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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 Foreign Affairs Review

DPG Foreign Affairs Review is compiled by our research team from publicly available information and open source media to provide an overview of significant developments related to India's foreign affairs during the month. Your comments and feedback can be addressed to Mohit Musaddi at mohit@dpg.org.in.

Cover Photographs:

(Photographs top to bottom)

EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar participates in the BRICS Foreign Minister's video conference on April 28, 2020. Source: [Twitter/@DrSJaishankar](https://twitter.com/DrSJaishankar)

EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar's video conversation with the acting Foreign Minister of Afghanistan, Mr. Mohammed Haneef Atmar on April 27, 2020. Source: [Twitter/@DrSJaishankar](https://twitter.com/DrSJaishankar)

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Contents

I. Asia	1
II. North America	7
III. Europe.....	9
IV. West Asia.....	12
V. Africa.....	15
VI. Latin America and Caribbean	18
VII. Multilateral Fora.....	21

I. Asia

1. [Telephone conversation between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the State Counsellor of Myanmar](#)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a telephonic conversation with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on April 30. The leaders discussed the evolving COVID 19 scenario in the domestic and regional contexts and updated each other on the steps being taken to control the spread of the pandemic. Underlining the importance of Myanmar as a vital pillar of India's Neighbourhood First policy, Prime Minister Modi conveyed India's readiness to provide all possible support to Myanmar for mitigating the health and economic impact of COVID 19. PM Modi also thanked the State Counsellor for the cooperation being extended by Myanmar authorities to Indian citizens in Myanmar.

2. [Telephone conversation between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina](#)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a telephone conversation with Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh on April 29. The two leaders discussed the regional situation in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, and briefed each other about the steps being taken to mitigate its effects in the respective country. Both the leaders expressed satisfaction at the continuation of supply of essential items across the border through road, rail, inland waterways and air. Prime Minister Modi, recalling the shared bonds of history, culture, language and fraternal ties, expressed satisfaction at the excellent state of bilateral relations, and ensured India's readiness to help Bangladesh in containing the spread of COVID-19 and in mitigating the health and economic impact of the pandemic.

3. [Telephone conversation between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the President of Indonesia](#)

On April 28, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a telephone conversation with Mr. Joko Widodo, the President of Indonesia. The two leaders exchanged thoughts about the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in the region and the world. The Indonesian President appreciated the facilitation provided by the Government of India of supplies of pharmaceutical products to Indonesia. Prime Minister Modi assured him that India would do its best to prevent disruption in supplies of medical products or the other commodities traded between the two countries. The

Prime Minister also underlined the fact that Indonesia is an important maritime partner in India's extended neighbourhood, and the strength of the bilateral relationship would help both countries in fighting the effects of the pandemic.

4. [Telephone conversation between Prime Minister of India and Prime Minister of Singapore](#)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a telephone conversation with Lee Hsien Loong, Prime Minister of Singapore on April 23. The two leaders exchanged views on the health and economic challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. They updated each other on the measures being adopted in their respective countries to tackle the pandemic and its economic and social effects. The Prime Minister promised to provide all possible support for maintaining supplies of essential goods, including medical products, to Singapore. The Prime Minister also expressed his appreciation for the support being extended to Indian citizens in Singapore.

5. [Telephone conversation between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President of the Maldives](#)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a telephone conversation with Mr. Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, President of the Maldives on April 20. The leaders updated each other about the current state of COVID-19 infections in their countries. They expressed satisfaction that the coordination modalities agreed between SAARC countries were being implemented actively. Appreciating the special challenges that the pandemic poses for a tourism-dependent economy like the Maldives, Prime Minister assured the Maldivian President of continued Indian support for minimising the health and economic impact of COVID-19.

6. [Telephone conversation between Prime Minister of India and Prime Minister of Bhutan](#)

On April 16, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a telephone conversation with Dr. Lotay Tshering, Prime Minister (Lyonchhen) of the Kingdom of Bhutan. The two Prime Ministers discussed the regional situation in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, and updated each other about the steps being taken by their governments to control its effects. The leaders expressed happiness at the progress made in implementing the special arrangements agreed on 15 March between the leaders of the SAARC countries. Prime Minister referred to the timeless and special nature of India-Bhutan ties, and assured Lyonchhen that India would ensure all

possible support to Bhutan for minimising the health and economic impact of the pandemic.

