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Trump says he will halt immigration, citing pandemic



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Brent oil drops 25%, near two-decade lows on scant demand, storage woes



FILE PHOTO: The sun is seen behind a crude oil pump jack in the Permian Basin in Loving County, Texas, U.S., November 22, 2019. REUTERS/Angus Mordant

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Brent crude futures plunged 25% on Tuesday to the lowest in nearly two decades, a day after panicked traders sent U.S. oil below minus \$40 per barrel on fears of a historic glut due to the destruction of fuel demand by the coronavirus pandemic.

Monday's historic crash in U.S. crude futures saw the front-month May contract, which expires Tuesday, settling at negative \$37.63 a barrel as traders facing a dearth of storage space and customers scrambled to avoid taking delivery of barrels. While that trade was anomalous, the steep decline in Brent and U.S. futures expiring in June showed the market remained worried that the overwhelming supply and weak demand will persist for weeks. Brent LCOc1 futures for June delivery fell \$6.52, or 25.5%, to \$19.05 a barrel by 12:46 p.m. EDT (1646 GMT), while U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude CLC2 for June fell \$9.09, or 44.5%, to \$9.09.

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At their session lows, the Brent front-month fell to \$18.10 a barrel, its lowest since December 2001, while

the WTI second-month fell to \$11.00, the lowest for that contract since December 1998.

WTI for May delivery CLC1, meanwhile, rebounded from its negative condition. It was trading at \$4.80 a barrel, as most of open positions coming into this week were settled on Monday.

"With available storage in short supply, nobody wanted to hold a contract about to come due," Konstantinos Venetis, senior economist at TS Lombard, an independent investment research provider, said in a note. "U.S. shale producers are fast approaching the point where they will be forced to shut down operations."

The main U.S. storage hub in Cushing, Oklahoma, delivery point for WTI, is expected to be full within weeks.

"There is nothing to make energy traders believe that storage constraints, rising inventories, and demand concerns will be alleviated," said Edward Moya, senior market analyst at OANDA in New York.

U.S. President Donald Trump called on the government to make funds available to the U.S. oil and gas industry, calling Monday's crash a "financial squeeze" and mooting a halt to Saudi imports.

In Texas, however, oil and gas regulators declined to force

producers to curtail oil output.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies, including Russia, have announced sweeping cuts in production, amounting to almost 10% of global supplies. But with economies virtually at a standstill due to coronavirus lockdowns, demand is expected to drop as much as 30%.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said leading global oil producers could hold talks again to discuss their output deal further if needed.

Top oil exporter and de facto OPEC leader Saudi Arabia said it was ready to take extra measures to stabilize oil markets along with other producers.

U.S. crude inventories were expected to rise by about 16.1 million barrels in the week to April 17 after posting the biggest one-week build in history, analysts polled by Reuters said.

The American Petroleum Institute (API) is set to release its data at 4:30 p.m. (2030 GMT) on Tuesday.

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Trump says he will halt immigration, cwiting pandemic, as Georgia plans partial reopening

WASHINGTON/ATLANTA (Reuters) - President Donald Trump's response to the coronavirus outbreak took on a sharper political tone with his pledge to suspend immigration into the country, while Georgia and other U.S. states began lifting restrictions that stalled their economies.

FILE PHOTO: U.S. President Donald Trump addresses the daily coronavirus task force briefing at the White House in Washington, U.S., April 20, 2020. REUTERS/Jonathan Ernst Trump made the immigration announcement in a Twitter message late on Monday night, suggesting his action would prevent further contagion from outsiders while saving American jobs.

Trump, elected in 2016 in part on his vow to stamp out illegal immigration, had staked his re-election in November on the strength of a U.S. economy now sapped by the economic shutdown to stop the pandemic. He has since been pressing for states to begin easing restrictions that have left a record 22 million people seeking unemployment benefits.

"In light of the attack from the Invisible Enemy," he tweeted, referring to the pandemic, "as well as the need to protect the jobs of our GREAT American Citizens, I will be signing an Executive Order to temporarily suspend immigration into the United States."

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The White House declined to offer further details on the reasoning behind the decision, its timing or its legal basis.

Trump was due to meet later on Tuesday in the Oval Office with Governor Andrew Cuomo of New York, the state hardest hit by the outbreak. The Democratic governor has voiced strong opposition to Trump's record on immigration and has clashed with the Republican president over a lack of testing and medical equipment to fight the outbreak.



