



Delhi Policy Group

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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

[Govt Approves 26 Defence Items From Local Suppliers to Boost 'Make in India'](#)

May 20, 2020, Barat Shakti.in

The Central Government has issued Public Procurement to encourage 'Make in India' and to promote manufacturing and production of goods and services in India. Under this order, Department of Defence Production (DDP), Ministry of Defence has so far notified 127 items where purchase preference is given to local suppliers as per PPP-MII 2017.

[US may impose sanctions on India for buying missile system from Russia, says Alice Wells](#)

May 21, 2020, News 18

"How do they want their systems to communicate with one another? It's not a mix and match arrangement. At certain point, India will have to make sort of a strategic commitment to technologies and platforms and we think we have the best technologies and platforms," Alice Wells said while participating in a Atlantic Council-organised virtual discussion.

[Grasping the defence self-reliance nettle](#)

May 21, 2020, The Hindu

The measures, recently announced by the Finance Minister, to promote self-reliance in defence production, address long-standing strategic and national security concerns about the extent of India's external dependence for its defence-preparedness.

[India isn't prepared to meet its defence needs](#)

May 20, 2020, The Hindustan Times

All policy changes that have "potential" and need to be implemented effectively before their outcome can be objectively assessed.

[Indian Navy benefits from Pentagon paranoia over China](#)

May 18, 2020, Asia Times

According to a report by Paul McLeary for Breaking Defense, the US government was in such a hurry to get sub-hunting helicopters into the hands of the Indian

Navy that the Americans gave up some of their own helicopters to fill a rushed delivery early next year.

[Study reveals marked decline in noise levels in Indian Ocean Region during lockdown](#)

May 21, 2020, Hindustan Times

A slump in shipping traffic during the lockdown has resulted in a marked decline in noise levels across the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) – which includes Arabian Sea, Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean – a study by Pune’s Maritime Research Centre (MRC) has revealed.

[Sagarmala is passe; Government begins work on new maritime vision](#)

May 21, 2020, The Hindu Business Line

The Shipping Ministry has started the work related to drafting a new blueprint for India’s maritime sector for the next decade. This comes after the coronavirus pandemic decimated the previously laid down assumptions and projections on trade that formed the basis for Sagarmala, the flagship maritime programme of the Narendra Modi-led government.

[India’s pivot to the United States](#)

May 19, 2020, East Asia Forum

At a time when much of Asia is reconciling itself to the regional dominance of China and increasing political distance from the United States, India is going the other way – moving into an ever-closer partnership with the United States and making a more intensive effort to balance China in the Indo-Pacific.

[Border disputes with China, Nepal amid covid add to India’s worries](#)

May 21, 2020, Live Mint

India seems to be facing border problems with two of its neighbours–China and Nepal–while grappling with rising cases of covid-19 at home and a cyclone along its east coast.

[Big surge in Chinese transgressions, most of them in Ladakh](#)

May 22, 2020, The Indian Express

Nearly three-quarters of the transgressions, data since 2015 show, have taken place in the western sector of the LAC, which falls in Ladakh. The eastern sector, which falls in Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim, witnessed almost one-fifth of the Chinese transgressions.

['Inaccurate': MEA on China's charge that Indian troops trespassed across border in Ladakh](#)

May 21, 2020, The Indian Express

Reacting on the recent flare-up of border tensions between India and China, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Thursday rejected China's allegations that Indian troops crossed over to the Chinese side of the frontier in Ladakh and Sikkim. It asserted that "all Indian activities are entirely on the Indian side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC)".

[The changing nature of Chinese diplomacy](#)

May 20, 2020, The Hindu

China, post-COVID-19, will be operating in a very different external environment. It may wish to recall what Kissinger told the White House staff in July 1971 after his trip to the country: "The Chinese style is impressive. The Russians will fight you for every nickel and dime, and elbow you at every level, and lose a million dollars of goodwill in the process. The Chinese have a sense of the longer trends and focus on that, not on ploymanship."

Pakistan

[India should talk to Taliban if Delhi feels it will help peace push: Pakistan](#)

May 17, 2020, Dawn

India should speak to Taliban militants if it feels that it will help the peace process, Pakistan's Ambassador in Washington said. In an interview with The Hindu, an Indian newspaper, US Special Representative for Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad said it would be "appropriate" for an India-Taliban engagement. Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States Asad Khan said, "It is for India to respond to that suggestion".

[403 more health professionals test positive for COVID-19 in a week](#)

May 18, 2020, The News

Four hundred and three more healthcare providers have tested positive for COVID-19 over the past week across Pakistan, raising the total number of healthcare providers infected with the novel coronavirus to 1,169, of whom 589, or around 50 per cent, are doctors, federal health authorities said on Sunday.

