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Trump opens Mideast peace plan details Jan 30; Netanyahu & Gantz arrive Feb 2

01.24.20

Trump: I'll unveil Mideast peace plan before Netanyahu, Gantz arrival

President says he expects Palestinians might react negatively at first, but insists that 'it's actually very positive for them'; U.S. officials make no mention of inviting Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas to Washington along with Israeli leaders

Reuters| Published: 01.24.20 , 09:17

U.S. President Donald Trump said Thursday he will release details of his long-delayed peace plan for the Middle East before Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Blue & White leader Benny Gantz visit the White House next week.

The political aspects of the peace initiative have been closely guarded. Only the economic proposals have been unveiled.

Yet details of the plan have apparently emerged, including Israeli annexation of parts of the West Bank and control over the entirety of Jerusalem, whose predominantly Arab eastern neighborhoods the Palestinians want as their capital.

Trump discussed the timing of the plan's release with two architects of the plan, senior advisers Jared Kushner and Avi Berkowitz, on Air Force One while returning to Washington from Switzerland on Wednesday.

Speaking to reporters on Air Force One en route to the Miami area for a political event, Trump said Palestinians might react negatively to his plan at first, but that "it's actually very positive for them."

"It's a great plan," said Trump, who will meet with Netanyahu at the White House on Tuesday. "It's a plan that really would work."

Vice President Mike Pence, on a visit to Jerusalem on Thursday, extended an invitation to Netanyahu and Gantz to make the visit. It was not immediately clear whether Trump would meet the two leaders separately or together.

The Trump Middle East peace proposal is a document, dozens of pages long, that addresses in detail the thorny political issues between Israel and the Palestinians, such as the status of Jerusalem.

U.S. officials made no mention of inviting the Palestinians, and Nabil Abu Rudeineh, a spokesman for Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, said: "We warn Israel and the U.S. administration not to cross any red lines."

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas attends a ceremony marking the 55th foundation anniversary of the Fatah movement in the West Bank city of Ramallah. Dec. 31, 2019

Trump indicated his administration had spoken "briefly" to the Palestinians and would speak to them again "in a period of time."

Netanyahu said he had accepted the U.S. invitation. His office said he would fly to the United States on Sunday.

Netanyahu, Israel's longest-serving prime minister, faces political and legal troubles at home - he is heading for his third election in less than a year, and was indicted on criminal charges for bribery, fraud and breach of trust in November. He denies any wrongdoing.

Gantz, a centrist former IDF chief, this week lifted his objection to having the peace plan be published before the March 2 election. He had previously objected to it as interference in the vote.

Long-delayed plan

The launch of Trump's plan to end the decades-long conflict between Israel and the Palestinians has been delayed numerous times over the last two years.

A source familiar with the peace team's thinking said bringing both Netanyahu and Gantz in on the details is aimed at defusing any suggestion that Trump might be favoring one political candidate over another.

Trump is facing his own political clock, preoccupied with his bid for re-election in November, and could ill afford to wait for months for Israel to decide who its next prime minister will be, the source said.

"If we waited we could be in the same position four months from now and never put out the plan," the source said.

The political proposal is the product of three years of work by Kushner, Berkowitz and former envoy Jason Greenblatt. Kushner proposed a \$50 billion economic plan for the Middle East last summer at a conference in Bahrain.

Kushner and Berkowitz had been scheduled to visit Israel and Saudi Arabia after attending the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, this week, but opted instead to discuss the issue with Trump on his flight home, the source said.

Israeli-Palestinian peace talks collapsed in 2014 and Palestinians have called Trump's proposal dead in the water, even before its publication, citing what they see as his pro-Israel policies.

The Trump administration has reversed decades of U.S. policy on the conflict, refraining from endorsing the two-state solution - the longtime international formula which envisages a Palestinian state co-existing with Israel.

It has also recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital and moved its embassy there. More recently, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced in November that the United States no longer viewed Israel's settlements on West Bank land as "inconsistent with international law."

