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Weekly World News Briefs

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Hamas Leader: Next Week's Protests to Be 'Decisive'

May 10, 2018 Voice of America News reported: "The Gaza leader of the Hamas militant group on Wednesday said that a mass protest on the Israeli border will be 'decisive,' vowing that he and other top officials were 'ready to die' in a campaign to end Israel's decade-old blockade of the territory.

In a speech to hundreds of Gazan youths, Yehiyeh Sinwar said Hamas has rejected international proposals to stop the weekly, often violent gatherings, which culminate in Monday's mass demonstration.

'We can't stop these protests. We are supporting, even leading, them,' he said. The protests will be 'like a tiger running in all directions,' he said.

The Hamas-led demonstrations are meant to protest a crippling decade-long Israeli-Egyptian blockade, imposed after the group seized power in Gaza in 2007, and assert Palestinian demands to return to lost properties in what is now Israel..."

Saudi air defences intercept two missiles over Riyadh

May 9, 2018 spacedaily.com reported: "Saudi Arabia's air defences intercepted two ballistic missiles over the capital Riyadh on Wednesday, state television said in the latest in a series of attacks claimed by rebels in neighbouring Yemen. Two explosions were heard in the city, according to an AFP photographer.

A spokesman for the Saudi-led coalition said Saudi air defences hours earlier had also intercepted a ballistic missile originating from Yemen and targeting Saudi Arabia's southern city of Jizan.

Yemen's Huthi rebels quickly claimed responsibility for attacking "Riyadh Dry Port and other economic targets" in the Saudi capital with Burkan 2H ballistic missiles..."

Iran bombards Israel with '20 rockets' and artillery from Syria after Damascus air strikes

May 9, 2018 thesun.co.uk reported: An Israeli air defence (IDF) spokesman said "about 20 rockets" were fired by Iranian Quds Force at the Jewish state's defensive line in the area - which has been occupied by Israel since 1967.

IDF spokesman Lt. Col. Jonathan Conricus later confirmed to reporters that no one has been injured and that the army's Iron Dome defence systems intercepted some of the missiles.

He said that Israeli forces had "responded" after several bases were targeted, adding: "The IDF sees this Iranian attack on Israel with severity. This event is not over."

Fighter jets have also been seen flying over the area, which lies near the Syria's southern border, according to the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

Shortly before the suspected strikes on the Golan Heights, reports within Syria claimed that Israel had attacked targets in the Quneitra province south of Damascus.

Syria's state media said air defences had intercepted "hostile Israeli missiles" on early Thursday morning that were fired over the south west of the capital city.

It later claimed Israeli missiles had destroyed a radar station on the northern border.

This comes after missiles strikes last night were attributed to Israel following reports of "irregular activity" of Iranian forces in Syria.

Campaigners said the strikes killing at least 15 people and targeted depots and rocket launchers that likely belonged to Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards.

The IDF had deployed Iron Dome defence systems and opened bomb shelters in Golan Heights and in northern Israel in preparation for retaliatory strikes.

Tuesday's attacks represent an immediate escalation in tensions in the region after US President Donald Trump walked away from the 2015 nuclear agreement Barack Obama struck with Iran..."

Magnitude 4.5 earthquake is latest warning of San Andreas' power

May 8, 2018 latimes.com reported: "A magnitude 4.5 earthquake shook a large portion of Southern California on Tuesday, and was felt from San Diego to Santa Clarita, authorities said.

Tuesday's temblor struck at 4:49 a.m. about seven miles north of Cabazon and 85 miles east of downtown Los Angeles. The epicenter was close to the San Gorgonio Pass, through which Interstate 10 connects Palm Springs with San Bernardino.

The strongest shaking — Intensity Level 6 — occurred in an uninhabited mountainous area in Riverside County. The cities of Riverside and San Bernardino felt only "light" shaking calculated as Intensity Level 4, while many areas in L.A. and Orange counties felt only "weak" Intensity Level 2 or 3 shaking.

There were no immediate reports of damage. The U.S. Geological Survey's earthquake early warning system under development worked as expected, giving scientists in Pasadena — about 80 miles away from the epicenter — 26 seconds of warning before the shaking arrived, according to a Southern California Seismic Network report."



