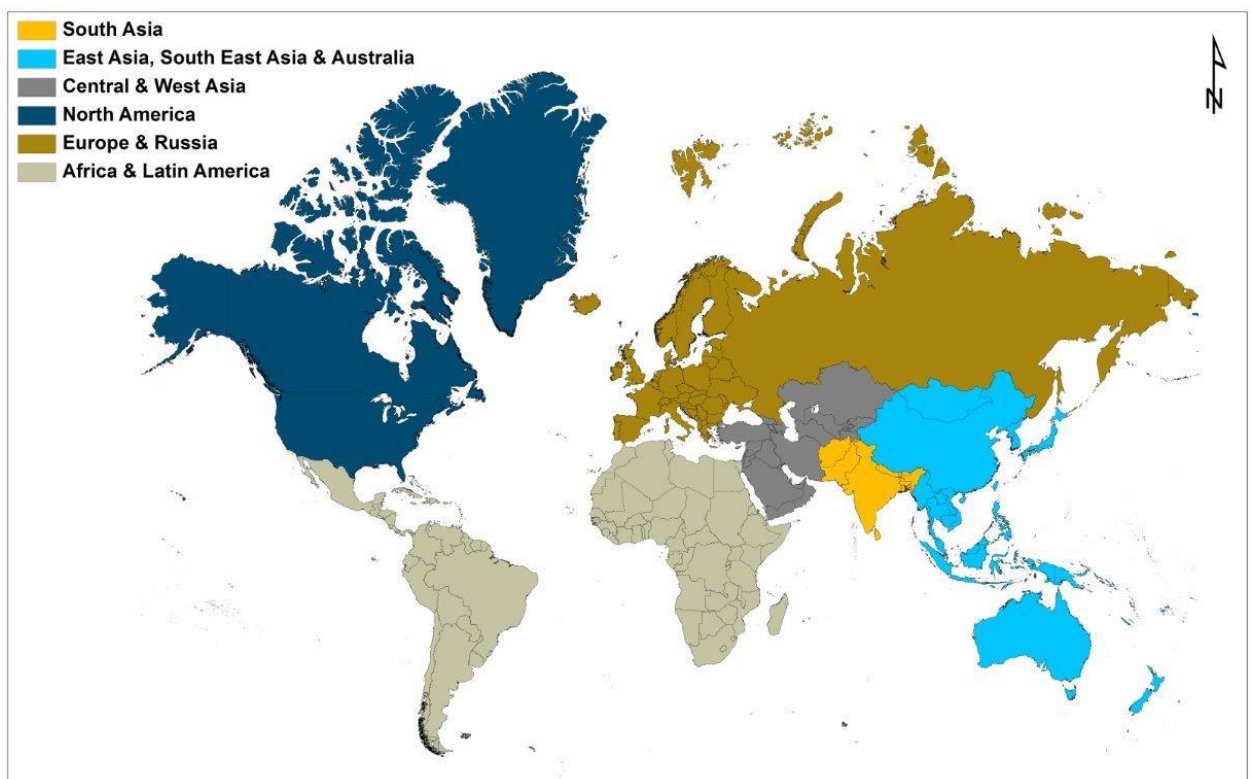




Delhi Policy Group

# DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH



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# DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH

## Volume 4, Issue 16

### 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

#### [US approves sale of anti-ship missiles, torpedoes worth USD 155 million to India](#)

April 14, 2020, The Economic Times

The Trump administration has notified the Congress of its determination to sell Harpoon air-launched anti-ship missiles and Mark 54 lightweight torpedoes worth USD 155 million to India to enhance its deterrent capabilities against "regional threats" and to bolster its homeland defence.

#### [Attack by Pakistan on Indian boats contravention of all established norms: India](#)

April 14, 2020, The Economic Times

India on Tuesday said Pakistani maritime forces carried out an attack on two Indian boats off the coast of Gujarat two days ago in contravention of all established norms and practices. In a statement, the Ministry of External Affairs asked Pakistan to instruct its forces to refrain from such acts of "unprovoked violence".

#### [India sending hydroxychloroquine to 55 coronavirus-hit countries](#)

April 16, 2020, The Economic Times

India is in the process of supplying anti-malarial drug hydroxychloroquine to 55 coronavirus-hit countries as grants as well as on commercial basis, official sources said on Thursday. A number of countries including the US, Mauritius and Seychelles have already received the drug in the past few days while several others will get it by the weekend, they said.

#### [S-400, key arms deals with Russia on track: Indian Ambassador to Russia](#)

April 15, 2020, The Economic Times

All major bilateral defence contracts, including deliveries of the S-400 air defence missile systems, are on schedule and the Covid-19 pandemic will have no effect on their implementation timeline, the Indian Ambassador to Russia Bala Venkatesh Varma has said.

#### [India's economic growth may fall to 1.1% this fiscal: SBI report](#)

April 16, 2020, The Hindu

According to the SBI Ecowrap report, the extension of the lockdown would result in economic loss of ₹21.1 lakh crore or 6% of the nominal Gross Value Added.

[Coronavirus hits Rafale deliveries to India, first four fighters expected in July, not May](#)

April 14, 2020, The Print

France will remain under lockdown until 11 May, delaying the delivery. Indian personnel are now undergoing limited training that had completely stopped in March.

[Zoom not safe, MHA says in its advisory on videoconferencing app](#)

April 16, 2020, India Today

The home ministry has advised private individuals and firms that using Zoom videoconferencing app may leave them vulnerable to cyber risks. The app has soared in popularity in recent weeks.

## Pakistan

[Two officers martyred as Pak Army trainer aircraft crashes](#)

April 14, 2020, The News

Two officers of Pakistan Army martyred in a training aircraft Mushshak crash near Gujrat. According to ISPR, the aircraft was on a routine training mission.

['Country making atom bomb can't make ventilators, test kits'](#)

April 11, 2020, The News

Prime Minister Imran Khan Friday said Pakistan was a nuclear state but it was strange that it could not make its own ventilators and test kits and had to import them.

