



UPDATE COVID 19

June 11, 2020

Dear BGA Clients,

This report surveys the steps countries in the Asia-Pacific are taking to revive their economies and reopen their societies. Some have opened quite substantially, while others are still facing Covid-19 infections and are fighting to rein them in. Many are exploring how to use the tragedy of the pandemic to reform their economies and make them more efficient. Most of the Southeast Asian nations are looking to attract more foreign investment to jump-start economic recovery.

BGA will continue to monitor reactions to the outbreak across the region as they unfold. Questions and comments are welcome and can be directed to BGA Head of Research Murray Hiebert at mhiebert@bowergroupasia.com.



Best Regards,

Murray Hiebert
Director of Research, BowerGroupAsia

Snapshot 6.11.2020

2,694,511

confirmed cases in our markets

Source: World Health Organization

132,800 deaths

-5.2%

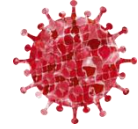
2020 Projected World Growth

Source: World Bank Global Economic Prospects, June 2020

0.5%

2020 Projected Asian Growth

Source: World Bank Global Economic Prospects, June 2020



Covid-19 Recovery Across the Asia-Pacific

		Covid-19		% GROWTH				Covid-19		% GROWTH	
		6/11 Cases	6/4 Cases	GDP 2019	Est. GDP 2020			6/11 Cases	6/4 Cases	GDP 2019	Est. GDP 2020
	Australia	7,267	7,229	1.8	-6.7		Nepal	4,364	2,300	7.1	2.5
	Bangladesh	74,865	55,140	7.9	2.0		New Zealand	1,154	1,154	2.2	-7.2
	Brunei	141	141	3.9	1.3		Pakistan	119,536	85,264	3.3	-1.5
	Cambodia	126	125	7.0	-1.6		PNG	8	8	5.0	-1.0
	China	84,652	84,603	6.1	1.2		Philippines	23,732	19,748	5.9	0.6
	Hong Kong*	1,108	1,099	-1.2	-4.8		Singapore	38,965	36,405	0.7	-3.5
	India	286,579	216,919	4.2	1.9		South Korea	11,947	11,629	2.0	-1.2
	Indonesia	34,316	28,233	5.0	0.5		Sri Lanka	1,869	1,749	2.3	-0.5
	Japan	17,282	17,018	0.7	-5.2		Taiwan**	443	443	2.7	-4.0
	Laos	19	19	4.7	0.7		Thailand	3,125	3,101	2.4	-6.7
	Malaysia	8,338	7,970	4.3	-1.7		U.S.A.***	1,973,797	1,827,425	2.3	-5.9
	Mongolia	194	185	5.1	-1.0		Vietnam	332	328	7.0	2.7
	Myanmar	248	234	6.5	1.8						
Sources:		(WHO)	(WHO)	(IMF)	(IMF)			(WHO)	(WHO)	(IMF)	(IMF)

Covid-19 Data (except as noted): *World Health Organization*; *Government of Hong Kong SAR; **Taiwan Centers for Disease Control, ***U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
 GDP: *International Monetary Fund*



"Covid-19 has also accelerated pre-existing geopolitical trends. The U.S.-China rivalry has intensified. Global supply chains have been upended. In quite a few countries, social divisions have grown starker, fracturing social and political stability."

Teo Chee Hean, Senior Minister, Singapore

Click to jump to a particular country or scroll down to see all:

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| Malaysia | Mongolia | Myanmar | Nepal | New Zealand |
| Pakistan | PNG | Philippines | Singapore | South Korea |
| Sri Lanka | Taiwan | Thailand | U.S. | Vietnam |

	Australia	COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/11 CASES 7,267	6/4 CASES 7,229	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019 1.8%	2020 est. -6.7%
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- Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced on June 11 that the only impediment to loosening restrictions further was the Black Lives Matter protests across the country. Officials worry these protests could spark a new virus outbreak after a protester at last week’s Melbourne demonstration tested positive for coronavirus. However, continued restrictions on international travel, social distancing and high levels of testing suggest a second outbreak could be smaller than elsewhere.
- The OECD has forecast Australia will be one of the least badly affected countries in the G20, with the fourth smallest GDP contraction in 2020 after South Korea, China and Indonesia. The OECD forecast for Australia warns of an economic hit with a second outbreak of coronavirus. Australia’s economic output could fall by 6.3 percent this year if there is another wave of infection. Even without a second wave, the grouping says Australia’s GDP will fall by 5 percent this year, and the economy is tipped to rebound 4.1 percent in 2021 if a second wave is avoided. The OECD advised that the federal government should consider what support might be needed once the existing measures end in September, such as strengthening the social safety net and investing in energy efficiency and social housing.