[Pak economy size shrinks to \\$264 bn](#)

May 19, 2020, The News

With the contraction of Pakistan's GDP growth rate that falls into zero range at negative -0.38 percent for the outgoing fiscal year, the total size of the country's economy and per capita income are expected to shrink significantly in terms of dollar in post Covid-19 pandemic. The total size of Pakistan's economy in terms of dollars has decreased up to US\$264 billion for outgoing fiscal year 2019-20 against revised estimates of US\$279 billion.

[ADB okays \\$300m loan to boost Pakistan's Covid-19 response](#)

May 20, 2020, Dawn

The Asian Development Bank has approved a \$300 million emergency assistance loan to strengthen Pakistan's public health response to the coronavirus pandemic and help meet basic needs of vulnerable and poor segments of society.

[Seven troops martyred in two attacks in Balochistan](#)

May 20, 2020, Dawn

Seven soldiers, including a junior commissioned officer, were martyred in a bomb blast and an exchange of fire with militants in Balochistan on May 18. The bomb hit the vehicle during a routine patrol.

[General Qamar Javed Bajwa meets PM Imran Khan](#)

May 21, 2020, The News

Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa called on Prime Minister Imran Khan on May 20. The matters pertaining to internal security, current situation vis-a-vis COVID-19 pandemic, relief efforts and the overall regional situation were discussed during the meeting.

Afghanistan

[Taliban attack Kunduz City, clash with security forces](#)

May 19, 2020, Tolo News

The Taliban attacked Kunduz city from several directions on May 18 and clashed with security forces for several hours. At least 40 Taliban were killed in the clash with security forces and 50 others were wounded. The Afghan forces pushed back the Taliban attack.

[Khalilzad in Kabul as nationwide violence continues unabated](#)

May 20, 2020, Tolo News

The US Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad has arrived back to Kabul following a short visit to Doha and has met with President Ghani on May 20. In Doha, Khalilzad met senior Taliban officials and discussed issues regarding the implementation of the US-Taliban peace deal, a reduction in violence, and the intra-Afghan talks.

[How the partnership works in the Political Agreement](#)

May 20, 2020, Tolo News

The political agreement signed on May 17 authorizes a 50-50 percent sharing of the cabinet between President Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah. Abdullah, according to the agreement, is the head of the High Council for National Reconciliation. The agreement also allows the two sides to appoint their favorites as governors or to other specified government posts.

[Pompeo's promise to slash Afghan military funding 'immediately' still hasn't happened](#)

May 20, 2020, Task & Purpose

The U.S. Defense Department has not withheld \$1 billion in funding from Afghan security forces despite Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's vow on March 23 to cut that sum "immediately", five sources familiar with the matter said. The Pentagon has been reluctant to shave the funds announced by Pompeo and Defense Secretary Mark Esper has not provided guidance to his agency on how to carry it out.

[Pakistan still supports Taliban, Pentagon Report finds](#)

May 20, 2020, RFERL

A quarterly report by the U.S. Department of Defense to Congress has noted continued Pakistani support for violence by the hard-line Taliban movement in Afghanistan. The report by the Inspector General of the Department of Defense, compiled with the help of the Department of State and the United States Agency for International Development, observes a continuity in Islamabad's quest for what it has long defined as its interests in Afghanistan.

Bangladesh

[India, Bangladesh open new chapter in regional connectivity mechanism](#)

May 20, 2020, The Economic Times

India and Bangladesh have opened a new chapter in regional connectivity by expanding scope of inland water transport mechanism that would enable to boost trade in region.

[Cyclone Amphan's trail of destruction in Bangladesh and India](#)

May 21, 2020, UN News

UN humanitarians and partners are working hard to assist the people of Bangladesh and India suffering from the impact of Cyclone Amphan, which made landfall on Wednesday, wreaking havoc, causing high tidal surges, flooding and embankments to collapse.

[To Boost Trade, India And Bangladesh Add More Water Routes](#)

May 21, 2020, India.com

To boost trade, economic activity and connectivity, India and Bangladesh have added five more "ports of call" on either side and increased the protocol (water) routes from 8 to 10. "These additions to the protocol will facilitate bilateral trade with improved reliability and cost-effectiveness for the business community and the people of both the countries," an official release said. Also Read - Cyclone Amphan: Over 1.4 mn People Evacuated in Bangladesh.

Nepal

[Amid Dispute With India, Nepal Publishes New Political Map: What Now?](#)

May 22, 2020, The Diplomat

Nepal published a new, authoritative political map showing the areas of Lipulekh, Kalapani, and Limpiyadhura as part of its territory, toughening its stance on a recently flared up territorial dispute with India.

[Kalapani Crisis Worsens - "Indian Virus More Lethal Than Brought from China or Italy" Says Oli](#)

May 22, 2020, The Citizen

The India-Nepal row over Kalapani area on the strategic India-Nepal-Tibet (China) tri-junction took a sharp turn for the worse on May 19, when Nepalese

Prime Minister, Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli, told the country's parliament that the "virus from India is far more lethal than the one brought by China and Italy."

