

Weekly Newsletter

Myanmar: Military Coup



A protester holds a placard with an image of Myanmar military Commander-in-Chief Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing and Justice For Myanmar as fellow protesters march around Mandalay, Myanmar on Monday, Feb. 8, 2021. A protest against Myanmar's one-week-old military government swelled rapidly Monday morning as opposition to the coup grew increasingly bold. (AP Photo)

The military in Myanmar toppled the Aung San Suu Kyi's frail democracy on February 1st, 2021. Myanmar military has arrested many civil leaders, including Aung San Suu Kyi, President U Win Myint, along with cabinet ministers, the chief ministers of several regions, opposition politicians, writers and activists under the impression, without any evidence, that the

elections won by Aung San Suu Kyi and her party are scam and fraud. Myanmar's leading Democratic Party, National League for Democracy, won the elections by 83%. Military refused to accept the elections. Aung San Suu Kyi has been Myanmar's de facto leader since the elections of 2015. The military argued that elections were fraudulent and threatened to take action. Not long after the threat was made, Myanmar's houses of parliament were surrounded by the military soldiers. Military has also accused Aung San Suu Kyi of violating an obscure import law, many are viewing this accusation as a ploy to keep her incarcerated.

Military had been in power in Myanmar since 1962. In 2011, quasi-democracy began when military implemented parliamentary elections and other reforms. Unfortunately, the recent coup has brought back the full military rule just after nine years of quasi-democracy. The military coup in Myanmar was effectively declared on the military owned Myawaddy TV station. The presenter quoted the constitution of 2008 and described that it allows military to take control and declare national emergency. It was further added that the national emergency will stay in place for one year. Power has been handed over to Commander-in-chief Min Aung Hlaing. According to reports, two days from February 1st, military took control of the parliament and other State institutions and operations including country's infrastructure, suspended most television broadcasts and cancelled all domestic and international flights. Telephone and internet access was suspended in major cities. The stock market and commercial banks were closed. The full military takeover has caused protests against the military regime. The protestors include teachers, lawyers, students, bank officers and government workers. It has also been reported that soldiers have used water cannon against the protestors. Strict restrictions have been imposed including curfew and gatherings. Many international States have condemned the military takeover including EU, Australia, UK and the U.S. Whereas, Cambodia, Thailand and the Philippines

called it an internal matter. China urged all sides to resolve the differences.

Glacier collapse in India



A piece of Himalayan glacier in the Indian state of Uttarakhand broke off and fell into a river Sunday, causing flood that have killed at least 20 people so far, while nearly 200 remain missing. The wall of water barreled down a valley in the northern state of Uttarakhand on Sunday morning, destroying bridges, roads and two hydroelectric power plants this is not a small incident, it's more alarming that the glaciers are melting more rapidly as compare to previous years. Environment protectionists are worried and call it a climate change event and the glaciers are melting due to global warming, however they also warned people to get ready for more disasters.

Asia is home to some of the world's biggest waterways, from the Ganges and the Indus in India to the Yangtze and Mekong originating in China, that snake for thousands of kilometers.

They support the livelihoods of vast numbers of farmers and fishermen, and supply drinking water to billions of people, but have come under unprecedented pressure in recent years.

Higher temperatures are causing glaciers that feed the rivers to shrink, threatening water supplies and also increasing the chances of landslides and floods, while critics blame dam building and pollution for damaging fragile ecosystems.

Rivers are really at risk from development projects, dumping of solid waste and liquid waste, sand mining and stone mining, Himanshu Thakkar, from the South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People are very much dependent on these rivers. In regions like the Himalaya, the problem of rising temperatures is three-fold:

- It leads to the melting of mountain glaciers, which can spark floods.
- It also decreases glacial coverage, which leads to a reduction in the long-term availability of water for people, agriculture, and hydropower.
- As glacier cover reduces and the area is replaced by water or land and hence the land Corrosion started.