Bangladesh

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/11 CASES	6/4 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	74,865	55,140		7.9%	2.0%

- While nationwide lockdowns were ended on May 31, the recent surge in cases has prompted the government to implement strict lockdowns in highly affected areas of Dhaka on an experimental basis, beginning June 10. Flights on international routes from Bangladesh will resume in the third week of June after over two months of suspension due to the coronavirus pandemic. The first flights will be run on the London and Qatar routes, though the exact dates have not been announced.
- The budgetary allocation for Fiscal Year 2020/2021 was presented to Parliament on June 10. The supplementary budget is scheduled to be passed on June 16 and the finance bill on June 29. The appropriation bill for 2021 will be passed on June 30, thereby bringing an end to the budget session. Major economic plans will be revealed once the budget session ends.



Brunei

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/11 CASES	6/4 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	141	141		3.9%	1.3%

- Brunei has not reported any new Covid-19 cases since May 8. Only one case remains under active treatment at the National Isolation Center (NIC). The Minister of Religious Affairs announced that Brunei will not participate in this year's hajj pilgrimage, citing the ongoing Covid-19 crisis.
- Schools and mosques have resumed operations in the first of four reopening phases, in some cases relying on smart technology to ensure public safety. Brunei expects to enter the second phase of reopening after June 12. The minister of health reported that over 80 percent of the population has registered for the BruHealth contact tracing app, which will help facilitate access to businesses and institutions.



Cambodia

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/11 CASES	6/4 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	126	125		7.0%	-1.6%

- All foreigners who test positive for Covid-19 must purchase local health insurance and are required to pay at least \$160 for testing, transportation, room and board. Foreign travelers arriving on planes with a confirmed Covid-19 patient will be required to quarantine at a hotel or health center and pay at least \$180 for each of their tests. A normal health check will cost \$30, but patients requiring treatment or emergency services will be billed at least \$1,500. The government will set up a private banking system at the airports to facilitate depositing testing and quarantine fees of \$3,000.
- The Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training announced that the government has prepared between \$60 million and \$100 million for laid-off workers and retraining in case factories close. Some 200 factories have suspended operations, employing a total of over 87,000 workers. The ministry further said that as of June 10, the government has provided funding to more than 126,000 workers and spent a total budget of KHR 11 billion (\$2.7 million).
- Team Europe, a combined effort by the European Union, its member states and international financial institutions, is mobilizing EUR 443 million (\$505 million) in grants and loans to work with Cambodia to fight the pandemic. The funds provide significant financial and technical support to help Cambodia address immediate needs, protect the most vulnerable, mitigate the socio-economic impact of the coronavirus crisis and prepare for recovery.



China

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/11 CASES	6/4 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	84,652	84,603		6.1%	1.2%

- Business operations have generally resumed due to a government-directed effort in major cities in China. In addition, regional-level governments are introducing measures to hasten the return of migrant workers critical to the service and manufacturing economies. These measures were introduced after minor outbreaks occurred in northern China when business resumed.
- A travel “fast lane” has been opened between China and Singapore for business travelers. With strict itineraries and a sponsor-based applications system, travel will resume between six Chinese cities and Singapore on an essential basis. Restrictions on the number of flights allowed in from the United States were relaxed after the United States threatened to impose retaliatory limits.



