

# Gulf Today

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Rashford strikes late as United edge PSG, Barca thump Ferencvaros



Page 24

## Vaccine will help fight virus, not eradicate: UK scientist



Police officers patrol a busy Craftsman Street in Dublin, Ireland, on Wednesday. The country is going for a second lockdown.

Agence France-Press

The Ministry of Health conducted 105,740 tests over the past 24 hours leading to the detection of the new cases. 1,501 people also made full recoveries in the last 24 hours.

The current death toll stands at 472 while total confirmed cases in the country is 119,132. Out of the total cases, 111,814 people have completely recovered so far.

The European Union has removed Canada, Georgia and Tunisia from its list of countries exempt from its coronavirus travel ban because of rising case numbers, European sources said Wednesday.

To slow the epidemic, the EU has advised members to ban travellers arriving from outside the bloc unless they come from a short list of countries deemed safe -- or at least safer than Europe.

Member state envoys have agreed to remove three countries from the list, and to add Singapore, bringing it down to nine from 11 territories, diplomats told AFP.

Residents of Australia, Japan, New Zealand, Rwanda, South Korea, Thailand, Uruguay and Singapore are now the only travellers deemed safe on the advisory list, although EU member states can set their own rules. China is the ninth country -- with the proviso it reciprocates for EU travellers which to date it has not.

Spain became the first country in western

Europe to accumulate more than 1 million confirmed COVID-19 infections on Wednesday as the nation of 47 million struggles to contain a resurgence of the virus.

The health ministry said that its accumulative case load since the start of the pandemic reached 1,005,295 after reporting 16,973 more cases in the past 24 hours.

EU leaders will hold a video summit on October 29 to discuss the sudden rise in Covid-19 cases across their continent, European sources said on Wednesday.

The meeting is expected to be the first in a series of regularly-held video calls, the sources said, with European leaders eager to improve coordination to slow the spread of the coronavirus and fix the pandemic-hit economy.

Switzerland is considering tighter restrictions including mini-lockdowns to check rapidly rising number of coronavirus cases, Health Minister Alain Berset said on Wednesday.

The government will decide on further measures next week after examining the impact of its ban this week on spontaneous gatherings of more than 15 people and a nationwide obligation to wear masks.

King Willem-Alexander said Wednesday the Dutch royal family regretted going on holiday despite a partial coronavirus lockdown in the Netherlands, admitting "it hurts to have betrayed" people's trust.

The Dutch king and queen cut short a holiday to their luxury home in Greece on Saturday, a day after departing from Amsterdam on a government jet.

### LONDON

**UAE reports 2 deaths, 1,538 COVID-19 cases; EU takes Canada, Tunisia off virus-safe travel list; Spain 1st in western Europe to hit 1m cases; leaders to hold video summit on Oct. 29.**

Agencies



Lebanon's exit from conflict hinges on new PM, says Aoun



Karyana to tackle sedition charges, summoned by police



Siraj's spell helps Bangalore defeat Kolkata in Abu Dhabi

Page 23

The coronavirus will be around for "evermore" as it is unlikely it will be eradicated, a British scientist on the government's advisory committee for the pandemic said on Wednesday, although vaccines would help improve the situation.

Britain, like other countries in Europe, is currently in the grip of a resurgence in COVID-19 infections, with much of the country under local restrictions and more than 2,000 daily cases reported on Tuesday.

"We are going to have to live with the virus for evermore. There is very little chance that it's going to become eradicated," John Edmunds, a member of Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE), told lawmakers.

Although the coronavirus will be around indefinitely, Edmunds said that the prospect of a vaccine towards the end of the winter should impact the government's strategy now.

"If vaccines are just around the corner then, in my view, we should try and keep the incidence as low as we can now, because we will be able to use vaccines in the not too distant future," he said.

He said the UK had played a "clever game" in investing in different coronavirus vaccines. Britain has signed supply deals for six different COVID-19 vaccines, with 340 million doses secured across different types of technologies.

"I think we will be in a reasonable position in months," he said. "I don't think we're going to be vaccinating everybody but to start, maybe the highest risk people, healthcare workers and so on."

In the UAE, 2 deaths were reported and 1,538 new coronavirus cases and 1,501 new recoveries on Wednesday.

## Trump criticised for being insensitive during campaign

**TUCSON:** He adjusts his coat. He gazes out at the crowd. And then he goes for it. President Donald Trump, a man who is famously particular about his appearance, is fully embracing doing a dad dance to the Village People's "YMCA" as the finale to his rallies in the campaign's closing stretch.

He starts with the arms, clenched fists pumping back and forth - sometimes to the beat - as though he's on an elliptical trainer. He claps. He waves. And then he starts to bob his head and move his knees. On some nights, he sticks mostly to pointing and clapping. But on others, he lurches from side to side and jerks his body as the crowd cheers.

Backstage, top staff and campaign aides often join in with the more traditional take, using their bodies to spell out "M-C-A" to the strains of the cheesy '70s anthem.

