East, and it is also a challenge for Israel." Gantz said, "the security matters that stand out less in light of the challenges of coronavirus have not disappeared and they will return."

Trump, Russia Opposed Obama-Era UN Resolution on Israel, Transcript Shows; Russia did not support a UN Security Council Resolution that the Obama administration considered pushing in order to force parameters for a peace agreement on Israel and the Palestinians, as indicated by recently declassified phone conversations between US President Donald Trump's former adviser Michael Flynn and Russia's ambassador to the US at the time, Sergey Kislyak. The resolution included a Palestinian state based on pre-1967 borders, and was "more like what the Palestinians want and very far from the Trump plan," according to a source close to the matter. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu enlisted then-president-elect Donald Trump and his staff to try to block the Resolution, and ultimately convinced Russian President Vladimir Putin to threaten a veto. The resolution was never actually submitted to the UNSC because it had no chance of passing.

Lebanese Leader: We Don't Want to be Cut Off from the West; The head of Lebanon's Kataeb Party, Sami Gemayel, spoke out against the Hezbollah terrorist movement after the movement's Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah gave an address on Tuesday concerning the country's financial and political crisis. "No one has the right to drag us into the place they want, and no one has the right to impose on us a lifestyle that we don't want," said Gemayel concerning Hezbollah, adding that Hezbollah was preventing the Lebanese Army from closing illegal smuggling crossings along Lebanon's borders, according to Asharq Al-Awsat. Hezbollah has been accused of smuggling goods and dollars from Lebanon into Syria and harming the Lebanese economy, as well as smuggling weapons from Syria into Lebanon. During his speech on Tuesday, Nasrallah denied smuggling dollars out of Lebanon. The Kataeb Party leader stressed that Lebanon doesn't "want to live in isolation and be cut off from the West, Arabs and the entire world."

Paul McCartney Gets Birthday Wishes from Israel; Israel wished Beatles legend, Sir Paul McCartney, a happy birthday on Thursday, the rocker's birthday. McCartney's last performance in Israel was in 2008 and

was a massive success. Rumors began to spark in late 2019 that McCartney was planning a return sometime in the near future. McCartney is reportedly "in talks" with officials and promoters and the chance for another Tel Aviv show by the man once dubbed "the cute Beatle" is "extremely high." McCartney is currently married to a Jewish transportation mogul named Nancy Shevell and was previously married to the late photographer and animal rights activist Linda Eastman, who was also Jewish.

Cabinet Approves Establishment of Ramat Trump; The Cabinet on Sunday approved the proposal to establish the community of Ramat Trump in the northern Golan Heights. Settlement Affairs Minister Tzipi Hotovely said at the Cabinet meeting, "The decision to establish the community of Ramat Trump is great news for the settlement in the Golan Heights. The Settlement Affairs Ministry is starting to work to prepare the ground to be populated by the first core of families, which in the future will grow to 300 families." Ramat Trump is named after the 45th President of the United States, President Donald Trump, as a token of gratitude for his support of Israel and the decision that led to US recognition of Israeli sovereignty in the Golan. "The area does not yet fully realize its potential in terms of population size. The expansion of the settlement in the Golan is great news for an important and flourishing land, whose historical roots reach as far back as the time of the Hasmoneans," Hotovely added.

Israeli-Designed Instant Coronavirus Breathalyzer Could Be Rolled Out Globally; An Israeli-designed one-minute breath test to tell whether someone has coronavirus could soon be installed at hundreds of global entry points pending FDA approval. The clever contraption, which uses frequency to detect the deadly SARS-CoV-2, was designed by a team based at an Israeli university and has a success rate of more than 90 percent in trials to-date. Current tests for the new coronavirus use throat or nose swabs and look for particles but the team led by Professor Gabby Sarusi at the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev thought outside the box in terms of detection. Sarusi said the idea was for these breathalyzers to be installed throughout the country at places such as ports, workplaces, and cruise ships, with each device processing breath from about 4,000 people every day. The next steps are to conclude the validation process then get FDA approval, for which there is a Covid-19 fast-tracking system in-place, meaning that the tests could be seen in public as soon as September.

Coronavirus Cabinet Approves Renewal of Train Services, Cultural Events; Trains will finally return to Israel's railways on Monday after the coronavirus cabinet approved the renewal of services under tight health restrictions on Wednesday evening. In addition, the ministers decided that cultural events will be permitted with crowds limited to 250 attendees, or 500 attendees if approved by the director-general of the Culture and Sports Ministry. They designated the Ajami neighborhoods of Jaffa, Rahat, and Ar'ara as "red zones" with high levels of infection, where schools will now be closed and gatherings limited to 10 people. The meeting held at the Foreign Ministry took place as official data showed that Israel had recorded its largest number of daily cases in two months. Some 288 people tested positive for the novel coronavirus in the last 24 hours, the Health Ministry reported Wednesday evening, bringing the total number of active cases to 3,993. At last count, 19,783 cases of coronavirus had been confirmed in Israel, and the death toll was 302.