Hong Kong

COVID19 DATA (HK SAR)	6/11 CASES	6/4 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	1,108	1,099		-1.2%	-4.8%

- As of June 11, there have been no locally transmitted infections for seven days. Officials announced this week that Ocean Park, a theme park the government recently bailed out with HKD 5.4 billion (\$698 million), would reopen on June 13. Disneyland is also planning to reopen, though a date has not yet been set. The government has had to defend the decision to reopen theme parks while political protests continue to be banned due to “public health concerns.” A restriction on gathering in groups of more than eight people is in place until June 18.
- The government has announced a relaxation of the 14-day quarantine rule for executives of 480 of the largest companies listed in the city. Companies listed on the Hong Kong stock exchange and included in the Hang Seng Index, the Hang Seng China Enterprises Index or the Hang Seng Composite LargeCap, MidCap or SmallCap Index will be able to send two directors or executives every month to the city to sign deals, attend meetings and handle other company affairs. Multiple trips by the same director or executive within the same calendar month will not be allowed.



India

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/11 CASES	6/4 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	286,579	216,919		4.2%	1.9%

- The finance ministry has suspended the launch of new government schemes for one year to limit spending during the pandemic. Government spending will only be allowed under the economic package announced for Covid-19 and the prime minister’s Garib Kalyan scheme to provide funds to the poor. All schemes that were approved under the union budget this year will also stand suspended until March 31, 2021. The decision comes as India’s sovereign rating has been downgraded to the lowest investment grade, a step closer to junk status, amid slow GDP growth and predictions of an economic contraction.
- The Union Cabinet has approved a proposal to amend the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) to prevent companies from being forced into resolution proceedings due to Covid-19. Under the proposal, the government will exclude Covid-related debt from the definition of default under the code; the cut-off for this debt will be March 25.
- The government has constituted an empowered group of secretaries to provide support and facilitate foreign investors to invest in India and to boost growth in key sectors. The group will be chaired by the Cabinet secretary and will have representation from the NITI Aayog government think tank, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade and the departments of commerce, revenue and economic affairs. The committee will also coordinate the creation of project development cells to identify and develop projects to invest in, in coordination with state governments.



Indonesia

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/11 CASES	6/4 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	34,316	28,233		5.0%	0.5%

- The number of daily recorded cases has surged as the government eases large-scale social restrictions and moves into a "new normal." The government announced an all-time high of 1,241 new confirmed cases on June 10. The government is moving to ease restrictions on mobility and commercial activity primarily for economic reasons. Companies in Jakarta are now allowed to reopen their offices at 50 percent capacity. Employees in the office must be divided into two shifts based on time of arrival and departure. The Ministry of Health has issued decree HK.01.07/MENKES/328/2020 on health protocols and guidelines for workplaces and industries.
- The government is planning to reform the healthcare sector, including strengthening the national health insurance program. However, the government recently issued a ministerial regulation of concern to foreign companies on local content requirements (LCR) for pharmaceuticals and medical devices. Direct impact is expected on products for government procurement. BGA continues to assess the impact of this LCR regulation on the investment climate and to seek clarification from government.
- The World Bank has revised down its projection of Indonesia's 2020 GDP growth to 0 percent under its new baseline scenario and -3.5 percent under the worst-case scenario, a correction from a previous projection of 2.1 percent.
- Finance Minister Sri Mulyani recently announced the government's decision to increase the budget for its stimulus packages from \$45 billion to \$48 billion.



Japan

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/11 CASES	6/4 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	17,282	17,018		0.7%	-5.2%

- The Tokyo Metropolitan Government is considering lifting its "Tokyo alert" on June 12 given the low number of Covid-19 confirmed cases in the last week. The alert was made in anticipation of a resurgence after the entire nation came out of its state of emergency last month. The lifting of the alert is expected to be accompanied by the opening of theme parks and large-scale events of up to 1,000 people as well as restaurants that were asked to operate under limited hours.
- The country's GDP was revised to a negative 2.2 percent for the year in the first quarter of 2020, which was less than the initial estimate of a 3.4 percent contraction last month. The change was mainly due to an upward correction in capital expenditure as long-term investments were revised upwards by more than 2 percent. Weak consumer demand and a drop in business activity due to the state of emergency in April will likely slow recovery, with the latest OECD estimate projecting a 2020 GDP growth of negative 7.3 percent.
- Rating agency S&P Global Ratings revised down the outlook on Japan's sovereign rating from "positive" to "stable" given the rise in the country's debt to GDP ratio following Covid-19 stimulus measures. The A+ rating for long-term and A-1 for short-term sovereign debt remains unchanged.



