



# UPDATE COVID 19

June 4, 2020

Dear BGA Clients,

This report surveys the steps by countries in the Asia-Pacific to reopen their economies and societies. From China to New Zealand and Vietnam, some have opened quite substantially, while others are still facing Covid-19 infections and are fighting to rein them in. Countries like Australia and India are exploring how to use the tragedy of the pandemic to reform their economies and make them more efficient. Many of the Southeast Asian nations are looking to attract more foreign investment to jump-start economic recovery.

BGA will continue to monitor regional 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](mailto:mhiebert@bowergroupasia.com).



Best Regards,

Murray Hiebert  
Director of Research, BowerGroupAsia



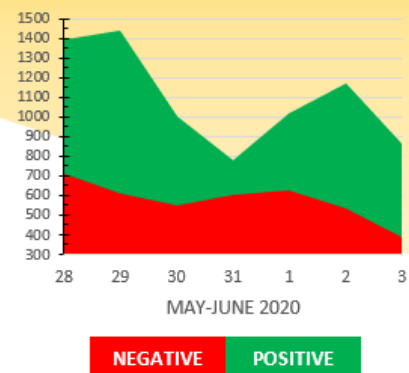
## Social Intelligence Spotlight: Singapore

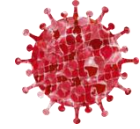
As Singapore continues to look towards easing restrictions, public sentiment with respect to Covid-19 focused largely on the virus's impact on employment, the economy and the trajectory of new cases in the country. There was a dip in overall conversation with respect to the virus, in part due to the gradually easing of concerns that had peaked a month ago regarding the explosion of new case clusters in worker dormitories.

Public sentiment was mostly either positive or neutral, in part due to the sorts of subjects that dominated the discussion including the introduction

of the latest budget package to combat the impact of the pandemic and the worsening economy, industry trends and elections possibly being held in the coming weeks. Where there was negative sentiment, it was focused on aspects such as concerns about the effects of the virus on vulnerable population segments and the perceived limitations of the government's response. As Singapore shows more signs of moving towards upcoming polls, we can expect to see more of a focus on public sentiment as the government's response to Covid-19 intersects even more directly with wider political realities.

Public Sentiment on Government Covid-19 Policy  
May-June 2020





# Covid-19 Recovery Across the Asia-Pacific

		Covid-19		% GROWTH				Covid-19		% GROWTH	
		6/4 Cases	5/28 Cases	GDP 2019	Est. GDP 2020			6/4 Cases	5/28 Cases	GDP 2019	Est. GDP 2020
	Australia	7,229	7,139	1.8	-6.7		Nepal	2,300	886	7.1	2.5
	Bangladesh	55,140	38,292	7.9	2.0		New Zealand	1,154	1,154	2.2	-7.2
	Brunei	141	141	3.9	1.3		Pakistan	85,264	59,151	3.3	-1.5
	Cambodia	125	124	7.0	-1.6		PNG	8	8	5.0	-1.0
	China	84,603	84,547	6.1	1.2		Philippines	19,748	15,049	5.9	0.6
	Hong Kong*	1,099	1,067	-1.2	-4.8		Singapore	36,405	32,876	0.7	-3.5
	India	216,919	151,767	4.2	1.9		South Korea	11,629	11,344	2.0	-1.2
	Indonesia	28,233	23,851	5.0	0.5		Sri Lanka	1,749	1,425	2.3	-0.5
	Japan	17,018	16,683	0.7	-5.2		Taiwan**	443	441	2.7	-4.0
	Laos	19	19	4.7	0.7		Thailand	3,101	3,054	2.4	-6.7
	Malaysia	7,970	7,619	4.3	-1.7		U.S.A.***	1,827,425	1,698,523	2.3	-5.9
	Mongolia	185	148	5.1	-1.0		Vietnam	328	327	7.0	2.7
	Myanmar	234	206	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



*"You will have to understand this coronavirus, it's not going to go unless a vaccine is discovered. We have to live with the coronavirus. The entire world has reached this conclusion."*

