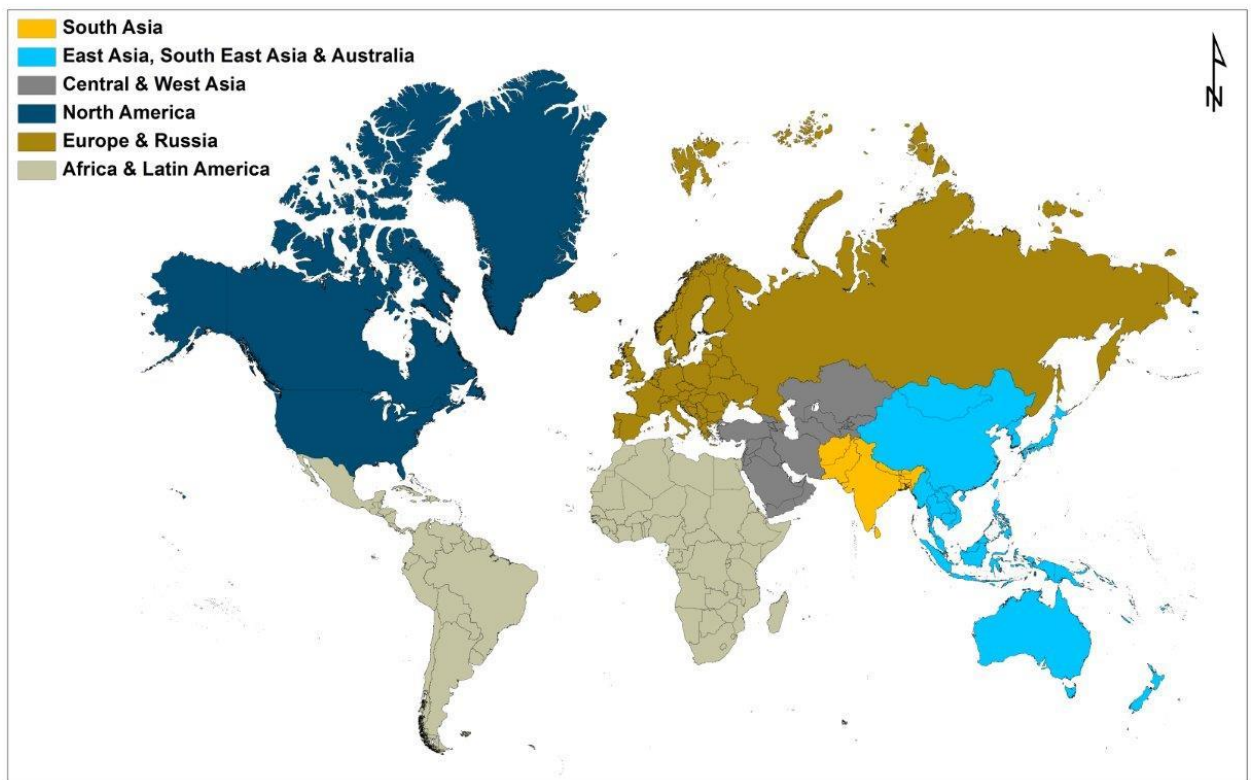




Delhi Policy Group

# DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH



Volume IV, Issue 10 | March 6, 2020



# DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH

## Volume 4, Issue 10

### 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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Your comments and feedback can be addressed to Angana Guha Roy at [angana@dpg.org.in](mailto:angana@dpg.org.in).

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**Delhi Policy Group**  
Core 5A, 1st Floor,  
India Habitat Centre,  
Lodhi Road, New Delhi- 110003.  
[www.delhipolicygroup.org](http://www.delhipolicygroup.org)

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## South Asia

### India

#### [India reports 30 coronavirus cases, all international passengers to be screened](#)

March 6, 2020, The Economic Times

The government is working intensively to ensure meaningful intervention, if needed, to deal with the impact of unfolding Covid-19 crisis in the country, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said.

#### [Indian Navy cancels multilateral naval exercise amid coronavirus fears](#)

March 3, 2020, Business Today

The mega biennial naval event that was scheduled to be held in Visakhapatnam from March 18, 2020. A total of 41 nations were invited for the joint naval drill, including the navies of US, UK, France, Japan, Russia and Iran.

#### [PM Modi's visit to Brussels deferred as India-EU Summit rescheduled in view of Coronavirus outbreak](#)

March 5, 2020, News on Air

The India-European Union Summit which was slated to be held later this month will now be rescheduled in view of the Coronavirus outbreak.

#### [India conveys concerns to China over equipment seized from Pakistan-bound ship](#)

March 5, 2020, Hindustan Times

India said on Thursday that it has seized dual-use equipment that experts had determined had "military applications" from a Pakistan-bound Chinese merchant vessel and asked China to ensure its entities don't engage in activities that could contribute to proliferation.

#### [Autoclave seized in India from Pakistan-bound Chinese ship not for military use under non-proliferation: China](#)

March 5, 2020, The Economic Times

Asked about reports that officials of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) confirmed that the industrial autoclave seized from the Chinese ship 'Da Cui Yun' can be used for the "manufacture of very long-range ballistic missiles or satellite launch rockets", Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said it is not for military use.

### [China ship carried dual-use item: MEA](#)

March 6, 2020, The Times of India

Highlighting continuing ballistic missile and nuclear proliferation between China and Pakistan, India announced it has seized an industrial autoclave from a Chinese vessel which berthed at Kandla in early February.

### [China rejects Indian claim Karachi-bound ship has military supplies](#)

March 6, 2020, DAWN

China strongly rejected an Indian allegation that a detained Karachi-bound Chinese merchant vessel carried cargo that breached non-proliferation and export control restrictions.

### [China at helm, India faces tough month at UNSC](#)

March 2, 2020, The Indian Express

India is bracing for a tough month ahead, as China is going to assume presidency of the United Nations Security Council for the month of March. Beijing's Permanent Representative Zhang Jun will assume the presidency on Monday.

### [UN Human Rights chief to move SC over CAA, India calls it 'internal matter'](#)

March 3, 2020, The Indian Express

Reacting to the same, the Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement said, "The Citizenship Amendment Act is an internal matter of India and concerns the sovereign right of the Indian Parliament to make laws. We strongly believe that no foreign party has any locus standi on issues pertaining to India's sovereignty."