[With tensions escalating on both sides, officials recommend holding Nepal-India talks at the earliest](#)

May 22, 2020, The Kathmandu Post

The boundary row between Nepal and India has escalated since the former's release of a new political and administrative map that incorporated all disputed territories. With prominent personalities on both sides trading barbs, officials and experts say that pressure has mounted on both Kathmandu and New Delhi to de-escalate and sit for talks.

[With release of new map, Nepal and India enter a state of 'cartographic war', experts say](#)

May 21, 2020, The Kathmandu Post

Nepal released its new political and administrative map, the first since the signing of the Treaty of Sugauli in 1816, including territories that have long been claimed by both Nepal and India, prompting analysts to describe it as a "cartographic war" between the two countries.

[Nepal thanks India for providing medical supplies to fight COVID-19](#)

May 17, 2020, The Hindu

Nepal thanked India for providing medical supplies, including testing kits, as part of the bilateral cooperation to fight the coronavirus pandemic in the country, which reported the first death from the deadly disease on Saturday.

Sri Lanka

[Sri Lanka will not tolerate targeting of war heroes: Gotabaya Rajapaksa](#)

May 19, 2020, The Hindu

Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa on Tuesday said the country will not hesitate to exit international bodies that continuously "targeted" its soldiers.

[Sri Lanka president warns UN over war crimes claims](#)

May 19, 2020, Yahoo News

Sri Lanka threatened to pull out of the UN Human Rights Council if it pursued war crimes claims allegedly committed by government forces during a bloody war with Tamil Tiger separatists.

[Sri Lanka eyes billion US dollars a year by boosting seafarer employment](#)

May 19, 2020, Economy Next

Sri Lanka is planning to boost employment opportunities for seafarers from the island by providing them with more employment opportunities which could lead to boosting earnings to about billion US dollars from the current 300 million dollars.

Sri Lanka Navy ship SLNS Samudura dispatched to assist fishing boats swept away into Indonesian sea.

East & South East Asia

China

[Pompeo promotes US interests at Australia's cost](#)

May 21, 2020, Global Times

"We stand with Australia," US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Wednesday. He blasted China for threatening Australia with economic retribution and said the Trump administration fully backs the Morrison government's push for an independent inquiry into the origin of the coronavirus. If Australians naively believe Pompeo's remarks suggest the US is a reliable ally who truly cares about Australia's interests, they will be gravely wrong. Pompeo, in fact, attempted to instigate Australia to rush forward in its row with China and serve as a US's pawn to create trouble for China by making an issue of the coronavirus' origin.

[Space Operations Squadron embodies Japan's military ambitions](#)

May 21, 2020, Global Times

The Japanese Defense Ministry on Monday established the Space Operations Squadron. This is Japan's Self-Defense Forces' first unit dedicated to outer space, and it will monitor space debris and suspicious satellites with the stated aim of aiding Japanese satellites to avoid collisions, according to the Japan Times.

[Post-pandemic world trend: further globalization, better governance](#)

May 20, 2020, Global Times

Some believe that the epidemic has exposed developed countries' so-called excessive dependence on China's manufacturing industry. Hence, they believe that after the pandemic, those countries shall take action to reduce dependence upon China in industrial supply chain. Meanwhile, some others think the crisis unveiled US' incompetent leadership, which has affected the credibility of US dollar and US bond.

[Europe, US draw further apart amid COVID-19 pandemic](#)

May 20, 2020, Global Times

Seventy-three percent of Germans say their impression of the US has worsened due to the COVID-19 pandemic, according to an opinion poll conducted jointly by the Koerber Institute in Germany and the Pew Institute in the US. Thirty-seven percent of Germans now prioritize their country's relationship with the US, a 13 percentage point decline from the last survey in November 2019. The US

government's poor response to the COVID-19 has worsened the country's image. Such an attitude could be representative for Europeans. The US government's response to the COVID-19 has continuously shocked and disappointed the world, including some US allies such as Germany and other European countries.

[US Space Force devt risks new arms race in outer space](#)

May 20, 2020, Global times

US President Donald Trump on Friday held an event at the White House in which US Defense Department officials unveiled the official flag of the US Space Force for the first time. Trump said the space is going to be the future both in terms of defense and offense, adding "we're now the leader in space."

[Tsai must be warned for her to stay sober: Global Times editorial](#)

May 20, 2020, Global times,

Tsai Ing-wen began her second term on May 20. Her inaugural speech regarding cross-Straits relations played the same old tune. On the one hand, she repeated words such as "peace," while on the other, she intends to lead Taiwan further tilted to the US to confront the mainland amid mounting tensions between China and the US. The situation in the Taiwan Straits is hardly optimistic.

[US and Taiwan cannot afford starting new game over Taiwan question: Global Times editorial](#)

May 20, 2020, Global times

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo sent a congratulatory message to Taiwan regional leader Tsai Ing-wen on the eve of May 20 congratulating her on the commencement of second term in office. He called Tsai Ing-wen "President" and praised Taiwan as a highly reliable partner. It was the first time in recent decades that a US Secretary of State has publicly congratulated a Taiwanese leader on the start of her term.

