



SIGNS OF THE TIMES

News Articles for Episode 255

Iran to buy Su-35 fighter jets from Russia - Iranian broadcaster - The Jerusalem Post (jpost.com)

#bibleprophecy, #russia, #iran, #jets

Mar 11, 2023

Russia has not confirmed the deal, but Iran has claimed to have finalized the purchase.

Iran has reached a deal to buy advanced Su-35 [fighter planes from Russia](#), Iranian state media said on Saturday, expanding a relationship that has seen Iranian-built drones used in Russia's war on Ukraine.

"The Sukhoi-35 fighter planes are technically acceptable to Iran and Iran has finalized a contract for their purchase," the broadcaster IRIB quoted Iran's mission to the United Nations as saying in New York.

The report did not carry any [Russian confirmation of the deal](#), details of which were not disclosed. The mission said Iran had also inquired about buying military aircraft from several other, unnamed countries, IRIB reported.

Russian-Iranian relations

Russian President Vladimir Putin met Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in Tehran last July, stressing closer ties in the face of Western pressure over the war in Ukraine.

Iran has acknowledged sending drones to Russia but says they were sent before Moscow's invasion of Ukraine last year. Moscow denies that its forces use Iranian-built drones in Ukraine, although many have been shot down and recovered there.

Iran's air force has only a few dozen [strike aircraft](#): Russian jets as well as aging US models acquired before the Iranian revolution of 1979.

In 2018, Iran said it had started production of the locally designed Kowsar fighter for use in its air force. Some military experts believe the jet is a carbon copy of an F-5 first produced in the United States in the 1960s.

[SVB collapse: Bank fallout shines spotlight on \\$620 billion hole in banking sector | Washington Examiner](#)

#bibleprophecy, #banks, #financial, #economy

Mar 13, 2023

Fallout from the [Silicon Valley Bank collapse](#) has directed attention to a \$620 billion ticking time bomb in the [banking system](#) that has the potential to spell doom for the financial system.

SVB's meltdown was partly caused by a chasm between its assets and what they were worth in the market. Eventually, SVB sold some of those assets, [spooking investors](#) and triggering a run on the bank. But SVB isn't alone, as banks across the United States were sitting on \$620 billion in unrealized potential losses at the end of last year, per [the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation](#).

That hole illustrates why authorities at the Federal Reserve, the Treasury Department, and the FDIC were so eager to stave off contagion or panic spread from SVB's demise across the banking sector.

The reason for this predicament is that banks compiled a plethora of bonds and treasuries during times when interest rates were hovering near zero. But now, the Federal Reserve has begun jacking up rates in an effort to combat inflation, which has caused many of those assets to plunge in value.

This is because higher interest rates mean that new bonds accrue higher rates of returns for investors. As a result, older bonds have comparatively lower rates of return, rendering them less desirable for investors and therefore triggering a plunge in the value of older assets.

A consequence of the \$620 billion unrealized potential loss phenomenon is that banks may quickly find themselves with less cash on hand than their books might have suggested.

Taking note of the liquidity needs of banks, the Federal Reserve announced plans to offer banks a facility to help them meet depositor withdrawals Sunday. The government has also moved to backstop depositors at SVB in the hope of curtailing panic from its demise from rippling across the industry.

\$620 billion of unrealized losses, overall equity 2.2 trillion. If a run on the banks would happen it could be fatal even for several large US banks like JP Morgan and Citi. This crisis isn't over. The US Treasury simply bought some time. pic.twitter.com/2xNvfIrN9b

— Kim Dotcom (@KimDotcom) [March 13, 2023](#)

The FDIC guarantees deposits up to \$250,000, but many SVB deposits eclipsed that threshold. The government announced plans on Sunday to back those deposits of over \$250,000 as well.

SVB caused panic among investors last week when it revealed that it sold treasuries at a loss, inciting a run on the bank. On Thursday, customers withdrew \$42 billion in a single day. For comparison, Washington Mutual "lost \$16 billion dollars over 10 days" during the financial crisis of 2008, according to Sen. Mark Warner (D-VA).

The bank was the 16th largest federally insured bank and was taken over by regulators Friday after announcing it needed to raise over \$2.2 billion to stay solvent.

Federal Reserve to launch instant payment service 'FedNow' in July (yahoo.com)

#bibleprophecy, #banks, #financial, #federalreserve

Mar 15, 2023

The Federal Reserve said Wednesday it will launch its long-awaited instant payment service FedNow in July.

