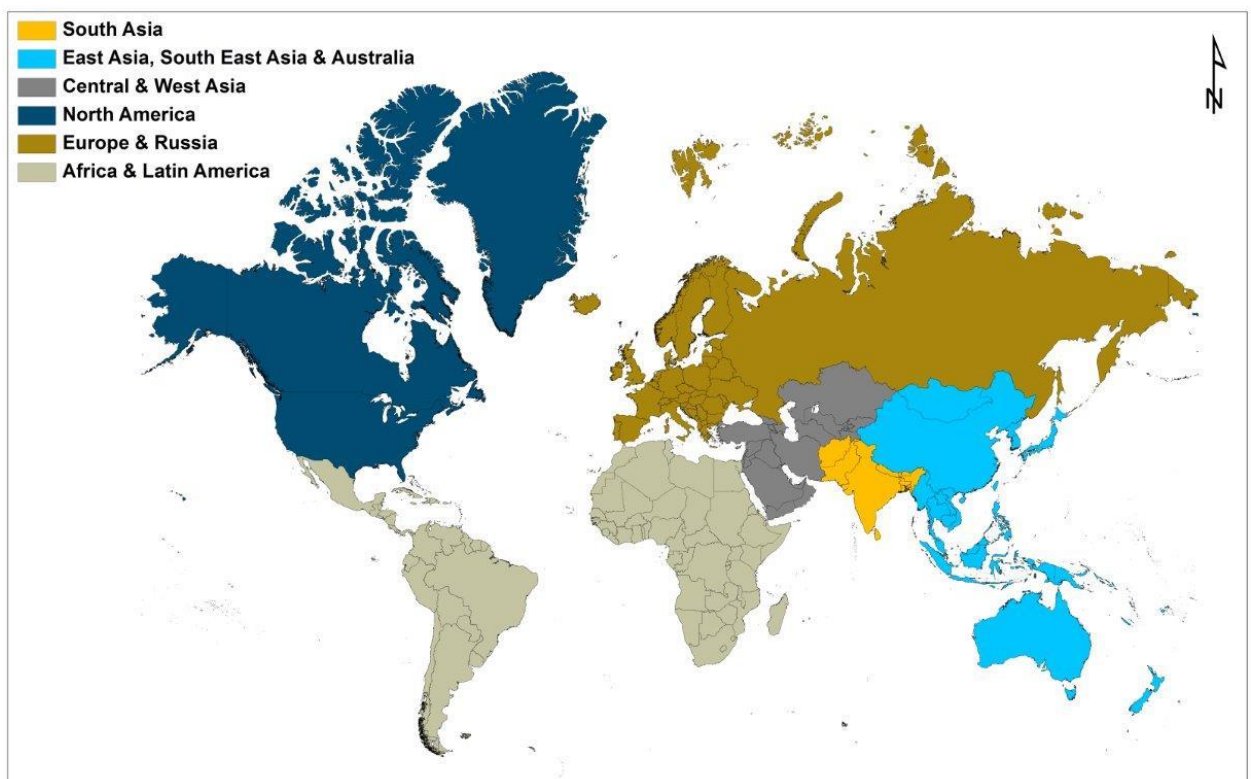




Delhi Policy Group

DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH



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DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH

Volume 4, Issue 12

ABOUT US

Founded in 1994, the Delhi Policy Group is among India's oldest independent think tanks with its primary focus on international and strategic issues of critical national interest. Over the past decades, the Delhi Policy Group has established itself in both domestic and international circles, particularly in the area of national security.

In keeping with India's increasing global profile as a leading power and the accompanying dynamism of India's foreign and security policy, the Delhi Policy Group has expanded its focus areas to include India's broader regional and global role; India's initiatives to strengthen its strategic periphery; India's political, security and connectivity challenges and policies across the Indo-Pacific; and the strategic partnerships that advance India's rise. To support these goals, the DPG undertakes research, publishes policy reports and organises conferences on strategic and geo-political, geo-economic, and defence and security issues.

DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH

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South Asia

India

[India to halt international flights; Modi urges citizens to stay home as virus spreads](#)

March 19, 2020, National Post

Prime Minister Narendra Modi appealed to citizens to stay home and avoid panic buying, even as India outlined plans to halt all international flights and rushed to stem the spread of coronavirus cases in the country.

[COVID-19: After Modi's SAARC initiative, Nepal, Maldives reach out to India for help](#)

March 19, 2020, The Week

Nepal and Maldives might be the first few countries to get a dose of India's SAARC reach out. Both countries have made an informal request for the rapid response team (RRT) that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had suggested during the SAARC video conferencing recently. The requests are being followed up.