Glaciers are often referred to as the “water towers” of the world, with half of humanity depending on mountains for their water needs. The Tibetan Plateau alone is the source of 10 of Asia’s biggest rivers and provides water to 1.35 billion people, or 20 per cent of the world’s population.

The incident raises questions about developing a region that is vulnerable to climate change. The IPCC’s Special Report on Oceans and Cryosphere warned that glacier retreat could increase the risk of landslides, floods and cascading events in regions where these disasters were previously unheard.

In the Paris Agreement, Member States committed to limit global temperature increases to well below 2°C, and preferably to 1.5°C, compared to pre-industrial levels. Slowing global

warming would help save glaciers, but countries must also prepare mountain ecosystems for an unavoidable increase in temperatures. Steps need to be taken otherwise there will be a regret at the end.

The Second Wave of Coronavirus

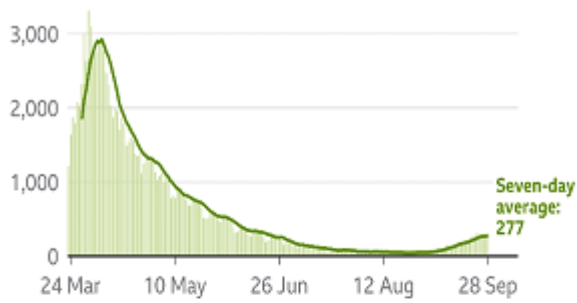
The COVID-19 pandemic has caused around 290,000 deaths and at least 4.3 million confirmed cases worldwide. The persistence of pandemic has caused a major economic crisis and recession. Self-isolation and social distancing has showed a huge downward shift in all economic sectors globally and stock markets have gone to new highs. Agriculture sector has faced 20% decline in demand because of safety measures that have been imposed. These impositions have caused a big loss of perishable goods. Panic buying has caused a shortage to whatever was already available.

Analysis of the countries hit by the second wave of Coronavirus:

United Kingdom:

□ The prime minister of United Kingdom shared a warning that the second wave in UK is leaving it to be at a critical point. Chief scientific adviser Sir Patrick Vallance corroborated the idea by adding that UK is expected to face 50,000 per day in October 2020, but the speed of virus spreading has reduced than before.

□ North-West and North-East are badly hit along with Liverpool, Manchester and New Castle where the rate of infection has increased by 10%.



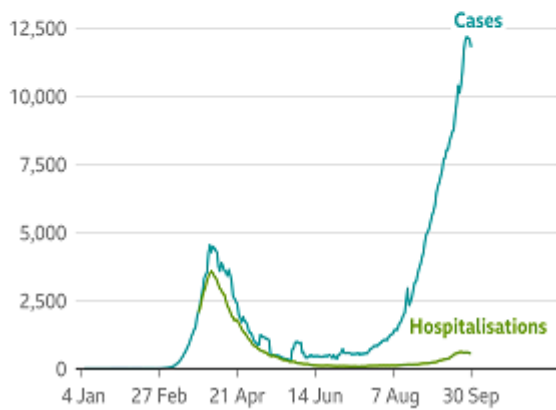
No data available for Scotland since 16 Sep