Laos

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/11 CASES	6/4 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	19	19		4.7%	0.7%

- The Lao government has pressed on with plans for reopening and economic recovery. Government offices, primary and secondary schools, night markets and restaurants have reopened, with universities to open June 15. The government previously established a Covid-19 emergency fund totaling LAK 30 billion (\$3.3 million), of which 78 percent has already been spent. Laos discharged its last Covid-19 patient from the hospital on June 9. On June 8, the Japanese government announced a grant of JPY 1.5 billion (\$13.7 million) for the purchase of medical equipment in support of Laos’s Covid-19 response.
- Construction on major infrastructure projects has continued, with the Boke-Xayaboury bridge and the China-Laos railway reaching 55 percent and 90 percent completion, respectively.



Malaysia

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/11 CASES	6/4 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	8,338	7,970		4.3%	-1.7%

- On June 7, Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin announced the implementation of the Recovery Movement Control Order (RMCO), which will be in place from June 10 until August 31. This will replace the current Conditional Movement Control Order (CMCO). The RMCO will allow more activities to be carried out while adhering to standard operating procedures. The RMCO will allow more interstate travel, businesses to reopen following health protocols and the return of open markets and religious celebrations. Large gatherings and international travel will remain restricted.
- With the RMCO in place on June 10, the domestic tourism sector in the country can resume its operations. Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture (MOTAC) Nancy Shukri said that with RMCO allowing interstate travel and business operations to return to normal, the tourism sector can help accelerate the country’s economic recovery. MOTAC will look toward revitalizing the domestic tourism sector and its sub-sectors such as hospitality (hotel and other types of tourist accommodations), transport, food and beverage and tourist guides.
- Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin announced on June 5, a Short-Term Economic Recovery Plan called “Penjana” (Generate) worth MYR 35 billion (\$8.2 billion) to revitalize Malaysia’s economy. Under the recovery plan, there are 40 initiatives that will benefit Malaysians and businesses to ease their financial burdens due to Covid-19. Out of the MYR 35 billion (\$8.2 billion), the government has allocated MYR 10 billion (\$2.3 billion) for direct fiscal injection into the economy.



Mongolia

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/11 CASES	6/4 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	194	148		5.1%	-1.0%

- Although restrictions are in place until the end of June, over 600 politicians are organizing mass gatherings across the country due to the three-week election campaign. Rural areas have been similarly affected as urban areas, while traffic has significantly increased in the urban areas.
- The opposition called for a larger economic stimulus than that offered by the government and promised in their election program to undertake large-scale privatization of major state assets in financial, mining and aviation sectors. The current government plans to further consolidate state assets if it wins the elections on June 24. Both sides of the political aisle are expected to increase fiscal spending and public debt limits against GDP starting from Q3.
- Conscious of the upcoming election, the government has been selective about publicizing economic data. The World Bank and other international financial institutions are privately warning that the economy is in a dire situation as unemployment is hitting record levels, mostly in the informal sector. Publicly, the World Bank revised GDP growth to -2.5 percent this year.



Myanmar

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/11 CASES	6/4 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	248	206		6.5%	1.8%

- The government has taken legal action in nine cases against people conducting religion services across the country, including five cases of large crowds gathering at Buddhist ceremonies, for violating the existing laws during the Covid-19 period. At least 500 people were hit with either a fine or imprisoned up to a year for violating curfew, quarantines or other movement control orders.
- The Asia Foundation conducted a nationwide survey indicating that two-thirds of businesses in Myanmar are expected to face cash flow problems since the government stimulus package is impacting only a few sectors. The survey estimated that an additional \$643 million to \$1.5 billion will be needed to help the businesses survive in Myanmar. According to the survey, 16 percent of the workforce was laid off due to Covid-19.
- The Ministry of Hotel and Tourism (MOHT) has released a “Tourism Relief Plan.” The plan targets the period from August 2020 to January 2021 as the “Re-Launching Stage” to include relaxing travel and visa regulations and providing tax incentives and tax holidays to new investors in the tourism sector.



