

Newsletter Tuesday January 29, 2019

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| Intel to invest NIS 40 billion in Israel over next 5 years

Tech giant agrees to build a new chip-making fabrication plant in Israel, which "is expected to bring thousands of jobs to the south," says Finance Minister Moshe Kahlon • Country to allot 91 acres to new plant and provide 10% tax incentive.

Eran Bar-Tal

An Intel logo is seen at the company's offices in Petach Tikva | Archives: Reuters

Tech giant Intel Corp will invest 40 billion shekels (\$11 billion) over the next five years on a new semiconductor fabrication plant in Israel.

Finance Minister Moshe Kahlon secured the deal in a meeting Monday night with Intel Israel production plant CEO Daniel Benatar and Yaniv Garty, general manager of Intel Israel.

"Intel's global management has informed us about its decision to invest another 40 billion shekels in Israel, an unprecedented decision that is expected to bring thousands of jobs to the south [of Israel]," Kahlon said on Twitter.

The news follows a commitment by Intel in May last year to invest about 18 billion shekels (\$4.9 billion) to upgrade its existing factory in the southern Israeli city of Kiryat Gat between 2018 and 2020. The new plant will also be located in Kiryat Gat.

The investment equates to NIS 8 billion per year – around 0.7% of Israel's gross domestic product – which will have a tangible impact on the country's growth numbers in the coming year.

The country agreed to allot some 91 acres to the new plant.

Israel competed with bids from Singapore and Ireland, where Intel had also considered opening the aforementioned plant, Kahlon said. According to the deal, Intel will receive a 10% tax incentive.

"You cannot expect corporations to invest in Israel today because of Zionism. They come because it's worth it for them," the finance minister told Israel Hayom.

Economy and Industry Minister Eli Cohen said: "Intel's decision to continue investing significantly in Israel is an important vote of confidence in Israel and the Israeli economy. [The company's] activities in Israel in the fields of research and development and advanced production support the policies of the Economy and Industry Ministry to increase exportation and create quality jobs in general; in the periphery in particular.

"We view Intel as a partner on this path and its repeated decision to invest in Israel strengthens the economy and employment in Israel and we expect this cooperation to continue into the future. More than 320 foreign companies operate in Israel and they contribute greatly to its growth, innovation, exportation and employment," Cohen said.

The chipmaker said it will not disclose any details, including the schedule, costs and technologies of the new project in Israel.

Santa Clara, California-based Intel is one of the biggest employers and exporters in Israel, where many of its new technologies are developed.

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Hamas says Egypt will reopen Gaza crossing for 3 days

Rafah crossing will operate for three days starting Tuesday, Gaza's Interior Ministry says

• Egypt has kept the crossing shut for outbound Palestinians since the Palestinian Authority withdrew its forces earlier this month in a dispute with Hamas.

Associated Press and Israel Hayom Staff

Palestinians make their way toward the Rafah border crossing between the Gaza Strip and Egypt | Archives: AP

Hamas on Monday said Egypt will briefly open its border with the Gaza Strip in both directions for the first time in three weeks.

The Rafah crossing will operate for three days starting Tuesday, Gaza's Interior Ministry said in a statement.

Egypt has kept the crossing shut for outbound Palestinians since the Palestinian Authority withdrew its forces earlier this month in a dispute with Hamas.

The Islamic terrorist group seized power in Gaza in 2007 but allowed the Western-backed Palestinian Authority to operate the crossing in a 2017 reconciliation agreement that has since unraveled.

Rafah is the main gate to the outside world for the Gaza Strip's 2 million residents.

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| [PM Netanyahu suspends observer mission in Hebron](#)

"We will not allow the continuation of an international force that acts against us," PM says of the Temporary International Presence in Hebron, which has been accused of systematically targeting Jewish residents • Palestinian Authority denounces the move.

