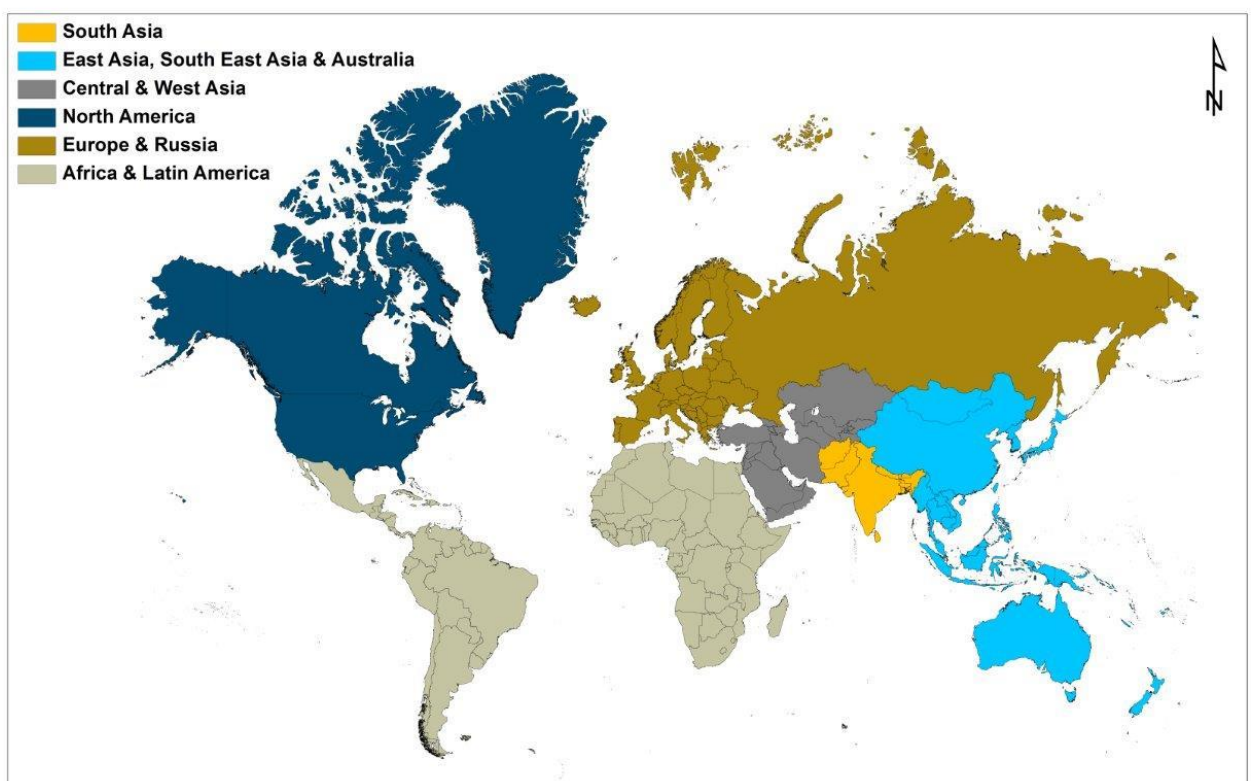




Delhi Policy Group

# DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH



Volume IV, Issue 19 | May 8, 2020



## **DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH**

### **Volume 4, Issue 19**

#### **ABOUT US**

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

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

#### **DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH**

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## South Asia

### India

#### [India's Foreign Affairs Strategy](#)

May 2020, Brookings India

In this changing world, what are some of the basic and long-term drivers of India's foreign policy which determine the overarching goal? What is India's strategy to achieve those goals? What should India be doing?

#### [India to Send Investment Pitches to More Than 1,000 American Companies to Relocate From China: Report](#)

May 7, 2020, News 18

In an effort to gain more firms for India, the Centre is seeking to lure more than 1,000 US businesses, including medical devices giant Abbott Laboratories, to relocate from China even as President Donald Trump's administration has been accusing Beijing for its role in the coronavirus pandemic, according to a report by Bloomberg.

#### [South Asia unveils India-China balancing act during COVID-19](#)

May 7, 2020, The Hindu

Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, which are actively engaging New Delhi and Beijing during the pandemic, are standing out in showcasing an 'independent' foreign policy, squarely fixated on promoting their interests.

#### [World will need a new template of globalisation post COVID-19: PM Modi](#)

May 4, 2020, The Indian Express

The prime minister said humanity is facing its most serious crisis in many decades and that NAM can help promote global solidarity as it has often been the world's moral voice.

#### [South Block is turning the Covid crisis into an opportunity to conduct diplomatic engagement online](#)

May 5, 2020, The Indian Express

The Foreign Office is merely following other professions that are adapting to restrictions on travel across borders and within them by the corona crisis. Work that was considered deeply inter-personal, like teaching, has now gone virtual as universities moved to cope with the massive disruption in their academic

schedules. Diplomacy is another profession that requires facetime for both formal and seemingly informal work.

[Modi had turned his back on NAM and SAARC. Covid brings them back on his table](#)

May 5, 2020, The Print

The coronavirus crisis left global leaders scratching their heads. But Modi saw an opportunity and launched a diplomatic blitzkrieg — first with SAARC, then with NAM.