[Protest continues over Mohmand-Bajaur boundary dispute](#)

April 14, 2020, The News

The residents of Mohmand district continued to stage protest over the boundary dispute between Mohmand and Bajaur districts. A large number of protesters converged on the Sagi Chowk in Safi tehsil in Mohmand to state on sit-in over there.

### [ADB to lend \\$800 million to Pakistan for COVID-19 response](#)

April 14, 2020, The News

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has agreed to lend \$800 million to Pakistan to help the country combat challenges posed by the novel coronavirus, after the lender tripled its pandemic response size in the region to \$20 billion.

### [Pakistan urges China to soften terms for power deals](#)

April 15, 2020, Dawn

Pakistan has requested China for ease in payment obligations of over \$30 billion worth of about 12,000-megawatt power projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to minimise its financial and economic difficulties.

### [IMF sees negative 1.5pc growth in Pakistan this year](#)

April 15, 2020, Dawn

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) projected economic recession for Pakistan following the coronavirus-related 'The Great Lockdown' that would sharply contract the global economy this year. The fund projected Pakistan's economy to shrink by 1.5pc during this fiscal year, compared to 3.3pc growth in 2018-19. These estimates are generally comparable with 1.3pc decline in the country's economic output forecast by the World Bank.

### [Lockdown eased, extended for two weeks](#)

April 15, 2020, Dawn

The government has extended the prevailing lockdown for another two weeks with some essential industries being allowed to reopen. Prime Minister Imran Khan announced the decision in his televised address to the nation after chairing a National Coordination Committee (NCC) meeting, which was attended by the chief ministers of all provinces.

### [Ulema vow to resume congregational prayers](#)

April 15, 2020, Dawn

Prominent clerics and noted scholars of the country announced resumption of five-time congregational prayers at mosques across the country from April 15. Friday congregations will also be held this week.

### [Pakistan included in G20 debt relief plan](#)

April 16, 2020, Dawn

Pakistan has been included in the group of countries eligible for debt relief on all principal and interest payments to official bilateral creditors announced by the G20 countries in their Riyadh meeting.

### [ISI chief, PM discuss issues of national security](#)

April 16, 2020, Dawn

The chief of the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI), Lt Gen Faiz Hamid, met Prime Minister Imran Khan to discuss "national security issues". The meeting was held on the heels of another session between PM Khan, Chief of the Army Staff Gen Qamar Bajwa and Gen Hamid on the sidelines of a meeting of National Coordination Committee on Covid-19, which was reported by multiple media outlets.

### [Pakistan wins \\$1.4b IMF emergency loan](#)

April 17, The Express Tribune

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved an emergency loan of \$1.4 billion for Pakistan, as Islamabad is also expected to get around \$1.5 billion relief in the shape of delay in repayment of loans to bilateral creditors.

### [Two decades of flawed policies: Power producers make billions in Pakistan](#)

April 17, The Express Tribune

An inquiry committee, formed by the government to investigate independent power producers (IPPs), has unearthed that energy producers have made billions of rupees in the past two decades due to flawed policies.

## **Afghanistan**

### [Taliban free 20 Afghan prisoners](#)

April 13, 2020, The News

The Taliban released a first group of 20 prisoners on April 12, effectively moving forward a crucial swap with the Afghanistan government aimed at kick-starting intra-Afghan peace talks.

### [US officials meet with Taliban leaders in Qatar](#)

April 14, 2020, Anadolu Agency

According to Suhail Shaheen, a spokesman for the Taliban's political office in Qatar, a Taliban delegation led by Mullah Baradar, deputy chief of the group and head of its political office, met with U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad and General Scott Miller, the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan on April 13.

### [Taliban Denies 'Charter' Document](#)

April 14, 2020, Tolo News

A day after Tolo news published a document titled the "Charter of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan," the Taliban rejected it, saying it has "nothing to do with the Islamic Emirate."

### [NATO Committed to ANDSF Despite Planned Troop Decrease](#)

April 16, 2020, Tolo News

Following this week's defense ministers' videoconference session in Brussels, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg told reporters that NATO and NATO allies have "expressed support" for the agreement between the US and Taliban, and in order to "support the peace efforts," NATO will adjust troop levels in Afghanistan from "roughly 16,000 down to 12,000." However, he reiterated that this decision was "conditions-based."

### [China supports UN in playing greater role in Afghan issue: envoy](#)

April 17, 2020, Xinhua

"The Afghan peace process is facing a historic opportunity, and China firmly supports an inclusive peace process that is 'Afghan-led and Afghan-owned,'" Zhang Jun, China's permanent representative to the United Nations, told the "6+2" Format Video Conference on Afghanistan, chaired by UN political affairs chief Rosemary DiCarlo.

## **Bangladesh**

### [Bangladesh rescues 300 people from Rohingya boat in Teknaf](#)

April 16, 2020, BD News24

They were rescued from Shyamlapur Jahaj Ghat area of Baharchara Union, said Lt Cdr M Sohel Rana of Teknaf Coast Guard. "They had sailed for Malaysia a few days



back but were forced to return after failing to make port there. The rescued are mostly women and children and are residents of various camps in Ukhiya and Teknaf."

#### [Bangladesh's apparel exports fall 84% in first half of April](#)

April 16, 2020, Dhaka Tribune

Economist and sector people attributed the outbreak of coronavirus, which hit the global supply chain badly, to the drastic fall. Apparel exporters shipped goods worth only \$194 million during the first half of the current month, down 83.74% from the same month of last year.

#### [Coronavirus: Govt declares entire Bangladesh at risk](#)

April 16, 2020, The Daily Star

The government today declared the entire Bangladesh at risk of the coronavirus pandemic as the infection has now spread to various parts of the country.

## Nepal

#### [India lockdown extension to impact Nepal](#)

April 14, 2020, Nepali Times

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's widely expected announcement of an extension by 19 more days of the nationwide lockdown is expected to impact Nepal in multiple ways.

#### [India stands in solidarity with Nepal in common fight against COVID-19: PM Modi](#)

April 10, 2020, All India Radio

Prime Minister Narendra Modi today said India stands in solidarity with Nepal in common fight against COVID-19. Mr Modi spoke to Nepalese Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli and discussed the prevailing situation. Mr Modi also appreciated the determination of people of Nepal to fight this challenge.