### [Taliban dropped India from its thank you list. Delhi should face new Afghanistan realities](#)

March 5, 2020, The Print

Economic aid never fails to produce influence, and India should know that. Our aid must not only continue, but it should increase with firm commitments.

### [After Donald Trump tour, US defence secretary to visit India](#)

March 5, 2020, The Times of India

Following Donald Trump's visit to India last month, the US secretary of defence Mark Esper is now slated to touch down in New Delhi on March 15 to discuss specific measures to further strengthen the already expansive military cooperation between the two countries.

### [Takeaways from Trump's visit to India](#)

March 4, 2020, Asia Times

However, was the visit all optics, or was it able to stop the cracks that had begun to appear in the Indo-US relationship and reaffirm the faith of those who had hoped that it would serve to be a pivot of a stabilizing order in the Indo-Pacific region?

### [Moves to strengthen Coast Guard with more choppers](#)

March 5, 2020, Outlook India

Deeper exploration of the oceans will require increased harmonisation of aeronautics and maritime fields, Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar said on Thursday, adding that the request for proposal (RFP) for acquiring 14 multi-role heavy helicopters for maritime search and rescue operations would be issued by March-end.

### [India outshines Russia, Poland to bag USD 40 million defence deal in Armenia](#)

March 2, 2020, India Today

In a big boost to Make in India' defence goals, India has managed to secure a deal in Armenia to supply four weapon locating radars beating the competing bids from Russia and Poland. The contract worth over USD 40 million to supply four Swathi weapon locating radars has been signed with Armenia and supplies have also started, sources said here.

### [India as Counterweight to China in Asia](#)

March 5, 2020, National Review

Seventy years later, India has once again emerged as a possible bulwark against a rising China. Beijing loomed large as Indian prime minister Narendra Modi received President Trump at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport in Ahmedabad on February 24.

### [India's equivocal policy towards China](#)

March 5, 2020, Modern Diplomacy

China has thanked India for help extended in dealing with COVID19. Aside from this gesture, there are serious problems in relations. India became independent on August 15, 194 while China on April 1, 1950. Sino-Indian relations have since witnessed ups and downs from bonhomie, hindi-chinee bhai bhai (Indian-Chinese brotherhood) to being at daggers drawn. The last coffin in the relations is India's cartographic aggression of amending maps to show Chinese territories as Indian.

## Pakistan

### [KSA may install refinery, petrochemical complex in Hub](#)

March 2, 2020, The News

The indications from Saudi Arabia so far received suggest that it would not install a world class state-of-art and deep conversion refinery and petrochemical complex in Gwadar Port as there is no system available to evacuate the petroleum products. However, Saudi Aramco has hinted at setting up the refinery with petrochemical complex at Hub, or at Somiani – coastal areas of Balochistan, which are not far away from Karachi.

### [Foreign investment in short-term government papers exceeds \\$3.3 billion](#)

March 1, 2020, The News

Foreign investment in Pakistan's short-term debts surpassed \$3.3 billion in the first eight months of the current fiscal year of 2019/20, as lucrative interest rates continued to pique interest of international funds in local currency bonds.

### [NA to hold national dialogue on Afghanistan on March 17](#)

March 1, 2020, The News

The Pakistan National Assembly (NA) will hold a national dialogue on 17th of March on how to take up challenges of the post US-Afghan peace deal inked in Qatar.

### [Coronavirus cases jump to six in Pakistan](#)

March 5, 2020, The Express Tribune

Of the sixth confirmed COVID-19 cases in Pakistan, all had a history of travel to Iran. Three of the cases are in Karachi and three in Gilgit-Baltistan. The new case has emerged as all educational institutes in Sindh have been closed till March 13 amid the fear of contagious disease's outbreak in the province.

### [PML-N reaches out to MQM-Pakistan to discuss 'new governance model'](#)

March 5, 2020, The Express Tribune

A delegation of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz visited the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan headquarters in Karachi to find out a new "governance model" to resolve the long-standing issues of the country.

## Afghanistan

### [US and Taliban sign 'Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan'](#)

February 29, 2020, Tolo News

Following eighteen months of negotiations in Doha, the United States and the Taliban on February 29 officially signed a peace deal that will pave the way for the withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan in exchange for a number of assurances by the Taliban to the US and its allies.

### [Taliban prepare to start Intra-Afghan talks](#)

March 1, 2020, Tolo News

Taliban representatives in Qatar said they are now preparing to begin the intra-Afghan talks. On the other hand, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in a press conference after the signing said that the agreement will mean nothing if concrete actions on commitments and promises are not kept.

### [Afghan President rejects timing of prisoner swap proposed in U.S.-Taliban peace deal](#)

March 1, 2020, NPR

Afghanistan's president publicly rejected the timeline for a prisoner swap with the Taliban, just one day after the United States signed a peace deal with the militant Islamist group that proposes a March 10 deadline for an exchange of prisoners.

### [Iran accelerates repatriation of Afghans: Officials](#)

March 4, 2020, Tolo News

Herat's refugees and repatriation directorate said that the number of Afghan refugees repatriated by Iran has doubled over the last two weeks and hundreds of thousands of refugees are crossing the border at Islam Qala every day.

### [Trump discusses Afghan peace deal with top Taliban Leader](#)

March 4, 2020, Voice of America

The U.S. military carried out what it called a "defensive strike" against Taliban fighters on March 4 in southern Afghanistan, hours after President Donald Trump spoke by phone with a Taliban leader about a peace deal. A Taliban readout of what it asserted was a 35-minute phone call said its deputy chief, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, assured Trump the insurgent group would seek "positive future bilateral relations" with Washington after all U.S. and coalition troops withdraw from the country under the agreement they signed.



### [Pompeo: peace process going forward despite setbacks](#)

March 5, 2020, Tolo News

US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo, during a press briefing on March 5, called the violence of the last couple of days "unacceptable," but he said that the US would continue to push the peace process forward. He mentioned the need to discuss the prisoner releases and said that US envoy Zalmay Khalilzad was in Kabul at the moment, to move things along.

