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Coronavirus pandemic



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How markets are reacting

March 18 coronavirus news

By Jessie Yeung, Helen Regan, Steve George, Angela Dewan and Fernando Alfonso III, CNN

Updated 9:37 p.m. ET, March 18, 2020

What you need to know

- All 50 states in the US now have confirmed cases.
- The European Union has **closed its borders** for 30 days.
- Millions across the world have been put **under lockdown**.
- Governments **are pumping huge sums of stimulus funds** into their economies to keep industries from collapsing.
- Have a question or a story about coronavirus? [Share it here](#).



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12:56 p.m. ET, March 18, 2020

Trump claims calling coronavirus the "China virus" is not racist

From CNN's Betsy Klein

President Trump was pressed Wednesday on why he is calling coronavirus the "Chinese Virus," amid instances of bigotry against Asian-Americans.

He did not indicate that he will stop calling it that, and claimed that he is using the term because China tried to blame the virus on US soldiers.

"Cause it comes from China. It's not racist at all, no, not at all. It comes from China, that's why. I want to be accurate," Trump said.

Pressed again, he said, "I have great love for all of the people from our country, but as you know China tried to say at one point... that it was caused by American soldiers. That can't happen, it's not gonna happen, not as long as I'm president. It comes from China."

See the exchange:



12:55 p.m. ET, March 18, 2020

Trump says he doesn't agree with his Treasury Secretary that US could reach 20% unemployment

From CNN's Betsy Klein



Alex Wong/Getty Images

President Trump said Wednesday he doesn't agree with Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin's comments to Republican senators that US unemployment could reach Great Depression levels of 20%.

"I don't agree with that – that's an absolute total worst case scenario," he conceded.

But, he added, "We're nowhere near it."



12:49 p.m. ET, March 18, 2020

World Health Organization calls on countries to keep "isolating, testing"

From CNN Health's Jacqueline Howard

The World Health Organization is continuing to call on countries to isolate, test and treat suspected cases of novel coronavirus as the pandemic sweeps the world.

"WHO continues to recommend that isolating, testing and treating every suspected case, and tracing every contact, must be the backbone of the response in every country," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said during a media briefing in Geneva on Wednesday.

Tedros added: "This is the best hope of preventing widespread community transmission. Many countries are listening to our call and finding solutions to increase their ability to implement the full package of measures that have turned the tide in several countries."



12:43 p.m. ET, March 18, 2020

US Defense Secretary says military will provide up to 5 million masks for health care services

From CNN's Betsy Klein

Defense Secretary Mark Esper said the Department of Defense will make available up to five million N95 masks and other personal protective equipment from US strategic reserves, he said, noting that "the first one million masks will be available immediately."

He said they are also prepared to distribute "up to 2,000 operational deployable ventilators for use as needed" to the Department of Health and Human Services. Esper announced these steps on ventilators and masks on Tuesday.

He added: "We've certified our 16th lab to help with processing tests from across the country." Yesterday, this number was 14.

Esper said the USS Mercy and Comfort Navy hospital ships are being prepared to deploy.

"We have also alerted a variety of field and expeditionary hospitals to be ready to deployed as needed, based on direction from the commander in chief," he said.

"The US military remains ready and capable at defending the country and our interests abroad," Esper said.

He said his department is "leaning forward" in its response, noting that the Department has issued international and domestic travel restrictions to all DOD personnel and families.



12:41 p.m. ET, March 18, 2020

Italian official warns "soon" they won't be able to assist those who get sick

From CNN's Sharon Braithwaite in London

Gov. Attilio Fontana of Lombardy, Italy, made another appeal to the people: "You must not go out, you have to stay at home."

"Unfortunately the numbers of the contagion are not decreasing, they continue to be high. Soon we will not be able to give an answer to those who get sick," the governor said.

Fontana then made a plea to Lombardy citizens.

"We are asking you to make a sacrifice in order to save lives. Every time you leave home it's a risk for you and others," said Fontana, adding that if people continue not to comply with the restriction he will ask the government to implement "even stricter measures," the governor said.



12:41 p.m. ET, March 18, 2020

US-Canada flight restrictions will take effect on March 21

From CNN's Paula Newton

An airline industry source with knowledge of the directive being sent to air carriers told CNN that North American airlines will not be required to suspend all flights between the US and Canada. Some business, diplomatic, educational and family emergency travel will be allowed to continue.

The restrictions are meant to be applied to what the governments describe as "non-essential" travel, in particular leisure visits. In light of this, North American carriers will soon begin dramatically reducing their US-Canada flight schedules, the source said.

The new border restrictions for airlines are expected to be enforced by March 21 at midnight.



12:46 p.m. ET, March 18, 2020

Public health expert believes millennials may face "disproportional number of infections"

From CNN's Maegan Vazquez



Evan Vucci/AP

Dr. Deborah Birx said during Wednesday's briefing at the White House that the coronavirus task force is concerned about reports indicating that more young people are becoming seriously ill from coronavirus, suggesting they may have continued to be exposed to the virus because they weren't concerned about being at risk.

"There are concerning reports coming out of France and Italy about some young people getting seriously ill and very seriously ill in the ICUs," Birx said.

"We think part of this may be that people heeded the early data coming out of China and coming out of South Korea of the elderly or those with preexisting medical conditions were a particular risk," she continued. "It may have been that the millennial generation ... there may be disproportional number of infections among that group and so even if it's a rare occurrence it may be seen more frequently in that group."

Birx added that the task force has "not seen any significant mortality in children."

Hear the full announcement:



12:37 p.m. ET, March 18, 2020

Refugee admissions to the US temporarily suspended

From CNN's Priscilla Alvarez

The US is putting a temporary pause on refugee admissions in light of the coronavirus pandemic, according to two sources familiar with an administration call Wednesday morning with refugee organizations.

The move comes after the International Organization for Migration, which is in charge of booking refugees on their travel, and the UN refugee agency announced a temporary suspension of resettlement travel. The agencies shared concerns in a statement Tuesday, saying international travel "could increase the exposure of refugees to the virus."

There will be a moratorium on refugee admissions until April 7, according to the sources. Wednesday will be the last day for refugee arrivals.

By the numbers: As of Feb. 29, there were 6,273 refugees admitted to the US this fiscal year.

The State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration did not immediately respond to request for comment.



12:34 p.m. ET, March 18, 2020

White House recommends canceling non-essential elective surgery, including dental procedures

White House coronavirus task force member Seema Varna said at a news conference today that the Trump administration is recommending that patients cancel elective health procedures to help with health care capacity nationwide.

"We believe that these recommendations will help surgeons, patients, and hospitals prioritize what is essential, while leaving the ultimate decision in the hands of state and local health officials and those clinicians who have direct responsibility to their patients," Varna said.

She continued: "We urge providers and clinicians and patients to seriously consider these recommendations. They will not only preserve equipment, but it also allows doctors and

nurses to help those that are on the front lines, and it will protect patients from unnecessary exposure to the virus."



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