Trump's rally dance has become a rare moment of levity in an otherwise miserable campaign year marked by a deadly pandemic, an economic recession and racial turmoil. And while Trump has largely been shunned by pop culture, the dance has spawned a viral TikTok video, a challenge (even though he's threatened to ban the site in the U.S.) and a parody on "The Late Show" with Stephen Colbert.

"Do you want to shake your groove thing but

don't know the steps? Then order 'Dancing with The Don' and let President Trump teach you all the hottest moves!" Colbert's show advertised in a parody infomercial.

Trump's campaign staff and family members have also been promoting clips and copycats as the president trails in most national polls and in many battleground states just two weeks out from Election Day.

"Love it!" the president's daughter and senior adviser, Ivanka Trump, wrote as she retweeted a video posted by a young woman replicating the president's moves.

When a reporter tweeted a video showing some of Trump's campaign aides dancing along - but not Ivanka Trump's husband, Jared Kushner, a top White House adviser - Ivanka tweeted back: "Party Foull!"

Added Trump senior advisor Steve Cortes: "President Beast Mode can boogie..."

The efforts to make the dance "athing" come as the president has been trying to demonstrate his vigor after returning to the campaign trail following his infection with the coronavirus, which put him in the hospital for three nights.

It has drawn a scowl from others, including CNN's Don Lemon, who criticized Trump for dancing to the song during a pandemic that has killed so many.

"That can't be taken away no matter how many times you go to rallies and dances to the Village People," Lemon said. "He is having fun and dancing on the graves of 215,000 Americans. Dancing."

"YMCA," widely considered a gay anthem, is a relatively new addition to Trump's rally playlist. It was swapped in this year after the Rolling Stones threatened in June to sue if Trump didn't stop using his song "You Can't Always Get What You Want" as his rally closer.

Trump's eclectic rally soundtrack - an integral part of the events - has sparked numerous threats of legal action, along with group sing-alongs, crowd dance sessions, confused stares and even bows.

In the early days, the list was heavy on the Rolling Stones and Aerosmith (until they also threatened legal action), along with Trump favorites like Adele (until she objected) and the late tenor Luciano Pavarotti's "Nessun Dorma" (until his wife objected, too).

Throughout much of 2016, the Backstreet Boys and 'N Sync were rally staples, as have been ballads from Broadway musicals including "The Phantom of the Opera," "Cats," and "Les Miserables."

Former US president Barack Obama hits the campaign trail for Joe Biden on Wednesday

in a bid to drum up support for his former vice president among young Americans and Black voters in the final stretch of the White House race.

As the 59-year-old Obama makes his first in-person campaign appearance - at a drive-in car rally at a sports stadium in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania - President Donald Trump is to visit North Carolina, one of the battleground states key to victory on November 3.

Biden, 77, who is leading in the national polls, had no public events on his schedule for the third day in a row, leading the 74-year-old Trump to accuse his Democratic opponent of going "into hiding."

The Biden campaign said the former vice president was preparing for the second and final debate against Trump, which is to take place in Nashville, Tennessee, on Thursday.

Obama remained on the sidelines during the Democratic presidential primaries but he threw his support behind Biden after his former deputy won the nomination.

The Biden campaign is hoping the star power of America's first Black president will help boost turnout among young voters and African Americans, who are key to Democratic hopes of recapturing the White House.

## 15 Afghans crushed to death at visa centre; 25 die in violence

**JALALABAD:** At least 15 people were killed in stampede among thousands of Afghans gathered near Pakistan's consulate on Tuesday as jostling broke out between people applying for visas, officials in the eastern city of Jalalabad said.

An estimated 3,000 Afghans had congregated on the open ground, usually used for sports or public gatherings, outside the consulate, waiting to collect tokens needed to apply for a visa, two provincial officials told Reuters a day after the tragedy.

An Afghan news channel transmitted images of them holding passports aloft to secure attention. Images taken after the stampede showed scores of passports strewn across the ground.

"The visa applicants jostled to secure their token from the consulate officials...the crowd got out of control, leading to a stampede," said an Afghan official.

A survivor described to reporters how tempers frayed and the crowd became unruly in the lead up to the stampede.

"I stood in the queue all night but at some point people got angry and started pushing, many of us fell on the ground," said Farmanullah, who goes by a single name.

On the other hand, at least 25 Afghan security force personnel were killed in an ambush blamed on the Taliban, officials said Wednesday, as spiralling violence imperils ongoing peace talks.

"The ambush came despite assurances by the Taliban to Washington last week that they would reduce bloodshed.

Security forces were attacked overnight Tuesday in Takhar province and fighting was still going on, said Jawad Hejji, a spokesman for the governor, who put the death toll so far at 25.

"The Taliban had taken positions in the houses around the area. They ambushed our forces who were there for an operation against the enemy," he said.

Takhar provincial health director Abdul Qayyum said 34 security personnel had been killed - including the deputy police chief of the province.

"The Taliban have so far not commented on the attack.

Despite opening peace talks with the Afghan government in a Gulf state, the headline group have only increased violence in Afghanistan in a bid to wield leverage in the negotiations.

A major assault by the Taliban in Helmand province forced thousands of families to flee their homes last week, while a car bomb Sunday near the police headquarters in Ghazni wounded the insurgents left 16 people dead and 154 wounded.