Palestinians and most of the international community view the settlements as illegal under international law. Israel disputes this, citing historical, biblical and political ties to the land, as well as security needs.

Netanyahu announced during an election campaign last September that he intends to annex the Jordan Valley, a large swathe of the West Bank.

Israel captured the West Bank from Jordan in the 1967 Six-Day War and Palestinians, who signed interim peace deals with Israel in the 1990s, seek to make the area part of a future state.

Abbas's Palestinian Authority, which exercises limited self-rule in the West Bank, has publicly refused to engage politically with the Trump administration.

They fear the plan will dash their hopes for an independent state in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip.

Trump, who will seek a second term in a Nov. 3 election, faces his own problems at home with Democrats seeking to oust the Republican president on impeachment charges of abusing power and obstructing Congress.

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01.24.20

Netanyahu asked that Gantz be invited to Washington to foil any opposition

01.24.20

'Netanyahu knew details of Trump plan in advance'

So-called 'Deal of the Century' includes Palestinian state with no military, control of border or alliances, Israeli sovereignty over all settlements and entirety of Jerusalem, in complete reversal from Clinton plan in 2000

Itamar Eichner| Updated: 01.24.20 , 01:28

Senior Israeli officials say the details of Donald Trump's long-awaited peace plan, which are now coming to light, were presented to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in recent weeks and the invitation to Washington for a presentation of the plan was arranged in coordination with him.

Netanyahu said he asked that Blue & White leader Benny Gantz be invited as well, possibly in order to foil any opposition from Gantz to the proposed plan.

The invitation next week coincides with Knesset deliberations on the immunity from prosecution requested by Netanyahu, who is facing charges of bribery, fraud, and breach of trust.

The visit by Israeli officials also coincides with Trump's current impeachment trial in the Senate.

Trump tweeted he is looking forward to welcoming the Israeli leaders to Washington.

The president also said the information reported by the media detailing parts of the plan is incorrect.

Israeli sources who have seen the plan it allows for Israel to annex 30% to 40% of Area C of the West Bank, which is today under Israeli civil and security control. In these areas, Israeli sovereignty will be extended to its settlements alone, including those outside the main blocs and in other areas Israeli rule will include the entire territory.

The U.S. plan suggests Israel immediately extend its sovereignty to all but 15 West Bank settlements to create territorial integrity.

The peace plan also leaves Jerusalem in its entirety in the hands of Israel with the Palestinians given only symbolic access to the city.

This puts an end to Bill Clinton's proposed parameters from 2000, which left the holy basin and the Palestinian neighborhoods of East Jerusalem in the hands of the Palestinian Authority.

Palestinians would be given their own state, though it would be severely restricted. It would not be allowed to have an army, not be permitted to forge alliances with other countries and have no control of its air space or borders.

The Palestinians would also be required to demilitarize the Gaza Strip and disarm its Hamas rulers.

The American plan includes a stated intent to see Jewish refugees who fled Arab countries in parity with Palestinian refugees who fled the nascent Israeli state, therefore negating the need for a solution to the right of return of Palestinian refugees into Israel, though a symbolic number will be allowed to return.

The American plan also suggests a land swap to compensate the Palestinians for some of the territory they stand to lose.

The White House believes the economic plan unveiled in the Bahrain conference in June 2019 will provide an incentive to the Palestinian people, who will demand their leadership sign on to the Deal of the Century.

Sources close to the White House say Trump's son-in-law and aide **Jared Kushner has enlisted Sunni countries to pledge \$50 billion in aid for the Palestinian Authority.**

The Trump team also aimed to create a firewall between the Palestinian leadership and moderate Arab countries in order to foil any attempt to block the proposed plan.

Arab leaders such as the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman reportedly said they had previously wasted money on the Palestinians but that would now change.

The **difference between earlier peace plans** and the Trump plan is that there are more than two partners to the proposed deal. With the **Gulf leaders on board**, the White House believes, the **Palestinians will not be able to create a false narrative.**

"The past plans were theatre that caused nothing but violence and death," American officials said. **"This plan has no dead-line**, it will require patience."