7. [Telephone conversation between Prime Minister of India and Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam](#)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a telephone conversation with Mr. Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on April 13. The two leaders discussed the situation arising out of the COVID-19 pandemic and the steps being taken to address this challenge. The leaders agreed on the potential for bilateral collaboration in fighting COVID-19, including the facilitation of supplies of required medical equipment. They also committed to provide the necessary support to each other's citizens present in their territories. Both leaders stressed the importance of the Strategic Partnership between India and Vietnam, and expressed satisfaction at the recent progress on various fronts. They also reviewed regional and international developments.

8. [Telephone conversation between Prime Minister Modi and Prime Minister Oli of Nepal](#)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on April 10 had a phone call with K P Sharma Oli, Rt. Hon. Prime Minister of Nepal. The two leaders shared views on the ongoing Covid-19 crisis and the challenges it poses to the health and safety of citizens of both countries and the region. They discussed the steps taken in their respective countries to tackle the pandemic. Prime Minister Modi reiterated India's commitment to ensuring all possible support and assistance for Nepal's efforts in fighting this global pandemic.

9. [Telephone conversation between PM and Prime Minister of Japan](#)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke on telephone with Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan on April 10. The two leaders discussed the global health and economic challenges emerging out of the COVID-19 pandemic. They also discussed the steps taken in their respective countries to deal with this crisis. The two leaders agreed that the India-Japan partnership could play a critical role in helping the world find solutions to the challenges arising out of the pandemic.

10. [Telephone conversation between PM and President of Republic of Korea](#)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a telephonic conversation with Moon Jae-in, President of the Republic of Korea on April 9. The two leaders discussed the COVID-19 global pandemic and the challenges it posed to the global health systems and economic situation. They shared

information about the steps taken in their countries to tackle the pandemic. The Prime Minister expressed appreciation for the technology-based response deployed by the Republic of Korea to manage the crisis. President Moon Jae-in appreciated the way Indian authorities have motivated the vast Indian population to fight the pandemic with unity of purpose.

11. [Telephone conversation between PM and Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia](#)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on April 6 had a telephonic conversation with Scott Morrison, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia. The two leaders discussed the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and the domestic response strategies being adopted by their respective Governments. They agreed on the importance of bilateral experience-sharing in the context of this health crisis, including through collaborative research efforts.

12. [70th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between India and China](#)

Messages of felicitations were exchanged between the Presidents, Prime Ministers and External Affairs Ministers of India and the People's Republic of China on occasion of the 70th Anniversary of the establishment of Diplomatic Relations between India and the People's Republic of China on April 01.

President Shri Ram Nath Kovind, in his letter to Chinese President Xi Jinping, conveyed warm greetings, felicitations and good wishes to the Government and the people of China, and observed that the two sides have made considerable progress especially in the last few years in enhancing bilateral engagement in a number of areas, including political, economic and people-to-people ties.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his message to Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, stated that India and China are two large developing countries and emerging economies which are increasingly playing an important role in the global landscape. Therefore, good relations between India and China are conducive not only for their respective countries, but also for the peace, stability and prosperity of our region and the world. PM also noted that the COVID-19 pandemic was a reminder of the interconnected nature of the world today and the need therefore to adopt a truly global response to it.

External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar, in his letter to Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, remarked that in the last seven decades, India-China relations have expanded substantially and become increasingly diverse and multifaceted.

13. [Telephone conversation between the External Affairs Minister and the Foreign Minister of Russia](#)

On April 23, EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar held a telephone conversation with Mr. Sergey Lavrov, the Foreign Minister of Russia. The two discussed the then forthcoming BRICS Foreign Ministers meeting. They also reviewed recent developments pertaining to Afghanistan and remarked that joint cooperation on coronavirus reflects the special friendship between India and Russia.

