

‘Whatever it takes’

UK PM warns EU over post-Brexit trade dispute

REUTERS, Carbis Bay

Britain will do “whatever it takes” to protect its territorial integrity in a trade dispute with the European Union, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said yesterday, threatening emergency measures if no solution was found.

Since Britain completed its exit from the EU late last year, relations between the two have soured, with both accusing the other of acting in bad faith over part of their Brexit divorce deal that covers border issues with Northern Ireland.

The two sides showed little sign of defusing their row during a G7 weekend summit hosted by Britain.

Despite US President Joe Biden encouraging them to find a compromise, Johnson's words indicated no softening of his position on what is called the Northern Ireland protocol that covers border issues with the British province.

“I think we can sort it out but it is up to our EU friends and partners to understand that we will do whatever it takes,” Johnson told Sky News.

“I think if the protocol continues to be applied in this way, then we will obviously not hesitate to invoke Article 16,” he added, referring to a safeguard clause that allows either side to take measures if they believe the agreement is leading to economic, societal or environment difficulties.

“I’ve talked to some of our friends here

today, who do seem to misunderstand that the UK is a single country, a single territory. I just need to get that into their heads.”

His words came after he met French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and top EU officials Ursula von der Leyen and Charles Michel at a Group of Seven summit in southwestern England.

The EU told London once again that it must implement the Brexit deal in full and introduce checks on certain goods moving from Britain to its province of Northern Ireland. Britain again called for urgent and innovative solutions within the protocol.

Brexit has also strained the situation in Northern Ireland. The province has an open border with EU member Ireland so the Northern Ireland

Protocol was agreed as a way to preserve the bloc’s single market after Britain left.

The protocol essentially kept the province in the EU’s customs union and adhering to many of the single market rules, creating a regulatory border in the Irish Sea between the British province and the rest of the United Kingdom.

The pro-British “unionist” community in Northern Ireland say they are now split off from the rest of the United Kingdom and the Brexit deal breaches the 1998 peace deal. But the open border between the province and Ireland was a key principle of Good Friday deal.



People ride kayaks and boards around a prop shark in a protest in Gyllyngvase beach, Falmouth, during the G7 summit in Cornwall, Britain, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

G7 outlines pandemic pact

Leaders agree to adopt action plan to prevent future pandemics

AFP, Carbis Bay

Britain yesterday acclaimed a “historic” action plan by G7 nations to prevent future pandemics, as the elite group showcased US-led unity against China and Russia at its first in-person summit in almost two years.

The “Carbis Bay Declaration” -- named after the seaside town in Cornwall, southwest England, where US President Joe Biden and other leaders are meeting this weekend -- comprises a series of health policy commitments.

The collective steps include slashing the time taken to develop and license vaccines, treatments and diagnostics for any future disease to under 100 days, while reinforcing global surveillance networks.

It will be formally published today, alongside the G7’s final communique.

“The #CarbisBayDeclaration marks a proud and historic moment for us all,” British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Twitter, as he chaired



the second day of the three-day summit.

“Under this agreement, the world’s leading democracies will commit to preventing a global pandemic from ever happening again, ensuring the devastation caused by Covid-19 is never repeated,” he said.

World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, criticized in some quarters for being too accommodating towards China where the coronavirus originated, welcomed the health pact.

And he said the UN agency would examine a British proposal to create a “Global Pandemic Radar” to send

early warnings of future outbreaks.

“The world needs a stronger global surveillance system to detect new epidemic and pandemic risks,” he said.

However, aid charity Oxfam said the declaration “does nothing to address the fundamental problems that are preventing vaccines being accessible to the vast majority of humanity.”

The G7 -- Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States -- are largely focussed on “building back better” after Covid-19 wrecked economies and claimed millions of lives around the world.

They are expected to pledge to donate one billion vaccine doses to poor countries this year and next -- although campaigners say the rollout is much too slow to end the crisis sooner.

The leaders are also set to issue new commitments on climate change, including financial aid for the developing world, in the buildup to the UN’s COP26 environmental summit in Scotland in November.