### [Ghani, Abdullah to hold parallel Swearing-In Ceremonies](#)

March 6, 2020, Tolo News

The Afghan Presidential Palace said that preparations for President Ghani's swearing-in ceremony were completed and the event will be held on March 9. The ceremony was scheduled to take place earlier but delayed because of the "rumors about coronavirus in Afghanistan" and the short notice for world leaders to attend the inauguration, according to the Palace.

### [The Taliban have fulfilled a series of conditions: Gen. Milley](#)

March 6, 2020, Tolo News

The US Defense Secretary Mark Esper and US Army Chief of Staff General Mark Milley at a US Senate Armed Services Committee hearing said that less than a week has passed since the signing of the peace agreement with the Taliban and the overall level of attacks has been low. The two US officials say that, so far, the provincial capitals of the thirty-four provinces in Afghanistan have not witnessed Taliban attacks.

## **Bangladesh**

### [Modi to visit Dhaka on March 17](#)

March 2, 2020, The Daily Star

Dhaka considers the recent violence in Delhi as India's domestic issue and expects the country's authorities to control it.

### [Bangladesh's parliament speaker cancels India visit](#)

March 2, 2020, Andolou Agency

A delegation from Bangladesh led by the country's parliament speaker has cancelled its visit to New Delhi amid the turmoil over India's controversial Citizenship Amendment Act.

### [Bangladesh: 12 injured in rally against Indian premier](#)

March 5, 2020, Andolou Agency

At least 12 people were injured in Bangladesh at a protest against the upcoming visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, according to eye witnesses and local police.

### [Bangladesh naval ship on goodwill visit to Sri Lanka](#)

March 3, 2020, Adaderna.lk

The Commanding Officer of the Bangladesh ship which is on a goodwill visit to Sri Lanka, Captain Mostafa Zillur Rahim Khan with officers of the crew, called on the Commander Western Naval Area, Rear Admiral Sumith Weerasinghe at the Western Naval Command Headquarters.

### [Ready To Share Military Hardware With Bangladesh: Indian Diplomat](#)

March 2, 2020, NDTV

India is ready to share with Bangladesh any military hardware being manufactured in the country for India's defence forces, Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla said on Monday as he underlined the potential for robust defence cooperation between the two neighbours.

### [More Chinese companies to come in Bangladesh, says Chinese Ambassador](#)

March 2, 2020, Dhaka Tribune

Ruling out the possibility of any "substantial impact" of the coronavirus outbreak on the ongoing mega projects in Bangladesh, Chinese Ambassador in Dhaka Li Jiming has said more Chinese companies will come to Bangladesh as the country has been a very attractive investment destination.

### [Naval warship BNS Swadhinata leaves for Qatar](#)

February 29, 2020, Bangladesh

Bangladesh naval warship BNS Swadhinata left Chattogram naval base for Doha in Qatar on Friday to join a three-day 7th International Naval Exercise and Exhibition scheduled to be held at Doha from March 26.

## **Bhutan**

### [Bhutan confirms first case, 8 Indian tourists with suspected symptoms admitted in hospital](#)

March 6, 2020, Live Mint

Bhutan on Friday confirmed the first case of coronavirus in the country.

### [India-Bhutan rail link soon](#)

March 4, 2020, Northeast Now

Railway Minister Piyush Goyal was recently in Bhutan heading a business delegation at the Bhutan-India Start-up Summit 2020. An Indian Railways team will visit Bhutan and hold discussions with the Bhutan Mining Corporation on finalizing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for export of railway ballast from Bhutan to India.

## **Nepal**

### [India tells Nepal to give list of essential medicines](#)

March 5, 2020, Online Khabar

Two days after the Indian government decided to impose a restriction on the export of 26 types of medicines including paracetamol, New Delhi has asked Nepal to provide a list of the essential drugs it needs to supply to Nepal.

### [Nepal-India meet agrees to collaborate on issues of bilateral interests](#)

March 5, 2020, Khabarhub

A meeting of the Nepal-India district-level coordination committee concluded in Baitadi agreeing on a seven-point agreement on issues of bilateral interests.

### [Nepal to perform coronavirus screening at 37 border points with India](#)

March 5, 2020, Khabarhub

The government has decided to perform screening for coronavirus at 37 border entry points along the Nepal-India border.

### [Nepal suspends visa on arrival for countries worst hit by COVID-19](#)

March 3, 2020, CGTN

The Nepali government has suspended the visa-on-arrival regime for nationals of five countries – China, South Korea, Japan, Italy and Iran, which were badly affected by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) epidemic, a Nepali minister said.

### [Nepal-China ties: Who's to blame for the embassy statement?](#)

March 3, 2020, The Annapurna Express

Many are blaming the Chinese government for the rather undiplomatic press statement issued by the Chinese Embassy in Kathmandu over a syndicated article in The Kathmandu Post and the accompanying illustration of a masked Mao on a 100-yuan bill. But it can be argued that the statement has nothing to do with Beijing and in fact it's a diplomatic faux pas on the embassy's part.

## Sri Lanka

### [Sri Lanka Navy finds over 280 kg of Kerala Cannabis floating in northern seas](#)

March 3, 2020, Colombo Page

Sri Lanka Navy has recovered approximately 281 kilograms of Kerala Cannabis (ganja) floating in the seas off Nagarkovil, Jaffna, in the North Monday (Mar 02).

### [Two Russian Baltic Fleet warships arrive at the port of Colombo in Sri Lanka](#)

March 5, 2020, Colombo Page

Two Russian Navy ships 'Yaroslav Mudry' and 'Victor Konetsky' arrived at Sri Lanka's Colombo Port Wednesday on a three day goodwill visit, Sri Lanka Navy Media unit said.

### [China-run Hambantota Port in Sri Lanka setting up warehouses, distribution centres](#)

March 4, 2020, Economy Next

Sri Lanka's Hambantota Port, operated by China's CM Ports group is setting up warehouses and distribution centres to strengthen its position as a regional logistics hub, a top official has said.

### [Combined Task Force 150 Commander conducts leadership engagement in India and Sri Lanka](#)

March 6, 2020, Defence Connect

India and Sri Lanka are not part of the international combined armed forces but play a key role that is important to security partnerships, maintaining security and stability in the Indian ocean region, and work with the UN partners in developing a global response to security challenges.

