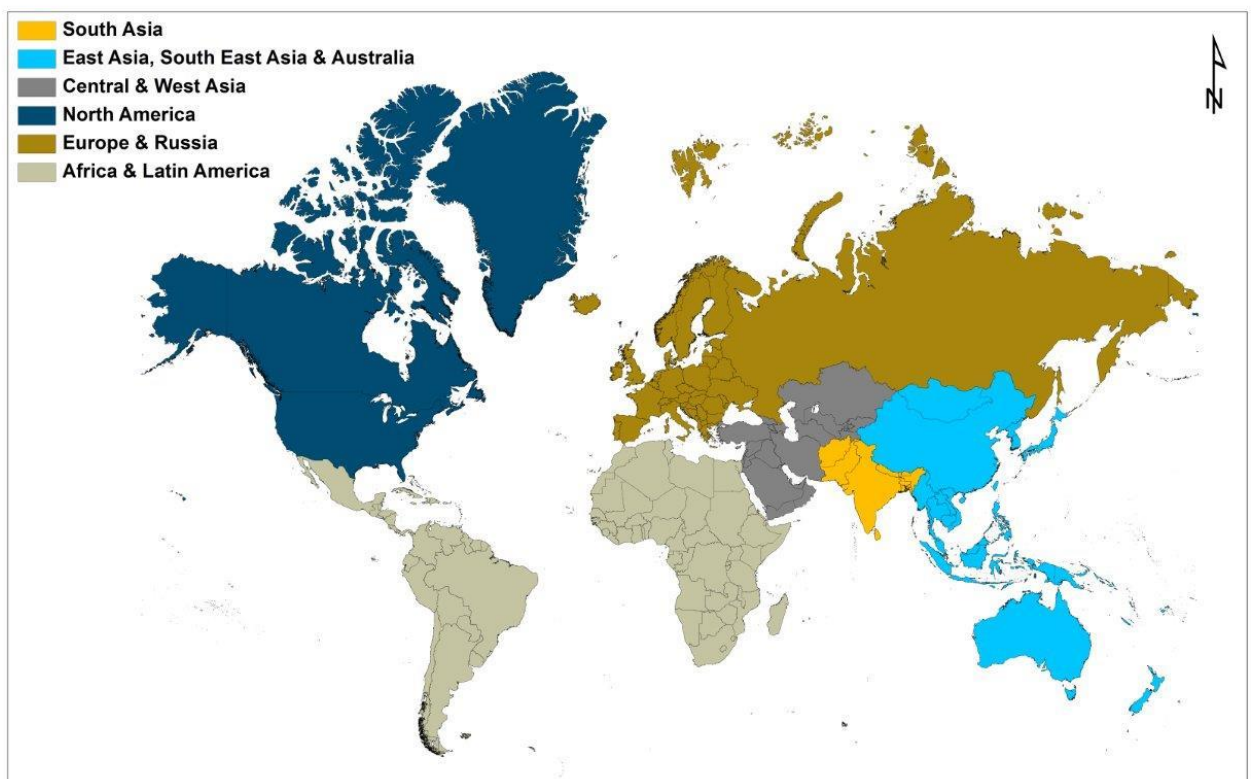




Delhi Policy Group

DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH



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DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH

Volume 4, Issue 18

ABOUT US

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

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

DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH

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South Asia

India

[Covid-19: India set to 'ramp up' defence production following lockdown](#)

April 28, 2020, Jane's

The Indian Ministry of Defence (MoD) has called on state-owned defence enterprises to prepare to return to work and to "ramp up production" following the end of a national lockdown that has been in place since 25 March.

[PM Modi pushes for reduction in imports in defence sector](#)

May 1, 2020, Live Mint

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said India should reduce dependence on imports and take forward the "Make in India" initiative to build its domestic capabilities for designing, developing and manufacturing state-of-the-art defence equipment.

[India is now the world's third largest military spender](#)

April 27, 2020, The Print

With an expenditure of \$71.1 billion in 2019, India has emerged as the third largest military spender in the world, just behind the US and China.

[Indian Navy readying amphibious ships for evacuating Gulf NRIs: Reports](#)

April 29, 2020, The Week

The Indian Navy, Air India and the Indian Air Force have been roped in to prepare for evacuating non-resident Indians stranded by the coronavirus outbreak in multiple countries of the Gulf, according to media reports.

[India says social media posts in West Asian states are 'propaganda'](#)

April 30, 2020, Hindustan Times

India on Thursday described a flurry of social media posts in West Asia on the treatment of Muslims in the country as "propaganda" and said countries in that region were keen to work with New Delhi for economic recovery after the Covid-19 crisis.

[Jaishankar holds video conference with Indian envoys in Australia, NZ and Pacific Islands](#)

April 30, 2020, Outlook

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Thursday held a video conference with Indian envoys in Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Papua and New Guinea and the Pacific Island countries which are considered important for India's Indo-Pacific vision.

[View: Desperate India may now need Modi to do a Roosevelt](#)

May 1, 2020, The Economic Times

Small Indian companies getting decimated by the world's harshest coronavirus lockdown can finally see a ray of hope.