#### [Govt okays construction of defence university](#)

April 16, 2020, The Himalayan Times

The government has issued 'Defence University and Development Board Formation Order 2019', to establish the National Defence University.

## Sri Lanka

### [Sri Lanka's economic recovery from coronavirus](#)

April 17, 2020, Daily Mirror

Apart from the money the government will have to spend towards the medical management of the virus, it will have to spend a significant sum of money on social welfare and also support the corporate sector in the coming months. Economists are unable to estimate the sum of money that will be required for this purpose because the extent to which the pandemic will affect our economy is yet unknown.

### [Sri Lankan military is helping the country fight the pandemic](#)

April 15, 2020, The Hindu

Sri Lanka's military is playing many roles in the COVID-19 battle from contact-tracing to running quarantine centres. Some 10,000 frontline health workers in Sri Lanka are working tirelessly to arrest the spread of COVID-19 that has affected 235 people and claimed seven lives until Wednesday.

### [Sri Lanka Navy arrests three transporting over 133 kg Kerala Cannabis in dinghy](#)

April 13, 2020, Colombo Page

Sri Lanka Navy today arrested three people transporting over 133 kilograms of Kerala Cannabis in a dinghy in the seas off Jaffna peninsula.

### [Navy prohibits migrant boats from entering Sri Lankan waters](#)

April 11, 2020, News First.lk

Sri Lanka Navy said it has increased patrols and monitoring along the coastal belt of the island as there is a possibility of people from other countries making attempts to cross in to Sri Lanka by boat.

### [Sri Lanka Air Force conducts aerial surveillance operations to monitor illegal entry by sea](#)

April 16, 2020, Colombo Page

As there is an imminent threat of illegal migrants attempting to enter Sri Lanka by sea with the global situation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) is currently conducting daily Aerial Surveillance Operations in support of the SL Navy's efforts of blocking illegal entry in to the island by the sea.

## East & South East Asia

### China

#### [China rectifies death toll based on facts, unaffected by Western noise: Global Times editorial](#)

April 17, 2020, Global Times

The city of Wuhan in Central China's Hubei Province rectified its COVID-19 death toll to 3,869 on Friday, an increase of 1,290 from the previous figure, after the local government altered its counting method. The revision also means that the death toll in the Chinese mainland increased from 3,342 to 4,632. This is a responsible correction in accordance with laws and regulations. It is also a consolation to the people who died in this epidemic and their families, as well as an explanation to the whole of Chinese society.

#### [Washington lies to weather COVID-19 crisis: Global Times editorial](#)

April 16, 2020, Global Times

Fox News on Thursday quoted "multiple sources" and claimed that the COVID-19 is "likely originated in a Wuhan laboratory." A Fox News reporter also asked US President Donald Trump about the issue during the White House coronavirus news briefing, and Trump didn't deny it. This has promoted the spread of this accusation in the international media.

#### [Nobody accountable in US despite rising virus deaths](#)

April 16, 2020, Global Times

"Federalism" has been a trending topic in the US, as President Donald Trump and some state governors were involved in a public spat over each other's authority amid the pandemic. Such debates not only do no good to the country's handling of the deadly virus, but has exposed a critical problem in this great power - the absence of accountability mechanism.

#### [African debt to China may be solved through bilateral talks on the basis of equality](#)

April 16, 2020, Global Times

The whole world is facing mounting pressure on pandemic prevention and consequent economic contraction as the novel coronavirus ripples across the planet. China, as a creditor of some African countries, has been called upon to offer debt relief which actually is not simple nor effective.

### [Wild-growing capital breeds chaos in Western countries amid pandemic](#)

April 16, 2020, Global Times

The novel coronavirus pandemic has drawn the world into an unprecedented disaster which is also a test for countries' survival and management abilities. The chaos that keeps emerging in Western countries amid the outbreak is mostly because of the wild-growing capital force.

### [Xi-Putin call shows joint stance against politicizing pandemic](#)

April 17, 2020, Global Times

Top leaders of China and Russia spoke on the phone on Thursday night, communicating on epidemic prevention and control and setting a fundamental tone for China-Russia ties amid challenging time marked with uncertainties. Such extremely strong mutual understanding and support to address each other's core concerns shown by the top leaders of the two countries also indicated China-Russia ties are the most stable and solid bilateral relationship between major powers, analysts said.

### ['Buying Hubei' becomes nationwide campaign](#)

April 17, 2020, Global Times

"Buying Hubei" has become a nationwide campaign with participation from ordinary citizens, officials, celebrities and corporations. It combines some of the fastest-growing business models in China and the world - e-commerce and livestreaming promotion - with the country's robust internet, logistics infrastructure and technological prowess built over the past several decades. Above all, it inspired millions across the country who are motivated to spend money not for self-indulgence, but to extend a helping hand to their fellow countrymen in hardship. The result: Tens of millions of dollars were added to the local economy; tens of thousands of businesses and jobs are now saved, according to businesses and officials.

### [West feels challenged by China's new 'Wolf Warrior' diplomacy](#)

April 16, 2020, Global Times

Chinese diplomats were once known for their conservative, low profile in China and world affairs. Internationally our diplomats were considered enigmatic, and Chinese people were called "inscrutable." It was a time of much less adversity or need to fend off inordinate criticisms from the glorious West. But the world and Chinese diplomats have changed. In some Westerners' eyes, Chinese diplomats

are using "Wolf Warrior" style diplomacy, named after the 2015 patriotic action film and its 2017 sequel. This seemingly has made the West feel challenged.

#### [Trump's WHO funding halt rash but typical](#)

April 16, 2020, Global Times

US President Donald Trump announced Tuesday that he is halting funding to the World Health Organization (WHO) while a review is conducted over WHO's "role in severely mismanaging and covering up the spread of coronavirus." Trump has accused the organization of failing to "adequately obtain, vet and share information in a timely and transparent fashion."

#### [Immoral to boost reelection by attacking WHO: Global Times editorial](#)

April 15, 2020, Global Times

US President Donald Trump announced Tuesday that Washington was suspending funding to World Health Organization (WHO) while reviewing over the organization's "role in severely mismanaging and covering up the spread of the coronavirus." Since last week, Trump has launched a barrage of attacks on WHO, accusing the organization of being "China centric."