14. [Telephone conversations of the External Affairs Minister with his counterparts from Asia](#)

On April 27, EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar reviewed the bilateral cooperation with Mr. Mohammed Haneef Atmar, the acting Foreign Minister of the [Islamic Republic of Afghanistan](#). The two discussed the coronavirus challenge and humanitarian assistance, including food and medical supplies. Dr. Jaishankar received updates on the latest developments on the Afghanistan peace efforts and also on the safety and well-being of the Sikh community there.



EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar's video conversation with the acting Foreign Minister of Afghanistan, Mr. Mohammed Haneef Atmar on April 27, 2020. Source: [Twitter/@DrSJaishankar](#)

EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar received a call from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of [Malaysia](#), Mr. Hishammuddin Hussein on April 13. Dr. Jaishankar reaffirmed India's resolve to continue its engagement on bilateral issues. The EAM also thanked Mr. Hussein for the support given to Indian citizens currently in Malaysia.

On April 8, the External Affairs Minister had a telephone conversation with the Foreign Minister and the Minister of Women of [Australia](#), Ms. Marise Payne. They discussed their respective responses to the coronavirus outbreak. Ms. Payne assured that there is no change in the status of Indian students studying in Australia. Dr. Jaishankar confirmed that India will fully facilitate arrangements for Australians wishing to return home and that New Delhi is also responding positively to Australia's drug requirements.

II. North America

1. [Telephone conversation between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the President of United States of America](#)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a telephonic conversation with Donald Trump, President of United States of America on April 04. The two leaders exchanged views on the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on global well-being and the economy. Stressing the special relationship between the two countries, the Prime Minister reiterated India's solidarity with the USA in overcoming this global crisis together. The two leaders agreed to deploy the full strength of the India – US partnership to resolutely and effectively combat COVID-19. The Prime Minister and the US President exchanged notes on the respective steps taken in each country to mitigate the health and economic impacts of the pandemic.

2. [Telephone Conversation between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Prime Minister of Canada](#)

On April 29, Prime Minister Modi spoke on the phone with Mr. Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada. The two leaders discussed the prevailing global situation regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. They agreed on the importance of global solidarity and coordination, the maintenance of supply chains, and collaborative research activities. The two leaders agreed that the partnership between India and Canada could contribute meaningfully to the global effort to fight the pandemic, especially through collaboration in research and technology aimed at finding a vaccine or therapeutic solutions to COVID-19.

3. [External Affairs Minister's telephone conversation with the Secretary of State of the United States of America](#)

EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar had a telephone conversation with the Secretary of State of U.S., Mr. Mike Pompeo on April 23. The two exchanged notes on the response to coronavirus and discussed the importance of international cooperation. They also exchanged views on the ongoing situation in Afghanistan.

4. [Telephone conversation between the External Affairs Minister and the U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation](#)

External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar held a telephone conversation with Mr. Zalmay Khalilzad, U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation on April 17. Mr. Khalilzad apprised the EAM of recent

Afghan developments while Dr. Jaishankar shared the Indian perspective. The EAM reiterated that the historical friendship with Afghanistan will always be the guide for India's Afghan policy.

5. [MEA's response to the observations on India in the USCIRF Annual Report](#)

On April 28, the Official Spokesperson from the Ministry of External Affairs, Mr. Anurag Srivastava responded to observations on India by the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) in their Annual Report 2020. Among other findings, the USCIRF reported that following the landslide victory of PM Modi's BJP in 2019, "the national government used its strengthened parliamentary majority to institute national level policies violating religious freedom across India, especially for Muslims".

Mr. Srivastav's replied that India rejects the observations made in the USCIRF Annual Report. "Its biased and tendentious comments against India are not new. But on this occasion, its misrepresentation has reached new levels. It has not been able to carry its own Commissioners in its endeavour." He further stated that India regards it as an organisation of particular concern and will, therefore, treat it accordingly.

III. Europe

1. [Telephone conversation between PM and Prime Minister of Ireland](#)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a telephone conversation on April 22 with the Prime Minister of Ireland, Dr. Leo Varadkar. The two leaders discussed the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and the steps being taken in their respective countries for controlling its health and economic impacts. The two leaders agreed that India and Ireland can leverage their strengths in the pharmaceutical and medical fields to contribute to the global fight against the pandemic. They also deliberated on the potential for strengthening India's cooperation with Ireland, as well as with the EU, in the post-COVID context.