[PM discusses investment models to boost economy](#)

May 1, 2020, Hindustan Times

In the backdrop of the contraction in the economy due to the coronavirus pandemic and the national lockdown, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday held a "comprehensive" meeting to discuss strategies to boost the economy, with an eye on enhancing investment. The meeting took place even as the government is in the middle of finalising the first round of economic measures to provide relief to different sectors. This, officials aware of development said, may be made public next week.

[India maps out post-Covid export plan to take on China](#)

April 30, 2020, The Economic Times

India has begun work on a continuity plan to kick-start exports once the country emerges from the shadows of the Covid-19 pandemic. The plan includes cutting down import dependence, especially from China, by focussing aggressively on substitution while improving safety compliance and quality goods to gain global market share. The commerce and industry ministry is mulling setting up groups to draw up strategies for sectors where China has vacated space and countries are looking to diversify suppliers.

Pakistan

[CPEC projects may face delay, disruption: report](#)

April 25, 2020, The News

Pakistani authorities have warned about delays and disruption in China Pakistan Economic Corridors (CPEC) related multi-billion dollars projects after outbreak of coronavirus. In a detailed report tabled before high-powered National Coordination Committee (NCC) stating that Chinese companies working on CPEC projects will suffer delays and higher costs along with supply-chain and worker related disruptions will be witnessed.

[Pakistan talks to countries for solution to debt issue](#)

April 26, 2020, The News

Pakistan has reached out to several world capitals represented at the United Nations to start consultations in the face of 'debt challenges' facing most of them. Pakistan has been in the forefront and consistently highlighting this issue, as the world economies take a battering in the aftermath of the COVID –19.

[Governor Sarwar makes Quran teaching with translation compulsory in Punjab universities](#)

April 25, 2020, The News

Making teaching of the Holy Quran with translation compulsory in all provincial universities, Punjab Governor Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar has constituted a seven-member committee of vice-chancellors to submit its recommendations on how to make it part of the syllabus.

[Anti-ship missiles fired by Navy hit target](#)

April 26, 2020, Dawn

The Pakistan Navy fleet units demonstrated their combat readiness through live weapon firing of anti-ship missiles in the North Arabian Sea. The Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Zafar Mahmood Abbasi, witnessed the event along with Pakistan Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Asif Khaliq and other senior naval officers.

[Imran reshuffles media team for a third time](#)

April 28, 2020, Dawn

Prime Minister Imran Khan replaced his special assistant on information Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan with retired Lt Gen Asim Saleem Bajwa and appointed Leader

of the House in the Senate Shibli Faraz as federal minister for information and broadcasting – a position that has been lying vacant for almost a year.

[Chinese lawmakers okay prisoner exchange treaty with Pakistan](#)

April 30, 2020, The Express Tribune

China's National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, a top legislative body, has ratified the treaty on the transfer of sentenced persons between Pakistan and China.

[National Assembly Speaker Asad Qaiser tests coronavirus positive](#)

May 1, 2020, The Express Tribune

National Assembly Speaker Asad Qaiser tested positive for the novel coronavirus and went into self-isolation. In violation of the government's policy of social distancing, Asad Qaiser had reportedly hosted Iftar-dinner at his residence.

[Islamabad most dangerous place for journalists, says report](#)

May 1, 2020, Dawn

A report released to mark the World Press Freedom on May 3 has suggested that not only is violence common against Pakistani journalists but that violent incidents happen more commonly in the federal capital than other areas. The report said that Islamabad, with 34 per cent of all violent attacks in the country, comes out as its most dangerous and riskiest region for journalists.

Afghanistan

[US calls on Afghan leaders to set aside disputes, focus on virus](#)

April 27, 2020, Dawn

The US peace envoy to Afghanistan called on the country's feuding leaders to set their differences aside to combat the coronavirus pandemic and advance a stalled peace agreement signed with the Taliban earlier this year. The well-being of the Afghan people and the country depends on all parties devoting their full energies to fighting the Covid-19 pandemic, the shared enemy of all, Zalmay Khalilzad tweeted.

[Afghan violence increased after US-Taliban deal: UN](#)

April 28, 2020, Dawn

Violence surged in Afghanistan in the weeks after the United States and the Taliban signed a deal supposed to pave the way for a peace process. In all, fighting

in the first three months caused 1,293 civilian casualties, of which 760 were injuries and the rest deaths, including 152 children and 60 women, the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) said in a quarterly report.

[Trump tells advisers U.S. should pull troops as Afghanistan COVID-19 outbreak looms](#)

April 27, 2020, NBC News

President Donald Trump has pushed his military and national security advisers in recent days to pull all U.S. troops out of Afghanistan amid concerns about a major coronavirus outbreak in the war-torn country, according to two current and one former senior U.S. officials. Trump complains almost daily that U.S. troops are still in Afghanistan and are now vulnerable to the pandemic, the officials said.