Source: Gov.uk dashboard, 30 Sep

BBC

Rising hospitalisations follow rising cases

7-day rolling mean hospitalisations and cases in France



Source: Data.gov.fr, ECDC

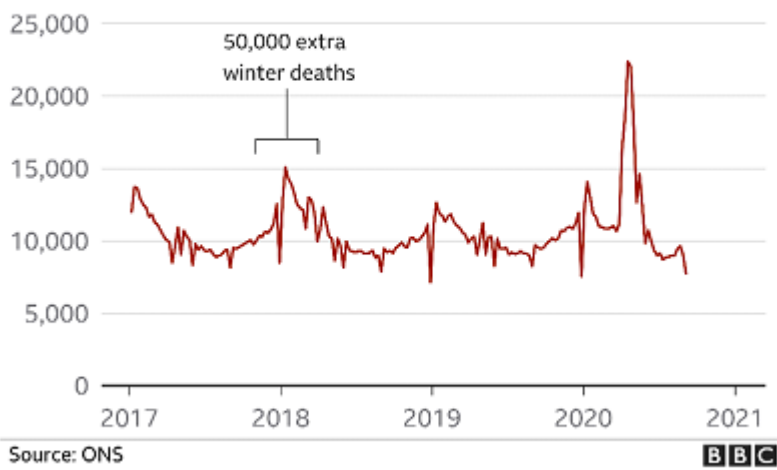
BBC

□ Hospitals in UK are admitting only the patients with serious symptoms. Cases have seen a decline in Northern Ireland but there is a continuous threat of rising. UK can expect what is coming from France where cases started emerging again earlier than UK.

□ There is a threat of more people losing their lives in winter than usual in UK. People catch respiratory illnesses and flu due to harsh winter WEATHER which causes deaths, but now there is a new virus with possibly no vaccine up till now has become a new major threat for UK.

Deaths usually peak in winter

Provisional deaths registered by week in England and Wales



Canada:

□ Canada is weeks into second wave of pandemic and there are 2,5000 new cases have been reported across the State.

□ The cases of hospitalization have increased in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. Manitoba showed a deadly hike in cases, 150 in one day, and now is under lockdown, whereas cases in Saskatchewan have simply doubled.

□ There are 783 new cases in Ontario and 239 in Toronto along with five new reported deaths. Ontario has hired 100 new people to help and track new cases of infection and more to be hired by November 2020.

□ Canada reported record 2,554 new cases on October 9th alone. Quebec has reported 969 new cases and eight deaths. 844 cases were reported only between October 14th and 15th.

China:

□ The Chinese people fear the outbreak of second wave of coronavirus as new cases in China resurged.

□ According to the authorities the second wave of coronavirus is likely to take happen because the borders have been opened again.

□ The Director of the Infectious Disease Department at Huashan Hospital, Zhang Wenhong, said that if even if an effective

vaccine is develop it will take almost a year to become widely available.

□ He further asserted that identifying virus can be a challenge for the health workers sometimes because some people show mild to no symptoms. Moreover, the virus is likely to exist in China in the winters and coming spring.

□ To control the outbreak, Yunnan, a southwestern province of China is under a complete lockdown, to prevent the spread of Coronavirus in the province as the neighboring country Myanmar is seeking a hike in cases.

□ To avoid a large scale outbreak of second wave of Covid-19, the authorities are carrying out checks in every province and municipality.

□ However, the outbreak has helped China to strengthen its ties with Europe. They have expanded their relationship in the field of health. Millions of masks, health suits, and medical equipment reached Europe from China.

India:

□ India is experiencing its second wave of Covid-19 as the number of new cases keeps increasing each day. The Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Uddhav Thackeray said that more people have started going out of their homes to work which is causing the virus to spread rapidly. He urged the people to strictly comply with the Covid-19 SOPs.

□ The lockdown and the coronavirus has brought serious consequences for the Indian economy. But some reports also suggest that the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) called for another lockdown in the country.

□ A rapid hike in the coronavirus is seen in Maharashtra, Delhi, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Kerala and Odisha.

□ The cases reported daily in India has reached as high as 90,000 and Delhi is reporting the highest number of cases each day.

□ India has reached the second position in the world in terms of most number of coronavirus cases.