2. [Telephone conversation between Prime Minister Modi and the Prime Minister of Sweden](#)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a telephone conversation on April 07 with Stefan Lofven, Prime Minister of Sweden. The two leaders discussed the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and the steps being taken in their respective countries for controlling its health and economic impacts. Both leaders agreed on the potential for collaboration and data sharing between Indian and Swedish researchers and scientists, which would also contribute to the global efforts against COVID-19.

3. [Telephone conversation between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the President of the Government of Spain](#)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a telephonic conversation with Pedro Sanchez Perez-Castejon, President of the Government of Spain on April 04. The two leaders discussed the global challenge posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The two leaders agreed on the importance of international cooperation for fighting the global health crisis. The Spanish Prime Minister agreed with Prime Minister's observation that the world needs to define a new, human-centric concept of globalisation for the post-COVID era. The two leaders agreed on the utility of yoga and traditional herbal medicines for providing an easily accessible means of ensuring the psychological and physical health of people confined to their homes due to the pandemic.

4. [Telephone conversation between Prime Minister Modi and His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales](#)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a telephone conversation on April 02 with His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. The two dignitaries discussed the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. His Royal Highness the Prince thanked the Prime Minister for the facilitation and assistance provided for UK citizens stranded in India during the present crisis. Prime Minister thanked His Royal Highness the Prince for the keen interest he has always taken in Ayurveda.

5. [Telephone conversation between PM and the Federal Chancellor of Germany](#)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a telephone conversation on April 02 with Her Excellency Dr. Angela Merkel, Federal Chancellor of Germany. The two leaders discussed the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the situation in their respective countries, and the importance of international collaboration for fighting the health crisis. They shared views on the inadequate availability of medicines and medical equipment required during the pandemic, and agreed to explore avenues of cooperation in this regard. The German Chancellor agreed with the Prime Minister that the COVID-19 pandemic is an important turning point in modern history, and offers an opportunity to forge a new vision of globalisation focused on the shared interests of humanity as a whole. The Prime Minister informed Her Excellency the Chancellor about the recent Indian initiatives to disseminate simple yoga exercises and immunity-enhancing Ayurvedic remedies for people of the world. The Chancellor agreed that such practices could be very beneficial for enhancing psychological and physical health, especially under the present lockdown conditions.

6. [Telephone conversations of the External Affairs Minister with his counterparts from Europe](#)

Over the course of the month, the External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar held telephonic conversations with his counterparts from Estonia, Czech Republic, Armenia, U.K. and Spain.

On April 27, the EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar had a telephone conversation with the Foreign Minister of [Estonia](#), Mr. Urmas Reinsalu. They deliberated on the use of digital tools in the coronavirus outbreak and also talked about cooperation in the UN framework.

On April 24, the EAM exchanged experiences on the response to coronavirus with the Foreign Minister of the [Czech Republic](#), Mr. Tomáš Petříček. The two agreed that there are valuable lessons for international cooperation regarding the ongoing situation and thus looked forward to keeping in touch.

The EAM had a telephone conversation with the Foreign Minister of [Armenia](#), Mr. Zohrab Mnatsakanyan on April 21. They discussed the friendship and cooperation between India and Armenia amidst the coronavirus pandemic. Dr. S. Jaishankar appreciated Armenia's care of Indian students and assured Mr. Mnatsakanyan that medical supplies were on their way from India to Armenia.

On April 20, the EAM received a call from Mr. Dominic Raab, Foreign Secretary of the [United Kingdom](#). The two discussed cooperation on coronavirus related challenges and exchanged notes on international developments, including the G20 issues.

On April 8, EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar had a telephone conversation with the [Spanish](#) Foreign Minister Ms. Arancha Gonzalez. Reiterating India's positive response to the urgent pharmaceutical requirement of Spain, Dr. Jaishankar stressed that an effective response to the pandemic requires global cooperation.

IV. West Asia

1. [Telephone conversation between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the President of Egypt](#)

On April 17, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a telephone conversation with Mr. Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, President of Egypt. The leaders discussed the evolving global situation in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and exchanged information about the steps being taken by their respective governments to protect their populations. They agreed on the utility of continuous exchange of experiences and best-practices, in order to learn from each other.