[Afghans Claim Foreign Combatants Fighting Alongside Taliban In Violation Of Peace Deal](#)

April 29, 2020, RFERL

Afghan officials say hundreds of foreign combatants are fighting alongside Taliban militants in a strategic northern province, a move that if proven true would violate the terms of the U.S.-Taliban peace agreement. Zakaria Sawda, the governor of the northeastern province of Badakhshan, said around 400 foreign militants, mostly from neighboring Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, had joined the Taliban and were fighting Afghan security forces in the province.

Bangladesh

[Swedish PM phones Hasina, says they won't cancel RMG product order](#)

April 29, 2020, UNB

Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Lofven on Wednesday assured that his country will not cancel any garment product order from Bangladesh.

[Dhaka, Delhi will work together to tackle food crisis](#)

April 30, 2020, The Daily Star

Bangladesh and India yesterday decided to work together to increase food production to face the possible food crisis due to the coronavirus pandemic.

[India Bangladesh land border at Petrapole opens; jute, maize exported](#)

May 1, 2020, The Hindu

The India Bangladesh land border at Petrapole in West Bengal opened on Thursday after being closed for almost a month. The West Bengal government expressed its displeasure over not being consulted before restarting trade through the international trade border. Chief Secretary Rajiva Sinha said the State has the final say on easing the restrictions. "We do not want the people to suffer. But every notification of the Centre said the State will have the final word on easing restrictions," he said.

[Covid-19: India gifts Bangladesh 1 lakh anti-malarial tablets, 50,000 surgical gloves](#)

April 26, 2020, India Today

India on Sunday gifted one lakh anti-malarial tablets of hydroxychloroquine and 50,000 surgical gloves to Bangladesh to help it combat the coronavirus pandemic which has infected nearly 5,000 people and killed over 100 in the country.

Nepal

[Around 1,300 Nepalis stranded in bordering Indian district brought home](#)

May 1, 2020, The Kathmandu Post

Government authorities brought home around 1,300 Nepalis stranded in Dharchula, a bordering Indian town across the Mahakali River, on Thursday.

[Nepal nationals sent home via border bridges in Uttarakhand](#)

April 30, 2020, Outlook

Around 1,352 Nepal nationals stuck here due to the lockdown were on Thursday allowed to cross over to their country through the border bridges at Jhoola ghat, Charcha and Balakon in Pithoragarh district.

[India and Nepal's Kalapani border dispute: An explainer](#)

April 29, 2020, ORF Online

India and Nepal must chalk out their borders in a formal and friendly manner, to avoid other disputes such as the one over the Kalapani area. India should also move beyond its insecurities related to China. Although the Nepali Parliament has taken up the issue seriously, the two governments should fill the communication gap as a matter of urgency.

Sri Lanka

[Nearly 4,000 Sri Lankan Navy personnel quarantined after 60 tested positive for COVID-19: report](#)

April 25, 2020, The Hindu

The move came as 30 Navy personnel tested positive for the COVID-19 virus each on Friday and Saturday at the country's Welisara Naval camp. Nearly 4,000 Sri Lankan Navy personnel and their families have been quarantined at a major naval facility after 60 COVID-19 cases were confirmed in two days, a media report said.

[All Lankan students in South Asia safely brought home – MFR](#)

May 1, 2020, Economy Next

The Sri Lankan government says it has brought home 1065 Sri Lankan students based in the South Asian region, over the last 10 days.

East & South East Asia

China

[China turns a page with two sessions to convene in May](#)

April 29, 2020, Global Times

On the same day, Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei announced they would lower their emergency response to the COVID-19 epidemic from the top level to the second one. Beijing will also remove quarantine requirements for visitors from low-risk parts of the country. The successive announcements are milestones, showing that China has firmly controlled the epidemic and ushers in a new era to fully resume economic and social activities while making prevention and control work normal.

[What do two sessions mean for domestic, global economies?](#)

April 29, 2020, Global Times

China has set late May as the date for this year's "two sessions" - the annual meetings of its top legislative body and top consultative body. Considering the rapid victory the country has achieved in its fight against the coronavirus and progressing toward economic recovery, setting targets and the work focus for social and economic development for the year in late May may seem a little belated. However, the delay was an adjustment that had to be made according to China's actual situation amid the pandemic.

[Political bias prevents Westerners from fairly assessing Jack Ma's philanthropic efforts](#)

April 30, 2020, Global Times

Since February, the philanthropist, who has been committing to charity after retiring as retail giant Alibaba's chairman, has donated a huge amount of essential medical supplies to more than 150 countries, regions and organizations, offering the most-needed help for those grappling with the COVID-19 epidemic. However, some Western observers and media outlets accused Ma of "following Party guidelines" to provide donations, claiming his philanthropic efforts were capitalized by the Communist Party of China (CPC) to "fix China's reputation." This didn't come out of nowhere, given their deeply-rooted prejudice against China and the CPC.

[Trump should be political Batman for US in crisis](#)

April 30, 2020, Global Times

During his interview with Reuters on Wednesday, US President Donald Trump said China "will do anything they can" to prevent him from being reelected. How pretentious this president is. Trump is putting all his bets on winning the election on China. China has offered substantial medical supplies to the US for the latter's fight against COVID-19, to which Trump could brag that the US is the "king of ventilators", highlighted Global Times editorial.

