

Far and Wide

Every week we share selection of six news from six continents that we believe will impact our world in the near or distant future

April 2024 | Issue #45



India is set to deploy fresh Defence Attachés to numerous missions across Africa.

Welcome to the latest edition of Far and Wide, where we embark on a journey to explore intriguing stories and global developments.

India is widening its **military diplomatic efforts by dispatching Defence Attachés (DA)** to numerous African missions for the first time, marking a broader realignment of DA placements globally. **Sources indicate that Africa is scheduled to receive four new DA assignments**, with one designated for Francophone western Africa and three for eastern and southeastern Africa, **encompassing nations such as Ivory Coast, Mozambique, Ethiopia, and Djibouti.** Ahead of these deployments, **DA personnel stationed abroad** underwent a preparatory training program at the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service. Additionally, the Indian embassy in Poland is slated to welcome a new DA, while adjustments are anticipated in Russia, the **Philippines, and Armenia.**

A significant development is India's heightened focus on **Francophone Africa**, signalling closer alignment with French strategic interests, notably observed during French President **Emmanuel Macron's recent visit.** The deepening strategic collaboration between India and France, reinforced by substantial military hardware agreements, suggests ongoing cooperation in 'third countries'. In the Philippines, the appointment of a DA reflects Manila's keen interest in **Indian military equipment** amid tensions with **Beijing in the South China Sea.**

These shifts underscore India's evolving military-diplomatic strategy, tailored to address regional security dynamics and foster strategic alliances. Against the backdrop of ongoing crises in regions like Gaza, Ukraine, and the Red Sea-western Indian Ocean, **India is enhancing its diplomatic presence** to safeguard its interests and assets. As India navigates complex geopolitical terrain, these diplomatic **maneuvers play a pivotal role in shaping alliances**, mitigating security challenges, and advancing national interests on the global stage.

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Israel-Iran tensions may send fares of Europe flights soaring

Flying times **to and from Europe** and the UK are to be **increased by up to an hour**, potentially leading to **higher airfares**, as airlines like **Air India, Vistara, and others** avoid overflying **the Iranian airspace amidst concerns** of conflict between Iran and Israel.

IndiGo, which operates flights to Istanbul via Turkish Airlines, is also adjusting routes.

Air India is closely monitoring the situation to decide on the continuation of its Delhi-Tel Aviv flights, with a **temporary shift in routes**.

Meanwhile, **Lufthansa has temporarily halted** overflying Iranian airspace until mid April, prioritizing passenger safety.

Source: Times of India

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/israel-iran-tensions-may-send-fares-of-europe-flights-soaring/articleshow/109277035.cms>

Vistara, altering flight paths due to Middle East tensions, warns of possible delays on certain routes. Geopolitical tensions have expanded **no-fly zones**, with **Afghanistan, Russia, Ukraine, and Iran** becoming restricted areas for various airlines. These changes reflect the impact of conflict zones on global flight operations.



North America

Preventing future pandemics goal of new U.S. partnership with 50 countries

President Joe Biden's administration has announced a strategy aimed at supporting **50 countries in identifying and responding to infectious diseases**, with the objective of preventing future pandemics like the **disruptive COVID-19 outbreak** of 2020. Through partnerships with these nations, U.S. officials will enhance testing, surveillance, communication, and preparedness for disease outbreaks, **enhancing global health security**.

This initiative, known as the **Global Health Security Strategy**, seeks to safeguard people across nations while strengthening the United States in these crucial times.

The program will involve **various government agencies** and already has initiated efforts in countries like Congo to combat outbreaks **such as mpox virus**. With a goal of **enlisting 100 countries by year-end**, the U.S. is committing significant resources to this endeavor, **requesting \$1.2 billion in funding for global health safety measures** in Biden's annual budget proposal to Congress.



Source: Global News

<https://globalnews.ca/news/10426639/us-partnership-preventing-pandemics/>



South America

Indians travelling to South America via Istanbul will now need an e-ATV

Turkish authorities have introduced a **new requirement for Indian and Nepalese passport holders** transiting via Istanbul Airport to obtain an 'Electronic Airport Transit Visa' (e-ATV) for **travel to Mexico, Panama, Colombia, and Venezuela.**

The announcement, made by the **Embassy of the Republic of Türkiye**, emphasizes the **importance of this mandate for travelers to these destinations starting April 15, 2024.**

Indian and Nepalese passport holders affected by the new regulation can obtain the e-ATV free of charge through the website "evisa.gov.tr" from April 15 onwards.