The instant payment network will settle payments in seconds, with the capability to support consumer-to-consumer, consumer-to-merchant, merchant-to-merchant, and bank-to-bank transactions.

"With the FedNow Service, the Federal Reserve is creating a leading-edge payments system that is resilient, adaptive, and accessible," said Tom Barkin, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond and the FedNow Program's executive sponsor.

"The launch reflects an important milestone in the journey to help financial institutions serve customer needs for instant payments to better support nearly every aspect of our economy."

According to the Fed, a mix of banks of all sizes, including the largest processors and the U.S. Treasury, are on board. The central bank is continuing to speak with financial institutions and service providers to test the program ahead of its implementation.

"With the launch drawing near, we urge financial institutions and their industry partners to move full steam ahead with preparations to join the FedNow Service," said Ken Montgomery, first vice president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston and FedNow program executive.

Montgomery noted availability of the service is just the beginning, and growing the network of participating financial institutions will be key to increasing the availability of instant payments for consumers and businesses across the country.

Starting in the first week of April, the Fed will begin formally certifying banks to launch the service. Early adopters will have to conduct customer testing, informed by feedback from the FedNow Pilot Program, to prepare for sending live transactions through the system.

The Fed maintains making funds immediately available will help Americans living paycheck to paycheck or small businesses with cash flow constraints by avoiding late payment fees and freeing up working capital to finance growth.

Analysts say FedNow could also cut demand for payday loans as consumers won't have to wait for a check to clear. For businesses, there could also be upside for better paying suppliers on time, and businesses could embrace it as a less costly, and more certain, way to accept consumer payments.

Fed Governor Michelle Bowman [said last year](#) that FedNow, which will enable consumers and businesses to send payments instantly, could offer some of the same benefits as a central bank digital currency.

[FBI reveals hate crimes at levels not seen in over 20 years | ערוץ 7 \(israelnationalnews.com\)](#)

#bibleprophecy, #jews, #anti-semitism, #hate

Mar 13, 2023

Updated data finds antisemitic hate crimes against American Jews increased nearly 20 percent in 2021.

Newly released FBI data found that hate crimes were at a record high in the United States in 2021, revealing a dangerous pattern not seen in over two decades.

The number of reported anti-Jewish hate crimes rose from 683 in 2020 to 817 in 2021, and comprised slightly more than half of all religion-based hate crimes in 2021, consistent with FBI data from prior years. There were also 109 antisemitic assaults reported, a 16 percent increase from 2020. Overall, antisemitic incidents increased 19.6 percent.

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL), reacting to the overall data – which recorded 10,840 incidents in 2021, the highest in more than 20 years – said that the updated tally gives a “complete picture of hate crimes in America” which is a more accurate representation of the daily lives of minority communities in the US.

“The supplemental hate crime data released today confirms what ADL predicted at the time of the initial release – reported hate crimes for 2021 reached record high levels,” ADL CEO Jonathan Greenblatt said.

He called for Congress to mandate that state and local law enforcement agencies receiving federal funding participate in the FBI’s hate crime data collection program each year.

“Data drives policy. Moving forward, law enforcement agencies must urgently commit to hate crime data collection and reporting,” he said. “Absent comprehensive and inclusive data, policymakers will lack the critical information that is needed to address these concerning trends.”

The supplemental data released by the FBI after the initial release of 2021 hate crime data in December revealed 10,840 reported hate crimes in 2021 (rather than the 7,262 incidents the FBI data had initially reflected). A total of 14,859 law enforcement agencies, which represents about 79 percent of the agencies enrolled in the hate crime data collection program, participated in reporting for 2021.

Of the total number of reported hate crime incidents, a clear majority (approximately 64.5 percent) were based on race, ethnicity or national origin – which has been the case

for the last two decades, with reported anti-Black hate crimes making up the vast majority of cases.

ADL's own count of both criminal and non-criminal acts of hate against Jews found a total of 2,717 antisemitic incidents in 2021, the highest number on record since ADL began tracking such data in 1979. Assaults, including violent assaults, increased 167 percent in 2021.

The organization pointed out that while Jews made up only two percent of the US population in 2021, antisemitic hate crimes accounted for 7.5 percent of all hate crimes reported by the FBI.

