

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update February 18, 2021 (6th Adar, 5781)

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The image shows two items: on the left, a book with a purple cover titled "GOD'S APPOINTED TIMES" by Barney Kasdan, subtitled "A Practical Guide for Understanding and Celebrating the Biblical Holidays"; on the right, a glass bottle of "Anointing Oil" with a label that includes "Jerusalem of Gold Anointing Oil".

For the Yachad Report Newsletter For February 2021

Latest Israeli Data Proves Vaccines Work - 0.1% Infected; Less than 0.1% of individuals who received their second dose of the Pfizer vaccine contracted the disease, according to data released Thursday evening by Maccabi Healthcare Services. Vaccine effectiveness in Israel is now 93%, according to the data. The Pfizer vaccine was proven to be 95% effective in its Phase III clinical trials. The report showed that as of data tracked until February 11, when a week had passed since 523,000 people had received their second shot, only 544 people were infected. “The data unequivocally prove that the vaccine is very effective and we have no doubt that it has saved the lives of many Israelis,” said Dr. Miri Mizrahi Reuveni, head of Maccabi’s health division. No one who was vaccinated died. Moreover, the majority of those who did contract the virus had only mild or no symptoms. “Out of 544 infected, only 15 people needed hospitalization,” the report said, “four of which were defined as in serious condition, three in moderate and eight mild.”

Three BDS Resolutions Defeated at Florida State University; Three Boycott Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) resolutions were defeated at Florida State University (FSU) earlier this week following a concerted effort by pro-Israel organizations, including StandWithUS, the Jewish Student Union, Noles for Israel, CUFI, and Mishelanu, according to a press release from the former. The resolutions were tabled by the Student Senate President Ahmad Daraldik at FSU, who has been accused of making anti-Semitic statements that led to his removal and later reinstatement as a senator. According to StandWithUS, two of the resolutions attacked the IHRA (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance) definition of antisemitism, while the third resolution called for divestment from companies conducting business in Israel. The resolutions were defeated in committee prior to them reaching the Student Senate floor. The anti-IHRA definition resolution failed with a vote of 0 in favor, 7 against, and 3 abstaining.

Drone Strike Reported on Pro-Iran Militia Arms Shipment on Iraq-Syria Border; Unidentified drones have targeted a weapons shipment making its way from Iraq to Syria near an illegal military crossing used by pro-Iranian militias, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said Wednesday afternoon, citing unnamed sources. Several Iraqi news outlets attributed the strikes to Israel. The UK-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the rare daylight incident happened near Abu Kamal in the eastern Deir Ezzor province. The report said the vehicle was loaded with weapons and ammunition, adding that there is no

information on casualties and the extent of the damage. Israel has reportedly bombed sites connected to Iran's alleged missile production and transport efforts in the area before

Iran Produces Uranium Metal, IAEA Says, in Latest Breach of Deal; Iran has carried out its plan to produce uranium metal, the UN atomic watchdog confirmed on Wednesday, despite Western powers having warned Iran that would breach their 2015 nuclear deal as uranium metal can be used to make the core of an atom bomb. Iran began breaching its nuclear deal with major powers step by step in 2019 in response to former US President Donald Trump's withdrawal from the deal the previous year and Washington's reimposition of sanctions on Tehran. Iran has in recent months accelerated those breaches of the deal's restrictions on its atomic activities, potentially complicating efforts to bring the United States back into the deal under President Joe Biden.

In Possible Signal to Iran, Haliva Appointed Head of IDF Intelligence; In what might be a signal toward Iran, Maj.-Gen. Aharon Haliva was appointed on Thursday to be the next head of IDF Intelligence. Haliva is currently the head of the IDF's Operations Directorate, which is in charge of overseeing and coordinating the IDF's readiness for war. Some see this move – at a time when tensions between Israel and Iran are high – as a sign that the IDF wants an experienced, well-informed officer heading the Intelligence Directorate. Haliva was previously commander of the Paratroopers Brigade and the IDF Training Base 1 officers' school.

Israel's Immunai Hopes to Reprogram Immune System with \$60M Funding; Immunai announced Thursday \$60 million in new funding, making it better poised to answer the most pressing questions in immuno-oncology, cell therapy, infectious disease, and autoimmunity. The company, based in New York with its research and development arm located in Tel Aviv, has raised \$80m. so far. Immunai is on a mission to reprogram the immune system to advance personalized medicine to better detect, diagnose and treat diseases, company co-founder Noam Solomon told The Jerusalem Post. It does it through its AMICA (Annotated Multi-omic Immune Cell Atlas) database composed of data from a diverse group of the world's top hospitals that has been harmonized so it can be used for clinical purposes.

Let It Snow: Israel Looking Forward to 'Storm of the Season' Next Week; Jerusalem may be at least sprinkled in white this week, as forecast models indicate that a cold wave and stormy weather is headed for the Holy Land starting on Tuesday night. "We're seeing something that hasn't been seen since 2015," Alon Abarbanel, an economics student at Tel Hai and an amateur meteorologist, told Kan on Thursday. "There will be a very cold air system that slides in our direction. We are seeing snow that could accumulate in places like Jerusalem and Metula and not just in the Golan Heights. We're all just waiting for it, especially with the slightly disappointing winter that has been until now. To get the icing on the cake would be amazing." Meteorologist forums expressed excitement at the possibility of winter weather, with many expressing hope that this week would bring snow to Jerusalem and the mountainous regions of the country.