*Imran Khan, Prime Minister of Pakistan*

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

Australia	Bangladesh	Brunei	Cambodia	China
Hong Kong	India	Indonesia	Japan	Laos
Malaysia	Mongolia	Myanmar	Nepal	New Zealand
Pakistan	PNG	Philippines	Singapore	South Korea
Sri Lanka	Taiwan	Thailand	U.S.	Vietnam



## Australia

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/4 CASES	5/28 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	<b>7,229</b>	<b>7,139</b>		<b>1.8%</b>	<b>-6.7%</b>

- Australia is about to enter its first recession in 29 years after its GDP dropped by 0.3 percent in Q1. Treasurer Josh Frydenberg warned that a recession was inevitable because the Q2 results would be worse than the impact felt earlier.
- Following revelations that the government's JobKeeper wage program would cost AUD 60 billion (\$41.4 billion) less than originally forecast, Prime Minister Scott Morrison signaled that further stimulus measures would take the form of targeted support rather than economy-wide packages.
- The federal government has launched an AUD 470 million (\$324 million) housing stimulus package to push Australians to renovate or build and to prop up Australia's construction sector. The government has also hinted it is looking to help the struggling arts and entertainment sector.



## Bangladesh

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/4 CASES	5/28 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	<b>55,140</b>	<b>746</b>		<b>7.9%</b>	<b>2.0%</b>

- The government decided to lift its lockdown on May 31, and since then, Bangladesh has recorded ever higher numbers of Covid-19 cases each day. These new heights are putting tremendous pressure on the healthcare infrastructure. Now, nearly 25 percent of tests are coming back positive for Covid-19.
- Senior ministers hinted recently that the country could be divided into three zones — red, yellow and green — based on the intensity of Covid-19 cases. It seems certain that some red zones will be put under lockdown again, possibly including some areas in Dhaka. The government will outline the steps that will have to be taken to resume public transport services between May 31 and June 15. The government decided to allow public transport services such as buses, trains and ships to restart operations with a fixed number of passengers from May 31, though services must strictly comply with health directives. The aviation authority will also consider resuming domestic flights under its management between May 31 and June 15, but the embargo on international flights will be in place until June 15.
- The government has announced a new BDT 20 billion (\$236 million) stimulus package for commercial banks as an interest subsidy to ease the loan burden on businesses amid the Covid-19 pandemic. This is the 19th stimulus package during the pandemic, and a total of BDT 1 trillion (\$11.8 billion) has been allotted, which is 3.7 percent of the GDP. Distribution from the various packages started on May 14. The government is tailoring the upcoming national budget, keeping aside a sum of BDT 50 billion (\$589 million) for interest payments against loans taken under different stimulus packages. The Finance Ministry has allocated BDT 30 billion (\$353 million) for paying interest on the soft loans to the industry, service and agriculture sectors. The remaining BDT 20 billion (\$236 million) will be used for interest payments for loans from the April-May period.



## Brunei

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/4 CASES	5/28 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	<b>141</b>	<b>141</b>		<b>3.9%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>

- Brunei has not reported any new Covid-19 cases since May 8. Only one case remains under active treatment at the National Isolation Center. The Ministry of Religious Affairs indicated that its decision on the annual hajj would await an announcement from Saudi Arabia, though Singapore and Indonesia have canceled their pilgrimages.
- Mosques reopened with capacity restrictions on May 29, and schools reopened on June 2 with measures for prevention and social distancing. To facilitate access to businesses and mosques, the minister of health reported that over half the population had registered for the BruHealth contact tracing app. The recent easing of lockdown measures is the first of four phases of reopening and is expected to last through June 12.