□ The India's fragile healthcare system has experienced an

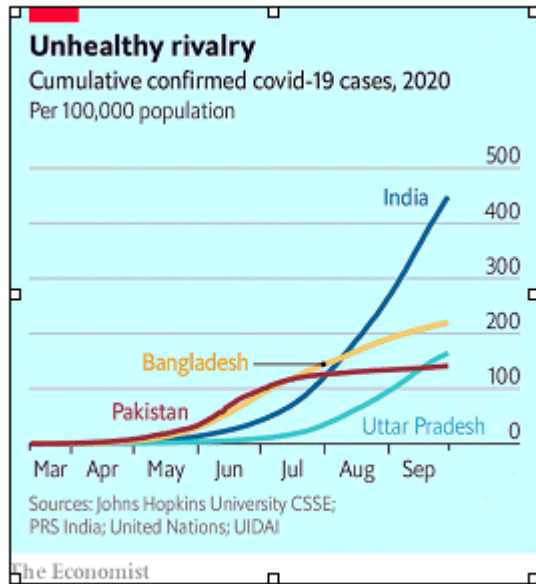
exponential rise in the cases of coronavirus.

□ India is not only facing health crisis but also financial difficulties. The Indian GDP has crashed and the unemployment has skyrocketed. Private investment has become negligible while inflation is increasing.

□ In these difficult times, another challenge that India faces is the shortage of doctor. The stats suggest that for every 1000 patients that require medical treatment, less than one doctor is available. The situation in the rural areas of India is a completely different story.

□ Indian authorities do not only need to start more testing and adopt early detection mechanisms but most importantly they must focus on spreading mass awareness in the country. The people must be compelled to take preventive measures if the growth of virus has to be slowed down.

□ Here is the graph showing the rapid increase in cases daily in India in comparison with other South Asian Countries.



COVID-19 second wave in South Asia

□ In some areas cases are decreasing as the numbers of positive cases are increasing but on the other hand, in multiple states in India where cases are increasing & government is calling it as a second wave.

□ Many analysts including Dr. Randeep Guleria said the trend of rising cases indicates that the Covid-19 curve may not

flatten very soon. He expects cases to rise further over the next few months and continue into early next year & India has to deal with it.

Brazil:

□ Brazil has reported more than five million coronavirus infections and the state of São Paulo is experiencing the worst health crisis. Colombia is the next worst hit region of the country, where 27,495 people have died.

□ The Brazilian authorities have been accused of not taking the virus seriously, as a result of which the cases increased in the country. The government officials labelled it as a "little flu."

□ The Brazilian government has placed a ban on gatherings, parties and shut down the bars as the coronavirus cases are increasing again.

□ The shopping malls and restaurants are now following restricted hours.

United States:

□ The US braces itself for the second wave of COVID-19, many experts have different opinions. Some say that the second wave is not going to be that deadly in comparison to the start of COVID-19.

□ Scientists warn that the trend is driven by four big, hard-hit places Arizona, California, Florida, and Texas, and that cases are rising in close to 30 states.

□ A lot of things have been changed after the first pandemic when hospitals were full, people were scared and the country kept facing new crisis.

□ The mortality rate has been dropping in many countries. The total confirmed cases in the US reached 7,718,948, with a death toll of 214,377, accounting for 2.78 percent, when COVID-19 hit the U.S for the first time according to data from Johns Hopkins University.

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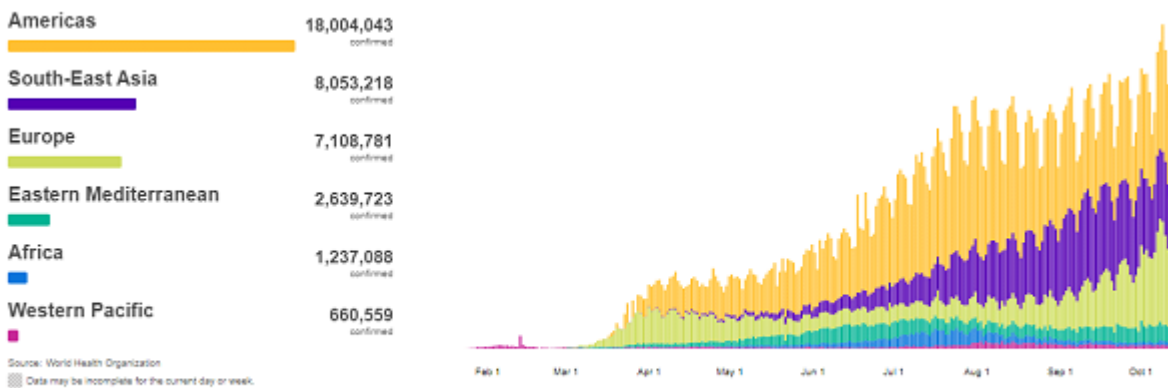
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Second wave of COVID-19 spike in different countries