[Neither de-sinicization nor de-Americanization possible after pandemic](#)

May 19, 2020, Global times

Has the COVID-19 pandemic triggered a process of either "de-sinicization" or "de-Americanization?" This question has been widely discussed by scholars all over the world. The China-bashing campaign during the pandemic, led by the US, has pushed China into a very difficult situation. The US-launched crackdown on Chinese companies and its threat to further decouple with China after the

pandemic has provoked speculations - a process of de-sinicization is about to start.

[With flagging influence, US distorts China's loans](#)

May 19, 2020, Global times

In a speech via video link Monday at the opening of the 73rd World Health Assembly, President Xi Jinping said China will work with other G20 members to implement the Debt Service Suspension Initiative for the poorest countries. He also said China is ready to work with the international community to bolster support for the hardest-hit countries under the greatest strain of debt service so that they could tide over their current difficulties.

[CPPCC session especially significant this year given the challenges created by the pandemic: China Daily editorial](#)

May 20, 2020, China Daily

The third annual session of the 13th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference opens on Thursday, after being delayed for more than two months because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Trump races to rule the bottom with fool's fantasies](#)

May 19, 2020, Global times

COVID-19 has been a game changer. For the first time in generations, a vast swath of the American public has come to believe that China has done something that has palpably and profoundly harmed the American people. I think one would have to go back all the way to the Korean War - when Chinese and American soldiers faced each other directly on the battlefield - to find a comparable moment in the mind of Americans.

[It's US that fears probe on virus origin: Global Times editorial](#)

May 18, 2020, Global Times

The 73rd World Health Assembly conference that started Monday will discuss a proposal of the EU to investigate the novel coronavirus' origin. Media reported that 62 countries, including EU member countries, have backed the proposal. We believe Beijing will be open to a scientific and fair investigation while it is Washington that will worry about a serious and scientific investigation.

[How should China deal with regional challenges toward its rise?](#)

May 18, 2020, Global Times

As East Asia's largest economy, China encounters economic competition from regional powers such as Japan and India. It also faces US hegemonic aggression. These pressures lead to profound questions. How can China balance them to continue its rise? Is Japan or India a bigger threat in the region to China's rise?

[Washington calculates international obligation, benefit](#)

May 17, 2020, Global Times

A draft letter to the World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus shows that the Trump administration will "agree to pay up to what China pays in assessed contributions" to the WHO, according to Fox News on Saturday. US President Donald Trump previously announced that the US was freezing the WHO funding. If the funding is restored as the letter describes, the new US funding level will be about one-tenth what it paid before.

[Virus investigation must be fair, scientific: Global Times editorial](#)

May 17, 2020, Global Times

This year's World Health Assembly will convene virtually on Monday with tackling the COVID-19 pandemic top on its agenda. According to Western media reports, the EU is putting forward a motion for the assembly, requesting an independent inquiry into the origin of the coronavirus, a proposal supported by countries such as Canada and Australia. As the US and some other countries are also urging international support for Taiwan's participation in the assembly as an observer, some Western media outlets claimed that China is facing unprecedented pressure during this year's conference and will be isolated.

[Amid COVID-19, negative factors dictate Japan's attitude toward China](#)

May 16, 2020, Global Times

China-Japan relations are striving hard in the battle to prevent and control the novel coronavirus. Against this backdrop, Japan has adjusted its approach with China while walking a fine line with the ramped up China-US rivalry.

[China's countermeasures ready for prolonged 'war' with US: Global Times editorial](#)

May 15, 2020, Global Times

Based on Global Times sources, if the US further pinches Chinese telecommunication giant Huawei by blocking companies such as TSMC from providing chips to the company, China will carry out countermeasures, such as

including certain US companies into its list of "unreliable entities," imposing restrictions on or investigating US companies such as Qualcomm, Cisco and Apple, and suspending purchases of Boeing aircraft.

[No turning the other cheek on Huawei: China Daily editorial](#)

May 19, 2020, China Daily

Following a botched 18-month campaign to deny the Chinese telecommunications company access to critical international supplies and key overseas markets, the United States Commerce Department announced a third round of sanctions on Huawei on Friday in a bid to tighten its stranglehold on the company.

[China slows defense budget growth to 6.6 % in 2020](#)

May 22, 2020, Global Times

China set its 2020 defense budget growth target at 6.6 percent, lower than the 7.5 percent growth in 2019. The figure was made public on Friday in a draft budget report to be submitted to the annual session of the National People's Congress (NPC).

[China aims to create 9 million jobs in 2020, keep CPI at 3.5%](#)

May 22, 2020, Global Times

China is planning to create 9 million jobs in 2020, the lowest since 2014, as the country seeks to control rising unemployment, which is essential to social stability, amid serious pressure from the #COVID19 pandemic, the Government Work Report said on Friday.