## Cambodia

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/4 CASES	5/28 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	<b>125</b>	<b>124</b>		<b>7.0%</b>	<b>-1.6%</b>

- On May 29, the World Health Organization announced that Cambodia is preparing for larger-scale community coronavirus transmission and has demonstrated an effective rapid response to initial cases. However, Cambodia is still in the early stages of the pandemic.
- Six flights with 1,880 passengers from South Korea, China and the Philippines landed at Phnom Penh International Airport on June 3, as the ministry of health designed a school nearby as a health check facility for all travelers entering Cambodia from abroad. Since May 20, all passengers have been taken to waiting areas for health checks and for their samples to be taken for testing at the Pasteur Institute before going into quarantine.
- On June 2, the Garment Manufacturers Association in Cambodia, the Cambodia Footwear Association and the European Chamber of Commerce in Cambodia submitted a letter to the European Commission seeking a 12-month postponement until August 2021 of its withdrawal of “Everything But Arms” trade preferences. Some 250 Cambodian apparel, footwear and travel goods factories have suspended operations, and more than 130,000 workers in the sector have lost their jobs.



## China

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/4 CASES	5/28 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	<b>84,603</b>	<b>84,547</b>		<b>6.1%</b>	<b>1.2%</b>

- To avoid further transmission as China reopens its economy, officials have conducted mass testing of nearly 10 million people in Wuhan — finding 300 asymptomatic positive cases — at a cost of \$126 million. A similar citywide program has been implemented in the city of Mudanjiang, in China’s northeast Heilongjiang province, and is expected to wrap up in less than a week.
- During China’s annual “Two Sessions” of its legislature and a senior advisory body, authorities unveiled economic stimulus measures worth CNY 4 trillion (\$562 billion) — the largest package in the country’s history and a slight increase from projections in our last update. GDP growth forecasts for 2020 were notably absent, suggesting officials may adopt flexible approaches toward economic recovery and rising unemployment, including strategies emphasizing domestic consumption. While retail, hospitality and accommodations have opened throughout the country, demand remains low and recovery will likely be gradual.
- Losses continue to mount in the airline industry as Covid-19 shockwaves ripple across the globe. Starting June 16, the United States plans to prohibit Chinese passenger flights from entering its airspace. The announcement follows China’s decision not to lift restrictions on U.S. passenger flights, which have been in place since March. Requests from U.S. airlines to resume flights this month have gone unanswered, though Chinese officials indicated they are rethinking an agreement mandating equal treatment for domestic and foreign carriers. China’s efforts to establish “travel bubbles” in the south, and more recently with Singapore, may help to relieve pressure on the beleaguered industry for non-American carriers.



## Hong Kong

COVID19 DATA (HKSAR)	6/4 CASES	5/28 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	<b>1,099</b>	<b>1,067</b>		<b>-1.2%</b>	<b>-4.8%</b>

- This week, a cluster of local cases emerged beginning with the infection of a 34-year-old woman who works at a logistics warehouse. Her husband, two of her colleagues and the paramedic who took her to hospital were later confirmed positive. The woman did not have recent travel history, and the origin of her infection is unknown, adding to concerns that there continue to be asymptomatic spreaders in the city. On June 4, there were five new Covid-19 cases of residents who had recently returned from Bangladesh.
- Following the discovery of the cluster, the health authorities announced that all residents of a public housing estate in Sha Tin would be tested for Covid-19. However, some residents of the estate have already left or have been unreachable for testing, leading some experts to urge the government to be more proactive in conducting mandatory testing. Currently, the Hospital Authority and Health Department laboratories carry out about 2,000 Covid-19 tests daily, but Professor Gabriel Leung, dean of Hong Kong University’s Faculty of Medicine, has called for 10,000 tests per day.



## India

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/4 CASES	5/28 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	<b>216,919</b>	<b>151,767</b>		<b>4.2%</b>	<b>1.9%</b>

- The Indian government’s approach has now shifted from “permitting a baseline set of activities” to “listing what is prohibited,” indicating a shift toward opening all sections of the economy. The central guidelines released on May 30 target a phased opening of all prohibited activities starting June 8, outside containment zones. State governments will be able to impose restrictions.
- The number of daily cases continues to increase, and India is expected to cross the projected 300,000 cases mark within this month. Given that the number of cases has yet to peak, state governments remain concerned about further stress on health infrastructure due to increased economic activity, the return of domestic migrant workers from other states and citizens being repatriated from foreign countries.
- The government has designated senior officials and set up project development cells for coordination between the central and state governments to attract foreign investment. It aims to highlight policy stability and consistency in the overall investment environment, provide timely clearances from various departments and ministries and offer investment support and facilitation to global investors.
- Domestic flights could begin operating on May 25, and the government is considering starting international flights over the next few months. Non-scheduled flights have been permitted for foreign nationals who are healthcare professionals, researchers, engineers, technicians and whose services are required in laboratories, factories and other healthcare-related services. Foreign nationals with expertise in engineering, managing or design and who are working in manufacturing units, design units, software and IT, banking and non-banking financial institutions will also be permitted to enter.



