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UK quarantines travellers from Spain in sudden blow to Europe's revival



Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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U.S. to donate 500 million Pfizer vaccine doses globally -sources



The Biden administration plans to donate 500 million Pfizer (PFE.N) coronavirus vaccine doses to nearly 100 countries over the next two years, three sources familiar with the matter told Reuters on Wednesday.

The United States is likely to distribute 200 million shots this year and another 300 million in the first half of next year, they said.

It will donate them to 92 lower-income countries and the African Union, they added.

The donations will go through the COVAX vaccine program that distributes COVID-19 shots to low- and middle-income countries and is backed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI).

U.S. President Joe Biden will announce the deal on Thursday at the Group of Seven meeting of the world's wealthiest countries in Britain, one of the people said.

The deal was negotiated over the past four weeks by White House COVID-19 response coordinator Jeff Zients and the coronavirus task force team, one of the sources said.

The White House and Pfizer declined to comment.

The U.S. president told reporters before boarding Air Force One for Britain that he had a global vaccine strategy and would be announcing it but did not offer details.

Report ad
The White House has been under mounting pressure to

boost donations of COVID-19 shots to other countries.



The United States has given at least one shot to around 64% of its adult population and has begun vaccinating adolescents, while other countries like Brazil and India are struggling to get desperately needed doses.

"This action sends an incredibly powerful message about America's commitment to helping the world fight this pandemic," said Tom Hart, acting chief executive of The ONE Cam-

paign, a nonprofit working to end extreme poverty and preventable disease by 2030.

The Biden administration had said it would share 80 million vaccine doses worldwide by the end of June. The White House earlier this year pledged \$4 billion to COVAX and urged other countries to boost donations as well. read more

GAVI did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Pfizer has said it expects to produce as many as 3 billion COVID-19 shots in 2021 and upwards of 4 billion next year.

The New York Times reported that the United States will buy the doses at a "not-for-profit" price, citing people familiar with the deal. They also reported that Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla will accompany Biden during the announcement.

The agreement is in addition to the 300 million shots the United States has already purchased from Pfizer and brings the total number of Pfizer/BioNTech shots purchased by the United States to 800 million, the Times said.



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WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

CORONAVIRUS DIARY

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Children Are our Hope For The Future



a result.

We have seen many cars lined up in food lines trying to feed their families.

It is very sad in America that we still have that many hungry people.

All these kids need to have enough food to survive. In the meantime, they also need to go to school to learn and get educated.

After all, all these kids are the future of our nation.

The IRS has issued a letter to 36 million families explaining that they may be eligible for a monthly Child Tax Credit payment starting in July.

In the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan passed in March, a one-year expansion of the CTC was included that increased the credit amount and allows it to be distributed in periodic payments in advance.

The maximum credit in 2021 is \$3,600 for children under six and \$3,000 for children between the ages of 6 and 17.

We are very glad the Biden administration is helping so many families especially for the children.

In the last several years because of the coronavirus pandemic, many parents of young children lost their jobs and the kids really suffered as



Southern DAILY Make Today Different

Editor's Choice



A girl named Haneen holds a sign during a vigil after four members of a Muslim family were killed in what police describe as a hate-motivated attack, at London Muslim Mosque in London, Ontario, Canada, June 8, 2021. REUTERS/Carlos Osorio



A man photographs "Mount Recyclemore", an artwork depicting the G7 leaders looking towards Carbis Bay, made from electronic waste by Joe Rush and Alex Wreckage, ahead of the G7 summit, at Hayle Towans in Cornwall, Britain, June 8, 2021. REUTERS/Tom Nicholson



Wild Asian elephants lie on the ground and rest in Jinning district of Kunming, Yunnan province, China June 7, 2021. A herd of 15 wild elephants has trekked hundreds of kilometres after leaving their forest habitat in Xishuangbanna National Nature Reserve, according to local media. China Daily via REUTERS



A Bosnian Muslim woman reacts as she awaits the final verdict of former Bosnian Serb military leader Ratko Mladic in the Srebrenica-Potocari Genocide Memorial Center, Bosnia and Herzegovina, June 8, 2021. United Nations war crimes judges upheld a genocide conviction and life sentence against Mladic, confirming his central role in Europe's worst atrocities since World War Two. REUTERS/Dado Ruvic



Indigenous Brazilians take part in a protest for land demarcation and against President Jair Bolsonaro's government, in Brasilia, Brazil June 8, 2021. REUTERS/Adriano Machado



High school seniors celebrate after receiving their diplomas as the Josiah Quincy Upper School held its graduation ceremonies at Fenway Park, home of the Boston Red Sox, for greater coronavirus safety in Boston, Massachusetts, June 8, 2021. REUTERS/Brian Snyder

Drought Parches Crops
Global Food Costs
Surge To Decade High



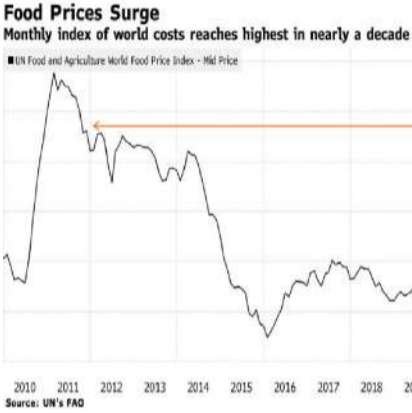
Global food prices have extended their rally to the highest in almost a decade, heightening concerns over bulging grocery bills at a time when economies are still struggling to overcome the Covid-19 crisis.

