

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update February 10, 2022 ***(9th Adar-A, 5782)***



[For the Yachad Report Newsletter For February 2022](#)

Bennett, Biden Discuss ‘Growing Iranian Aggression’; Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and U.S. President Joe Biden on Sunday, February 6, discussed Iran’s increasing aggression and possible steps to block its nuclear program, according to Bennett’s office. The two leaders also discussed the brewing tensions between Russia and Ukraine, and Bennett also congratulated Biden on the operation to eliminate ISIS leader Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurashi, according to the statement. “The world is now a safer place thanks to the courageous operation of the U.S. forces,” said Bennett. The two leaders’ telephone conversation came just hours after Bennett warned at the weekly Cabinet meeting that the deal being negotiated with Iran in Vienna would “damage [Israel’s] ability to deal with the nuclear program.” “The greatest threat against the State of Israel is Iran,” said Bennett. “Whoever thinks that an agreement will increase stability—is mistaken. It will temporarily delay enrichment, but all of us in the region will pay a heavy, disproportionate price for it.” “President Biden conveyed his unwavering support for Israel’s security and freedom of action, emphasizing his administration’s full support for replenishing Israel’s Iron Dome system,” the White House said. Bennett thanked the president and his administration for America’s “steadfast support of Israel,” including the decision to fund the Iron Dome anti-missile system.

Israel to Remain Neutral in Potential US-Russia War; As Russia masses its troops on the border with Ukraine and China rattles the sabers of its growing military, much conjecture is being made about how countries will align. The Centre for Research on Globalization published an article on its website suggesting that if a Cold War develops between the US and either Russia or China, Israel, considered one of the US’s most loyal allies, might remain neutral. “At the moment, the [Israeli] assessment is that we don’t see a violent confrontation soon. I also don’t think a world war is about to start there,” Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid said. “We have a duty to act with caution about the Russia-Ukraine crisis that no other country has.” Rabbi Ken Spiro, a historian and Senior Lecturer and Researcher for Aish HaTorah Yeshiva, agreed that Israel could remain neutral in the current environment of shifting alliances. “People try to frame international relations in black and white when it is actually a big mix of varying shades of gray,” Rabbi Spiro said. “No country is entirely the enemy of another, and alliances are nuanced.” “The Soviet Union sided with the Arabs against Israel, but Russia is not the Soviet Union. The US used to be Israel’s staunchest ally, but now, the Democrats are turning on Israel, and even the US Jews can’t be relied upon like it used to be the case.

IDF Postpones Juniper Cobra Amid Russian, Iranian Tensions; The Israeli military has postponed the upcoming missile-defense Juniper Cobra drill that was set to take part in March. “The international Juniper Cobra exercise by the IDF and the United States Army that was scheduled to take place in March has been postponed due to a variety of considerations and will take place at a later date, which will be announced later,” the IDF Spokesperson’s Unit wrote on Twitter. “The IDF appreciates the close cooperation with the US Army and looks forward to joint training in the future,” it added. The exercise was to have simulated a scenario in which American forces will be deployed to Israel in order to work alongside the IDF’s Air Defense Force and practice a variety of possible scenarios of missile threats in various sectors. While the IDF refused to expand on why this year’s drill was postponed, the announcement comes as the US military has increased its troop presence in Ukraine amid increased tensions with Russia.

Iran-Backed Terrorists in Yemen Threaten to Drone-Strike the UAE’s ‘Tower of Babel’; Yemenite military expert Brigadier General Abdallah Al-Jafari said in a January 31, 2022 interview on Al-Alam TV (Iran) that Houthi missiles and drones will reach Tel Aviv and the Eilat Port, as well as other targets in Israel. He also said that he expects that the UAE’s Burj Khalifa and Expo 2020 will be targeted as well. The Burj Khalifa is the world’s tallest skyscraper and is often compared to the Tower of Babel from the Bible as it is a tower that ‘reaches the heaven.’ Last month, Israel365 News reported that the Houthis, an Iranian Shiite proxy terrorist organization in Yemen, expanded the conflict which until now has been limited to targeting Saudi Arabia by launching a missile attack against the United Arab Emirates. The missile attack, the second in one week, targeted the al-Dhafra airbase in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