Putin hopes Biden less impulsive than Trump

Denies plan to supply Iran satellite system

AFP, Washington

Russian President Vladimir Putin voiced hope Friday that US President Joe Biden will be less impulsive than his predecessor Donald Trump, ahead of his first summit with the new US leader.

In an interview with NBC News, Putin described Biden as a “career man” who has spent his life in politics.

Though he described relations with the United States as having “deteriorated to its lowest point in recent years,” Putin said he expects he can work with Biden.

“It is my great hope that, yes, there are some advantages, some disadvantages, but there will not be any impulse-based movements on behalf of the sitting US president,” he said, according to a translation by NBC News.

“I believe that former US president Trump is an extraordinary individual, talented individual... He is a colorful individual. You may like him or not. But he didn’t come from the US establishment,” Putin was quoted as saying.

Biden plans to raise a range of US complaints, including over purported Russian election interference and hacking, in the summit with Putin on Wednesday in Geneva at the end of the new president’s first foreign trip.

Putin also dismissed as “fake news” a report in the Washington Post that Russia is planning to supply Iran with an advanced satellite system that would allow it to track potential military targets.

Meanwhile, the White House yesterday said Biden will give a solo news conference after his meeting next week with Putin.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Gunmen kill 53 villagers in northern Nigeria

Armed cattle thieves have killed 53 people in northwest Nigeria’s Zamfara state, police and local residents said yesterday, the latest violence to hit the restive region. Scores of motorcycle-riding gunmen called bandits by locals on Thursday through Friday, invaded the villages of Kadawa, Kwata, Maduba, Ganda Samu, Saulawa and Askawa in the Zurmi district, shooting residents, they said. The gang attacked farmers in their fields and pursued others who fled to escape the assaults. Northwest and central Nigeria have in recent years fallen prey to gangs of cattle thieves and kidnapers who raid villages, killing and kidnapping residents in addition to stealing livestock after looting and burning homes. The criminals have begun to focus on raiding schools and kidnapping students for ransom.

Sri Lanka seeks \$40m in damages over ship fire

Sri Lanka is seeking \$40 million in damages from the operator of a ship that left massive pollution when it caught fire off the country’s west coast, officials said yesterday. Ports and shipping minister Rohitha Abeygunawardena said an interim claim had been lodged with X-Press Feeders, which controls the Singapore-registered MV X-Press Pearl. The vessel has been submerged in seas off Colombo since June 2 after burning for almost two weeks and releasing tonnes of plastic raw materials that swamped local beaches. Sri Lankan environmentalists have called it the “worst marine disaster” in the country’s history. On May 20 the X-Press Pearl reported an onboard acid leak and caught fire just as it was due to enter the Colombo harbour.

Hong Kong democracy activist Agnes Chow released

Hong Kong democracy activist Agnes Chow described prison as “agony” yesterday after she was released on the second anniversary of the city’s huge democracy rallies, with police out in force and protests now all but banned. Two thousand officers have been placed on standby after social media calls for residents to commemorate the failed democracy demonstrations. Authorities have kept a coronavirus prohibition on public gatherings, despite the city recording just three local infections in the last month. A Beijing-imposed national security law has also criminalised much dissent and most of the city’s democracy leaders have been arrested, jailed or fled overseas. Chow, 24, was mobbed by waiting media but opted for a quiet exit, making no comment.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



Britain’s Queen Elizabeth and Prince Edward attend a ceremony marking official birthday of the Queen in the Quadrangle of Windsor Castle in Windsor, Britain, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

SURVEILLANCE OF DEMOCRATS

Allegation sparks abuse of power claims against Trump

AFP, Washington

Democrats erupted in outrage Friday over news that Donald Trump’s Justice Department secretly surveilled lawmakers probing possible collusion with Russia, reaping the phone records of top political foes in what they called an unprecedented abuse of power.

Democrats Adam Schiff and Eric Swalwell said they were recently told by Apple that during 2017-2021 the company had been ordered to hand over records of their phone communications, as well as those of family members including a child, as Trump fought a flow of damaging leaks on his 2016 election campaign’s links to Russia.