[India's vaccine manufacturing could play larger role amid global cooperation](#)

April 30, 2020, Global Times

Even the fierce global competition to develop coronavirus vaccine cannot take the spotlight off India, given its strength in the field. The Serum Institute of India, the world's largest vaccine maker by number of doses produced and sold, announced on Sunday that it will start mass production of a COVID-19 vaccine developed by the University of Oxford and hopes to bring it to the market by October if human clinical trials are successful, according to The Economic Times. Additionally, the US recently disclosed that it is now working with India to develop vaccines to combat the global pandemic.

[Debunking foreign accusations of China's unemployment data](#)

April 30, 2020, Global Times

Some Western media have long been preoccupied with the opinion that China has fabricated its official unemployment data, an impression that is ungrounded and prejudicial, because not only has China made constant efforts to improve its statistical methods, but its current model of unemployment survey is mostly in line with international standards and can generally reflect the country's employment status, found a Global Times investigation.

[US pushes S.China Sea hegemony amid pandemic](#)

April 30, 2020, Global Times

The US Navy said on April 21 that the USS America and two other vessels entered the South China Sea. In the face of the raging coronavirus epidemic in the US, Washington has shown no intention to halt pressuring China on the South China Sea issue. The USS America, the most important operational naval asset in the South China Sea, was carrying out the latest operation when the coronavirus-hit aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt is docked in Guam.

[Morrison's adventurism could damage China-Australia relations beyond repair](#)

April 28, 2020, Global Times

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison made a series of phone calls last week to several world leaders, including US President Donald Trump, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron, appealing for their support of Australia's "independent" inquiry into "the origin and spread" of the COVID-19 outbreak, with China as the thinly veiled target.

[Coercion claim divorced from reality: China Daily editorial](#)

April 28, 2020, China Daily

The misinterpretation and sensationalizing of remarks by Cheng Jingye, the Chinese ambassador to Australia, by some Australian media outlets and politicians is clear evidence that their bias and xenophobia against China have reached an appalling degree.

[The future of China's economic engagement](#)

April 24, 2020, China Daily

Oil trades at a negative price. Unemployment in the United States is nine times greater than during the period following the Global Financial Crash (GFC) in 2008. A poorly managed response to COVID-19 infections and a medical system that favors the affluent, means around two thousand people are dying every day. And yet the American stock market rallied higher for five weeks. This is a stunning disconnect between economic reality and the financial market. It's taken a collapse in the oil price to get the American market to wake up and reconnect with economic reality.

[U.S. claim to scrutinize four Chinese telecom firms "discriminates against China's SOEs:" spokesperson](#)

April 30, 2020, Xinhua

The U.S. claim to scrutinize four Chinese telecommunications companies discriminates against China's state-owned enterprises (SOEs), Gao Feng, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Commerce, told a press conference Thursday. The discrimination will not only affect Chinese firms' investing in the United States but also undermine the confidence of companies around the world in the U.S. investment environment, Gao said.

[China firmly opposes U.S., Australia strengthening military presence in South China Sea](#)

April 30, 2020, Xinhua

A Chinese Ministry of National Defense spokesperson on Thursday voiced firm opposition to the United States and Australia strengthening their military presence in the South China Sea. Spokesperson Wu Qian made the remarks at a press conference when asked to comment on reports about frequent U.S. military activities in the sea and airspace around China, U.S. warships and planes' multi-day training and their military exercise together with Australian navy in the South China Sea.

[China urges U.S. to stop interfering in China's internal affairs under pretext of religion](#)

April 29, 2020, Xinhua

China urges the United States to respect the facts, abandon its arrogance and prejudice, and stop interfering in China's internal affairs under the pretext of religion, according to a Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wednesday. Spokesperson Geng Shuang made the remarks at a press conference in response to a recent United States Commission on International Religious Freedom annual report making accusations of China's religious freedom situation.

[Looking out for each other in trying times is what BRICS spirit all about: Chinese FM](#)

April 28, 2020, Xinhua

Looking out for each other in trying times is what the BRICS spirit is all about, Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi said Tuesday. Wang made the remarks when addressing BRICS Foreign Ministers' Extraordinary Conference on COVID-19 via video link. BRICS is an emerging-market bloc that groups Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

Japan

[Clumsy strategy weakening bid to shore up remote island defenses](#)

April 29, 2020, The Asahi Shimbun

For all of Japan's high-touted preparations to defend remote territory from invasion, the situation on Miyakojima island here illustrates how woefully ill-prepared the Ground Self-Defense Force is in dealing with a crisis.

[Japan preparing to extend coronavirus emergency for about a month](#)

May 1, 2020, The Asahi Shimbun

Japan is preparing to extend its state of emergency over the novel coronavirus, originally set to end on May 6, for about a month, government sources told Reuters on Thursday, even as some other countries begin to reopen after strict lockdowns.

