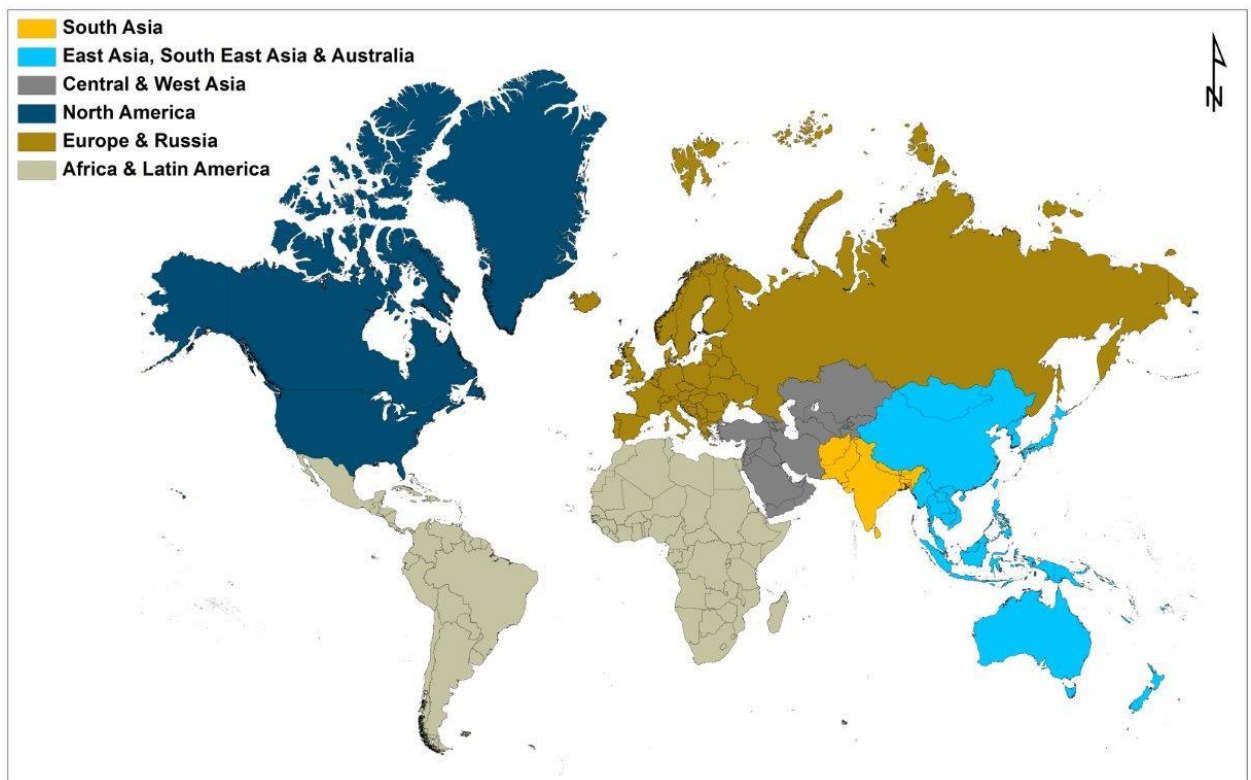




Delhi Policy Group

DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH



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DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH

Volume 4, Issue 8

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.

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Contents

South Asia.....	1
East & South East Asia.....	12
Central & West Asia.....	18
United States.....	22
Europe & Russia.....	24
Africa & Latin America	27

South Asia

India

[Pacts being readied for Trump-Modi bilateral: Homeland security to facilitation of trade](#)

February 21, 2020, The Indian Express

Donald Trump India visit: Sources said while 8-10 pacts are under "active consideration", about half-a-dozen are expected to be signed and announced during Trump's visit.

[Ivanka, Jared Kushner to accompany Donald Trump, Melania to India](#)

February 21, 2020, The Indian Express

US President Donald Trump and wife Melania Trump, who are visiting India on February 24-25, will be accompanied by daughter Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner. Ivanka and Jared are advisers to the US President. The four are scheduled to travel to Ahmedabad and then to Agra, where they will see the Taj Mahal, before arriving in New Delhi. Ivanka had visited Hyderabad in November 2017.

['We're not treated very well by India': Donald Trump indicates no major trade deal on card during Delhi visit](#)

February 19, 2020, The Indian Express

"We can have a trade deal with India. But I'm really saving the big deal for later," Trump said. His statement clearly indicated that a major bilateral trade deal might not be on the cards this time.

[Modi's neighbourhood policy is predicated on his 'sabka saath, sabka vikas' vision for inclusive growth](#)

February 21, 2020, The Indian Express

The visit of Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa to India in February marked the beginning of a new chapter in ties with a friendly neighbour, one with which India has close historical bonds straddling culture, religion, spirituality, art and language.

[India rejects mediation offer by UN Secretary-General on Kashmir](#)

February 16, 2020, Economic Times

The UN chief, who arrived in Pakistan on a four-day visit, addressed a press conference along with Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, wherein he also expressed his "deep concern" over the situation in Jammu and Kashmir and tensions along the Line of Control (LoC). Guterres also said that it was

important for India and Pakistan to de-escalate "militarily and verbally" and exercise "maximum restraint".

[India rejects China's objection to Shah's Arunachal visit](#)

February 21, 2020, The Economic Times

China, which claims Arunachal Pradesh as part of south Tibet, objected to Shah's visit to the state, saying it violated Beijing's "territorial sovereignty" over it. "Our position on Arunachal Pradesh is clear and consistent. Arunachal Pradesh is an integral and inalienable part of India," Kumar said at a media briefing.

[Cabinet Committee on Security clears procurement of 24 US multi-role helicopters for Indian Navy](#)

February 19, 2020, Economic Times

The Cabinet Committee on Security headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi cleared the procurement of 24 MH-60R Seahawk multi-role helicopters worth \$2.6 billion for the Indian Navy. The 24 Lockheed Martin helicopters will be procured through the foreign military sales (FMS) route from the US government.