Israeli officials, however, believe there is no option of a peace plan succeeding with just one of the sides to the conflict on board.

The administration has been trying to enlist right-wing opinion-makers to support the plan. They are primarily concerned with the reaction of Defense Minister Naftali **Bennett**, who **has already come out against the establishment of a Palestinian state.**

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01.23.20

Palestinians say deal of Israel self interest could cause tension and lead to an escalation

01.23.20

Palestinians say peace deal presentation stems from 'Israeli political self interest'

Abbas warns U.S. and Israel from 'crossing red lines' in outline if published, a senior official close to the Palestinian president said he puts faith in Europe and China rather than Arab nations

Elior Levy | Updated: 01.23.20, 23:22

Palestinian Authority officials claimed that the decision to present U.S. President Donald Trump's Middle East peace plan stems from "internal Israeli political self-interests," said a senior aide to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on Thursday.

During a meeting with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, U.S. Vice President Mike Pence invited Netanyahu and Blue & White party leader Benny Gantz to Washington next week to present the details of the Trump administration's long-delayed "Deal of the Century" outline.

On Thursday, Abbas warned Israel and the U.S. not to cross "red lines," saying that the Palestinian government will continue to "refuse and resist any American claims of Jerusalem as the Israeli capital."

"The Palestinian position supports ending the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories whose capital is East Jerusalem," said an official statement from the Palestinian President. "If the U.S. publishes the 'Deal of the Century', the authority will take steps to protect its basic rights."

"It is obvious to us that the presentation of the peace deal is meant to help Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu with his elections, we know when personal interests are at play," said the senior official.

"We are in the middle of a process that did not start today," said the official.

"First, they [The U.S.] declare Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, then they move the embassy to the city, followed by American announcements supporting a legitimization of the West Bank settlements and lately we are witness to the administrations willingness for Israel to annex the Jordan Valley; the announcement today is just the next step."

The official clarified that the Palestinian stance on the matter remains as it has always been: a complete refusal of a one-sided American peace proposal, which Ramallah called unbalanced and vehemently pro-Israeli.

The official went on to warn that the publication of the plan might destabilize the security balance in the West Bank.

"There is no doubt the plan will have an effect on the Palestinian streets," said the official. "It could cause tension and lead to an escalation, there is a limit to the existing patience for one-sided moves."

And yet, the official did not use radical terminologies such as Intifada or any other kind of violent reactions.

The official revealed that the Palestinian leadership is hoping for support from European nations and China rather than the Arab states.

"We feel isolated and alone," said the official. "Even if Jordan or Egypt refuse to publicly and blatantly come out against the plan, we have the backing of Europe and China behind us, together with other nations."

The official estimated that it is still unlikely that Jordan will support that plan if a sizeable annexation of the border region of the Jordan Valley by Israel is included.

In a joint statement made with Pence, Netanyahu said he was behind the invitation for Gantz to travel with him to Washington because he wanted to reach the widest possible consensus in the talks.

01.23.20

Right wing leaders insist Trump plan must not see handover of land to Palestinians

01.23.20

Right wing leaders insist Trump plan must not see handover of land to Palestinians

As word came of the invitation to Netanyahu and Gantz to Washington to see the long-awaited Trump peace plan politicians on the right were quick to voice their concerns |24NEWS| Updated: 01.23.20 , 22:21

Defense Minister Naftali Bennett, a staunch pro-settlements advocate, said that his party “will not allow the handover of land to Arabs nor the formation of a Palestinian state.”

As reports on the Trump administration’s intention to reveal the details of its long-anticipated Middle East peace plan were confirmed Thursday evening, reactions of Israeli politicians were quick to follow.

Bennett stipulated that US President Donald Trump, senior White House advisor Jared Kushner, and Ambassador to Israel David M. Friedman are true friends of Israel. “Perhaps the State of Israel is facing a historical opportunity, besides significant risks... Once the details of the plan will be revealed we will address it properly.” Bennett said. West Bank settlement community leaders warned of widespread security concerns and an escalation throughout the country if estimations of the proposal turn out to be true, Hebrew-language outlet Walla News reported.