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

A United Nations gauge of world food costs climbed for a 12th straight month in May, its longest stretch in a decade. The relentless advance risks accelerating broader inflation, complicating central banks efforts to provide more stimulus.

Drought in South America has withered crops from corn and soybeans to coffee and sugar. Record purchases by China are worsening the supply crunch in grains and boosting costs for global livestock producers. Cooking oils have soared too on demand for biofuel. The surge in food costs has revived memories of 2008 and 2011, when spikes led to riots in more than 30 nations.

“We have very little room for any production shock. We have very little room for any unexpected surge in demand in any country,” Abdolreza Abbassian, senior economist at the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organization, said by phone. “Any of those things could push prices up further than they are now, and then we could start getting worried.”

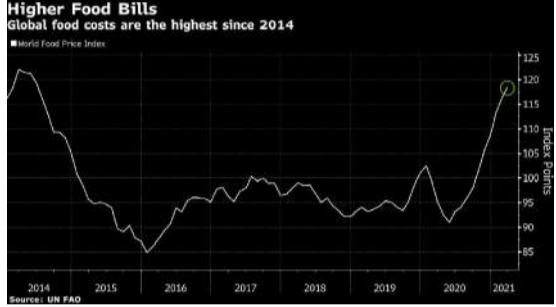


The prolonged gains across the staple commodities are trickling through to store shelves, with countries from Kenya to Mexico reporting higher costs for food items. The pain could be particularly pronounced in some of the poorest import-dependent nations, which have limited purchasing power and social safety nets, at a time when they are grappling with the ongoing pandemic

Breakdown of last month’s food costs: The FAO’s food price index rose 2.1% from February. Vegetable oil prices jumped 8% to the highest since June 2011. Meat and dairy costs rose, boosted by Asian demand. Grains and sugar prices fell. Grains prices recently climbed to multiyear highs as China imports massive amounts to feed its hog herds that are recovering from a deadly virus.

“We are not in the situation we were back in 2008-10 when inventories were really low and a lot of things were going on,” Abbassian said. “However, we are in sort of a borderline. It’s a borderline that needs to be monitored very closely over the next few weeks, because weather is either going to really make it or create really big problems.”

The UN index has reached its highest since September 2011, climbing almost 5% last month. All five components of the index rose during the month, with gains led by vegetable oils, grains and sugar. The Bloomberg Agriculture Spot Index, measuring prices from grains to sugar and coffee, is up 70% in the past year.



There were other elements that exacerbated skyrocketing food costs a decade ago. For example, oil prices neared \$150 a barrel -- double current levels -- and there was a wave of trade restrictions by major grain shippers. Meanwhile, the cost of rice, one of the world’s food staples, has remained relatively subdued this time round amidst the surge in other agricultural prices. Gains in the past year have been fueled by China’s “unpredictably huge” purchases of foreign grain, and world reserves may hold relatively flat in the coming season, Abbassian said. Summer weather across the Northern Hemisphere will be crucial in determining if U.S. and European harvests can make up for crop shortfalls elsewhere.

Across the Board

All food categories tracked by FAO climbed in the past 12 months

Price Gains in the past year	
Meat	10%
Dairy	28%

Cereals	37%
Overall food index	40%
Sugar	57%
Vegetable oil	124%

(Source: UN’s FAO)
(Courtesy <https://www.bloomberg.com/>)

Related

Food Fears Are Rising

Global food prices aren’t leaving any wiggle room for the realities of today’s bad harvests or demand spikes.

The state of play: A UN index of food prices “has reached its highest since September 2011, climbing almost 5% last month,” reports Bloomberg. Another tracker of “prices from grains to sugar and coffee is up 70% in the past year.”

Why it matters: The real threat comes in countries where large portions of the population live close to the edge of hunger, Axios’ Bryan Walsh wrote.

•Even in the U.S., rising prices hit the poorest Americans, who spend more than one-third of their income on food.



A sales assistant arranges fruit in a supermarket in the Philippines. (Photo/Veejary Villafranca/Bloomberg via Getty Images)

•“The pain could be particularly pronounced in some of the poorest import-dependent nations,” Bloomberg reports.

The big picture: COVID-related labor disruptions probably aren’t helping, but climate change-related shifts in precipitation and temperatures are expected to lead to more volatile food production in the coming years, Axios’ Andrew Freedman tells me.

•That volatility can destabilize fragile countries. This already played out, studies show, with the Syrian Civil War, which began during a severe drought.