[At His First NAM Meeting, Modi Raises Terrorism, Fake News During COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

May 5, 2020, The Wire

For the first time since he took over six years ago, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday took part in a summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, albeit virtually, where he raised issues about terrorism, fake news and “doctored videos” with an eye towards India’s Western neighbour.

[Operation Samudra Setu: Indian Navy ship Jalashwa reaches Maldives to bring back Indian citizens](#)

May 8, 2020, DNA

India has launched a massive repatriation effort, the largest in history, to evacuate Indian citizens who have been stranded in various countries due to the travel lockdown over COVID-19 pandemic.

[Redefining Security](#)

May 8, 2020, The Indian Express

The freezing of fresh capital acquisitions by the defence forces, delays in procurement and induction of existing orders, and austerity measures in the administrative domain, were expected. It is easy to approach this problem tactically by issuing directives and guidelines and then seeking periodic feedback from the military on the progress made, targets met, shortfalls and remedial measures instituted.

[The new capitalism: In the foreseeable future, politics will drive economic policies, not market-based rationality](#)

May 4, 2020, The Indian Express

What will the pandemic do to this political thrust that had already become a reality in several major economies? In any realistic political sense, this question cannot be answered unless we pay special attention to how Globalisation 2.0 has benefitted China.

[China-backed AIIB approves \\$500 million loan for India's Covid-19 response](#)

May 8, 2020, The Hindustan Times

Beijing-backed Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) said it had approved a \$500 million loan to India to help the country navigate the coronavirus pandemic.

## **Pakistan**

['Afghan families trapped in lockdown to get Rs12,000 each'](#)

May 3, 2020, The News

Pakistan Minister for SAFRON and Narcotics Control Shehryar Khan Afridi said the UNHCR had decided to replicate the Ehsaas Programme of Pakistan under which 36000 Afghan refugee families trapped in lockdown would be provided Rs12,000 each.

[IMF sees Pakistan's \\$1.9bln to fizzle out in 15 months](#)

May 3, 2020, The News

Pakistan's gross international reserves are likely to dip \$1.82 billion over the next 15 months as the pandemic is taking toll on the country's exports, remittances and foreign inflows, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said. IMF estimated gross international reserves for pre-COVID-19 scenario at around \$12.6 billion for the current fiscal year, but they are now estimated to decline to \$11.9 billion till June-end 2020, indicating a \$587 million drop.

[New US diplomat for South Asia designated](#)

May 5, 2020, Dawn

Deputy Assistant Secretary Thomas L. Vajda will look after South Asian affairs at the US State Department when current chief diplomat for the region, Alice G. Wells, retires on May 22, the department confirmed.

### [Injured PTM leader passes away](#)

May 3, 2020, Dawn

Arif Wazir, a key leader of the Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement (PTM) who suffered serious injuries in a gun attack in South Waziristan tribal district, died in Islamabad's Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (Pims). His body was later sent to Wana, the district headquarters of South Waziristan.

### [Govt to end lockdown from 9th in phases](#)

May 7, 2020, The Express Tribune

Prime Minister Imran Khan announced that the National Coordination Committee on Covid-19 had decided to end the coronavirus-induced lockdown imposed across the country for nearly one and a half months from May 9 (Saturday) in different phases as the tally of patients suffering from the infections surged past 24,500 and the death toll moved close to 600.

## **Afghanistan**

### [Abdullah says 'tentative' agreement reached with Ghani](#)

May 2, 2020, Dawn

A bitter feud between Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and his rival Abdullah Abdullah appeared closer to resolution after Abdullah said the two men had moved forward in talks. "We have made progress in negotiations & reached tentative agreement on a range of principles. Work on details is underway to finalise the agreement," Abdullah said on Twitter.

### [At least five killed in attack on Afghan military centre](#)

May 5, 2020, Dawn

The Taliban claimed responsibility for a truck bomb in southern Helmand province that killed at least five Afghan security force members. The attack took place at a military centre where at least 150 members of the Afghan army and intelligence wing were stationed on May 3. Afghan government forces in the last two months have suffered heavy casualties across the country. The violence poses an immediate threat to a fragile peace deal between the United States and the Taliban, signed in February, as the military is forced to fight an emboldened Taliban with less US support.

### [US's Khalilzad Meets with Indian Officials on Afghan Peace](#)

May 7, 2020, Tolo News

The US peace envoy for Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad, on May 7 met with Indian officials and discussed the US peace and reconciliation efforts in Afghanistan. Khalilzad was accompanied by the senior director in the US National Security Council, Lisa Curtis, and the US ambassador to India, Mr. Ken Juster.

### [933 Taliban Prisoners Freed by Afghan Govt. More Promised](#)

May 7, 2020, Tolo News

The Afghan government released about 31 Taliban prisoners on May 6 from Pul-e-Charkhi prison in Kabul, bringing the number of released Taliban prisoners to 933. The NSC said that with the release of 527 Taliban in the upcoming days the numbers will reach 1,500, and the "first round" of the prisoner release will be complete.

### [Afghan lawmakers say 45 migrants drowned after Iranian guards forced them into river](#)

May 7, 2020, Reuters

Iranian border guards killed 45 Afghan migrant workers trying to cross into Iran this month by forcing them into a raging mountain torrent at gunpoint, according to two Afghan lawmakers investigating the deaths. The incident has triggered a diplomatic crisis between the neighbours, who share trade, economic and cultural ties. Iran has denied that such an event took place on its soil.