#### [Lack of basic knowledge of viruses a main cause of global pandemic](#)

April 15, 2020, Global Times

The global coronavirus pandemic has revealed just how inadequately the world is prepared for outbreaks of infectious diseases. Even many developed countries have been caught under-prepared even though they lead the world in medicine, and have well-established public health and epidemic prevention systems. The crucial cause is a lack of knowledge of what it takes to foresee, prepare and provide treatment during an epidemic.

#### [China-US relations will no longer be the same](#)

April 15, 2020, Global Times

It is beyond the Chinese people's imagination that China-US relations have become what they are today. The epidemic outbreak brings new shocks, and the turbulence in relations between the two countries is likely to be more severe. No one in China wants that.

### [US sailor's death a needless tragedy in a faulty strategy](#)

April 15, 2020, Global Times

A sailor on board the USS Theodore Roosevelt has reportedly died from COVID-19, the first virus-related death among the aircraft carrier's 600 active-duty crew members who have tested positive for the coronavirus. This is a pure tragedy. The global pandemic has brought the world to a critical time when all countries must work together to defeat the deadly virus. The tragedy on this US aircraft carrier shows that Washington continues to focus on geopolitical competition rather than coping with the invisible threat to humanity.

### [Anti-virus work won't disrupt China-Africa friendship: Global Times editorial](#)

April 13, 2020, Global Times

Some foreigners have been involved in Guangzhou's epidemic prevention and control, and there has been friction between China's grassroots personnel and some African people. Officials in Nigeria and other countries have expressed their concerns and dissatisfaction, and the African Union has responded as well. Both the US media and government have participated in the hyping of the issue and spreading false information, vigorously provoking China-Africa relations.

### [Chinese Foreign Ministry defends WHO's COVID-19 outbreak response](#)

April 17, 2020, Xinhua

The World Health Organization (WHO) repeatedly called on countries to attach great importance to the outbreak and improve preparedness at its early stage, which a recently released WHO timeline of COVID-19 response clearly showed, a Foreign Ministry spokesperson said Thursday.

### [India receives half-a-million COVID-19 testing kits from China: official](#)

April 16, 2020, Xinhua

India on Thursday received a total of 500,000 COVID-19 Rapid Testing Kits from two different Chinese companies, confirmed the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) Director Raman Gangakhedkar.

### [Xisha, Nansha Islands are Chinese territory: FM spokesperson](#)

April 16, 2020, Xinhua

A Chinese spokesman on Tuesday refuted the Vietnamese claim concerning the Xisha and Nansha Islands, stressing the Xisha and Nansha Islands are Chinese territory. A spokesman for Vietnam's Ministry of Foreign Affairs On April 9 said that Permanent Mission of Vietnam to the United Nations on March 30 issued a

diplomatic note to the United Nations protesting China's two diplomatic notes on sovereignty claims in the South China Sea.

#### [Govt transparent in COVID-19 data](#)

April 17, 2020, China Daily

Data and information on COVID-19 in China released by the Chinese government is transparent and open, and there is no government meddling in data collection, a National Health Commission official said on Thursday.

#### [Actions required that suit the words: China Daily editorial](#)

April 17, 2020, China Daily

As the novel coronavirus pandemic has wreaked havoc around the world, it has magnified the tensions between China and the United States, with some US politicians and media jumping on it as an opportunity to hurl more unfounded accusations and criticism at China. Which is why the more upbeat tone of Wednesday's telephone conversation between Yang Jiechi, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, and US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo came as a welcome change.

#### [Too early for country to lower its guard: China Daily editorial](#)

April 16, 2020, China Daily

The latest reports of a rebound in local novel coronavirus infections are all associated with imported cases. This hints at loopholes either in the current upon-arrival medical screening regime, or in the reliability of testing.

#### [Synchronize actions to soften the blow: China Daily editorial](#)

April 15, 2020, China Daily

With the novel coronavirus pandemic wreaking havoc around the world, its impact on the global economy has been catastrophic. According to the International Monetary Fund, the world economy will contract by 3 percent this year, the "worst recession" since the Great Depression in the 1930s. Moreover, "much worse growth outcomes are possible and maybe even likely," the IMF said in its 2020 World Economic Outlook report on Tuesday, adding that the downturn will slash around \$9 trillion from the world economy over 2020 and 2021, more than the economies of Japan and Germany combined.

[Economic pickup in sight after pandemic shock: China Daily editorial](#)

April 14, 2020, China Daily

China's foreign trade continued to fall in March, but the momentum of decline has greatly eased, indicating that the world's second-largest economy is gradually recovering from the fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Focus on border infections timely: China Daily editorial](#)

April 14, 2020, China Daily

During the same time span, the National Health Commission registered 89 newly confirmed cases on the country's mainland, of which 86 were imported. One day earlier, 108 new cases were confirmed on the mainland. Of the 98 imported cases of the day, 49 were reported by Heilongjiang and 35 by the neighboring Inner Mongolia autonomous region. The front line of the country's defense against a surge in imported cases has shifted to the northeast.

[10+3 again show solidarity in the face of adversity: China Daily editorial](#)

April 14, 2020, China Daily

The "10+3" cooperation mechanism – which brings together the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, China, Japan and the Republic of Korea – was established after the shock of the 1997 Asian financial crisis and it has proved to be an effective and fruitful cooperation platform.

[No discrimination against Hubei people: China Daily editorial](#)

April 12, 2020, China Daily

There are increasing incidences of workers being denied a job, even dismissed just because of their Hubei identity. This is unacceptable, and it must come to an immediate end.

## Japan

[India-Japan partnership can help develop new techs for post-COVID world: PM Modi](#)

April 10, 2020, The Economic Times

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said the India-Japan special strategic and global partnership can help develop new technologies and solutions for the post-COVID-19 world.



### [Taiwan donating 2 million face masks to Japan](#)

April 17, 2020, Japan Today

Taiwan will donate two million face masks to Japan, which has been hard hit by the outbreak of the new coronavirus, as part of the island's efforts to show it can help the world combat the pandemic.