[Netizens hail 'iron brotherhood' on 69th anniversary of China-Pakistan ties](#)

May 21, 2020, Global Times,

Netizens from China and Pakistan have hailed the bilateral brotherhood amid the COVID-19 outbreak, with many from China dubbing their Pakistani friends as "iron brothers - a term used in China to describe great friendship" as Thursday marked the 69th anniversary of diplomatic ties.

[NPC opens, no growth target set for 2020](#)

May 22, 2020, China Daily

China has not set a GDP growth target for this year and will take a slew of forceful financial measures this year to shore up the economy, which has been dragged down by the devastating COVID-19 pandemic, according to the Government

Work Report that Premier Li Keqiang delivered to the opening of the third session of the 13th National People's Congress on Friday.

[Proposed security legislation to better safeguard Hong Kong's development: China Daily editorial](#)

May 21, 2020 China Daily

Reports that the National People's Congress, China's top legislature, will make a decision allowing its standing committee to make legislation strengthening national security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region have been like a testing kit for an anti-Beijing virus.

[China announces concrete measures to boost global fight against COVID-19 as Xi addresses WHA session](#)

May 18, 2020, Xinhua

Chinese President Xi Jinping on Monday announced concrete measures to boost global fight against COVID-19 including providing international aid and making the country's COVID-19 vaccine a global public good when available. Xi made the announcement as he addressed the opening of the 73rd session of the World Health Assembly (WHA) via video link.

Japan

[Japan's core consumer prices show first fall in 40 months](#)

May 22, 2020, The Japan Times

Core consumer prices fell from a year earlier in April, recording the first decline in 40 months, government data showed.

[Japan urges Taiwan's participation in WHO assembly](#)

May 19, 2020, Japan Today

Japan urged the World Health Organization to allow Taiwan to join its plenary sessions as an observer to discuss the global response to the new coronavirus pandemic.

[Japan launches new unit to step up defense in outer space](#)

May 19, 2020, Japan Today

Japan launched its new space defense unit Monday to monitor and counter threats to the country's satellites.

[Abe shelves bill on retirement age of prosecutors after public pressure](#)

May 18, 2020, Japan Today

The government and ruling coalition parties agreed Monday to shelve a plan to enact a law to extend the retirement age of prosecutors during the current Diet session, amid heated criticism from the Japanese public led by celebrities who have taken to Twitter to express their opposition.

[BOJ expands loan program for small firms by ¥30 trillion](#)

May 22, 2020, Japan Today

Japan's central bank on Friday offered 30 trillion yen in additional lending to help small firms in the world's third-largest economy struggling with the economic devastation wrought by coronavirus.

Korea

[UN dismisses complaint about NK defectors detained in Seoul](#)

May 22, 2020, The Korea Herald

The United Nations Human Rights Committee said a group of North Korean workers who defected to South Korea in 2016 are not being detained against their will, as claimed by lawyers who submitted a complaint to the UN body on behalf of the defector's self-proclaimed families.

[Seoul closely monitoring N. Korea as leader out of public view again](#)

May 22, 2020, The Korea Herald

South Korea is closely watching the whereabouts of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, the unification ministry said Friday, as his absence from public view has stretched to three weeks once again.

[S. Korea sees 2010 sanctions on N. Korea as no hindrance to inter-Korean exchange](#)

May 22, 2020, The Korea Herald

A set of sanctions slapped on North Korea over its deadly sinking of a South Korean warship in 2010 has since been softened and no longer poses any obstacle to inter-Korean exchanges, the unification ministry said.

[S. Korea not mulling lifting of 2010 sanctions on N. Korea: unification ministry](#)

May 22, 2020, Yonhap News Agency

South Korea is not considering lifting sanctions imposed on North Korea in 2010 after its sinking of a South Korean naval ship, the unification ministry said Friday amid speculation over the possibility of their removal aimed at bolstering stalled inter-Korean relations.

[Unification minister refutes speculation over possible lifting of 2010 sanctions on N. Korea](#)

May 21, 2020, Yonhap News

Just because sanctions imposed on North Korea following its deadly sinking of a South Korean naval ship in 2010 have mostly lost their effect does not mean that Seoul is considering the possibility of lifting them, Unification Minister Kim Yeon-chul said.

Southeast Asia

[ASEAN's efforts against COVID-19 lauded](#)

May 21, 2020, Saigon Online

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has coped with COVID-19 quite well with Vietnam serving as the ASEAN Chair 2020, heard an online seminar held by the Center for International Law (CIL) under the National University of Singapore on May 20.

[Leveraging ASEAN to respond to COVID-19](#)

May 21, 2020, East Asia Forum

COVID-19 is testing international resolve to cooperate. Both China and the United States have so far failed to provide the necessary global leadership. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations (UN) play – at best – the role of supporting actors. Even the European Union and ASEAN are struggling with outbreaks of nationalism and unilateral knee-jerk reactions.

