

G20 trade ministers meet virtually to discuss coronavirus impact

Reuters | Riyadh

Trade ministers from the Group of 20 major economies convened an extraordinary video conference on Monday to assess the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on global trade and discuss cooperation on supply chains.

In a virtual summit last week, G20 leaders pledged to inject over \$5 trillion into the global economy to limit job and income losses from the coronavirus and “do whatever it takes to overcome the pandemic.”

They said they would ensure the flow of vital medical supplies and other goods across borders and to resolve supply chain disruptions caused by multiple closures of frontiers by national governments anxious to limit transmission of the virus.

But they stopped well short of calling for an end to export bans that many countries have enacted on medical supplies.

King Salman of Saudi Arabia, this year's G20 host, said the group must send a strong signal to restore confidence in the global economy by resuming the normal flow of goods and services as soon as possible.

Yousef Al-Benyan, chair of the Saudi Business 20 which engages the global business community, told Reuters the coronavirus crisis proves the importance of cross-border trade which he said would be vital to economic recovery.

Saudi king offers to pay for coronavirus patients' treatment

Reuters | Riyadh

Saudi Arabia will finance treatment for anyone infected with the coronavirus in the country, the health minister said yesterday, while the agriculture ministry took steps to boost wheat and livestock supplies amid global fears of a food shortage.

The kingdom has registered eight deaths among 1,453 infections.

Health Minister Tawfiq Al Rabiah said King Salman would cover treatment for citizens and residents diagnosed with the virus, urging people with symptoms to get tested.

“We are all in the same boat,” he told a news conference, adding that Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman was overseeing containment efforts “night and day”.

At a separate news conference, the agriculture ministry spokesman said Saudi Arabia would start importing at least 1.2 million tonnes more wheat next month, adding to strategic reserves of over 1 million tonnes.

Abdullah Abalkhail said the kingdom had also expanded the list of countries from which it can import livestock.

Public health officials say Saudi Arabia's past experience combating the Middle East



A Saudi man walks past a poster depicting Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz, after a curfew was imposed to prevent the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) helped prepare it for the new coronavirus outbreak.

The kingdom has taken drastic steps to contain the disease, halting international flights, closing most public places and imposing a partial curfew.

Restrictions on movement have tightened, with entry and exit to Riyadh, Mecca, Medina and Jeddah heavily restricted. The interior ministry said on Monday it was curbing access to six districts in Mecca, as it did over the weekend with several neighbourhoods in Medina.

Elsewhere in the region, the United Arab Emirates recorded

two deaths yesterday in Arab and Asian nationals, both in their 40s with pre-existing heart conditions, raising the death toll to five among 611 infections. The country extended distance learning until the end of the academic year.

Organisers of Expo 2020 Dubai yesterday supported a proposal to postpone the world fair due to start in October in the UAE for one year following requests by member states hit by the coronavirus pandemic.

Kuwait has repatriated hundreds of citizens from Britain, France and Iran since Saturday, the civil aviation authority said.

Gunmen kill New Zealand man at Freeport mine office in Indonesia's Papua

Reuters | Jakarta

Attackers shot dead a New Zealand man and wounded six other people at an office of the Indonesian arm of mining company Freeport-McMoRan Inc on Monday, police said.

The gunmen opened fire at around 2 p.m. (0300 GMT) at the office in the city of Timika in Indonesia's Papua province, the company PT Freeport Indonesia said in a statement.

Police said the attackers were members of an armed criminal group without going into further details.

Separatists have launched a string of attacks in recent years in the area around the company's nearby Grasberg operation - the world's second largest copper mine.

There have been sporadic shootings and ambushes on vehicles traveling on the main supply route to the mine.

PT Freeport Indonesia said one staff member was killed and six other people wounded, two of them seriously.

Prince Harry, wife Meghan bid farewell to royal roles

Reuters | London

Prince Harry and his American wife Meghan posted their last message as working members of Britain's royal family on Monday before officially embarking on new careers without their “Royal Highness” styles.

Harry and Meghan shocked Queen Elizabeth and the other Windsors in January by announcing plans step back from their royal roles. A later deal brokered by the 93-year-old monarch means they will go their own way from April.

So from Wednesday, the couple, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, will be free to pursue new careers, earn their own money and spend most of their time in North America.

But they will no longer be able to use the word “royal” in their branding or carry out official duties and have agreed not to use the style of HRH - His or Her Royal Highness.

Harry, 35, the queen's grandson and sixth in line to the throne, will remain a prince but relinquish his military appointments.