No proof they were the sources of leaks was ever presented, yet the probe stayed alive for as long as Trump remained in office, to January 2021.

Schiff called it “the weaponization of law enforcement by a corrupt president.” Senate leaders threatened to subpoena

two Trump attorneys general, Jeff Sessions and Bill Barr, who oversaw the surveillance, to testify on the issue.

“This is a gross abuse of power and an assault on the separation of powers,” said Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and Senate Judiciary Committee Chair Dick Durbin in a statement.

The Justice Department said Friday that its inspector general would investigate the use of subpoenas and other powers to probe lawmakers and journalists under Trump.

The secret surveillance took place as Trump faced investigations by special counsel Robert Mueller and by the House Intelligence Committee -- where Schiff was then the top Democrat -- into whether his campaign colluded with Russian election meddling and whether Trump tried to obstruct those investigations.

As they progressed and the threat of impeachment intensified, Trump accused Schiff and other Democrats of leaking classified intelligence to reporters.

CURBING INFLUENCE OF BIG TECH IN US

Lawmakers propose antitrust overhaul

AFP, Washington

US lawmakers unveiled sweeping antitrust measures Friday aimed at tempering the dominance of Big Tech firms including Apple and Facebook, in what may be the most ambitious effort in decades to break corporate monopolies.

A bipartisan group of House members introduced five separate bills that propose changes so comprehensive they could reshape the largest US technology and entertainment companies and force an overhaul of their business practices.

In a bid to ward off corporate consolidation, the measures would make it harder for mega-companies like Amazon and Google to buy out smaller competitors, and facilitate the breakup of firms that use their dominant position in their core business to make deep inroads into another.

The bills follow a 16-month investigation by the Antitrust Subcommittee into the state of competition in the digital marketplace, and particularly the unregulated power wielded by Amazon, Apple, Facebook, and Google.

Silicon Valley giants have come under increasing fire in Europe and the United States due to concerns about monopoly-like power. And US President Joe Biden and other G7 countries are keen to set a global tax rate of at least 15 percent on multinational firms, in a bid to optimize tax revenue from tech behemoths.

Pulitzer Board honors teen who filmed Floyd murder

AFP, New York

The Pulitzer Prize Board awarded a “special citation” on Friday to the teenager whose video of the murder of George Floyd by a white police officer sparked worldwide protests against racial injustice.

Eighteen-year-old Darnella Frazier was honored as New York’s Columbia University announced the 2021 prestigious journalism awards in a virtual ceremony.

Frazier was also among the witnesses who testified at the trial of former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin, who was convicted in April of Floyd’s May 25, 2020 murder.

In the video taken by Frazier, Chauvin is seen kneeling for more than nine minutes on the neck of Floyd, a 46-year-old Black man, as bystanders urge him repeatedly to get off and Floyd says that he can’t breathe, before losing consciousness.

The New York Times was honored with the public service prize for its “courageous, prescient and sweeping coverage” of the coronavirus pandemic.



The Associated Press won the Pulitzer for breaking news photography and an AP photographer, Emilio Morenatti, was honored for feature photography.

“The Night Watchman” by Louise Erdrich was awarded the prize for fiction while “Wilmington’s Lie: The Murderous Coup of 1898 and the Rise of White Supremacy” by David Zucchino was honored for non-fiction.

The biography prize was given to “The Dead Are Arising: The Life of Malcolm X” by the late Les Payne and Tamara Payne.

“Postcolonial Love Poem” by Natalie Diaz was the winner in the poetry category; “The Hot Wing King” by Katori Hall won the drama prize, and “Stride” by Tania Leon won for music.

প্রশাসক হিসেবে (বীমা উন্নয়ন ও নিয়ন্ত্রন কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক নিয়োগ প্রাপ্ত)
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ডেল্টা লাইফ ইনসিওরেন্স কোম্পানী লিমিটেড-এর পক্ষ থেকে
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এ মর্মে আশ্বস্ত ও নিশ্চিত করা হচ্ছে।



ডেল্টা লাইফ ইনসিওরেন্স কোম্পানী লিমিটেড