Ynet-News, September 29, 2020 – Tuesday

09.29.20 – Tu - - - News
PM willing to negotiate Palestinians who no longer have veto over Arab attitudes

09.29.20 – Tu - - - News Placed in Sep 28 spot – Monday
Long, crowded lines for hours outside test centers is spreading the virus

09.27.20 – Su - - - News Placed in Sep 29 spot – Tuesday
Ynetnews will return after Yom Kippur; sunset 5:53 pm in Jerusalem

09.29.20 – Tu - - - News
Trump and Biden first debate five weeks before Election to compare policies

9.28.2020 – Mo - - -
Journal of Medical Science published bizarre indefensible paper in peer review

9.28.2020 – Mo - - - News Placed in Sep 27 spot – Sunday
Artist used digital reconstruction to create photorealistic portraits of 54 emperors

09.29.20
PM: Hezbollah hiding missile factory in Beirut residental area
Addressing UNGA via video message, Netanyahu urges the people of Lebanon to stand up to the Iran-backed group over its use of their neighborhoods to store weapons and accuses the international body of allowing Hezbollah to use the Lebanese as 'human shields'; says UAE, Bahrain deals will facilitate peace with Palestinians
Ynet| Published: 09.29.20 , 20:10

Hezbollah is hiding a missile factory in Beirut among civilians just as it did in the city's now-devastated port, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Tuesday as he addressed the United Nations General Assembly.

The prime minister, who like many other world leaders gave a recorded speech and did not attend the annual New York gathering due to COVID-19, produced his trademark graphics to illustrate his claim that the Iranian-backed group had a weapons plant in the Jannah neighborhood of the Lebanese capital. To make matters worse, Netanyahu said, the plant was even located next to a gas station.

He cited the massive explosion at Beirut port in early August, which was triggered by tons of ammonium nitrate allegedly being used by Hezbollah, and warned that the same thing could happen in Jannah.

The United Nations must insist that Hezbollah stop using Lebanese people as "human shields," he said.

Netanyahu also praised the two treaties Israel signed this month with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, which he said would lead to greater harmony and cooperation in the Middle East.

He hailed what he said was an expanding wave of Israel normalization in the Middle East and said he had "no doubt that more Arab countries will be joining the circle of peace soon."
Like Bahrain and the UAE, Netanyahu said that the agreements between them would help to end the conflict with the Palestinians.
"Expanding circle of peace will not make peace between Israel and Palestinians less likely, it will make peace between Israel and Palestinians more likely," Netanyahu told the General Assembly.

He struck a tougher note, however, with the Palestinians, who he said no longer had a veto over Arab attitudes to Israel.

He urged the Palestinian leadership to return to talks with Israel, saying that he "would be willing to negotiate on the basis of the Trump peace plan to end our conflict with the Palestinians once and for all."

09.29.20
Long, crowded lines for hours outside test centers is spreading the virus

09.29.20
Long, crowded queues at Haredi coronavirus testing centers
Test facilities in Jerusalem and Bnei Brak, which have major ultra-Orthodox communities, report overcrowding due to high demand, with many people who need to be in quarantine waiting for hours without social distancing
Ynet| Published: 09.29.20 , 18:20

Due to their high coronavirus morbidity, several test centers were opened in ultra-Orthodox communities around the country on Tuesday, but as result of the large demand, large and crowded lines formed outside these facilities, risking a continued spread of the pathogen.

A testing facility was opened Tuesday morning at Jerusalem's predominantly-Haredi Ramot neighborhood, which has been designated as a virus hotspot.

Local residents received a text message urging them to go to get tested free of charge and without a prior appointment.

This resulted in hundreds of people arriving, creating long and crowded queues outside the facility – in contradiction with public health orders on social distance.

Many of those who arrived to get tested were also people that were required to enter quarantine.

Racheli, a resident of the neighborhood, said that her husband received a message saying he was positive for the virus, which required the rest of her family to go and get tested.

"We received a message from our local HMO to choose a place and a time to come get tested, but all of have been doing is running around the block for an hour trying to get a test," she said.

"My husband is positive, and I need to go into isolation. I do not understand what we are supposed to do. I have been waiting for nearly an hour to get tested. If we have not yet contracted the virus, we surely did now."

Enoch, who also was supposed to be in isolation and who went to get tested, said that he waited for nearly an hour, with health workers at the facility warning it could take close to two hours.

"I am supposed to be in quarantine. I was in contact with a confirmed carrier. If there is any place to get infected, it is here," he said.