### [U.S. Afghanistan envoy, Taliban leaders hold 'lengthy' meeting on Afghan peace](#)

May 7, 2020, Washington Times

The U.S. special envoy to Afghanistan said he participated in a "lengthy" meeting with Taliban leaders as the militant group and Afghan government concerns mount that a peace deal could crumble amid ongoing violence and the coronavirus pandemic. Zalmay Khalilzad, who has led the U.S. negotiations, met with the representatives in Doha, Qatar, the State Department announced, as part of a regional trip in support of reducing violence and continuing intra-Afghan dialogue with the Taliban.

### [China Ramps Up Role In Afghanistan Ahead of U.S. Withdrawal](#)

May 5, 2020, Reuters

As the United States and its allies begin what looks like a final drawdown of their forces from Afghanistan, China appears to be expanding its role and influence in



the country. Beijing is actively enhancing contacts and possibly building robust relations with the Afghan government in Kabul and the Taliban, visibly pushing for a reconciliation between its longstanding ally Pakistan and Afghanistan. China is underpinning its diplomacy with the prospects of greater trade and investment in the impoverished country.

## Bangladesh

### [Bengal blocks goods at Bangladesh border, warned](#)

May 7, 2020, Tribune India

The Centre has slammed the West Bengal Government for not allowing the movement of goods carriers through Indo-Bangladesh border, which, it said, is an "act of violation of the Constitution and will have international implications".

### [Rice exports to Bangladesh via West Bengal likely to commence soon](#)

May 8, 2020, The Economic Times

Rice exports to Bangladesh through West Bengal are likely to begin soon as the ministry of home affairs (MHA) has taken a tough stand against the state government for not allowing border trade with India's eastern neighbour. MHA has asked the state chief secretary to immediately allow transportation of essentials through land ports on the Indo-Bangladesh border. Traders said that trucks loaded with rice are stuck at the border, causing daily losses to the freight companies.

### [India donates Bangladesh 30,000 COVID-19 testing kits](#)

May 6, 2020, Outlook

India donated 30,000 COVID-19 test kits to Bangladesh as part of its emergency medical assistance to the neighbouring country which has reported 11,719 coronavirus cases and 186 fatalities.

## Nepal

### [Will COVID-19 Reshape Nepal's Diplomacy?](#)

May 8, 2020, The Diplomat

What will Nepal's relationships with India, China, and the U.S. look like after COVID-19?

### [Why China's maneuvers in Nepal politics worry India](#)

May 5, 2020, The Times of India

China's strategy in Nepal hinges on an important fact — the unity among the different factions of the Nepal Communist party.

### [Nepal plans to relax lockdown, restart economy](#)

May 2, 2020, Northeast Now

Nepal is charting out plans to ease the nationwide lockdown imposed in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, in a bid to gradually restart the stalled economy.

## **Sri Lanka**

### [The Belt and Road in Sri Lanka: Beyond the Debt Trap Discussion](#)

May 7, 2020, The Diplomat

More than an overstated "debt trap," Sri Lanka should consider the environmental and labour impacts of Chinese investment.

### [Sri Lanka's poll date challenged at Supreme Court](#)

May 6, 2020, The Hindu

Sri Lanka's parliamentary poll date of June 20 has been challenged at the Supreme Court, with four recently-filed petitions questioning its timing amid the coronavirus pandemic.

### [Australia-Sri Lanka defence co-operation in response to COVID-19](#)

May 2, 2020, Ft.lk

Australian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka David Holly and Australian Defence Adviser Group Captain Sean Unwin yesterday handed over Australian supplied Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to National Operation Centre for Prevention of COVID-19 Head and Army Commander Lieutenant General Shavendra Silva.

## East & South East Asia

### China

#### [US system fuels Trump team's political hooliganism](#)

May 7, 2020, Global Times

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Wednesday the US is uncertain that the coronavirus originated from a laboratory in Wuhan. But he also claimed "there is significant evidence that this came from the laboratory." "Those statements can both be true," he further quibbled.

#### [Chinese forex data signals it is unlikely to dump US Treasuries](#)

May 7, 2020, Global Times

China's foreign exchange reserves rose slightly to \$3.09 trillion at the end of April, data from the State Administration of Foreign Exchange (SAFE) showed on Thursday. If anything, the latest statistics indicate China has not moved to reduce its US Treasury holdings, despite US media reports that Washington may renege on its debt obligations to China.

#### [Why Trump won't cancel US debt obligations toward China ?](#)

May 7, 2020, Global Times

Among the latest wave of ill-intentioned suggestions made by some US politicians to blame China and distract from the Trump Administration's errors in handling the COVID-19 crisis, defaulting on the US debt owned by China is the worst possible idea. The push to "make China pay for the virus" by refusing to honor repayments on US bonds held by China came from US Senator Lindsay Graham and has been refuted by voices including Trump himself and his top economic advisor Larry Kudlow.

#### [EU COVID-19 review should avoid politicizing WHO](#)

May 7, 2020, Global Times

The European Union is calling for a timely review of the international response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the World Health Organization's performance, Reuters reported Thursday. Such review could be conducive, especially to the world's response to similar crises in the future. Some would take the EU's resolution, to be debated by WHO health ministers meeting virtually on May 18-19, as a document to hold the UN health agency and China accountable for the pandemic. This is a malicious misinterpretation of the EU's real intention,

which, according to the Reuters report, is to address the long-term consequences on health and "gaps in pandemic preparedness" and to underscore cooperation.