[India becomes 5th largest economy, overtakes UK, France: Report](#)

February 17, 2020, Economic Times

India emerged as the world's fifth largest economy by overtaking the UK and France in 2019, says the World Population Review report by a US-based think tank. "India's economy is the fifth largest in the world with a GDP of USD 2.94 trillion, overtaking the UK and France in 2019 to take the fifth spot," it said.

[Indian defence to work under theatre commands just like US and China](#)

February 17, 2020, Business Insider

India will have two to five theatre commands along the borders with Pakistan and China, Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat said. The proposed peninsular command will be formed by merging the Navy's western and eastern commands and spread from the Sir Creek near the Arabian Sea to the Sundarbans in the Bay of Bengal.

[India-Russia defence deals set to cross \\$16 bn; to include S-400 systems, Kalashnikov rifles](#)

February 17, 2020, Hindustan Times

The two countries signed 14 memorandums of understanding (MoUs) during the recent Defexpo 2020 in Lucknow that covered development and production of land, air and naval systems and hi-tech civilian products. Russia's state-run Rosoboronexport inked deals with the DRDO for advanced pyrotechnic ignition

systems, HAL for export of spares and services to friendly countries, and BHEL for land systems.

[Portugal Backs India's Permanent Membership Bid at UN Security Council](#)

February 16, 2020, NDTV

Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa said his country fully supported India's bid for permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Mr Sousa said India will participate in the 2020 UN Ocean Conference to be held from June 2-6 in Lisbon in Portugal adding that two countries can cooperate on a variety of projects.

[Don't Interfere in India's Internal Affairs: India Warns Turkey](#)

February 17, 2020, Indian Defence

India has raised a strong objection to the statement made by the President of Turkey RecepTayyipErdoğan regarding Kashmir. India has asked Turkey not to interfere into the India's internal matter.

[Jaishankar meets US House Speaker Pelosi](#)

February 15, 2020, Economic Times

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Saturday said that US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's "consistent support" to India-US ties has always been a great source of strength as he met her on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference.

[Defence minister reviews performance of four shipbuilding PSUs](#)

February 17, 2020, PTI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh held review meetings with four shipbuilding public sector units (PSUs) wherein their senior officials apprised him about the companies' current activities and future plans, a government statement said. Singh appreciated the improvement in performance of these PSUs -- Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Limited (GRSE), Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL), Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) and Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL) -- over the years and urged them to further strive to become "world-class and compete at the international level"

Pakistan

[Neighbours' mind games: India, Pakistan must initiate dialogue between nuclear experts](#)

February 19, 2020, The Indian Express

The establishment of credible mutual deterrence between two nuclear rivals, by diminishing the possibility of a surprise nuclear attack, forms the basis of what is termed "strategic stability".

[China joins India, US to set new deadline for Pakistan](#)

February 20, 2020, The Indian Express

Diplomatic sources said Turkey was the only country which held out in the end. This marks a major shift in China's position, which has always backed Pakistan at the FATF.

[Pakistan Navy commissions multirole corvette](#)

February 15, 2020, The News

Pakistan Navy (PN) has commissioned the first of two 2,300 tonnes multirole corvettes ordered from Dutch shipbuilder Damen in 2017.

[Religious leaders condemn jail term to Hafiz Saeed](#)

February 15, 2020, The News

Religious leaders have condemned the 11 years sentence awarded to Hafiz Saeed and his aide Zafar Iqbal on charges of funding terrorism and running banned organisation, terming it a move to appease FATF which would end up promoting the Indian narrative of terrorism against Pakistan.

[Air-launched cruise missile tested successfully](#)

February 19, 2020, Dawn

Pakistan carried out a successful test of the nuclear-capable Air-Launched Cruise Missile Raad-II. The missile was launched from a Pakistan Air Force Mirage-III aircraft. Raad-II, is an improved version of Raad missile. It has a range of 600km; Raad had a 300-kilometre range.

[Mystery gas leak death toll doubles amid blame game](#)

February 19, 2020, Dawn

Pakistan federal and provincial agencies continued their hitherto unsuccessful efforts to determine the source and place of a toxic gas leak in a neighbourhood of Karachi, the death toll from the leak rose to 14.

[FATF gives Pakistan time until October to exit 'grey list': sources](#)

February 21, 2020, The Express Tribune

Pakistan is likely to stay on the "grey list" of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), which has agreed to give Islamabad time until October to fully implement the 27-point Action Plan given by the global financial watchdog.

[China backs Pakistan decision not to evacuate students from coronavirus lockdown](#)

February 21, 2020, The Express Tribune

China backed Pakistan's decision not to evacuate Pakistani students from the province at the centre of China's coronavirus outbreak, a day after parents confronted government ministers demanding their children be brought home.

[Govt refuses to allow raw material import from India](#)

February 21, 2020, The Express Tribune

Amid a trade standoff with the neighbouring country, the government has refused to allow South Korean firm Lotte Chemical Pakistan import of raw material from India.

Afghanistan

[Esper: U.S., Taliban Deal on reducing violence in Afghanistan 'Promising,' but with risks](#)

February 15, 2020, RFERL

U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper said a deal between the United States and the Taliban on a weeklong reduction of violence in Afghanistan "looks very promising," but warned it was not without risk.

[Ghani wins Afghanistan presidential polls, Abdullah rejects result](#)

February 19, 2020, Xinhuanet

Afghanistan's election commission declared the serving President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani as the elected president for the second term, nearly five months after the 2019 presidential polls. However, Ghani's rival in the presidential race, Abdullah Abdullah has disputed the election results as "bogus" and claimed his victory in the controversial polls.

[U.S. Special Envoy, Top EU Diplomat discuss Taliban deal with Afghan President](#)

February 19, 2020, RFERL

The U.S. special envoy for Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad, and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani met on February 19 to discuss a U.S. deal with Taliban militants on a seven-day reduction in violence.

[Dostum rejects IEC results: 'Governors will be appointed in North'](#)

February 19, 2020, Tolo News

Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostum, first vice president, spoke at a gathering in Jawzjan where he rejected the election result and called on the people to be ready and that governors will be appointed for the northern provinces of the country.

