

WORLD

Thousands bid farewell to George Floyd

Democrats propose police overhaul as White House rejects idea of defunding

By ZHAO HUANXIN in Washington and CHEN WEIHUA in Brussels

George Floyd's funeral was scheduled to be held in his native Houston on Tuesday after mourners paid their respects to the African American whose death ignited global protests against police brutality and racism.

Floyd, who was 46 when he was killed, was to be laid to rest next to his mother. On May 25, as a white Minneapolis officer pressed a knee on Floyd's neck for several minutes, the dying man cried out for his mother.

A public memorial service was held on Monday in Houston. Nearly 6,000 people attended.

Under a blazing Texas sun, mourners gathered wearing T-shirts with Floyd's picture or the words "I Can't Breathe" — a statement he cried out repeatedly while pinned down by the police officer Derek Chauvin.

Chauvin, the 44-year-old white officer who was filmed pressing his knee on the handcuffed Floyd's neck for nearly nine minutes, made his

first court appearance on Monday. He faces up to 40 years in jail if convicted on charges of second-degree murder, third-degree murder and manslaughter.

Floyd's death sparked international protests and drew new attention to the treatment of African Americans in the United States by police and the criminal justice system.

"Defund the police", a rallying cry from protesters angry at Floyd's death in Minneapolis police custody two weeks ago, seemed to have hit a wall at the White House and at Capitol Hill on Monday, as Democratic lawmakers proposed sweeping legislation to combat police violence and racial injustice.

Some demonstrators and activists clamoring for an end to police brutality have called for law enforcement budgets to be slashed, while in Minneapolis, the City Council voted on Sunday to dismantle the police department and create a new system of public safety.

"There won't be defunding, there won't be dismantling of our police," US President Donald Trump told a



Attorney Ben Crump raises his fist as Philonise Floyd, brother of George Floyd, speaks during the public viewing of George Floyd in Houston on Monday. Standing on the left is Reverend Al Sharpton and in the background is George Floyd's younger brother Rodney Floyd. ADREES LATIF / REUTERS

roundtable of state, federal and local law enforcement officials at the White House on Monday.

According to The Associated Press, on Monday, relatives of Floyd and three other black people who were killed by police have joined nearly 600 rights groups to demand the top UN human rights body urgently convene a special session to look into a rise in police violence and repression of protests in the United States.

High in-custody death rate

In a data analysis on Monday, CNN reported that the rate of in-custody deaths in the US is more than double Australia's and about six times that of the United Kingdom's.

A media review by the Bureau of Justice Statistics found a total of 1,348 potential arrest-related deaths

in the 10 months from June 2015 through March 2016, an average of just more than four per day, according to the report.

It also said that of those confronted or arrested by police, African Americans are more likely to be subjected to force, a key complaint of the protesters marching across the US.

In a direct response to the mass protests, US congressional Democrats unveiled a 134-page bill on Monday that would allow victims of misconduct and their families to sue police for damages, eliminate the "qualified immunity" for both police and corrections officers, prohibit racial profiling and ban choke holds.

The legislation would not cut or abolish funding for police departments. US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi suggested that

"defunding" was not an issue for Congress.

Also on Monday, World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that the WHO fully supported equality and the global movement against racism.

But he advised that if people did attend a protest, they should keep at least one meter from each other, clean their hands, cover coughs and wear masks, adding that those who were sick should stay home and contact a healthcare provider.

Pan Mengqi in Beijing, May Zhou in Houston and agencies contributed to this story.

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Pakistani economic corridor powers ahead despite outbreak

By KASWAR KLASRA in Islamabad For China Daily

For business manager Fazal Rahim, operations at the Port Qasim Power Plant he helps oversee in southern Pakistan haven't skipped a beat even as all precautions have been taken against the coronavirus.

"Rest assured, COVID-19 has not even slowed down the pace of work here," he said. "Credit goes to the management and the workers, both Pakistanis and Chinese."

Of the 1,060 employees at the plant in Karachi, 292 are Chinese.

"Stable operations continue at Port Qasim Power Plant. Not a single worker has contracted the virus so far," said Xi Peng, deputy chief representative of Power Construction Cooperation of China in Pakistan.

"We have made sure every worker complies with standard operation procedures to keep the virus at bay."

"All employees are following the necessary precautionary measures such as wearing masks in public places, washing hands on a frequent basis and avoiding gatherings."

As an independent power producer, the coal-fired power plant is just one of a number of energy projects emerging in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, or CPEC. It has been jointly developed by Powerchina Resources Limited (China) and

Al Mirqab Capital Qatar (Qatar). It is projected to meet the electricity demands of 4 million households when completed.

"Since operations started in April 2018, we have steadily increased the ratio of Pakistani employees, especially from technical operations, to pool the talents of Pakistan's young generation," Xi said. Apart from posts in engineering management, locals are working as skilled workers and logistics service providers.