Bank of Israel Buys Nearly \$7 Billion in Foreign Currency to Stem Shekel Appreciation; The Bank of Israel said on Sunday it bought \$6.832 billion of foreign currency in January, helping to weaken the shekel from a 24-year peak and taking forex reserves to a new record high of \$179.5 billion. Last month, the central bank said it would buy \$30 billion of forex in 2021 to try and stem the shekel's appreciation, after buying \$21 billion in 2020. The shekel hit 3.11 per dollar on January 14, its strongest level since April 1996. With the help of the central bank's intervention, it has eased back by about 6%, although the Bank of Israel believes that part of the shekel's strength stems from a weak dollar globally. There was no shekel trading on Sunday, but on Friday the representative rate was set at 3.286.

Number of Seriously Ill COVID Patients in Israel Falls Below 1000; The number of coronavirus patients listed in serious or critical condition fell to its lowest level in over a month on Wednesday, Israeli

Deputy Health Minister Yoav Kisch (Likud) said Wednesday morning. Speaking with Reshet Bet, the deputy minister said that the number of patients hospitalized in serious condition with COVID has fallen below 1,000 for the first time since early January, with 993 patients in serious or critical condition. That is the lowest number since January 8th, according to data released by the Health Ministry. In addition, the infection rate continues to decline, with the percentage of COVID tests returning positive falling to 7.8% on Tuesday, down from 8.8% of tests conducted Monday and Sunday, and 9.5% of tests conducted Saturday.

Murders of Women Spark Anger in Lebanon as Domestic Violence Doubles; The murder of three women has provoked outrage in Lebanon, as authorities revealed a doubling of domestic abuse reports in a country that recently won praise for new laws to protect women. The most high-profile death was that of model Zeina Kanjo, who was strangled at home. An arrest warrant has been issued for her husband, who was charged with her murder after fleeing to Turkey, according to the state-run National News Agency (NNA). A local news channel invited Kanjo's husband, Ibrahim Ghazal, on to share his version of events, triggering anger on social media over what many see as a culture of victim-blaming.

UAE's Spacecraft Reaches Mars in Game-Changing Mission; The United Arab Emirates' mission to Mars is a major achievement for the Gulf country and comes seven months after the country launched its first interplanetary mission. The Hope spacecraft made its way to Mars amid important developments in the region. The Abraham Accords were announced and signed, and more than 100,000 Israelis traveled to Dubai. The UAE and Israel have become leaders in vaccinating their publics. Both countries also face challenges ahead, but in general, they represent leading technology sectors in the region. Back in July the Hope spacecraft took off at dawn from Japan and made its way to Mars. It was reported at the time that the concept dated back to 2014 and was intended to inspire a new generation while celebrating the country's 50th anniversary. This was a big deal for the UAE, the Gulf, and the region. Yousef al-Otaiba, the UAE ambassador to the US, praised the effort last year. He harkened back to the years of hard work and dedication it took.

Israeli Firm CYE Raises \$100M for Advanced Cybersecurity Approach; "There isn't another cybersecurity company doing what we are doing," said Noy Saban, the chief financial officer of Herzliya-based CYE. "We found that for many enterprises, the security head's job is learning about and setting up some of the many security tools that are available. In contrast, we do a complete security assessment of the enterprise's entire system, including live hacking attempts, and provide tools for mitigating the most likely attacks." Saban spoke the day before CYE announced that it completed a massive \$100 million financing round. The round was led by the global investment organization EQT, with participation from existing investor 83North. "The money will allow us to scale up at a much faster pace," Saban said. "Our company is already profitable and growing extremely rapidly. We are not looking to do a fast exit. We expect to be leaders in our market, and we believe this investment round will allow us to get there more quickly." The company has 70 employees, and plans to double that in the coming year, he said. The company's name is short for Cyber Eye, like a trusted adviser looking from above, Saban said.

1800-Year-Old Coin Found by Soldier Offers Look at Ancient Life in Israel; Some 1,800 years ago, a traveler was making his way through the Carmel area and a coin fell from his pocket. Almost two millennia later, the artifact was found by an Israeli soldier during a training exercise, the Israel Antiquities Authority announced Tuesday. "This coin joins only 11 such coins from known locations in the National Treasures Department collection," said Dr. Donald Tzvi Ariel, head of the IAA's Numismatics Department. "All the coins were found in northern Israel, from Megiddo and Tzipori to Tiberias and Arbel." The artifact bears images and text that allowed researchers to precisely identify its origin and dating. One of its sides reads: "of the people of Geva Phillipi," [civic] year 217 (158-159 CE) together with the image of the Syrian moon god, Men. The other face carries the portrait of Roman emperor Antoninus Pius.

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