FILE PHOTO: U.S. President Donald Trump addresses the daily coronavirus task force briefing at the White House in Washington, U.S., April 20, 2020. REUTERS/Jonathan Ernst

Cuomo told reporters at his daily coronavirus briefing that his meeting with Trump would focus on testing and how the federal government could work in partnership with the states.

"It's a situation that is very difficult, and it's a situation where - however you do it - it's going to be a blame game," he said. "But it's a situation where you need everybody to work together."

Cuomo, who like Trump is from the same

New York City borough of Queens, has mostly sidestepped potential confrontations with the president, emerging as a foil to his brashness by projecting a calm and fact-based approach to the crisis.

New York accounts for nearly half of the at least 43,000 coronavirus deaths in the United States, according to a Reuters tally, and even though the outbreak appears to be past its peak in New York, Cuomo has insisted on a go-slow approach to reopening.

Click here for a GRAPHIC tracking the novel coronavirus in the U.S.

GEORGIA TO REOPEN

By contrast, Georgia Governor Brian Kemp, a Republican, on Monday said that gyms, hair salons, bowling alleys, tattoo parlors and massage parlors could reopen on Friday, followed next Monday by movie theaters and restaurants.

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United States Reaches A New Extreme Trump Says He Will Issue Order To Suspend Immigration During Coronavirus Crisis



Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

President Trump announced in a tweet late Monday night that he plans to suspend immigration to the United States, a move he said is needed to safeguard American jobs and defend the country from coronavirus pandemic, which he called "the Invisible Enemy."
"In light of the attack from the Invisible Enemy, as well as the need to protect the jobs of our GREAT American Citizens, I will be signing an Executive Order to temporarily suspend immigration into the United States!," the president wrote, announcing the plan at 10:06 p.m.
Trump, who is running for reelection on his immigration record and his effort to build a wall on the Mexico border, has long been frustrated with the limits on his ability to seal off the United States by decree. An executive order suspending all immigration to the country would take the president's impulses to an untested extreme.
Two White House officials said an executive order is being drafted and that Trump could sign it as soon as Tuesday.

The order, which was discussed among senior staff members Monday, would suspend nearly all immigration under the rationale of preventing the spread of infection by foreigners arriving from abroad.
The United States currently has more confirmed coronavirus cases, by far, than any other country, with more than 775,000; the next highest country is Spain, with 200,000 cases. The United States also has far more confirmed virus-related deaths — more than 42,000 — than any other nation; Italy has more than 24,000 deaths and Spain just fewer than 21,000.



Honduran migrants wait in line to

plead their asylum cases at the El Caparral border crossing on March 2, 2020 in Tijuana, Mexico. (Photo/Huffaker/AFP/Getty Images)

It remains unclear what exceptions Trump could include in such a sweeping immigration order, or if would-be immigrants could reach the United States by demonstrating they are free of the virus. The White House officials said they thought the order would not be in place long-term.
The president's announcement caught some senior Department of Homeland Security officials off guard, and the agency did not respond to questions and requests to explain Trump's plan late Monday.
The United States already has placed broad restrictions on travel from Europe, China and other pandemic hot spots, while implementing strict controls at the country's land borders. International air travel has plummeted.
Halting immigration to the United States could affect hundreds of thousands of visa holders and other would-be green card recipients who are planning and preparing to come to the United States at any given time. Most of them are the family members of Americans.
For Trump's executive order to work, it would have to direct the State Department and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to immediately stop the issuance of immigration visas. Such a move appears to have no modern precedent and would potentially leave the fiancées, children and other close relatives of U.S. citizens in limbo.



The State Department issued about 460,000 immigration visas last year, and USCIS processed nearly 580,000 green card approvals for foreigners who ap-

plied for permanent residency, the latest U.S. statistics show.
Alex Nowrasteh, the director of immigration studies at the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank, said that the president likely does have the authority to issue such an order during a time of crisis. Nowrasteh said there are at least two legal justifications for Trump to close the border to all immigration: Title 42 of the U.S. Code enables the president to halt immigration for health reasons, while a 2018 U.S. Supreme Court decision upholding his travel ban gives him legal precedent.
If such an order were in fact signed, it would be unprecedented in American history, Nowrasteh said. During the height of the 1918 flu pandemic, the United States allowed more than 110,000 immigrants to enter the country. And during World War II, the United States accepted more than 170,000 immigrants with green cards and more than 227,000 temporary agricultural workers, mostly from Mexico, on the bracero guest worker visa program.



A medical professional conducts tests for the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Bolinas, a coastal enclave in Northern California on April 20.