[Japan passes ¥25.69 trillion emergency budget](#)

May 1, 2020, Japan Today

The Diet passed an emergency budget worth 25.69 trillion yen (around \$240 billion), including cash handouts for every resident, in a bid to counter the economic devastation wrought by the coronavirus pandemic.

[Japan defense chief in talks with Western counterparts on virus](#)

April 30, 2020, The Japan Times

Defense Minister Taro Kono is stepping up talks with his European and U.S. counterparts out of concern that China may further increase its military and economic presence after the novel coronavirus pandemic subsides.

Korea

[Kim Jong-un's sister could emerge as heir apparent, think tank suggests](#)

April 29, 2020, The Korea Herald

Amid conflicting reports about the health of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, a parliamentary think tank in South Korea has weighed in on Kim's younger sister Kim Yo-jong taking over the throne of the reclusive regime.

[Navy to participate in US-led RIMPAC exercise in August](#)

April 30, 2020, The Korea Herald

The Navy plans to participate in a US-led multinational maritime exercise slated to kick off near Hawaii in August, a military source said, despite concerns over the new coronavirus.

[UN chief says world should follow Korea on COVID-19 fight](#)

May 1, 2020, The Korea Herald

United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres said he hopes many countries follow the example of South Korea, which has been "extremely successful" in

addressing COVID-19, and plans to fight climate change in its post-coronavirus economic recovery.

Southeast Asia

[China Closes Border Crossing With Myanmar Amid Fighting](#)

April 24, 2020, The Economic Times

China closed a border crossing with Myanmar on Friday after fighting in that nation spilled into a Chinese province and damaged buildings. State broadcaster CCTV said vehicles, a school and other buildings in Yunnan province were damaged by bullets, artillery fire and flames from an exploding gas station in Myanmar.

[5-Nation Face-Off In High-Seas Energy Tussle Off Malaysia](#)

April 25, 2020, The Straits Times

Malaysia's push to explore energy blocks off its coast has turned into a five-nation face-off involving American and Chinese warships, raising the risk of a direct confrontation as broader tensions mount between the world's biggest economies.

[Philippines Urged To Go On Joint Patrols With Malaysia, Vietnam To Show United Front Vs China](#)

April 27, 2020, Inquirer.net

The Philippines should carry out joint patrols with Malaysia and Vietnam in the South China Sea to push back against China, which seemed to be using the COVID-19 pandemic as a smokescreen for its continued aggression in the disputed waters, according to retired Senior Associate Supreme Court Justice Antonio Carpio.

[PM Modi Discusses Covid-19 Crisis With Indonesian President; Assures Him Disruption-Free Supply Of Medical Products](#)

April 28, 2020, Live Mint

Asserting that close cooperation between India and Indonesia was important to deal with the challenges posed by COVID-19, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday assured Indonesian President Joko Widodo that India would do its best to ensure disruption-free supply of medical products traded between the two countries in these times of crisis.

['Laughable, Cynical': Filipinos Pan Chinese Coronavirus Music Video As South China Sea Propaganda](#)

April 27, 2020, SCMP

On YouTube on Monday, the video had 146,000 “dislikes” as opposed to 2,000 “likes.” Of the 20,000 comments, most were negative, describing the video as “propaganda”. More than 8,000 people signed a petition on Change.org demanding the video be taken down.

[USS Bunker Hill Conducts 2nd South China Sea Freedom of Navigation Operation This Week](#)

April 29, 2020, USNI.org

Guided-missile cruiser USS Bunker Hill (CG-52) conducted a freedom of navigation operation through the Spratly Island chain in the South China Sea, U.S. 7th Fleet announced.

Central & West Asia

Central Asia

[COVID-19: Tajikistan Set To Officially Confirm First Cases](#)

April 30, 2020, Central Asia News.net

The global death toll from the coronavirus is approaching 230,000 with more than 3.2 million infections confirmed, causing mass disruptions as governments continue to try to slow the spread of the new respiratory illness.

[World Bank approves additional \\$200 million for COVID-19 response in Uzbekistan](#)

May 1, 2020, AKI Press.com

The World Bank's Board of Executive Directors approved \$200 million in additional development policy financing to support Uzbekistan's ongoing health, social, and economic policy responses to the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This financing will provide additional money for the government's budget amidst a large decline in tax revenues and an unanticipated increase in expenditures to cover anti-crisis measures, the World Bank said.

[Kazakhstan Negotiating 22% Oil Output Cut](#)

April 29, 2020, Oil Price.com

Kazakhstan is in talks with the companies operating its two large oil projects to reduce total output by 22 percent in compliance with the latest OPEC+ production cut agreement.

[EBRD increases trade support in Uzbekistan](#)

May 1, 2020, The Times of Central Asia

More businesses in Uzbekistan, including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), will benefit from export and import opportunities available through a trade finance agreement signed between the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the country's leading lender, the National Bank for Foreign Economic Activity of the Republic of Uzbekistan (NBU), the EBRD said on April 30.