[ASEAN needs to come together on COVID-19 pandemic](#)

May 22, 2020, The Korea Times

The outbreak of the novel coronavirus poses a significant threat to Southeast Asia and its regional bloc, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). This is primarily due to the region's geographical proximity to China and the high trade flow between them.

[China warns of military conflict risk as US steps up warplane flights over South China Sea](#)

May 21, 2020, Express.co.UK

The flyovers came with increased military operations by both the US Navy and Air Force in the South China Sea, East China Sea, the Taiwan Strait and the Yellow Sea this year. China has warned of a growing risk of military conflict between the two countries. The US Pacific Air Forces said B-1 bombers conducted a mission in the South China Sea just days after training with the US Navy near Hawaii.

Central & West Asia

Central Asia

[Uzbekistan rejects Russian criticism over language policy](#)

May 18, 2020, Daily Sabah

Uzbekistan pushed back against Russian criticism of its plans to enforce the use of the Uzbek language in the civil service, in a rare rebuke to Moscow by Tashkent amid otherwise warm ties.

[Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, China discuss joint railroad project](#)

May 20, 2020, Meafn.com

Minister of Transport of Uzbekistan Elyor Ganiev, Minister of Transport and Roads of Kyrgyzstan Zhanat Beishenov and representatives of Department of Foreign Capital and Overseas Investment of National Development and Reform Commission of China held a videoconference on May 20, 2020 , Trend reports citing the Ministry of Transport of Uzbekistan.

[Kazakhstan boosts oil exports to China](#)

May 18, 2020, New Europe

Kazakhstan will increase its oil exports to neighbouring China almost four times this month, Kazakhstan' Deputy Energy Minister Aset Magauov said on May 18.

[Kazakhstan Commits To New OPEC Agreement, Lower Oil Production](#)

May 21, 2020, The Astana Times

Kazakhstan is committed to cutting its oil production by 390,000 barrels a day as part of the newly-minted agreement between the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and its allies, known as OPEC+, which includes Kazakhstan.

West Asia

[Vande Bharat Mission: First Flight from Bahrain Lands at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport in Hyderabad](#)

May 20, 2020, Times of India

The first special evacuation flight from Bahrain landed in Hyderabad with 175 passengers on May 19 as part of Government of India's Vande Bharat Mission.

[Saudi Arabia Pips Iraq as Top Oil Supplier to India in April](#)

May 20, 2020, Reuters

Saudi Arabia replaced Iraq as the top oil supplier to India in April after a gap of three months as refiners in Asia's third largest economy were drawn by deep discounts on Saudi crude.

[Shell Evacuates Foreign Staff from Iraq's Basra Gas Project](#)

May 21, 2020, Al Jazeera

Royal Dutch Shell evacuated some 60 foreign staff from Iraq's Basra Gas Company (BGC) as a security measure following a protest over delayed pay, company officials said.

[U.S. Targets Iran's Interior Minister in Latest Round of Sanctions](#)

May 20, 2020, CNBC

The U.S. Department of Treasury announced Wednesday (May 20) that it will sanction Iran's interior minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli for human rights abuses, the latest move in the Trump administration's "maximum pressure" campaign against Tehran.

[EU Says It Won't Recognize Unilateral Israeli Annexation in the West Bank](#)

May 19, 2020, Times of Israel

The European Union's top diplomat warned Israel against annexing parts of the West Bank, saying the bloc would not recognize any changes to the 1967 lines not agreed upon in a peace deal between Israel and the Palestinians.

[Kuwait, Saudi Arabia Halt Oil Production from Neutral Zone](#)

May 21, 2020, Deccan Herald

In the neutral zone, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia decided to shut down the offshore Khafji oilfield for one month starting June 1, acting head of Kuwait Oil Gulf Co. Abdullah al-Sumaiti told the official KUNA news agency.

[Qatari Energy Minister Kaabi Says 'Absolutely No Way' Qatar Would Cut LNG Production](#)

May 21, 2020, S&P Global

Qatari energy minister Saad al-Kaabi said Thursday (May 21) there was "absolutely no way" Qatar would cut its LNG production despite reduced demand and low global gas prices.

[Saudi Arabia Rejects Israel's West Bank Annexation Plans](#)

May 21, 2020, Arab News

Saudi Arabia said on Thursday (May 21) that it rejected Israel's pledge to annex parts of the occupied Palestinian West Bank. The Foreign Ministry stressed the Kingdom's "condemnation of any unilateral decisions and any violation of legitimate international decisions."

[UN Envoy Calls for Russia-US Talks to Help End Syrian War](#)

May 19, 2020, Al Jazeera

The United Nations Syria mediator has urged the United States and Russia to make the most of "some calm" in the war-torn country and talk to each other about a push for peace.