[No, India didn't suddenly rediscover SAARC. The latest outreach is in line with old policy](#)

March 18, 2020, Newslandry

As an initiative from the pivotal power in South Asia, India's outreach showed the specific use of regional groupings such as SAARC. It was the first summit-level SAARC meeting since 2014. The proposed summit in 2016 in Islamabad had been called off after India decided to stay away in the wake of the Uri terror attack, and Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Bhutan followed suit. This latest use of the SAARC platform shows how India can employ the horses-for-courses principle in its regional diplomacy, and not get tied to one such group in the region.

[Cross-border trade with Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh beginning to feel coronavirus pinch](#)

March 17, 2020, The Hindu

The coronavirus outbreak is yet to significantly impact international trade along India's land border. However, passenger movement is distinctly down at most border gates following an embargo on the fresh issue of visas.

[Indian economy 'remarkably unscathed' amid global coronavirus surge: Chinese media](#)

March 19, 2020, The Economic Times

Indian economy is "remarkably unscathed", while major economies across the globe is grappling with "severe fallout" due to the surge of coronavirus cases, a Chinese state-run media said.

[HAL cuts its profit on Tejas Mark 1A deal by 50%. fighter jets to take to sky by 2022](#)

March 19, 2020, The Print

The defence ministry Wednesday cleared the much-awaited deal for the purchase of 83 Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Mark 1A Tejas from the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) for a surprisingly low amount of Rs 37,000 crore as against the original value of the deal, which was pegged at around Rs 50,000 crore.

Pakistan

[Religious leaders condemn govt for victimising Jang-Geo Group](#)

March 14, 2020, The News

Religious leaders have continued condemning the government for victimizing Jang/Geo Group Editor-in-Chief Mir Shakil-ur-Rahman for speaking truth and criticizing the PTI government's anti-people policies.

[36 brigadiers promoted to major general rank](#)

March 14, 2020, The News

The Promotion Board of Pakistan Army Friday approved promotion of 36 Brigadiers to the rank of Major General. General Qamar Javed Bajwa presided over the board meeting at the General Headquarters. The promoted one-star officers also include 11 those belonging to the Army Medical Corps.

[Coronavirus impact: Pak exports may dip by 25pc in March](#)

March 16, 2020, The News

Impact of coronavirus has forced buyers from the world in general and Europe in particular to send emails to Pakistani exporters, asking for immediate halt in shipping of consignments containing export products to them.

[Protests across UK demand release of Jang/Geo editor-in-chief](#)

March 15, 2020, The News

British Pakistani community members and journalist organisations have strongly condemned the illegal arrest and detention of Jang and Geo's Editor-in-Chief Mir Shakil-ur-Rahman as well as the illegal shutdown of Geo News by the PTI-government controlled Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Pemra).

[Moody's lowers Pakistan's growth forecast to 2.5pc](#)

March 18, 2020, Dawn

Moody's Investor Service on Tuesday lowered its forecast for Pakistan growth rate at 2.5 per cent for the current fiscal year owing to Covid-19 even though it said risks for the entire Asia-Pacific (APAC) region were generally on the downside.

[China will always stand by Pakistan, says President Xi](#)

March 18, 2020, Dawn

Chinese President Xi Jinping said special friendship between Pakistan and China was choice of the history as it had deep roots in the hearts of people of the two countries. "We want to see a united and strong Pakistan with stability and prosperity," he said during a meeting with President Dr Arif Alvi during his visit to Beijing.

[PM fears coronavirus will spread, asks nation to be ready](#)

March 18, 2020, Dawn

In his first address to the nation weeks after Pakistan confirmed its first coronavirus case, Prime Minister Imran Khan has asked the public to prepare for the pandemic in the country while ruling out lockdown in cities to contain the spread of the disease.

[Pakistan rules out viral outbreak delaying CPEC](#)

March 20, 2020, The Express Tribune

Pakistan does not see the novel coronavirus outbreak, which has had a devastating impact on the global economy, delaying the projects under the multibillion-dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

[US to provide \\$1m to Pakistan to combat COVID-19](#)

March 20, 2020, The Express Tribune

The United States on Friday announced that it will provide Pakistan \$1 million under the USAID programme to help improve monitoring and rapid response against the novel coronavirus.

Afghanistan

[PM Imran orders opening of Pak-Afg border 'despite global pandemic'](#)

March 20, 2020, The Express Tribune

Minister Imran Khan has ordered opening of the Pak-Afghan border in Chaman "despite global pandemic". He has given instructions to open the border between Chaman and Spin Boldak, Kandahar. He also told authorities to "let trucks crossover into Afghanistan".