The president already has largely halted most forms of immigration into the United States, Nowrasteh said. This latest move continues his restrictionist immigration policies and takes them to a new level, using the pandemic as the reasoning.
On March 18, the State Department canceled most routine immigrant and nonimmigrant visa appointments at its offices overseas, effectively shutting down almost all new kinds of travel into

the United States. The State Department also stopped all processing for refugee resettlement.
Later that week, however, authorities resumed processing H-2A visas for seasonal guest workers. The country's agricultural laborers have been officially declared "essential workers," including hundreds of thousands of people who enter the country under that temporary visa.
Nowrasteh said he was surprised that it took Trump so long to use the pandemic and the cause of public health as justification to achieve one of his highest policy priorities. (Courtesy <https://www.msn.com/>)



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Editor's Choice



U.S. President Trump leads daily coronavirus response briefing at the White House in Washington



Medical professionals in Bolinas, a coastal enclave in Northern California, conduct testing of all residents for the novel coronavirus and its antibodies to combat the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) crisis in Bolinas



Healthcare workers react as people cheer and thank them outside NYU Langone Medical Center during outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in New York



People sunbath on the sidewalk as beaches are closed to limit the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Galveston, Texas, U.S., April 20, 2020. REUTERS/Go Nakamura



A health worker wearing a protective gear checks a girl's temperature, at the walk-through screening and testing facility for the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), in Karachi, Pakistan April 21, 2020. REUTERS/Akhtar Soomro TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY



Gene Campbell, 89, who contracted coronavirus (COVID-19) at Life Care Center of Kirkland, leaves Swedish Medical Center in Edmonds



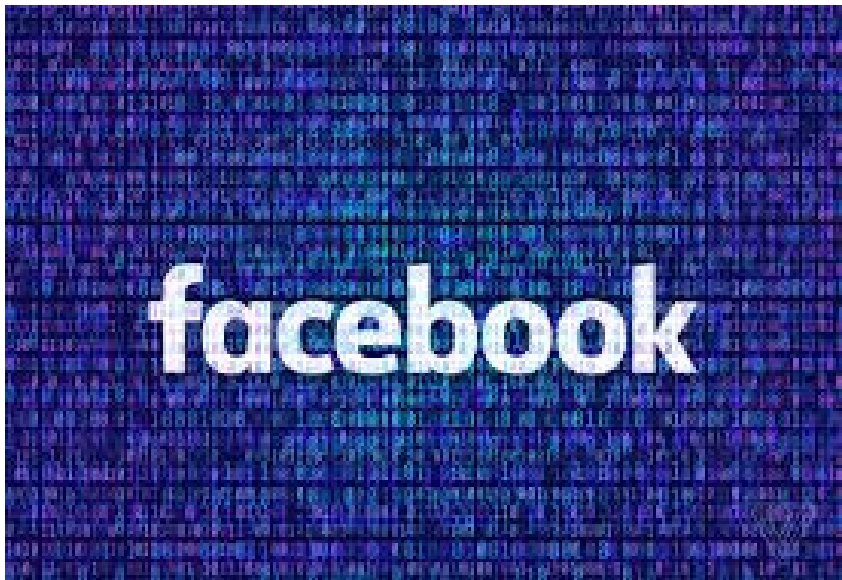
Workers wearing protective equipment are seen on the grounds of the Central Jamia Mosque Ghamkol Sharif, a temporary morgue set up at a Mosque as the spread of the Coronavirus disease (Covid-19) continues, Birmingham, Britain, April 21, 2020. REUTERS/Carl Recine TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY



Registered Nurses and members of National Nurses United (NNU), the largest U.S. nurses union, rally on behalf of health care workers nationwide who have become infected with the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and call on the Trump administration to order the mass production of personal protective equipment (PPE)

Company Has Launched COVID-19 Data Maps For The U.S.

Facebook Will Take Its Symptoms Tracking Efforts Globally



Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

Many, many symptom trackers have launched during the coronavirus pandemic, but few have the potential to reach even a bucketful of Facebook’s vast ocean of users. Facebook launched a symptom tracking partnership with Carnegie Mellon University’s Delphi epidemiological research center early this month, and now the company plans to expand the project outside of the U.S. In early April, Facebook began prompting some users in the U.S. with a CMU survey asking them to self-report COVID-19 symptoms. The effort is designed to help governments and health officials predict where the virus could hit next. Facebook will work with researchers from the University of Maryland on the expansion as the team at CMU’s Delphi develops an API that would allow any researcher to tap into the data set. Facebook is also collecting survey data onto its own symptom map, which visualizes the percentage of the population with COVID-19 symptoms by county and hospital referral region. The map also displays flu activity distinct from reported COVID-19 symptoms. With

testing capacity still limited in many places, this kind of survey effort seeks to provide a more anticipatory picture of the virus and where it might be spreading next. “The real-time estimates we’ve derived correlate with the best available data on COVID-19 activity, which gives us confidence that we may soon be able to give health care officials forecasts of disease activity that is likely to occur in their localities several weeks into the future,” Ryan Tibshirani, co-lead on Carnegie Mellon University’s Delphi COVID-19 Response Team, said in a statement.



