



COVID -19 PANDEMICS AND SOUTH ASIA

Maj Gen Dipankar Banerjee
(Retd)









President, Chanakya Chakra
New Delhi, INDIA

SOUTH ASIA - BACKGROUND

- **South Asia - one fourth of the world's population**
- **India in the lead in infection and deaths.**
- **Not peaked yet – daily rate excess of 50,000 infections in India.**
- **Morbidity Low – young population**
- **No resistance to authority**
- **Severe Impact – Limited Capability – Inadequate regional cooperation**

The Rise of the Coronavirus in South Asia

CONFIRMED CASES **AND DEATHS** OVER THE PAST FOUR WEEKS

Country	July 9	July 16	July 23	July 30
 India	794,842 21,623	1,005,637 25,609	1,288,130 30,645	1,632,422 35,712
 Pakistan	240,848 4,983	257,914 5,426	269,191 5,709	277,402 5,924
 Bangladesh	175,494 2,238	196,323 2,496	216,110 2,801	234,889 3,083
 Afghanistan	33,908 957	35,070 1,113	35,928 1,211	36,542 1,271
 Nepal	16,531 35	17,344 39	18,241 43	19,547 52
 Maldives	2,553 13	2,899 15	3,120 15	3,567 15
 Sri Lanka	2,154 11	2,687 11	2,753 11	2,814 11
 Bhutan	80 0	84 0	92 0	101 0
Total	1,266,410 29,860	1,517,958 34,709	1,833,565 40,435	2,207,284 46,068

SOURCE: WHO, CDC, NHC, AND DINGXIANGYUAN, VIA JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY AND WORLDOMETER

SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT

Collapse of international trade and tourism

Wage and income wiped out for tens of million

- **Rising food insecurity**
- **Social Inequalities will widen**

• **Urgent needs**

- **Need for inclusive and sustainable relief and economic stimulus.**
 - **Strengthening public health infrastructure.**
 - **Enhanced social protection for livelihood security.**

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Figure 4: Indicators of Fiscal and Debt Sustainability in South Asia, 2019

Country	Fiscal Sustainability		Debt Sustainability				DSA year
	Tax Revenue (% of GDP) (2017)	Fiscal Balances % of GDP (2019)	Public Debt as % of GDP (2019)	External debt, % of GDP (2018)	Short term, % of external debt (2018)	Risk of debt distress	
Afghanistan	9.3	-1	7.6	13.1	14	High	2020
Bangladesh	8.8	-5.2	34.6	18.1	17.3	Low	2019
Bhutan	12.5	0.6	108.6	101.4	0.2	Moderate	2018
India	11.2	-7.4	69	19.2	20		2019
Maldives	21.2	-5.6	70.1	43.8	11.3	High	2020
Nepal	20.7	-4.6	32.6	18.9	4.6	Low	2020
Pakistan	12.4	-8.8	76.7	28.9	9.1		2020
Sri Lanka	12.4	-6.8	83	59.5	15.5		2020

IMPACT ON ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

- **Collapse of travel and tourism – Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka**
- **Product off-take Affected – Bangladesh, Sri Lanka garments & clo**
- **Manufacturing industries hit**
- **Movement of migrant workers**
- **Likely slow recovery due inadequate personal spending**

SOUTH ASIAN REGIONAL COOPERATION

- Enhance intra-regional trade – activate SAFTA
- Strengthening South Asian freight corridors
- Build climate-resilient agro-ecosystems
- Fast-tracking clean energy transition *hydel-solar*
- Enhancing Digital Technology
- Building disaster resilience through sub-regional cooperation.
- Activate regional and sub-regional cooperation organizations:-
 - *Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN)*
 - *SAFTA, BIMSTEC (including Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand).*

INTER-REGIONAL COOPERATION

- Inter-regional pandemic cooperation network under the UN ESCAP at Bangkok.
- Information sharing, resource network, best practices exchange.
- Rejuvenate, recreate inter regional cooperation.
- End regional conflicts and terrorism
- Implement concept of **BUILD BACK BETTER**

CONCLUSION

- protecting people and enhancing resilience,
- supporting sustainable and inclusive economic recovery, and
 - restoring supply chains and supporting MSMEs.
- **COLLECTIVE AND JOINT FRONT AGAINST A COMMON ENEMY**