['We Are Stronger Together': UAE Welcomes 105 Medics from Kerala For Covid-19 Mission](#)

May 22, 2020, The Indian Express

A team of 105 medics from Kerala travelled to Abu Dhabi to support the nation in its fight against the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

[Doctors Without Borders Warns of Covid-19 'Catastrophe' in War-Torn Yemen](#)

May 21, 2020, France 24

A coronavirus "catastrophe" is unfolding in Yemen, medical charity Doctors Without Borders (MSF) said on Thursday (May 21), warning that many of those infected with Covid-19 in the war-torn country never even make it to hospital.

United States

United States

[US slams China's 'disturbing behaviour' at India border](#)

May 21, 2020, The Times of India

In a sharp criticism of China over border tensions with India, the US on Wednesday described Beijing's actions as "disturbing behaviour" and said that the skirmishes were a reminder of the threat China posed as it sought to use its power, whether in the South China Sea or on the borders with India.

[Trump Warns China of U.S. Response to Hong Kong Crackdown](#)

May 21, 2020, Bloomberg

President Donald Trump warned that the U.S. would respond to a planned move in Beijing to curtail protests and democratic movements in Hong Kong.

[Coronavirus: Trump gives WHO ultimatum over Covid-19 handling](#)

May 19, 2020, BBC

US President Donald Trump has sent a letter to the head of the World Health Organization (WHO) threatening to pull US funding permanently over Covid-19.

[Trump says may head outdoors for campaign rallies amid pandemic](#)

May 22, 2020, Reuters

U.S. President Donald Trump, eager to get back on the road and make his case for re-election on Nov. 3, said on Thursday he may have to stage campaign rallies at outdoor sites until the coronavirus pandemic settles down enough for traditional events.

[Trump to pull US out of third arms control deal](#)

May 21, 2020, The Guardian

The US has declared its intention to leave the Open Skies Treaty, which is intended to reduce the risk of war by allowing Russia and western nations to conduct observation flights over each other's territory.

[U.S.-China tensions will likely get worse ahead of November election, experts say](#)

May 21, 2020, CNBC

Tensions between the U.S. and China will likely get worse ahead of the American presidential election this November, experts told CNBC on Thursday.

Europe & Russia

Europe

[EU to launch the world's greenest Covid-19 recovery package](#)

May 22, 2020, The National

The European Union is poised to announce the world's greenest recovery package next week, as it seeks to curb pollution and save its economy from the coronavirus pandemic.

[Would-be Merkel successor warns against EU 'transfer union'](#)

May 21, 2020, Reuters

The European Union must be careful not to become a "transfer union" in which richer member states are asked to bankroll their poorer peers, said Friedrich Merz, a leading candidate to succeed German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

[Coronavirus: EU considers solvency aid for companies](#)

May 21, 2020, Deutsche Welle

The European Union is considering offering financial aid to companies in countries hardest hit by the coronavirus pandemic, the economics affairs commissioner said Thursday.

[Italy warns Franco-German Covid-19 bailout plans are too little too late](#)

May 21, 2020, The National

Italy has warned that plans unveiled by Germany and France for a €500 billion coronavirus bailout are insufficient to keep the bloc's economy afloat, even as the bloc's more frugal nations voice resistance.

[Coronavirus triggers fall in UK asylum and visa applications](#)

May 21, 2020, The Guardian

The coronavirus pandemic triggered a significant drop in applications to the UK for asylum and visas in the first quarter of the year, as well as a fall in the number of people removed from the country, official figures show.

[Ireland expects scepticism in EU at UK Northern Ireland proposal](#)

May 20, 2020, Reuters

Britain's proposal on Wednesday that its Brexit divorce deal would require no new customs infrastructure in Northern Ireland will be met with scepticism by many in the European Union, Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney said.

[Bulgaria to allow entry of citizens from EU, Schengen countries](#)

May 22, 2020, Reuters

Bulgaria, which has started to ease its lockdown, has scrapped a ban on the entry of visitors from the European Union and Schengen visa zone countries, the health ministry said in a statement late on Thursday.

Russia

[Rosneft Launches \\$610M Defamation Lawsuit Against Russian Media Outlet](#)

May 21, 2020, The Moscow Times

Russian oil giant Rosneft has launched a 43 billion ruble (\$610 million) lawsuit against Russian business website RBC over the outlet's coverage of the company's disposal of its Venezuelan assets.

[Russia Calls U.S. Leaving Open Skies Treaty a 'Blow' to European Security](#)

May 21, 2020, The Moscow Times

Washington's departure from the Open Skies arms control treaty would be a blow to European security, a Russian deputy foreign minister said Thursday, after President Donald Trump announced the United States will withdraw.

[Why Russia is losing its hold on Syria](#)

May 20, 2020, Asia Times

Putin and Assad are pursuing different policies and endgames, a disconnect that has put their alliance in doubt.

[Russia has no reason to remain party to Open Skies Treaty after US withdrawal - expert](#)

May 22, 2020, Tass

According to the expert, the US decision on the withdrawal from the treaty would further escalate military and political situation in the Euro-Atlantic region

['Russia sends 8 Soviet-made warplanes to Haftar'](#)

May 21, 2020, Andolou Agency

Russia sent at least eight warplanes to renegade commander Khalifa Haftar, Libya's Interior Minister Fathi Bashagha has said.