[World Bank study analyzes youth radicalization in Tajikistan](#)

May 1, 2020, The Times of Central Asia

Youth in Tajikistan's rural and most-at-risk regions along the Afghan border face greater challenges accessing employment, education, and training, thereby exposing them to relatively higher risks of being drawn into illegal activities and/or radicalization, according to a study published on April 29 by the World Bank.

West Asia

[Navy, Air Force Give Final Touches to Biggest Evacuation Plan Ever to Bring Back Indians Stranded in Gulf Nations](#)

April 29, 2020, News 18

Indian Navy is in the advanced stages of preparing at least three of its ships to evacuate thousands of stranded Indians, particularly migrant labourers, from the Gulf countries.

[US-Led Coalition Conducts 28 Strikes in Iraq, Syria in March 2020](#)

April 30, 2020, Sputnik International

The US-Led coalition has carried out 28 airstrikes against Daesh in March, Combined Joint Task Force - Operation Inherent Resolve (CJTF-OIR) said in a release on Thursday (April 30).

[Pompeo Preparing Argument that US Still 'participant' in Iran Nuclear Deal, in Effort To Restore UN Sanctions](#)

April 27, 2020, Fox News

A U.S. official confirmed to Fox News on Sunday (April 26) that Secretary of State Mike Pompeo is preparing a legal argument claiming the country is still a participant in the 2015 nuclear agreement with Iran. This will help restore UN sanctions on Iran.

[11 European Ambassadors Warn Israel against West Bank Annexation](#)

May 01, 2020, Times of Israel

The envoys from the UK, Germany, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Sweden, Belgium, Denmark, Finland and the EU on Thursday (April 30) warned Jerusalem of severe consequences if it moves ahead with plans to annex parts of the West Bank as part of a government coalition deal.

[Jordan Ends Historic Arrangement with Israel as West Bank Annexation Tensions Rise](#)

May 01, 2020, NBC News

Israeli farmers will no longer be allowed to work their fields in an enclave of southern Jordan, ending a more than 25-year arrangement meant to shore up a historic peace agreement, Jordan's Foreign Ministry announced Thursday (April 30).

[Kuwait Joins Saudi-Qatar-Oman to Reject Anti-India Propaganda](#)

April 28, 2020, The Economic Times

Kuwait, after Oman, Saudi Arabia and Qatar have, rejected attempts to spoil ties with India through 'foreign sponsored' social media handles and posts.

[India Green-lights UAE, Kuwait Request For Ex-military Doctors, Nurses](#)

April 29, 2020, Hindustan Times

The government has given an in-principle approval to requests from Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates to send Indian doctors and paramedics to help the two Gulf countries fight the Covid-19 pandemic.

[Oman asks State Sector Companies to Replace Expats with Locals](#)

April 30, 2020, Indian Express

Oman's Finance Ministry has asked all state-owned companies to replace foreign workers with qualified local Omanis, as part of efforts to develop the national workforce, news agency Reuters reported.

[Airlines in the Middle East Predicted to Lose \\$24 Billion Due to Pandemic](#)

April 24, 2020, Middle East Monitor

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has predicted that airlines in the Middle East could lose up to \$24 billion in revenues due to the suspension of flights as part of preventative measures to combat the coronavirus pandemic.

[Donald Trump Tells Saudi Arabia To Cut Oil Supply or Lose US Military Support: Sources](#)

May 01, 2020, India Today

US President Donald Trump had told Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman that unless the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) started cutting oil production, he would be powerless to stop lawmakers from passing legislation to withdraw U.S. troops from the kingdom, four sources said.

['Destructive Policies': Turkey Slams UAE over Middle East, Africa](#)

May 01, 2020, Al Jazeera

Turkey's Foreign Ministry on Thursday (April 30) accused the United Arab Emirates of pursuing "destructive policies" in northern Africa and the Middle East and called on the Emiratis to abandon what it called a "hostile attitude" towards Ankara.

[Yemen Reports First Coronavirus Deaths, Multiple Cases](#)

April 30, 2020, Al Jazeera

Yemen has reported its first two deaths from the novel coronavirus, its health minister told Yemen TV late on Wednesday (April 29).

United States

United States

[Trump suspects coronavirus outbreak came from China lab, doesn't cite evidence](#)

April 30, 2020, CNBC

President Donald Trump on Thursday said – without offering any evidence – that he has a high degree of confidence that the coronavirus outbreak originated from a laboratory in China.

[Trump says China wants him to lose his re-election bid](#)

April 30, 2020, Reuters

U.S. President Donald Trump said he believes China's handling of the coronavirus pandemic is proof that Beijing "will do anything they can" to make him lose his re-election bid in November.

[Coronavirus government response updates: Trump declares May 'Older Americans Month'](#)

May 1, 2020, ABC News

With the White House coronavirus social distancing guidelines set to expire Thursday, President Donald Trump says he's eager to return to hosting mega rallies and attending sporting events, and more governors are looking to lift restrictions before the weekend.