### [Akie Abe criticized for shrine visit, adding to PM's virus woes](#)

April 16, 2020, The Asahi Shimbun

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's wife came under fire on social media over a report she visited a shrine last month with about 50 people, adding to public disapproval of how the premier has handled the coronavirus crisis.

### [Japan airlines keep most domestic flights despite few riders](#)

April 17, 2020, The Asahi Shimbun

Japan's top airlines are operating a majority of their domestic capacity even though the coronavirus outbreak has left seats on flights mostly empty, amid a lack of clear government directives on the functioning of transport infrastructure in the crisis.

### [Will Abe's conservative nostalgia beat COVID-19?](#)

April 14, 2020, The Japan Times

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe last week declared a state of emergency due to the nation's rising COVID-19 infections. But the measure, made possible by a recent amendment to the law against infectious diseases, only empowered governors of the designated hot-spot prefectures to request citizens and private businesses to practice social distancing, such as minimizing outings, working from home, and closing or reducing hours of the businesses. The lack of enforcement provisions, such as fines, invited broad skepticism as to its effectiveness.

### [SE Asia, S Korea, Japan, China leaders meet by video on pandemic](#)

April 14, 20120, Japan Today

Forced apart by the coronavirus pandemic, Southeast Asian leaders linked up by video Tuesday to plot a strategy to overcome a crisis that has threatened their economies and kept millions of people in their homes under lockdowns.

### [Japan to pick partner this year for next fighter jet development](#)

April 13, 2020, Japan Today

Japan will choose a partner for joint development of a successor fighter jet to the Air Self-Defense Force's F-2 from U.S. or British companies by the end of this year, according to the Defense Ministry

## **Korea**

### [North Korea fires multiple anti-ship cruise missiles into East Sea](#)

April 14, 2020, The Korea Times

North Korea fired a salvo of short-range projectiles believed to be anti-ship cruise missiles into the East Sea on Tuesday, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said. The firings came on the eve of the birthday of late founder Kim Il-sung and South Korea's general elections.

### [Moon to Resume Push for Cross-Border Cooperation](#)

April 17, 2020, The Chosun Ilbo

The ruling Minjoo Party's landslide victory in the general election on Wednesday is expected to give fresh momentum to President Moon Jae-in's quixotic attempts to engage North Korea.

### [Koreans Vote in General Election](#)

April 15, The Chosun Ilbo

Voters began casting their ballots in the general election on Wednesday morning. They can vote at 14,330 polling stations across the nation from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. and are only allowed to vote in their respective residential district and must bring their ID cards.

### [2 N.Korean Defectors Win Parliamentary Seats](#)

April 16, 2020, The Chosun Ilbo

Two North Korean defectors won National Assembly seats in Wednesday's election for the first time ever. The two come from vastly different backgrounds. One is the slick 58-year-old former diplomat Thae Yong-ho, who has proved a natural politician and comes from an elite background in Pyongyang. The other is Ji Seong-ho, 38, who was born to an impoverished family near northernmost border with China.

### [Ruling Party Sweeps to Landslide Victory](#)

April 16, 2020, The Chosun Ilbo

The ruling Minjoo Party and proxies swept to victory in a landslide in Wednesday's general election to secure more than 180 seats in the National Assembly.

### [U.S. Defense Chief Pushes Korea for More Money](#)

April 16, 2020, The Chosun Ilbo

U. S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper has put yet more pressure on "wealthy" Korea to cough up money for the upkeep of the U.S. Forces Korea.

## **Southeast Asia**

### [ASEAN+3 countries adopt joint statement on COVID-19](#)

April 15, 2020, Vietnam News

The Special ASEAN Plus Three Summit on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) via video conference on Tuesday issued a joint statement. Click to read the full text of the joint statement.

### [Chinese ship back in waters off Vietnam amid coronavirus 'distraction'](#)

April 14, 2020, Reuters

A Chinese ship embroiled in a standoff with Vietnamese vessels last year has returned to waters near Vietnam as the United States accused China of pushing its presence in the South China Sea while other claimants are pre-occupied with the coronavirus.

### [Chinese ship nears Malaysia amid South China Sea tensions](#)

April 17, 2020, The Straits Times

A Chinese government survey ship embroiled in a stand-off with Vietnamese vessels has moved south near Malaysia, shipping data showed yesterday, amid accusations that China is using the coronavirus pandemic to assert its presence in the South China Sea.

### [Coronavirus gives Vietnam, Cambodia a chance to boost ties with Washington and Beijing](#)

April 16, 2020, SCMP

As coronavirus crisis continues, Phnom Penh has shown solidarity with Beijing, while Vietnam joined US-led Quad partnership set up to counter China's

influence. The neighbours' allegiances have a bearing on great power rivalry in Asia

[ASEAN replaces EU to be China's largest trading partner](#)

April 15, 2020, The Star

Asean, as a bloc, has replaced the European Union to become China's largest trading partner in the first quarter of this year, according to China's Global Times citing data from the Chinese General Administration of Customs.

## Central & West Asia

### Central Asia

#### [US delivers food assistance for vulnerable populations in Uzbekistan](#)

April 17, 2020, The Times of Central Asia

The United States, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), delivered 131,320 kg of food assistance worth almost \$400,000 to Uzbekistan. This food assistance will reach more than 35,000 of the most vulnerable Uzbekistani citizens and be distributed through more than 144 health and social protection facilities.

#### [EU provides additional EUR 48 million to support Tajikistan's COVID-19 response](#)

April 15, 2020, The Times of Central Asia

Ambassador Marilyn Josefson, head of the European Union Delegation to Tajikistan, on April 13 and 14 held meetings with Sirojiddin Muhridin, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and with Zavki Zavkizoda, Minister of Economic Development and Trade and Yusuf Majidi, Deputy Minister of Finance of Tajikistan. Ambassador Josefson announced the mobilisation of an additional EUR 48 million of EU funding to support Tajikistan in its comprehensive COVID-19 response, the Delegation of the European Union to Tajikistan said.