[Russia's Black Sea Fleet Completes The First Stage Of Its Modernization](#)

May 21, 2020, Naval News

The first stage of its renewal is to be completed shortly. The Izvestia daily writes about the development of the fleet and the threats it would repel after rearmament.

Africa & Latin America

Latin America

[COVID-19 Global Roundup: Behind surging virus growth in Latin America](#)

May 20, 2020, CGTN

After Asia, Europe and North America, the coronavirus pandemic found its latest peak in Latin America, which has relatively poor healthcare systems and economy.

[Latin America's economic plight is getting worse](#)

May 22, 2020, The Economist

In São Paulo 91% of intensive-care beds in hospitals are occupied even as cases of COVID-19 soar. The city has declared a four-day public holiday to reduce travel.

['Dengue Kills Too' - Latin America Faces Two Epidemics](#)

May 20, 2020, VOA

The coronavirus is killing thousands and commanding government attention across Latin America. But another deadly viral infection remains a problem for the region: dengue.

[Guatemala angry over coronavirus-infected deportees](#)

May 22, 2020, Al Jazeera

Guatemala's president Alejandro Giammattei has questioned his country's relationship with the United States, revealing frustration over the US continuing to send deportees infected with COVID-19.

[Press Freedom Under Attack in Latin America, Experts Say](#)

May 20, 2020, VOA

Latin American leaders are trying to discredit journalists by accusing them of disseminating fake news or being elitist and out of touch, media rights experts say.

[Colombia joins Argentina in banning all international flights](#)

May 21, 2020, Al Jazeera

Colombian official: 'We do not expect to resume international air travel or to reopen land borders' before August 31.

[Populism and the Pandemic : Argentina Responded to COVID-19 while Brazil Ignored](#)

May 18, 2020, Byline Times

Brazil is heading towards a monumental health crisis, amid a widespread coronavirus outbreak that now has a death toll of almost 20,000, while major city hospitals at near collapse due to overwhelming demand. This tragedy has happened largely because the Brazilian right-wing populist President Jair Bolsonaro has adopted a totally dismissive attitude towards the pandemic.

[Venezuela's military to escort Iranian tankers bringing petrol](#)

May 21, 2020, BBC News

The Venezuelan military will escort Iranian tankers delivering much-needed petrol to the country to prevent any attempt by the US to stop them.

Africa

[Kenya deports 182 virus carriers back to Tanzania](#)

May 20, 2020, Andolou Agency

Kenya has deported 182 people who tested positive for COVID-19 back to Tanzania, local media reported.

[World Bank approves \\$1 billion funding for Kenya budget support](#)

May 20, 2020, Reuters

The World Bank has approved a \$1 billion loan for Kenya to help it close a gaping budget deficit and tackle the economic shocks from the coronavirus pandemic, both sides said.

[Investors Rush to Nigeria](#)

May 21, 2020, Bloomberg

Nigeria's early move to tap cheap loans has improved its risk perception among foreign investors, leading to a fall in the country's borrowing costs.

[Somalia's state-building after the pandemic](#)

May 22, 2020, Daily Sabah

The COVID-19 outbreak first begun in Wuhan, China but has swiftly spread all around the world and led to the global economy's deterioration.

[Somalia looks to first full elections in 51 years, despite COVID-19 crisis](#)

May 21, 2020, UN News

The consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic are acute for Somalia, but the Horn of Africa nation is doing what it can with the resources it has, even as it looks ahead to its first direct elections in a half-century, the top UN official in the country said on Thursday.

[Guterres encourages Member States to reach agreement over Ethiopian Nile dam project](#)

May 19, 2020, UN News

UN chief António Guterres is encouraging Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan to persevere with efforts to overcome their differences and reach agreement on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.

[U.S. Nears Settlement with Sudan Over 1998 Terror Bombings](#)

May 19, 2020, The Wall Street Journal

The Trump administration is nearing a deal with Sudan to resolve claims over Al Qaeda's 1998 bombings of U.S. embassies in Africa, helping clear the way to remove Khartoum's designation as a state sponsor of terrorism.

[Burundi voting ends in calm despite fraud allegations](#)

May 21, 2020, CGTN

Voting in Burundi's presidential election passed calmly on Wednesday despite simmering political violence, the coronavirus pandemic and the opposition accusing the authorities of fraud.

[U.S. Tussles with France, U.N. Over Counterterrorism Efforts in West Africa](#)

May 21, 2020, Foreign Policy

The Trump administration seeks to put an American in charge of the U.N. mission in Mali.

[Cape Town turns coronavirus hotspot for the African continent](#)

May 21, 2020, WION

Cape Town has become the epicentre of the coronavirus outbreak in South Africa and one of the hotspots of the African continent.



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