Bangladesh

[Chinese-run projects in Bangladesh to continue](#)

February 16, 2020, AA news

In a joint press briefing with Bangladeshi Foreign Minister AbulKalam Abdul Momen in the capital Dhaka, Chinese Ambassador Li Jiming said most Chinese employees in Bangladesh had resumed work following a quarantine period.

[India-Bangladesh joint Military & Army Exercise Sampriti-IX concludes in Meghalaya](#)

February 17, 2020, Indus Dictum

Over the past two weeks, with effect from 3 February to 16 February, the Armies of India and Bangladesh participated in joint military Exercise Sampriti IX at Umroi, Meghalaya. As the 9th edition of the joint Exercise reached its culmination on 16 February, the Heads of Observer Delegations from both sides conveyed their appreciation of both participating contingents for successfully achieving the objectives of the Exercise.

[Saudi Arabia says yes to more skilled workers from Bangladesh](#)

February 16, 2020, Arab News

Following a Joint Economic Council meeting which concluded in the capital recently, Saudi Arabia was keen on hiring more skilled workers from Bangladesh. Last year Bangladesh sent around 400,000 workers to the Kingdom, according to data from the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training. Saudi Arabia is the largest labor market for Bangladeshi migrant workers, with 1.5 million employed in the Kingdom.

[Bangladesh eyes stronger commercial ties with Qatar](#)

February 17, 2020, Financial Express

Bangladesh and Qatar held their first Foreign Office Consultations (FOC at State guesthouse and discussed ways to strengthen commercial ties further between the two countries and send more workers there ahead of the FIFA World Cup to be held in Qatar in November-December, 2022.

[Indian PM to visit Dhaka over March 16-18](#)

February 15, 2020, Dhaka Tribune

A wide range of bilateral issues is expected to be discussed during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's official talks with her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi on March 18 in Dhaka. Indian Prime Minister Modi is likely to arrive in the capital on March 16 on a three-day visit to Bangladesh to participate in the gala event on the birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on March 17 along with other global dignitaries.

[Newly appointed Pakistani envoy presents credential to president](#)

February 19, 2020, Dhaka Tribune

The new High Commissioner of Pakistan to Bangladesh Imran Ahmed Siddiqui has presented his credential to President Abdul Hamid at Bangabhaban. Welcoming the envoy to Bangladesh, the President said the country always maintains good ties with all countries following its foreign policy.

[Seminar on Indian Defence Equipment held in Dhaka](#)

February 19, 2020, UNI

A Seminar on Indian Defence Equipment (SIDE 2020) was organised by the High Commissioner of India in Dhaka. The Bangladeshi Minister for Industries was the chief guest. Representatives from twelve different Indian Firms participated in the event. The High Commissioner noted that India and Bangladesh have close cooperation in many diverse areas and therefore are natural partners to pursue further cooperation in the field of defence technologies.

[Australia appoints new high commissioner to India](#)

February 18, 2020, The Hindu

Australia has appointed former New South Wales premier Barry O'Farrell as the next high commissioner to India, one of Canberra's closest and most significant partners in the Indo-Pacific, an official statement said. O'Farrell, 60, will succeed Harinder Sidhu who has been in the office since 2016.

Nepal

[Foreign Minister Gyawali leaves for Bangladesh](#)

February 17, 2020, The Himalayan Times

Minister for Foreign Affairs Pradeep Kumar Gyawali has left for a three-day official visit to Bangladesh at the invitation his Bangladeshi counterpart, Dr AK Abdul Momen. During the visit, Gyawali will hold delegation-level talks with his counterpart. The two foreign ministers will review overall aspects of the bilateral relations and exchange views on various matters of mutual interest such as energy, trade, transit, connectivity, tourism and cooperation on regional and multilateral issues.

[PM Sheikh Hasina offers airport, seaport facilities to Nepal](#)

February 20, 2020, Dhaka Tribune

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina offered Bangladesh's airport and seaport facilities to Nepal as part of Dhaka's commitment for regional connectivity for shared prosperity as Nepal's visiting Foreign Minister Pradip Kumar Gyawali called on her at the Prime Minister's Office. Sheikh Hasina, told Gyawali that her government was updating Syedpur Airport as an international aviation facility expecting it to be an important centre for regional connectivity, While Nepal and Bhutan could use Syedpur Airport; Chattogram and Mongla seaports for the mutual benefits.

[Bangladesh to sign Free Trade Agreement with Nepal](#)

February 18, 2020, All India Radio

Bangladesh and Nepal have agreed to sign a Free Trade Agreement to enhance trade between the two countries. Announcing this after meeting the visiting Foreign Minister of Nepal Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Commerce Minister of Bangladesh TipuMunshi said that a committee will be formed to work out the modalities of the agreement.

Sri Lanka

[Sri Lanka, Bangladesh agreed to IMF to provide debt relief for Somalia](#)

February 17, 2020, Lanka Business online

Sri Lanka and Bangladesh have reportedly agreed to provide debt relief for Somalia under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative of the International Monetary fund (IMF). The Central Bank of Sri Lanka and the Ministry of Foreign Relations have expressed their concurrence to provide Sri Lanka's contribution and the cabinet has approved to transfer a sum equivalent to 163 million rupees as Sri Lanka's total contribution to the Somaliya Administered Account.

[U.S. Bars Sri Lankan Army Chief Accused of War Crimes](#)

February 15, 2020, New York Times

The United States has imposed an entry bar on Sri Lanka's army chief, Lt. Gen. Shavendra Silva, citing his alleged involvement in war crimes during the final stages of the country's civil war. The travel restriction on the general is the first significant international penalty to be imposed on a Sri Lankan official over atrocities committed during the country's 26-year civil war with Tamil Tiger militants, which ground to a halt in 2009.

[Sri Lanka warns US of consequences following ban on Silva](#)

February 17, 2020, MENAFN

Sri Lanka has warned the United States of the consequences following a ban on Lt. Gen. Shavendra Silva, Commander of the Army and Acting Chief of Defence Staff, as well as his immediate family. Foreign Relations Minister Dinesh Gunawardena said that the move unnecessarily complicates the US-Sri Lanka relationship.