## Indonesia

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/4 CASES	5/28 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	<b>28,233</b>	<b>23,851</b>		<b>5.0%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>

- Various national agencies have issued guidelines and regulations to support the government’s “new normal” policy. This includes guidelines on commercial activity in public areas and houses of worship. However, no clear criteria have yet been announced that will be the basis for the government to ease restrictions and usher in the “new normal” period. The Covid-19 task force has announced that 102 cities and districts — mostly in Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Sunda Islands, and Papua, which have relatively low numbers of confirmed cases — have been allowed by the president to prepare for the new normal policy. The work from home policy for civil servants will end on June 4, and normal government office services are expected to start on June 5.
- The government will continue its regulatory reform agenda to improve Indonesia’s investment competitiveness. The government is also planning to reform the healthcare sector, including strengthening the national health insurance program. Worryingly, the government drafted a draconian local content requirement for the pharmaceutical and medical devices sectors.
- New cases in Jakarta have begun increasing again after the Eid ul-Fitr holiday. According to Indonesia’s leading epidemiologist, if the government does not implement a strict policy to prevent the reverse flow of *mudik* (those who left Jakarta during or before Ramadhan and now seek to return) the total number of Covid-19 cases could reach 100,000 by the end of June.
- The government plans to issue mechanism guidelines for the National Economic Recovery program this month. The program includes capital injection for state-owned enterprises, government deposits for commercial banks and interest rate subsidies for micro-small business debtors.



## Japan

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/4 CASES	5/28 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	<b>17,018</b>	<b>16,683</b>		<b>0.7%</b>	<b>-5.2%</b>

- A week after lifting the state of emergency nationwide, there has been a resurgence of Covid-19 cases in areas such as Tokyo and Kitakyushu city. Daily infection cases surpassed 30 in Tokyo on June 2, marking the highest number of cases since May 14. Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike has responded with a “Tokyo alert,” which is a preemptive warning asking people to remain vigilant in hope of avoiding a suspension of economic and social activities.
- Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is planning to demand that local governments issue advance warnings to their citizens prior to reinstating a state of emergency. Though the government has not confirmed the exact thresholds it would use to declare the state of emergency for a second time, it would issue these demands to prefectures if confirmed cases surpass 50 percent of the threshold.
- Japan is considering easing the entry ban of visitors from countries where infections have subsided. Thailand, Vietnam, Australia and New Zealand are the initial group of countries, and travel may resume this summer after the government coordinates with each of the countries. The Chinese government is also stepping up issuing visas to Japanese citizens after months of limitations — most likely to shore up the hard-hit economy.



## Laos

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/4 CASES	5/28 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	<b>19</b>	<b>19</b>		<b>4.7%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>

- On May 29, the government detailed official plans to open the country. Primary and secondary schools opened June 2, with remaining institutions set to open June 15. Night markets and restaurants will also reopen, subject to government authorization. Laos discharged an additional two Covid-19 patients on June 3, leaving only one case remaining under observation.
- Despite the lockdown, the Lao government pressed ahead with economic planning and legal reform. On June 4, the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare instructed businesses to pay workers their normal wages. Businesses must be certified as affected by Covid-19 to seek reprieve from the order. The government has also inked a memorandum of understanding to explore a clean thermal energy project with a joint-venture investment valued at \$1.7 billion. With the help of Japan, Laos launched a new civil code on May 26, harmonizing disparate laws including those with respect to property and contracts.
- In the past week, Laos confirmed two additional foreign aid grants. The United Nations World Food Program and Food and Agriculture Organization pledged \$546,000 to support nutrition and livelihoods as part of a longer-term aid project. Separately, the Francophonie University Association Covid-19 fund awarded EUR 25,000 (\$28,000) to a Lao university project, which will develop disinfectant products to reduce airborne viral transmission.