[China resists politically driven COVID-19 probes](#)

May 7, 2020, Global Times

Any investigation to define the time and origin of the novel coronavirus should be based on a rigorous scientific study, which can't be interpreted in a political context nor based on presumptions of guilt, Chinese officials and experts said as the World Health Organization (WHO) mulls on a new mission to China to seek the origin of the virus amid growing noises, particularly some ill-intentioned attempts from US politicians in pursuing viral conspiracies as part of a smear campaign against China, posing a serious threat to the global combat against the disease.

[US has to adopt pragmatic approach to 5G: China Daily editorial](#)

May 7, 2020, China Daily

Having put Huawei on its restrictive Entity List last year, citing national security concerns, the United States Commerce Department has reportedly drafted a new rule that will allow US companies to work with the Chinese telecommunications enterprise to set the standards for 5G networks.

[Taiwan separatists up to their tricks again: China Daily editorial](#)

May 7, 2020, China daily

Showing that they will willingly break the bounds of decency to pursue their separatist agenda, the secessionist-minded forces in Taiwan are once again trying to exploit the novel coronavirus outbreak and the World Health Assembly to advance their cause.

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

April 29, 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.

### [Chinese, U.S. chief trade negotiators hold phone talks](#)

May 8, 2020, Xinhua

Chinese Vice Premier Liu He, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chief of the Chinese side of the China-U.S. comprehensive economic dialogue, held a phone conversation with U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin Friday morning.

### [China to join WHO collaboration initiative against COVID-19 pandemic](#)

May 6, 2020, Xinhua

China has decided to join the international collaboration initiative launched by the World Health Organization (WHO) to combat COVID-19, a Foreign Ministry spokesperson said on Wednesday. On April 24, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus announced to launch an international collaboration to accelerate the development, production, and equitable distribution of vaccines, diagnostics, and therapeutics for COVID-19.

### [Washington fans anti-China rhetoric to shift responsibility for COVID-19 crisis](#)

May 6, 2020, Xinhua

With COVID-19 cases and deaths mounting daily, the U.S. government has intensified attempts to fan the flames of anti-China rhetoric to divert attention from its direct responsibility for the crisis.

## **Japan**

### [Pandemic sets Japan on course for recession as spending and service activity plunge](#)

May 8, 2020, The Japan Times

Japan's household spending plunged in March and service sector activity shrank at a record pace in April, reinforcing expectations that the COVID-19 pandemic is tipping the world's third-largest economy into deep recession.

### [In the age of COVID-19, world leaders struggle to adjust to online diplomacy](#)

May 7, 2020, The Japan Times

In the world of diplomacy, gone are the days of handshakes, bilateral meetings or international summits attracting a horde of world leaders and diplomats to discuss issues of the day.

### [Abe and Trump affirm cooperation over coronavirus response and drugs](#)

May 8, 2020, The Japan Times

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and U.S. President Donald Trump agreed Friday to cooperate over their countries' coronavirus response and development of treatment drugs and vaccines, a top Japanese official said.

### [Abe, Putin agree on cooperation over coronavirus response](#)

May 8, 2020, The Japan Times

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Russian President Vladimir Putin agreed during phone talks Thursday to jointly work toward containing the spread of coronavirus.

### [Japan to change location of missile defense system amid local outcry](#)

May 7, 2020, Japan Today

Japan will find a new location for its new Aegis Ashore land-based missile defense system amid strong local opposition to deployment in the north-eastern city of Akita, government sources said.

### [Japan to help shift manufacturing to ASEAN from China after virus disrupts supply chains](#)

May 5, 2020, The Japan Times

Japan will launch a subsidy program to encourage domestic manufacturers to transfer their overseas production bases to Southeast Asia, as the coronavirus pandemic has greatly disrupted their supply chains heavily dependent on China.

### [Scapegoating the WHO as the CHO](#)

May 3, 2020, The Japan Times

The coronavirus pandemic and the resulting socio-economic crises highlight the need for global circuit breakers to identify, isolate and quarantine systemic risks early. They give a human face to the reality that the institutions of international governance have lagged behind the rapid emergence of global threats.

## Korea

### [Kim Jong-un congratulates Xi on containing COVID-19](#)

May 8, 2020, The Korea Herald

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un sought to strengthen ties with China by sending a message to Chinese President Xi Jinping congratulating him on gaining control over the COVID-19 situation.

### [Trump Still Demands Massive Hike for USFK Upkeep](#)

May 8, 2020, The Chosun Ilbo

U.S. President Donald Trump is reportedly demanding US\$1.3 billion a year to maintain American troops in Korea. That is a whopping 53.3 percent higher than the W1.4 trillion Korea had to pay last year.

### [N.Korea Building Missile Hangar Near Pyongyang](#)

May 7, 2020, The Chosun Ilbo

North Korea is close to completing a missile storage facility near Pyongyang Sunan International Airport.

### [Kim Jong-un Reappears - at Fertilizer Plant](#)

May 2, 2020, The Chosun Ilbo

After a wave of news reports that North Korea's leader was gravely sick or even dead, Kim Jong-un has reappeared in public, for the first time in 21 days, at a fertilizer factory.