•A study found that rising temperatures in countries of origin increased the number of people seeking asylum in the EU, Axios Science editor Alison Snyder noted. (Courtesy [axios.com](https://www.axios.com))

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Global Food Costs Surge To Decade High



Global food prices have extended their rally to the highest in almost a decade, heightening concerns over bulging grocery bills at a time when economies are still struggling to overcome the Covid-19 crisis.

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

Countries Feel Food Price
Squeeze - A Closer Look

The world is racing to vaccinate its way out of the coronavirus pandemic, but another challenge has already emerged for some more vulnerable governments and economies. Global food prices are at the highest in more than six years, driven by a jump in the cost of everything from soybeans to palm oil because of the large demand from China, vulnerable supply chains and adverse weather. Some banks warn the world is heading into a commodities “supercycle.” Inflation is putting another squeeze on consumers hurting from pandemic-induced recession and—in some places—falling currencies.



Russia: History Lesson

Memories of soaring prices and empty shelves in the aftermath of the Soviet Union’s collapse are still vivid for many Russians. With his popularity barely back from nadirs and protests demanding the

release of jailed opposition leader Alexei Navalny, President Vladimir Putin is wary of the political impact of food costs.

“Russia may see some real political mobilization around food prices,” said Hendrix. “Authoritarian governments tend to be somewhat more permissive of these types of “kitchen table issue” protests than they are of more general campaigns against corruption and authoritarian rule.



In recent weeks, the world’s No. 1 wheat exporter imposed tariffs and quotas designed to curb sales abroad and drive domestic prices lower. Russia’s largest retailers were also ordered to freeze some food prices, with potatoes and carrots up by more than a third

from last year.

Though, as the Arab Spring demonstrated, the former can become the latter—sometimes very quickly.” Russia and Argentina have restricted crop shipments to suppress prices at home.

Nigeria: Perfect Storm

Food prices in Africa’s biggest economy make up for more than half the country’s inflation index and rose at the fastest pace in more than 12 years in January.



An average Nigerian household spends more than 50% of its budget on food. The costs are adding to a perfect storm of food security challenges that have haunted Nigeria throughout the pandemic.

Foreign currency reserves needed to import goods dried up after a plunge in oil prices. Supply bottlenecks and attacks on farmers have also weighed on supply of agricultural goods. There were also shortages of staples such as rice after the authorities restricted imports and closed land borders for 16 months. They reopened in December, but that has done little to ease inflation.



Turkey: Angry Leader

Turkey: Angry Leader As the world’s biggest per-capita consumer of bread and its top flour exporter, Turkey is particularly exposed to a rally in commodity markets. Food prices rose 18% in January from a year earlier, with sharp jumps in staples from grains to vegetables.

Turkey has grappled with a double-digit

food inflation for years, but the political implications for President Recep Tayyip Erdogan are increasing as food costs hit his core support base along with the plunge in the value of the lira.



Erdogan ordered an investigation into the increase in food prices. He said oil, pulses, vegetables and fruits were the “primary concern.” The Trade Ministry may impose fines on businesses that sell food products at high prices, the president warned in January. The trouble is that government threats and financial penalties in 2019 barely moved the needle.

India: Balancing Act

Home to the most arable land after the U.S., India is the world’s biggest exporter of rice and the second-largest producer of wheat. At the same time millions of people cannot access affordable food and the country has some of the highest rates of child malnutrition.



While costs for staples rose more slowly in recent weeks, food remains at the center of political tensions that have been dominating India. Protests by farmers escalated over a move by Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s government to liberalize the market for crops. Growers are concerned the new law will push down prices.

Modi is pushing with reforms that many

believe are designed ultimately to cut India’s food subsidy bill, the biggest in the world. The government said in January it was becoming “unmanageably” large. Cuts to food and fuel subsidies have often translated into unrest and projections aren’t looking good in the next two years, according to Verisk Maplecroft.

Brazil: Populist Pressure

Populist Pressure Latin America’s biggest economy stands out among emerging markets for having the fastest increase in food prices in the past year relative to overall inflation because of a sustained decline in the currency, according to Oxford Economics Ltd. Meanwhile, President Jair Bolsonaro’s popularity is falling to near record lows and he’s trying to find new ways to mollify the electorate.

On Feb. 19, he abruptly removed the head of the state-controlled oil company after a row over fuel prices. He also has been pushing for a new round of coronavirus aid to the poor after cash handouts ended in December.



The trouble is that the money served to push up food prices, according to Maria Andreia Lameiras, a researcher at the economics research institute Ipea. Rice jumped 76% last year, while milk and beef soared by more than 20%. “The government dispensed money to the population with the highest expenditures on food,” Lameiras said.

The cost of securing vital nutrition threatens to widen inequality in a country with the biggest income gap in the region, a situation that’s only been exacerbated by the pandemic. Even if the aid returns, the monthly payment would be lower and reach fewer people, limiting its scope to mitigate extreme poverty. (Courtesy [bloomberg.com](https://www.bloomberg.com))