Israel’s Education Minister, Rabbi Rafi Peretz, adamantly rejected the plan, saying “We will not allow handing over our homeland. Our forefathers’ land is not up for negotiation.”

Chairman of Yisrael Beiteinu Avigdor Liberman tweeted sarcastically that his party “offers applying sovereignty as well as revoking immunity,” referring to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s request for protection from prosecution following his indictment on charges of bribery, fraud, and breach of trust.

Netanyahu's request for immunity is scheduled to be considered by a Knesset committee next week.

01.23.20

Peace deal presentation as Knesset debates Netanyahu's request for immunity

01.23.20

Netanyahu, Gantz invited to Washington for peace deal presentation

Prime Minister said he requested the Blue & White leader to be included in the meeting hoping to achieve the widest possible consensus while defense minister expressed concern

Itamar Eichner, Moran Azulay, Elisha Ben Kimon | Updated: 01.23.20 , 21:50

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Blue & White party leader Benny Gantz were invited on Thursday to come to Washington on Tuesday next week for the presentation of U.S. President Donald Trump's "Deal of the Century" Middle East peace plan.

Netanyahu received word of the expected invitation from a White House official at the end of the Fifth International Holocaust Forum.

In a joint statement made with U.S. Vice President Mike Pence Netanyahu said he was behind the invitation of Blue and White leader Benny Gantz to Washington because he wanted to reach the widest possible consensus in the talks.

"We just completed a conversation about plans for next week," Pence said after meeting at the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem.

"President Trump asked me to extend an invitation to Prime Minister Netanyahu to come to the White House next week to discuss regional issues as well as the prospect of peace here in the Holy Land," he said.

According to earlier reports, the U.S. plan allows for Israeli sovereignty over the Jordan Valley and settlements in Area C. It also allows for a demilitarized Palestinian state, which would include portions of uninhabited and Palestinian spaces in Area C.

A Trump official in Washington said the plan will be presented in the coming days.

Another official involved in the matter said the plan was not formulated around Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas's position.

The U.S. peace team, headed by special advisor Jared Kushner and special envoy Avi Berkowitz, had been expected to visit Israel on Wednesday and Thursday to discuss the plan with Netanyahu and Gantz, but the visit was canceled at the last minute reportedly due to severe weather conditions and a tight schedule.

The flight to D.C. will take place as the Knesset begins to debate Netanyahu's request for immunity from prosecution on charges of bribery, fraud, and breach of trust, but Blue & White officials made their position clear that there is no reason to postpone the Knesset procedure.

Defense Minister Naftali Bennett said there may be risks attached to the Trump plan, "President Trump, Jarred Kushner and Ambassador Friedman are close friends of Israel, which might be facing a historic opportunity, alongside serious risks."

A statement released on behalf of Bennett's party Yamina read, "we will not give up territory to the Arabs or allow the foundation of a Palestinian state, we will address the details of the plan as they come to light."

The head of the Binyamin Regional Council Yisrael Gantz says such a Palestinian state “endangers the state of Israel, the settler community will fight it with all our rights.” Peace Now organization officials said that “any proposal that does not include the formation of a Palestinian state according to the 1967 borders and the evacuation of solitary settlements is a deception that will end up in the dustbin of history.” In July 2019, the Trump administration published the economic part of the plan in Bahrain.

01.23.20

Prince Charles official visit; gave tribute to his grandmother, Princess Alice, buried on Mount of Olives

01.23.20

On first official Israel visit, Prince Charles affirms commitment to fight anti-Semitism
At the end of a meeting with President Rivlin, the two leaders planted an English oak at the presidential residence as a tribute to the prince's grandmother, who saved the lives of many Jews during the Holocaust
Ynet| Published: 01.23.20 , 18:27

Britain's Prince Charles arrived in Israel on Thursday for his first-ever official visit as dozens of world leaders gathered in Jerusalem for the Fifth International Holocaust Forum ceremony in the capital.