[Sri Lanka decides to withdraw from UN consensus resolutions - report](#)

February 18, 2020, Colombo Page

The Sri Lankan government has decided to immediately withdraw from the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) resolutions 30/1 and 40/1 co-sponsored by the good governance government in 2015 and 2019 respectively. The move was taken as implementing the resolutions under the current political climate is inconsistent with the current government's political policy.

[India, Sri Lanka to ink MoU to develop Palaly airport in Jaffna](#)

February 20, 2020, Deccan Herald

The decision comes a day after the Sri Lankan Cabinet approved a proposal for the MoU with India for the project, which would include terminal modification, electricity supplies, utility services and transit facilities to be improved. "India has already agreed to provide Sri Lanka with a grant of 300 million Sri Lankan rupees (Rs 11.83 cr) for the development of the airport which started its international flights last year," the statement said.

[Japan firm lands massive Sri Lanka airport contract](#)

February 20, 2020, Malay Mail

A Japanese firm was chosen by Colombo today to build a new US\$570 million (RM2.3 billion) terminal for Sri Lanka's main airport, as Tokyo re-emerges as a key infrastructure backer amid a raft of Chinese projects. The cabinet announced the Taisei Corporation was picked to develop the Japanese-funded project, with the

new terminal expected to double capacity at Bandaranaike International airport to around 20 million passengers a year.

[Turkey seeks to work with Sri Lanka to combat extremism](#)

February 17, 2020, Colombo Gazette

The Ambassador of Turkey to Sri Lanka R. DernetSekeroioglu said that at a time when Turkey is confronting terrorism within and outside her borders, lessons from Sri Lanka's very own experiences against the LTTE would be of much value. In addition, Turkey is looking forward to enhancing bilateral cooperation on intelligence sharing in combating violent fundamental extremism, she further said.

[Pakistan, Sri Lanka have great potential to explore bilateral trade: Saad](#)

February 20, 2020, Radio Pakistan

Pakistan's High Commissioner to Sri Lanka SaadKhattak says the two countries have a great potential to explore in the areas of bilateral trade. Speaking at an interaction with members of Pakistani community in Colombo, he assured full support of the High Commission to Pakistani business community in this regard.

[Zambian Army Commander to visit Sri Lanka](#)

February 20, 2020, Colombo Gazette

Zambian Army Commander, Lieutenant General W.M Sikazwepsc DIP (DSS) MA (DSS) is scheduled to arrive in Sri Lanka on February 21 for a five-day long goodwill expedition.

[Indian, Sri Lankan Navy joint hydrographic survey op progresses: Defence Ministry](#)

February 21, 2020, Indus Dictum

The Indian Navy Hydrographic Survey Ship, INS Jamuna is on a two-month deployment to carry out a joint Hydrographic Survey off the South-West coast of Sri Lanka from 6 February. A team of Sri Lankan Navy hydrographers including officers and sailors have also embarked on board for the duration of the survey.

Maldives

[Shah to hold bilateral security cooperation talks with Maldives counterpart](#)

February 20, 2020, Business Standard

Union Home Minister Amit Shah will hold a bilateral meeting with his Maldivian counterpart Sheikh Imran Abdulla on February 21 and will discuss security

cooperation between the two countries. This is for the first time Shah will meet Abdulla, who is on a four-day visit to India.

[Huawei Marine to build new Maldives to Sri Lanka subsea cable](#)

February 17, 2020, Capacity Media

Huawei Marine Networks (HMN) has been awarded the contract to build a new subsea cable called the Maldives Sri Lanka Cable system (MSC). Once live, the new system will create a direct connection between the Maldives and Sri Lanka increasing regional capacity and route diversity.

East & South East Asia

China

[Xi hails China-Pakistan brotherhood in phone call with Pakistani PM on epidemic](#)

February 21, 2020, Xinhua

Facts have proved once again that China and Pakistan are true friends and good brothers that share weal and woe, Chinese President Xi Jinping said in a phone conversation with Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan on Thursday.

[Outbreak to have limited impact on economy](#)

February 21, 2020, Xinhua

The novel coronavirus outbreak not only poses a threat to public health but also has affected production activity and economic operations. Still, the epidemic's impact on the macroeconomy would be short term.

[Coronavirus not China's Chernobyl](#)

February 21, 2020, Xinhua

At a time when China is trying to contain the novel coronavirus epidemic, some Western media outlets have exposed their anti-China bias by claiming the situation is "China's Chernobyl".

[US vicious attacks against China at security meeting prove futile](#)

February 21, 2020, Xinhua

At the 56th Munich Security Conference, which ended on Sunday, the US delegation launched a vicious attack on China and Chinese telecommunications equipment maker Huawei in a desperate bid to coerce the United States' European allies to toe Washington's line on China and its companies.

[Amazon should apologize for offensive t-shirts](#)

February 21, 2020, Global Times

Amazon is receiving public scorn once again for selling offensive items on its retail platform. The US online retail behemoth has angered many Chinese consumers after they discovered t-shirts and coffee mugs featuring the slogan "Coronavirus made in China" were being sold on the platform. If Amazon doesn't want to stand against their Chinese consumers, the company should apologize and punish vendors for selling such items.

[Virus to move China up global healthcare supply chain](#)

February 20, 2020, Global Times

Combating novel coronavirus pneumonia (COVID-19) could trigger an earth-shaking change in the world's healthcare industry supply chain. China is set to expand its supply chain in the healthcare industry.

[COVID-19 fight must not be limited by egoism](#)

February 20, 2020, Global Times

The outbreak of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has brought a strong and comprehensive impact to China. The whole country is forced to suspend its previous schedule and engage in a full-scale battle against the epidemic. So far, China has achieved remarkable results on battlefields outside Hubei Province. The dangerous possibility of a large-scale spread of the disease across the country has been contained. The situation in Hubei has also started to improve significantly.