[UN suspends Afghans' voluntary repatriation](#)

March 18, 2020, Dawn

The office of UN High Commissioner for Refugees announced that the voluntary repatriation of registered Afghan refugees in Pakistan has been suspended because of closure of the Torkham and Chaman border-crossing points with Afghanistan.

[Nearly 70,000 Afghans return home after fleeing virus hit Iran](#)

March 17, 2020, The News

Nearly 70,000 Afghans have returned from virus-hit Iran in the first three weeks of February, overwhelming health workers at border crossings and raising fears of a major outbreak in the impoverished country.

[NATO "concerned" about political turmoil](#)

March 19, 2020, Tolo News

NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg at a press conference called on Afghan leaders to resolve their differences and work for peace in the country. "We are of course concerned about the political turmoil we see in Afghanistan today, I was in Kabul a couple of weeks ago when the deal was signed and we had announcement of the deal between Taliban and the United States and of course to make sure that deal is implemented, we need united Afghan government that can be part of a political negotiating process," said Stoltenberg.

[US pushes for sooner release of Taliban prisoners](#)

March 18, 2020, Tolo News

The US Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation, Zalmay Khalilzad, said the United States would like to see the prisoner releases begin as soon as possible in line with the US-Taliban peace agreement.

[Coronavirus makes Taliban realise they need health workers alive not dead](#)

March 18, 2020, Reuters

Scared by the prospect a coronavirus epidemic in parts of Afghanistan under their control, the Taliban have pledged their readiness to work with healthcare workers instead of killing them, as they have been accused of in the past.

[Troop drawdown in Afghanistan will continue despite coronavirus, Pentagon says](#)

March 18, 2020, The Washington Times

Top Pentagon officials say the U.S. will continue executing its troop drawdown in Afghanistan despite the global coronavirus outbreak and stressed that new medical protocols are in place to screen and test service members.

Bangladesh

[Bangladesh Develops Low-cost Kit for Detection of Coronavirus Cases](#)

March 19, 2020, News 18

The Bangladesh government approved a low-cost kit, developed by a private health research institute, to detect novel coronavirus cases in a mass scale, amidst reports of crisis of equipment in the country for such tests.

[China offers help in Bangladesh's fight against coronavirus](#)

March 18, 2020, The Daily Star

The government of China has decided to assist Bangladesh in fighting the outbreak of novel coronavirus in the country.

[India, Bangladesh have created a golden chapter of mutual relations: PM Modi](#)

March 17, 2020, The Hindu Business Line

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said India and Bangladesh have scripted a golden chapter of bilateral ties, and given new dimension and direction to their partnership due to increasing trust between the two nations.

[How is the Indian visa ban affecting Bangladeshi medical tourists?](#)

March 17, 2020, Dhaka Tribune

Patients who seek medical help in neighbouring India will face a dire situation with the onset of the visa ban.

Bhutan

[Jaishankar congratulates king, queen of Bhutan on birth of second child](#)

March 20, 2020, ANI News

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Thursday congratulated Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuk, the King of Bhutan and Queen Jetsun Pema on being "blessed with the birth of the second royal child."

[Bhutan 99% free of COVID-19](#)

March 17, 2020, Kuensel

Bhutan's fight against COVID-19 cannot be more scientific and evidence-based than it is today. The interventions and measures put in place are based on how the epidemiology of the disease is evolving, said health minister, Dechen Wangmo.

Nepal

[Nepal's vulnerability to Covid-19](#)

March 18, 2020, Asia Times

The world has been reeling under the havoc created by a new disease called Covid-19 that originated in Wuhan, China. Such has been the global spread of this potentially lethal disease that even the rich and powerful countries are grappling to contain its menace. The pandemic has shown that countries need to be more united than ever in their fight against this outbreak.

[Nepal to prohibit entry of people from Europe, West Asia and Gulf](#)

March 18, 2020, News on Air

Nepal government has decided to prohibit entry of people from Europe, West Asia and Gulf including Iran and Turkey, Malaysia, South Korea and Japan as a precautionary measure to prevent the spread of coronavirus. The prohibition will be effective from 20 March midnight and continue till 15 April.

Sri Lanka

[Sri Lanka missions in India continue to coordinate early return of Buddhist pilgrims](#)

March 19, 2020, Colombo Page

The Ministry of Foreign Relations said that arrangements have been made to bring back 871 Sri Lankan pilgrims, who had been visiting India, to the country by air from today (19) until the 25th.

[Sri Lanka postpones general election](#)

March 19, 2020, Colombo Page

Sri Lanka's Election Chief Mahinda Deshapriya has announced that the general election cannot be held as scheduled for the next month after the political parties handed over the nominations today.

[All Sri Lanka airports closed from March 19 - 25](#)

March 18, 2020, Colombo Page

Sri Lanka's Civil Aviation Authority informs that all Sri Lanka airports will be closed for operation for six days from Thursday, 19 March.