Minister Yuli Edelstein Warns: Lack of Discipline Will Result in Another Lockdown; Health Minister Yuli Edelstein warned during today's meeting of the Coronavirus Cabinet that non-compliance with Health Ministry instructions may lead to tragedy. Edelstein said that while the Ministry was in favor of it, "if there is no public discipline, we will not re-open the railway system and cultural institutions. We can't allow the morbidity rate to go back up as a result of people ignoring instructions." 288 new infections were recorded over the last 24 hours. The number of virus patients in Israel now stands at 3,993, with 36 of them in critical condition and 29 on respirators. Earlier in the day, the government declared the neighborhoods of Ar'ara in the north of the country and the Bedouin town of Rahat in the Negev desert as restricted areas. The government will also impose a partial closure on the predominantly-Arab Ajami neighborhood of Jaffa, and

the nearby Tzahalon neighborhood. A daycare center in Jerusalem was also temporarily closed after a two-year-old was diagnosed with the coronavirus.

EU Cuts Funding to Arab Anti-Israel Organization; The European Union has for the first time canceled a grant to a Palestinian Arab non-profit organization for refusing to sign a clause that no terrorist organization would benefit from its funds. The organization, the BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights had secured a €1.7 million (about 1.9 million USD) for a three-year project called “Mobilizing for Justice in Jerusalem,” which sought to document alleged Israeli crimes and violations in Israel's capital. BADIL claimed that it refused to sign the clause because it "criminalizes the Palestinian struggle against oppression and requires the recipient organization to perform ‘screening’ procedures which amounts to policing its own people.” On Friday, BADIL received a letter from the EU stating that since it had refused to sign Article 1.5 of Annex II of the “General conditions applicable to European Union-financed grant contracts for external actions,” the EU would “consider your application no longer valid.”

Iran Still Works to Obtain Weapons of Mass Destruction Tech – German Intel; A German intelligence report released on Monday says Iran's clerical regime has continued its illicit proliferation activities in the federal republic during 2019. The 181-page Baden-Württemberg state intelligence agency document declares in a section titled “Proliferation” that the states “Iran, Pakistan, North Korea and Syria are still pursuing such efforts. They aim to complete existing arsenals, perfect the range, applicability and effectiveness of their weapons and develop new weapon systems. They try to obtain the necessary products and relevant know-how, among other things, through illegal procurement efforts in Germany.” According to the report, the term “proliferation” refers “to the further spread of atomic, biological and chemical weapons of mass destruction – or the products and know-how required to manufacture them – and corresponding delivery systems.” Iran's regime agreed to limit the development of its nuclear program in a 2015 deal with world powers. Tehran received economic sanctions relief as part of the unsigned 2015 atomic accord.

Bird Study Backs Bible: Pigeons, Doves Sacrificed in Ancient Jerusalem; Analysis of bird remains excavated in Jerusalem confirmed that specific species of birds—pigeons, doves—were indeed sacrificed in the Temple as the biblical text suggests. “[Noah] again sent out the dove from the ark. The dove came back to him toward evening, and there in its bill was a plucked-off olive leaf! Then Noah knew that the waters had decreased on the earth,” (Genesis 8:10-11). From the story of Noah and the dove in the Book of Genesis to the issues of ritual sacrifices and dietary restrictions, birds play a very important role in the biblical text. Pigeons and doves often appear in the Bible as animals fit to be offered to God. For example, as described in Leviticus, they were one of the options for an atoning sacrifice for those who committed several types of sin or who had become impure. Moreover, a mother was required to bring a turtledove after completing her purification period following childbirth.

Special Vessels Show Jewish Continuity in Israel After Roman Destruction; New research offers insights on how Jewish life continued in the Land of Israel after the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem at the hands of the Romans. The use of chalkstones vessels, very common among the Jewish population during the Second Temple Period, did not stop with the destruction of the city in the second century CE as previously thought but continued in the Galilee, the new center of Jewish life, for at least another two centuries. The most accepted interpretation on the reason why chalkstone vessels were prevalent during the Second Temple Period is connected to Jewish purity laws. According to these laws, stone vessels did not receive impurity, while clay vessels were extremely susceptible to it and very hard to purify. Tzipori was already a major Jewish center in the first century CE, and that importance only grew: the great Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi moved the Sanhedrin there in the second half of the second century, and the Mishna, the foundational text of rabbinic Judaism, was compiled in the city.

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