[China's tourism sector partly resumes under economic pressure](#)

February 21, 2020, Global Times

China's tourism industry, which has been hit hard by the outbreak of the novel coronavirus pneumonia, or COVID19, is cautiously resuming operations under the policy guidance of local authorities that are struggling to push the economy forward.

Japan

[China-Japan-US triangle: Abe's balancing act](#)

February 21, 2020, The Interpreter

The legacy for Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzo will be defined by how skilfully he navigates fluid geostrategic and geo-economic variables in the US-Japan-China triangle, at a time when regional order is fragmented and global governance is heavily contested. And of those points, China poses a particular challenge.

[What to make of the record defense budget](#)

February 20, 2020, The Japan Times

If all goes according to precedent, the Diet will be approving the government's budget in the next month or so, including record-high spending on defense.

[Japan, U.S., S Korea discuss coronavirus, N Korea](#)

February 16, 2020, Japan Today

The top diplomats of Japan, the United States and South Korea on Saturday agreed to support China's efforts to contain a deadly new coronavirus, as the outbreak poses increasing health risks and threatens to undermine the global economy.

[Investors urge Japan to strengthen climate targets ahead of U.N. summit](#)

February 18, 2020, Japan Today

Investors managing \$37 trillion in assets urged Japan to slash the country's carbon emissions, saying on Monday that a strong signal from Tokyo could help galvanise international climate action ahead of a U.N. summit in Glasgow in November.

[Japan, U.S., S Korea discuss coronavirus, N Korea](#)

February 16, 2020, Japan Today

The top diplomats of Japan, the United States and South Korea on Saturday agreed to support China's efforts to contain a deadly new coronavirus, as the outbreak poses increasing health risks and threatens to undermine the global economy.

[Tokyo, Beijing stay united on epidemic fight, Xi's state visit](#)

February 16, 2020, The Asahi Shimbun

Japan and China reaffirmed on Feb. 15 their commitment to work closely to contain the new coronavirus epidemic and realize Chinese President Xi Jinping's state visit to Japan in April.

[Japan bans entry from 2nd Chinese province, raises travel advisor](#)

February 12, 2020, The Asahi Shimbun

Japan will deny entry to people from another Chinese province (Zhejiang) to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus and strengthened its travel advisory for Japanese citizens to avoid trips to China.

Korea

[China, Russia supply combined 53,000 tons of refined oil to N. Korea last year](#)

February 21, 2020, The Korea Herald

China and Russia supplied around 53,000 tons of refined oil to North Korea last year despite tough sanctions restricting trade with Pyongyang, a United Nations report showed.

[Moon, Xi agree to closely cooperate against coronavirus](#)

February 20, 2020, The Korea Herald

South Korean President Moon Jae-in agreed in his telephone conversation with Chinese President Xi Jinping on Thursday to strengthen cooperation between the neighboring countries in a desperate fight against the novel coronavirus pandemic, according to Cheong Wa Dae.

[US flies surveillance aircraft over Korean Peninsula to monitor N. Korea](#)

February 20, 2020, The Korea Herald

The United States again flew a surveillance aircraft over South Korea on Thursday, an aviation tracker said, on an apparent mission to monitor North Korea.

[US Senate panel to hold hearing on N. Korea policy](#)

February 20, 2020, The Korea Herald

A US Senate subcommittee will hold a hearing next week with former US government officials to discuss North Korea policy, the panel's website showed.

[US flies surveillance aircraft to monitor N. Korea](#)

February 19, 2020, The Korea Herald

A US surveillance aircraft has flown over South Korea on an apparent mission to monitor North Korea, an aviation tracker said.

[Military to restrict all enlisted soldiers from vacationing over coronavirus](#)

February 21, 2020, The Korea Times

South Korea will start restricting all enlisted soldiers from vacationing, staying outside their bases and meeting visitors this weekend, the defense ministry said Thursday, after the Navy reported the first suspected coronavirus case among the country's service members.

[Can Korea continue nuke reactor exports after Barakah?](#)

February 20, 2020, The Korea Times

Korea's first nuclear reactor export to the United Arab Emirates is now an official success after the Middle Eastern country gave the first reactor at the Barakah Nuclear Plant – built by Korea Electric Power Corp. (KEPCO) – the go ahead.

[N.Korea Revamps 'Destroyed' Missile Site](#)

February 21, 2020, The Chosun Ilbo

North Korea is revamping the Tongchang-ri missile site it ostensibly shut down in 2018 after recently testing a missile engine there."It seems that the North is repairing and refurbishing various facilities there," a military spokesman here said

Thursday, "We're watching whether it intends to operate the site on a long-term basis."

Southeast Asia

[The Economic Fallout of the Coronavirus in Southeast Asia](#)

February 13, 2020, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

The world watches as the number of confirmed coronavirus cases continues to climb. But at more than 1,000 fatalities and counting, the new virus strain has already claimed more total lives than the 2002–2003 Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak, according to data from CEIC (see figure 1). That said, a lower share of people who have contracted the 2019–2020 coronavirus have died, a figure that hovers around 2 percent.

[ASEAN, China enhance cooperation in response to COVID-19](#)

February 21, 2020, Vietnam News

The ASEAN Coordinating Council (ACC) and the ASEAN-China Foreign Ministers met on Thursday in Laos to discuss to how to respond to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

[What Does the New Australia-ASEAN Informal Defense Ministers' Meeting Mean for the Future of Security Ties?](#)

February 20, 2020, The Diplomat

Australia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) held what was the inaugural iteration of a new informal meeting between their defense ministers. The birth of the new mechanism spotlighted the status of the security aspect of relations between the two sides and the management of it amid wider trend and developments.

[ASEAN, Australia defence ministers attend informal meeting](#)

February 20, 2020, Vietnam News

Defence ministers of ASEAN member nations and Australia attended an informal meeting on the sidelines of the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) Retreat in Hà Nội on Wednesday under the chair of Vietnamese Minister of National Defence General Ngô Xuân Lịch.