Maldives

[Maldives govt announces MVR 2.5 bln economic recovery package](#)

March 20, 2020, Avas

The Maldives government has unveiled a MVR 2.5 billion recovery package to mitigate the losses caused to the country's economy due to the global COVID-19 pandemic.

East & South East Asia

China

[Beijing launches online system for tomb-sweeping amid COVID-19 outbreak](#)

March 20, 2020, Global Times

Beijing started an online appointment system on Thursday for people to orderly sweep the tombs of their deceased family at cemeteries during the upcoming Qingming Festival. It also launched online tomb-sweeping services for people to convey condolences remotely so as to avoid large gatherings on site.

[Trump's racist words spark hatred, fuel global xenophobia](#)

March 20, 2020, Global Times

US President Donald Trump has referred to the novel coronavirus as "Chinese virus" at least eight times in tweets and media briefings within just two days, fueling widespread xenophobia and racist sentiment and even physical and verbal attacks against Asian Americans and undermining global efforts to contain the deadly virus.

[Industrial cities rush to help skilled Hubei workers back to production line](#)

March 19, 2020, Global Times

Hubei workers are carefully making their way to jobs outside the province as new domestic COVID-19 infections gradually dry up in China. The resumption of work, much anticipated and urgent for those workers and their employers, won't give rise to a new round of infections, as a two-month lockdown proved the workers are not pathogen carriers.

[Taiwan facing risk of infection wave due to flawed control effort: experts](#)

March 19, 2020, Global Times

The island of Taiwan's epidemic control efforts against the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) are seriously flawed and Taiwan is facing the risk of another wave of COVID-19 infections, as the island's authority previously only focused on preventing cases from the Chinese mainland but not those from the rest of the world, multiple experts from the island said on Wednesday.

[Zero new confirmed cases reported in Hubei as of March 18](#)

March 19, 2020, Global Times

There have been no new confirmed cases in Central China's Hubei Province, the area hit hardest by the coronavirus, as of Wednesday. Meanwhile, no new local infections were reported within the Chinese mainland.

[Chinese mainland reports zero increase in domestically transmitted COVID-19 cases](#)

March 19, 2020, Global Times

No new domestically transmitted cases of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) were reported on the Chinese mainland Wednesday, according to data from Chinese health authority Thursday.

[Top epidemiologist warns of blind spots in epidemic control in Wuhan](#)

March 19, 2020, Global Times

The Chinese central government has called for attention to community epidemic prevention and control work in epidemic-stricken Hubei Province and its capital Wuhan despite apparent improvements. Similarly China's top epidemiologist has warned of possible blind spots as new confirmed cases keep popping up in community clinics.

[Tit-for-tat media spat decays ties](#)

March 18, 2020, Global Times

China's latest measures against several US publications in the country have been billed as a tit-for-tat move against similar restrictions on Chinese media outlets in the US, but it also signals that Beijing has taken a more direct approach against Washington's constant ideological attacks and serves as a warning to anti-China forces in the US that their words and deeds will no longer go unanswered, Chinese sources and analysts said on Wednesday.

['Two sessions' likely in late April or early May: observers](#)

March 18, 2020, Global Times

The "two sessions," annual meetings of China's top legislative body and its top consultative body, are likely to be held in late April or early May, Chinese analysts said Wednesday, since by then the domestic epidemic situation is expected to be under control and business operations should have resumed.

[Chinese premier meets Pakistani president](#)

March 18, 2020, Global Times

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang and Pakistani President ArifAlvi held a meeting on Tuesday in Beijing, pledging to enhance cooperation in COVID-19 epidemic prevention and control.

[Western states' 'surrender' to COVID-19 shocks Chinese](#)

March 16, 2020, Global Times

As voices have grown louder for countries to learn from China's rigorous measures, some Western countries such as the UK and Sweden decided to apply a totally different approach of "herd immunity," allowing the deadly virus to decide the fate of millions of people in the hope those infected would acquire immunity.

[China gets tough on imported coronavirus and hiding of travel history, including waiving of free treatment](#)

March 15, 2020, Global Times

China is taking a zero tolerance stance toward imported coronavirus cases and hiding of travel history, including waiving of free treatment, following a number of new confirmed cases from abroad which are under investigation.

[India a quagmire for Chinese companies amid COVID-19, causing \\$50m loss so far](#)

March 18, 2020, Global Times

India is becoming a quagmire for hundreds of Chinese companies investing or operating there, with severe supply chain and cash flow woes and tens of millions of dollars at stake.