Passengers must carry a **printed copy of their e-ATVs during travel**, which will be checked by airlines and Turkish authorities at departure airports and transit points in Istanbul Airport.

Source: Economic Times

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/nri/visit/indians-traveling-to-south-america-via-istanbul-will-now-need-an-e-atv/articleshow/109364751.cms?from=mdr>

This requirement aims to **streamline transit procedures** and ensure **compliance with international aviation standards.** Travelers are advised to obtain their **e-ATVs in advance** and adhere to the outlined guidelines for a smoother transit experience. The embassy's statement highlights the importance of this announcement **for Indian and Nepalese passengers travelling** through Istanbul Airport to the **specified destinations.**



Asia

India to send new Defence Attachés in multiple missions in Africa

India is expanding its **military diplomacy efforts** by deploying **Defence Attachés (DA) to several African missions** for the first time, part of a broader adjustment of DAs across continents.

This move reflects India's response to **dynamic situations in regions** like the Indo-Pacific, Red Sea-Indian Ocean, and Eurasia. Africa is scheduled to receive **four new DAs**, with one assigned to Francophone western Africa and three to eastern and southeastern Africa.

Training programs are underway for DAs deployed abroad, including in Poland, where a new DA will be stationed. This realignment responds to India's evolving defense needs, **encompassing defense production, crisis management, and strategic cooperation.**

Notably, **India's military engagement is intensifying** in regions like Francophone Africa, the Philippines, and Armenia, aligning with strategic interests and emerging partnerships. These developments underscore **India's growing role in global defense cooperation** and its response to regional security challenges, including those in the **South China Sea and Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.**



Source: The Hindu

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-to-send-new-defence-attach%C3%A9s-in-multiple-missions-in-africa/article68051464.ece>



Australia

Climate change: El Niño ends with uncertainty over cooler future

Scientists have declared an end to the **powerful El Niño weather event**, which, coupled with climate change, has **contributed to record-high global temperatures**. According to the **Australian Bureau of Meteorology**, the Pacific Ocean has noticeably cooled in the past week. This natural occurrence, which began last June, **brought warmer surface waters to the Pacific**, intensifying atmospheric heat. However, the future remains uncertain, with researchers unsure of the **next climate phase**.

El Niño's departure instigates speculation about whether recent temperature records are **indicative of accelerated climate change**. This weather phenomenon, known as the **El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO)**, **transitions** through phases including El Niño, neutral, and La Niña.

While some forecast a **La Niña event**, the Australian Bureau advises caution due to unprecedented ocean conditions. The potential arrival of La Niña holds significance, **affecting storms, hurricanes, and global heating rates**. Its **cooling influence may temper recent temperature spikes, challenging assumptions about climate acceleration**.

Source: BBC

<https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-68826152>

Africa

The G7 Presidency partners with UNDP Africa to advance AI for sustainable development

The **G7 Italian Presidency**, in partnership with **UNDP**, concluded a series of high-level meetings in **Addis Ababa with African Union (AU) officials**, EU representatives, and private sector stakeholders, reaffirming a commitment to **collaboration on Artificial Intelligence (AI)** for sustainable development and collectively addressing challenges to **ensure access to AI for all**. These meetings followed the Verona consensus, recognizing the need for **G7-developing country cooperation**.

Discussions emphasized enhancing **local AI ecosystems**, democratizing computing power and responsible AI development to **advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. Sessions included diverse perspectives and expert counsel, with a focus on leveraging AI for sustainable development in Africa.

Building on the Verona Process, the Italian G7 Presidency and UNDP plan to **co-design an AI Hub for Sustainable Development** with African leaders in 2024, involving stakeholders from the technology industry and academia. This initiative aims to accelerate progress towards the SDGs, benefiting **not only Africa but the global community**.



Source: UNDP

<https://www.undp.org/africa/press-releases/g7-presidency-partners-undp-africa-advance-ai-sustainable-development>