#### [Uzbekistan seeks end of cotton boycott as virus weighs on economy](#)

April 16, 2020, Al Jazeera

As the coronavirus threatens to weaken Uzbekistan's economy, the country is calling for a boycott of its cotton to be lifted.

#### [ISS crew lands in Kazakhstan after more than 200 days](#)

April 17, 2020, ABC News

A U.S.-Russian space crew landed safely Friday in the steppes of Kazakhstan, greeted with extra precautions amid the coronavirus pandemic.

## West Asia

### [Middle East Set for Sharp Economic Fall Due To Covid-19 "Great Lockdown" Says IMF](#)

April 14, 2020, Forbes

Middle East economies are set to suffer a huge economic hit this year because of the Covid-19 pandemic. The situation is being exacerbated by domestic political turmoil and the collapse in oil prices.

### [Iran Expects India, World Community to Stand Up Against US Sanctions: Iranian Envoy](#)

April 15, 2020, Hindustan Times

Iran expects India and the rest of the world community will stand against the "unjust" US sanctions that are hurting millions of Iranians amid the Covid-19 crisis, Iranian ambassador Ali Chegeni has said.

### [US Navy Accuses Iranian Vessels of Harassing Warships in Gulf](#)

April 16, 2020, BBC News

The US Navy has accused Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) of "dangerous and provocative actions" in international waters in the Gulf. Eleven IRGC Navy vessels repeatedly conducted "harassing" approaches of six US Navy and Coast Guard ships on Wednesday (April 15).

### [In U.N. Session, Syria Denounced Over Chemical Weapons Use in 2017](#)

April 16, 2020, The Japan Times

U.N. Security Council members Britain, Estonia and Germany denounced Syria Wednesday (April 15) for a lack of accountability after being accused of conducting chemical weapons attacks in 2017.

### [Expatriate Repatriation Tests UAE Ties with India and Pakistan](#)

April 15, 2020, TRT World

The United Arab Emirates wants foreigners to fly out as soon as possible but their home countries might have trouble accepting them. The issue of the repatriation of thousands of expatriate workers has threatened to taint the UAE's relations with India and Pakistan.

### [Yemen's War Rages Under Shadow of Looming Coronavirus Threat](#)

April 16, 2020, Al Jazeera

Yemen's war shows no signs of abating a week after the Saudi-led military coalition declared a unilateral truce because of the coronavirus threat looming over the war-devastated nation.

### [Israel's President Asks Parliament to Choose Prime Minister](#)

April 16, 2020, Al Jazeera

Israel's President has asked the Knesset to choose a new prime minister, giving the parliament three weeks to agree upon a leader or plunge the country into an unprecedented fourth consecutive election in just over a year.

### [3,336 Indians Infected with Coronavirus Abroad: 785 in Kuwait](#)

April 16, 2020, Times of India

As many as 3,336 Indian nationals abroad have tested positive for Covid-19. According to the break-up of those infected abroad, 785 are in Kuwait, followed by 634 in Singapore and 420 in Qatar.

### [Oman Says Companies Can Let Go Of Foreign Workers, But Omanis Cannot Be Fired](#)

April 15, 2020, The Week

A directive by Oman's Supreme Committee on Wednesday said private companies that are struggling due to COVID-19 can ask non-Omani employees to leave permanently.

### [Qatar Starts Expansion Drilling at World's Largest Gas Field](#)

April 16, 2020, Oilprice.com

Qatar Petroleum has started the development drilling campaign of the North Field East Project to expand the production capacity of the world's biggest natural gas deposit that the tiny nation shares with Iran in the Persian Gulf.

### [Bahrain to Fund Private Sector Salaries with \\$570 Million Relief Initiative Due To Covid-19](#)

April 08, 2020, The National

Bahrain rolled out a \$570 million initiative to pay for the wages of 100,000 citizens working in the private sector for three months, covering April to June, as a measure to help relieve the economic impact of the coronavirus on businesses and workers.

### [Egypt Foils Possible Terrorist Plot Against Coptic Christians](#)

April 15, 2020, Al-Monitor

Egyptian authorities say a suspected terrorist cell was plotting attacks against the country's Coptic Christians to coincide with their Easter celebration on April 19. The religious minority, which makes up about 10% of Egypt's population of 100 million, is a frequent target of armed groups in the volatile Sinai Peninsula.

### [Iraq Condemns Turkish Strikes against PKK in Kurdistan Region](#)

April 16, 2020, Al-Monitor

In what it called a flagrant violation of its sovereignty, Iraq says Turkish airstrikes inside its airspace targeted a refugee camp and killed three civilians Wednesday (April 15). "We deplore the penetration of Iraqi airspace by Turkish aircraft," the Iraqi government-affiliated Security Media Cell wrote on Twitter.

### [20 Saudis Charged in Jamal Khashoggi Murder](#)

April 12, 2020, Middle East Monitor

A Turkish court accepted an indictment on the 2018 killing of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul. The 117-page indictment prepared by Istanbul prosecutors accusing 20 Saudi nationals of involvement in the gruesome premeditated murder was accepted by Istanbul's Heavy Penal Court No. 11.

### [In U.N. Session, Syria Denounced Over Chemical Weapons Use in 2017](#)

April 16, 2020, The Japan Times

V. N. Security Council members Britain, Estonia and Germany denounced Syria Wednesday (April 15) for a lack of accountability after being accused of conducting chemical weapons attacks in 2017.



## United States

### United States

#### [White House Offers Reopening Guidelines as U.S. Deaths Surge](#)

April 17, 2020, The New York Times

President Trump told the nation's governors on Thursday that they could begin reopening businesses, restaurants and other elements of daily life by May 1 or earlier if they wanted.

#### [Trump unveils three-stage process for states to end coronavirus shutdown](#)

April 16, 2020, Reuters

President Donald Trump laid out new guidelines on Thursday for U.S. states to emerge from a coronavirus shutdown in a staggered, three-stage approach meant to revive the U.S. economy even as the country continues to fight the pandemic.

#### [Reported U.S. Coronavirus Deaths Reach Record 4,591 in 24 Hours](#)

April 17, 2020, Wall Street Journal

In the 24 hours ending at 8 p.m. Eastern time on April 16, 4,591 people were reported to have died from Covid-19, according to a Wall Street Journal analysis of data from Johns Hopkins University. The prior record was 2,569 on April 15.