[India must not fall into the same trap as the West](#)

March 18, 2020, Global Times

As major economies around the world grapple with severe fallout from the global coronavirus pandemic which continues to show no sign of abating, one emerging economy has remained remarkably unscathed: India.

[Stimulus no panacea for economic woes](#)

March 20, 2020, China Daily

The novel coronavirus outbreak poses a major threat to the Chinese economy in the near term. Following the outbreak, the fear factor led to a drastic drop in consumption demand, especially in the tourism, catering, entertainment and

offline retail sectors, and the extended factory shutdown caused a major disruption in supply. It is very likely that China's GDP growth in the first quarter of this year will fall to the lowest level since 1993 when data were first released.

[China moves help avert financial crisis](#)

March 20, 2020, China Daily

Policy commitments and timely intervention by monetary authorities in China have helped douse the fires of another global financial crisis and calmed the jittery financial markets, amid the novel coronavirus outbreak, experts said on Thursday.

[U.S. attempt to sever global industrial chain "unrealistic and insensible:" spokesman](#)

March 17, 2020, China Daily

A U.S. official said Monday that the White House is preparing a presidential executive order designed to bring medical supply chains from countries such as China back to the United States to cut its dependency on foreign medicines.

Japan

[COVID-19: A strategic shock shakes the world](#)

March 18, 2020, The Japan Times

Sports arenas are without fans. Restrictions on travel are in place throughout the world. People's interest in toilet paper has irrationally skyrocketed. Who predicted that this decade would begin with what the World Health Organization has just declared a pandemic?

[No. of foreign visitors to Japan plunges 58% in Feb](#)

March 20, 2020, Japan Today

The coronavirus pandemic is hitting hard at Japan's tourism industry, with the number of foreign visitors plunging 58% in February from a year earlier, government data showed on Thursday.

[U.S. to suspend visa services in virus-hit countries including Japan](#)

March 19, 2020, Japan Today

The U.S. State Department is suspending routine visa services in countries facing heightened travel alerts, including Japan and South Korea, amid the coronavirus pandemic, embassy websites for the two countries showed.

[Japan automakers to halt North American plants as coronavirus spreads](#)

March 19, 2020, The Japan Times

Japanese automakers Toyota Motor Corp., Honda Motor Co. and Nissan Motor Co. announced separately Wednesday that they would suspend operations at their plants in North America due to the spread of the new coronavirus that causes COVID-19.

[Japan to ask all travelers arriving from Europe, Egypt and Iran to self-quarantine](#)

March 19, 2020, The Japan Times

Japan will ask travelers from Europe as well as Egypt and Iran to self-quarantine for 14 days after their arrival in an attempt to contain the spread of the new coronavirus, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said.

[Japan commissions first Maya-class guided-missile destroyer](#)

March 19, 2020, Jane's Defence Weekly

The Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) commissioned the first of two Maya (Improved Atago)-class, Aegis-equipped destroyers in a ceremony held on 19 March in Yokohama City, Kanagawa Prefecture.

[Counter-Piracy Operations by Japanese Self-Defense Force](#)

March 18, 2020, SLD

For Japan and the international community, the waters off the coast of Somalia and the Gulf of Aden are extremely important sea lanes.

Korea

[Pandemic engulfs world economy](#)

March 19, 2020, The Korea Times

The rapid spread of COVID-19 has engulfed the world economy paralyzing economic activities in every industry, fanning worries that the world is slipping into a recession.

[N.Korean Troops in 30-Day Lockdown](#)

March 16, 2020, Chosun Ilbo

North Korean troops have just emerged from a 30-day lockdown amid the coronavirus scare, U.S. Forces Korea Commander Gen. Robert Abrams claimed

last Friday. Adams said he is "fairly certain" that North Korea has cases of coronavirus.

[S. Korea, US sign \\$60 billion currency swap deal](#)

March 19, 2020, The Korea Times

South Korea and the United States have signed a \$60 billion bilateral currency swap agreement, Seoul's central bank said Thursday, a move expected to relieve liquidity crunch caused by the global spread of the new coronavirus.

[Coronavirus boosts 'contactless' economy, benefits Samsung's memory chip biz](#)

March 20, 2020, The Korea Times

While the stock market in Korea has been experiencing a sharp drop due to the spread of COVID-19, Samsung Electronics appears to be benefiting from the rise in the number of people looking to reduce face-to-face interaction, industry analysts said.

Southeast Asia

[Having Brushed Off Coronavirus Threat, Southeast Asia Begins to Confront It](#)

March 18, 2020, The New York Times

Now, with the belated realization that the virus is encircling the globe in its relentless spread, countries across Southeast Asia have begun to impose strict measures, including lockdowns in the Philippines and Malaysia and the widespread closure of schools, businesses and entertainment venues in Thailand. The delays are proving dangerous, as some nations face a worrisome rise in cases without a health care system that can deal with a major outbreak.