The Prince of Wales met with President Reuven Rivlin at his Jerusalem residence ahead of the 75th anniversary marking the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp.

“For me, this is a very significant experience,” Prince Charles said to the president. “Many of my teachers at school were Holocaust survivors and we are all deeply committed to combating anti-Semitism.” Prince Charles has visited Israel twice in the past, for the funerals of slain prime minister Yitzhak Rabin and former President Shimon Peres.

“We will always remember how your grandmother, Princess Alice, who is buried here on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, saved the lives of many Jews during the Holocaust,” said the president, referring to the prince's grandmother, who is recognized as a “Righteous among the Nations” for sheltering Jews in Greece during the Holocaust and is buried at the Church of Mary Magdalene in Jerusalem.

“Britain stood firm against the Nazi threat,” said the president.

“Many British servicemen and women fought with great bravery and liberated many concentration and death camps. And today British forces are on the front line in the war on terror in the Middle East, and we are together in this just war.”

At the end of their meeting, they went into the residence's garden to plant an English Oak tree, a tribute to the tree planted in the Avenue of the Righteous Among the Nations at

Yad Vashem by President Ezer Weizman and Prince Phillip, the Duke of Edinburgh in honor of his mother Princess Alice.

Next to the tree is a plaque with the inscription in English, Hebrew, and Arabic:
"The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it" (Genesis 2:15).

01.24.20

Democrats argue in bogus impeachment trial that Trump abused power

01.24.20

Democrats argue 'right matters' in Trump impeachment trial

Prosecutors argue president abused power for own personal political benefit ahead of 2020 election, even as top FBI, national security officials publicly warn off theory that it was Ukraine, not Russia, that interfered in 2016

Associated Press| Published: 01.24.20, 11:46

Democratic House prosecutors made an expansive case Thursday at Donald Trump's impeachment trial that he abused power like no other president in history, swept up by a Ukraine theory pushed by attorney Rudy Giuliani and branded "completely bogus" by Democrats.

On Friday, the Democrats will press their final day of arguments before skeptical Republican senators, focusing on the second article of impeachment, obstruction of Congress' investigation.

As the audience of Senate jurors sat through another long day, and night, the prosecutors outlined the charge.

They argued that Trump abused power for his own personal political benefit ahead of the 2020 election, even as the nation's top FBI and national security officials were publicly warning off the theory that it was Ukraine, not Russia, that interfered in the 2016 election.

"That's what Donald Trump wanted investigated or announced -- this completely bogus Kremlin-pushed conspiracy theory," said Rep. Adam Schiff, the chairman of the House Intelligence Committee who is leading the prosecution, during Thursday's session.

At the close of the evening Schiff made an emotional plea to senators to consider what was at stake as Trump is accused of seeking Ukrainian probes of political foe Joe Biden and Biden's son while holding back congressionally approved military aid as leverage.

"Right matters," he said, quoting Army officer Lt. Col. Alex Vindman who had testified in the House. "Otherwise we are lost."

The president is facing trial in the Senate after the House impeached him last month, accusing Trump of abusing his office by asking Ukraine for the investigations while withholding the aid from a U.S. ally at war with bordering Russia. The second article of impeachment accuses him of obstructing Congress by refusing to turn over documents or allow officials to testify in the House probe.

Republicans, growing tired of the long hours of proceedings, have defended Trump's actions as appropriate and cast the process as a politically motivated effort to weaken him in the midst of his reelection campaign. Republicans hold a 53-47 majority in the Senate, and acquittal is considered likely.

The Democrats' challenge is clear as they try to convince not just fidgety senators but an American public divided over the Republican president in an election year.

With Chief Justice John Roberts presiding, Democrats argued on Thursday that Trump's motives were apparent.