### [Two-minute COVID-19 antibody test kit set to hit market](#)

May 8, 2020, The Korea Times

A Korean company's rapid antibody test kit for COVID-19, which can deliver results in just two minutes, is ready for mass production.

## Southeast Asia

### [US Defense Secretary Mark Esper Says Aggressive Behaviour by China in South China Sea](#)

May 06, 2020, Defence Aviation Post

The Chinese Army is indulging in aggressive behaviour in the South China Sea and the Chinese Communist Party has ramped up its disinformation campaign to try to shift the blame on coronavirus and burnish its image, US Defense Secretary Mark Esper said.

## [Weapons, Viruses, and The New Defense Reality in Southeast Asia](#)

May 07, 2020, War on the Rocks

What happens when the greatest threat to national security comes from a virus? What does that mean for defense spending, modernization, and civil-military relations? In Southeast Asia – where militaries have long had an outsized role in politics, economics, and society – the answers to these questions are still very much up for grabs.

## [New Cybersecurity Report Says China-Based Group Is Hacking Asia-Pacific Governments](#)

May 07, 2020, CNBC

A China-based hacking group has been quietly carrying out a five-year cyber espionage campaign against Asia-Pacific governments after it previously “slipped off the radar,” a new report claims.

## [Delayed South China Sea talks expose China’s complex relationship with neighbours during pandemic](#)

May 07, 2020, SCMP

Negotiations between China and its Southeast Asian neighbours for a South China Sea code of conduct have been postponed as the nations involved put their efforts into containing the Covid-19 pandemic, creating uncertainty about whether the two sides can work together amid rising tensions in the contested territory.

## [Not China's Cup of Tea: New Online Pan-Asia Alliance Emerges From Thai-Chinese Meme War](#)

May 07, 2020, VOA

A Twitter war with Chinese nationalists has forged a new online alliance among social media users in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Thailand, highlighting public solidarity among some pro-democracy movements in Asia.

## [Myanmar Sailors Arrested In China For Smuggling](#)

May 07, 2020, Eleven Myanmar

The Myanmar Embassy in Beijing released a statement that the Shanghai Maritime Bureau arrested seven Myanmar sailors working on Hong Yi ship near the Jetty in Shanghai on April 28th for smuggling.



### [Indonesia Calls For Parties to Exercise Self-Restraint in South China Sea amid Pandemic](#)

May 07, 2020, The Jakarta Post

Indonesia expressed its concern about recent activities in the South China Sea that could potentially lead to an escalation in tensions at a time when a collective global effort is needed to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

### [Indonesia Asks Why Chinese Fishing Ship Dumped Sailors in Sea](#)

May 08, 2020, Nikkei Asian Review

Indonesia on Thursday demanded an explanation from China over sea burials of Indonesian crew members on Chinese fishing vessels, amid reports of mistreatment..

## Central & West Asia

### Central Asia

#### [Uzbekistan looks to Pakistani ports](#)

May 8, 2020, DAWN

Uzbekistan on Thursday formally sought Pakistan's support for accession to the Quadrilateral Traffic in Transit Agreement (QTTA) in a bid to utilise Karachi and Gwadar ports for its trade operations.

#### [Uzbekistan's stateless: UN hails landmark move allowing 50,000 to apply for citizenship](#)

May 6, 2020, Euro News

A landmark law in Uzbekistan will allow an estimated 50,000 stateless people to claim citizenship, in a move hailed by the United Nations which is now calling on other countries to follow suit.

#### [Uzbekistan moves to lower cost of cotton for manufacturers](#)

May 6, 2020, Eurasia Net

Cotton grown in Uzbekistan is to be sold at a rate pegged to prices on the New York Mercantile Exchange following a May 6 presidential decree in support of the textile industry.

#### [Uzbekistan says ready to help neighboring Kazakhstan after Uzbek dam burst](#)

May 6, 2020, Xinhua Net

Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev said Tuesday that he regrets the dam burst in Uzbekistan has also caused flooding in neighboring Kazakhstan and expressed willingness of his government to help in the aftermath of the disaster.

#### [Dam burst displaces over 70,000 in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan](#)

May 5, 2020, Accu Weather

A dam located at the Sardoba Reservoir burst late last week and led to significant flooding along the Syr Darya River near the Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan border. It is being reported that over 70,000 people have been displaced.

#### [Kazakhstan Calls In Volunteers to Form Paramilitary COVID-19 Response Team](#)

May 7, 2020, The Astana Times

For the first time, volunteer military personnel are also being called in to serve their nation in the battle against coronavirus as the Kazakh government has decided to double-down and tackle the spread of the virus head-on. The country

has been in a state of emergency since April 2 and this may not change anytime soon.

### [Understanding Sinophobia in Central Asia](#)

May 1, 2020, The Diplomat

Sinophobia in Central Asia is real. But does that translate into a threat to China's lasting presence in the region?

### [OSCE appraises Turkmenistan's counter-terrorism strategy](#)

May 7 2020, Menafn.com

OSCE has appraised Turkmenistan's National Strategy to prevent violent extremism and counter terrorism for 2020-2024, said Thomas Greminger Secretary-general of OSCE, Trend reports with reference to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan.

### **West Asia**

### [Massive Repatriation of Indians Begin with Flights from the UAE](#)

May 07, 2020, Arab News

The first wave of a massive exercise to repatriate hundreds of thousands of Indians stuck abroad began Thursday (May 07), with two flights departing from the United Arab Emirates.