[Half of U.S. states easing coronavirus restrictions as jobless numbers grow](#)

April 30, 2020, Reuters

The White House let its 2-week-old economic reopening guidelines expire on Thursday as half of all U.S. states forged ahead with their own strategies for easing restrictions on restaurants, retail and other businesses shuttered by the coronavirus crisis.

[Over 3.8 Million Americans Filed for Jobless Benefits Last Week as States Struggle With Coronavirus Claims Surge](#)

May 1, 2020, Wall Street Journal

Nearly four million people filed for unemployment benefits last week, bringing total claims to more than 30 million as states struggle to process an unprecedented wave triggered by the coronavirus pandemic.

[Trump says US can never declare 'total victory' over virus](#)

April 30, 2020, Associated Press

President Donald Trump said that he believes the U.S. can never declare "total victory" over the coronavirus because too many people have died. But he added that he will count it a win when the virus is gone and the economy fully reopened.

[Texas Oil Port Hit by One-Two Punch: Falling Demand and Overproduction](#)

April 28, 2020, The New York Times

Corpus Christi has become the largest energy exporter in the United States, but several expansion projects have been delayed or scuttled, threatening jobs and investments.

[U.S. states, local governments could need nearly \\$1 trillion for pandemic: Pelosi](#)

April 30, 2020, Reuters

U.S. state and local governments could need close to \$1 trillion in aid over several years to cope with the aftermath of the coronavirus pandemic, House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi said on Thursday.

[Biden expected to publicly address sexual assault allegation](#)

May 1, 2020, Associated Press

Joe Biden on Friday was expected to give his first public comments on a sexual assault allegation that has roiled his presidential campaign.

[Trump Attacks Flynn Inquiry Amid New Revelations on F.B.I.](#)

April 30, 2020, The New York Times

The bureau was on the verge of closing its investigation into Michael Flynn in early 2017 when new evidence prompted agents to keep it open, newly disclosed court papers showed.

[Trump: U.S. considering coronavirus testing on some international flights](#)

April 29, 2020, Reuters

President Donald Trump said on Tuesday the United States was considering having passengers on international flights from coronavirus hot spots be tested for the virus.

Europe & Russia

Europe

[Europe's economy just had its worst quarter since records began](#)

April 30, 2020, CNN

Europe's economy suffered its deepest contraction on record in the first quarter and worse is to come as the region crashes into a recession triggered by the introduction of measures to contain the coronavirus.

[UK is past the peak, says PM Johnson, promising lockdown exit plan](#)

April 30, 2020, Reuters

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Thursday Britain was now past the peak of its coronavirus outbreak and promised to set out a plan next week on how the country might start gradually returning to normal life.

[EU chief backs investigation into coronavirus origin and says China should be involved](#)

May 1, 2020, CNBC

The president of the European Commission backed calls for an investigation into the origin of the new coronavirus and said China should be involved in the process.

[EU foreign policy chief denies report on China disinformation altered](#)

April 30, 2020, The Guardian

The European Union's foreign policy chief has rejected allegations that a report on Chinese disinformation and the global coronavirus pandemic was watered down in response to pressure from Beijing.

[European Countries Move Closer to Reopening Continent](#)

April 28, 2020, Wall Street Journal

European governments are preparing to unlock the continent's economy by introducing rules and guidelines that amount to a sweeping reconfiguration of everyday life, from subway seating to classroom size.

[EU GDP shrinks by 2.7% in Q1 amid coronavirus pandemic](#)

April 30, 2020, Anadolu Agency

The European Union's gross domestic product (GDP) contracted by 2.7% on an annual basis, the sharpest declines since the third quarter of 2009, amid COVID-19 pandemic.

[Coronavirus Widens Europe's North-South Economic Divide](#)

April 28, 2020, Wall Street Journal

Most nations of Europe's north are set to recover faster from their medically induced economic comas than those in the south, exacerbating a divergence of fortunes in the eurozone and feeding political tensions over how to pay for the fallout of the coronavirus pandemic.

[EU, Mexico conclude talks to update free trade deal](#)

April 28, 2020, Reuters

The European Union and Mexico finalised a major upgrade to their free trade deal on Tuesday after the two sides agreed to grant reciprocal market access to each other's tenders for public contracts.

[Italy reports largest drop in active COVID-19 cases](#)

April 30, 2020, Anadolu Agency

Italy on Thursday reported 285 new fatalities from the novel coronavirus, bringing the total to 27,967, with the largest daily drop in active cases since the beginning of the outbreak.

[Coronavirus: Spain plans return to 'new normal' by end of June](#)

April 28, 2020, BBC

Spain has announced a four-phase plan to lift its stringent coronavirus lockdown and return to a "new normality" by the end of June.

[Coronavirus downturn: France and Italy in recession as Spain sees record GDP decline](#)

April 30, 2020, Euronews

France and Italy entered a recession in the first three months of this year while Spain's GDP plunged sharply, new data on COVID-19's impact on European economies indicates.

[German minister: Coronavirus crisis won't make Brexit easier](#)

April 24, 2020, Reuters

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said the coronavirus crisis would not make Brexit negotiations easier, adding that Berlin would use its EU presidency in the second half of the year to ensure there is a "good result" for both the EU and Britain.

