



Delhi Policy Group

# DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH



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## Volume 4, Issue 9

### 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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## Contents

South Asia.....	1
East & South East Asia.....	9
Central & West Asia.....	14
United States.....	18
Europe & Russia.....	21
Africa & Latin America .....	25

## South Asia

### India

#### [Delhi violence: India slams 'misleading, irresponsible' remarks by international bodies](#)

February 27, 2020, The Times of India

India on Thursday hit out at the "inaccurate, misleading and irresponsible" remarks made by some foreign agencies and individuals on the Delhi Violence that has claimed at least 34 lives so far.

#### [Shift in geopolitics, so India to attend signing of Taliban peace pact with US](#)

February 28, 2020, The Indian Express

In its first step towards engaging with the Taliban, India has decided to send its envoy to the signing of the peace pact between the US and Taliban in Doha on Saturday, according to sources.

#### [Indian, Myanmar Air Force conduct joint exercise](#)

February 27, 2020, Times of India

The first ever HADR (Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief) exercise between the Indian and Myanmar Air Force culminated at the Air Force station in Bamrauli. IAF team also demonstrated causality evacuation procedure and communication setup to the Myanmar Air Force.

#### [Myanmar President U Win Myint arrives in India, to hold talks with top leadership to strengthen ties](#)

February 26, 2020, New Indian Express

Myanmar President U Win Myint arrived in India on February 26 on a four-day visit during which he will hold talks with the top leadership here to deepen bilateral ties. The Myanmar president is also expected to visit Agra and Bodh Gaya following his official meetings in New Delhi. He is accompanied by First Lady Daw Cho Cho.

#### [India, Myanmar sign 10 MoUs; Focus on solar power and roads](#)

February 27, 2020, Economic Times

India and Myanmar on Thursday exchanged 10 agreements, four of which focus on the construction of water supply systems, distribution of electricity by solar power, as well as construction of roads and schools in Rakhine state, located on the western coast of the South Asian country.

### [India's annual defence exports to touch Rs 35,000 cr by 2024, says Rajnath Singh](#)

February 27, 2020, Hindu Business Line

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, projected that annual Indian defence exports will touch ₹35,000 crore by 2024, from the current level of ₹17,000 crore. Singh also said that he has no doubt about India emerging as among the three major economies of the world by 2030 and the defence industries will have an important role to play.

### [Trump announces \\$3B defense deal with India](#)

February 26, 2020, Defense News

U.S. President Donald Trump announced Tuesday that India has signed a deal to purchase more than \$3 billion of advanced military equipment, including helicopters. Modi, meanwhile, said the two had a productive exchange on issues including defense cooperation, energy and technology, adding that talks will continue.

### [Trump's India visit: Indo-US energy relations set to touch a new high](#)

February 25, 2020, Business Standard

The \$12 billion worth of annual crude oil imports to India along with a possible LNG deal are set to take the energy relations of India and the US to a new high. Under the deal, India is to get a share in natural gas from the proposed Driftwood project in Louisiana.

### [First phase of India-US mega trade deal expected to be sealed soon](#)

February 27, 2020, Business Standard

India and the US are set to sign the first phase of a mega trade deal soon under a model followed by the Donald Trump administration in finalising a similar deal with China.

### [Don't want to say anything on CAA, it is up to India: Donald Trump](#)

February 25, 2020, The Economic Times

US President Donald Trump said on Tuesday that issues involving the Citizenship (Amendment) Act are up to India and asserted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi wants people to have religious freedom.

[Trump govt seems supportive of India as part of its Indo-Pacific strategy, while also counting gains for itself](#)

February 24, 2020, The Indian Express

The stage is now set for the 36-hour Donald Trump show. He will arrive today in Ahmedabad, and will be received, in a gesture usual towards visiting US presidents, by the prime minister himself at the airport.

[India-US security cooperation in eastern Indian Ocean and Pacific must be extended to western frontiers](#)

February 23, 2020, The Indian Express

Delhi has already stepped up its naval activity within the Gulf and beyond as part of its emergence as a regional security provider. It knows that its effectiveness will rise manifold if it acts in concert with the US and other partners. Modi and Trump could begin by laying the political foundation for such cooperation.

[As Trump visits India, on the table: plan to counter China's reach with Blue Dot network](#)

February 24, 2020, The Indian Express

US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and NSA Robert O' Brien have brought along the pointperson for the Blue Dot network in the US system – Adam Boehler, CEO of the US International Development Finance Corporation (USIDFC) – as part of the visiting delegation.

[US surpasses China to become India's top trading partner](#)

February 23, 2020, Times of India

The US has surpassed China to become India's top trading partner showing greater economic ties between the two countries. According to the data of the commerce ministry, in 2018-19, the bilateral trade between the US and India stood at \$87.95 billion. During the period, India's two way commerce with China aggregated at \$87.07 billion.

[West Asia is central to India's foreign policy: V K Singh](#)

February 26, 2020, Economic Times

The Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses organised the 4th West Asia Conference on "Ten Years of Political & Economic Transformation in West Asia: Challenges, Lessons & Future Trends" on 26-27 February. Delivering the Inaugural Address, Minister of State for Road, Transport and Highways, Government of India, General Vijay Kumar Singh, noted that West Asia will always be central to India's foreign policy with the Gulf region being one of the largest markets, supplier of energy and source of remittances by a large India Diaspora.