## Malaysia

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/4 CASES	5/28 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	<b>7,970</b>	<b>7,619</b>		<b>4.3%</b>	<b>-1.7%</b>

- Childcare centers have been allowed to operate since June 2. This decision comes after the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development presented comprehensive operating procedures for childcare centers, detailing every step of the process from when children are dropped off until they are picked up. Currently, there are 7,000 registered childcare centers in Malaysia. The government hopes this will resolve the widespread issue of working parents forced to take unpaid leave to care for their children at home.
- Finance Minister Tengku Zafrul Abdul Aziz said the government will soon announce the “Short Term Economic Recovery Plan” for the period of June to December 2020. The recovery plan will cover three objectives: empower people, support businesses and stimulate the economy. Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin is expected to officially launch the plan later this month.
- Ministry of Health Director General Dr. Noor Hisham declared that Malaysia has successfully flattened the curve and is in the final phase of recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. Hisham said before the Movement Control Order (MCO) was implemented on March 18, the Covid-19 reproduction number (R0) stood at 3.55. This meant for every infected person, the virus could infect 3.55 people. After the MCO was implemented, this number was reduced to 0.6, and under the Conditional Movement Control Order (CMCO) in place since May 4, the number dropped to 0.3.





## Mongolia

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/4 CASES	5/28 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	<b>185</b>	<b>148</b>		<b>5.1%</b>	<b>-1.0%</b>

- As the government rapidly repatriates citizens, the number of imported cases has surged close to 200. About 1,700 are quarantined and their health will be monitored for 21 days. Although restrictions are in place, people are still going out and living their lives, while road traffic has increased.
- In view of parliamentary elections taking place on June 24, around 600 candidates from a dozen parties are campaigning across the country, resulting in mass gatherings and public meetings. Although there are rules for social distancing, wearing face masks and using disinfectants, not all politicians and voters are following the regulations.
- The IMF has approved almost \$100 million in emergency financial assistance to Mongolia under the Rapid Financing Instrument. This emergency financial assistance will help support foreign exchange reserves, create fiscal space for essential pandemic-related expenditure and catalyze international donor support.



## Myanmar

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/4 CASES	5/28 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	<b>234</b>	<b>206</b>		<b>6.5%</b>	<b>1.8%</b>

- More businesses have opened from June 1, and the government announced the return of all civil servants to work — all of whom must abide by the Covid-19 related guidelines.
- The government extended international flight and temporary entry restrictions for international visitors until June 15.
- One of the steps the Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) plans to use to revive the post-Covid-19 economy is taking advantage of the knowledge and skills brought by the several tens of thousands of students and migrant returnees. Through investments, MIC will prioritize the labor-intensive manufacturing, agriculture and agro-based food processing and construction sectors. For the manufacturing sector, MIC will invite energy generation investments to meet the underserved energy demand. The government has set an FDI target for 2019-2020 of \$5.8 billion.



## Nepal

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/4 CASES	5/28 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	<b>2,300</b>	<b>886</b>		<b>7.1%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>

- Nepal's lockdown, previously scheduled to expire on June 2, was again extended until June 14. This comes as cases are increasing at a rapid pace across the country, with the situation deteriorating so quickly that the army has been mobilized to implement the lockdown in the worst-hit areas. The country also extended its domestic and international flight ban until June 30.
- Adherence to the lockdown has been faltering, as traders in urban districts like Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur have begun opening their shops despite national regulations. The Nepal National Traders Federation instructed small business owners and traders to open their shops in the morning while adhering to social distancing measures.
- The government released its planned budget for FY 2020/2021, worth NPR 1.47 trillion (\$12.2 billion), which is targeted at helping the economy recover from the effects of the pandemic. Additionally, the World Bank approved a \$100 million Development Policy Credit that will focus on Nepal's electricity sector.