Meetings have been held between Afghan forces and the Taliban in Doha over the past few days, but little progress has been made since the talks launched in September.

Agencies Reuters

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SUBSCRIPTION



# ARTS & CULTURE

## Colombian artist Velez showcases sculptures at Oblong, Dubai



**SHARJAH:** Colombian artist Gustavo Velez, known for his sculptures which embody a certain creative fluidity, is showcasing his artworks at the Oblong Contemporary Art Gallery on Blue Waters Island, Dubai (Oct. 1 – Dec. 1).

It is a double delight actually, along with the main exhibition, there is also a virtual online exhibition that can be viewed at Oblong website curated by Italian curator Susanna Campolunghi, which features fifteen artworks of Velez (October end to January end, 2021).

One of the most prominent artists from Medellin, Colombia, Velez's sculptural process is the result of the figurative artist's interpretation, abstracted from the reality of the world. He transforms matter into works that play between the figurative and the conceptual, between forms easily identifiable and others more abstract, full of movement, light, shadow and search of the infinite.

Entwining elegant lines, the thin, light

● **Gustavo Velez in his studio.**

sculptures depict his particular way of creating tri-dimensional shapes. From every angle, their forms are seamless and the lines are dynamic; their shapes change when light changes, giving the spectator an infinite, pleasant possibility of viewing the pieces.

Velez started acquiring knowledge of the arts in his hometown, then moved to Italy and continued his studies in the Lorenzo De Medici academy of Florence, Italy. He developed, experimented and mastered his technique of marble carving in his studio in Pietrasanta, Italy.

He is well aware of the paths to sculpting as he engages materials in order to shape his works. For the past twenty years, he has been

committed to complex abstract forms in different media.

His quest for form in matter is akin to the way a poet fashions meaning from the flourishing, buzzing, confusion of language. Velez's works have the precision of poetry as well as its openness.

Although he works with different materials, he takes special pleasure in sculpting marble. Says he: "The medium I most appreciate and the one with which I coexist from day to day, is marble. That is why seventeen years ago I headed to Pietrasanta after completing my training in Florence.

"I am passionate about sculpting marble, about extracting from it all its values, and obtaining from it the transparency and movement that lie within it."

Velez often challenges himself to capture the abstract shape of things whose form is fleeting or hard to fathom, such as Wind (White Carrara

● **The blue of the sky is reflected in Gustavo Velez's sculpture.**

marble, 2007), Aire (White Carrara marble, 2013), and Bruma (Carrara marble, 2013).

It is the type of challenge that Leonardo da

Vinci once engaged in when he reflected upon water, which he called the "vetturale di natura" (the vehicle of nature).

With his outstanding powers of observation, da Vinci drew the lines of flowing water. Velez's instinct is to focus on the flow without the representational component, and much like Constantin Brancusi's Bird in Space (1919), he captures the soaring flight of the animal without wings.

Many of Velez's sculptures are a tribute to Brancusi (1876-1957), the Romanian artist from whose work he draws aesthetic lessons. Velez says: "In Brancusi I discovered a reading of sculpture as rhythm and harmonious lines that impact space".

One can see in Brancusi's wingless Bird in Space an antecedent to Velez's Vuelo (White Carrara marble, 2007) and Mia vita (White Carrara marble, 2008). One can even discern a distant echo of Brancusi's The Kiss (1908) in Contraste (Sienna yellow marble, 2007).

Notwithstanding the similarities, it is the differences that define Velez's oeuvre. Velez's Infinita (White Carrara marble, 2007) does not need the colossal height of Brancusi's The Endless Column (1938) in order to draw a line to connect earth and sky, finite matter and the infinity of space. Infinita achieves this by weaving into the marble a pattern that acts

like a recursive function and a biomorphic suggestion of blooming.

He has exhibited his artworks throughout Asia and in art fairs in Japanese cities such as Tokyo and Iwaki. In China, he exhibited at the Zhengzhou Art Museum in Guan Xiang and in Korea, he hosted a monumental installation at the Art sculpture park of Seoul.

His colossal sculptures in marble, bronze and steel are in museums in Ecuador and Colombia such as the Archaeological Museum and Contemporary Guayaquil, Museum of Modern Art in Cuenca, Museum of Modern Art in Quito and Art Museum Tolima. He currently divides his time between Pietrasanta, New York and Medellin.

Oblong Contemporary Art Gallery's mission is to create a successful global arena for culture and art. Mainly involved in promoting contemporary and modern art, operating both locally and on the international art platform, it is a place of cultural exchange, exhibiting quality artworks and giving a platform to artists from the region.

Additionally, Oblong hosts workshops, educational initiatives and a cross-cultural art exchange programme between the UAE and Pietrasanta, on the coast of northern Tuscany in Italy. The gallery name was derived from the 'oblong' shape, which comes from three other shapes: a square, a circle and a rectangle. The founders of Oblong, Emanuela Venturini and Paola Marucci, have described the shape as a representation of their different backgrounds and characters. They have strong links to Pietrasanta, embodying the DNA of the historic city and its rich heritage.

Muhammad Yusuf, Features Writer