## Pakistan

### [FATF wants swift completion of plan: Pakistan gets until June to get out of grey list](#)

February 22, 2020, The News

The Financial Action Task Force kept Pakistan on the grey list till June 2020 for complying with the remaining conditions of its 27-point action plan, especially those concerned with penalising and prosecuting terrorist financing (TF) network.

### [Oxford Economics lowers Pakistan's GDP growth to 2.4pc in current fiscal](#)

February 22, 2020, The News

Contrary to the claims of Prime Minister Imran Khan that 2020 will be the year of growth, Oxford Economics, the leader in forecasting and quantitative analyses has lowered the GDP growth of Pakistan to 2.4 percent in the ongoing fiscal 2019-20 from its early forecast of 2.7 percent.

### [Pakistan seeks IAEA support to boost N-power programme](#)

February 27, 2020, Dawn

Pakistan has sought the support of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to strengthen its nuclear power programme as the country is significantly scaling up nuclear power to meet the rising energy demand.

### [Pakistan confirms first two cases of coronavirus](#)

February 27, 2020, Dawn

Pakistan has confirmed the first two cases of the novel coronavirus, with at least 15 suspected cases still under investigation. Sindh and Balochistan governments as a precautionary measure announced closure of all public and private educational institutions for two days and till March 15, respectively.

### [Punjab govt decides not to extend Nawaz's bail](#)

February 26, 2020, Dawn

The government decided not to extend the bail of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif and declared him an "absconder" for violating the bail requirements by not presenting his medical report before a board formed on the order of the Islamabad High Court.

### [Staff-level accord with IMF unlocks \\$450m tranche](#)

February 27, 2020, The Express Tribune

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) announced that it reached a staff-level agreement with Pakistan after both the sides finally resolved all outstanding issues aimed at keeping the \$6 billion programme on track.

## **Afghanistan**

### [Afghan government agrees to postpone Ghani inauguration: U.S.](#)

February 25, 2020, Reuters

Afghanistan's government has agreed to postpone President Ashraf Ghani's inauguration to a second term, the United States said it declined to recognize competing election victory claims by Ghani and his chief political foe. The postponement could allow more time for U.S. diplomats and others to mediate a resolution to a political crisis that threatens a peace process due to see the United States and the Taliban sign an accord this weekend on a U.S. troop withdrawal.

### [Pompeo: Afghanistan 'reduction of violence is working'](#)

February 25, 2020, The Hill

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Tuesday that a seven-day "reduction in violence" agreement with the Taliban is largely holding. "So far, the reduction of violence is working," Pompeo told reporters at a briefing. "Imperfect, but it's working."

### [China welcomes potential peace deal between U.S., Afghan Taliban](#)

February 25, 2020, People's Daily Online

China welcomes a possible peace deal between the United States and the Taliban, and stands ready to work with the international community for peace, stability and development in Afghanistan.

### [Afghanistan drawdown mustn't precipitate a crisis, India tells US](#)

February 27, 2020, The Times of India

Ahead of the Afghanistan peace deal, and in the just concluded Indo- US summit, India conveyed to the US that it must not fritter away gains made in the past 19 years with a hasty withdrawal.



## Bangladesh

### [3,000 kilometre long power grid from Myanmar-Thailand to India: BIMSTEC](#)

February 25, 2020, All India Radio

Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is working on connecting about 3,000-kilometre long power grid from Myanmar-Thailand to India. This was announced by the Energy Adviser to the Prime Minister of Bangladesh Dr Tawfiq-E-Elahi Chowdhury while inaugurating the energy conference of BIMSTEC in Dhaka on February 25.

### [Modi due on Mar 17, Shringla Mar 2](#)

February 27, 2020, New Age Bd

Indian foreign secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla will reach Dhaka on March 2 on a two-day official visit to lay grounds for a visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the 17th of that month. Modi is expected pay the visit to attend a public ceremony organised by Bangladesh government marking the birth centenary of the country's founding president Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

### [Cambodia to support Bangladesh within ASEAN framework](#)

February 28, 2020, New Age Bd

Cambodia has assured Bangladesh of its support within the framework of ASEAN as Dhaka sought Phnom Penh's support for safe repatriation of Rohingyas to their place of origin in Rakhine State. The Rohingya issue was discussed at the first-ever joint commission meeting between Bangladesh and Cambodia held at state guesthouse Meghna in the capital on February 27.

### [SaifulAlam made DGFI chief as five major generals get new duties in army shake-up](#)

February 24, 2020, Bd News

Five senior generals have been given new responsibilities in a major shake-up in the top brass of the Bangladesh Army. MdSaifulAlam of the 11th Infantry Division has replaced MdSaiful Abedin as director general of the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence or DGFI.

## Nepal

### [Pakistan, Nepal vow to strengthen bilateral economic cooperation](#)

February 25, 2020, Radio Pakistan

Foreign Secretary of Nepal, Shanker Das Bairagi called on Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi in Islamabad on February 25. He is leading the delegation for

the 4th Round of Pakistan-Nepal Bilateral Political Consultations. The two sides resolved to enhance high-level exchanges and strengthen bilateral economic cooperation.

