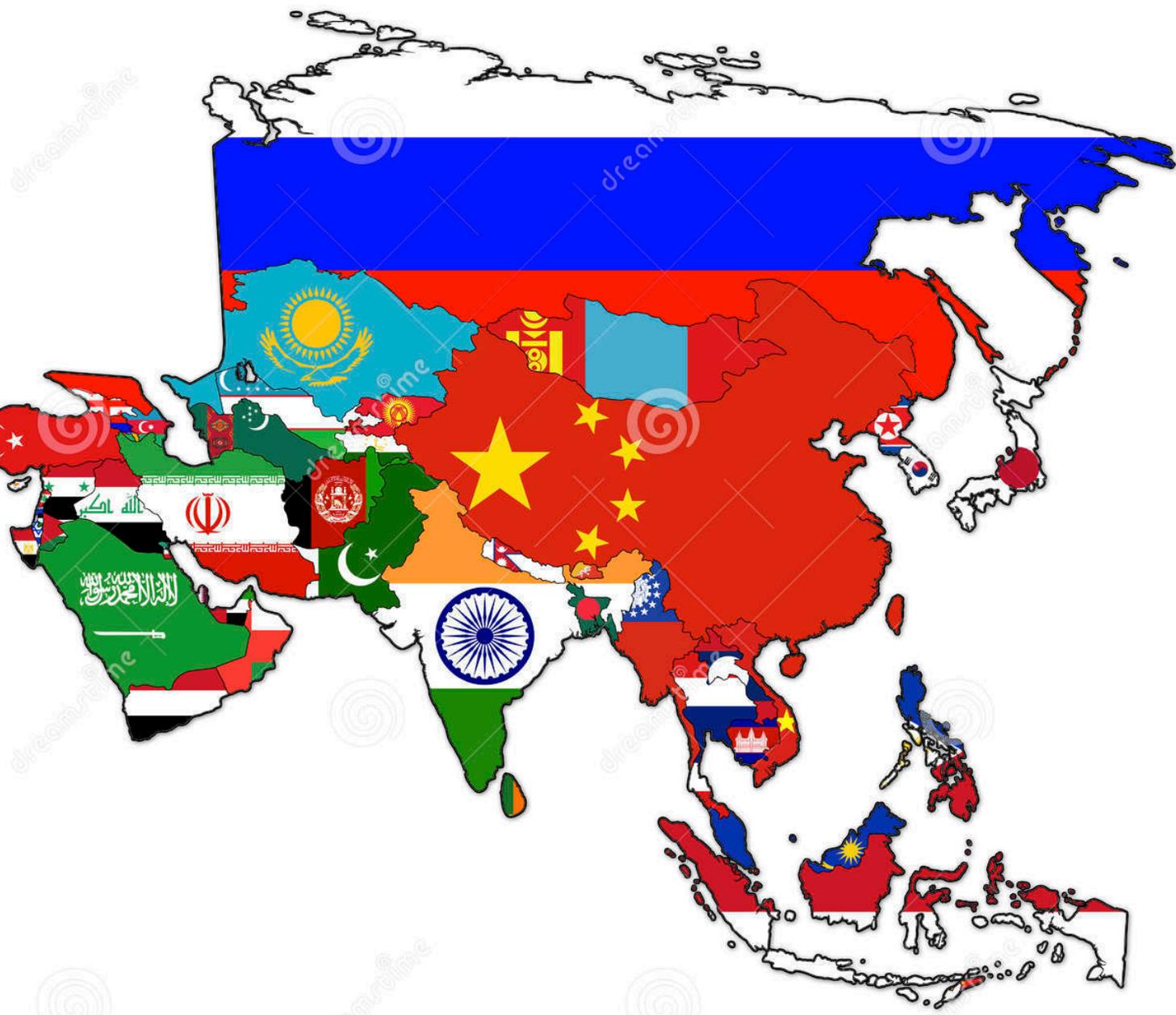


Current Events



#13: Asia

The Tweet vs. the Dragon

Hillary Clinton upset the Chinese government on Monday with a message she posted on the social networking site.

"The detention of women's activists in #China must end," Clinton tweeted. "This is inexcusable."

The tweet linked to a New York Times story about five female activists in China who were arrested for protesting a wide array of women's issues. They stand accused, according to the Times, of provoking social instability.

The message did not go over well inside the Chinese government, according to Reuters.