### [Sri Lanka could finalize billion dollar plus China loan within weeks](#)

March 5, 2020, Economy Next

Sri Lanka is making good progress with loans of more than a billion US dollars loan from China Development Bank, which may be finalized within weeks, Central Bank Deputy Governor Nandalal Weerasinghe said.

### [Coronavirus to hit Sri Lanka's economy: warns Sri Lankan central bank](#)

March 5, 2020, Outlook India

The novel coronavirus outbreak that is wreaking havoc and has claimed over 95,000 lives globally will affect Sri Lanka's economic growth, the central bank warned on Thursday, citing the impact on key sectors like tourism and exports.

[Sri Lanka tourist arrivals decline 17.7 percent in February 2020 as coronavirus outbreak hits arrivals from China](#)

March 5, 2020, Colombo Page

The number of international tourist arrivals to Sri Lanka declined for the eleventh straight month in February 2020 by 17.7 percent in comparison to a year ago as the tourism industry is hit by the coronavirus outbreak, heavily limiting the arrival of Chinese tourists.

**Maldives**

[India Has Always Respected Maldives' Sovereignty: Mohamed Nasheed](#)

February 29, 2020, NDTV

The former President lauded the Indian government saying that it has never happened that a project initiated by New Delhi had become a debt trap.

[Mahinda Rajapaksa's visit could relaunch India-Lanka-Maldives NSA dialogue](#)

February 5, 2020, The Economic Times

Maldives besides Sri Lanka is also keen to revive NSA-level dialogue in the backdrop of revival and expansion of defence ties with India. Growing Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean Region and PLA Navy's efforts to forge partnerships in the region is being closely monitored by Delhi which has long positioned itself as the net security provider in the region.

[India's Cricket Diplomacy in the Maldives: A Step in the Right Direction?](#)

March 3, 2020, The Times of India

In the recent past, there have been several steps in continuum and in the right direction that have been taken by India to help Maldives with the game of cricket.

## East & South East Asia

### China

#### [Ministry: Xi to visit Japan at most appropriate time](#)

March 6, 2020, China Daily

Beijing and Tokyo agreed to ensure that President Xi Jinping's state visit to Japan will take place at the most appropriate time and in the best environment and atmosphere, Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said on Thursday.

#### [WHO chief warns against complacency in novel coronavirus fight](#)

March 6, 2020, China Daily

The World Health Organization, or WHO, warned on Thursday that some countries have not taken the threat posed by COVID-19 seriously enough and that risks becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy.

#### [Cooperation seen as vital for global health](#)

March 6, 2020, China Daily

China will do its utmost to strengthen cooperation with the World Health Organization and offer assistance to meet the urgent needs of countries severely hit by the novel coronavirus pneumonia epidemic, a senior official of the Foreign Ministry said on Thursday.

#### [China to ramp up help to taxi, truck drivers facing losses](#)

March 6, 2020, China Daily

China will ramp up support to help taxi and truck drivers pull through as the novel coronavirus outbreak has dealt a temporary blow to their business, according to the country's top transport authority on Friday.

#### [No double standards should be applied in countering terrorism: Chinese diplomat](#)

March 6, 2020, China Daily

A senior Chinese diplomat said here Thursday that there is no "good" terrorism or "bad" terrorism, there is only terrorism in the world, and no double standards should be applied in countering terrorism.

#### [Mainland spokesperson considers U.S. House passage of Taiwan-related act "unreasonable"](#)

March 5, 2020, Xinhua

A Chinese mainland spokesperson on Thursday slammed the so-called "Taiwan Allies International Protection and Enhancement Initiative (TAIPEI) Act of 2019"

passed by the U.S. House of Representatives recently, saying the passage of the Taiwan-related bill is "unreasonable."

[COVID-19 won't heavily hamper mega development projects Chinese firms implement in Bangladesh: Chinese envoy](#)

March 5, 2020, Xinhua

The COVID-19 epidemic will not heavily affect mega development projects that Chinese firms implement in Bangladesh, Chinese Ambassador Li Jiming said while visiting the construction site of Bangladesh's largest Padma Bridge Rail Link Project on Wednesday.

[Fighting the virus, let science silence lies](#)

March 3, 2020, Xinhua

The fight against the COVID-19 virus is also a battle against rumors and lies. When China is fighting vigorously against the disease, certain Western individuals and media outlets have suggested that the COVID-19 virus may have to do with China's biological warfare program and that it is a bioweapon leaked from a lab.

[Highlights of Xi's remarks at a leadership meeting on controlling COVID-19, stabilizing economy](#)

March 3, 2020, Xinhua

Xi Jinping has chaired a leadership meeting to study the major tasks in preventing and controlling the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and stabilizing economic and social development.

[Update: 143 new confirmed cases of coronavirus infection reported on Chinese mainland, down from the peak of over 15,000](#)

March 6, 2020, Xinhua

Chinese health authority said Friday it received reports of 143 new confirmed cases of novel coronavirus infection and 30 deaths on Thursday on the Chinese mainland.

[Fox host hits new low on politicizing disease](#)

March 3, 2020, Global Times

Fox News host Jesse Watters blatantly asked the Chinese for "a formal apology" because "this coronavirus originated in China." His cohost asked, "What if the outbreak had started here [the US]?" Watters asserted that the epidemic started in China. He even stated in his show, "They are very hungry people. The Chinese communist government cannot feed the people, and they are desperate. This food

is uncooked. It's unsafe, and that is why scientists believe that's where it originated." These remarks make him look like a hooligan.

### [China irreplaceable in supply chain despite decoupling headwinds](#)

March 5, 2020, Global Times

Those who weeks ago advised multinationals to diversify their supply chains away from China and into Southeast Asia must now accept the fact that the coronavirus outbreak cannot reshape global supply chains where China has become highly integrated.

## Japan

### [S Korea protests Japan's quarantine plans over coronavirus](#)

March 6, 2020, Japan Today

South Korea strongly protested on Friday Japan's decision to impose a two-week quarantine for visitors from South Korea, calling it "unreasonable, excessive and extremely regrettable".