□ According to the graph, cases are increasing but Americans are satisfied with their medical conditions & following the precautions to avoid COVID-19. Things might change in winters if the precautions are ignored.

□ A “huge surge” expected to take off in October “and accelerate in November and December.” The country is currently seeing about 765 daily deaths from Covid-19, but that number could jump to 3,000 daily deaths by late December.

Status of Vaccine:

□ As world is competing to discover a vaccine, it is highly unlikely that vaccine will be available for mass immunization. It is considered that healthy young people will be last to receive it. WHO is looking to organize a guide to prioritize the groups that need immediate help. According to WHO, 150 vaccines have been tested and 42 have been tried on humans.

□ Until the vaccine or effective treatment is developed, the countries are implementing social distancing, universal mask-wearing, frequent hand sanitization, and try to avoid crowded places. This is the only solution to slow down the second Wave of COVID 19.

President Trump's Visit to India: Pakistan's Diplomatic Success on Indian Soil

The United States of America and India have come a long way from being crestfallen to being fully cooperative with each other on strategic concerns and matters. While the association between two States became sore amid India's nuclear ambitions in 1998, Bill Clinton, former president of USA, revitalized the ties in 2000 and since then the strategic and economic ties have only gotten sturdier. Fast forward to 2019, as per Indian Ministry of External Affairs, India was anticipated to acquire \$18 billion worth of arsenal from USA along with bilateral military exercises. USA based Indian diaspora has also been very active in promoting India's interests and popularity. Indians are also among the richest immigrant communities in the USA. Despite the fact that India is the US's largest trading partner, they do business of about \$142 billion a year. The USA filed a lawsuit in the World Trade Organization against India and called it a source for US's trade deficit by subsidizing exports.

On February 24th of 2020, US President Donald Trump addressed the Indian audience in Ahmedabad during visiting India to meet with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. While being on stage President Trump proclaimed to be all set to sell arsenal, energy and "best and most feared" military equipment of worth whopping \$3 billion to India. While making all the statements that Indian media, political leadership and audience wanted to hear, President Trump made a comment that sent a chill down their spines. President Trump, while standing on Indian stage

placed on Indian soil, said that the USA is now enjoying good relations with Pakistan and all the efforts made by Pakistan are paying off well in progressing towards a new beginning, harmony, stability and reduced tensions. President Trump did not just stop there, he went on and said that the Trump administration is working very closely and positively with Pakistan to decrease the risk of militancy along the border.

President Trump's statements praising Pakistan for its efforts on Indian soil were not well received by Indian media and leadership. As Pakistani media, leadership and Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi highlighted that the importance of these statements cannot be denied, Indian media went frenzy and kept bringing up the past references of terror attacks to keep the reputation of Modi government intact. The statements in favor of Pakistan made the Modi government concerned to the level where PM Modi refused to hold an unscripted press conference to avoid any more controversy which might have further killed the euphoria of Indian audience. The reference of having good relations with Pakistan at a public meeting with PM Modi cannot be accidental on part of American president and US's soft policy towards Pakistan qualifies to be an irritant for India in pursuit of having great strategic partnership with the USA.

