

Headlines:

- The Innovation Turning Desert Sand into Farmland
- A Breakthrough for Churches in Saudi Arabia?
- Iran's Rouhani warns Trump of Historic Regret Over Nuclear Deal

Details:

The Innovation Turning Desert Sand into Farmland

Faisal Mohammed Al Shimmari farms in some of the most extreme conditions in the world, at Al Ain, an oasis in the United Arab Emirates desert, where temperatures can reach 50C. "It's expensive as we have to buy water regularly to irrigate these plants," he says. Farmers have to use tankers to bring in water, and in the desert farms use almost three times as much water as those in temperate climates. This makes farming in the desert impractical so the UAE imports about 80% of its food. Yet for many, this might be the future of farming. Increased drought, deforestation and intensive farming methods are turning an area half the size of Britain into desert each year. According to the United Nations Convention to Combat Climate Change, by 2045, 135 million people could lose their homes and livelihoods to desertification. That raises the challenge of how to grow food in increasingly hostile conditions, but one scientist has come up with an innovation that could turn those deserts green again. Norwegian scientist Kristian Morten Olesen has patented a process to mix nano-particles of clay with water and bind them to sand particles to condition desert soil - he has been working on Liquid Nanoclay (LNC) since 2005. "The treatment gives sand particles a clay coating which completely changes their physical properties and allows them to bind with water," he says. "This process doesn't involve any chemical agents. We can change any poor-quality sandy soils into high-yield agricultural land in just seven hours." Kristian's son Ole Morten Olesen, who is also the chief operating officer of the company they founded, Desert Control, says: "We just mix natural clay in water that is inserted into the sand which creates half a metre layer into the soil that turns the sand into good fertile soil." Normal sand particles are very loose, which means that they have a very low water retention capacity. But when you add Liquid Nanoclay to the sand it binds those sand particles together, says Kristian, which means it can hold water for longer, "increasing the possibility of agricultural yield". "I am amazed to see the success of LNC," says Faisal. "It just saved consumption of water by more than 50%, it means now I can double the green cover with the same water." [Source: BBC]

Based on Abu Huraira, Prophet Mohammad (saw) said: «لَا تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ حَتَّى تَعُودَ أَرْضُ الْعَرَبِ مُرُوجًا وَأَنْهَارًا»
«The Hour (of Resurrection) will not occur..... until the land of the Arabs returns to being pastures and rivers.» (Sahih Muslim).

A Breakthrough for Churches in Saudi Arabia?

Saudi Arabia has made a deal with the Vatican to allow churches for Christian worshippers, according to an Egyptian English-language website and aljazeera news. The Egypt Independent reports the agreement between Roman Catholic Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran and Mohammed bin Abdel Karim Al-Issa of the Muslim World League. The claim that churches will be built in Saudi Arabia has not been confirmed by the Vatican or Saudi

authorities. The newspaper reports the cardinal visited Saudi Arabia this year and met the royal family, urging the Saudi rulers to extend promised democratic reforms to include freedom of religion. There are no Christian churches in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia allows Christians to enter the country as foreign workers for temporary work, but does not allow them to practice their faith openly. The young Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has already unleashed an historic reform effort that includes emancipating women, introducing music and cinema and cracking down on corruption.

The rapid pace of secularization and adoption of Western values by Muhammed Bin Salman could also pave the way for the cross to re-establish itself in Hijaz after hiatus of 1400 years. This would upend the prohibition derived from the words of the messenger of Allah (saw) and explained by many scholars. Ibn Qudaamah said, "It is not permissible for any of them (the kuffar) to live in the Hijaaz". This is the view of Malik and al-Shafa'i, but Malik said, "I think that they should be expelled from all the Arab lands, because the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: «لَا يَجْتَمِعُ دِينَانِ فِي جَزِيرَةِ الْعَرَبِ» "Two religions cannot coexist in the Arabian Peninsula." Abu Dawood narrated with his isnaad from 'Umar that he heard the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) say: «لَا أُخْرِجَنَّ الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَى مِنْ جَزِيرَةِ الْعَرَبِ، حَتَّى لَا أَدَعَ إِلَّا مُسْلِمًا» "I will certainly expel the Jews and the Christians from the Arabian Peninsula, and I will not leave anyone there but Muslims." Al-Tirmidhi said that this is a saheeh hasan hadeeth. And it was narrated that Ibn 'Abbas said, «دَعُونِي فَأَلْذِي أَنَا فِيهِ خَيْرٌ، أَوْصِيكُمْ بِثَلَاثٍ: أَخْرِجُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ مِنْ جَزِيرَةِ الْعَرَبِ، وَأَجِيزُوا الْوَفْدَ بِخَوْفٍ مَا كُنْتُ أُجِيزُهُمْ قَالَ وَسَكَتَ عَنِ الثَّالِثَةِ أَوْ قَالَهَا فَانْسِيئُهَا» "The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) left behind three instructions. Expel the mushrikeen from the Arabian Peninsula, honour the delegations the way that I do, and he kept quiet about the third." [Source: IslamQA, Narrated by Abu Dawood, Al-Mughni, 9/285, 286.]

Iran's Rouhani warns Trump of Historic Regret Over Nuclear Deal

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has warned that the US will face "historic regret" if Donald Trump scraps the nuclear agreement with Tehran. Mr Rouhani's comments come as the US president decides whether to pull out of the deal by a 12 May deadline. Mr Trump has strongly criticised the agreement, calling it "insane". The 2015 deal - between Iran, the US, China, Russia, Germany, France and the UK - lifted sanctions on Iran in return for curbs on its nuclear programme. France, the UK and Germany have been trying persuade the US president that the current deal is the best way to stop Iran developing nuclear weapons. The UN also warned Mr Trump not to walk away from the deal. However, he has threatened that the US will "withdraw" from the deal on 12 May - the end of a 120-day review period - unless Congress and European powers fixed its "disastrous flaws". In remarks carried live on Iranian state television on Sunday, President Rouhani said: "If America leaves the nuclear deal, this will entail historic regret for it." He warned Iran had "a plan to counter any decision Trump may take and we will confront it". Iran insists its nuclear programme is entirely peaceful and says it considers the deal non-renegotiable. [Source: BBC]

Iran's leaders are either blind agents of America or extremely naive. Did they not learn from America's invasion of Iraq? Possession of nuclear weapons is what keeps America from invading North Korea and now Pyongyang is negotiating with the US from a position of strength. While Iran is crying over spilt milk, and is waiting for the nuclear-armed Jewish state acting under America's patronage to attack it. Tehran can only rue its ignoble decision of surrendering its nuclear programme...