[South China Sea of brewing troubles and its implications for India](#)

February 18, 2020, Modern Diplomacy

For years, China, Brunei, Taiwan, Malaysia, Philippines, and Vietnam have contested overlapping claims to hundreds of coral reefs, features, and islets in the

South China Sea. China's man-made islands fortified with airstrips, anti cruise missiles, control towers, naval bases has allowed it to assert its sovereignty vigorously and poised it to seize greater control of the sea.

[Strengthening Myanmar-Sri Lanka Bilateral Relations: A Primer](#)

February 20, 2020, The Diplomat

From shared security concerns to their struggles with great power rivalries, Myanmar and Sri Lanka have a lot in common.

[Southeast Asia Continues to Struggle to Confront the Coronavirus](#)

February 20, 2020, CFR

Although Southeast Asia remains the region where the coronavirus is most likely to spread in significant numbers, most of the region's states remain significantly underprepared to deal with the virus.

Central & West Asia

Central Asia

[Uzbekistan and Turkey launch new format of cooperation](#)

February 20, 2020, The Times of Central Asia

As part of Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's visit to Turkey, official delegations of Uzbekistan and Turkey convened on February 19 in Ankara for the first session of the Strategic Cooperation Council of the two countries.

[Kyrgyzstan's investment and trade mission visits Japan](#)

February 19, 2020, The Times of Central Asia

An investment and trade mission of Kyrgyzstan visited Japan last week with the assistance of the Investment Promotion and Protection Agency of the Kyrgyz Republic (IPPA), the Japan Association for Trade with Russia and the Newly Independent States (ROTOBO) and the Department of Economic Diplomacy of Kyrgyzstan's Foreign Ministry together with the Kyrgyz Embassy in Japan, the ministry reported on February 18.

[The US Didn't Just Wake Up to Central Asia's Importance](#)

February 21, 2020, The Diplomat

"[The release of the Central Asia strategy] marks the first time in more than two decades that the United States has come up with a serious approach to a region where vast economic, geopolitical, and civilizational stakes are at issue," they state in their opening paragraph.

[US wants Central Asia to oust China, Russia](#)

February 19, 2020, The Tribune

The bigger picture is how the US may be subtly using the Afghan factor to nudge Central Asia into accepting a certain option or use cues to direct them away from overly depending on Russia and China. The US has offered a \$100-million aid to increase cross-border trade and connectivity between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. For the first time, the US told the regional states to push Russia and China out.

[Before and Beyond 5G: Central Asia's Huawei Connections](#)

February 19, 2020, The Diplomat

Huawei and Central Asian countries have special and long-lasting relations that are here to stay.

[A new strategy for Central Asia](#)

February 18, 2020, The Hill

This month, the Trump administration released its strategy for Central Asia. This marks the first time in more than two decades that the United States has come up with a serious approach to a region where vast economic, geopolitical, and civilizational stakes are at issue. It follows visits by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, the first trip to the region by someone in that role in half a decade.

[Kazakhstan cracks down on Eurasian Union car imports](#)

February 20, 2020, Eurasia Net

Used cars are far cheaper in other members of the Eurasian Economic Union. So some 170,000 Kazakhs imported cars from these partners duty-free. Now they're getting an unexpected bill.

[Turkmenistan approves humanitarian aid program for Afghanistan](#)

February 21, 2020, Trend Agency

Turkmenistan has approved a program for rendering humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan for 2020-2022. In particular, new social facilities are planned to be built, the humanitarian projects are planned to be implemented in the field of healthcare and the measures are planned to be taken to continue cooperation in the field of education.

West Asia

[Turkey To Stand With Pakistan On Kashmir Issue, Erdoğan Says](#)

February 14, 2020, Daily Sabah

The issue of Kashmir is as important to Turkey as it is to Pakistan, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said on Friday, noting that Turkey has not forgotten the Pakistani people's help during the Turkish War of Independence.

[US Lost Track Of \\$715m In Weapons Sent To Anti-daesh Allies In Syria](#)

February 20, 2020, Middle East Monitor

The US government has failed to account for nearly \$715.8 million in weapons and equipment funnelled to its Syrian allies involved in the multinational counter-offensive against Daesh, according to a report released on Tuesday by the Department of Defence.

[Egypt to build new military base 'to secure Suez Canal'](#)

February 18, 2020, Middle East Monitor

Egyptian cabinet yesterday said that a new military base would be built on the country's eastern border to secure the Suez Canal.

[Washington To Strengthen Presence Of Nato To Disengage Militarily From Baghdad](#)

February 15, 2020, Middle East Monitor

The approval of the US' allies to strengthen the role of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) mission in Iraq, indicates Washington's intention to "disengage" militarily from Baghdad. However, those allies have asked the US administration to maintain its military engagement in the region to combat Daesh.

[India issues fresh travel advisory asking citizens to not visit 5 provinces in Iraq](#)

February 18, 2020, India Today

India on Tuesday issued a fresh travel advisory cautioning citizens against visiting large parts of Iraq in view of the deteriorating security situation.

[Rockets Strike Near US Embassy In Iraq, No Casualties Reported](#)

February 16, 2020, Al Jazeera

Several rockets landed near the embassy of the United States in Iraq's capital early on Sunday, US and Iraqi military officials said, in the latest of a series of attacks against US assets in the country.

[Global Terror-Finance Watchdog FATF Set to Sanction Iran](#)

February 20, 2020, The Wall Street Journal

A global terror-finance watchdog agency is set to blacklist Iran, broadening a U.S. effort to isolate Tehran financially and potentially straining the already sanctions-battered Iranian economy.

[Iran's Elections Are Set To Be Dominated By Hardliners](#)

February 20, 2020, CNN International

The election should provide evidence of how far the Iranian establishment has moved from current President Hassan Rouhani's modernizing agenda and how it is now rallying around conservatives and hardliners.

[Iran Announces 3 New Cases Of Coronavirus After 2 Deaths](#)

February 20, 2020, The Washington Post

Iran said Thursday that three more people have been infected with the new virus that originated in central China, following an announcement the day before that two people had died of the illness caused by the virus in the Iranian city of Qom.