“With antisemitic incidents up across the board in nearly every category we track, and with the FBI data now reflecting a 19.6 percent increase in reported antisemitic hate crimes for 2021, a whole-of-government, whole-of-society approach will be needed to address these extremely disturbing trends,” Greenblatt said. “Hate crimes are message crimes; they are uniquely harmful and deeply personal, both to the individual and to the group of people who share the individual's characteristics.”

“It is essential that, as we craft policy solutions and dig into the hard work of addressing hate crimes, we take a community and victim-centered approach,” he added.

[Giant seaweed blob twice the width of the US takes aim at Florida | The Hill](#)

#bibleprophecy, #ocean, #seaweed, #environment

Mar 13, 2023

TAMPA, Fla. ([WFLA](#)) — Marine scientists are tracking a 5,000-mile-wide seaweed bloom that is so large, it can be seen from space.

These sargassum blooms are nothing new, but [scientists say](#) this one could be the largest in history. At last check, it was heading toward Florida's Gulf coast.

The thick mat of algae drifts between the Atlantic coast of Africa and the Gulf of Mexico, providing habitat for marine life and absorbing carbon dioxide, but it can also wreak havoc when it gets closer to shore. It blocks light from reaching coral and negatively impacts air and water quality as it decomposes.

[‘It’s a big loss’: Red tide cancels popular Indian Rocks BeachFest](#)

Florida's Gulf coast is already grappling with an algae bloom amid the busy spring break tourism season. Red tide has caused dead fish to wash ashore in droves, while the risk of respiratory irritation for humans has [canceled events](#) and driven beachgoers away.

With a blanket of sargassum approaching, spanning twice the width of the continental U.S., scientists warn that Florida beaches could soon be inundated with seaweed.

“It’s incredible,” Brian LaPointe, a research professor at Florida Atlantic University's [Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute](#) told [NBC News](#). “What we’re seeing in the satellite imagery does not bode well for a clean beach year.”

LaPointe, who has studied the blooms for decades, said beaches in the Florida Keys are already being affected. Earlier this week, [parts of Mexico were told to prepare](#) for up to three feet of sargassum to build up on shore.

Chunks of brown plant matter may be unappealing to look at, but the impact on humans does not end there. Large pieces of sargassum can ensnare boats and other machinery in the water.

“Even if it’s just out in coastal waters, it can block intake valves for things like power plants or desalination plants, marinas can get completely inundated and boats can’t navigate through,” Brian Barnes, an assistant research professor at the University of South Florida's College of Marine Science told [NBC News](#). “It can really threaten critical infrastructure.”

Rotting sargassum releases hydrogen sulfide, which can cause respiratory problems for tourists, residents and anyone who works on the water, LaPointe told [NBC News](#).

“Following the big 2018 blooms, doctors in Martinique and Guadeloupe reported thousands of people going to clinics with breathing complications from the air that was coming off these rotting piles of sargassum,” LaPointe said.

Barnes and his colleagues at [USF's Optical Oceanography Laboratory](#) track sargassum blooms. The blanket of seaweed appears to be growing each year, but 2018 and 2022 had the largest blooms, he said. This year could top last year's record.

“Historically, as far back as we have records, sargassum has been a part of the ecosystem, but the scale now is just so much bigger,” Barnes told [NBC News](#). “What we would have thought was a major bloom five years ago is no longer even a blip.”

Scientists have found that climate change is causing ocean temperatures to rise, creating a more ideal environment for the algae to thrive. Meanwhile, urban and agriculture runoff is sending nitrates from fertilizers and other nutrients flowing into the ocean, feeding the bloom.

Typically, rafts of sargassum gather in the Sargassum Sea region in the northern Atlantic Ocean. From there, the Gulf Stream pushes the algae around the Atlantic basin, which allows it to spread and grow in different areas.

[Despite Curses by Local Witches, Thousands in Nicaragua Accept Christ at Gospel Event - Michael Foust \(christianheadlines.com\)](#)

#bibleprophecy, #gospel, #salvation, #witches

Mar 8, 2023

The salvation of thousands was recorded last week at an outdoor gospel campaign in Somotillo, Nicaragua, despite opposition from local witches who attempted to curse the field and block the event by Shake the Nations Ministries.

[According to God TV](#), It was the first stop on a “Buenas Nuevas Nicaragua” campaign across 17 regions in the Central American nation by [Shake the Nations](#), which will hold a mass gospel event at each location.

It is the [largest gospel initiative](#) in the history of the ministry and is being conducted in partnership with a local missions ministry, Mountain Gateway.