Rahim, for one, is glad to work there. "The Chinese are the best workers in the world. Their dedication and commitment to work has almost transformed the dream of the CPEC into a reality."

One such Chinese worker is Hu Ling, manager of the corporate culture department at the plant, who chose to stay during Chinese New Year in January. "One needs to serve the company with devotion and enthusiasm," Hu said over the phone. "We have to accomplish the CPEC."

"I always keep in touch with my family by video call. Although the epidemic is relatively severe, I firmly believe that with wise decision-making, the whole society's unity and strong support of the people from all walks of life, we can surely overcome the epidemic."

Mohammad Saad, a senior Paki-



Two cooling towers are seen in the Sahiwal Thermal Power Plant in the Pakistani city of that name in August. The coal-fired plant, which generated 9 billion kWh of electricity in 2018, is among a number of energy projects along the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. PHOTO BY XINHUA

stani official, said: "The CPEC is a priority. We have made sure that the COVID-19 pandemic doesn't affect progress on projects under the CPEC."

On the way to completion

Various other projects under the CPEC are on the way to completion.

Pakistani authorities said last week that work on the Western Route of the CPEC was in full swing. A four-lane expressway from Hakla, near the capital Islamabad, to Dera

Ismail Khan in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province is due to be completed next year.

It will cut travel time from 5 hours to 2-and-a-half hours, according to Asim Saleem Bajwa, a retired lieutenant-general who is the special assistant to the prime minister on information and broadcasting.

Experts believe the 292-kilometer Western Route of the CPEC will help usher in an era of economic prosperity in some of the country's most underdeveloped regions.

Work on the Suki Kinari-KP Hydel Power Project, with a capacity of 874 megawatts, is steadily progressing. Bajwa said recently that 50 percent of the work had been completed.

In the city of Multan, a roadway known as PKM — undertaken by the China State Construction Engineering Corporation, or CSCEC — is the largest transportation infrastructure project to come on line in the CPEC. Since opening to traffic on Nov 5, it has become the country's most advanced motorway.

"Our company highly values the health and safety of every employee," the Pakistan Observer newspaper quoted the Pakistani logistics supervisor — whose family name was given as Muzzamil — as saying at the main camp of the CSCEC PKM project.

After the coronavirus broke out in Pakistan, company officials carried out epidemic-prevention measures, while implementing a "fully closed management" and bringing in thorough disinfection processes. Details such as body temperature of workers have been logged daily.

All personnel followed the epidemic prevention requirements, and so "no case of infection has occurred in our camp," Muzzamil added.

The writer is a freelance journalist for China Daily.

Briefly

UNITED NATIONS World leaders won't gather for debate

The president of the UN General Assembly said on Monday that world leaders will not be coming to New York for their annual gathering in late September for the first time in the 75-year history of the United Nations because of the COVID-19 pandemic. But Tijjani Muhammad-Bande told a news conference that he hopes to announce in the next two weeks how the 193 heads of state and government will give their speeches on pressing local and world issues during the assembly's so-called General Debate.

SUDAN Push for 3-way talks on giant dam to resume

Sudan has called for the resumption of talks with Egypt and Ethiopia on the giant Blue Nile hydropower dam after the failure of a United States-led mediation effort this year. The three countries have been at odds over the filling and operation of the \$4 billion Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, under construction near Ethiopia's border with Sudan on the Blue Nile, which flows into the Nile. Sudan's irrigation minister on Monday invited his Egyptian and Ethiopian counterparts to resume negotiations digitally on Tuesday "in order to reach a comprehensive and satisfactory agreement".

UNITED STATES Arms negotiator to meet Moscow peer

US Special Presidential Envoy for Arms Control Marshall Billingslea said on Monday that Washington and Moscow had set the date and venue for nuclear arms negotiations this month. "Today agreed with the Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Ryabkov on time and place for nuclear arms negotiations in June," Billingslea said on Twitter, without providing more details. Citing a US Department of State official, Bloomberg reported the same day that a new round of arms control talks between the two nuclear superpowers would be held in Vienna on June 22.

Prince Andrew in Epstein-probe row

US prosecutors and attorneys for Britain's Prince Andrew sniped at one another across the Atlantic on Monday, each saying the other side was to blame for the duke's failure to participate in the Jeffrey Epstein sex-trafficking probe. Andrew's lawyers said in a statement that he had offered three times this year to speak with US investigators after being assured that he "is not and has never been a 'target' of their criminal investigations into Epstein". Hours later, the US attorney in Manhattan, Geoffrey S. Berman, issued a statement saying the prince had tried to "falsely portray himself to the public as eager and willing to cooperate" even as he repeatedly declined to schedule an interview.

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