Holocaust Survivor Dies of Wounds Caused by Hamas Terror Rocket; A 91-year-old Holocaust survivor who was seriously wounded when a rocket fired from the Hamas terror group in the Gaza Strip hit her home in southern Israel last May died this week. Naomi Perlman succumbed to shrapnel wounds sustained during a rocket attack on her home in Ashkelon during the 11-day conflict between Israel and terror groups in the Gaza Strip last May. Perlman’s Indian caregiver, Santosh Sumaya, was killed in the attack. “If there is anyone who deserves to be called the ultimate survivor it is my mother,” her son, Shuki Perlman, was quoted by the Kan public broadcaster as saying. “It was nine months of fighting. I did not believe she would survive at all. She arrived at Barzilai (hospital) without a pulse and blood pressure.” Thirteen Israelis died in the fighting. Feldman, who was born in 1931 in Poland, escaped to Ukraine and from there to Uzbekistan during the Holocaust. Her grandson visited her in the hospital the night before she passed away. “I showed her pictures of her new great-granddaughter, and she smiled,” Shuki Perlman said. “I flew to see my daughter and returned a week ago. I was with her last night; it was as if she was waiting for me to say goodbye.” She was survived by Shuki and a daughter, eight grandchildren, and 12 great-grandchildren.

Israel’s Small but Proud Olympic Delegation Takes Aim at the Beijing Winter Games; When the opening ceremony of the Winter Olympics kicked off in Beijing on Friday, February 4, just six athletes marched under the Israeli flag, a drop from the 10 that competed in Pyeongchang in 2018. Israel has never won a medal at the Winter Olympics – in which it has competed every game since 1994 – and that’s not expected to change in 2022. But the six Olympians this year – none of whom were born in the Jewish state – bring with them a range of experiences, stories and a sense of pride to be representing Israel on the international stage, competing in figure skating, speed skating, and alpine skiing. “We have a very high-quality and experienced delegation,” said Yaniv Ashkenazi, the head of Israel’s delegation to the Winter Games and director of the Elite Sport Department at the Israel Olympic Committee, during a December press conference. “We have a lot of hopes and expectations that our athletes will be good, will be healthy, and we’ll hope for the best.” Yael Arad, the president of the Israel Olympic Committee and an Olympic silver medalist in judo, said Israel’s delegation to Beijing is not large, but it is impressive. “We’re sending a very small delegation,” said Arad. “We want them to succeed, we believe in our athletes, we have athletes who are strong contenders for finals, in three different disciplines... we’re always striving as high as possible.” When it comes to Jewish athletes competing in

Beijing from around the world – including the US and Canada – a medal finish just might be in the cards. Israel has not said that it will join in a diplomatic boycott of the Games, which the US, Canada, the UK, and other nations are taking part in to protest China's brutal policies, in particular the Uyghur genocide. But Culture Minister Chili Tropper will not be attending — though he did attend the Games in Tokyo last year — citing concerns over the Omicron COVID wave.

Israeli Coronavirus Expert: 70-80% of Most Severe Cases Vaccinated at Least Three Times; Prof. Yaakov Jerris, director of Ichilov Hospital's coronavirus ward, told Channel 13 News that the majority of serious cases were vaccinated patients. "Right now, most of our severe cases are vaccinated," Jerris said on Channel 13 News. "They had at least three injections. Between seventy and eighty percent of the serious cases are vaccinated. So, the vaccine has no significance regarding severe illness, which is why just twenty to twenty-five percent of our patients are unvaccinated." Professor Jerris also related to an issue in reporting that has been revealed to be prevalent in reporting data. Speaking at a cabinet meeting on Sunday, January 30, he told ministers, "Defining a serious patient is problematic. For example, a patient with a chronic lung disease always had a low level of oxygen, but now he has a positive coronavirus test result which technically makes him a 'serious coronavirus patient,' but that's not accurate. The patient is only in a difficult condition because he has a serious underlying illness." Jerris's statements are consistent with a German government report that found more than 78.6% of reported cases of the omicron COVID-19 variant in the country were in vaccinated individuals. Four thousand and twenty people who reported contracting Omicron in the study – which equates to 95.6 percent of total cases – had received at least two doses of COVID-19 vaccines.