### [WHO urges the world to fight virus](#)

March 6, 2020, Japan Today

The global march of the new virus triggered a vigorous appeal Thursday from the World Health Organization for governments to pull out "all the stops" to slow the epidemic, as it drained color from India's spring festivities, closed Bethlehem's Nativity Church and blocked Italians from visiting elderly relatives in nursing homes.

### [Coronavirus testing to be covered by national health insurance](#)

March 6, 2020, Japan Today

Tests for the new coronavirus will be covered under the national health insurance system from Friday, the health ministry said, as Japan steps up efforts to stem the spread of the pneumonia-causing virus.

### [Japan says state visit by China's Xi postponed over virus](#)

March 6, 2020, Japan Today

A state visit by Chinese President Xi Jinping has been postponed as preventing the outbreak of the new coronavirus is "the biggest challenge" facing both countries, Japan's top government spokesman said.



### [Abe says gov't ready to boost fiscal spending for virus-hit economy](#)

March 3, 2020, Japan Today

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said on Tuesday his government was ready to deploy further fiscal stimulus measures if needed to protect the country's already fragile economy from the negative effects of the coronavirus.

### [G7 pledges cooperation, no specifics, in response to virus](#)

March 4, 2020, Japan Today

Seven major economies pledged to use "all appropriate tools" to deal with the spreading coronavirus but announced no immediate actions.

### [Innovation: The front line of the new great power competition](#)

March 4, 2020, Japan Times

New technologies and new applications of existing technologies will disrupt every dimension of human activity and endeavor.

## **Korea**

### [Government to ban export of face masks](#)

March 5, 2020, The Korea Times

The government will ban the export of face masks from today, as part of emergency measures to curb the continued spike in their prices and a shortage of what many consider a daily necessity to prevent any further spread of the coronavirus here, the Ministry of Economy and Finance said.

### [Koreans cynical about China's mask donations](#)

March 5, 2020, The Korea Times

Many Koreans are reacting cynically to a series of face mask donations from China, blaming the Moon Jae-in administration for allowing a situation to develop where the country now needs to receive help from the very place the coronavirus originated. Korea has been grappling with a mask shortage as the number of infections has soared over the past two weeks.

### [Gov't denies sending face masks to North Korea](#)

March 5, 2020, The Korea Times

The government has denied allegations that it provided North Korea with face masks to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. "The government has not provided any masks to North Korea, nor has any nongovernmental organization sought

permission from the government to send masks to help the North," Yoh Sang-key, a spokesman for the Ministry of Unification, said Thursday.

#### [In her first official statement, Kim's sister slams South Korea](#)

March 4, 2020, The Korea Times

In her first known official statement, the younger sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on Tuesday leveled diatribes and insults on South Korea for protesting over her country's latest live-fire exercises.

#### [Seoul's NK policies raise validity issue](#)

March 4, 2020, The Korea Times

The Moon Jae-in administration has once again reached out to North Korea for cooperation in healthcare and more joint activities.

#### [Trump says he has no reaction to North Korea launches](#)

March 4, 2020, The Korea Times

U.S. President Donald Trump said Tuesday he had "no reaction" to North Korea's projectile launches this week, calling them "short-term missiles" in an apparent bid to downplay the threat.

#### [US sanctions two Chinese nationals linked to North Korean cyber group](#)

March 3, 2020, The Korea Times

The U.S. Treasury Department on Monday sanctioned two Chinese nationals linked to a North Korean state-sponsored cyber group. The department said it is designating the two individuals – Tian Yinyin and Li Jiadong – for taking some US\$91 million in funds that were stolen by Lazarus Group from a hack of a cryptocurrency exchange in April 2018.

#### [It's Time for the European Union to Talk to North Korea](#)

March 2, 2020, 38 North

Brussels has an ostensible policy of "critical engagement" towards North Korea. This approach combines sanctions, humanitarian aid and dialogue. But since 2016 there have been many sanctions and no substantial engagement. This approach has failed to achieve any of its stated objectives. The European Union's (EU) new leadership should reconsider this policy as soon as possible.

#### [Leaders of Two Koreas Exchange Letters of Goodwill Amid Virus Epidemic](#)

March 5, 2020, KBS World

The South Korean presidential office says President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un have exchanged letters amid the novel coronavirus

outbreak. Yoon Do-han, presidential senior secretary for public communication, told reporters on Thursday that Moon received a letter from the North Korean leader the previous day, expressing his faith in South Korea's ability to overcome the new coronavirus.

### [S. Korea's coronavirus cases soar past 6,000](#)

March 5, 2020, The Korea Herald

South Korea's coronavirus cases surged past 6,000 with 41 deaths Thursday, as the government shifted its focus to minor clusters of coronavirus infections, so far overshadowed by the massive number related to Shincheonji Church of Jesus.

## **Southeast Asia**

### [Coronavirus' economic impact in East and Southeast Asia](#)

March 4, 2020, East Asia Forum

As the number of coronavirus cases continues to rise around the world, there are deep concerns over the potential economic impact of the virus. The virus originated in China, and given the size of China's economy, a slowdown there from the COVID-19 outbreak will spill over to the rest of the ASEAN+3 region.

### [World's biggest coronavirus victim in equities is Southeast Asia](#)

February 29, 2020, The Economic Times

The S&P 500 Index may have witnessed its quickest correction ever, but one of the biggest stock-market victims of the coronavirus epidemic has been Southeast Asia.

### [China, ASEAN Band Together in the Fight Against Coronavirus](#)

March 4, 2020, The Diplomat

The ASEAN-China special session on COVID-19 may mark the start of China offering assistance and expertise to other countries battling the outbreak.

### [Is Vietnam Sending Its Maritime Militia to China's Coast?](#)

March 5, 2020, The Diplomat

In recent weeks, hundreds of Vietnamese fishing boats have gathered near China's Hainan province, site of a sensitive military base.

### [Indonesia detains 'illegal' Vietnamese fishing boats](#)

March 5, 2020, CNA

Indonesia says it has detained dozens of crew from Vietnamese boats fishing illegally in waters that were the scene of a diplomatic spat with China earlier this year.

### [Indonesia, China, and the Natuna Linchpin](#)

March 1, 2020, The Diplomat

Can Indonesia develop a strategy to confront China's long game in the Natunas and the South China Sea?