Ariel Kahana, News Agencies and Israel Hayom Staff

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu: "They want to uproot us from here. They will not."

| Photo: Oren Ben Hakoon

Israel on Monday said it is suspending operations of an international observer force in the West Bank city of Hebron after 25 years.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said it would not extend the mandate of the Temporary International Presence in Hebron, saying "we will not allow the continuation of an international force that acts against us." It did not give a timeframe for the observers' exit.

TIPH has deployed unarmed civilian observers from Norway, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey in Hebron, located in Judea and Samaria, since 1997. Its stated mission is to report on violations of international humanitarian and human rights laws.

The Prime Minister's Office statement did not elaborate on the alleged misconduct of TIPH, although a former officer with the organization alleged that the mission is tainted with corruption, which its officials have tirelessly worked to cover up.

Bennet Nygaard Solum, who served as TIPH's chief procurement and financial officer twice in the last decade, testified before an Oslo-based notary in November that "TIPH fails to meet its own code of ethics. It disregards Israeli and Palestinian law in Hebron and prefers to protect its own members from any allegations of wrongdoing, with all that that entails."

Netanyahu's "decision makes me happy," Solum said on Monday.

The TIPH website says the force works on six-month mandates but did not specify when the current one expires. A force spokesman declined to comment.

The Palestinian Authority denounced the move and on Tuesday asked the United Nations to deploy a permanent international force in Judea and Samaria and east Jerusalem.

"The Israeli government's decision means it has abandoned the implementation of agreements signed under international auspices and given up its obligations under these agreements," said Nabil Abu Rudeineh, spokesman for PA President Mahmoud Abbas.

PA official Saeb Erekat said the U.N. should "guarantee the safety and protection of the people of Palestine" until "the end of Israel's belligerent occupation."

TIPH observers have been accused in Israel of systematically and violently agitating against Jewish residents of the city.

"They want to uproot us from here. They will not," Netanyahu said in separate remarks on Monday.

"There's a line of thought that says that the way to achieve peace with the Arabs is to be extirpated from our land. That is the certain path to achieving the opposite of this dream," he said.

The prime minister's decision garnered support from right-wing politicians.

Deputy Foreign Minister Tzipi Hotovely, who spearheaded the efforts to end TIPH's mandate, said: "A foreign force has no place in the city of our forefathers, certainly not when it works one-sidedly against the [Jewish] residents and favors the Palestinians."

Public Security Minister Gilad Erdan said, "The force cooperates with extremist organizations and promotes the delegitimization of Israel."

Professor Eugene Kontorovich, an international law expert and senior fellow at the Kohelet Policy Forum, said TIPH "was initially planned as a temporary force, but diplomatic inertia kept it in place."

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Palestinian Authority PM resigns, dissolves unity government

Rami Hamdallah tenders his resignation and that of his unity government to PA President Mahmoud Abbas on Tuesday, dealing a blow to faltering reconciliation efforts with Hamas • Hamas condemns move as an attempt to exclude it from Palestinian politics.

Reuters and Israel Hayom Staff

Rami Hamdallah | Archives: Reuters

Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah tendered his resignation and that of his unity government to PA President Mahmoud Abbas, he said on Tuesday, dealing a blow to faltering reconciliation efforts with Gaza's Islamist Hamas rulers.

The government will continue to carry out its duties until a new one is formed, it said in a statement issued after a weekly cabinet meeting.

There was no immediate comment from Abbas, but his Fatah faction, at a meeting he chaired two days ago, recommended that the government be replaced.

A Hamas official condemned the move as an attempt to marginalize and exclude the group from Palestinian politics.

Hamdallah, a little-known academic, headed the national unity government formed in 2014 and led the West Bank-based Fatah's reconciliation efforts with Hamas, which seized power in Gaza in 2007.

The two groups signed a reconciliation deal two years ago which set in motion a plan for Abbas' Palestinian Authority to resume governing in Gaza and take up control of the coastal enclave's crossing points into Egypt and Israel.

But disputes over power-sharing and disagreements over policy toward Israel have hampered the deal's implementation.