"No president has ever used his office to compel a foreign nation to help him cheat in our elections," Rep. Jerrold Nadler of New York, the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, told the senators. He said the nation's founders would be shocked. "The president's conduct is wrong. It is illegal. It is dangerous."

Democrats scoffed at Trump's claim he had good reasons for pressuring Ukraine to investigate former Vice President Biden or other political foes.

Rep. Sylvia Garcia of Texas, herself a former judge, aid there is "no evidence, nothing, nada" to suggest that Biden did anything improper in dealings with Ukraine.

Trump, with Giuliani, pursued investigations of Biden and his son, Hunter, who served on a Ukrainian gas company's board, and sought the probe of debunked theories of what nation was guilty of interference in the 2016 U.S. election.

On dual tracks, Democrats prosecuted their case while answering in advance the arguments expected from the president's attorneys in the days ahead.

At one point, they showed video of a younger Lindsey Graham, then a South Carolina congressman and now a GOP senator allied with Trump, arguing during Bill Clinton's 1999 impeachment that no crime was needed for impeaching a president. Trump's defense team is now arguing that the impeachment articles against him are invalid because they do not allege he committed a specific crime.

The president's defenders' turn will come Saturday.

"We will be putting on a vigorous defense of both facts, rebutting what they said," and the Constitution, said attorney Jay Sekulow.

Ahead of the day's proceedings, Sen. Roy Blunt of Missouri said the Democrats were putting forward "admirable presentations." But he said, "There's just not much new here."

During the dinner break, Sen. John Barrasso, R-Wyo., said it seemed like "Groundhog Day in the Senate."

The top Senate Democrat, Chuck Schumer, acknowledged that many senators "really don't want to be here."

But Schumer said Schiff has been outlining a compelling case that many Republicans are hearing it for only the first time. He contended they can't help but be "glued" to his testimony.

Once reluctant to take on impeachment during an election year, Democrats are now marching toward a decision by the Senate that the American public also will judge.

Trump blasted the proceedings in a Thursday tweet, declaring them the "Most unfair & corrupt hearing in Congressional history!"

After the House prosecutors finish, the president's lawyers will have as long as 24 hours. It's unclear how much time they will actually take, but Trump's team is not expected to finish Saturday, according to a person unauthorized to discuss the planning and granted anonymity. The Senate is expected to take only Sunday off and push into next week. After that senators will face the question of whether they do, or do not, want to call witnesses to testify.

Senators were permitted Thursday to review supplemental testimony submitted by an aide to Vice President Mike Pence, Jennifer Williams, who was among those who had concerns about Trump's actions. Democrats said the testimony, which is classified, bolsters their impeachment case. A lawyer for Williams declined to comment.

Holding the room's attention has been difficult for the Democrats, but senators seemed to pay closer mind to Schiff's testimony that grew dramatic.

Most senators, even Republicans, sat at their desks throughout the afternoon session, as the rules stipulate, and not as many of them were yawning or standing to stretch as during the previous long nights.

To help senators pass the time, the Republican chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, Richard Burr of North Carolina, passed out lunch favors of fidget spinners, stress balls and other toys.

Democrats thanked the senators for their time and patience, acknowledging the repetition of some of their presentations.

The impeachment trial is set against the backdrop of the 2020 election. Four senators who are Democratic presidential candidates are off the campaign trail, seated as jurors.

A new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research showed the public slightly more likely to say the Senate should convict and remove Trump from office than to say it should not, 45% to 40%. But a sizable percentage, 14%, said they didn't know enough to have an opinion.

One issue with wide agreement: Trump should allow top aides to appear as witnesses at the trial. About 7 in 10 said so, including majorities of Republicans and Democrats, according to the poll.

The strategy of more witnesses, though, seemed all but settled. Republicans rejected Democratic efforts to get Trump aides including former national security adviser John Bolton and acting chief of staff Mick Mulvaney to testify in back-to-back votes earlier this week

01.06.20 – Mo -

Health report: Worst flu epidemic in decade Nineteen Israelis die since flu season

01.06.20 – Mo -

Health report: Worst flu epidemic in decade

Nineteen Israelis die since beginning of flu season, among them three children; Public Health Association chairman: 'situation is serious, can't wait for elections'

Inbar Tvizer | Published: 01.06.20 , 21:18

The 2019 flu season has been the worst in a decade, said a Health Ministry report published on Monday.

