

BRIEFLY

No clear champ in UK election debate

LONDON (AP) — British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and opposition leader Jeremy Corbyn attacked each other's policies on Brexit, health care and the economy Tuesday in a televised election debate that likely failed to answer the question troubling many voters: Why should we trust you?

The two politicians hammered away at their rival's weaknesses and sidestepped tricky questions about their own policies in the hourlong encounter, which was the first-ever head-to-head TV debate between a British prime minister and a chief challenger.

It was a chance for Corbyn to make up ground in opinion polls that show his Labour Party trailing Johnson's Conservatives ahead of the Dec. 12 election. For Johnson, the matchup was an opportunity to shake off a wobbly campaign start that has seen the Conservatives thrown on the defensive by candidates' gaffes and favoritism allegations involving Johnson's relationship with an American businesswoman while he was London's mayor.



Corbyn



Johnson

Bolivian security forces and supporters of former President Evo Morales near a major fuel plant.

The public defender's office on Tuesday confirmed the death in El Alto, where protesters had been trying to block access to the fuel plant.

A hospital says at least eight people were injured.

The violence came as some Bolivian cities report food and gasoline shortages because of demonstrations by pro-Morales groups.

Morales resigned on Nov. 10 following a disputed election and massive protests by Bolivians, who believe he rigged the vote.

About two-dozen people have been killed in unrest since the Oct. 20 election. An interim government says it wants to organize new elections, but it faces fierce opposition from Morales' camp.

U.S., Australian hostages freed by Taliban in swap

ISLAMABAD — The Taliban on Tuesday freed an American and an Australian held hostage since 2016 in exchange for three top Taliban figures — a move that the insurgent group asserted could help rekindle talks to end Afghanistan's 18-year war.

The hostages — American Kevin King and Australian Timothy Weeks — were released in an area of southern Afghanistan heavily controlled by the Taliban, ending more than three years of captivity since they were abducted outside the American University in Kabul, where both had been professors.

A Taliban statement that followed the swap, which freed the younger brother of Sirajuddin Haqqani, the head of the fearsome Haqqani network, called the exchange a "confidence-building measure" that could help bring an end to Afghanistan's endless war.

Anas Haqqani, along with an uncle, Hajji Malik Khan, and a Haqqani lieutenant, Hafiz Rashid Khan, were released by the Afghan government on Monday and flown to Qatar, where the extremist group has a political office in the capital, Doha.

The U.S. State Department said in a statement that King and Weeks were in the care of the U.S. military, where they were recovering and would soon be reunited with their loved ones.

Ruling backs asylum seekers prior to policy shift

SAN DIEGO — A federal judge ruled Tuesday that a partial ban on asylum does not apply to anyone who appeared at an official U.S. border crossing before the policy was announced in July, a decision that may affect thousands of people.

The Trump administration announced July 16 that it would deny asylum to anyone who traveled through another country without applying there first.

Advocates went to court on behalf of the many migrants who heeded the recommendations of the U.S. government and showed up at official crossings earlier this year to request asylum, rather than cross the border illegally.

The advocates said the administration engaged in an "immoral bait-and-switch" against those immigrants by imposing the ban.

U.S. District Judge Cynthia Bashant ruled in their favor Tuesday, saying anyone who appeared at a U.S. border crossing with Mexico before July 16 would be exempt from the ban.

"(These) asylum seekers understood their access to asylum in the United States to be premised on their willingness to wait in Mexico," Bashant wrote. "

— Associated Press

Sea ice minimal in Chukchi, Bering seas

Climate warming is taking a toll on sea ice off Alaska's northwest coast

By DAN JOLING
Associated Press

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — The U.S. research vessel Sikuliaq can break through ice as thick as 2.5 feet. In the Chukchi Sea northwest of Alaska this month, which should be brimming with floes, its limits likely won't be tested.

University of Washington researchers left Nome on Nov. 7 on the 261-foot ship, crossed through the Bering Strait and will record observations at multiple sites, including Utqiagvik, formerly Barrow, America's northernmost community. Sea ice is creeping toward the city from the east in the Beaufort Sea, but to find sea ice in the Chukchi, the Sikuliaq would have to head northwest for about 200 miles.

In the new reality of the U.S. Arctic, open water is the November norm for the Chukchi. Instead of thick, years-old ice, researchers are studying waves and how they may pummel the northern Alaska coastline.

"We're trying to under-



AP Photo/John Guillote
The U.S. research vessel Sikuliaq makes its way through sea ice in the Beaufort Sea off Alaska's north coast.

stand what the new autumn looks like in the Arctic," said Jim Thomson, an oceanographer at the UW Applied Physics Laboratory.

Chukchi sea ice in early November was at its lowest level on record, said Rick Thoman, a climate expert at the University of Alaska Fairbanks' International Arctic Research Center and a former forecaster for the National Weather Service.

Low ice is a problem for people of the coast. Communities north and south of the Bering Strait rely on near-shore ice to act as a natural sea wall, protecting land from erosion brought on by winter storms.

Sea ice is a platform from which to catch crab or cod in Nome, a transportation

corridor between villages in Kotzebue Sound and a work station on which to butcher walrus near Gambell.

Sea ice is also a one of the most important physical elements of the Chukchi and Bering seas. The cold, salty water underneath ice creates structure in the water column that separates Arctic species from commercially valuable fish, such as Pacific cod and walleye pollock. When sea ice melts, it creates conditions important for the development of micro-organisms at the base of the food web.