[Kuwait Opens Military Office In India In Bid To Up Security Co-operation](#)

February 20, 2020, Arab Times

The State of Kuwait has opened an office for military engagement in the Republic of India in an effort to realize the wish of Kuwaiti leadership to increase cooperation between the two friendly countries in the defense and security fields.

[Kuwait To Nationalise 'entire' Energy Sector By 2021](#)

February 18, 2020, Middle East Monitor

Kuwait has established "an urgent plan" to nationalise 100 per cent of all the technical, supervisory and executive jobs in the oil sector by January 2021, the country's state-run Supreme Petroleum Council announced yesterday.

[Oman Sees The Biggest Gulf Clash Risk In Strait Of Hormuz](#)

February 16, 2020, The Jerusalem Post

The risk of a military confrontation is higher in the Strait of Hormuz than anywhere else in the Gulf region, Oman's foreign minister said, due in part to the growing number of military vessels from different countries that are guarding it.

[Qatar Says Talks To End GCC Crisis Were Suspended In January](#)

February 15, 2020, Al Jazeera

Qatar's foreign minister has said efforts to resolve a years-long Gulf diplomatic crisis were not successful and were suspended at the start of January.

[Saudi Arabia Plans To Export Gas And Petrochemicals Soon](#)

February 16, 2020, Zawya

Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest crude exporter, plans to add gas and petrochemicals to its slate of exports and will soon make a major announcement on the topic, the Kingdom's energy minister said on Sunday.

United States

United States

[Lawmakers Are Warned That Russia Is Meddling to Re-elect Trump](#)

February 20, 2020, The New York Times

A classified briefing to House members is said to have angered the president, who complained that Democrats would “weaponize” the disclosure.

[Surging Dollar Reflects the Standout U.S. Economy](#)

February 20, 2020, The New York Times

The dollar climbed to its highest level in years this week, a reflection of the standout status of the American economy against a global backdrop clouded by the coronavirus.

[Homeland security to IP rights, Donald Trump visit to help seal five pacts](#)

February 21, 2020, LiveMint

India and the US are likely to finalize five pacts, including on trade facilitation, homeland security and intellectual property rights, after talks between US President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi next week.

[Namaste Trump: What do the US and India want from this visit?](#)

February 21, 2020, Indian Express

India is gearing up for US President Donald Trump’s first ever visit to India on Monday, February 24th and it’s bound to be a spectacle. What does the Trump administration hope to get out of this visit? Why have India and US not been able to come to an agreement over a trade deal and why is the Modi government spending big money on this particular visit?

[Outbreak will not change China's commitments to buy U.S. goods: senior U.S. official](#)

February 21, 2020, Reuters

The U.S. government expects China to honour its commitments to buy more U.S. goods under a trade deal signed by the world’s two largest economies in January despite the fast-spreading coronavirus outbreak, a senior U.S. official said on Thursday.

[President Trump goes on clemency spree, and the list is long](#)

February 19, 2020, Associated Press

President Donald Trump went on a clemency blitz Tuesday, commuting former Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich's 14-year prison sentence and pardoning former New York City police commissioner Bernie Kerik, among a long list of others.

[Why Sanders Will Probably Win the Nomination](#)

February 20, 2020, The New York Times

Successful presidential candidates are mythmakers. They don't just tell a story. They tell a story that helps people make meaning out of the current moment; that divides people into heroes and villains; that names a central challenge and explains why they are the perfect person to meet it. Democrats already see reality through the Bernie lens.

[Warren doubles down on criticising Bloomberg as U.S. Democrats sprint to Super Tuesday](#)

February 20, 2020, Reuters

A debate-stage scrap between Michael Bloomberg and Elizabeth Warren spilled onto the Democratic campaign trail on Thursday as the former New York mayor sought to move past his rocky debate debut and the senator dug in on attacking her billionaire rival.

Europe & Russia

Europe

[Brexit burned \\$81bn hole in EU budget, leaders try to fill gap](#)

February 20, 2020, Al Jazeera

EU is set to revise membership dues now that UK is no longer contributing to bloc.

[The EU's biggest post-Brexit fight is about to get real](#)

February 20, 2020, CNBC

Where will the money come from? This is the contentious question that the EU needs to answer every seven years – and this time around, the issue is even more complicated.

[The EU's agenda to regulate AI does little to rein in facial recognition](#)

February 21, 2020, Quartz

The term “facial recognition” only appears four times in the 27-page document, known as the White Paper on Artificial Intelligence, that outlines Europe’s vision for the future of artificial intelligence. Three of those four instances are in footnotes.

[US campaign against Huawei's 5G role in UK set to continue](#)

February 20, 2020, The Guardian

The White House campaign against Britain’s decision to allow Huawei to supply 5G network technology is expected to continue after a critical UK-US meeting at Downing Street broke up without reaching agreement on the issue.

[US and UK accuse Russia of major cyber-attack on Georgia](#)

February 20, 2020, CNN

The US, UK, and Georgia accused the Russian military Thursday of being behind a major 2019 cyber-attack on Georgia that disrupted "several thousand Georgian government and privately-run websites and interrupted the broadcast of at least two major television stations."

[Far-right motive suspected in mass shooting in Germany](#)

February 20, 2020, CBS News

A 43-year-old German man shot and killed nine people at several locations in a Frankfurt suburb in an attack that appeared to have been motivated by far-right beliefs, officials said Thursday.

[West German Men Fill Race to Replace Chancellor Merkel](#)

February 19, 2020, The New York Times

The candidates to lead Angela Merkel's conservative party reflect a pivot away from the chancellor's centrist legacy. All are men from the conservative west.

[France's Challenge in Africa](#)

February 17, 2020, The New York Times

The Libyan revolution of 2011 brought lasting terrorist mayhem across a broad reach of Africa's former French colonies. Now France needs its allies to help pacify the region — if that can be done.

[France's Groupe ADP to buy 49% in GMR airport business for Rs 10,780 cr](#)

February 20, 2020, Business Standard

GMR Infrastructure on Thursday said France's Groupe ADP would acquire a 49 per cent stake in its airport business for an equity consideration of Rs 10,780 crore. The company has signed a share-purchase agreement with Groupe ADP valuing GMR Airports Limited at Rs 22,000 crore. GMR manages the Delhi and Hyderabad airports.