#### [Foreign Affairs Minister in Geneva renews Nepal's commitment to human rights](#)

February 26, 2020, Online Khabar

Minister for Foreign Affairs Pradeep Kumar Gyawali addressed the High-level Segment of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, expressing Nepal's commitment to human rights. He discussed Nepal's opinions about crucial human rights issues including the rights of women, children, and people with disabilities and also highlighted Nepal's concerns about climate change and global warming.

#### **Sri Lanka**

#### [Sri Lanka withdraws from UN war investigation pact](#)

February 27, 2020, Al Jazeera

Sri Lanka has withdrawn from a UN resolution that would allow war crimes allegedly committed during the country's civil war to be investigated. That is despite a promise by the new government to probe historic allegations.

#### [Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force ship in Sri Lanka](#)

February 22, 2020, MENAFN

Japanese ship "Takanami" which belongs to the Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force, arrived at the port of Colombo on 21st February 2020 and was welcomed by the Sri Lanka Navy in compliance with naval traditions.

#### [Pakistan extends full cooperation to Sri Lanka](#)

February 24, 2020, PMD News

Pakistan ready to extend its cooperation in defense, trade, people-to-people relations, countering extremism, promoting religious harmony and in any other area Sri Lanka would need. This was assured by the Pakistan High Commissioner Major General (Retd) Muhammad Saad Khattak when he met with President Gotabaya on February 24 at the Presidential Secretariat.

#### [Sri Lanka willing to sign revised MCC deal addressing concerns: Minister](#)

February 28, 2020, Economy Next

Sri Lanka's cabinet of ministers had decided not to sign an agreement with the America's Millennium Challenge Corporation, in its present form, cabinet spokesman Minister Bandula Gunawardane said. However Sri Lanka would be

willing to sign an agreement for the US\$480 million grant if it is revised to remove unacceptable conditions, he said.

## **Maldives**

### [Maldives to intervene at ICJ in support of Rohingya](#)

February 26, 2020, Dhaka Tribune

Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdulla Shahid has announced the Maldivian administration's decision to file a written declaration of intervention at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at The Hague, in support of the persecuted Rohingya people. The minister made the declaration while addressing the 43rd Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in Geneva.

## East & South East Asia

### China

#### [India trip part of campaign for reelection: China Daily editorial](#)

February 25, 2020, China Daily

The US president was naturally effusive in response to the "stunning display of Indian culture and kindness" that was laid on to welcome him on his visit to the country.

#### [Chinese duck legion prepared to help Pakistan wipe out locust plague](#)

February 27, 2020, Global Times

China is preparing to send an army of 100,000 ducks to Pakistan to help the country exterminate the locust plague that has been posing a huge threat to the country's agriculture. The estimated time of deployment is the second half of this year.

#### [Eight negative arguments smearing China's virus fight must be refuted](#)

February 24, 2020, Global Times

The COVID-19 outbreak in China has begun to decline outside Hubei Province, meanwhile in some countries it is on the rise. This fully shows that the epidemic is a challenge faced by all humanity and needs to be addressed by all countries.

#### [Italy learns little from China's epidemic control, and pays the price](#)

February 27, 2020, Global Times

Italy had only a few cases of COVID-19 between the end of January and February 18 but in one week it recorded 374 cases, becoming the country with the highest number of infections in Europe. Is this situation emerging in Italy because we started to diagnose cases and run tests? This is what the Italian leader says.

#### [China's quarantine moves need understanding](#)

February 26, 2020, Global Times

The city of Weihai, East China's Shandong Province, has announced that foreigners and Chinese nationals who departed from Japan or South Korea would be sent to hotels for a 14-day mandatory quarantine starting Tuesday. South Korean Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha on Tuesday described the move as "excessive." Her statement is understandable. China's Foreign Ministry on Wednesday expressed China's empathy.

### [Consumption rebound certain but efforts need to increase tenfold](#)

February 26, 2020, Global Times

The ongoing novel coronavirus pneumonia (COVID-19) epidemic has had a great impact on China's economy. In these circumstances, in order to accomplish this year's social economic goal and increase income for Chinese people, a strong rebound is needed for the Chinese economy.

### [China's production resumption key to future of globalization](#)

February 26, 2020, Global Times

Globalization is facing an unprecedented backlash as delivery delays and inventory shortages caused by the ferocious coronavirus outbreak have put the global economy, which is highly dependent on China's supply chain, at risk of heavy losses.

### [COVID-19 not to slow down pace of CPEC: Pakistani official](#)

February 26, 2020, Xinhua

The pace of the ongoing and forthcoming projects of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will not be slowed down by the outbreak of COVID-19 in China, the chairman of the CPEC Authority in Pakistan said on Monday.

### [Repeating same old China threat benefits no one](#)

February 21, 2020, Xinhua

While many around the world are extending a helping hand to China in the fight against the novel coronavirus epidemic, some U.S. politicians once again are hyping up their same old talk of the so-called China threat.

### [For better or worse, humanity shares common destiny](#)

February 21, 2020, Xinhua

In an era of globalization, the interests of countries across the world are closely intertwined, and no one can be immune to common challenges such as the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

## **Japan**

### [Japan's sports world puts itself on hold in fight against coronavirus](#)

February 28, 2020, Japan Today

In a united effort, the Japanese sports world has introduced a drastic range of self-imposed restraints to combat the coronavirus outbreak ahead of this summer's Tokyo Olympic Games.