And then there's wildlife. Sea ice is the prime habitat for polar bears and the preferred location for dens where females give birth. Female walrus with young

use sea ice as a resting platform and follow the ice edge south as it moves into the Bering Sea.

The formation of sea ice requires the ocean temperature to be about 28 degrees, the freezing point of saltwater. Historically, ice has formed in the northernmost waters and been moved by currents and wind into the southern Chukchi and Bering seas, where it cools the water, allowing even more ice to form, said Andy Mahoney, a sea ice physicist at the University of Alaska Fairbanks' Geophysical Institute.

Forecasters 20 years ago took it as a given that the water temperature would be cold enough to form sea ice.

"Even at the end of summer you couldn't get enough heat into the ocean to raise the water temperature significantly above freezing," Mahoney said. "So it didn't take much cooling to cool the ocean down to the freezing point."

Climate warming has brought a harsh new reality. High summer temperatures have warmed the entire water column in the Bering and Chukchi seas. Water temperature from the surface to the ocean bottom remain above normal, delaying ice formation.

Trump stretches in assailing witnesses

By HOPE YEN AND CALVIN WOODWARD
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Tuesday accused witnesses at the House impeachment hearings of spreading word-of-mouth information about matters they have no knowledge of themselves. But the testimony of Lt. Col Alexander Vindman and Jennifer Williams did not come from a rumor mill.

Both listened directly to Trump's phone conversation with Ukraine's president in July and had their own concerns about his request for a politically beneficial "favor."

At the hearing, Republicans tried to defend Trump by pushing a widely discredited claim that former Vice President Joe Biden pressed Ukraine's government to shut down a corruption investigation of Burisma, the energy company where Biden's son Hunter served on the board.

A look at some of the remarks in the second round of public hearings in the impeachment inquiry by the House Intelligence Committee and Trump's response:

Trump: "All these people are talking about — they heard a conversation of a conversation of another conversation that was had by the president." — Cabinet meeting.

The facts: Trump is wrong that the witnesses testifying Tuesday only had thirdhand information about the call at the cen-

ter of the whistleblower complaint.

Both Vindman, a National Security Council expert on Ukraine, and Williams, an aide to Vice President Mike Pence, directly listened to the July call between Trump and Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

California Rep. Devin Nunes, the top Republican on the committee, speaking of the news media: "You'd think they would be interested in Joe Biden threatening to withhold U.S. loan guarantees unless the Ukrainians fired a prosecutor who was investigating Burisma. That would be a textbook example of bribery."

The facts: Nunes is incorrect to say Joe Biden pressed to have the prosecutor fired while he was investigating Burisma. In fact, by the time Biden came out against the prosecutor, the investigation was dormant.

Trump and his personal lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, have defended their actions in asking Ukraine to investigate the Bidens by citing a video of Joe Biden from 2018. Speaking on a public panel, Biden recounted threatening to withhold a \$1 billion loan guarantee from Ukraine's government unless it fired the prosecutor who the U.S. and other countries said was failing to fight corruption.

But officials in the U.S. and Europe wanted Ukraine to do a broader, more aggressive investigation of corruption in the country. Biden was among the

international leaders who considered the prosecutor ineffective.

Trump: "Right now you have a kangaroo court headed by little shifty Schiff, where we don't have lawyers, we don't have witnesses, we don't have anything." — Cabinet meeting.

The facts: Depends on the meaning of "we." Republicans on the committee have a lawyer asking questions of the witnesses, so it's not true that they have no legal repre-

sentation. And several witnesses were invited at the request of Republicans on the committee.

It's also true, though, that Trump himself does not have a lawyer speaking for him at the hearings. That's not unusual. The inquiry is meant to be a fact-finding process and the president is not charged with anything.

He will have legal representation if the House Judiciary Committee moves ahead to draft articles of impeachment against him.

Epstein jail guards charged with falsifying records

NEW YORK — Two correctional officers responsible for guarding Jeffrey Epstein the night he killed himself have been charged with falsifying prison records.

A grand jury indictment made public Tuesday accused guards Toval Noel and Michael Thomas of failing to perform checks on Epstein every half hour, as required, and of fabricating log entries to show they had.

Epstein was found dead in his cell in August as he awaited trial on charges of sexually abusing teenage girls.

New York City's medical examiner ruled Epstein's death a suicide.

A message left with union officials representing the guards wasn't immediately returned.

The Associated Press reported Friday that the officers were offered a plea deal by prosecutors, but declined to take it.

Netanyahu celebrates U.S. settlement decision

EFRAT, West Bank — Israel's prime minister has traveled to the West Bank to celebrate the U.S.'s announcement that it does not consider Israeli settlements to be a violation of international law.

Benjamin Netanyahu called the Trump administration's declaration a "huge achievement" that "fixed a historic wrong."

"I think it is a great day for the state of Israel and an achievement that will remain for decades," he said.

Netanyahu spoke Tuesday at a gathering of ecstatic supporters and settler leaders in Efrat, a large settlement outside of Jerusalem.

The Palestinians, who claim the West Bank as part of a future state, say the move undercuts any chances of a broader peace deal.

1 killed in Bolivia clashes near fuel plant

EL ALTO, Bolivia — At least one person has been killed in clashes between

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