



# ISRAEL MATTERS!

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## Waze Deal Primes Israel's "Silicon Wadi" for Wave of Investment

### Israeli Author, Amos Oz, Wins Franz Kafka Prize



Acclaimed Israeli author Amos Oz has won the prestigious Franz Kafka Prize in the Czech Republic. An international jury selected Oz for the prize, which is awarded annually with a \$10,000 prize.

The prize is awarded by the Prague-based Franz Kafka Society to authors whose works "appeal to readers regardless of their origin, nationality and culture." Past winners have included the American novelist Philip Roth and Nobel laureates Elfriede Jelinek of Austria and Harold Pinter of Britain.

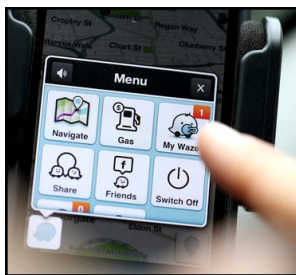
The 74-year-old Oz, born in Jerusalem to Polish and Russian parents, is known for his use of humor and imagination in work that has been translated into more than 40 languages. Examples include the 1965 short story *Where the Jackals Howl*, his earliest fiction, and *A Tale of Love and Darkness* (2003), a heart-wrenching memoir of his mother's suicide when he was 12 years old.

Oz has received numerous awards, including the Israel Prize for Literature in 1998 and Germany's Goethe Prize in 2005. The Kafka prize, named after the famous Prague-born writer of such classics as *The Trial* and *The Castle*, was first awarded in 2001.

Oz will travel to Prague for an October ceremony to receive the prize. Oz has been said to be among the candidates for the Nobel Prize for literature in the last several years. [JPost and AP]

Google has acquired the mobile map developer Waze Inc. in one of the most lucrative outcomes for an Israeli technology startup. The purchase is poised to fuel a wave of investment and entrepreneurship in the country. Waze was bought for about \$1.1 billion, making it one of a handful of companies with roots in Israel to fetch more than \$1 billion. The company has offices in Ra'anana, Israel, where it was founded, and Palo Alto, California.

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu congratulated Waze for "putting Israeli technology on the world map." Israel rallied around Waze, a service initially built and funded by locals and used by millions of its residents. The company's success is helping to validate the rise of Silicon Wadi, the technology community that takes its name from an Arabic term for valley. Waze will keep its product-development team in Israel, Google said in a blog post.



Waze was founded in 2008 by Ehud Shabtai, Amir Shinar and Uri Levine, who aimed to offer online maps that were constantly updated and improved by user feedback. In 2009, they hired Noam Bardin, an Israeli serial entrepreneur, as chief executive officer, and raised \$12 million from venture capitalists. As the company expanded and became one of the most popular mapping applications for

Apple Inc.'s iPhone, it raised an additional \$55 million from investors, including Microsoft.

Waze's mobile app solicits input from almost 50 million users to improve directions and display traffic and road-hazard details. Waze eventually could be used to improve the Internet search giant's own navigation tool and help the company extend its dominance in maps over rival Apple.

Tel Aviv, which has a population of about 400,000, is home to as many as 700 early stage startups, according to city data. While about 50 percent of Silicon Valley startup founders are foreign-born, businesses in Tel Aviv are mostly started by Israelis, said Avner Warner, the city's director of International Economic Development. The success of Waze may encourage more Israeli entrepreneurs to pursue consumer-focused applications, a domain mostly bypassed by local startups in favor of data-driven companies that target large enterprises.

[Bloomberg]

## UN Requests More Time as Austria Begins Golan Heights Pullout

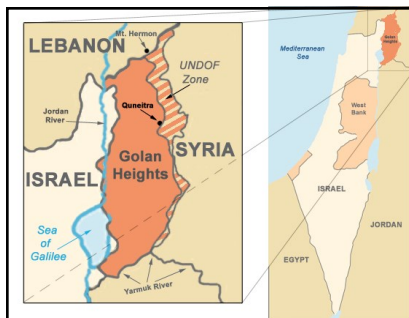
Austrian troops in the UN monitoring force on the Golan Heights have begun pulling out, the country's defense ministry said, as the UN appealed for more time to find a replacement for the departing soldiers. The alpine state, which has been a cornerstone of the UN force monitoring a ceasefire between Syria and Israel since 1974, recently announced that it would withdraw its peacekeepers because of deteriorating security on the strategic plateau.

At the same time, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon warned that spillover from Syria's civil war threatens a 40-year-old cease-fire between Syria and Israel and recommended bolstering the vulnerable U.N. peacekeeping force there by more than 300 troops.

Austria's Defense Minister, Gerald Klug, said the pullout of soldiers on the Golan Heights would take between two and four weeks. Some 380 troops are currently stationed there, according to the ministry.

A top Israeli government official was quoted as saying that several dozen Austrian troops had already left the mission's headquarters. Israeli public radio said they were administrative staff. "But the majority of soldiers will remain in place until the UN has found a country that can send troops to replace the Austrian ones," said the Israeli official, who asked not to be named.

UN peacekeeping chief Herve Ladsous appealed to Vienna for more time in an interview with the daily Die Presse. "Austria must make us a better offer. Because to be honest: we need more time," he said. "We are now working together to find an appropriate solution," he added, noting that Austria had been the "backbone" of the



UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) for the past 39 years. "We can hardly find replacement contingents in less than six to eight weeks. We are trying our best and are discussing this problem with troop providing countries," he added.

The Austrian pullout will leave the UNDOF, headquartered in Quneitra, with just 341 troops from the Philippines and 193 from India. Japan and Croatia have also withdrawn in recent months as battles between Syrian government and opposition forces spread into the cease-fire zone.

The US ambassador to Vienna voiced regret over the Austrian decision and called for it to be reviewed. "Austria should have called for a wider discussion at the UN about improving the weapons and equipment for the troops," he was quoted as saying in Die Presse. [GlobalNation]

## Australian Light Horse/1917 Battle of Beersheba Subject of Australia-Israel Joint Stamp Issue

As part of The World Stamp Expo 2013, Australia Post and Israel

Post are marking the Battle of Beersheba through the release of a commemorative issue of two stamps.

The 60c base-rate stamp features the statue of an

Australian Light Horseman in the Park of the Australian Soldier at Beersheva in Israel. The statue is the work of Australian sculptor Peter Corlett. The \$2.60 stamp features contemporary images of Australian Light Horsemen. The battle scene, once considered to be a photograph

of the actual Battle of Beersheba, is now accepted to be a re-enactment made the following year.

The Battle of Beersheba took place on 31 October 1917 and was part of a wider British offensive known as the third Battle of Gaza during World War I. The final phase

of this day-long battle was the famous mounted charge of the 4th Light Horse Brigade, widely considered to be the last great mounted charge in military history.



Thirty-one Australian Light Horsemen were killed in the charge and 36 were wounded. The capture of Beersheba allowed British Empire forces to break the Ottoman line near Gaza and then advance into Palestine, a chain of events which eventually culminated in the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. [InternationalStampNews.com]