### [First Evacuation Flight from Bahrain Carrying 177 Keralites to Arrive in Kochi](#)

May 08, 2020, Mathrubhumi

Putting an end to the anxious wait of the Indians stranded in Bahrain, the first evacuation flight to India will take off on Friday (May 08) carrying 177 passengers.

### [Covid-19: First Repatriation Flight from Oman to India Will Leave with 170 Passengers](#)

May 06, 2020, Times of Oman

The first repatriation flight from Oman to India will leave from Muscat International Airport with around 170 passengers on Saturday (May 09).

### [U.S.' Khalilzad To Meet Taliban in Qatar, Visit India, Pakistan](#)

May 06, 2020, Reuters

The U.S. special representative for Afghanistan will call for a reduction in Afghan violence, the start of intra-Afghan peace talks and cooperation against the new coronavirus on a trip to Qatar, India and Pakistan, the U.S. State Department said.

### [Kadhimi is the New Iraqi PM](#)

May 08, 2020, The Tribune

The government of Iraqi PM-designate Mustafa al-Kadhimi won a vote of confidence in Parliament, putting an end to more than five months of political turmoil in Iraq.

#### [President Trump Vetoes Iran War Powers Resolution](#)

May 07, 2020, CNN International

President Donald Trump on Wednesday (06 May) vetoed the Iran War Powers resolution, a bipartisan effort to rein in presidential authority to use military force against Iran without congressional approval.

#### [Failing to Override a Veto, Senate Falls Short of Curbing Trump's Iran War Powers](#)

May 07, 2020, The New York Times

The Senate failed on Thursday to overturn President Trump's veto of a resolution seeking to block him from taking further military action against Iran without explicit approval from Congress, falling short in its latest effort to curtail his unilateral moves on matters of war and peace.

#### [Israeli Defence Minister Claims 'breakthrough' in Developing Antibody Against Coronavirus](#)

May 06, 2020, The Indian Express

A "significant breakthrough" in developing an antibody to the novel coronavirus has been made by Israel's main biological research institute IIBR that can attack the virus and neutralise it within the bodies of those who contract it, country's Defence Minister Naftali Bennett confirmed.

#### [US to Remove Patriots, Other Military Assets from Saudi Arabia](#)

May 07, 2020, Al Jazeera

The United States is reportedly removing Patriot anti-missile systems, along with other military assets, from the kingdom of Saudi Arabia as it winds down a military build-up that began when tensions with Iran flared up last year.

#### [Private Companies Looking to Centre To Allow Repatriation of More Indians: Indian Envoy to Saudi Arabia](#)

May 07, 2020, India Today

Indian ambassador to Saudi Arabia Dr Ausaf Sayeed expressed hope that the Indian government will give clearance to Saudi private companies who wish to send Indian nationals home at their own expense.

#### [Turkey Blocks Foreign Banks in Attempt to Stem Currency Slide](#)

May 07, 2020, The Wall Street Journal

Turkey blocked three international banks from trading its currency Thursday (May 07), an effort to stymie investors who are betting that the country's weak financial standing will continue to deteriorate.

### [Top Houthi Leader Killed amid Fierce Battles in Yemen](#)

May 08, 2020, Anadolu Agency

A prominent Houthi rebel commander was killed Thursday (May 07) amid fierce clashes in central Yemen, according to local sources. Mohamed Abdel Karim al-Hamran, who commanded special forces in Marib and Bayda provinces, was buried in the capital Sana'a.

## United States

### United States

#### [Trump, Pence test negative after White House valet contracts coronavirus](#)

May 7, 2020, Reuters

U. S. President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence have tested negative for the novel coronavirus after a member of the U.S. military who works at the White House as a valet came down with the virus.

#### [Trump says coronavirus tests are 'overrated,' but he will get tested daily](#)

May 7, 2020, CNBC

President Donald Trump said Thursday that testing for the coronavirus is "somewhat overrated" shortly after announcing that he will be tested for the disease every single day.

#### [Trump administration buries CDC guidance on reopening amid pandemic](#)

May 7, 2020, The Guardian

The Trump administration shelved a document created by the nation's top disease investigators with step-by-step advice to local authorities on how and when to reopen restaurants and other public places during the still-raging coronavirus outbreak.

#### [Malaria drug touted by Trump for coronavirus fails another test](#)

May 8, 2020, Reuters

The malaria treatment repeatedly championed by U.S. President Donald Trump as a "game changer" in the fight against the novel coronavirus has again failed to show a benefit in patients hospitalized with COVID-19, according to a study.

#### [Trump says coronavirus worse 'attack' than Pearl Harbor](#)

May 7, 2020, BBC

US President Donald Trump has described the coronavirus pandemic as the "worst attack" ever on the United States, pointing the finger at China.

[Global report: deaths are price of reopening, says Trump, as China warns risks remain](#)

May 7, 2020, The Guardian

Donald Trump has again suggested the US may need to accept the reality of more deaths in order to start reopening the economy, as governments around the world continued to ease out of lockdown restrictions.

[Ex-Trump adviser Michael Flynn charges of lying to FBI dropped](#)

May 7, 2020, BBC

The US Department of Justice is moving to drop the criminal charges against former national security adviser Michael Flynn. He was among the former aides to President Donald Trump convicted during the special counsel's investigation into Russian election interference.