### [Virus to cost world tourism at least \\$22 billion: global tourism body](#)

February 28, 2020, Japan Today

The deadly coronavirus epidemic will cost world tourism at least \$22 billion owing to a drop in spending by Chinese tourists, the head of the World Travel and Tourism Council said.

### [China's foreign policy chief Yang to visit Japan](#)

February 28, 2020, Japan Today

China's foreign policy chief Yang Jiechi will make a two-day visit to Japan from Friday, the Japanese Foreign Ministry said.

### [IAEA chief says Fukushima water release plan meets global standards](#)

February 27, 2020, Japan Today

The head of the International Atomic Energy Agency said Wednesday that Japan's plan to release radioactive water from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant into the environment meets global standards of practice in the industry.

### [Senior official in Foreign Ministry balks at donation to assist China](#)

February 26, 2020, The Asahi Shimbun

A state minister for foreign affairs refused to make a cash donation to a private relief initiative by the ruling party to help China contain the coronavirus outbreak, citing a territorial dispute between the two countries and Beijing's handling of anti-government protests in Hong Kong.

## **Korea**

### [52 countries restrict entry from virus-hit Korea](#)

February 28, 2020, The Korea Times

More than 50 countries are restricting the entry of travelers from South Korea with bans or tougher quarantine procedures over coronavirus concerns, foreign ministry data showed Friday, as the number of infections topped 2,000 confirmed cases here.

### [Korea struggles to acquire hospital beds amid spike in coronavirus cases](#)

February 28, 2020, The Korea Times

South Korean health authorities said they are making utmost efforts to maximize efficiency in treating novel coronavirus patients amid a spike in new confirmed cases in the country's southeastern areas.

### [Korean Embassy in Iran calls for preparations for contingency amid spreading virus](#)

February 28, 2020, The Korea Times

The South Korean Embassy in Iran has called for hundreds of its citizens there to prepare for possible contingencies, warning that the coronavirus outbreaks in the Islamic republic could escalate into a "serious situation."

### [Chinese students delay trips to Korea amid coronavirus worries](#)

February 28, 2020, The Korea Times

An increasing number of Chinese students enrolled in universities here are canceling their trips to the country ahead of the new school year amid heightening fears over the new coronavirus, data showed.

### [USFK issues advance furlough notice to Korean employees amid little progress in defense cost talks](#)

February 28, 2020, The Korea Herald

US Forces Korea has issued a 30-day advance notice of potential furlough to its South Korean employees, it said Friday, in an apparent move to further pressure Seoul over defense cost-sharing negotiations.

### [Several N.Koreans Rumored Dead of Coronavirus](#)

February 26, 2020, The Chosun Ilbo

Eight people are rumored to have died of coronavirus in North Korea, a diplomatic source said. The source said the reason North Korea sealed its borders on Jan. 22 was that a number of people there had already died of coronavirus.

## **Southeast Asia**

### [Coronavirus is drying up the supply chains of Southeast Asia's factories](#)

February 28, 2020, QUARTZ

Even as China pushes factories to reopen, the ripple effects of Covid-19 have already proved inescapable for manufacturers outside the country. Particularly hard hit is Southeast Asia, where industries that depend on China for raw materials are being hobbled as their supplies dry up.

### [Conflict prevention in the South China Sea depends on China abiding by the existing rules of navigation](#)

February 27, 2020, SCMP

US freedom of navigation operations do not, in and of themselves, raise the risk of a maritime incident. From the 1972 'Rules of the Road' to the 2014 bilateral agreement on the rules of behaviour, the protocol exists for peaceful engagement even in disputed waters.

### [Trump plans Southeast Asia summit in Las Vegas](#)

February 26, 2020, CNA

US President Donald Trump has invited Southeast Asian leaders to meet next month in Las Vegas, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Tuesday (Feb 25), after a summit last year was scrapped.

### [India, US oppose China's bid on South China Sea code](#)

February 26, 2020, Deccan Herald

India has joined the United States to oppose China's move to tweak the proposed Code of Conduct on the South China Sea in order to keep its rivals and other nations outside the region away from the disputed waters.

### [Cobra Gold 2020 underway](#)

February 25, 2020, Bangkok Post

The Cobra Gold 2020 military exercise began on Tuesday with 9,630 participating soldiers from 29 countries, who were required to strictly follow anti-Covid-19 measures.

### [Narendra Modi holds talks with Myanmar President U Win Myint; India, Myanmar sign 10 pacts](#)

February 27, 2020, The Economic Times

Modi and President Myint held talks at Hyderabad House and 10 pacts were signed between the two countries. The focus of many agreements was on development projects under India's assistance, particularly in Rakhine state. The Rakhine state has witnessed a lot of violence in the past and scores of Rohingyas had fled the state facing persecution.



## Central & West Asia

### Central Asia

#### [USAID and Eurasia Foundation to strengthen civil society in Central Asia](#)

February 28, 2020, The Times of Central Asia

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has officially launched the Civil Society Support Program in Central Asia, which will be implemented by Eurasia Foundation.