Israeli Engineers Develop Implants to Help Paralyzed People Walk Again; People with long-term paralysis might regain the ability to walk after Israeli scientists successfully engineered the first 3D human spinal cord tissue. The results were published in a groundbreaking peer-reviewed study published in the journal *Advanced Science* on Monday morning, February 7. The study was conducted by researchers from the Sagol Center for Regenerative Biotechnology at Tel Aviv University, headed by Prof. Tal Dvir. He was joined by researchers from the Shmunis School of Biomedicine and Cancer Research and the Department of Biomedical Engineering at TAU. The team at Dvir's lab includes Ph.D. student Lior Wertheim, Dr. Reuven Edri, and Dr. Yona Goldshmit. Paralysis can occur after a spinal cord injury, which can refer to damage sustained to any part of the spinal cord or the nerves at the end of the spinal canal. These injuries can cause permanent changes in strength, sensation, and other bodily functions, and in severe cases, can lead to long-term paralysis, for which there is currently no cure. Despite many prior attempts having been made worldwide to promote natural or intervened regeneration at the site of the injury, there has been minimal success. Many existing experimental or investigated methods rely on the transplantation of different cells or biomaterials into the site of the injury. Two issues jeopardize the success of the treatment, however: the immune response to the transplanted cells causing them to be rejected, and the implantation of dissociated cells that fail to form into a functional network. Therefore, the research team hypothesized that mimicking embryonic development by applying a specific spinal cord motor neuron differentiation protocol in a 3D dynamic environment would provide cells with signals for appropriate regenerative tissue formation, healing the site, and lowering the risk of rejection. Furthermore, they theorized, assembling a functional neuron network prior to implantation would increase the chances of functional engraftment, in which it integrates well into the host body.

Alleged Israeli Airstrike Targets Sites Near Damascus; Syrian air defenses were activated in response to an alleged Israeli missile barrage targeting the vicinity of the capital Damascus, state media said early on Monday, January 31, citing a military source. This is the first alleged Israeli airstrike reported in Syria this year. The missiles were launched from the direction of Riyaq, a Lebanese town east of Beirut, according to the Syrian SANA news agency. The strikes targeted sites belonging to the Assad regime near Al-Qutayfah, northeast of Damascus, causing injuries and material damage. A series of cargo flights on airlines used to transport Iranian weapons traveled between Iran and Syria in recent weeks, according to independent flight

trackers. The strike comes a week after Syrian and Russian military jets jointly patrolled the airspace along Syria's borders, including along the Golan Heights.

Iranian Forces Crack Down on Teachers as Wage Protests Continue; Iranian security forces arrested at least four teachers on Monday, January 31, as teachers around the country continued to demand improvements to their wages and working conditions and the release of detained teachers. The Coordinating Council of Iranian Cultural Associations reported that dozens of union activists had been summoned by authorities throughout the country, saying that this showed that "the government's response to the demands is an iron fist." Mohammad Ali Zahmatkesh, a teacher and activist, was reportedly arrested on Monday as he left his home on his way to a protest rally. In Tehran, Ahmad Heydari, a teacher participating in the protest in the city, was arrested as well in front of the Iranian parliament. Two other teachers were also detained by plainclothes security forces. A protester in Mariwan was also reportedly arrested. According to the coordinating council, teachers protesting in Tehran were dispersed by security forces who pushed and threatened them. Additionally, on Monday, teacher and activist Jafar Ebrahimi was sentenced by the Karaj Revolutionary Court to four years and six months in prison. The council stressed that it will not be intimidated by the attempts to suppress the protests and warned that it would continue and widen protests and would close classes in March if their demands are not met. Several protesting teachers and activists have been arrested and jailed since the protests began months ago. Some of the protests have been violently suppressed, with security forces firing tear gas at and assaulting protesters.

At Abu Dhabi Grand Mosque, Herzog Says Region has a Choice: Peace or Iranian Terror; During a visit to the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Abu Dhabi on Monday, January 31, President Isaac Herzog said the Middle East had a stark choice of possible futures, between one of hope and peace and another of Tehran-led chaos. "There are only two alternatives for this region," he said, standing outside the mosque in the capital of the United Arab Emirates. "One is peace, prosperity, cooperation, joint investments and a beautiful horizon for the people, or alternatively, what Iran is doing, which is destabilizing the region and using its proxies to employ terror. These are the two alternatives, and this visit symbolizes hope, peace, and a great future for our nations, the region, and the world at large." The night before, the UAE announced it shot down a ballistic missile fired at it by the Iran-backed Houthi terrorist group. Herzog and his wife, Michal, concluded their historic visit to the UAE with the mosque tour. The first lady was presented with a bespoke traditional robe, and the president signed the mosque guest book. They were then given a tour explaining the mosque's architecture and construction. Herzog summarized his trip as "very moving, historic, and exciting."