[Pandemic Control: A New Area for ASEAN Defense Cooperation?](#)

March 17 2020, The Diplomat

ASEAN could modify military humanitarian assistance and disaster relief mechanisms to support regional healthcare systems in times of crisis.

[Chinese military expert advocates using lasers to paralyze US warships in South China Sea](#)

March 19, 2020, Star and Stripes

The Chinese military should consider using non-lethal lasers on U.S. Navy warships to discourage their transits through the South China Sea, a state-run newspaper in China said.

Central & West Asia

Central Asia

[Uzbekistan to borrow \\$1 billion to fight coronavirus, aid economy](#)

March 19, 2020, Reuters

President Shavkat Mirziyoyev ordered Uzbekistan's government on Thursday to borrow up to \$1 billion abroad to finance measures to curb the spread of the coronavirus and counter its impact on the national economy.

[Kazakhstan aims to keep oil production unchanged despite market crisis](#)

March 16, 2020, Upstream Online

Country's government declares 30-day state of emergency in bid to delay impact of coronavirus on already stagnating economy.

[Turkmenistan donates humanitarian aid to Iran to help battle coronavirus](#)

March 19, 2020, Trend News Agency

Turkmenistan has donated humanitarian aid consisting of essential goods, including medical tools to Iran to help battle coronavirus, Trend reports with reference to Turkmenistan's embassy in Azerbaijan.

[Agenda for second India-Central Asia Dialogue, to be hosted by India, under preparation: Govt](#)

March 19, 2020, Outlook

India would host the second India-Central Asia Dialogue and its agenda was under preparation, the government informed Parliament on Thursday.

West Asia

[Bahrain Unveils \\$11.3bn Economic Stimulus Package](#)

March 18, 2020, Saudi Gazette

Bahrain unveiled \$11.3bn (BHD 4.3bn) economic stimulus package to support its citizens and the private sector hit by coronavirus pandemic, state news agency Bahrain News Agency reported late on Tuesday.

[Bahrain Reports First Coronavirus Death](#)

March 16, 2020, Anadolu Agency

A 65-year-old woman, who was put under quarantine in Bahrain after she contracted the coronavirus, died on Monday, the country's state media reported. The deceased female had returned from Iran last month and was put under quarantine upon her arrival to Bahrain.

[Strategic Partnership With China Lies at Root of Iran's Coronavirus Outbreak](#)

March 11, 2020, The Wall Street Journal

Iranian officials trace the origins of the country's coronavirus epidemic to the holy city of Qom, home to dozens of seminaries and religious shrines—but also a number of Chinese-backed infrastructure projects built by scores of workers and technicians from China.

[250 Indians In Iran Test Coronavirus Positive](#)

March 17, 2020, Gulf News

Over 250 Indians have tested positive in Iran, government officials in New Delhi said on Tuesday.

[Iraq Taps New Candidate Adnan al-Zurfi as Prime Minister, Testing Relations With Iran](#)

March 17, 2020, The Wall Street Journal

Iraq's president designated a former provincial governor with American citizenship as prime minister, drawing criticism from Iran's allies in the country amid new tensions between Washington and Tehran.

[Iraq Lodges Formal Complaints With UN Over Recent US Airstrikes](#)

March 18, 2020, Middle East Monitor

Iraq said yesterday that it has filed a formal complaint with the United Nations and the United Nations Security Council over the US' bombings of security, military and civilian sites that left six people dead.

[Israeli Spies Source Up To 100,000 Coronavirus Tests In Covert Mission](#)

March 19, 2020, The Guardian

Israel's secretive Mossad intelligence agency launched a covert international operation this week to fly in up to 100,000 coronavirus testing kits, although the effort may have been in vain as critical parts were reportedly missing.

[Coronavirus Cases: 33 Percent Cure Rate In Oman](#)

March 19, 2020, Times of Oman

A statement issued online by Oman's Government Communication Centre (GC) said: "The total infected cases of coronavirus in Oman touched 39 of which 13 have been recovered. Thus the cure rate from coronavirus reached 33% in Oman," the statement added.

[Coronavirus: Saudi Arabia Suspends Prayers in Courtyards AtMakkah, Madinah Mosques](#)

March 20, 2020, Khaleej Times

Saudi Arabia said on Thursday it suspended Muslims from conducting their five daily prayers and the weekly Friday prayer in the overflow area just outside the walls of the of two holy mosques in Makkah and Madinah, to limit the spread of coronavirus.