"China is a country ruled by law. Relevant departments will handle the relevant case according to law," Hua Chunying, China's Foreign Ministry spokesman, said on Tuesday. "We hope that public figures in other countries can respect China's judicial sovereignty and independence."



<http://www.cnn.com/2015/04/07/politics/hillary-china-twitter/index.html>

Ten Years of 0s and 1s

Hackers, most likely from China, have been spying on governments and businesses in Southeast Asia and India uninterrupted for a decade, researchers at internet security company FireEye Inc said.

The cyber espionage operations dated back to at least 2005 and "focused on targets - government and commercial - who hold key political, economic and military information about the region."

"Such a sustained, planned development effort coupled with the (hacking) group's regional targets and mission, lead us to believe that this activity is state-sponsored - most likely the Chinese government," the report's authors said.

The attack was still ongoing, noting that the servers the attackers used were still operational.



<http://mobile.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN0N40AD20150413?irpc=932>

Save Yourself

Virtually all the 156 dolphins that beached themselves over the weekend on the coast of north-east Japan have died, while the incident has also triggered speculation that another major earthquake is imminent.

Local coast guard officials managed to rescue three of the pod of melon-headed whales – also known as electra dolphins – from the beach close to the town of Kashima, but the majority have been buried where they beached themselves.

The stranding of so many dolphins has prompted comparisons with a similar incident in 2011, when 50 melon headed whales beached themselves on a nearby coast just six days before a magnitude-9 earthquake struck offshore, triggering a massive tsunami that devastated hundreds of miles of coastline and leaving around 18,000 people dead.



<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/japan/11531987/Deaths-of-100-dolphins-in-Japan-triggers-speculation-of-earthquake.html>

We Just Added a Few Zeroes

An Indian software pioneer and nine others have been sentenced to seven years in jail for their role in what has been dubbed India's biggest corporate scandal in memory, police said.

In 2009, Satyam Computers Services was at the center of a massive \$1.6 billion fraud case after its then-chairman Raju admitted inflating profits with fictitious assets and nonexistent cash.

Investigators say losses to investors resulting from the company's book manipulation were much higher.

A special court convicted Raju and nine other people of cheating, criminal conspiracy, breach of public trust and other charges, said the Central Bureau of Investigation. The case has been compared to the 2001 Enron Corp. scandal, in which a Houston energy company's earnings had been overstated by several hundred million dollars.



<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/04/09/asia/india-scandal/index.html>

Free Hat?

A man charged with planning the deadly 2008 Mumbai terror attacks in India has been released on bail in Pakistan after years of detention, prompting sharp criticism from India.



Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi, a top leader of the terrorist group Lashkar-e-Taiba, was released early Friday from a jail in the Pakistani city of Rawalpindi, according to Yahya Mujahid, spokesman for Jamaat-ud-Dawa, a group with which Lakhvi is affiliated.

Lakhvi was charged in Pakistan in 2009, accused of masterminding the November 2008 terror attacks that left more than 160 people dead in Mumbai, India's most populous city.

<http://www.cnn.com/2015/04/10/asia/pakistan-mumbai-suspect-released/index.html>



Bad Gas Man

Jiang Jiemin, a former Communist Party official who once ran China's largest oil and gas firm confessed to taking huge bribes, according to official reports from his trial on Monday, when prosecutors also said Mr. Jiang lubricated the corrupt dealings of the former security chief, Zhou Yongkang.

According to the court's summaries of the trial, issued on the Internet, Mr. Jiang pleaded guilty to the charges: taking bribes, accumulating unexplained wealth and abusing his powers as a state company employee. Prosecutors said the bribes amounted to 14 million renminbi, or \$2.25 million, and Mr. Jiang and his family had another 14.8 million renminbi, or \$2.4 million, in unexplained wealth, which is a crime in China, according to a report in the People's Daily newspaper on Tuesday.



http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/14/world/asia/jiang-jiemin-bribery-trial-china.html?ref=asia&_r=1

Light 'Em Up

A Japanese court has blocked the restarting of two nuclear reactors in the western city of Takahama, after local people raised safety concerns.

The plant had already obtained approval from the country's nuclear watchdog.

But locals had petitioned the court in Fukui prefecture, where Takahama is located, to intervene, saying it would not withstand a strong earthquake.

All 48 commercial reactors in Japan remain offline following 2011's Fukushima disaster.