## New Zealand

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/4 CASES	5/28 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	<b>1,154</b>	<b>1,154</b>		<b>2.2%</b>	<b>-7.2%</b>

- New Zealand has had no new Covid-19 cases for the past 13 days, prompting the government to convene a Cabinet meeting on June 8 to consider moving to alert level 1.
- At alert level 1, there will be strict controls on the border, but all rules and restrictions on businesses and services will be lifted.
- The FY 2020/2021 budget allocated an extra NZD 6.9 billion (\$4.4 billion) to the wage subsidy scheme, which will end in September 2020. In addition, NZD 9 billion (\$5.8 billion) has been allocated to training schemes and state housing building programs. Moreover, NZD 14 billion (\$9 billion) will be used for other welfare schemes to support businesses and low-income households.



## Pakistan

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/4 CASES	5/28 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	<b>85,264</b>	<b>59,151</b>		<b>3.3%</b>	<b>-1.5%</b>

- The federal government of Pakistan has opened nearly all businesses except restaurants (for dine-in), marriage halls, hotels, cinemas, theaters and educational institutions. Pakistan is seeing a growth in cases, and the last three days have seen an exceptional increase.
- The government has opened all outbound flights, but inbound flights are still only for Pakistanis who are either stuck outside the country or those who wish to visit the country. One Persian Gulf-based airline resumed its flights to Pakistan but then suspended them as Pakistanis arriving in Athens tested positive. Pakistanis arriving from Saudi Arabia are testing positive in large numbers.
- Government assessments are that the peak of the “first wave” will be reached between the second and fourth week of June.
- The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics has estimated that the country’s fiscal deficit is projected to be in the range of 8 to 17 percent of GDP in the upcoming fiscal year, depending upon the duration of Covid-19-related lockdown measures. A 17 percent deficit would be unprecedented in the country’s history. The State Bank of Pakistan has also warned that the number of bankruptcies in the country will rise sharply if the lockdown is extended for too long.



## Papua New Guinea

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/4 CASES	5/28 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>		<b>5.0%</b>	<b>-1.0%</b>

- Papua New Guinea’s Parliament voted to extend the country’s coronavirus state of emergency, due to expire June 2, by two weeks while members of parliament debate legislation to guide the country’s ongoing response to the virus.
- A parliamentary committee said the emergency should be extended by two months because the country remains unprepared to deal with a potential outbreak.
- Fitch Solutions has revised its forecast for GDP growth in Papua New Guinea in 2020 to -1.1 percent from -0.2 percent. This is due to the recent collapse in oil and gas prices and increased uncertainty in the mining sector following the government’s rejection of multiple mining leases.



## Philippines

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/4 CASES	5/28 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	<b>19,748</b>	<b>15,049</b>		<b>5.9%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>

- Philippine Airlines will start international flights this month, with select routes to the United States, United Kingdom, Vietnam, mainland China, Malaysia, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Taipei, Singapore, Japan and a number of other countries expected in the coming days. Cebu Pacific's international flights will remain suspended until June 30 while AirAsia will gradually increase its flights to include international destinations by July 1.
- On June 1, the proposed Accelerated Recovery and Investments Stimulus for the Economy of the Philippines (ARISE Philippines) Act passed its second reading in the House of Representatives. The measure seeks to provide PHP 1.3 trillion (\$26 billion) worth of economic intervention to aid businesses affected by the pandemic and the nationwide lockdown through wage subsidies, zero interest loans and industry-based assistance. Congress is waiting for the president to certify the stimulus as urgent, after which Congress can immediately pass it on third reading.
- On June 2, the House panel approved on its third and final reading the proposed Financial Institutions Strategic Transfer (FIST) Act, which aims to assist banks and other financial institutions with offloading their debts and managing non-performing assets affected by the pandemic.