2. [Telephone conversation between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the King of Jordan](#)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a telephone conversation with His Majesty King Abdullah II of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on April 16. The two leaders discussed the challenges posed to the world by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the steps being taken in their respective countries to limit its impact. They agreed to support each other's efforts to the maximum possible extent, by sharing information and best practices and by facilitating needed supplies.

3. [Telephone conversation between PM and President of the State of Palestine](#)

On April 14, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a telephone conversation with Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, President of the State of Palestine. The two leaders discussed the challenges posed by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and apprised each other of the steps being taken in their respective countries to control the situation. The Prime Minister appreciated the efforts being made by the Palestine authorities to protect their population from the virus, and assured all possible support from India for these efforts.

4. [Telephone conversation between Prime Minister Modi and the King of Bahrain](#)

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi had a telephone conversation with His Majesty Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa, King of the Kingdom of Bahrain on April 06. The two leaders discussed the ongoing COVID-19 health crisis and its consequences, including logistics chains and financial markets.

5. [Telephone conversation between Prime Minister Modi and the Sultan of Oman](#)

On April 07, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a telephonic conversation with His Majesty Haitham bin Tarik, Sultan of Oman. The two leaders discussed the health and economic challenges posed by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and the steps being taken by their respective countries to respond to them. They agreed that both countries would extend all possible support to each other in dealing with the crisis.

6. [Telephone conversation between Prime Minister and PM of Israel](#)

Prime Minister had a telephone conversation on April 03 with Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of Israel. The two leaders discussed the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the response strategies adopted by their respective Governments to the health crisis. The leaders explored possible collaboration between India and Israel in fighting the pandemic, including by improving availability of pharmaceutical supplies and by innovative use of high technology. They agreed to maintain a focused channel of communication to explore such synergies. Mr. Netanyahu agreed with the Prime Minister that the COVID-19 pandemic is an important turning point in modern history, and offers an opportunity to forge a new vision of globalisation focused on the shared interests of humanity as a whole.

7. [Telephone conversation between Prime Minister Modi and the PM of Kuwait](#)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a telephonic conversation with His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait on April 01. Both leaders discussed the domestic and international aspects of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. They agreed that their officials would maintain regular contact during the health crisis, in order to exchange information and explore avenues of cooperation and mutual support.

8. [Telephone Conversations of the External Affairs Minister of India with his counterparts from West Asia](#)

Over the course of the month, the External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar held telephonic conversations with his counterparts from Lebanon, UAE, Palestine, Qatar, Oman, Iran and Saudi Arabia.

On April 29, EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar had a telephone conversation with the Foreign Minister of [Lebanon](#) Mr. Nassif Hitti. They discussed economic

and agricultural cooperation between India and Lebanon. Mr. Hitti praised India's role in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). Dr. Jaishankar appreciated Lebanon's assistance to the Indian community there.

The EAM had a telephone conversation with Mr. Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the [United Arab Emirates](#) on April 24. Dr. Jaishankar applauded the 'generosity of spirit' and 'clarity of policy' that has characterised the relationship between India and the UAE. They discussed the need for international cooperation during the ongoing pandemic.

On April 24, he discussed the coronavirus situation with Foreign Minister Riad Al Malki of [Palestine](#). He also assured the FM of Indian medical assistance to Palestine.

The External Affairs Minister had a telephone conversation with the Foreign Minister of [Qatar](#), Mr. Mohammed bin Abdulla Al Thani on April 24. They discussed their respective approaches in combatting the coronavirus and agreed that such challenging times will further strengthen the India-Qatar friendship. Dr. S. Jaishankar thanked Minister Al Thani for taking care of the Indian community in Qatar.

On April 23, the EAM had a conversation with the Foreign Minister of [Oman](#) Mr. Yusuf Alawi. Dr. S. Jaishankar appreciated Oman's taking care of the Indian community there and assured him of India's support in the collective fight against coronavirus.