[Idlib Crisis Festers As Coronavirus Threat Looms](#)

March 20, 2020, Ahval

As Turkey and the international community struggle to deal with a fast-growing global pandemic, some 3 million displaced Syrians remain in dire need of aid along the Turkish border in Idlib province, with violence set to flare again due to fears that coronavirus will soon appear in Syria's last rebel-held province.

[Rocket Attack In Northwest Syria Kills Two Turkish Soldiers](#)

March 20, 2020, Al Jazeera

Two Turkish soldiers have been killed in a rocket attack in Syria's northwesternIdlib province, Turkey's defence ministry has said.

[Nato Plans On Supporting Turkey's Efforts In Syria](#)

March 19, 2020, Anadolu Agency

NATO allies are looking into what can be done to support Turkey's efforts in the Syrian crisis, the bloc's secretary-general said on Thursday. Jens Stoltenberg was speaking at a virtual news conference in which he presented the 2019 Annual Report on the military alliance. "No other NATO ally is more affected by the crisis in Syria than Turkey," Stoltenberg pointed out, mentioning the military losses and the fact that Turkey hosts 4 million Syrian refugees.

United States

United States

[As Pandemic Grows, U.S. Warns Americans Not to Travel Abroad](#)

March 19, 2020, The New York Times

The State Department announced on Thursday that Americans should not travel outside the country, and that citizens abroad should either return home or stay in place as the coronavirus pandemic grows.

[Donald Trump Bashes Media Coverage Of Coronavirus, Agrees With One America News Reporter That News Outlets "Siding With China"](#)

March 19, 2020, Deadline

Days after saying that a lot of the media "actually has been really fair" in its coverage of the coronavirus crisis, on Thursday President Donald Trump was back to calling a number of news outlets "dishonest."

[Biden's wins in U.S. states that matter most set stage for duel with Trump](#)

March 18, 2020, Reuters

With Bernie Sanders on the ropes in the race for the Democratic Party nomination, Joe Biden can turn his attention now to a November matchup against Republican Donald Trump, backed by momentum in states that decide U.S. presidential elections.

[Sanders to 'assess his campaign' after another round of bruising losses: statement](#)

March 18, 2020, Reuters

Democratic presidential hopeful Bernie Sanders plans to talk with supporters to "assess his campaign" after bruising losses to Joe Biden in the most recent round of voting, his campaign said in a statement on Wednesday.

[Trump wants direct payments of \\$1,000 for adults, \\$500 for kids in coronavirus stimulus bill, Mnuchin says](#)

March 19, 2020, CNBC

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin on Thursday laid out details of the Trump administration's plan to send Americans relief money as part of a massive stimulus package to blunt the impact of the novel coronavirus crisis.

[Coronavirus deals blow to NASA's 2024 return-to-moon plan](#)

March 20, 2020, Reuters

The coronavirus has dealt a blow to NASA's plan to return Americans to the moon by 2024, as the space agency chief on Thursday ordered the temporary closure of two rocket production facilities after an employee tested positive for the illness.

[Analysis: Coronavirus erodes Trump's re-election prospects](#)

March 20, 2020, Al Jazeera

Six weeks ago, the US election was Trump's to lose. The coronavirus pandemic has changed everything.

[US and Mexico coordinating on plan to restrict travel across the border](#)

March 20, 2020, CNN

The US and Mexico are coordinating on a plan to restrict nonessential travel across the border, the State Department confirmed Thursday evening. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Foreign Secretary Marcelo Ebrard discussed the plans during a call on Thursday.

[Turkey says it sent 500,000 coronavirus test kits to United States](#)

March 19, 2020, Reuters

Turkey has sent 500,000 coronavirus test kits to the United States upon their request, Health Minister Fahrettin Koca said on Thursday.

[OPEC supply curbs, U.S. measures could support oil prices near term: Goldman](#)

March 20, 2020, Reuters

Supply restraint by core-OPEC producers could push second-quarter Brent oil prices up to \$30 a barrel, while U.S. measures to support the market could underpin prices in the near term, Goldman Sachs said in a research note.

[Khamenei says U.S. sanctions forced Iran to become 'self-sufficient'](#)

March 20, 2020, Reuters

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, in a live speech on state TV for the start of the Persian new year, said on Friday that U.S. sanctions has forced the country to become self-sufficient as he called on Iranians to preserve unity.

Europe & Russia

Europe

[Coronavirus and the EU: The nation versus the union?](#)

March 19, 2020, Deutsche Welle

EU member states are pressing ahead with unilateral measures to stop the spread of coronavirus — and the bloc is no longer sitting in the driver's seat. Cooperation looks different in an era of pandemic.

[Coronavirus: European Union seals borders to most outsiders](#)

March 17, 2020, BBC

The EU is banning travellers from outside the bloc for 30 days in an unprecedented move to seal its borders amid the coronavirus crisis.