Steep Global Wildlife Decline may be Worse than Feared, Israeli Study Finds; A new paper by Israeli researchers has not only confirmed a disputed estimate that wildlife populations have declined by over two-thirds in the past 50 years, but showed that the true drop may have been even more severe, according to a Monday, January 31, statement. The study, published last week in the journal *Nature*, should spur people to action and reconsider the relationship between human beings and nature, said the authors, from Ben Gurion University of the Negev and Tel Aviv University. "Rather than discourage us from action, we feel that our work should be viewed as a call to arms," said co-author Shai Meiri from Tel Aviv University. "Rapid and comprehensive changes in how we view our relationships with nature are needed – and the onus is on us to make sure they happen before it is too late." Going further, the researchers took a closer look at the overlap between monitored populations and protected wildlife areas around the world. The data was then compared to random samples from other locations and their proximity to the global network of protected areas. The results showed that populations that were sampled for the Living Planet Report were "much more likely to be inside protected areas than would be expected to occur by chance." It indicated that the true wildlife decline could be even more dire than previously thought. "This is truly alarming," said co-author Gabriel Caetano. "If populations inside protected areas – where we focus a lot of our conservation efforts – are doing so badly, those that reside outside protected areas are probably worse off. The true situation of nature – mostly not

monitored or protected – may be much worse.” “A lot of focus and attention by the public, governments, and NGOs is focused on the extinction of species,” the statement said. “Nevertheless, extinction is but the unwanted conclusion of a process that starts with harm to individual animals or plants by people and leads to their populations declining.” Authors called for greater monitoring of populations and species in different locations and warned that “many populations, species, and pristine locations would be lost forever without concentrated and direct action.”

'The Jew is the Devil' — Neo-Nazis Rally in Florida; Participants at a neo-Nazi rally in Orlando, Florida, on Saturday, January 29, waved Nazi flags and shouted antisemitic and anti-Black slogans, according to the NGO StopAntisemitism.org. The rally was organized by the National Socialist Movement (NSM) and was supposed to be live-streamed on the American Nazi Party's website. The live-stream archive was not currently working on the website, but participants chanted, “The Jew is the devil” and “Jews rape children and drink their blood.” NSM plans to hold other events, including on April 23 in Washington State, a convention of its national chapters and a public protest. On January 12, NSM said it had opened its own live-streaming capabilities after losing access to the use of BlogTalk Radio, which it blamed on “the Jew.” The platform is still rife with errors, which the webmaster blamed on visitors. NSM has a 25-point manifesto on its website and advocates an American “White” ethnostate in which only those with European ancestry can be citizens.

Herzog Opens Israel's National Day at Dubai Expo, Celebrates Israel-UAE Ties; “Expo 2020 Dubai is a reminder of what can be accomplished when we work together to break down borders by connecting minds and imagining a different future,” President Isaac Herzog said Monday, January 31, as he launched Israel's national day at Expo 20 in Dubai, following a ceremonial welcome in the central plaza where “Hatikvah” was played. Herzog reiterated the hope and belief he had expressed on Sunday in Abu Dhabi that other Arab states in the region will follow the UAE's lead and join the Abraham Accords. Expo 2020 Dubai is a huge achievement for all the participating nations and also a huge achievement for Dubai itself and its brave leaders, Herzog said, adding, “It is a remarkable celebration of each nation's unique identity.” Herzog said he was proud of Israel's contribution to the vision of a common future, as has been seen on display over the past several months both in the UAE and in Israel, where he said he had the honor to inaugurate the UAE Embassy in Tel Aviv. “Israel is a country in which obstacles become opportunities and where the impossible is a tantalizing challenge,” Herzog said. Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, the UAE's minister of tolerance and coexistence and commissioner-general of Expo 2020 Dubai, said: “Israel has much to offer on our global platform, and so we are pleased to have you at this engagement with us, at Expo 2020 Dubai. We are proud to host the first World Expo to be held in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia region and of our warm Emirati welcome to the whole world.”

Israel's Gas, Electric, and Food Prices Climb as Consumer Price Index Jumps; Gasoline and electricity prices were set to rise on Tuesday, February 1, reflecting global price hikes brought on in part by supply shortages, steeper raw-material costs and decreased workforce availability. Israel's Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose 2.8% in 2021 and increased another 0.1% to 2.9% this year as of January 30, the Central Bureau of Statistics reported Monday, January 31. Prices for products and services are rising throughout the country. Last month, Osem, one of Israel's largest food producers, told supermarkets it would be increasing the prices of its products by as much as 5%, citing an increase in the cost of materials, packaging and transportation. “This is unprecedented,” Osem said. “After an extended period during which we have absorbed the price increase, we are forced to update our retail prices.” The cost of gasoline has spiked in tandem with the increased price of oil on global markets. The maximum price of 95-octane gasoline was set to rise by NIS 0.34 to NIS 6.71 per liter on February 1 at midnight, the Energy Ministry said. The price of one barrel of Brent crude oil is currently \$91.31. Over the past week, it has risen \$4.61, or more than 5%. Electricity tariffs were set to rise an average of 5.7% on February 1 at midnight, the Public Utilities Authority said. It attributed the increase to an almost tripling of world coal prices, from \$86 per ton to \$226 per ton in the past year. The rise