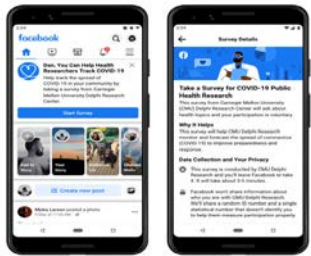
The opt-in CMU survey asks Facebook users if they were experiencing coughing, fever, shortness of breath or loss of smell — symptoms that can show up in COVID-19 patients in more mild forms and that likely would be present prior to an individual seeking treatment and thus

being tracked by healthcare systems. CMU published its initial findings on Monday, which show the data collected on Facebook correlates with existing COVID-19 public health data. The research team is introducing a tool called COVIDcast, which collects aggregated data about COVID-19 activity, sorted by geographic area. Google has also joined CMU’s research effort and later this week the COVIDcast will integrate data from both Facebook and Google survey responses. So far, the project has collected nearly one million responses each week on Facebook and 600,000 through Google’s Opinion Rewards and AdMob apps. In an op-ed in The Washington Post, Mark Zuckerberg touted his company’s efforts. “Getting accurate county-by-county data from across the United States is challenging, and obtaining such focused data from across the whole world is even harder,” Zuckerberg wrote, adding that Facebook is “uniquely” suited to aid research efforts that require surveying large subsets of the population. After a long season of criticism, social media companies are striving for relevance in the fight against the virus. Facebook, particularly dogged by negative press and privacy scandals in recent years, was early to add UI elements promoting COVID-19 information from health experts on its platform. Still, Facebook and other social networks remain plagued by coronavirus misinformation, scammers and conspiracies, which spread quickly and have proven difficult for companies to stamp out. Last week, a handful of U.S. anti-government protests organized on Facebook and promoted by President Trump defied the advice of state governments and public health officials, calling users to gather in public — an act of defiance that could potentially spread the virus to new communities in spite of the best efforts by state governments to protect their residents.

Facebook Starts Prompting U.S. Users To Fill Out A COVID-19 Survey To Help Track The Virus (Photo/Alex Kraus / Getty Images)



Starting today, some U.S. Facebook users will see a new pop-up on the app asking them to complete a survey about COVID-19. The survey, from Carnegie Mellon University’s Delphi epidemiological research center, is one of many new symptom mapping projects that seek to anticipate where the next wave of the virus will hit as COVID-19 sweeps through populations the world over. As if often the case in research, the challenge for these symptom mapping efforts is attracting a large enough sample of respondents to paint a statistically meaningful picture. Carnegie Mellon’s research effort will get a big leg up from Facebook, which may promote similar surveys in different parts of the world if this one goes well. While some other projects require users to download an app or find their way to an obscure web portal, Facebook’s promotion of the Carnegie Mellon survey means it can instantly reach a portion of users from the largest pool of online users any social network has ever collected. Facebook declined to provide details on how many users will be seeing the new prompt, but even a sub-section of Facebook’s U.S. users over the age of 18 would likely be massive from a data collection standpoint.



Many U.S. symptom tracking projects launched as the virus exploded over the last month, including a new app from Pinterest’s co-founder and others from research institutes like Harvard and New York’s Weill Cornell Medicine. The idea is that tracking self-reported symptoms could provide geographical insights that bolster the limited testing data available now. While users might be understandably wary of a research effort promoted by Facebook, given its recently fairly notorious record on user privacy, the company’s knowledge of who you are won’t be linked to the university’s data, which will be examined in aggregate. According to Facebook’s announcement, the survey data collected will aid public health planning around resource allocation and eventually “when, where and how to reopen parts of society.” The company announced the effort along with an expanded set of disease prevention maps, which the company will make available to researchers as part of its “Data for Good” initiative. (Courtesy <https://techcrunch.com/>)



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遭限制「人身自由」,德州民衆不滿居家令上街抗議

【美南新聞記者蕭永群報導】隨著居家令持續進行,全美各地紛紛出現反彈聲浪,18日在德州、加州、印第安納州、新罕布什爾州、內華達州、馬裏蘭州、猶他州和威斯康辛州等,紛紛出現民衆開始上街抗議的景象。儘管德州州長艾伯特(Greg Abbott)已於上周五宣布,將會緩慢地放寬各項限制、重啓