The report stated that "there is an increase in respiratory disease affliction rates. So far, the most dominant pathogen is the swine flu."

Since the beginning of the epidemic, 19 people have died from complications of influenza, among them three children.

According to the report, by January 1, 2020, about 1,965,000 people were inoculated against the seasonal flu – approximately 22% of the population, a four percent rise compared to the same period last year.

The vaccination rate among elderly people over the age of 65 stands at about 58% - a two percent increase since 2018 - and 22% among children between the ages of six months to three years - a 6% rise since last year.

Most of the fatal cases so far involved the A-Type sub-species of the H1N1 virus, also known as swine flu.

This subspecies is considered to be very aggressive and is able to spread among young and healthy people.

The vaccine against the pathogen is included in the standard flu inoculation.

Reports from the U.S. and Europe also point to high seasonal ailment rates.

Millions of Americans have already contracted the disease, with tens of thousands hospitalized and thousands dead.

Hundreds of fatal cases were also reported all across Europe. The majority of the deceased were not vaccinated.

The Health Ministry held on Sunday an assessment of the number of vaccines available in clinics across the country.

Many health centers in the country reported shortages in supply, with stocks expected to be replenished in the coming days, as shipments arrive in Israel from foreign pharmaceutical caches and companies.

As of Sunday, Leumit Health Care Services reported about 12.5 thousand vaccines left, after receiving their initial supply last week.

Clalit, Maccabi, and Meuhedet health care services reported only few hundreds of injections remain in stock, most of which are reserved for the secondary inoculation required for babies and children.

Professor Hagai Levin, Public Health Doctors Association Chairman in the Israel Medical Association responded to the findings of the report, stating that this flu season hasn't only arrived earlier than usual, but has been more severe than in previous years.

"Unfortunately, this ongoing neglect of the state health system, lack of adequate budgeting, proper preparation for the winter and low prioritization of health, results in the cost of human life," Levin said.

"A national plan is needed, including a publicity campaign and definition of vaccination targets among high-risk populations, in order to take care of this emergency. We cannot wait for after the elections."

First published: 21:18 , 01.06.20

Friday January 24, 2020

Jan-1 US Air-Traffic Control changed from radar tracking to transponder GPS

Friday January 24, 2020

Air-Traffic Control Is in the Midst of a Major Change (wsj.com)17

Posted by msmash on Friday January 24, 2020 @02:35PM from the shape-of-things-to-come dept.

Shift from radar to GPS should make tracking faster and more accurate, allowing more planes in the air. From a report:

Since World War II, air-traffic controllers have used radar to keep track of aircraft. But as of Jan. 1, most planes and helicopters flying in the U.S. must be equipped with transponders that allow their movements to be traced with GPS coordinates. The deadline caused a flurry of upgrades last year as operators who hadn't yet complied with the mandate rushed to equip their aircraft in time. Now, more than 100,000 commercial and general aviation aircraft have the transponders, according to the Federal Aviation Administration, including nearly all commercial aircraft and an estimated 60% of general aviation aircraft that need it.

"If you're flying an antique plane in the middle of Ohio, you don't have to have it," said John Zimmerman, vice president of Sporty's Pilot Shop, an Ohio retailer and flight school. The U.S. controls 29.4 million square miles of airspace, including all of the U.S., large portions of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans and the Gulf of Mexico. The FAA mandate primarily applies to Class A airspace, which is 18,000 feet or more above sea level; Class B airspace, the areas surrounding the nation's busiest airports; Class C airspace, the areas around smaller regional airports; and above 10,000 feet in Class E, the most common airspace. LaGuardia Airport in New York is Class B. Richmond International Airport in Virginia is Class C.