Testing centers in Bnei Brak also reported long lines, with mass number of people queuing for hours since the morning hours.

Also Tuesday, police spotted a confirmed coronavirus patient breaking quarantine at a checkpoint in Bnei Brak.

The patient, a man in his 60s, arrived in his car with two other passengers at a checkpoint in the city.

He told police officers that he had been diagnosed with the virus, and was fined and returned to his home.

09.27.20
Ynetnews will return after Yom Kippur; sunset 5:53 pm in Jerusalem

09.27.20
Ynetnews will return after Yom Kippur
We wish all our Jewish readers gmar hatima tova
Ynet| Published: 09.27.20 , 17:39

Yom Kippur times for your area in Israel:
Light Candles at: 5:53 pm in Jerusalem; 6:08 pm in Tel Aviv; 5:59 pm in Haifa; 5:58 pm in Be'er-Sheva; 6:00 pm in Eilat.

Yom Kippur Ends at: 7:04 pm in Jerusalem; 7:06 pm in Tel Aviv; 7:05 pm in Haifa; 7:07 pm in Be'er Sheva; 7:04 pm in Eilat.

09.29.20
Trump and Biden first debate five weeks before Election to compare policies

09.29.20
Five questions heading into Trump and Biden's first debate
Amid scandals and Twitter wars, former Democratic vice president and Republican incumbent face off for first time in election race - with millions already voting across multiple states
Associated Press| Published: 09.29.20 , 22:10

President Donald Trump and his Democratic challenger, Joe Biden, will meet on the debate stage for the first time Tuesday night in Cleveland.

Millions of voters will get their first opportunity to compare the candidates' policies and personalities side by side on national television for 90 minutes just five weeks before Election Day and as early voting is already unfolding in some states. Here are some of the biggest questions heading into the night:

How does Trump handle being on the defensive?
In his first formal debate since taking office, Trump has a lot to answer for.

More than 200,000 Americans have been killed by COVID-19 under his watch - the highest death toll of any country in the world. Tens of millions of people are still out of work. The country's cultural and political divisions are widening. And don't forget the weekend revelations that Trump has paid less federal income taxes than most working-class Americans for several years.
Moderator Chris Wallace of Fox News and Biden will no doubt press Trump on those facts.
Trump seems to revel in hand-to-hand combat, and history suggests that neither facts nor any code of conduct will prevent him from saying whatever he needs to change the subject. He can pivot to more friendly issues such as the Supreme Court confirmation fight or "law and order" - or he can jump into the mud by going after Biden's mental and physical strength or his family.
Such personal tactics worked for Trump four years ago. But now that he's the man in charge of the country, it's unclear if voters will be as willing to accept the brash outsider act.

How does Biden responds?
It's difficult to keep up with Trump's campaign messages, but one line of attack has risen above the rest over the past year: that the 77-year-old Biden, or "Sleepy Joe," is not

mentally or physically fit to be president. Therefore, perhaps nothing matters more for Biden on Tuesday night than his ability to convince America that he has the strength to hold the world's most important job.

Given Trump's persistent attacks, Biden faces a low bar in proving his stamina.

But it's worth asking whether that's the measure for success that voters should use. After nearly a half century in politics, Biden is a far more experienced debater than Trump, and he has a much better grasp of foreign and domestic policy. On paper, at least, Biden has the advantage.

Yet the former vice president's uneven performances in the primary debates offer plenty of reasons for Democrats to be worried.

Who will voters see on stage?

Trump and his Republican allies have been trying to brand Biden as a socialist since he emerged as the Democratic nominee from a pack of primary candidates that featured a self-described democratic socialist (not Biden). And Biden and his allies have been calling Trump a racist since Biden launched his campaign.

On Tuesday, each candidate will have a prime-time opportunity to debate the policies and rhetoric underlying each argument.

Biden, who has long positioned himself to the center of his party's most liberal positions, has embraced plans to enlarge the government's role in health care, education and the environment. Such policies are hardly socialist, but they would represent a significant shift to the left and require tax increases.

Trump has a well-established pattern of using racist rhetoric and favoring policies that disproportionately favor white people. For example, Trump has used the power of his office to crack down on Black Lives Matter protesters fighting for civil rights, calling them "terrorists" and warning that violent mobs of such protesters are invading largely white suburbs.

While the candidates' personalities may draw more attention than their policies, it's their policies that will touch the lives of virtually every American voter.

How will Biden handle Trump's false statements?