#### [Protests are popping up across the US over stay-at-home restrictions](#)

April 17, 2020, CNN

Protesters gathered in several state capitals this week to voice their opposition to stay-at-home orders issued to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus.

#### [Trump halts World Health Organization funding over handling of coronavirus outbreak](#)

April 15, 2020, CNN

President Donald Trump announced Tuesday he is halting funding to the World Health Organization while a review is conducted. Trump said the review would cover the WHO's "role in severely mismanaging and covering up the spread of coronavirus."

### [G-7 leaders chide Trump over WHO funding stop](#)

April 16, 2020, Politico

Several world leaders have rebuked Donald Trump for his decision to stop funding the World Health Organization, telling the president that multilateral cooperation is essential to fight the coronavirus pandemic.

### [Business Leaders Urge Trump to Dramatically Increase Coronavirus Testing](#)

April 15, 2020, Wall Street Journal

Banking and financial services executives told President Trump that his administration needed to dramatically increase the availability of coronavirus testing before the public would be confident enough to return to work, eat at restaurants or shop in retail establishments.

### [Ex-Trump lawyer Cohen to be released due to coronavirus outbreak - sources](#)

April 17, 2020, Reuters

Michael Cohen, the former personal attorney to U.S. President Donald Trump, will be released early from prison because of the coronavirus pandemic, two sources familiar with the matter told Reuters late on Thursday.

### [President Trump's Ex-Lawyer Michael Cohen to Serve Sentence From Home](#)

April 16, 2020, Wall Street Journal

President Trump's former personal lawyer Michael Cohen will be released early from prison and serve the rest of his three-year sentence at his home, according to a person familiar with the matter.

### [U.S. Intelligence Sifts Evidence for Origins of Coronavirus](#)

April 16, 2020, Wall Street Journal

U.S. intelligence agencies are assessing whether the coronavirus that has caused a global pandemic escaped from a Chinese biological laboratory in Wuhan, according to senior Trump administration officials.

### [FBI official says foreign hackers have targeted COVID-19 research](#)

April 17, 2020, Reuters

A senior cybersecurity official with the Federal Bureau of Investigation said on Thursday that foreign government hackers have broken into companies conducting research into treatments for COVID-19, the respiratory illness caused by the coronavirus.

[More than a third of G7 citizens see virus hit to incomes – poll](#)

April 17, 2020, Reuters

More than a third of people living in the Group of Seven rich nations say the novel coronavirus pandemic has already hurt their earnings, a poll showed on Friday.

## Europe & Russia

### Europe

#### [U.K. Extends Coronavirus Lockdown by at Least Three Weeks](#)

April 17, 2020, Bloomberg

The U.K. government will extend the country's lockdown by at least three more weeks in an effort to stem the spread of coronavirus.

#### [Scheme for EU citizens to stay in UK draws 3.4m applications](#)

April 16, 2020, The Guardian

The Home Office has received 3.4m applications from people seeking to stay in the UK after Brexit under the EU settled status scheme.

#### [Downing Street: UK will say 'no' if EU asks for Brexit extension](#)

April 16, 2020, Politico

The prime minister's official spokesman said the U.K. needed "legislative and economic flexibility" to manage its response to the coronavirus pandemic and would not seek more time to secure a trade deal with the EU.

#### [France's Macron positioning himself as leader of the world](#)

April 16, 2020, CNN

France's president, Emmanuel Macron, who has faced many challenges governing his country, is now positioning himself to take over the mantle of global leadership long reserved to the older leaders of China, Russia or especially the United States.

#### [Coronavirus: Macron questions China's handling of outbreak](#)

April 17, 2020, BBC

French President Emmanuel Macron has questioned China's handling of the coronavirus outbreak, saying things "happened that we don't know about". Mr Macron told the Financial Times it was "naive" to suggest that China had dealt better with the crisis.

### [France summons Chinese envoy after coronavirus 'slur'](#)

April 15, 2020, The Guardian

The French foreign office on Tuesday summoned the Chinese ambassador, Lu Shaye, to express its deep disapproval about Chinese diplomats' claims that France had left its older citizens to die.

### [Amazon to Suspend Operations in France Over Coronavirus Dispute](#)

April 15, 2020, The New York Times

The move follows a French court order for the U.S. retailer to limit deliveries to essential goods amid controversy over virus safety measures.

### [How Germany Plans to Start Opening Up, Starting Next Week](#)

April 16, 2020, New York Magazine

German Chancellor Angela Merkel announced plans Wednesday to slowly ease social-distancing rules put in place to slow the spread of the coronavirus. Changes will begin on Monday.

### [COVID-19 Prompts Germany and China to Draw Closer](#)

April 17, 2020, The Trumpet

German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Chinese President Xi Jinping agreed to a large-scale shipment of coronavirus medical supplies from Chinese state-controlled manufacturers. The two agreed in an April 8 phone call that "closer international cooperation was needed" to manage the crisis.

### [Germans have right to protest during pandemic, court rules](#)

April 16, 2020, Al Jazeera

The constitutional right to assembly was violated by rules banning groups of more than two people, a court has ruled.

### [European shares gain as Trump plans to reopen U.S. economy](#)

April 17, 2020, Reuters

European shares jumped on Friday, clawing back weekly declines as financial markets globally drew comfort from U.S. President Donald Trump's plans for a gradual re-opening of the U.S. economy and reports of a potential drug to treat COVID-19.

### [Hungary cannot save all businesses, PM Orban says](#)

April 17, 2020, Reuters

Hungary will help businesses to survive the economic fallout from the novel coronavirus pandemic, but changes in the economy will force a rethinking of what works and what markets have been lost for good, premier Viktor Orban said on Friday.

### [EU offers 'heartfelt apology' to Italy over coronavirus response](#)

April 16, 2020, The Guardian

The EU has offered "a heartfelt apology" to Italy for letting it down at the start of the coronavirus crisis as fresh evidence emerged that few European countries are likely to have achieved herd immunity as they begin cautiously lifting their lockdowns.

