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**QUESTION**: HOW IS ASIA AS A REGION RESPONDING TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC? CONTRAST THIS WITH THE RESPONSE IN AFRICA.

COVID-19 is a truly global problem, touching every corner of the world. From the direct health impact to economic, social, and political consequences, the pandemic has the potential to reshape countries across the globe, even those yet to report any confirmed cases. But while the problems are similar, the impacts on and responses from each country are unique.

**IN ASIA**

After initial missteps the Chinese government moved swiftly to prevent the spread of the disease, instituting an unprecedented quarantine in Wuhan, where the disease was discovered. Through a combination of [high-tech scanning and tracking](https://thediplomat.com/2020/03/china-fighting-covid-19-with-automated-tyranny/) of its population, coupled with strict controls on [people’s ability to leave their homes](https://thediplomat.com/2020/02/chinas-social-control-mechanisms-on-full-display-amid-coronavirus-epidemic/), much less travel, China made progress. The collapse of a health care system due to an overwhelming number of patients is much harder to cover up. Hong Kong declared the new [coronavirus an “emergency”](https://thediplomat.com/2020/01/one-coronavirus-two-systems-new-epidemic-hits-at-hong-kongs-political-divide/) in late January, and its efforts since have managed to ward off a spike in cases. The public clearly still remembers the lessons from SARS and reverted to mask-wearing and social distancing protocols more easily than many other populations. Schools were closed and public gatherings banned, but some businesses, have been allowed to stay open, albeit with strict protocols in place on distancing between people.

The way each country in the Asia region has responded to the covid-19 state is different for example,

**Taiwan**

Taiwan has been [universally lauded](https://thediplomat.com/2020/02/the-coronavirus-outbreak-how-democratic-taiwan-outperformed-authoritarian-china/) as a model for its [COVID-19 response](https://thediplomat.com/2020/04/how-taiwan-battles-the-coronavirus/), and for good reason: despite its close proximity to and frequent cross-border connections with China, where the outbreak began, Taiwan has limited its cases to just 393 as of April 14, with only six deaths. That’s because the government reacted quickly and decisively in January, by instituting [early travel restrictions](https://thediplomat.com/2020/02/taiwan-delays-spring-semester-tightens-travel-rules-over-coronavirus-worries/), rolling out testing, and asserting control of medical supply lines. Taiwan also recognized the potential for human-to-human transmission before China or the WHO did. Through these measures, Taiwan has been able to avoid the sort of sweeping lockdowns implemented around the world.

**Singapore**

Singapore’s early detection and quick response with restrictions and support packages announced starting in February not only enabled it to initially contain the virus, but also served as an early warning of the virus’ spread in Southeast Asia at a time when underreporting had been suspected. Singapore’s response has [served as an example globally](https://thediplomat.com/2020/03/asias-best-strategies-against-coronavirus-track-isolate-communicate/) and the country has also been contributing to assistance in the region and sharing its experiences with the world. Despite its best efforts, Singapore has been unable to contain the emergence of new clusters, leading to the imposition of a lockdown in early April to prevent another wave of COVID-19 cases.

**Bangladesh**

The Bangladeshi government has treated the pandemic seriously and taken economic and public health steps to mitigate damage. To support the national economy, the government has announced an $8 billion stimulus package, representing 2.5 percent of GDP.

**Bhutan**

After getting its first confirmed case of COVID-19 [from an American tourist](https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/american-tourist-in-bhutan-tests-positive-for-coronavirus-on-last-day-of-quarantine-2198215), Bhutan has appeared to contain matters well, though diagnostic capacity is limited. Bhutan sealed its borders as of March 23 and is monitoring the situation. Every confirmed case in the country has been correlated to overseas travel, suggesting community spread may be limited.

Asia as a region reacted very quickly[, closing its border with China](https://thediplomat.com/2020/02/north-korea-beefs-up-measures-to-prevent-coronavirus-outbreak/), before the new coronavirus had even been named. Those controls were later expanded to [deny the entry of all foreigners](https://thediplomat.com/2020/02/north-koreas-bizarre-strategies-for-tackling-the-coronavirus-outbreak/). The swift response has been coupled by official rhetoric terming COVID-19 a threat to “[national survival](https://www.nknews.org/2020/01/coronavirus-prevention-a-matter-of-national-survival-north-korean-media-says/).” Clearly, Asia is taking the disease seriously. Even though the covid-19 has spread rapidly in Asia and has limited the beds in hospital enough for the infected persons, Asia has used the method of using some of it hotels, schools hostel as hospital to make its patient more relax while going through this illness. Some country has also release fund to help the citizen.

**IN AFRICA**

Africa confirmed its first case in Egypt on Feb 14, 2020. China is Africa's leading commercial partner; thus, there are large travel volumes through which severe acute respiratory syndrome

e coronavirus could reach the continent. The respond of Africa to the covid-19 is very slow. The way Asia responded to the spread of the covid-19 is totally different from the way Africa is doing. In Africa, we are not strong in politics, amenities, and economical wise to battle this deadly disease. Our respond to the virus is slow, unlike other countries for example some countries in Europe when recorded their first case, locked down their boarders to contain the spread of the virus in the state. But in African even the first case of the covid-19 was not taken seriously which led to multiple cases and death across Africa.

The health care facility in Africa is very poor and the wellbeing of individuals in Africa is very low unlike Asia. Unlike the good health system in Asia, the virus had hit the country so hard. Africa’s health care system, like much of its social services, is starkly divided between urban and rural populations. A largescale COVID-19 outbreak would easily overrun rural health care facilities, where Africa ’s elderly (and thus higher-risk population) are more likely to live. Africa is heavily reliant on both formal and informal trade with China, meaning the border shutdown could not only cause economic turmoil but acute shortages of necessary goods.