Heading into the debate, Biden's team was advising him to avoid messy confrontations and fact checking Trump in real time to avoid getting pulled into the mud with a president who loves getting dirty.

Biden could easily spend all 90 minutes consumed by trying to refute Trump's claims, and no doubt, liberals will want to see Biden take the fight to the president whenever the opportunity presents itself. But Biden also wants to rise above the chaos and present voters with a clear alternative who's willing to compromise and move past the divisive fights that have dominated the Trump era.

It's a delicate balance, and Biden has struggled at times to stick to his advisers' plans. You may remember him snapping at voters on the campaign trail back in the spring or the campaign's futile attempt to get him to shorten and focus his stump speeches.

Even under the best of circumstances, as we've seen in Trump's previous debates, it's difficult to take on Trump directly. The former TV reality star is clearly comfortable on camera, and he's willing to say whatever he needs to - whether it's true or not.

How will democracy fare?

Trump has repeatedly sought to undermine the integrity of the election by raising unfounded concerns about voter fraud. Trailing in the polls, he's been escalating such warnings as Election Day nears.

Trump's message is not supported by facts, but many of his supporters believe it. We'll see how convincing Trump's message is, with Biden - and perhaps Wallace - pushing back.

There are legitimate concerns about the Postal Service's capacity to handle the surge of mail ballots as people try to participate in the election as safely as possible during the pandemic. And several states are scrambling to avoid the same ballot-counting delays that plagued primary elections. But experts are quite clear that there is no evidence of significant voter fraud and very little chance it will happen in 2020.

The experts' voices are not as loud, however, as whatever will be said Tuesday night.

9.28.2020
Journal of Medical Science published bizarre indefensible paper in peer review

9.28.2020
3 Scientists Say—in a Real Journal!—There's a Black Hole at the Center of Earth
They're trolling us ... we think. But how the hell did this get published?

BY CAROLINE DELBERT
SEP 28, 2020
A ridiculous scientific paper could show one journal's failure to review, and could even be generated by A.I.

Peer review is complicated, and isn't the same as fact checking or analysis—but this is wild.

It all started when scientists found a black hole at the center of the Earth ...

Scientists have uncovered a bizarre, indefensible paper that squeaked through peer review at what appears at first pass to be a legitimate medical journal. Expert responses to the report are funny, but the research represents some key items of interest in science publishing and academia more broadly.

In "A Black Hole at the Center of Earth Plays the Role of the Biggest System of Telecommunication for Connecting DNAs, Dark DNAs and Molecules of Water on 4+N-Dimensional Manifold," published last year in the Open Access Macedonian Journal of Medical Sciences, 13 listed authors from wildly different fields throw together a series of escalating falsehoods. "Recently, some scientists from NASA have claimed that there may be a black hole like structure at the centre of the earth," the abstract begins.

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— Paul Byrne (@ThePlanetaryGuy) September 22, 2020

It only gets crazier from there:

"The earth's core is the biggest system of telecommunication which exchanges waves with all DNAs and molecules of water. Imaging of DNAs on the interior of the metal of the core produces a DNA black brane with around 109 times longer than the core of the earth which is compacted and creates a structure similar to a black hole or black brane. We have shown that this DNA black brane is the main cause of high temperature of core and magnetic of earth."

IFL Science points out that scientists occasionally float garbage into the peer review system to make sure it's still working, but it's not entirely clear that this paper is garbage on purpose.

IFLS found some of the authors have been involved in ==previous== wild and ==questionable papers,== suggesting an ecosystem of either fakers or conspiracy theorists.

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Na, they're just trolling the journal. That particular journal appears to have fallen for a lot of articles like these. Also, the final author, Torello Lotti, coauthored this piece on predatory journals.https://t.co/BLOthRRG80

— Sarah Rasmussen (@SarahDRasmussen) September 23, 2020

Another of the group's papers begins, "First group couple to our universe from one side and produce matters like some genes of DNAs and couple to an anti-universe from another side with opposite sign and create anti-matters like some anti-genes of anti-DNAs."

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If this sounds like ==word salad== to you, you're not alone==. One of the theories== to explain the paper is that it was generated using "peer-review-tricking" artificial intelligence, which shuffles key terms and phrases and glues them together into something almost coherent. The technology to do work like this gets more sophisticated all the time. A.I. can almost write sitcom scripts, and ==job applicants== must "==optimize" their resumes== since so many are now scanned by keyword-seeking bots before they ever make it to a human.