[No extension to EU-UK transition seen, goods trade deal likely - Reuters poll](#)

February 21, 2020, Reuters

The transition period for Britain and the European Union to thrash out a trade deal will not be pushed beyond December, according to over two-thirds of economists polled by Reuters, resulting in a goods-only agreement when they part ways.

Russia

[Putin hails US for helping prevent terror attack in Russia](#)

February 20, 2020, Yahoo News.com

Russia's President Vladimir Putin on Thursday hailed the FBI for sharing information that helped thwart a terror attack by adherents of the Islamic State group in St. Petersburg during the New Year holidays.

[Merkel, Macron urge Putin to end conflict in Syria's Idlib](#)

February 21, 2020, Reuters

The leaders of Germany and France called Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday to express their concern about the humanitarian situation in Syria's Idlib region, urging an end to the conflict there, a German spokesman said.

[US and UK accuse Russia of major cyber attack on Georgia](#)

February 20, 2020, CNN

The US, UK, and Georgia accused the Russian military Thursday of being behind a major 2019 cyber attack on Georgia that disrupted "several thousand Georgian government and privately-run websites and interrupted the broadcast of at least two major television stations."

[Russian Lawmakers Propose Special Governing Status for Arctic](#)

February 20, 2020, The Moscow Times

Russia's far northern territories, border areas and closed military towns could be directly governed by the federal government in Moscow, a leading member of the parliamentary group that is drafting a package of amendments to Russia's Constitution has said.

[Is Russia cozying up to Syria's Kurds amid rift with Turkey?](#)

February 20, 2020, Al Monitor

The escalation in Idlib has left Turkey vacillating between Russia's tough options and the United States' enticing prodding, as it maintains its menacing posture to force the Syrian army's retreat to now-defunct cease-fire lines in the rebel stronghold. Amid the standoff, the Syrian Kurds are becoming a key factor in both US and Russian calculations to sway Turkey's attitude.

Africa & Latin America

Latin America

[Gun trafficking at the US-Mexico border](#)

February 20, 2020, Al Jazeera

Mexican security forces were outgunned by the Sinaloa Cartel in a bloody shootout in Culiacan last October.

[Trump's 'Remain in Mexico' program dwindles as more immigrants are flown to Guatemala or are quickly deported](#)

February 21, 2020, The Washington Post

The flow of migrants being returned across the border into Mexico included more than 100 people a day here last fall. That stream of Central Americans, carrying papers stamped with a future date in U.S. immigration court, has now slowed to a trickle, with fewer than a dozen crossing back into Matamoros daily.

[IMF's message to Argentina's bondholders: Prepare for a haircut](#)

February 2020, Al Jazeera

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) warned Argentina's bondholders on Wednesday that they would likely need to incur losses on their investment to help resolve the country's "unsustainable" debt burden.

[IMF Says Argentina's Debt Levels Unsustainable After Review](#)

February 20, 2020, Bloomberg

Argentina's debt load is unsustainable, the International Monetary Fund said, offering what is effectively a seal of approval to the government's plan to saddle creditors with losses in a renegotiation of its liabilities.

[Donald Trump's Venezuela Strategy Is a Total Failure](#)

February 20, 2020, National Interest

Every strategy Washington has designed to weaken Maduro's hold on power has failed. Venezuela may be a pipsqueak country that can't even supply shoes for its teachers, yet it's a nut the Trump administration hasn't been able to crack.

[Venezuela: refugee crisis tests Colombia's stability](#)

February 19, 2020, Financial Times

The chaos spreading into Colombia from Venezuela is unmistakable on the crowded highway that spans the countries' 2,200km border. On the Venezuelan side pick-up trucks crammed with entire families jostle for position as cars try to

weave through the traffic. Motorcycle riders line up in the heat waiting for passengers. Roadside vendors hawk plastic bottles filled with contraband gasoline. Litter is strewn everywhere.

Africa

[Libya's warring rivals resume talks in Geneva: UN](#)

February 21, 2020, Al Jazeera

The UN-recognised government pulled out of peace talks after a barrage of rockets hit a port in the capital, Tripoli.

[U.S. Should Recognize Allies' Concerns about Libya](#)

February 20, 2020, International Policy Digest

Attempts by the international community to end the civil war in Libya is failing to address critical issues: counterterrorism, and securing Libyan oil and natural gas for sale to Europe to bolster the continent's energy security and to provide Libya funds for its reconstruction.

[Tunisia names new government in last bid to avoid early election](#)

February 20, 2020, Al Jazeera

PM-designate forms coalition gov't that will include Ennahda party in a deal that will prevent parliament dissolution.

[Somalia: Al-Shabab fighters attack military bases](#)

February 19, 2020, Al Jazeera

Al-Shabab has attacked two Somali military bases using an explosive-laden vehicle driven by a suicide bomber along with dozens of heavily-armed fighters.

[Somaliland Not Ready To Welcome Somalia President Yet](#)

February 18, 2020, Business Week

Somaliland is uncomfortable with a push by Ethiopia Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed to visit the country alongside Somalia president Mohamed Abdilahi Farmajo.

[Turkey, Kenya to ink new cooperation deals in March](#)

February 22, 2020, Daily Sabah

Turkey and Kenya are set to sign new cooperation agreements aimed at avoiding double taxation and improving cooperation in the field of agriculture next month, said the Turkish envoy in Nairobi.

[Pompeo caps three-nation Africa tour with veiled swipe at China](#)

February 19, 2020, Al Jazeera

Without mentioning Beijing, the continent's top trading partner, Pompeo warns about 'empty promises' in Ethiopia speech.

[China expands influence in Africa as US plays catch-up](#)

February 20, Nikkei Asian Review

As China continues to implement its trillion-dollar Belt and Road infrastructure initiative, a principal focus will be engagement in Africa. China knows that Africa's youthful population is exploding, that the continent is rich in natural resources and that it is massive in geographical scale.



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