[Italian PM says EU must use 500-billion-euro rescue fund during virus outbreak](#)

March 20, 2020, Reuters

Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte said in an interview that the European Union must use "the full firepower" of its 500 billion-euro (\$534.10 billion) rescue fund to confront Europe's economic crisis during the coronavirus outbreak.

[Faced with shortages, EU plans stockpiling medical gear](#)

March 19, 2020, Reuters

The European Commission decided on Thursday to set up a stockpile of face masks, intensive care equipment and other essential medical gear to tackle shortages in Europe in the face of booming demand caused by the coronavirus crisis.

[PM: We can 'turn the tide' on coronavirus crisis](#)

March 19, 2020, BBC News

The UK can "turn the tide" on the coronavirus crisis within 12 weeks, Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said. But pressed on what he meant by the three-month timescale, he said he did not know how long it would go on for.

[Netflix is slowing down in Europe to keep the internet from breaking](#)

March 19, 2020, CNN

Netflix will reduce streaming quality in Europe for at least the next month to prevent the internet collapsing under the strain of unprecedented usage due to the coronavirus pandemic.

[Albania, North Macedonia Expect Good News on EU Talks](#)

March 19, 2020, Balkan Insights

Albania and North Macedonia expect that European Union ambassadors will approve a draft document that would bring the bloc close to opening accession talks with both countries.

Russia

[Over 20 reconnaissance aircraft, four drones spotted near Russia's borders](#)

March 20, 2020, Tass

Russia's radar stations spotted 22 aircraft and four drones of foreign states, which conducted air reconnaissance near Russia's borders over the past week, the Defense Ministry's official newspaper Krasnaya Zvezda (Red Star) said.

[War With OPEC Can't End Well for Russia](#)

March 16, 2020, The Moscow Times

Oil prices plummeted this week after a stalemate in talks between Russia and the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). Convinced it can force OPEC members to unilaterally decrease production, Russia may well end up worse off than its rivals in its bid to save face.

[Russia Sees Oil & Gas Income Fall By Almost \\$40 Billion](#)

March 18, 2020, Oil Price.com

Russia's revenues from oil and gas will be US\$39.5 billion (3 trillion rubles) lower than planned, due to the tumbling oil prices, Russian Finance Minister Anton Siluanov said on Wednesday, adding that Russia's budget will be in deficit this year.

[Russian court backs move to let Putin stay in power](#)

March 16, 2020, Al Jazeera

Russia's Constitutional Court has approved a package of amendments including a "reset" of President Vladimir Putin's previous terms, giving him the chance to rule until 2036.

Africa & Latin America

Africa

[Coronavirus pandemic: Experts say Somalia risk greater than China](#)

March 19, 2020, Al Jazeera

The coronavirus pandemic could kill more people in Somalia than anywhere else if preventive measures are not put in place urgently, medical experts and analysts have warned.

[In Burkina Faso, COVID-19 fight complicated by war, displacement](#)

March 16, 2020, Al Jazeera

Just like much of the rest of the world, the coronavirus pandemic is about to upend daily life in Burkina Faso. Starting on Monday, all schools and universities in the West African country will remain shut for the rest of the month.

[COVID-19: Africa told to prepare for worst. What's the response?](#)

March 19, 2020, Al Jazeera

From imposing travel bans to prohibiting mass gatherings and shutting down schools, governments across Africa are increasingly adopting sweeping measures in a bid to curb the spread of the new coronavirus.

Latin America

[Coronavirus in Latin America: Countries step up restrictions](#)

March 20, 2020, Al Jazeera

People in Brazil have protested against Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro's handling of the COVID-19 crisis which they say has been lax.

[US and Mexico coordinating on plan to restrict travel across the border](#)

March 20, 2020, CNN

The US and Mexico are coordinating on a plan to restrict nonessential travel across the border, the State Department confirmed.

[Guatemala suspends all deportation flights from US over COVID-19](#)

March 18, 2020, Al Jazeera

Guatemala will temporarily stop receiving Hondurans and Salvadorans returned from the United States under the asylum cooperation agreement due to the coronavirus pandemic, Guatemala's foreign ministry said.

[Brazil inmates captured after breakout sparked by coronavirus](#)

March 18, 2020, Al Jazeera

Brazil has recaptured more than 500 prisoners who fled four jails ahead of a planned lockdown of the facilities over the coronavirus pandemic, according to prison authorities..

[Dengue fever crisis grips Latin America](#)

March 17, 2020, Al Jazeera

DengueDengue fever cases are soaring in Latin America, all the way from Mexico to Chile.The mosquito-borne illness has become one of the most common reasons for hospitalisation.fever crisis grips Latin America.



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