2San Andreas fault

New outbreak of Ebola kills 17 in northwest DR Congo

May 8, 2018 AFP reported: "Seventeen people in northwest Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have died from Ebola, the health ministry said on Tuesday, describing the fresh outbreak as a "public health emergency with international impact."

"Twenty-one cases of fever with haemorrhagic indications and 17 deaths" have been recorded in Equateur province, it said, citing a notification to the ministry as of May 3. It is the DRC's ninth known outbreak of Ebola since 1976, when the deadly viral disease was first identified in then-Zaire by a Belgian-led team.

In Geneva, the World Health Organization (WHO) said lab tests in the DRC confirmed the presence of Ebola virus in two out of five samples collected from patients.

"WHO is working closely with the government of the DRC to rapidly scale up its operations and mobilize health partners, using the model of a successful response to a similar... outbreak in 2017," it said in a statement.

It said it had released \$1 million (840,000 euros) from an emergency contingency fund, set up a coordination group and deployed more than 50 experts to work with the DRC government and health agencies.

The outbreak occurred in Bikoro, on the shores of Lake Tumba.

All the cases were reported from a clinic at Ilkoko Iponge, located about 30 kilometres (20 miles) from Bikoro, where treatment capacities are limited, the WHO said.

A team of experts from the WHO, Doctors without Borders (DRC) and Equateur province travelled to Bikoro on Tuesday to beef up coordination and carry out investigations, it said.

Ebola is one of the world's most notorious diseases, being both highly infectious and extremely lethal. It is caused by a virus that has a natural reservoir in the bat, which does not itself fall ill, but can pass the microbe on to humans who hunt it for "bushmeat"..."

Iran warns US it would regret quitting nuclear deal

May 6, 2018 spacedaily.com reported: "Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said on Sunday that if the United States quits the nuclear deal between Tehran and world powers then Washington would regret it "like never before".

US President Donald Trump has threatened to abandon the agreement when it comes up for renewal on May 12, demanding his country's European allies "fix the terrible flaws" or he will re-impose sanctions.

"If the United States leaves the nuclear agreement, you will soon see that they will regret it like never before in history," Rouhani said in a televised speech in northwestern Iran.

"Trump must know that our people are united, the Zionist regime (Israel) must know that our people are united," Rouhani added.

The nuclear deal was struck in 2015 between Iran and Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United States, then led by Barack Obama.

Under the pact, sanctions were lifted in return for a commitment not to pursue a nuclear bomb, but Iran says it is not reaping the rewards despite complying with the deal.

The Islamic republic has always denied it sought a nuclear weapon, insisting its atomic programme was for civilian purposes.

Rouhani did not specify how Iran would react if the US pulls out of the deal."..."

'We may have to eliminate Assad'

May 7, 2018 Arutz Sheva 7 reported: "Israel may assassinate Syrian president Bashar Al-Assad, a senior Israeli official warned Monday, citing the Syrian leader's relationship with Iran and approval for Iranian use of Syria as a base of operations against Israel.

Speaking with Yediot Ahronot on Monday, Energy Minister Yuval Steinitz (Likud) warned that Israel might 'eliminate' the Syrian dictator if he continues to allow Iran to use Syria as a launching point for operations against Israel.

'If Syrian President Bashar Assad continues allowing the Iranians to operate out of Syria, Israel will eliminate him and topple his regime,' Steinitz said.

Israel is widely suspected of being responsible for the April 9th airstrike against the T-4 airbase outside of Homs, Syria. The facility, used by Iranian forces in Syria, was used in the past for Iranian operations against Israel, including a February drone attack over northern Israel.

Israeli aircraft shot down the drone, which Israeli officials later said was carrying explosives and had likely been en route to an attack against Israeli targets.

On Sunday, it was reported that Israeli security officials believe Iran is preparing for attacks against Israel to "avenge" the April 9th airstrike. The reprisals would likely be launched from Iranian-controlled sites inside of Syria, and could include missile attacks on Israel."..."