Nepal

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/11 CASES	6/4 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	4,364	2,300		7.1%	2.5%

- Nepal began the process of ending its lockdown on June 11, which will take place over the following 21 days. Health services, essential goods and construction have been restarted, as have takeaway restaurant services and some other retail sales. But educational institutions, shopping centers, religious sites and entertainment venues largely remain closed.
- As the country emerges from lockdown, the government has implemented an “even-odd” system based on license-plate numbers for private vehicles to operate. However, inter-district travel remains curtailed.
- The World Bank has approved an additional NPR 52 billion (\$450 million) road-improvement project aimed at jump-starting the pandemic recovery effort.



New Zealand

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/11 CASES	6/4 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	1,154	1,154		2.2%	-7.2%

- New Zealand reached zero active cases of Covid-19 on June 8 and returned to level 1 restrictions from midnight that night. Under level 1, New Zealand has no domestic restrictions, but international border restrictions still remain in place.
- Director General of Health Ashley Bloomfield and Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern both flagged the possibility of the reemergence of the virus as social distancing requirements have been lifted and businesses are no longer required to maintain contact tracing registers.
- The government has indicated that Australia would need to be “in a similar position” to New Zealand — having no active Covid-19 cases — before a travel bubble between the countries could be implemented. Pacific Island nations are urging Australia and New Zealand to include them in the planned travel bubble; however, both Ardern and Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison have been reluctant to discuss including Pacific neighbors in the travel plan.



Pakistan

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/11 CASES	6/4 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	119,536	85,264		3.3%	-1.5%

- Pakistan has seen a rapid increase in the number of infections since easing the lockdown and is now among the top countries in terms of daily new cases. The WHO has drawn the government’s attention to this situation and recommended reconsidering lockdowns. The government, however, says that the situation is under control. Prime Minister Imran Khan continues to stress that targeted, smart restrictions are the way forward.
- The World Bank’s revised forecast said that Pakistan’s economy will see a negative GDP growth of -2.6 percent for the current fiscal year (2019/2020) and -0.2 percent during the next (2020/2021). However, the government has calculated the GDP growth for this year at -0.4 percent and is targeting 2.1 percent growth for the next year.
- The Asian Development Bank has approved a \$500 million emergency loan for Pakistan to spend on its special protection plan for poor segments of the society. Pakistan has also received a breather in the shape of suspension of debt servicing from the Paris Club of international creditors. Payments of \$1.1 billion were due to Paris Club members by December this year.



Papua New Guinea

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/11 CASES	6/4 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	8	8		5.0%	-1.0%

- Papua New Guinea has issued 13 new orders covering public health and hygiene to cover the two-week extension of the State of Emergency. A parliamentary committee has said the emergency declaration should be extended by two months because the country remains unprepared to deal with a potential outbreak of Covid-19.
- Schools across Papua New Guinea returned to normal teaching this week. The Education Minister has directed schools to review teaching programs to cover lessons lost during the disruption.
- The International Monetary Fund has provided a new PGK 1.2 billion (\$520 million) loan. PNG’s treasurer says the loan does not come with conditions attached. The IMF said the loan will help PNG deal with its budget challenges amid falling commodity prices and the Covid-19 pandemic.



Philippines

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/11 CASES	6/4 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	23,732	19,748		5.9%	0.6%

- Presidential spokesperson Harry Roque said quarantine classifications of areas are flexible and may change depending on the data on confirmed Covid-19 cases. The government discussed the classification of areas on June 10, and President Rodrigo Duterte presided over another meeting on June 11. Changes in quarantine classifications will take effect on June 16.
- On June 4, the proposed Accelerated Recovery and Investments Stimulus for the Economy of the Philippines (“ARISE Philippines”) Act, was passed on its third and final reading at the House of Representatives. The measure seeks to provide PHP 1.3 trillion (\$26 billion) worth of economic interventions and aid businesses affected by the pandemic and the nationwide lockdown through wage subsidies, zero interest loans and industry-based assistance.
- On June 8, the World Bank published its June 2020 Global Economic Prospects report. The bank said it expects the country’s GDP to shrink by 1.9 percent this year amid the Covid-19 pandemic. The Washington-based multilateral lender said the Philippines, together with Malaysia and Thailand, will “experience the biggest contractions this year” in the East Asia and Pacific region.