in energy prices has led to a significant increase in electricity tariffs in many countries, the Public Utilities Authority said. More severely impacted are Sweden, with a 35% rise, the UK (34%), Belgium (18%) and Austria (14%). Israel, in part due to its reduction of coal use in recent years, is among the countries with lower increases, including the Czech Republic (9%), Italy (6%) and Germany (5%). While supply issues and raw-material costs are partly to blame, the coronavirus pandemic's effect on consumer demand also plays a significant role in the CPI's increase, according to Prof. Danit Ein-Gar of Tel Aviv University's Collier School of Management.

Israeli Tech Firms Have Much to Lose in Ukraine; Computer programmer Peter Kolomiets, a Russian-speaking Israeli who is currently living in Kharkhov, Ukraine, is concerned. In recent days, people in the border city in the east of the country have stocked up with canned foods, toilet paper and some are planning to flee westwards to Kiev, or Poland, or even to East Asia. "When you see on TV, 100,000 Russian troops massing on the border, 30 minutes away from you, it's very stressful," he told "Globes." Kolomiets said that Kharkhov's residents are divided between worried residents and business people, and tech entrepreneurs who feel sure that it's all just a muscle-flexing exercise by the Russians. Kharkhov is 42 kilometers from the Russian border but according to Kolomeits life is carrying on as usual and the restaurants and bars are full at night. Kolomiets's software company IdeaSoft serves Israeli companies and he is eager to convey the 'business as usual' message, to calm both his employees and customers. As a former officer in the IDF's Dudevan commando unit, he says that he understands military conduct and the Russians would not want to invade heavily populated areas, where they would sustain major losses, as happened to them previously in Georgia. In recent years Ukraine has become a type of proxy for Israel's tech sector, as companies struggle to hire staff. There are no official figures but IT outsourcing giant Ciklum VP Eran Cohen, who has been working with Israeli companies in Ukraine over the past 10 years, estimates that there are 15,000-17,000 employees there serving Israeli companies. This makes Ukraine a critical factor in the growth of Israel as a unicorn nation. These employees divide up into several categories: those working for large outsourcing companies like Ciklum, Aman Group and Globallogic, which serve Israeli companies; workers employed directly by Israeli companies like Playtika, Plarium, Wix and MoonActive; and everything in between including freelancers, or those employed by hundreds of local outsourcing companies. Some 5,000 Ukrainians are employed directly by Israeli companies, according to conservative estimates, with gaming software company Playtika alone having 1,000 employees in Ukraine. In Ukraine it is understood that these 17,000 employees of Israeli companies are in danger, although a distinction is made between cities like Kharkhov, Mariupol and Dnipro, which would likely be in the path of any potential Russian invasion, and cities closer to the Polish and Belarus borders like Kiev, Odessa, and Lvov, which are considered safer. An analysis by "Globes" on LinkedIn found that many Israeli companies are in the more dangerous eastern region including gaming software company Plarium, which has 816 developers living in Kharkhov. Other Israeli companies with development centers in Eastern Ukrainian cities are Playtika, Wix, and Fiverr. British outsourcing company Ciklum, which has 900 employees in Dnipro and Kharkhov, has formed a detailed plan to respond to any crisis. Cohen, who is responsible for Ciklum's operations with Israeli companies, said, "We assessed the situation and charted four scenarios of different invasions and reached the conclusion that an invasion in the east is the most likely possibility. We have plans for business continuity and in an emergency situation, we will evacuate workers to an office in Gdansk in Poland. Our business continuity team, which is responsible for the subject at a corporate level, has been equipped with satellite telephones." Peter Kolomiets, who manages projects in Ukraine for Israel's Aman Group, has also prepared a plan including assistance in evacuating workers and their families to Kiev, funding for hotel accommodation and food supplies brought ahead of time, as well as assistance with EU representatives in evacuating workers to Poland, if necessary, and buying satellite phones. "We have seen that the shutting down of the Internet is something that the Russians have repeatedly done," said Kolomiets. Verbit, an Israeli unicorn with 30 employees in Ukraine, has also prepared a business continuity plan, which includes assistance in evacuating employees to Poland, the UK and Israel, and

preparing employees for remote work, and paying salaries if the banking system in Ukraine is shut down and the economy disrupted.



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