### [Indonesia Bans Travelers From Iran, Italy, South Korea as Covid-19 Continues to Spread Around the Globe](#)

March 5, 2020, Jakarta Globe

The Foreign Affairs Ministry has banned travelers from Iran, Italy and South Korea from entering Indonesia as the three countries continue to struggle to contain a widespread Covid-19 outbreak.

### [After Duterte Scraps VFA, What's Next for the US-Philippine Alliance?](#)

March 5, 2020, Geopolitical Monitor

On 11 February, Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte provided formal notice to the United States of his decision to scrap the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) – a bilateral treaty inked in 1998 to facilitate the presence of US troops in the country.

### [Singapore official will head UN intellectual property agency after beating China's nominee, Wang Binying](#)

March 5, 2020, SCMP

Singapore's Daren Tang Heng Shim, backed by United States, to be World Intellectual Property Organisation's next director general. Tang beat out China's nominee after heavy lobbying from America.

### [Malaysia's 'Malay First' Malaise](#)

March 4, 2020, The Diplomat

The recent political upheaval, like so many of the country's woes, stems from the longstanding racialization of politics.

[Malaysia pulls plug on cross-border Brunei](#)

February 29, 2020, Energy Reporters

Malaysian sources said state-owned Petronas had halted discussions earlier this month on collaboration over several drilling projects straddling the maritime boundary or within the Malaysia-Brunei Commercial Arrangement Area.

## Central & West Asia

### Central Asia

#### [Coronavirus and Central Asia: closing borders, mounting concerns](#)

February 28, 2020, The Times of Central Asia

As the coronavirus spreads far beyond China, the concerns of the Central Asian population and governments are mounting.

#### [India, central Asia nations should consider air corridors: Jaishankar](#)

February 7, 2020, Live Mint

Foreign minister S Jaishankar on Thursday said India and central Asian countries should look at the viability of establishing air corridors besides Iran's Chabahar route to boost trade, given the lack of an overland route connecting the two sides.

#### [India-Central Asia business council launched](#)

February 7, 2020, India Post

In yet another initiative to boost business amid an economic slowdown, the Modi government and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) together on Thursday launched India-Central Asia Business Council.

#### [The US is all talk when trying to compete with Chinese investment in Central Asia and elsewhere](#)

February 6, 2020, SCMP

Just as Central Asia's dependence on China is an unfortunate reality, so is the participation of Huawei in Britain's 5G network. Washington's failure to acknowledge basic realities was on show during the US secretary of state's recent tour.

#### [Uzbekistan signs 2 bln USD energy agreements with Saudi Arabia's ACWA Power](#)

March 6, 2020, Xinhua

Uzbekistan has signed strategic agreements with Saudi Arabia's ACWA Power company to build thermal and wind power plants worth of 2 billion U.S. dollars, the country's ministry of energy said.

### [Uzbekistan Suspends Air Links With Afghanistan, Iran, Italy](#)

March 2, 2020m The New York Times

Uzbekistan has suspended flights to and from Afghanistan, Iran, and Italy to prevent the spread of coronavirus, the Central Asian nation's foreign ministry said on Monday.

### [Turkmenistan closes border with Uzbekistan to prevent spread of coronavirus](#)

March 6, 2020, AKI Press

Suspending flights to China and Thailand, closing the border with Uzbekistan and creating a quarantine zone in the east of the country are among the measures taken by the authorities in Turkmenistan to stop the spread of the coronavirus.

### [Kazakhstan suspends visits of South Koreans](#)

March 5, 2020, New Europe

As of 8 March, Kazakhstan is suspending the entry of South Korean citizens into the country due of the coronavirus, Kazakhstan's Deputy Industry and Infrastructure Development Minister Berik Kamaliev said on 5 March.

### [Kyrgyzstan bans entry for nationals of China, Iran, Japan, South Korea, Italy over coronavirus](#)

February 28, 2020, AKI Press

The Kyrgyz government has introduced temporary entry restrictions for nationals of China, Iran, Japan, South Korea and Italy.

### [Tajikistan shuts border to nationals of 35 countries: sources](#)

March 2, 2020, Reuters

The government of Tajikistan has instructed airlines and travel agencies to stop selling tickets to nationals of 35 countries including the United States, Britain, China, Japan and Iran, industry sources said.

### [Morocco, Turkmenistan to boost bilateral cooperation](#)

March 5, 2020, Xinhua

Morocco and Turkmenistan have agreed to boost cooperation, commerce and investment, an official statement said. The statement was released following the meeting by Moroccan Head of Government Saad Eddine El Otmani and visiting Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan Rashid Meredov in Rabat.

## West Asia

### [Erdogan, Putin Announce Idlib Ceasefire After Moscow Meeting](#)

March 06, 2020, Al Jazeera

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin have announced a military ceasefire in Idlib, after a meeting in Moscow that lasted six hours.

### [Turkey Claims Killing 21 Syrian Troops In Retaliation For Death Of Two Soldiers](#)

March 06, 2020, The Guardian

The Turkish military has killed 21 Syrian troops after two Turkish soldiers were killed in Idlib earlier, the state news agency reported on Friday, citing the Turkish defence ministry.

### [Netanyahu Falls Short of Parliamentary Majority](#)

March 05, 2020, Al Jazeera

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has again fallen short of a parliamentary majority with his hardline allies, final election results confirmed on Thursday, extending the country's year-old political deadlock and weakening the longtime leader as he prepares to go on trial on corruption charges.

### [Iran Warns India Of Isolation In Islamic World](#)

March 05, 2020, Livemint

Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Thursday reportedly warned India of isolation in the Islamic world if New Delhi did not stop the "massacre of Muslims". This comes days after Iranian foreign minister Javad Zarif raised a storm in India criticising the recent riots in New Delhi.

### [Indian Retail Tycoon Becomes First Indian To Get Saudi Arabia's Green Card](#)

March 03, 2020, Livemint

Abu Dhabi-based Indian retail tycoon M A Yusuff Ali has become the first Indian to receive Saudi Arabia's premium residency, his office said in a statement on Monday.

### [India To Set Up A Testing Lab In Iran To Screen Indians Before Evacuating](#)

March 4, 2020, Livemint

India will set up testing lab for coronavirus (COVID 19) in Iran keeping in view of novel coronavirus outbreak and Indians stranded there, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan informed media on Wednesday.