Singapore

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/11 CASES	6/4 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	38,965	36,405		0.7%	-3.5%

- Overall, the number of new Covid-19 cases per day remains under control. While the number of new cases among migrant workers in dormitories has stabilized, the average number of new cases per day in the wider community has more than doubled — from four to nine — in the past two weeks. The increase comes as the “circuit breaker” period was lifted on June 1. If the situation remains under control in the coming week, the government could decide by the middle of June to proceed to phase 2 of the reopening of the economy, which could then be rolled out by the end of the month.
- The government remains concerned about the level of asymptomatic cases among the wider community. While it has not disclosed the number of cases in the country, the government revealed that at least half of Singapore’s newly discovered Covid-19 cases show no symptoms, which prompted the government’s plans for a gradual lifting of curbs. To reduce the risks of subsequent waves of infection, the government is stepping up its Covid-19 surveillance testing efforts. These include the setting up of additional regional screening centers to carry out more screening for vulnerable groups such as preschool staff, construction workers, seniors and individuals diagnosed with acute respiratory infection.
- As the government is projected to spend around SGD 193 billion (\$139 billion) — including SGD 100 billion (\$72 billion) to combat Covid-19 — on its commitments across the four previously announced budgets, it expects these budgets to help Singapore avoid an annual average output loss of five percentage points or SGD 23.4 billion (\$16.8 billion) over 2020 and 2021.



South Korea

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/11 CASES	6/4 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	11,947	11,629		2.0%	-1.2%

- The country's jobless rate surged to 4.5 percent in May — the highest since January 2010 according to Statistics Korea. The number of employed people fell by 392,000 to 26.9 million in May, marking the third consecutive monthly decline.
- The OECD predicted that Korea's economy is expected to contract by 1.2 percent this year in line with IMF estimates. The OECD's prediction is grimmer than that of the Bank of Korea, which forecasts the Korean economy to contract 0.2 percent this year.
- The government is trying to help industries suffering from the Covid-19 pandemic by cutting red tape. Industry Minister Sung Yun-mo said on June 10 that the government will remove unnecessary regulations to help local retail companies to utilize more high-end technologies and keep up with soaring demand for delivery services amid the pandemic. The government is also mapping out measures such as fast-track immigration procedures for businesspeople and relaxing trade finance screening standards to help trade companies.



Sri Lanka

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/11 CASES	6/4 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	1,869	1,749		2.3%	-0.5%

- Former Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe has taken the government of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to task over how an estimated \$230 million in WHO funding was utilized. Wickremesinghe pointed to the country's lack of personal protective equipment and slow testing rate as evidence that funding was being misallocated by the government. However, Health Minister Pavithra Wanniarachchi rejected Wickremesinghe's claims and alleged that the island had only received \$2 million from the WHO.
- Sri Lanka's Covid-19 response will continue to be dominated by the executive branch for a further two months as the country's legislative elections have been postponed until August 5. While previously scheduled for April 25 and then subsequently June 20, the work of the Election Commission (EC) was delayed by the pandemic and then by legal disputes. The EC has also expanded postal voting options to mid-July due to the pandemic.



Taiwan

COVID19 DATA (TCDC)	6/11 CASES	6/4 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	443	443		2.7%	-4.0%

- On June 7, the Taiwan Centers for Disease Control (CDC) lifted most restrictions on large public events, public transportation and tourist hotspots, subject to health and social distancing guidelines. Local governments have been given discretion over public venues such as markets, though most have already lifted restrictions. While domestic travel resumes, international travel continues to be banned.
- The government announced that shopping vouchers will be available to residents in July. People can use these vouchers for everything other than e-commerce and paying bills and taxes. The Ministry of Transportation and Communications detailed an additional NTD 3.9 billion (\$130 million) plan to boost domestic tourism, including discounts and subsidies for lodging, park admissions and tour packages. The announcement came alongside the release of voucher plans from the Council of Agriculture and the Ministry of Culture valued at NTD 1.3 billion and NTD 1.2 billion (\$42 million and \$40 million) respectively.



