

Exclusion of Myanmar's Military Junta

What is the issue?

ASEAN has decided to exclude Myanmar's military junta from its annual summit which is a major setback for the Generals' attempt to gain regional legitimacy for their brutal regime.

Why did the coup occur?

- The Military had a tight grip on Myanmar as the constitution guarantees it a quarter of all seats in parliament and control of its most powerful ministries.
- In the last November's general election, military-backed party- USDP- performed poorly whereas the NLD did even better than in 2015.
- This created tensions between the armed forces and the government.
- The opposition raised allegations of widespread fraud in the election which was not backed by the electoral commission.
- Later, Myanmar's military seized power after detaining Aung San Suu Kyi and other democratically elected leaders.

TIMELINE: MYANMAR COUP



2010

9 Nov

Military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) wins election by landslide.
Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) boycotts election.

13 Nov

Aung San Suu Kyi is freed after 7 years of house arrest.

2011

31 Jan

Elected parliament convenes for first time in half a century, charged with choosing first civilian president since 1962 coup.

2015

8 Nov

NLD wins by landslide in Myanmar's first openly contested general election since 1990; Aung San Suu Kyi becomes de facto leader.

2020

8 Nov

NLD captures 396 of 476 seats in lower and upper houses of parliament in general election.*
USDP alleges voter fraud, challenges results.

2021

26 Jan

Military ramps up demands for investigation into alleged voter fraud, doesn't rule out coup possibility.

30 Jan

Military says it will protect the constitution and act according to the law amid coup fears.

Early morning

Military detains Aung San Suu Kyi, other leaders from ruling NLD party.

1 Feb

About 10:30am

Military declares state of emergency for a year, hands power to Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.

*Myanmar has a constitutional arrangement for 25% of parliament seats to be reserved for the military.

What was the followup of the power siege?

- The junta has unleashed a reign of terror claiming an estimated 1,000 lives.

- Ms. Suu Kyi who had been the State Councillor for five years from 2015 heading the quasi-democratic government has been in detention.
- Thousands of others were arrested by the military for their democratic protests.
- In cities, protests turned into armed fighting between pro-democracy protesters and security personnel, while in the jungles, anti-junta groups joined hands with rebels for military training.
- The situation was so grave that the UN Special Envoy warned that Myanmar had descended into a civil war.
- Recently, Myanmar's military sentenced a close aide of ousted civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi to 20 years in prison.

What has been the international reaction to the coup?

- US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has accused the security forces of a "reign of terror".
- The US, UK and European Union have all responded with sanctions on military officials.
- South East Asian countries have been pursuing diplomatic efforts to end the crisis.
- China blocked a UNSC statement condemning the coup, but has backed calls for the release of Ms Suu Kyi and a return to democratic norms.

What led to the exclusion of the junta by ASEAN?

- In April, Gen. Min Aung Hlaing was invited to Jakarta for emergency talks with ASEAN members which led to the **ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus**.
- The Consensus that includes immediately ending violence, starting the reconciliation process and allowing a regional special envoy to meet all stakeholders has not been met by the military regime.
- There have been reports of the junta torturing political prisoners.
- Regime violence, political crises and strikes and counter-attacks by protesters have all led to the exclusion of Myanmar.
- According to the UN, around 3 million people are in need of life-saving assistance because of conflict, food insecurity, natural disasters and COVID-19.
- The international community should continue to put pressure on the junta and urgently start a reconciliation process.

References

1. <https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/descent-into-chaos/article37244869.ece>
2. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-55902070>

Quick facts

Myanmar

- Myanmar, also known as Burma is in South East Asia.
- It neighbours Thailand, Laos, Bangladesh, China and India.
- The main religion is **Buddhism**.
- The biggest city is Yangon (Rangoon), but the capital is **Nay Pyi Taw**.
- There are many ethnic groups in the country, including **Rohingya Muslims**.