“While you may not see us here, the work continues,” the couple said in the last message to their more than 11 million followers on their sussexroyal Instagram page.



Britain's Prince Harry and Meghan, Duchess of Sussex, arrive for the annual Commonwealth Service at Westminster Abbey in London, Britain

Harry, Meghan, do not need US help for security costs, spokeswoman says

Reuters | Washington

Britain's Prince Harry and his wife, Meghan, have no plans to ask the US government for help with security costs, the couple said in a statement.

Earlier on Sunday, Trump tweeted: “Now they have left Canada for the US however, the US will not pay for their security protection. They must pay!” A spokeswoman for the couple said later in a statement: “The Duke and Duchess of Sussex have no plans to ask the US government for security re-

sources. Privately funded security arrangements have been made.”

The duchess, Meghan Markle, who married Prince Harry, the grandson of Britain's Queen Elizabeth, in 2018, criticised Trump during his 2016 election campaign as misogynistic and divisive.

Last year, Trump, on being told of Meghan's criticism, said: “I didn't know that. What can I say? I didn't know that she was nasty.” But he also wished her well in her new life as a British royal.

Latest developments

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has been able to do everything required to coordinate the government's response to coronavirus after he tested positive for the virus last week, his spokesman said on Monday.



The coronavirus epidemic in the United Kingdom is showing signs of slowing and antibody tests could be ready in days, Neil Ferguson, a professor of mathematical biology at Imperial College London, said on Monday. “We think the epidemic is just about slowing in the UK right now,” Ferguson told BBC radio.

Australia will spend A\$130 billion (\$79.85 billion) to subsidise the wages of an estimated 6 million people, marking a third tranche of stimulus designed to limit the fallout of the coronavirus pandemic on the country's economy.

Some 12,298 health workers have tested positive for coronavirus in Spain, deputy health emergency chief Maria Jose Sierra said at a news conference

Britain orders 10,000 ventilators from F1, aerospace consortium

Italy's epidemic should stabilise soon, but vigilance needed - WHO

A 1,000-bed Navy hospital ship docked in Manhattan yesterday and a field hospital was going up in Central Park for coronavirus patients, as officials in New York City, the epicenter of a widening U.S. outbreak, pleaded for more help from Washington.



Developing countries will need a \$2.5 trillion support package this year to face the economic crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic, a U.N. report said. Needed measures will include a \$1 trillion liquidity injection and a \$1 trillion dollar debt relief package, according to the paper by the U.N. Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

Iran's coronavirus death toll reaches 2,757 - health official

The Russian prime minister asked regional governors to consider Moscow-style restrictions a day after the capital announced a partial lockdown, ordering residents to stay home.

Germany hopes to launch a Singapore-style smartphone app within weeks to help trace infections.

Twitter removes two Bolsonaro tweets questioning virus quarantine

Sao Paulo

Two tweets by Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro in which he questioned quarantine measures aimed at containing the novel coronavirus were removed Sunday, on the grounds that they violated the social network's rules.

Two of the posts were removed and replaced with a notice explaining why they had been taken down.

In one of the deleted videos, Bolsonaro tells a street vendor, “What I have been hearing from people is that they want to work.”

“What I have said from the beginning is that ‘we are going to be careful, the over-65s stay at home,’” he said.

“We just can't stand still,

there is fear because if you don't die of the disease, you starve,” the vendor is seen telling Bolsonaro, who responds: “You're not going to die!”

In another video, the president calls for a “return to normality,” questioning quarantine measures imposed by governors and some mayors across the giant South American country as an effective containment measure against the virus.

“If it continues like this, with the amount of unemployment what we will have later is a very serious problem that will take years to be resolved,” he said of the isolation measures.

“Brazil cannot stop or we'll turn into Venezuela,” Bolsonaro later told reporters.

One dead, 127 hurt in China passenger train derailment



The train derailment in central China came after recent heavy rains triggered landslides in the area

Chenzhou China

One person was killed and 127 injured when a passenger train derailed after striking debris from a landslide that had fallen to the track, the state-run railway system said.

The accident happened around midday in a rural part of Hunan province and came after recent heavy rains triggered landslides in the area, a statement said.

One car caught fire and five were derailed, it said.

A railway police officer was killed and 122 passengers were hurt, four of them seriously. Five rail staff also suffered light injuries.

A video posted on Chinese social media and verified by AFP showed at least three cars lying on their side and a plume of smoke rising in the distance.

The train was travelling from the eastern city of Jinan to Guangzhou in the nation's south.

Parts of southern, eastern and central China have been soaked by steady rains beginning last week.