經濟,抗議者仍然心有不滿,約300名抗議人士,於18日聚集在德克薩斯州奧斯汀的州議會大廈前,手舉標語、喊著口號,抗議

州長頒布的居家令。艾伯特於17日宣布了新的行政命令,將進一步允許醫院進行非必要手術、零售商店可以有限度地重新開張,此外,州立公園也於20日重新開放。然而,如此命令仍然讓部分民衆不買單。18日許多德州當地民衆聚集在州議會前,從影像上顯示,許多人違反了社交隔離命令、也未配戴面部遮蔽物,抗議人士們主張人身自由遭到剝奪、且開放速度過緩。一名現場民衆表示:「我知道(重啓德州)一定很慢,但不能這麼慢。」一項民調顯示,大多數美國人都支持爲了對抗該病毒所實施的一些限制措施。州長艾伯特(Greg Abbott)的行政命令指出,所有德克薩斯人都應「盡量減少社交聚會」,而奧斯汀的官員也極力

呼籲人們在公共場合戴口罩。但是,在此次抗議中,特定人群還自豪地挑釁,他們僅僅通過集會就違反了這些限制。現場名叫韋弗(Weaver)的女士表示:「我不擔心被病毒感染。」如果我們真的感染了該病毒,我認爲我們已經足夠健康,可以抵抗它。我認爲這將有助於我們增強免疫力。」現場民衆手舉「讓我們工作」等標語,甚至有對公衛專家美國國立過敏與傳染病研究院(NAID)佛奇(Anthony Fauci)博士的攻擊言論。此外,「陰謀論網媒」Infowars的創始人亞歷克斯·瓊斯(Alex Jones),在現場



高舉大聲公抗議,還將該病毒的傳播描述爲「中共全球性的生化武器攻擊」。根據約翰·霍普金斯大學的報告,德州已傳出了超過1萬9400例冠狀病毒確診病例,而州政府的目標是,成爲全美封鎖後第一個重新開放的州。

史上頭一遭! 原油暴跌爲負值,專家表示「無需恐慌」

【美南新聞記者蕭永群報導】4月20日美國油價經歷歷史性的暴跌,結算價每桶來到負37.63美元,跌幅超過300%,讓許多投資者驚呼不可思議。西德州中質原油(WTI)下跌300%至每桶負37.63元,可謂前所未聞。這則新聞引起了不少恐慌,但是,專家建議投資者和行業工作者應該保持警惕,但毋須恐慌。美國殼牌石油(Shell)前總裁霍夫邁斯特(John Hofmeister)說:「如果只是閱讀標題,就會真的以爲是世界末日。今天,我們只是把這稱爲交易現象。」霍夫邁斯特表示,儘管這種暴跌令人震驚,但油價下跌並不意味著石油工業時代的終



結。相反地,這是因爲每月石油合同的交割日期剛好在星期二結束。他表示,受影響最大的不見得是石油和天然氣公司,而更可能是交易者,他們拼命拼湊價格,在截止日期前,瘋狂拋售目前供過於求的商品。霍夫邁斯特認爲,原油價格可能是短暫的:「作爲一種交易現象,真正受到它影響的人就是交易者。他們可能在今天(20日)賺了或賠了很多。但這並不會真正影響到石油和天然氣公司的日常運營,因爲石油和天然氣公司看的是更長遠的時間,而不是每日爲單位。若放眼未來,六月或七月的石油期貨合約都超過每桶20美元。」由於石油供應量大,但需求銳減,在全球大流行期間,鮮少人旅行、上下班、或出門購

物,煉油廠幾乎沒有汽油需求,加上美國的儲油空間已瀕臨極限。休斯頓身爲世界能源之都之一,在這段期間的巨額損失轉化爲各個領域的全面裁員,從製造、精煉廠層面的大規模裁員,可能會導致日後道路關閉的狀況。霍夫邁斯特說:「精煉廠已經削減了產量,並且工廠僅有69%的使用率,換言之,他們基本上削減了叁分之一的產量。」他認爲



這陣子許多公司可能會開始進行重組,可能導致小型石油公司被併購,有些人甚至可能必須申請破產才能生存。川普總統20日晚間也針對這個議題發言:「這是買石油的好時機,我們能用好價錢買到油...之前可沒人聽過負值的石油。」此外,他更指出正考慮購買7500萬桶原油,作爲戰備儲油。