This Is How Algorithms Will Evolve Themselves

The paper's references are also a nonsense buffet, mixing keywords from the paper ("dimension," "dark DNA," and most symbolically telling, "braneless"—all brought in out of context) with some wholly unrelated or even incomplete citations. At least one of the authors, "Cota Linda," has ==four papers that appeared in the same month in the same journal.==

Bystanders often talk about peer review like it's a way to ensure a paper is factually correct, but that's not always the outcome, and it's not even the goal. Sometimes, legitimate scientific or mathematical work is so complex that even "peers" struggle to analyze it, especially in the short time frame before publication. And now that more civilians are savvy about using peer-reviewed sources, for example, there could be journals that tick the boxes in the most minimal way in order to claim they're peer-reviewed.

IFLS points out that one of the authors previously published about predatory journals, which typically have a less legitimate footprint than the Macedonian Journal of Medical Science. Could it be that a totally good-faith peer review process decided to air these ideas as representative of real work? Maybe, but that's hard to believe even with the credulity sliders pushed all the way up. It seems more likely that the process has gone wrong at this particular journal.

In the meantime, though, we'll meet you at that black hole at the center of Earth.

9.28.2020
Artist used digital reconstruction to create photorealistic portraits of 54 emperors

9.28.2020
AI 'resurrects' 54 Roman emperors, in stunningly lifelike images
By Mindy Weisberger - Senior Writer a day ago

An artist used machine learning to create the photorealistic portraits.

Ancient Roman emperors' faces have been brought to life in digital reconstructions; the unnervingly realistic image project includes the Emperors Caligula, Nero and Hadrian, among others.

The features of these long-dead rulers have been preserved in hundreds of sculptures, but even the most detailed carvings can't convey what these men truly looked like when they were alive. To explore that, Canadian cinematographer and virtual reality designer Daniel Voshart used machine learning — computer algorithms that learn through experience — in a neural network, a computing system processes information through hierarchies of nodes that communicate in a manner similar to neurons in a brain.

In the neural net, called Artbreeder, algorithms analyzed about 800 busts to model more realistic facial shapes, features, hair and skin, and to add vivid color. Voshart then fine-tuned Artbreeder's models using Photoshop, adding details gleaned from coins, artworks and written descriptions of the emperors from historical texts, to make the portraits really come to life.

"There is a rule of thumb in computer programming called 'garbage in garbage out,' and it applies to Artbreeder," Voshart told Live Science in an email. "A well-lit, well-sculpted bust with little damage and standard face features is going to be quite easy to get a result." In contrast, a dataset including damaged sculptures or ones photographed under poor lighting can produce proverbial "garbage" images that aren't very realistic.

The busts that Voshart preferred to use as the primary sources were carved when their emperor subject was still alive, or were the most skillfully made, he said in a blog post.

For skin color, Voshart would either provide Artbreeder with a colorized reference image, or let it "guess" how to distribute hues so that the surface of the model resembled realistic human skin.

"I can change skin tone and change ethnicity somewhat with manual controls," he said.

Tracking down all the art and reference text for the emperors took approximately two months, and assembling each portrait required about 15 to 16 hours on average, Voshart told Live Science.

For the emperor Caligula, who ruled from A.D. 37 to 41, Voshart adjusted the Artbreeder model using descriptions that included "head misshapen, eyes and temples sunken," and "eyes staring and with a glare savage enough to torture," from a paper titled "Personal Appearance in the Biography of the Roman Emperors," published in 1928 in the journal Studies in Philology.

Nero, emperor from A.D. 54 to 68, had a more rounded jaw, skin that was "freckled and repulsive," and a face that was "agreeable rather than attractive," according to the 1928 paper.

When Voshart began the Roman Emperor Project as a distraction during the COVID-19 quarantine, his knowledge of the ancient emperors was "close to zero," he said. Nevertheless, what started as a diverting art experiment intrigued Voshart enough to eventually include 54 emperors, spanning a period in the Roman Empire that is sometimes called the Principate, from 27 B.C. to A.D. 285, he wrote on his website.

Knowing little about his subjects was actually a plus, allowing him to shape their faces without preconceptions or bias, Voshart said.

"In a forensic reconstruction, for example, you only want relevant information about hair, skin, known scars," and other physical features, Voshart explained. "Knowing aspects of personality can unduly influence an artist," leading them to craft a portrait that reflects a skewed perception of the subject, he said.

You can see more of Voshart's reconstructions on his website, and a poster of the 54 faces in the Roman Emperor Project is available at his Etsy store.
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