<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-32297366>

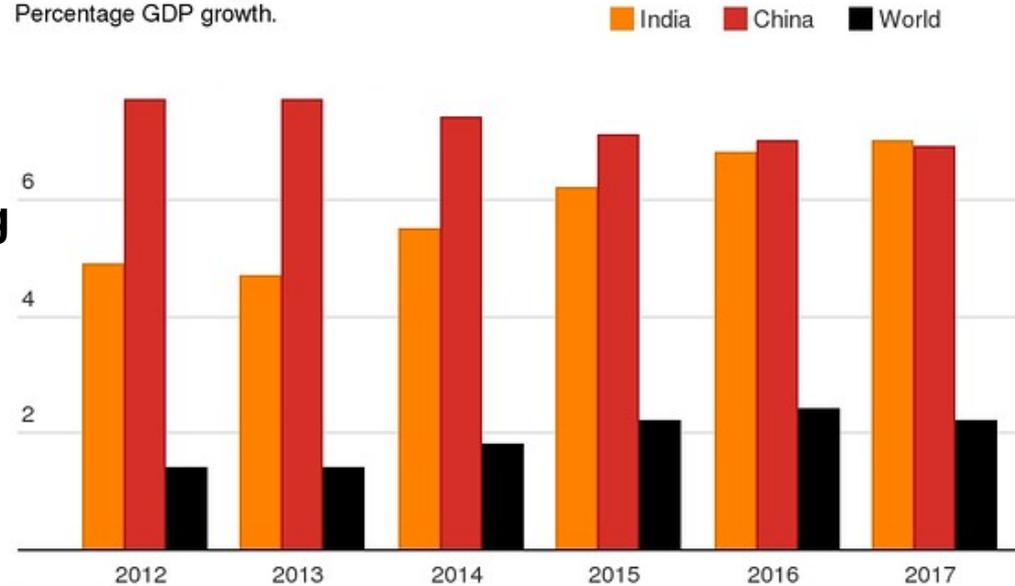
The Tiger Roars

India's economy is growing faster than China's this year, and the most of any major economy in the world. It will surpass Russia's this year in size and nearly equal Brazil's in 2016, according to new data from the International Monetary Fund.

India is holding its ground during a shaky time in the global economy too. While most emerging nations have struggled mightily against the strong U.S. dollar and falling commodity prices, India is above water. Its currency, the rupee, has gained in value against the dollar this year. The currencies of peers Brazil, Turkey and South Africa have all lost value.

Last week, Moody's raised India's credit rating outlook -- a sign of a healthy economy.

India Taking the Lead
Percentage GDP growth.



Source: World Bank



<http://money.cnn.com/2015/04/14/investing/india-economy-fastest-growing/index.html>
<http://money.cnn.com/2015/04/14/investing/india-economy-fastest-growing/index.html>

Cough, Cough...Cough

Air pollution kills around 7 million people every year, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), accounting for one in eight deaths worldwide in 2012.

It is especially bad in the Asia-Pacific region, which has a population of over 4.2 billion and high population density. China and India alone, with a combined population of around 2.7 billion, are both enormous sources and victims of air pollution.

In 2010, 40% of the world's premature deaths caused by air pollution were in China, the world's largest emitter of carbon dioxide.



<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/01/27/asia/asia-air-pollution-haze/index.html>

From the Ocean's Depths

South Korea's president has promised to raise the Sewol ferry, as the nation marks a year since the disaster.

A total of 304 people, mostly school students, were killed when the ship - which was overloaded and illegally redesigned - sank off Jindo island.

The government has faced a day of anger with relatives cancelling at least one memorial service in protest.

Divers have recovered all but nine of the bodies. Relatives say the ship must be raised and their remains found.



<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-32297010>

Oh Man, no Yemen

The U.N. Security Council voted Tuesday in favor of an arms embargo on Houthis -- the minority group that has taken over large swaths of Yemen, including its capital, Sanaa -- and supporters of former Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh.



The resolution "raises the cost" for the Houthis, according to Mark Lyall Grant, Britain's ambassador to the United Nations.

In addition to the arms embargo, it also demands that the Shiite group pull back and refrain from more violence and includes sanctions aimed at controlling the spread of terrorism, according to Grant.



<http://www.cnn.com/2015/04/14/middleeast/yemen-crisis/>

Unfashionable Demise

A former model and DJ from Melbourne, described by his former agency as having a promising future, is the latest Australian believed to have been killed while fighting alongside ISIS militants in Syria.