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Using 3D printing, an electronic larynx re-Created Voice of 3,000-Year-Old Mummy

Friday January 24, 2020

Scientists Re-Create Voice of 3,000-Year-Old Mummy (apnews.com)29

Posted by BeauHD on Friday January 24, 2020 @08:00AM from the ancient-human-voices dept.

Longtime Slashdot reader vm writes:

You don't have to wait until next Halloween to get creeped out. Using 3D printing, medical scanners, and an electronic larynx, researchers have recreated the voice of a 3,000-year-old Egyptian mummy. The tongue has deteriorated over three millennia and

all they have **so far is a vowel sound but it's a pretty clever** way to raise the dead with science.

"The researchers then synthesized Nesyamun's voice by 3D printing a model of his airway and connecting it to an electronic larynx, an artificial voice box that provides a noise source," reports Science Magazine. "Based on writings on Nesyamun's coffin and the objects he was buried with, researchers know that he was an Egyptian priest and scribe who likely sang and spoke to the gods as part of his ritual duties. His coffin inscriptions include a wish to 'see and address the gods as he had in his working life.'"

The findings have been reported in the journal Scientific Reports.

Friday January 24, 2020

First Space-Baked Cookies Took 2 Hours In Experimental Oven

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First Space-Baked Cookies Took 2 Hours In Experimental Oven (go.com)83

Posted by BeauHD on **Friday January 24, 2020 @05:00AM** from the worth-the-wait dept. pgmrldm shares a report from ABC News:

The results are finally in for the first **chocolate chip cookie bake-off in space**. While looking more or less normal, the best cookies required two hours of baking time last month up at the International Space Station. It takes far less time on Earth, under 20 minutes. And **how do they taste? No one knows**. **Still sealed** in individual baking pouches and packed **in their spaceflight container**, the cookies remain frozen **in a Houston-area lab** after splashing down two weeks ago in a SpaceX capsule. **They were the first food baked in space from raw ingredients**.

Italian astronaut Luca Parmitano was the master baker in December, radioing down a description as he **baked them one by one in the prototype Zero G Oven**. The first cookie - - in the oven for **25 minutes at 300 degrees Fahrenheit (149 degrees Celsius)** -- ended up **seriously under-baked**. He more than doubled the baking time for the next two, and the results were still so-so. The **fourth cookie stayed in the oven for two hours**, and finally success. Parmitano cranked the **oven up to its maximum 325 degrees F (163 degrees C)** for the **fifth cookie and baked it for 130 minutes**. He reported more success. As for aroma, the astronauts could smell the cookies when they removed them from the oven, except for the first.

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Mars Rover Software failure; needed new instructions to get the rover moving again

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Mars Rover Is Frozen In Place Following Software Error (extremetech.com)39

Posted by BeauHD on Friday January 24, 2020 @02:00AM from the red-light-green-light dept.

Iwastheone writes:

NASA reports that Curiosity has suffered a system failure that left the robot unaware of its position and attitude on the red planet. Until it recovers, Curiosity is frozen in place. Mars is far enough away that we can't directly control Curiosity in real-time -- the rover gets batches of commands and then carries them out. That means it needs to have precise awareness of the state of all its joints, as well as environmental details like the location of nearby obstacles and the slope of the ground. This vital information ensures the rover doesn't bump anything with its arm or clip large rocks as it rolls along.

Curiosity stores all this attitude data in memory, but something went wrong during operations several days ago. As the rover was carrying out its orders, it suddenly lost track of its orientation. The attitude data didn't add up, so Curiosity froze in place to avoid damaging itself. While the rover is physically stuck in place, it's still in communication with the team here on Earth. Since everything else is working on the rover, NASA was able to develop a set of instructions that should get the rover moving again. When transmitted, the data will inform Curiosity of its attitude and confirm its current state. This should allow the rover to recover and keep performing its safety checks. However, NASA also hopes to gather data on what caused the issue in the first place. The hope is they can avoid another freeze-up in the future.