[U.S. companies got emergency government loans despite having months of cash](#)

May 7, 2020, Reuters

When American companies recently applied for U.S. government loans meant to help small businesses survive the coronavirus crisis, they had to certify they needed the cash to cover basic needs like salaries and rent. The money, up to \$10 million, was meant to tide them over for eight weeks. Some recipients, though, had considerable cash on hand.

[Great Depression-like U.S. job losses, unemployment rate expected in April](#)

May 8, 2020, Reuters

The U.S. economy likely lost a staggering 22 million jobs in April, in what would be the steepest plunge in payrolls since the Great Depression and the starkest sign yet of how the novel coronavirus pandemic is battering the world's biggest economy.

[Michigan, California move to reopen factories as U.S. jobless ranks grow](#)

May 7, 2020, Reuters

Michigan and California, two U.S. manufacturing powerhouses have allowed factories to reopen from coronavirus lockdowns over the next few days, as millions more Americans joined the ranks of workers left jobless by the pandemic.

### [New York governor extends eviction ban to protect those most vulnerable](#)

May 7, 2020, Reuters

New York will extend a moratorium on evictions for non-payment of rent for another two months until Aug. 20 to alleviate anxiety over the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic, Governor Andrew Cuomo told a daily briefing on Thursday.

### [H-1B spouses get relief as Trump administration takes U-turn on H-4 visas](#)

May 8, 2020, Times Now

In a surprise move, the Donald Trump administration made a U-turn in its plan to review and possibly revoke H-4 employment authorisation document (EAD), which allows spouses of H-1B visa holders to legally work in the country.

### [Failing to Override a Veto, Senate Falls Short of Curbing Trump's Iran War Powers](#)

May 7, 2020, The New York Times

The defeat of the measure allows President Trump to continue to act unilaterally on Iran, in defiance of Congress.

### [Trump campaign launching \\$10 million effort attacking Joe Biden](#)

May 7, 2020, CNN

President Donald Trump's re-election campaign is launching a \$10 million effort to attack presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden.



## Europe & Russia

### Europe

#### [UK overtakes Italy with Europe's highest official coronavirus death toll](#)

May 5, 2020, Reuters

The United Kingdom has overtaken Italy to report the highest official death toll from the new coronavirus in Europe, figures released on Tuesday showed, increasing pressure on Prime Minister Boris Johnson over his response to the crisis.

#### [Spain's deputy PM calls for EU to step up or risk extinction](#)

May 8, 2020, Financial Times

Spain's radical left deputy prime minister has called for the EU to guarantee a minimum income for all of its 450m citizens as he warned that the bloc would not survive if it did not show solidarity with countries worst hit by coronavirus.

#### [Coronavirus: EU facing 'deep and uneven recession'](#)

May 6, 2020, BBC News

The European Union faces a deep and uneven recession, according to a new forecast from the EU's Commission. The bloc's executive arm predicts a recovery in 2021 but warns that the uncertainty is exceptionally high.

#### [EU regret after state-run newspaper China Daily removes COVID-19 mention from op-ed](#)

May 7, 2020, Euro News

The EU has expressed regret after its opinion article in the China Daily newspaper was watered down to remove references to the coronavirus outbreak beginning in the country.

#### [Scientist advising UK government on coronavirus steps down after lockdown breach](#)

May 6, 2020, Reuters

A British scientist advising the government on its coronavirus response resigned from his role on Tuesday, after the Daily Telegraph reported he had broken lockdown rules by meeting a female friend.

### [Commission steps up fight against money laundering and terrorist financing](#)

May 7, 2020, European Commission

The European Commission has today put forward a comprehensive approach to further strengthen the EU's fight against money laundering and terrorist financing.

### [EU wants UK to share more data before it grants access to crime-fighting system](#)

May 7, 2020, The Guardian

The UK should be denied access to an EU crime-fighting system until it agrees to share more fingerprint data with member states, a European parliamentary committee has said.

### [Germany could rescue Lufthansa with \\$10 billion bailout](#)

May 7, 2020, CNN

The German government could rescue Europe's leading global airline by taking a 25% stake as part of a €9 billion (\$9.7 billion) bailout.

### [Germany's Reopening Offers Hope for a Semblance of Normal Life](#)

May 6, 2020, The New York Times

Europe's largest democracy is now confident enough to lift most restrictions on businesses and schools.

### [Italy reports 274 new deaths, government faces divisions](#)

May 7, 2020, Anadolu Agency

As health emergency recedes, rising political divisions shake government. Italy on Thursday reported 274 new fatalities from coronavirus, bringing the total to 29,958, as the government faces rising internal rifts.

### [Barcelona and Madrid may be left in lockdown as Spain lifts curbs](#)

May 8, 2020, Al Jazeera

Madrid and Barcelona, Spain's two largest cities, could remain under virtual lockdown as the rest of the country eases its way towards some semblance of normal life.

### [Belarus presidential elections to be held on August 9, Belta reports](#)

May 8, 2020, Reuters

The Belarusian parliament said on Friday presidential elections would be held on Aug. 9, with the incumbent Alexander Lukashenko, who has ruled the country since 1994, widely expected to win a sixth term in office.

## **Russia**

### [Putin Accepts U.S. Ventilators as Russia's Coronavirus Cases Surge – Trump](#)

May 8, 2020, The Moscow Times

U. S. President Donald Trump has said that Russian President Vladimir Putin accepted his offer to provide ventilators as Russia continued to see record-setting daily coronavirus cases.

