

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update December 24, 2020 ***(9th Tevet, 5781)***



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England's Jewish Coronavirus Death Toll Reaches Seven-Month High Record; The Jewish death rate in England due to the coronavirus pandemic hit a seven-month high, according to the latest figures collated by the Board of Deputies. Some 20 new deaths caused by COVID-19 among England's Jewish community were reported last week, the first time this figure has been in double digits since May. The Board "has recorded a larger increase in reported COVID-19 mortality in the Jewish community this week than in previous weeks," said Board of Deputies president Marie van der Zyl, adding that "this may or may not be the start of a trend." "However," she continued, "as communities in London, Hertfordshire and Essex move into Tier 3 to join those such as Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham, and Gateshead, it serves as a reminder that we should all be carefully adhering to Government guidance."

Netanyahu, Rivlin To Vaccinate First in Public Events; Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will receive a coronavirus vaccination on Saturday night and President Reuven Rivlin will be inoculated on Sunday morning, the two men said Wednesday. "On Friday I will get out of [isolation] and on Saturday night I will get vaccinated," Netanyahu said in a video statement. He did not indicate where he will be jabbed. Rivlin will receive his injection on Sunday at Hadassah Hospital, Ein Kerem in Jerusalem. Rivlin and Netanyahu's vaccination will be filmed and photographed in an attempt to help build public trust in the vaccine. "I asked to be the first vaccinated to set an example and convince you that you can get vaccinated and need to get vaccinated," the prime minister said. Rivlin said that he will take the opportunity to "salute medical teams throughout the country and their noble work during the coronavirus pandemic."

US Vaccinations Begin at Jewish Hospital; A nurse in New York became the first person in the United States to receive the coronavirus vaccine Monday. Sandra Lindsay, a critical care nurse at the Long Island Jewish Medical Center, received the shot live on television shortly before 9:30 am. Lindsay said, "I hope this marks the beginning of the end of the very painful time in our history. I want to instill public confidence that the vaccine is safe." "We're in a pandemic so we all need to do our part," Lindsay added. New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, watching the landmark moment via video-link, told Lindsay he hoped the vaccine would give her and other frontline health care workers "a sense of security and safety." "It's going to take months before the vaccine hits critical mass. So, this is the light at the end of the tunnel, but it's a long tunnel," he said,

reminding people to keep following social distancing guidelines. COVID-19 has ravaged the United States. More than 299,000 Americans have been killed by the virus, including over 35,000 residents of New York state.

Israel Installs Covid-Killing LEDs In Water, AC, & Vacuum Systems; It hasn't proven easy to destroy COVID-19 in patients. But it is possible to destroy the new Coronavirus in the environment using ultraviolet LED (light-emitting diode) lights, which disinfect it in less than 30 seconds and can be installed in water, air-conditioning, and vacuum systems and will soon be available for private and commercial use, according to Tel Aviv University (TAU) researchers. Their study, just published in the Journal of Photochemistry and Photobiology B: Biology under the title "UV-LED disinfection of Coronavirus: Wavelength effect," was the first in the world on the disinfection efficiency of a virus from the family of coronaviruses using UV-LED irradiation at different wavelengths or frequencies. It was headed by Prof. Hadas Mamane, head of TAU's environmental engineering program at the School of Mechanical Engineering of the Fleischman Faculty of Engineering, and conducted in collaboration with Prof. Yoram Gerchman of Oranim College, Dr. Michal Mandelboim (the director of the National Center for Influenza and Respiratory Viruses at Sheba Medical Center at Tel Hashomer; and Nehemya Friedman at Sheba.

Israel Normalizes Ties with Bhutan; Israel established full diplomatic relations with Bhutan for the first time on Saturday night. Ambassador to India Ron Malka and his Bhutanese counterpart Vetsop Namgyel signed the final agreement normalizing ties on Saturday night. The countries' foreign ministries held secret talks over the past year towards the goal of forging official ties, which included delegations between the two capitals Jerusalem and Thimphu. The effort to make relations between the two countries was not connected to the Abraham Accords, in which four Arab countries – United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco – normalized ties with Israel in as many months, with American mediation. In fact, Bhutan does not even have official diplomatic relations with the US.

Kushner to Lead US Delegation to Israel, Morocco; White House senior adviser Jared Kushner will lead a US delegation to Israel and Morocco next week for discussions on the normalization deal the two Middle East countries reached last week, a senior administration official said on Tuesday. The US delegation and an Israeli team will join together and take the first direct commercial flight from Tel Aviv to Rabat as a sign of progress after the Israel-Morocco deal that Kushner helped broker. Kushner, Middle East envoy Avi Berkowitz and Adam Boehler, chief executive officer of the US International Development Finance Corporation, will arrive in Israel on Monday. While in Jerusalem, Kushner, who is US President Donald Trump's son-in-law, is to hold talks with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the official said.

Israel Proves it Can Shoot Down Cruise Missiles; The Defense Ministry completed a major, unprecedented air defense exercise this month, which tested the abilities of the country's three tiers of missile defense systems against a variety of aerial threats, officials said Tuesday. In the drill, which the ministry deemed a glowing success, the various air defense detection systems and batteries were required to communicate with one another and intercept several types of targets, including rockets, unmanned aerial vehicles, and — critically — cruise missiles simultaneously. The exercise, made up of a series of trials, was focused primarily on testing the capabilities of a new version of the medium-range David's Sling air defense system, which is currently under development, as well as new capabilities of the Iron Dome.

Israeli Drip Irrigation Emerges to Solve Rice Paddy Problem; An Israeli company has developed a drip irrigation system for growing rice to replace the flooded paddies that have supplied the world with rice for generations but cause a surprising level of damage to the environment. Rice is the staple food for more than half the global population, but its cultivation uses 30-40% of the world's freshwater and is responsible for 10% of manmade emissions of greenhouse gas methane, according to the U.N.-backed Sustainable Rice Platform. Netafim, a company that pioneered drip irrigation decades ago to grow produce like potatoes and

melons across Israel's challenging arid landscape, has just finished a pilot scheme using its technology on 1,000 hectares (2,470 acres) of rice fields in locations from Europe to southern Asia. At one such location, at La Fagiana farm in northeast Italy, two fields, side-by-side, grow high-quality rice for risotto. One is flooded, covered entirely by up to 15 cm of water to maintain temperatures and keep away weeds.



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