Thailand

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/11 CASES	6/4 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	3,125	3,101		2.4%	-6.7%

- As Covid-19 cases dwindle, the government is considering lifting the nationwide 11 pm to 3 am curfew for 15 days. The next reopening phase is expected to allow all businesses and activities to resume except for pubs, bars, karaoke bars and bath-sauna-massage parlors. The Center for Covid-19 Situation Administration will announce the final decision on June 12.
- Private sector groups called on the government to lift international travel restrictions when the Emergency Decree expires on June 30. The Eastern Economic Corridor Subcommittee plans to seek approval from the committee chaired by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha to allow foreign business travelers and investors to enter the country, subject to quarantine. Thailand may restart international flights through bilateral travel agreements with selected countries and allow foreign business travelers to resume their trips as early as July. Thailand may also require future tourists to present health certificates and Covid-19 insurance prior to their entry, in addition to Covid-19 rapid tests that can be conducted upon arrival in Thailand. Domestic travel has showed significant improvement; four airlines have restarted 84 domestic routes and tourism sites have reopened.
- Some 28,425 project applications worth up to THB 593 billion (\$19 billion) are under consideration for the THB 400 billion (\$13 billion) budget earmarked for economic recovery, according to the National Economic and Social Development Council. The Finance Ministry, the Tourism and Sports Ministry and the Tourism Authority of Thailand are considering a cash subsidy and digital voucher scheme from July 2020 to promote domestic travel to recover the economy.
- As the Covid-19 situation subsides, signs of internal conflict within the ruling Palang Pracharath Party (PPRP) have become apparent after 18 party executive members announced their resignation, forcing the new appointment of party executives, including fresh party leaders. The restructuring within PPRP will likely affect the cabinet makeup and the composition of the coalition government.



United States

COVID19 DATA (CDC)	6/11 CASES	6/4 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	1,973,797	1,827,425		2.3%	-5.9%

- Unexpectedly positive unemployment data was released on June 5, when the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that the total non-farm payroll increased by 2.5 million in May, bringing the total unemployment rate down to 13.4 percent. Unemployment data for the week of June 1, released on June 11, also revealed that the rate of job losses has slowed dramatically, with just 1.5 million new unemployment claims last week. While this still means unemployment is at historic highs, experts had expected May unemployment to reach nearly 20 percent. Considering this new data, the Federal Reserve projected on June 10 that unemployment will fall to around 9 percent by the end of 2020, while the economy will contract by 6.5 percent.
- After weeks of loosening restrictions, the Memorial Day holiday and hundreds of thousands of demonstrators protesting police violence thronging America’s streets, new cases of Covid-19 have begun to tick up slowly across much of the country. While this increase is small, and currently experts do not believe any location is likely to see a rapid deterioration like that seen in New York City earlier this year, the persistent and low-level spread is likely to continue as restrictions ease. However, given the already widespread economic damage and popular unwillingness to continue with lockdowns, states and cities have proven resistant to re-imposing lockdowns. Instead, local and federal leaders point to the fact that increased capacity, much of which was developed following the start of the pandemic as part of the “flatten the curve strategy,” is enough to handle any rebounds over the coming weeks.



Vietnam

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/11 CASES	6/4 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	332	328		7.0%	2.7%

- As of June 11, Vietnam has experienced 56 consecutive days without any new cases of community transmission. Of the total 332 confirmed cases in the country, over 95 percent have been recovered, and no deaths have been reported. Under the current circumstances, the government continues to give top priority to Covid-19 prevention and control to ensure that Vietnam is safe for sustainable development in the current “new normal” situation.
- Taking the position that Vietnam should not close borders completely at this stage but reopen with caution depending on the situation in other countries, the government will announce a list of safe countries and territories as a basis to determine the reopening of international commercial flights. The list will be based on certain criteria, such as a country having no new community transmission cases for at least 30 days. Guangzhou, Taiwan, Seoul, Tokyo and Laos may be the cities and countries considered first.
- To further support the tourism sector, which has been heavily affected by the pandemic, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism has been requested to promptly implement the “Program to Stimulate Domestic Tourism,” review and adjust the promotion plans for Vietnamese tourism under the changing circumstances and prepare to welcome foreign tourists as soon as the situation allows.