Russia

[Action plan for economic recovery to address new reality, says Putin](#)

April 30, 2020, TASS

The government should take into consideration the new reality related to the coronavirus pandemic when drafting the action plan on economic recovery, Russian President Vladimir Putin said.

[Russian Direct Investment Fund to announce projects with foreign states to combat COVID-19](#)

April 30, 2020, TASS

Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) together with partners from major foreign sovereign wealth funds and investment institutions plan to announce projects to combat the coronavirus disease in the near future, the Fund said in a press release following a video conference with partners

[Russian envoy blasts US for claiming to be part of Iran nuclear deal](#)

April 30, 2020, TASS

US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo said earlier that Washington was technically still a member of the Iran nuclear deal despite US President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw from it in 2018.

[Russian PM Mishustin Diagnosed With Coronavirus](#)

May 1, 2020, The Moscow Times

Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin has been diagnosed with coronavirus, he said during a video meeting with President Vladimir Putin broadcast on the state.

[NATO to Ramp Up Georgia's Security Against 'Aggressive' Russia: Official](#)

May 1, 2020, The Moscow Times

NATO will involve Georgia in its regional security program to help protect the Black Sea country from Russia's "aggressive" cyber- and misinformation threats, the Western military bloc said.

[Russia's Sibur to start LPG supplies to India in May as European demand tumbles](#)

April 30, 2020, Energy World

Russia's largest petrochemical company Sibur will supply two cargoes of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) to India in May for the first time ever as it looks for new markets after demand in Europe fell sharply due to the coronavirus outbreak, according to traders and shipping data.

Africa & Latin America

Africa

[Great Power Competition and the Scramble for Africa](#)

April 30, 2020, FPRI

The world faces a renewed struggle for influence in Africa. Notably, China, Russia, some Gulf States (Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar) and Turkey have employed private entities, state-run companies, and predatory lending and diplomacy to secure economic and political power across the continent. Concomitantly, the Trump administration is considering reducing its involvement in Africa to focus on "great power competition" with China and Russia, a priority in its 2017 National Security Strategy.

[China's expensive bet on Africa has failed](#)

May 1, 2020, Nikkei Asian Review

China is facing growing pressure to forgive the tens of billions of dollars of loans it has made to African countries since the early 2000s. The mistreatment of African residents in China during the outbreak has fueled cries of racism and prompted diplomatic protests against Beijing.

[India promises help on coronavirus to four African nations](#)

April 25, 2020, Live Mint

In recent years, India has accelerated its diplomatic engagement with the African continent where strategic rival China has made huge inroads with major investments and infrastructure projects besides loans on easy terms

[Rwanda total debt hits \\$4.9b amid lockdown](#)

April 30, 2020, The East African

Rwanda has borrowed extensively in the past month to mitigate against the adverse effects of the coronavirus pandemic, accruing an accumulated debt of close to \$200 million in March alone.

[UAE officials 'visit Sudan' to rally support for Libya's Haftar](#)

May 1, 2020, Al Jazeera

Several top United Arab Emirates (UAE) officials visited the Sudanese capital to rally support and recruit fighters for Libya's renegade commander Khalifa Haftar.

Latin America

[Venezuela denounces pressure from Brazil to withdraw diplomats](#)

April 30, 2020, Prensa Latina

The Venezuelan government denounced the undue pressure exerted by the Brazilian executive to withdraw Venezuelan diplomatic personnel from that country before May 2, the Foreign Ministry reported.

[Venezuela sets new price controls, with eggs costing more than a month's wages](#)

May 1, 2020, Reuters

Venezuela published a list of new price controls for 27 basic food items, fixing the price of eggs, some cuts of meat, and sausage above the monthly minimum wage President Nicolas Maduro set for the inflation-stricken country this week.

[Iran Is Hauling Gold Bars Out of Venezuela's Almost-Empty Vaults](#)

April 30, 2020, Bloomberg

Out of cash and desperate for help in propping up its oil industry, Venezuela is raiding its gold vaults and handing tons of bars to its long-time ally Iran, according to people with direct knowledge of the matter.

[Venezuela now wants to sell its BOE-stored gold to the U.N. for coronavirus relief - reports](#)

April 30, 2020, Kitco

Unable to repatriate its gold back from the Bank of England (BOE), Venezuela now wants to sell part of it to the United Nations to help with coronavirus relief, according to news reports.

[US to Mobilize Military Reservists in 'Anti-Drug' Operation Against Venezuela](#)

April 30, 2020, Venezuela Analysis

US President Donald Trump issued an executive order on Thursday activating armed forces reservists for an "anti-narcotics" mission in the Caribbean.

[Lawmakers: Trump's Funding Freeze for WHO Hits Venezuela](#)

April 30, 2020, The New York Times

As much as \$110 million in U.S. funding for disease prevention in Latin America as well as U.S. support for Venezuelan migrants has been thrown into doubt as part of President Donald Trump's decision to halt funding to the World Health Organization over its response to the coronavirus pandemic.



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