#### [Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan sign agreements worth \\$500 million](#)

February 27, 2020, The Times of Central Asia

Kazakhstan Prime Minister Askar Mamin and Uzbekistan Prime Minister Abdulla Aripov on February 26 took part in the II Forum of Interregional Cooperation between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in the city of Urgench of Uzbekistan's Khorezm region.

#### [EU-Kazakhstan Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement will enter into force on March 1](#)

February 26, 2020, The Times of Central Asia

On 1 March, the European Union-Kazakhstan Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (EPCA), now ratified by all the EU Member States and the European Parliament, will enter into force. This represents an important milestone in more than 25 years of EU-Kazakhstan relations, the Delegation of the European Union to Kazakhstan said on February 25.

#### [World Bank supports sustainable and efficient power sector in Tajikistan](#)

February 26, 2020, The Times of Central Asia

The World Bank's Board of Executive Directors on February 25 approved \$134 million in grant financing from the International Development Association for the Power Utility Financial Recovery Project with the overall objective of ensuring the viability and efficiency of Tajikistan's power sector, the World Bank said.

#### [Turkmenistan holds roadshow in Dubai for its oil and gas sector](#)

February 26, 2020, The Times of Central Asia

The International Roadshow "Oil and Gas of Turkmenistan-2020" held in Dubai (UAE) on February 24-25 brought together the leaders of the world oil and gas market, as well as the heads of the hydrocarbon sector of Turkmenistan. The event aimed at developing Turkmenistan's cooperation with all interested foreign

### [Freight train service resumes between north China, Central Asia](#)

February 27, 2020, Xinhua Net

A freight train loaded with 45 carriages of goods left Thursday from northern China's Shanxi Province and headed for Uzbekistan, marking the first cargo train between Shanxi and Central Asia since the novel coronavirus outbreak.

### [Kazakhstan Turns To Japan For A Boost In Cybersecurity](#)

February 27, 2020, Caspian News

As cybersecurity issues have long become an everyday struggle – whether viewed in economic, humanitarian, or national security terms – Central Asia's largest country is partnering with Japan to outline best practices.

## **West Asia**

### [Bahrain Reports 26 Cases Of Coronavirus, Kuwait Has Two More](#)

February 26, 2020, Gulf Today

Bahrain announced on Wednesday that the number of coronavirus infections has risen to 26 after 3 new cases were confirmed, according to the state news agency (BNA).

### [Former Egypt President Hosni Mubarak dies at 91](#)

February 25, 2020, The Tribune

Hosni Mubarak, the Egyptian leader who for nearly 30 years was the resolute face of stability in the Mideast before being forced by the military to resign after 18-day nationwide protests that were part of the Arab world's 2011 pro-democracy upheaval, died on Tuesday, the country's state-run TV said.

### [Iraq Fails To Form New Government, Prolonging Crisis](#)

February 27, 2020, Reuters

Iraqi politicians failed on Thursday to agree on a new government, prolonging deadlock that has failed to resolve unprecedented mass unrest and has stalled the country's recovery from years of war.

### [WHO Says Coronavirus Entered Iran 'undetected,' Warns Outbreak Could Be Worse Than Is Known](#)

February 27, 2020, CNBC

The new coronavirus that is rapidly spreading around the world entered Iran "unseen and undetected," world health officials said. Iran, which had just two cases a week ago, confirmed 245 infections as of Thursday morning, but the

outbreak could be even more widespread in the country than is currently known, said Dr. Mike Ryan, executive director of the World Health Organization's emergencies program.

#### [Iran Vice-president Masoumeh Ebtekar Infected With Coronavirus](#)

February 27, 2020, India Today

Iran Vice-President Masoumeh Ebtekar has been infected by the new strain of coronavirus COVID-19. The coronavirus epidemic in Iran has cost 26 lives, the health ministry announced Thursday.

#### [Kuwait's Coronavirus Cases Rise To 43](#)

February 27, 2020, Anadolu Agency

Kuwait confirmed more cases of the coronavirus Thursday taking the toll to 43, according to its Health Ministry. All infected people had returned from Iran. They are currently receiving treatment at three medical quarantine centers, it added.

#### [Saudi Arabia Closes Two Holiest Shrines To Foreigners As Coronavirus Fears Grow](#)

February 27, 2020, The Guardian

Saudi Arabia has closed the two holiest shrines of Islam to foreign travellers and banned pilgrims from entering the country as fears surrounding the coronavirus outbreak continue to grow in the Middle East.

#### [Russia And Turkey's Conflict In Syria Escalates](#)

February 27, 2020, Newsweek

Russia and Turkey's conflict over an insurgent-held province of northwestern Syria has witnessed a major escalation in hostilities recently, with new reports of Turkish military casualties incurred by airstrikes.

#### [Syria War: 33 Turkish Troops Killed In Airstrike In Idlib](#)

February 28, 2020, BBC News

At least 33 Turkish soldiers have been killed in an air strike by Syrian "regime forces" in north-western Syria, a senior Turkish official has said.

#### [Russia Sends Warships as Turkish Troops Killed in Syria](#)

February 28, 2020, The Moscow Times

Russia is sending two warships equipped with Kalibr cruise missiles to the Mediterranean Sea toward the Syrian coast amid mounting tensions between Russia, Turkey and Syria over the Syrian province of Idlib, the Russian Navy said Friday.