## Singapore

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/4 CASES	5/28 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	<b>36,405</b>	<b>32,876</b>		<b>0.7%</b>	<b>-3.5%</b>

- Singapore entered Phase One of the reopening of its economy after the circuit breaker period was lifted on June 1. The government expects more than three quarters of the economy to resume operations during this phase. Almost the entire economy should be able to reopen under phase two, including retail and food and beverage dine-in facilities. However, the government will adopt a more cautious approach toward higher-risk activities such as conferences, trade fairs and entertainment venues.
- Singapore and China will commence their "fast-lane" arrangement on June 8 to facilitate essential travel for official and business purposes between the two countries, which will mark Singapore's first green lane arrangement with another country. Singapore remains in discussions with countries such as Malaysia, New Zealand and South Korea on similar fast lane arrangements as well. However, senior officials reiterated that mass/recreational travel will take a back seat for some time.
- Singapore has been monitoring the global situation, particularly learning from experiences in countries such as New Zealand, Hong Kong, the United Kingdom and Germany. Health Minister Gan Kim Yong explained in Parliament that Singapore's reopening strategy, as well as restrictions on social gatherings, are similar to measures taken in these countries.
- Under the upcoming Covid-19 (Temporary Measures) amendment bill to be introduced and debated in Parliament on June 5, landlords facing cash-flow challenges due to the provision of relief to tenants will receive more assistance on their existing loan commitments.



## South Korea

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/4 CASES	5/28 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	<b>11,629</b>	<b>11,344</b>		<b>2.0%</b>	<b>-1.2%</b>

- The number of confirmed infections spiked during the past week. In response, on May 29, the government instituted another two weeks of intense social distancing in Seoul, Gyeonggi Province and Incheon, to last until June 14. On June 2, the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warned that another wave of Covid-19 infections might be on the horizon as the country continues to see small-scale outbreaks tied to churches, private cram schools and workplaces.
- On June 3, Korea finalized the single-largest supplementary budget worth KRW 35.3 trillion (\$29 billion), marking its third set of extra fiscal spending in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic. During the first quarter, Korea's economy shrank by 1.3 percent year-on-year from the previous quarter. The government lowered its GDP forecast growth for 2020 from 2.4 percent published in December to 0.1 percent in the annual economic outlook that came out on June 1. On June 2, Finance Minister Hong Nam-ki said the quarterly GDP growth rate could fall into the -2 percent range in the second quarter.



## Sri Lanka

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/4 CASES	5/28 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	<b>1,749</b>	<b>1,425</b>		<b>2.3%</b>	<b>-0.5%</b>

- Easing of restrictions are continuing with the island-wide curfew relaxed and now operational from 10 pm to 4 am. The exceptions are in Colombo and Gampaha districts, where movement is restricted within respective districts with no movement out or in allowed. Movement between other districts is allowed. The Colombo Airport is expected to resume international flight operations from August 1. All passengers arriving will be subject to a mandatory Covid-19 test at the airport.
- Additional precautions have been introduced for June 4 and June 5, through a 24-hour island wide curfew on both days, to prevent mass movement of people during the Buddhist Poson festival, which draws large crowds to the sacred cities of Anuradhapura and Mihintale in the North Central Province. The curfew will be eased on June 6.
- The relaxation of the curfew countrywide is an indication that officials consider the peak date for the virus (the "first wave") has been reached, except for concerns of it spreading in the densely populated Colombo and Gampaha districts. Wearing masks in public is now mandatory, and non-compliance is a punishable offense.



## Taiwan

COVID19 DATA (TCDC)	6/4 CASES	5/28 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	<b>443</b>	<b>441</b>		<b>2.7%</b>	<b>-4.0%</b>

- Two confirmed cases were reported in the past week. One confirmed case was a woman who came back from Russia on May 29, and the other one was a woman from the United States on June 1.
- Taiwan has maintained 53 days without indigenous cases of Covid-19, and the Taiwan Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has allowed local governments to lift restrictions on public gatherings at their own discretion. Most local governments have lifted all restrictions on mandatory mask-wearing, except on public transportation. The CDC has also said that on June 7, all restrictions on public gatherings, public transportation and tourist hotspots will be lifted if no new indigenous cases are found.
- The government announced that shopping vouchers will be available to residents in July. People can use these vouchers for everything other than e-commerce, paying bills and taxes. The vouchers are worth NTD 3000 (\$100) per person and can be purchased with cash — NTD 1,000 (\$33) — or retroactively reimbursed on a credit card purchase for the amount of NTD 2,000 (\$66).