### [US: Russia working to put Syrian militia in Libya](#)

May 8, 2020, Andolou Agency

Russia is working with Syria's Bashar al-Assad regime to transfer mercenaries to Libya to fight alongside renegade commander Khalifa Haftar's forces, said US envoy for Syria James Jeffrey, according to multiple reports.

### [Putin Hands World War II Medal to North Korea's Kim Jong Un](#)

May 5, 2020, The Moscow Times

Russian President Vladimir Putin has given North Korean leader Kim Jong Un a commemorative World War II medal for his role in preserving the memory of Soviet soldiers killed in North Korea, Russia's Embassy in Pyongyang said

### [Kazakh, Russian presidents discuss upcoming meeting of Supreme Eurasian Economic Council](#)

May 8, 2020, TASS

Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin have discussed preparations for a meeting of the Eurasian Economic Council, the Kazakh presidential press service said in a statement on Thursday, following a telephone call between the two presidents.

### [Putin's official visit to China may take place in September](#)

May 8, 2020, TASS

Russian President Vladimir Putin's official visit to China may take place in September, Russian Ambassador to China Andrei Denisov told journalists.

## Africa & Latin America

### Latin America

#### [Brazil's Bolsonaro to send troops to protect Amazon rainforest](#)

May 8, 2020, Al Jazeera

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro has authorised the deployment of armed forces into the Amazon region to fight fires and deforestation, three months earlier than in 2019, after a jump in destruction in the world's largest rainforest.

#### [Brazil tops Latin America in confirmed COVID-19 cases](#)

May 7, 2020, Andolou Agency

Brazil has the most confirmed coronavirus cases in Latin America and the Caribbean with 125,218, followed by Peru with 54,817, Ecuador with 31,881, Mexico with 26,025, Chile with 23,048, Colombia with 8,613 and the Dominican Republic with 8,807.

#### [Mexico auto plants to reopen as country weighs virus risks](#)

May 8, 2020, ABC News

On a day Mexico saw its worst daily increase yet in coronavirus cases, foreign-owned auto plants began setting dates for reopening.

#### [Deadline nears for Argentina debt deal](#)

May 7, 2020, Al Jazeera

The lid came off the high-stakes showdown between Argentina and its international creditors this week, as the crisis-ridden country moves ever closer to another devastating debt default.

#### [Venezuela opposition negotiated Maduro overthrow plan with security firm: report](#)

May 7, 2020, Reuters

Members of Venezuela's opposition in October negotiated a \$213 million deal with a small Florida security company to invade the country and overthrow President Nicolas Maduro, according to a document published by the Washington Post.

### ['Doctor diplomacy': Cuba seeks to make its mark in Europe amid Covid-19 crisis](#)

May 6, 2020, The Guardian

Now, as the world grapples with another era-shaping catastrophe, Cuban doctors and nurses are on the ground once again, only this time in a less common location: Europe.

### [In the Coronavirus Era, Trump's 'America First' Means 'Latin America Alone'](#)

May 7, 2020, Foreign Policy

The Trump administration's response to the pandemic in Latin America perfectly illustrates why U.S. relations with the region are on life support.

## **Africa**

### [Coronavirus: Unpacking the theories behind Africa's low infection rate](#)

May 5, 2020, The Africa Report

The continent, which is home to 17% of the world's population, accounts for only 1.1% of cases and 0.7% of deaths. Even better news: with more than 12,000 recovered patients already, Africa appears to be more resistant to the coronavirus than other continents.

### [African nations decry racism in China](#)

May 5, 2020, WION

Videos of racism against African expats in China are still doing the rounds. Videos of 'perceived' coronavirus carriers being evicted from hotels. Videos of African citizens sleeping on the streets, being kicked, being spat on and being attacked.

### [AU, UN welcome probe into plane crash in Somalia](#)

May 7, 2020, Somali Affairs

The African Union and the UN have welcomed the decision by leaders from Somalia, Kenya, and Ethiopia to investigate Monday's plane crash in southwest Somalia which killed six people on board.

### [55 people killed as heavy rains batter Rwanda](#)

May 7, 2020, CGTN Africa

55 people were killed following heavy rains in different parts of Rwanda on Wednesday, a senior Rwandan official said.

### [Egypt takes dispute over Ethiopia's Nile dam to Security Council](#)

May 7, 2020, N World

Egypt has written to the UN Security Council about Ethiopia's failure to reach an agreement over the operation of Addis Ababa's nearly-completed dam that Cairo fears will significantly reduce its share of the Nile's waters.

### [Japan to donate over \\$15.3 million to Zimbabwe](#)

May 6, 2020, Andolou Agency

Japan will donate more than \$15.3 million to assist vulnerable communities in Zimbabwe affected by droughts and floods, according to media reports.

### [IMF Executive Board Approves a US\\$491.5 Million Disbursement to Uganda to Address the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

May 6, 2020, IMF

The Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved today a disbursement of SDR361 million (about US\$491.5 million or 100 percent of quota) for Uganda under the Rapid Credit Facility (RCF). It will help finance the health, social protection and macroeconomic stabilization measures, meet the urgent balance-of-payments and fiscal needs arising from the COVID-19 outbreak and catalyze additional support from the international community.



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