“The inaugural campaign of Buenas Nuevas Nicaragua was beyond words – the Holy Spirit moved in a mighty way!” evangelist Nathan Morris, who founded Shake the Nations Ministries in 2006, wrote on his [Facebook](#) page. “... Witches had attempted to place sacrifices and curses around the field to stop the people from coming and hearing the gospel, but the Lion of Judah roared, and the devil was defeated tonight! Signs, wonders, miracles, and thousands of salvations displayed the authority of Jesus Christ! Every knee shall bow! Somotillo for Jesus!”

Morris says Nicaragua is “ripe” for a gospel harvest. He will lead four events in the next two months alone: Chinandega (March 17-18), Leon (March 31-April 1), Esteli (April 14-15) and Ocotal (April 28-29).

Evangelist Mauricio Canales of Shake the Nations said, “souls are being added to the kingdom” in Nicaragua.

“The Holy Spirit is already moving in a mighty way on the ground of Nicaragua,” Morris said.

The Nicaraguan campaign, Morris noted, has seen “thousands of churches” and “thousands of pastors and leaders” coming together “from all denominations, in one spirit, with one accord, that the gospel of Jesus Christ would be preached in the nation of Nicaragua.”

“We believe that this is the mandate from heaven,” he shared. “... We believe already the Holy Spirit is preparing the hearts and the people of Nicaragua.”

[Pentagon believes alien mothership could be eyeing Earth \(yahoo.com\)](#)

#bibleprophecy, #aliens, #pentagon

Mar 15, 2023

Somebody get Captain Steven Hiller (Will Smith, *Independence Day*) on the line, ASAP. In an article published yesterday (March 14) by [Fox News](#), the outlet revealed that United States officials think UFOs could visit our planet soon. In fact, the Pentagon has reason to believe an alien mothership is in our solar system, ready to explore Earth.

Last week, officials stated that these supposed alien aircrafts could send small probes to our planet in order to study it, similar to how NASA does on missions. Sean Kirkpatrick, the director of the Pentagon's All-Domain Anomaly Resolution Office (AARO), and Abraham Loeb, chairman of Harvard University's astronomy department, shared their findings on March 7. "An artificial interstellar object could potentially be a parent craft that releases many small probes during its close passage to Earth, an operational construct not too dissimilar from NASA missions. These 'dandelion seeds' could be separated from the parent craft by the tidal gravitational force of the sun or by a maneuvering capability," a portion of their findings read.

 | *NEW: Pentagon officials suggest alien mothership in our solar system could send mini probes to Earth*   pic.twitter.com/IOe9h6Ut59

— Pubity (@Pubity) [March 15, 2023](#)

American officials have been developing units to investigate strange phenomena for quite some time. AARO launched in July 2022, and they track unidentified objects near and on Earth. In 2005, Pan-STARRS telescopes were created for NASA to locate 90 percent of objects in Earth's orbit larger than 140 meters — which is how the potential alien mothership was said to be detected. Before that, on Oct. 19, 2017, the telescopes noticed a strange interstellar object and named it 'Oumuamua, meaning "scout" in Hawaiian. It traveled away from the sun without a cometary tail, leading scientists to classify the object as artificial.

Government officials say another object absent of a cometary trail was discovered three years later in 2020. And six months before 'Oumuamua made its closest approach to Earth, an interstellar meteor, IM2, measuring a meter long, crashed on our planet and had identical speeds relative to the sun at large distances, with the exact same shape as 'Oumuamua. "With proper design, these tiny probes would reach the Earth or other solar system planets for exploration, as the parent craft passes by within a fraction of the Earth-Sun separation — just like 'Oumuamua did. Astronomers would not be able to notice the spray of mini probes because they do not reflect enough sunlight for existing survey telescopes to notice them," researchers said of the alien activity.

See related tweets below.

Pentagon officials wrote a report that there may be a mothership in our solar system sending these little UFOs like Independence Day and no one talking about it LMAAAwearegunnadieOOOOOOO

— We Wuz VikangZ (@ArrozYUnGandul) [March 12, 2023](#)

Pentagon officials suggest alien mothership in our social system could possibly send small probes to Earth for research. [#DramaAlert](#)

They would operate similar to how NASA operates when studying other planets, according to the officials draft research report.

(via Fox News) pic.twitter.com/K9MwYWjbp1

— DramaAlert (@DramaAlert) [March 15, 2023](#)