### [Northern Italy is rattled by a 4.5-magnitude earthquake near the heart of the coronavirus crisis](#)

April 16, 2020, Daily Mail

Northern Italy was rattled by an earthquake near the heart of the coronavirus outbreak today. The 4.5-magnitude tremor struck near Coli in the region of Emilia-Romagna, around 30 miles north-east of Genoa and 60 miles south of Milan.

### [With weekend lockdowns and age-specific restrictions, Turkey takes a different coronavirus approach](#)

April 17, 2020

Last weekend, the Turkish government implemented a 48-hour curfew for 31 provinces, impacting three quarters of Turkey's population. The curfew was announced just two hours before it was to go into effect -- causing a buying panic in some areas as people flocked to grocery stores and bakeries with little regard for social distancing measures.

### [EU helps protect weak firms from foreign takeovers](#)

April 17, 2020, BBC

The EU plans to help block foreign takeovers of European companies struggling with the virus downturn. It wants to allow governments to invest in weak companies, which could include some form of ownership.

## Russia

### [Covid-19 pandemic won't affect S-400 deliveries: Indian Ambassador in Russia](#)

April 12, 2020, The Print

India had signed a \$5 billion deal with Russia to buy five units of the S-400 air defence missile systems in October 2018.

### [Russia's main defence export body donates \\$2 million for PM CARES Fund](#)

April 15, 2020, WION

Russian Government's main defence export body, Rosoboron-export has donated \$2 million for PM CARES Fund formed to deal with the COVID crisis. The money has already been transferred.

### [Coronavirus Spoils Putin's 'Forever-in-Power' Public Vote](#)

April 16, 2020, The Moscow Times

With tens of millions of Russians struggling financially, Putin shouldn't expect an enthusiastic turnout for his constitutional amendments.

### [Russia carries out anti-satellite test](#)

April 17, 2020, The Sydney Morning Herald

Russia has carried out a test of an anti-satellite missile, in what the US military says is an example of the threats in space.

### [Russia will accept Trump's offer of ventilators](#)

April 16, 2020, The Associated Press

The Kremlin says Russia will gratefully accept U.S. President Donald Trump's offer to provide ventilators for coronavirus patients.

### [Russian oil groups wrangle over OPEC deal](#)

April 17, 2020, Financial Times

Russia's oil producers are at odds over their roles in the world's largest crude reduction agreement, throwing into doubt Moscow's promise to slash output.

## Africa & Latin America

### Latin America

#### [Dominican Republic has more recovered than dead](#)

April 16, 2020, Dominicon Today

In Wednesday's briefing Public Health's coronavirus figures gives the population an air of hope: there are a total of 208 people recovered since the pandemic began in the country.

#### [Brazil president fires health minister during coronavirus crisis](#)

April 17, 2020, Al Jazeera

Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro, whose dismissive stance toward the COVID-19 pandemic has angered health experts, fired his popular health minister following a series of disagreements over the proper response to contain its spread in South America's most populous country.

#### [Brazil Cuts Oil Production On 62 Offshore Platforms](#)

April 16, 2020, Oil Price.com

Petrobras has started shutting down production at 62 offshore platforms in the shallow waters off its coast, Reuters reported, adding that the cuts will amount to 23,000 bpd.

#### [Trump oil deal raises question for Mexico: At what cost?](#)

April 14, 2020, Reuters

Mexico's president has incurred a debt with his U.S. counterpart Donald Trump by accepting U.S. help to end a standoff over global oil cuts, triggering concern the American will in return make the country pay on issues like migration and security.

#### [Oil-rich Venezuela is running out of gas](#)

April 16, 2020, Greenwich Meantime

The energy crisis is the latest bad news for authoritarian President Nicolás Maduro, who is now facing the most perilous moment of his embattled tenure.



### [Cuba sends medical staff to Qatar amid pandemic](#)

April 16, 2020, Andolou Agency

After sending medical professionals to 19 countries in a short period of time, Cuba stood out as one of the few countries to lead the global fight against the novel coronavirus.

### [IMF sees 'lost decade' of no growth in Latin America due to pandemic](#)

April 17, 2020, Yahoo Finance

The International Monetary Fund on Thursday said the economic fallout of the coronavirus pandemic, combined with other problems in recent years, meant Latin America and the Caribbean would likely see "no growth" in the decade from 2015 to 2025.

### [Trump Can Counter China's Influence Operations In Latin America](#)

April 14, 2020, National Interest

The Trump administration, as well as many pundits and U.S. policymakers, are concerned about the rise of Chinese soft power in Latin America and that the United States is "losing" its influence in the region.

## **Africa**

### [Somali intelligence funding Shabaab to attack Kenya – report](#)

April 17, 2020, The Star

Strong links exist between Somalia's National Intelligence and Security Agency and al Shabaab, a confidential report from an insider in the militia shows.

### [Coronavirus ends China's honeymoon in Africa](#)

April 16, 2020, Politico

Africa was supposed to be China's new stomping grounds. Instead, the novel coronavirus has spawned a growing backlash that threatens to unwind the ties Beijing has carefully cultivated over decades.

### [Africans in China: We face coronavirus discrimination](#)

April 17, 2020, BBC News

The Chinese government dismissed claims of racism, insisting China and Africa are friends, partners and brothers and that it has zero tolerance to racism.

## [African Union Condemns Trump for Suspending Funding of World Health Organization](#)

April 16, 2020, Okayafrica

Chairman of the African Union, Moussa Faki Mahamat, has called Trump's decision to suspend funding of the World Health Organization amid the COVID-19 outbreak, 'deeply regrettable'.

## [US Africa Command supporting African nations amid COVID-19](#)

April 14, 2020, Defence Web

As the world fights to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, the US, through US Africa Command, says it is doing its part to help African partner nations combat this new enemy.

## [US Mobile Hospitals Help Fight Coronavirus in Africa](#)

April 13, 2020, VOA

As Africa braces for the next wave of the global coronavirus pandemic, three U.S.-donated mobile hospitals with medics trained by U.S. forces are helping Ghana, Senegal and Uganda respond to local outbreaks.



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

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