### [Erdogan Condemns 'massacres' Committed Against Muslims In India](#)

February 28, 2020, The Siasat Daily

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan hit out Thursday against "massacres" of Muslims in India after communal riots in New Delhi left at least 38 dead.

### [Yemen's War Is Escalating Again](#)

February 26, 2020, Brookings Institution

After five months of de-escalation, the war in Yemen is heading back in the wrong direction. Fighting is escalating on the ground. The Houthi rebels have resumed missile attacks on Saudi Arabia and the Saudis have resumed air strikes on Sana'a. If the war escalates further, there is a danger it will expand and draw in Iran and America more than previously.

## United States

### United States

#### [Trump Appoints Pence To Lead Government's Coronavirus Response](#)

February 26, 2020, NPR

Hours after the White House rejected the idea of appointing a coronavirus czar, President Trump on Wednesday put Vice President Pence in charge of the administration's response to the disease.

#### [U.S. mulls using sweeping powers to ramp up production of coronavirus protective gear](#)

February 28, 2020, Reuters

President Donald Trump's administration is considering invoking special powers through a law called the Defense Production Act to rapidly expand domestic manufacturing of protective masks and clothing to combat the coronavirus in the United States, two U.S. officials told Reuters.

#### [Trump says 'quite a bit' of sell-off is fear a Democrat will win election, along with coronavirus](#)

February 26, 2020, CNBC

President Donald Trump said in a press conference Wednesday that he believes the stock market will recover its steep, multiday losses and said that fears a Democrat could win the election contributed substantially to the sell-off along with the coronavirus.

#### [Trump campaign ads target a new audience: Indian Americans](#)

February 27, 2020, Politico

After holding a political-style rally in India with over 100,000 cheering fans, Trump's campaign thinks it can win over a few Indian Americans in 2020.

#### [Donald Trump's Facebook Ads Look Different Than Democrats'](#)

February 27, 2020, Bloomberg

Donald Trump has run a more aggressive, and often more experimental, social media ad campaign than his Democratic rivals so far in 2020, according to new analysis by the non-profit Tech for Campaigns. The dynamic echoes the campaigns' strategies in the 2016 election, the group said.

### [Labour union unveils \\$150M campaign to help defeat Trump](#)

February 27, 2020, Washington Times

One of the nation's largest labour unions is unveiling plans to invest \$150 million in a nationwide campaign to help defeat President Donald Trump, a sweeping effort focused on eight battleground states and voters of colour who typically don't vote.

### [U.S. judge mulls holding Russian firm linked to election meddling in contempt](#)

February 28, 2020, Reuters

A federal judge is weighing civil contempt charges against a Russian company accused of funding a Russian troll farm's interference in the 2016 U.S. election to boost President Donald Trump's candidacy.

### [Oil prices on track for biggest weekly decline in over four years](#)

February 28, 2020, Reuters

Oil prices plunged to their lowest in more than a year on Friday, putting them on track for the biggest weekly decline in more than four years, as the rapid spread of the coronavirus stoked fears of slowing global demand.

### [Trump shakes up Justice Department, intelligence community](#)

February 27, 2020, The Hill

President Trump is challenging two institutions with crucial roles to play in the next election with a controversial appointment to the intelligence community and tweets directed at the Justice Department.

### [Trump Campaign Sues New York Times Over 2019 Opinion Article](#)

February 26, 2020, The New York Times

President Trump's re-election campaign sued The New York Times for libel on Wednesday, alleging that an Op-Ed article published by the newspaper falsely asserted a "quid pro quo" between Russian officials and Mr. Trump's 2016 campaign.

### [Indonesia receives drones, helicopters from United States](#)

February 28, 2020, The Jakarta Post

The Defense Ministry has been granted 14 insitu Scan Eagle drones and three Bell 412 helicopters from the United States, with Jakarta expecting the equipment to further strengthen the Navy's maritime patrol operations throughout the archipelago.

### [U.S. Maintains Pressure on Iran, Stalling Diplomacy While Expecting Attacks](#)

February 28, 2020, The New York Times

Nearly two months after the death of Iran's most important general, the Trump administration insists its "maximum pressure" campaign is working. Many allies are sceptical.

### [In Syria and Libya, Trump Is Torn Over 2 Wars, and 2 Strongmen](#)

February 27, 2020, The New York Times

After an airstrike on Turkish forces by Russia or its Syrian allies, President Trump may be forced to pick between Moscow and Ankara.

### [India-U.S. Defence Deal: Bernie Sanders Slams Donald Trump For Selling Weapons To India](#)

February 25, 2020, Bloomberg Quint

Democratic presidential candidate Senator Bernie Sanders has slammed U.S. President Donald Trump for selling weapons to India, saying that Washington D.C. should instead partner with New Delhi to fight climate change to save the planet.

## Europe & Russia

### Europe

#### [Huawei to build first European 5G factory in France to soothe Western nerves](#)

February 28, 2020, The Japan Times

Huawei will build its first European manufacturing plant in France, the chairman said on Thursday, as the Chinese telecom giant seeks to ease worldwide concerns stoked by U.S. charges that Beijing could use its equipment for spying.

#### [Britain and the E.U. Enter Trade Talks, Acrimoniously](#)

February 27, 2020, The New York Times

Each side is accusing the other of bad faith, and London is once again talking about a no-deal exit. But these are still early days.