## Thailand

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/4 CASES	5/28 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	<b>3,101</b>	<b>3,054</b>		<b>2.4%</b>	<b>-6.7%</b>

- This week’s increase in cases was restricted to overseas returnees, and there were no reports of local infections. The third phase of reopening took effect on June 1, which includes shortening curfew hours from 11 pm to 3 am, extending department store hours until 9 pm and the reopening of more businesses such as exhibition and convention venues, beauty salons, educational institutions, daycares, health and wellness establishments, fitness, sports and boxing stadiums, water facilities, cinemas and zoos under specific conditions. Inbound travel, excluding exempted cases, continues to be restricted. July 1 has been earmarked as the return to “normal” for the whole country.
- The next phase reopening is expected to allow resumption of more types of businesses and activities including pubs, concerts, massage parlors, sports competition with spectators and other non-players, film production for large settings, daily visits to elderly care centers and national parks. The Ministry of Education is also preparing to reopen schools nationally from July 1.
- Parliament passed a record THB 1.9 trillion (\$62.3 million) stimulus package on May 31. Three royal decrees were issued previously to expedite Covid-19 response spending. 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 stimulate the economy.
- As the Covid-19 situation subsides, a sign of internal conflict within the ruling Palang Pracharath Party (PPRP) has become apparent after 18 party executive members announced their resignation. The restructuring within PPRP will likely affect the cabinet makeup and the future shape of the coalition government.



## United States

COVID19 DATA (CDC)	6/4 CASES	5/28 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	<b>1,827,425</b>	<b>1,698,523</b>		<b>2.3%</b>	<b>-5.9%</b>

- The United States has been wracked by mass protests, often erupting into urban violence, prompted by the killing of an African American man by police in Minneapolis, Minnesota. While not directly related to the Covid-19 pandemic, the nationwide lockdown and economic collapse have fueled frustration and heightened the recent outbreak of violence to heights not seen since the 1992 Los Angeles riots. The widespread civil unrest threatens America’s recovery from Covid-19 in multiple ways: the congregation of tens of thousands of protestors will likely reignite the disease’s spread, the rampant destruction of urban property will hamper the return to economic growth and the now-frenzied political polarization will further impede negotiations for more stimulus spending.
- While unemployment figures continued their week-on-week decline with 1.8 million new claims in the last week of May, continuing weekly unemployment claims remained stable at 21 million in the same period. Though every state and the District of Columbia have entered at least the first stage of their reopening, buoyed by increasing evidence that warm summer weather slows the disease’s spread, consumer confidence remains low, and it is not clear that customers will return to the industries most affected by the outbreak. However, on June 4, the Senate passed the House’s Paycheck Protection Program Flexibility Act, which is aimed at giving business owners greater leeway in keeping employees on their payroll.



## Vietnam

COVID19 DATA (WHO)	6/4 CASES	5/28 CASES	GDP Growth (IMF)	2019	2020 est.
	<b>328</b>	<b>327</b>		<b>7.0%</b>	<b>2.7%</b>

- As of June 4, Vietnam has avoided Covid-19 community transmission for 49 days in a row. Of the 328 confirmed cases in Vietnam, over 90 percent have recovered, and no single death has been reported. Restrictions on entry into the country have been maintained.
- The government continues to further stimulate the economic recovery, keeping up the significant growth momentum witnessed since the country’s economic and social activities resumed in a “new normal” manner. Vietnam’s key macroeconomic indicators recorded in May are remarkably better than those of April. Over 5,000 businesses nationwide have resumed operation, while the number of newly established enterprises increased by 36.1 percent, and export volume rose by 5.2 percent.
- On May 29, the government promulgated a new resolution to further support impacted industries and boost economic development through speeding up public investment disbursement in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. Notable additional solutions approved by the government include reduction of land rent and various fees and charges, expedition of the investment licensing process and creation of favorable conditions for foreign experts, business managers, investors and high-skilled technical workers of foreign-invested projects to enter Vietnam.