### [PM Modi Set To Visit Egypt Next Week](#)

March 04, 2020, The Economic Times

Plans are afoot for Prime Minister Narendra Modi to visit Egypt next week, his first visit to the Arab world in 2020, aiming to expand strategic ties with a partner that has stood by India in times of crisis in recent years.

### [Iraq Temporarily Halts Commercial Exchange With Iran, Kuwait Amid Coronavirus Outbreak](#)

March 5, 2020, Kurdistan 24

Iraq has temporarily suspended trade exchange on its border-crossings with Iran and Kuwait starting from March 8 to 15, Iraq's border commission said on Thursday.

### [Kuwait Restricts Entry From 10 Nations, Including India, Philippines](#)

March 03, 2020, Gulf News

In a move aimed at controlling the rapid spread of the disease at home, Kuwait's civil aviation authority said on Tuesday passengers from 10 nations – including India, Turkey, Egypt, Bangladesh, must produce certificates issued by the Kuwaiti embassy in their country saying they are coronavirus free.

### [Hadi Government Calls On US To Designate Houthis As Terrorists](#)

March 04, 2020, Middle East Monitor

A minister of the UN-recognised government of Yemen has called on US Congress to designate the Ansar Allah movement, known as the Houthis, as a "terrorist organisation".

## United States

### United States

#### [Warren ends White House bid, leaving Biden and Sanders to fight for Democratic nod](#)

March 5, 2020, Reuters

Elizabeth Warren ended her presidential campaign on Thursday after concluding she had no realistic path to the Democratic nomination, leaving behind a two-man battle between former Vice President Joe Biden and Senator Bernie Sanders.

#### [Facebook is removing Trump campaign ads](#)

March 5, 2020, CNN

Facebook said it will remove some ads run by President Donald Trump's re-election campaign that it says ran afoul of its policies to "prevent confusion around the official US census."

#### [In Biden's Hometown, Trump Says He's Ready to Face Off Against Him](#)

March 5, 2020

President Trump came to Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s hometown on Thursday and said he was prepared to run against the former Democratic vice president in November, changing gears after being "mentally" ready to take on Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont.

#### [Trump calls WHO's global death rate from coronavirus 'a false number'](#)

March 5, 2020, The Guardian

Donald Trump declared live on television on Wednesday night that he did not believe the World Health Organization's assessment of the global death rate from coronavirus of 3.4%.

#### [Senate passes \\$8.3 billion emergency coronavirus package, sending bill to Trump's desk](#)

March 5, 2020, CNBC

The Senate on Thursday passed a multibillion-dollar spending package to combat the spread of the deadly coronavirus. The bill will now head to the White House, where President Donald Trump is expected to sign it.

### [Trump is looking for a foreign policy coup in the Balkans](#)

March 4, 2020, Al Jazeera

Could Trump score a major win in Europe? That is what he seems to be working towards. However, Kosovo and Serbia will test Trump's diplomacy.

### [Biden, Sanders and foreign policy: Where do they stand?](#)

March 5, 2020, Al Jazeera America

The two frontrunners promise to overturn Trump's foreign policies, but pledge a very different approach.

### [U.S.-Taliban Peace Deal: What to Know](#)

March 2, 2020, Council for Foreign Relations

The United States and the Taliban signed an agreement aimed at ending the eighteen-year war in Afghanistan, but many factors could still disrupt the peace process.

### [Fragility of U.S.-Taliban Deal Underscored as Attacks Increase in Afghanistan](#)

March 5, 2020, TIME

Less than 24 hours after President Donald Trump said he had a "very good talk" with a top Taliban leader and insisted the group wants to cease violence, a U.S. military drone on Wednesday targeted the militant group — retaliation for an uptick in Taliban attacks against Afghan forces.

## Europe & Russia

### Europe

#### [Europe experiences exceptionally warm winter](#)

March 5, 2020, BBC News

The Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) says the warmth was very evident in the north and east of the continent where a number of local temperature records were being broken.

#### ['Serious' differences between the UK and the EU in post-Brexit talks, top official says](#)

March 5, 2020, CNBC

There are "serious" divergences between the U.K. and the EU regarding the new trade deal that is due to be implemented by the end of the year, the European Union's chief negotiator said.

#### [Unshackled by EU, Countries Have Fiscal Freedom to Fight Coronavirus](#)

March 5, 2020, New York Times

The European Union is giving governments all the fiscal leeway they need to individually deal with the economic impact of the coronavirus and may decide on a more concerted stimulus if the economy suffers severely, officials said on Thursday.

#### [Support builds to end free EU carbon permits for aviation](#)

March 5, 2020, Reuters

A proposal to end free European Union carbon allowances for airlines and make them buy all the pollution permits they need gained momentum, as at least seven member states backed the idea, EU officials said.

#### [EU-Turkey tensions rise as refugees gather at Greece border](#)

March 5, 2020, Al Jazeera

European Union countries offered more money for border policing in Greece and humanitarian aid in Syria's Idlib, but they were in a bind over Turkey as they sought to avert a mass influx of refugees and migrants.

### [France's Macron and Trump agree to coordinate on coronavirus within G7](#)

March 4, 2020, Reuters

French President Emmanuel Macron agreed with U.S. President Donald Trump to coordinate efforts to fight the coronavirus under American leadership of the Group of Seven countries, Macron said in a tweet after a phone call with Trump.

### [Europeans, Britain raise North Korea missile launches at U.N. Security Council](#)

March 6, 2020, Reuters

Britain, Germany, France, Estonia and Belgium raised North Korea's latest missile launches behind closed-doors in the United Nations Security Council on Thursday, condemning the tests as a provocative action in violation of U.N. resolutions.

### [Brexit planning cost Britain 4.4 billion pounds](#)

March 6, 2020, Deutsche Welle

The British government has spent about 70% of the funds allocated to cover the cost of Brexit preparations. The money mostly went to cover staff costs, new infrastructure and gathering external expertise.

## **Russia**

### [Moscow to 'Shut Down' in Case of Coronavirus Outbreak](#)

March 2, 2020, The Moscow Times

Moscow authorities have drafted an emergency plan that envisions a shutdown of the Russian capital in case of a coronavirus outbreak.