#### [European lawmaker 'sceptical' on future of U.S.-EU trade talks](#)

February 27, 2020, Politico

The chair of the European Parliament's trade committee is warning that obstacles like steel and aluminium duties and Trump administration's auto tariff threats must be resolved before U.S.-EU trade talks can get off the ground.

#### [Brexit: Ministers 'need to get on' with EU aid replacement](#)

February 28, 2020, BBC

Wales' Brexit minister Jeremy Miles has urged the UK government to give "clarity and commitment" that EU funding will be fully replaced. UK ministers have vowed to substitute the £375m that Wales gets annually from the EU, but have not confirmed how.

#### [EU Slaps Sanctions on Turkish Officials Over Cyprus Drilling](#)

February 27, 2020, The New York Times

The European Union on Thursday slapped sanctions on two senior members of the Turkish Petroleum Corporation and accused them of responsibility for illegal drilling in waters off the Mediterranean island of Cyprus.

#### [EU planning carbon border measures 'as soon as possible'](#)

February 28, 2020, The Japan Times

The European Union will propose carbon border measures as soon as possible to protect its industries from competitors in countries with less stringent climate policies, the bloc's industry chief said on Thursday.



### [Largest-ever delegation from EU meets Africa](#)

February 27, 2020, Anadolu Agency

The largest-ever delegation from the EU on Thursday met with African Union commissioners in Ethiopia for talks that mainly focused on security and trade.

### [EU remains committed to non-recognition of Crimea annexation](#)

February 27, 2020, UNIAN

European Union's Permanent Mission to the OSCE has assured that the EU remains committed to non-recognition of the illegal annexation of Crimea.

### [Immigration from outside EU now at record high after Brexit](#)

February 27, 2020, Express

The number of migrants moving to Britain from outside the European Union is now at its highest level on record, official figures revealed. Some 379,000 people came to the UK from non-EU countries, the highest it has ever been since records began in 1975 when it was 93,000.

### [Number of cases of coronavirus double in France, tally at 38](#)

February 28, 2020, Reuters

The number of confirmed cases of coronavirus in France has more than doubled in 24 hours, the French Health minister said on Thursday, with the tally now at 38 from 18 on Wednesday.

### [France confirms interest in Chinook acquisition](#)

February 26, 2020, Flight Global

The French air force has finally confirmed a long-rumoured interest in acquiring heavy-lift helicopters for special forces missions and is studying different options, including leasing a pair of Boeing CH-47F Chinooks as a trial before making any purchase.

### [Italy blasts virus panic as it eyes new testing criteria](#)

February 27, 2020, Associated Press

With tourism tanking and panic rising, Italy tried to control the coronavirus in the realm of public perception Thursday as its outbreak grew to 650 cases and other countries took measures to limit travel to and from affected Italian regions.

## [Racially motivated terror attack in Hanau puts Germany's right wing extremism into focus](#)

February 27, 2020, ABC News

The German government under the grand coalition of Christian Democrats and Social Democrats has long faced criticism by politicians and pundits that it was not taking the threat of right-wing violence seriously enough, but top German politicians this past week have spoken out forcefully, countering this idea.

## **Russia**

### [Moscow Targets Chinese Nationals Amid Coronavirus Fears. And the Arctic Heats Up in Record Speed](#)

February 27, 2020, The Moscow Times

China has complained that Moscow's response to coronavirus is discriminatory and risks damaging relations with Beijing. Associated Press correspondents Francesca Ebel and Dasha Litvinova looked at how Moscow authorities went into great lengths to track down Chinese nationals. Francesca joins us to explain Russia's increasingly heavy-handed measures to contain the outbreak.

### [U.S., Britain Double Russian Oil Purchases](#)

February 27, 2020, The Moscow Times

The United States and Britain have more than doubled their crude oil purchases from Russia due to Iran and Venezuela sanctions, the RBC news website reported Friday, citing customs data.

### [Coronavirus in Russia](#)

February 27, 2020, The Moscow Times

As the new coronavirus that has killed more than 2,800 people continues to spread around the world, Russia has stepped up measures to tackle the health risk, including closing most entry points along its 4,200-kilometer border with China and temporarily banning Chinese citizens from entering the country.

### [EU Considers Sanctions Against Chinese, Russian Groups Over Hacking](#)

February 27, 2020, The Moscow Times

The European Union may target a Russian and a Chinese entity, as well as several individuals, with sanctions over cyber attacks, adding to signs of increasing alarm in the bloc over network security.

### [Trump Campaign Is Suing New York Times Over Russia Opinion Piece](#)

February 27, 2020, The Moscow Times

President Donald Trump's re-election campaign said on Wednesday it was filing a libel suit accusing the New York Times of intentionally publishing a false opinion article that suggested Russia and the campaign had an overarching deal in the 2016 U.S. election.

### [Russia Stages First Ship-Launched 'Tsirkon' Hypersonic Missile Test](#)

February 27, 2020, The Moscow Times

Russia has conducted the first ship-launched firing of its new hypersonic missile called Tsirkon and plans further tests from nuclear submarines, two unnamed military sources confirmed.