Among all the commendations for the Modi government, President Trump was unsuccessful in mentioning his remarks over the protest happening in India over its Citizenship Amendment Act and religious persecution of Muslims minority in India. Meanwhile, Pakistan's media and political leadership is thrilled to have received an acknowledgment for their efforts, whereas Indian media has tried it best to curb the idea that Pakistan is a partner in bringing and maintaining. President Trump's acknowledgment of Pakistan's efforts is not only a manifestation of Pakistan's successful foreign policy but also have given legitimacy to Pakistan's and its citizens sacrifices worldwide. The praising statements have given a

blow to India's hoax narrative that Pakistan is the problem, rather Pakistan is a part of solution in peace process which is clearly reflected by Pakistan's active participation in US-Taliban peace talks.

US Presidential Elections 2020: A Race between Democrats and Republicans

Nobody will ever deprive the American people of the right to vote except the American people themselves and the only way they could do this is by not voting..

–Franklin D. Roosevelt

The result of the US General Election Campaign 2020 will have an impact all around the world. The race of being next in the White House has already begun in the United States of America. Unlike other countries, in United States there are only two parties that are considered by the voters, Republican a right wing party and the Democratic Party i.e. the party of the leftist and the liberals. Winning the 2018 midterm elections, many Democrats anticipated that they will be successful in unseating Donald Trump in the general elections in 2020. Among the top Democrats running for the election are Joe Biden, Obama's VP, Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren and Michael Bloomberg. While there are two main candidates that are representing the Republican Party. Donald Trump has started his campaign for a second term, while he is being challenged by a fellow Republican William Weld.

The numbers of Joe Biden have dropped and now he is being

topped by Bernie Sanders. After the win in the New Hampshire, support for Sanders is likely to increase. On the other hand, the numbers of Elizabeth Warren are also on a decline. A controversy surrounded her after her year old tweet about running a DNA test for being Native American was surfaced in media. Accusations on Joe Biden by a former Nevada Lawmaker Lucy Flores have also been weighing him down publically. A response to this accusation was Biden's statement that he will work for ending violence against women. Biden is relying heavily on the votes of African- American voters in South Carolina.

Michael Bloomberg was accused of paying the audience to cheer for him, despite his uninspiring and spiritless performance during the presidential debate. Bernie Sanders, although a first Jewish presidential nominee is accused of being anti-semitic, less Jewish. This is possibly happening because of the Sanders's conflicts with the American Jewish leadership and Israeli leadership. Bernie Sanders has strict views towards Israel and critiques got this golden opportunity to accuse Sanders after he got into a quarrel with the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). Sanders refused to attend the committee meeting because he believed that it was a platform where leaders "express bigotry and oppose basic Palestinian rights". These statements by Sanders came after he won the Nevada caucuses, which make him a clear forerunner in the Democrats presidential race. The meeting of pro-Israel lobby was to be held in the beginning of March. AIPAC viewed these statements as an outrageous attack, especially for the US- Israel relationship. However, the bigger source of conflict other than not attending the meeting came after Sanders debate in December where he argued that Israel should only be given aid if they treat Palestinians better. He further said that America should not only be pro-Israel but also be pro-Palestine. Sanders earlier has called Netanyahu a racist and has been very critical of his policies.

Apart from this earnest controversies have come up against Donald Trump too. The American intelligence is said to warn the US lawmakers of the possible intervention by the Russians in 2020 General Elections to re-elect Donald Trump for the second term. Controversies have always remained a part of the election campaigns in the US, it is not something particular to these elections only. In this fight between Jews and Sanders, Donald Trump played his cards very well. Jews are voters of Democrats mostly. In order to secure Jewish vote bank in his favor, Trump moved the US Embassy to Jerusalem and proposed a peace plan for Middle East. The allies of Trump believe that the statements of Sanders will just make victory easier for them. The 59th US presidential elections are scheduled for 3rd November 2020. The winner will be inaugurated on January 20th 2021. The race of becoming the final presidential nominee will end in July at the Democratic National Convention.