### [Coronavirus Hits Russian Tourism for \\$400M Loss](#)

March 5, 2020, The Moscow Times

Tour operators warn of an "unprecedented situation" which could put industry on brink of collapse.

### [OPEC Backs Biggest Oil Cut Since 2008 Crisis, Awaits Russia](#)

March 5, 2020, The Moscow Times

OPEC agreed on Thursday to cut oil output by an extra 1.5 million barrels per day (BPD) in the second quarter of 2020 to support prices that have been hit by the coronavirus outbreak but made its action conditional on Russia and others joining in.

### [Russia Bans Export of Masks, Hazmat Suits to Fight Coronavirus](#)

March 4, 2020, The Moscow Times

Russia has banned the export of masks, respirators and hazmat suits to ensure access to the items for medics treating coronavirus patients and the public, under a decree published.

### [Will Russia Deliver the S-400 to Iran After Ukrainian Passenger Plane Downing?](#)

February 5, 2020, The Moscow Times

Russia needs to decide whether or not to supply Tehran with air defense equipment in 2020.

### [Russia's security ensured for decades to come, US knows that – diplomat](#)

March 6, 2020, Tass

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov said that "Moscow and Washington face similar choices when it comes to how we will proceed with the issue of arms control".

### [Turkey, Russia Agree Ceasefire in Syria's Idlib](#)

March 6, 2020, The Moscow Times

Turkey and Russia announced a ceasefire in northern Syria on Thursday, agreeing to end weeks of heavy fighting that sparked a humanitarian disaster and raised fears of their armies clashing.

## Africa & Latin America

### Latin America

#### [Coronavirus in Latin America: Health officials on alert](#)

February 28, 2020, Al Jazeera

Health officials across Latin America are bracing for a surge in coronavirus cases as the summer holiday season comes to an end.

#### [Mexico speeds up extraditions of cartel bosses to U.S](#)

March 3, 2020, Reuters

The government of Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador has stepped up extraditions of suspected drug cartel leaders to the United States, official data shows, as Washington presses for increased bilateral cooperation on security.

#### [Brazil Vies With Argentina for Development Bank's Top Job](#)

March 4, 2020, Bloomberg

Brazil plans to push for its own candidate to lead the Inter-American Development Bank, vying with Argentina for the regional lender's top job, as President Jair Bolsonaro seeks to capitalize on the political alliance with his U.S. counterpart Donald Trump.

#### ['The new frontier of oil': Latin America's newest crude-producing nation to hold pivotal election](#)

February 28, 2020, CNBC

An upcoming election in one of the smallest and poorest countries in South America is set to decide on a new government to oversee the highest amount of oil per person of any country in the world.

#### [Uruguay to advance ties with China: FM](#)

March 3, 2020, Xinhua Net

Uruguay's newly-installed government plans to continue to strengthen bilateral and multilateral ties with China, said Ernesto Talvi, the country's new foreign minister. The new administration will strive to actively deepen ties between Mercosur (the Southern Common Market) and China, Talvi told reporters, but "that is not going to diminish the efforts we are going to continue to make to deepen bilateral relations."

### [Hopes dim in Argentina for investment-led economic recovery](#)

March 3, 2020, Financial Times

Uruguay's new government wants to offer tax breaks to entice wealthy Argentines to relocate across the River Plate to boost local investment, but the rich need little encouragement to leave.

### [Trump considering travel restrictions at US-Mexico border over coronavirus](#)

March 2, 2020, CNBC

President Donald Trump said Saturday his administration was considering restrictions at the U.S.-Mexico border, after he authorized new hurdles on travel with Iran and heightened advisories for areas in South Korea and Italy as the coronavirus spreads across the globe.

## **Africa**

### [Tanzania, Uganda strike deal on sugar export](#)

March 5, 2020, PML Daily

The Tanzania government has said it is ready to allow Ugandan sugar imports on condition that it will only be a government-to-government arrangement.

### [The Coronavirus Threatens Africans and China's Hold on Africa](#)

March 2, 2020, National Interest

Africa's comparatively poor health-care system is failing to recognize many cases in its midst—setting the stage for a larger tragedy.

### [Zimbabwe calls US extending sanctions 'baffling'](#)

March 6, 2020, Al Jazeera

Zimbabwe on Thursday said it was dismayed by the White House's "baffling" decision to extend sanctions against members of the southern African country's government over rights abuses.

### [China to upgrade Zimbabwe's main coronavirus treatment facility](#)

March 6, 2020, Xinhua

The Chinese government on Thursday pledged to upgrade Zimbabwe's main isolation center for suspected coronavirus patients in the capital Harare.



### [South Africa records its first case of coronavirus](#)

March 5, 2020, CNN

The first case of the novel coronavirus in South Africa has been diagnosed, the country's health minister announced.

### [AUC & EC Committed To Full Implementation Of GMES – Excerpts From 10th African Union Commission – European Commission Meeting](#)

February 29, 2020, Space in Africa

The 10th AUC-EC Commission-to-Commission (C2C) meeting was held at the African Union (AU) Headquarters in Addis Ababa on 27 February. The meeting was co-chaired by the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, the President of the European Commission (EC), Ursula von der Leyen, with the participation of 22 EU Commissioners and nine AU elected officials.

### [Diplomats Fear a Collapse of South Sudan's Latest Peace Deal](#)

March 5, 2020, Foreign Policy

Even as they publicly support the pact, many privately think it is built on a house of cards and will be pulled down by the country's bloody past.

### [Sudan accused of masterminding lethal attacks on Khartoum protesters](#)

March 5, 2020, The Guardian

Inquiry finds that authorities armed and orchestrated security forces that killed more than 200 pro-democracy protesters.

### [Kenya, Somalia agree to ease border tensions](#)

March 5, 2020, Andolou Agency

Kenya's president and his Somali counterpart agreed to appoint joint committees to resolve recent tensions between the two nations, the Somalian presidency said.



**Delhi Policy Group**  
Core 5A, 1st Floor,  
India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road  
New Delhi - 110003  
India

[www.delhipolicygroup.org](http://www.delhipolicygroup.org)