### [Russia Partially Suspends South Korea Flights, Iranian Visas Over Coronavirus](#)

February 26, 2020, The Moscow Times

Russian Deputy Prime Minister Tatiana Golikova said on Wednesday Moscow would suspend flights between Russia and South Korea from March 1 over coronavirus fears, except those operated by Aeroflot and Aurora.

### [Russian ambassador asks UN colleagues "not to bury Astana process"](#)

February 28, 2020, TASS

Russia's UN Ambassador Vasily Nebenzya has urged his colleagues in the UN Security Council "not to bury the Astana process." Russia's UN Ambassador Vasily Nebenzya said that "we are working with the Syrian side to settle the existing difficulties".

### [Russia and Turkey carry out joint patrols in Syria's Hasakah province](#)

February 28, 2020, TASS

Russian and Turkish servicemen have held a joint patrolling mission in Syria's Hasakah province, the Russian Center for reconciliation of the conflicting sides in Syria said.

## Africa & Latin America

### Latin America

#### [Brazil confirms first coronavirus case in Latin America](#)

February 26, 2020, Al Jazeera

Brazil's Health Ministry on Wednesday confirmed the first case of a fast-spreading new coronavirus in Latin America, diagnosing a 61-year-old man in Sao Paulo who returned recently from Italy.

#### [Cameroon: Maurice Kamto makes long-awaited return](#)

February 27, 2020, Al Jazeera

Thousands of people have gathered in Cameroon for the return of the opposition leader, Maurice Kamto. Kamto spent time in the US and France following his release from jail last year. He was imprisoned after claiming victory during the last presidential elections.

#### [Border Patrol discovers new smuggling tunnel in southern US](#)

February 28, 2020, ABC News

Border Patrol agents in southern Arizona have uncovered another illegal tunnel running under the U.S.-Mexico border, the latest in a series of discoveries and the result of renewed efforts targeting underground smuggling routes.

#### [Smuggling tunnel dug by hand discovered at US-Mexico border](#)

February 27, 2020, New York Post

An incomplete smuggling tunnel was discovered by authorities at the Arizona-Mexico border — the 126th underground pathway found by border agents in that area since 1990, officials said.

#### [Mexico worried U.S. ruling sets precedent in cross-border shooting of teen](#)

February 26, 2020, Reuters

The Mexican government on Tuesday said it was worried a ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court in the case of a Mexican boy shot dead by a U.S. Border Patrol agent from the other side of the border would set a precedent.

#### [Protest-hit Chile ponders rewriting Pinochet's constitution](#)

February 27, 2020, France 24

Campaigning for next month's referendum on changing Chile's dictatorship-era constitution began on Wednesday, more than four months after an outbreak of unrest that triggered the ballot.

### [The Missing Link in China's Economic Ambitions in Latin America](#)

February 25, 2020, The Diplomat

The spotty records of Chinese companies on sustainability continue to undermine Beijing's ambitions in the region

### [US Struggles to Break Ties between Russia, Venezuela](#)

February 27, 2020, VOA

In October 2016, the head of Russia's largest oil company traveled to the birthplace of Hugo Chávez, the former president of Venezuela.

### [Trump ready to end Chevron's access to oil from Venezuela](#)

February 27, 2020, Los Angeles Times

The Trump administration is ready to unleash the full effect of sanctions on Chevron Corp.'s operations in Venezuela as the U.S. seeks to further squeeze President Nicolas Maduro's regime.

## **Africa**

### [Nigeria confirms first coronavirus case in Sub-Saharan Africa](#)

February 28, 2020, France 24

"The case is an Italian citizen who works in Nigeria and returned from Milan, Italy to Lagos, Nigeria on the 25th of February 2020," Health Minister Osagie Ehanire said in a statement on Twitter.

### [African Union To Deploy 3,000 Soldiers To Niger, Mali, Others Over Terrorism](#)

February 27, 2020, Sahara Reporters

Terror groups like Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province are among ruthless organisations that have terrorised people of the region in recent years, killing dozens in the process.

### [World Bank restores relations with Somalia](#)

February 28, 2020, RFI

The World Bank moved to reestablish relations with Somalia after a 30-year break, paving the way for the country to have access to low-cost development aid.

### [A step forward in South Sudan](#)

February 28, 2020, The Hindu

The inauguration of a national unity government in South Sudan last week is a milestone following the country's independence from Sudan in 2011. But the

durability of the peace in the world's youngest nation depends on reconciliation between the majority ethnic Nuer and Dinka communities under the terms of the 2018 peace deal.

### [Coronavirus: Kenyans furious as state allows flights from China](#)

February 27, 2020, Standard Media

Allowing flights from the virus hit China is precarious, Kenyans have told the government. The government announced that China Southern Airlines had resumed its flights from Guangzhou, one of the hotbeds of the novel coronavirus, to Nairobi.

### [US air strike kills telecom worker in Somalia](#)

February 26, 2020, Al Jazeera

An American air strike killed a worker for a telecom company in Somalia, officials said, while the US military said an al-Shabab commander and his wife died in an attack.

### [Zimbabwe's secret money printing threatens IMF assistance](#)

February 28, 2020, Financial Times

Secret money printing by the central bank of Zimbabwe has derailed efforts to revive the southern African nation's stricken economy and now threatens to end IMF oversight of the government's reform drive.



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