Sharky Jama had disappeared along with another Somali-Australian, named in Australian media reports as former business student Yusuf Yusuf, in August of last year.

The family did not know Jama had joined ISIS, despite his pro-ISIS social media postings and media reports on his activities.



<http://www.cnn.com/2015/04/16/asia/australia-isis-sharky-jama-killed/index.html>

The Dragon Smolders

Satellite images show China is making progress on building an airstrip on a reef in disputed territory in the South China Sea, a report says.

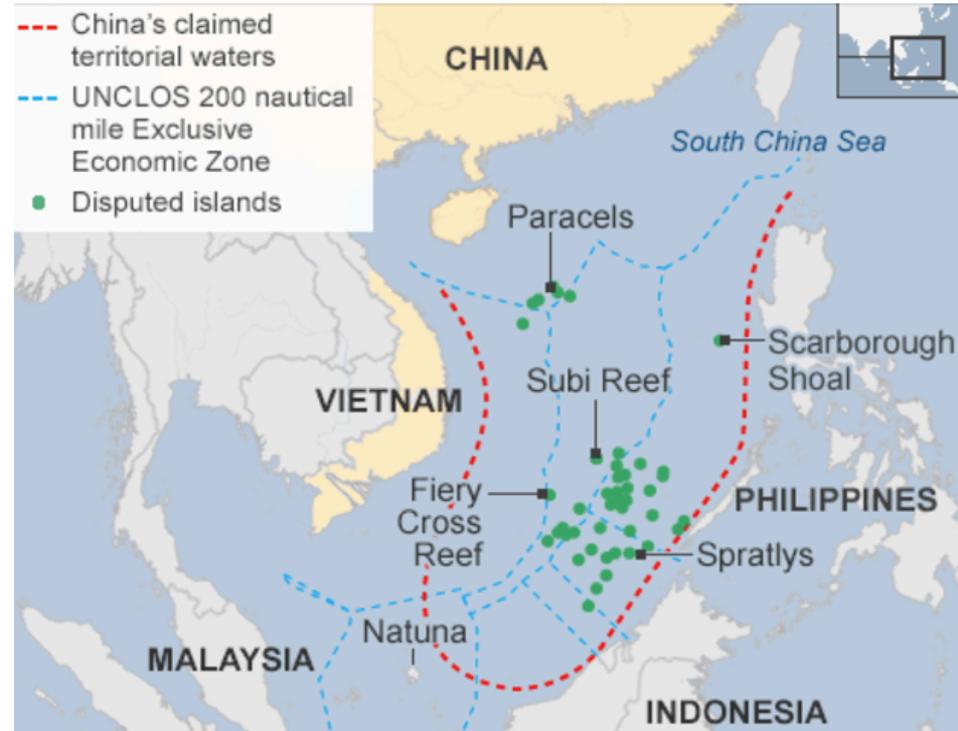
The images, published by IHS Jane's Defence Weekly, show construction work on reclaimed land on Fiery Cross Reef in the Spratly Islands.

The landmass could accommodate a runway about 3,000m long, the report said.

China's land reclamation work in the area has raised concern around the Asia-Pacific region.

China claims almost the whole of the South China Sea, resulting in overlapping claims with several other Asian nations including Vietnam and the Philippines.

They accuse China of illegally reclaiming land in contested areas to create artificial islands with facilities that could potentially be for military use.



Source: UNCLOS, CIA



<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-32331964>

The Dragon Spreads Its Wings

China's President Xi Jinping has signed agreements with Pakistan promising investment of \$46bn (£30.7bn).

The focus of spending is on building a China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) - a network of roads, railway and pipelines between the long-time allies.

They will run some 3,000km (1,800 miles) from Gwadar in Pakistan to China's western Xinjiang region. The projects will give China direct access to the Indian Ocean and beyond.

Proposed China Pakistan economic corridor



<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-32377088>

A Planet of Cyclopes

Near-sightedness, or myopia, means nearby objects appear clearly, but those farther away look blurry.

The rates of myopia have doubled, even tripled, in most of East Asia over the last 40 years, researchers say.

Several places like Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan have rates in the 80%. In South Korea, myopia rates among 20-year-olds have leaped from 18% in 1955 to over 96% myopia in 2011.

But researchers say reducing risk of myopia is easy, free and readily-available: Get some sunlight.



<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/04/05/asia/myopia-east-asia/index.html>