

Israel News Desk

with

BPF Secretary Steve Lloyd

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This is what the LORD Almighty says: "I will save my people from the countries of the east and the west. I will bring them back to live in Jerusalem; they will be my people, and I will be faithful and righteous to them as their God." (Zech 8:7-8)

Israel - May 4th/5th was Israel's Remembrance Day and its 74th Birthday, a day when the people of Israel switched in an instant from the melancholy of Remembrance day to the joy of celebrating the country's 74th birthday. It was Independence Day (Yom Ha'atzmaut) and they flocked in their thousands to beaches and to open spaces for family barbecues.

To add to the mood, a host of aircraft from the Israel Air Force soared over much of the country. President Isaac Herzog addressed the pilots over the radio and said *"To all air force pilots and soldiers of the Israel Defence Forces in the air at sea and on land, on the 74th anniversary of Israel's independence I wish you a happy Independence day."* He added: *"Independence Day is one of the most exciting days of the year. You are the ones who have turned this year into a real journey, a journey through Israeli society. We are facing great challenges, ahead of us are great opportunities, and we will conquer all of them if we stay united."*

Prime Minister Naftali Bennett hailed the spirit that has transformed Israel from a small nation in the desert into a modern technological leader.

"The story of Israel is a story of hope, a story of human spirit, a story of surviving against all odds," he said. "it's a story of a nation that built something from nothing, a scattered people returning to our ancient homeland. No matter what horrors we faced, we never lost our hope. No matter who tries to dehumanise us, we never lost our humanity. No matter who tries to destroy us, we'll never be defeated. We will always prevail."

When Israel and the United Arab Emirates signed the historic Abraham Accords last year to foster binational collaborations, it seemed that the sky was the limit.

Now, even the sky is no limit. For the newest of many projects blossoming between these Middle East allies will send three unmanned spacecraft to the moon. The Beresheet 2 mission, scheduled for 2024, follows Israel's solo attempt to reach the moon in 2019, which ended in a crash landing.

It is anticipated that the \$100 million SpaceIL mission could break several records in outerspace history, including a double moon landing in one mission and the launch of the smallest ever aircraft.....watch this space (pun intended).

After treating more than 6,000 patients, Israel's field hospital in Ukraine has finished its work. Its doctors and nurses are returning home in the middle of May...with the gratitude of the Ukrainians ringing in their ears. Often under the threat of Russians missiles, more than 60 medics from Tel Aviv's Sheba Medical Centre worked there for six weeks. They operated at the request of Kyiv itself, which asked that the hospital be constructed as part of Israel's humanitarian efforts to help Ukraine. The Hospital situated 30 miles west of Lviv had 150 beds across its emergency, paediatric, obstetrics, and gynaecology wards.

Russian Jewish philanthropist Yuri Milner, who made billions in Silicon Valley with early support from the Kremlin, is pledging to donate \$100 million for new efforts to aid Ukrainian refugees. Milner has managed to avoid western sanctions and his latest donation serves to further distance him from the Kremlin. Milner who lives in California USA is best known in the world of philanthropy for establishing the Breakthrough Prize to recognise and promote scientific achievement.

Israel's population hit 9,506,000 as the country celebrated its 74th birthday. It is expected to

reach 11.1 million in 2030 and 13.2 million in 2040. About 79% of Israel's Jews are native-born. These figures were released by the Central Bureau of Statistics after the country had seen its biggest immigration wave in 20 years with 38,000 arrivals.

Despite the phrase “never again” long linked to Holocaust commemoration, 47 per cent of the Israeli public are concerned that another holocaust will strike the Jewish people, a new survey shows. The poll conducted just days before Israel’s Holocaust Remembrance Day found that women expressed more anxiety about another holocaust compared to men (55% versus 42%). It also showed that younger Israelis are especially fearful - 24 per cent under the age of 24 said that they were very worried, in contrast to just 12 per cent of Israelis over the age of 45. Religiously observant Israelis showed that they were far more concerned than those who identify as secular Israelis.

There is always controversy over the Temple Mount and over the Passover period there were numerous clashes between Jewish worshippers and Arabs. Arabs stoned buses carrying the Jewish worshippers to the Temple Mount causing injuries to seven passengers and damage to a number of buses. A police video taken inside one of the buses showed Jewish families crouching on the floor of the vehicle as it was pelted with stones. There were also reports of tallit-wearing Jews being attacked by Arabs and beaten as they made their way to the Western Wall.

The Temple Mount is sacred to both Jews and Muslims and there is a longtime understanding that Jews are allowed to visit the Temple mount but are barred from praying there.

Police had to enter the compound to facilitate the routine visit of Jews to the holy site, and it is reported that they fired rubber bullets, which broke some of the mosques windows. 150 Palestinians were injured in the clashes with Israeli police.

Mimi Reinhardt, who drew up lists for German Industrialist Oskar Schindler that helped save hundreds of Jews during the Holocaust, has died at the age of 107. Jewish workers from the ghetto of the Polish city of Krakow who were on the lists were recruited to work at Schindler’s factory, saving them from deportation to Nazi death camps.

Please continue to pray for Israel, Jerusalem and the Israeli Defence Forces as they seek to keep the people of Israel safe.

Maranatha.

Steve