On April 23, EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar had a telephone conversation with Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of [Saudi Arabia](#). After thanking Prince Faisal for taking care of the Indian community in Saudi Arabia, the EAM discussed shared interests in ensuring food and health security. Dr. Jaishankar also assured Prince Faisal that India remains a reliable partner.

The EAM had a telephone conversation with Mr. Javad Zarif, the Foreign Minister of the [Islamic Republic of Iran](#) on April 13. The two discussed respective responses to the coronavirus challenge and exchanged views on regional developments.

V. Africa

1. [Telephone conversation between Prime Minister of India and President of the Republic of South Africa](#)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a telephone conversation with Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa on April 17. The two leaders exchanged views about the domestic, regional and global challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. They discussed the steps being taken by their respective governments to protect the health of their people as well as to minimise economic impacts. The Prime Minister assured that India would provide all possible support to South Africa for ensuring supplies of essential medicines during this challenging time. The Prime Minister commended the proactive role being played by President Ramaphosa, in his current capacity as the Chair of the African Union, for coordinating a continent-wide response to the pandemic.

2. [Telephone conversation between PM Modi and President of the Republic of Uganda](#)

On April 9, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a telephone conversation with President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of the Republic of Uganda. The two leaders discussed the health and economic challenges arising out of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Prime Minister assured President Museveni that India stands in solidarity with its friends in Africa during the present health crisis, and would extend all possible support to the Ugandan Government's efforts to control the spread of the virus in its territory. The Prime Minister warmly recalled his visit to Uganda in July 2018, and touched on the special nature of India-Uganda ties.

3. [External Affairs Minister's Telephone conversation with his counterparts from Africa](#)

Over the course of the month, External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar held telephonic conversations with his counterparts from Angola, Djibouti, Mali, Uganda, Comoros, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria and Kenya.

On April 30, the External Affairs Minister had a telephone conversation with the newly appointed Foreign Minister of [Angola](#), Mr. Tete Antonio. The two agreed on an early meeting of the India-Angola Joint Commission and also expressed their desire to work on new areas of cooperation, including health. Dr. Jaishankar also recognised the need to host the India-Africa Forum Summit at the earliest.

On April 30, he also had a telephone conversation with the Foreign Minister of [Djibouti](#), Mr. Mahmoud Ali Youssouf. They reviewed the India-Djibouti bilateral relationship in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

On April 25, he discussed health security and the solar alliance with the Foreign Minister of [Mali](#), Mr. Tiébilé Dramé. He reiterated India's growing cooperation with the Sahel and assured Mr. Dramé that India is ready to provide assistance to help Mali combat COVID-19.

On April 25, EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar followed up PM Modi's engagement with President Museveni of [Uganda](#) by having a telephone conversation with the Foreign Minister of Uganda, Sam Kutesa. The EAM confirmed the impending shipment of medical supplies and health equipment to Uganda to help it combat the coronavirus. He reassured Mr. Kutesa that India and Uganda will address this global challenge cooperatively.

The EAM had a telephonic conversation with Foreign Minister Mohamed El Amine Souef of [Comoros](#) on April 25. Reaffirming Prime Minister Modi's vision of SAGAR, the EAM stressed on the growing health cooperation and development partnership between India and Comoros.

Dr. S. Jaishankar, EAM and Mr. Alpha Barry, Foreign Minister of [Burkina Faso](#) had a telephonic conversation on April 25. The EAM was glad to learn that Mr. Barry had recovered from the coronavirus. He wished Mr. Barry good health and assured him that medical supplies were on their way from India to Burkina Faso. He further reaffirmed the friendship between the two countries.

The External Affairs Minister had a telephone conversation with Mr. Kalla Ankourao, the Foreign Minister of [Niger](#) on April 24. He assured Mr. Ankourao of India's support to Niger in meeting the coronavirus challenge, including the supply of medicines. They also discussed Covid-19's global implications in the context of the United Nations.

On April 24, Dr. S. Jaishankar had a telephone conversation with the Foreign Minister of [Nigeria](#) Mr. Geoffrey Onyeama. The two discussed cooperation during coronavirus and exchanged views on the Commonwealth. The EAM reiterated that India is committed to providing key medicines and thanked Mr. Onyeama for the welfare of the Indian community in Nigeria.

EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar spoke to the Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs of [Kenya](#), Ms. Raychelle Omamo on April 21. They discussed the long-

standing cooperation between India and Kenya in diverse fields. Dr. Jaishankar also assured Ms. Omamo that India will always be a reliable partner in medical supply.

VI. Latin America and Caribbean

1. [Telephone conversation between Prime Minister Modi and the President of Brazil](#)

On April 04, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a telephonic conversation with Jair Bolsonaro, President of Brazil. The two leaders discussed the global situation in the wake of the spread of COVID-19 pandemic. The two leaders stressed the significance of close cooperation between India and Brazil, bilaterally as well as in the multilateral institutional framework, to mitigate the grave crises caused by COVID-19. They agreed on the need to forge a new human-centric concept of globalisation for the post-COVID world. Recalling with gratitude the participation of the President of Brazil as the Chief Guest in the 70th Republic Day celebrations of India this year, the Prime Minister expressed happiness at the growing vibrancy in the India-Brazil friendship. He also thanked Brazil for its leadership of BRICS in the past year.

2. [External Affairs Minister's telephone conversations with his counterparts from Latin America and the Caribbean](#)

Over the course of the month, the External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar held virtual conversations with his counterparts from Guatemala, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Paraguay, Dominica, Uruguay, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Grenada, Peru, Panama and Brazil.

On April 30, EAM, Dr. S. Jaishankar spoke to the Foreign Minister of [St. Vincent and the Grenadines](#), Sir Louis Straker. The EAM assured Sir Straker that India will continue to support more community development projects and assist in economic recovery.

Dr. Jaishankar had a telephone conversation with the recently appointed Foreign Minister of [Guatemala](#), Mr. Pedro Brolo on April 30. The two discussed expanding trade relations between India and Guatemala and also decided to work closely in international organisations.

On April 30, Dr. Jaishankar had a conversation with the Foreign Minister of [Paraguay](#), Mr. Antonio Rivas Palacios, wherein they discussed the coronavirus situation and the economic recovery.

He also had a conversation with Foreign Minister Dr. Kenneth Darroux of [Dominica](#) on April 30. The two discussed cooperation in IT, distance education and ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

On April 29, the EAM had a telephone conversation with Mr. Ernesto Talvi, the Minister for External Relations of [Uruguay](#). Dr. Jaishankar explored economic cooperation possibilities and apprised Mr. Talvi of India's medical contribution to combating the coronavirus pandemic.

EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar had a telephone conversation with Ms. Kamina Johnson Smith, Foreign Minister of [Jamaica](#) on April 29. The conversation included notes on tackling the coronavirus challenge, and the EAM assured Ms. Smith that India will be a reliable provider of medicines.

On April 29, Dr. Jaishankar spoke to Ms. Claudia blum de Barberi, the Foreign Minister of [Colombia](#). They reviewed the ongoing discussions on trade and energy and expressed desire to expand ITEC cooperation. Dr. Jaishankar expressed solidarity in the fight against Covid-19 and assured Ms. Barberi that New Delhi will facilitate the return of Colombian nationals from India.

EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar spoke to the Foreign Minister of [Trinidad and Tobago](#), Mr. Dennis Moses on April 29. They discussed working together on IT cooperation and healthcare and looked forward to an early meeting of the Joint Commission.

On April 29, the EAM had a conversation with Mr. Peter David, the Foreign Minister of [Grenada](#). Discussions covered health cooperation and development partnership. Dr. Jaishankar was pleased to learn that Grenada's response to the coronavirus outbreak has been effective.

On April 28, EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar exchanged notes with Mr. Gustavo Meza-Cuadra, the Minister for External Relations of [Peru](#). The EAM appreciated the online programme of the Yoga Team Lima. He assured Mr. Meza-Cuadra that medical assistance from India will reach Peru very soon. The EAM also expressed his desire to work together for an ITEC exchange of pandemic experiences and best practices between India and Latin America.

The EAM held a telephone conversation with Mr. Alejandro Ferrer, the Minister for External Relations of [Panama](#) on April 28. Dr. Jaishankar complimented Mr. Ferrer for his government's decisive and effective response to the coronavirus. He appreciated Panama's desire to make

India one of its priority partners and also thanked Mr. Ferrer for taking care of the Indian community.

EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar had a telephone conversation with Mr. Ernesto Araujo, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of [Brazil](#) on April 23. The two reviewed in detail the follow-up of President Jair Bolsonaro's visit to India in January. They also exchanged notes on global issues, including the coronavirus pandemic.

VII. Multilateral Fora

1. [Video conference of the BRICS Ministers of Foreign Affairs/International Relations](#)

The BRICS Ministers of Foreign Affairs/International Relations video conference was convened by the current BRICS Chair, Russia on April 28, 2020. This video conference was convened in the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. The discussions centred around COVID-19 crisis, its impact and BRICS response. The BRICS Foreign Ministers also discussed the activities to be undertaken under Russian BRICS Chairmanship in 2020.

In his remarks, the EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar thanked the Russian Foreign Minister for convening this extraordinary meeting. He noted that BRICS, which brings together almost 42 percent of global population, with impressive growth, investment and trade share, has an important role to play in shaping the global economic and political architecture.

Dr. Jaishankar emphasized that the pandemic is not only posing a great risk to the health and well-being of humanity but is also severely impacting global economy and output by disruption of global trade and supply chains. Economic activity across sectors has been negatively impacted leading to loss of jobs and livelihoods. He emphasized that we need to provide support to businesses, especially MSMEs, to tide over the crisis and ensure livelihoods are not lost. EAM pointed out that the efficacy of traditional medicine systems to strengthen immunity should be recognized and that BRICS should support these efforts.

EAM emphasized that the current challenge underlines all the more the need for reform of multilateral systems and that reformed multilateralism was the way forward. He referred to the centrality of development and growth in the global agenda. India also reaffirmed its strong support for Russian BRICS Chairmanship in 2020 and the overall theme of "BRICS Partnership for Global Stability, Shared Security and Innovative Growth".



EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar participates in the BRICS Foreign Minister's video conference on April 28, 2020. Source: Twitter/@DrSJaishankar

2. [India participates in the video conference of SAARC Health Ministers on COVID-19](#)

At the video conference of SAARC Health Ministers on COVID-19 hosted by Pakistan on April 23, India was represented by Director General of Health Services, assisted by experts from All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi and Indian Council of Medical Research. On India's part, building on the briefing made at the March 26 video conference, a detailed account was presented on India's comprehensive response to the current Covid-19 situation, including India stepping up production of essential materials and medicines and enhancing capabilities in research on drugs and vaccines. At the meeting, India also highlighted the successful use and promising future of new and innovative technology-based solutions such as the mobile app 'Aarogya Setu' to maximize community outreach and intervention. The virtual meeting was an occasion for India to reaffirm its strong commitment towards greater sharing of knowledge, expertise and best practices in the joint fight against Covid-19 for the larger regional good.

3. [Video conference of senior trade officials of SAARC countries on dealing with the impact of Covid-19 on intra-regional trade](#)

As follow up action of the announcement made by the Prime Minister at the Video Conference of SAARC Leaders on 15 March 2020, a video conference of senior trade officials, inviting all SAARC countries, was held

on April 8 to discuss the impact of travel restrictions and the larger Covid-19 situation on intra-regional trade. All SAARC countries, except Pakistan, participated in the video conference.

Demonstrating keen shared interest and a problem-solving approach in the present challenging circumstances, all countries contributed actively to the discussions on a wide-ranging trade related agenda. It was recognized that the Covid-19 pandemic is likely to have a considerable adverse impact on trade in the SAARC region. In order for the countries to deal with the situation, it was stressed that new ways and means be jointly identified to sustain and expand the intra-regional trade until the normal trade channels are fully restored. The imperative need to maintain essential trade within the SAARC region was viewed as an important thrust area for favourable consideration.

Some specific issues addressed at the video conference included facilitation of trade through pragmatic solutions such as provisional clearance of imports at preferential duty with suitable conditions, provisional acceptance of digitally signed certificates of origin, acceptance of scanned copies of documents for clearance of imports by customs and release of payments by banks, resolving issues being faced for exports/imports at land customs stations on the land border.



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