

A ROADMAP OF MYANMAR

ANDREW SIA

Introduction



Myanmar is located in the Indochina Peninsula, a name given by the French in those colonial days. Indochina Peninsula consisted today's Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand and Burma. All the other countries were at one time under the French colonial ruling but not Burma, who was under the British. And Also, Thailand has not been colonized.

Myanmar is also known as Burma in the past, dating back to its colonial period. Renaming it is a contested issue as many political and ethnic opposition groups and countries continue to use Burma as they do not recognize the legitimacy of the ruling military government or even its authority to rename the country. People asked Aung San Suu Kyi for the name to be used in April 2016, soon after she took the office. She mentioned that it should only be treated as a matter of being used. The State Department of the United States list the country under both names.

It is a country in Southeast Asia, located in between Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea. It is bordered by Bangladesh and India to its northwest, China to its northeast, Laos and Thailand to its east and southeast.

It is a lower middle-income country with a population of 53.5 million and a growth of 0.9% in 2018. The country has a deficit of -0.9% of GDP in 2017. Its household consumption expenditure was lower than in overall East Asia and Pacific, although it is experiencing a growth in the emergence of new businesses.

We reported Myanmar in our January 2015 issue and it was our second country report as we were expecting it to take off. But its military junta has been dragging the feet of Myanmar from become a democratic country. That has left us an unpleasant opinion about the country.



Ancient History



Archaeological evidence showed that Homo erectus lived in the region now known as Myanmar as early as 750,000 years ago. Evidence of Neolithic age domestication of plants and animals and the use of polished stone tools dating to sometime between 10,000 and 6,000 BC.

During the Bronze Age, and it was 1,500 BC and already the people in the region were turning from copper to bronze, they were growing rice and domesticating poultry and pigs, and were among the first people in the world to do so.

During the Iron Age which was 500 BC, iron-making settlements in an area south of present-day Mandalay. There was evidence of trading with China. Myanmar was influenced by India and Thailand during the time as well.

We mentioned this to demonstrate the long history of civilization that took place in the Southeast Asia. What followed were wars fought between the different ethnic groups that went on for the next thousand years.

Recent History



We want to write about Burma under the British from 1824 to 1948 for its 124 years. At the time, the British East India Company was looking eastward for expansion. And over the next 60 years, through diplomacy, raids and treaties, also fought after three Anglo-Burmese Wars, British proclaimed control over most of Burma. Under the British rule, they brought social, economic, cultural and administrative changes. Throughout the colonial rule, Indians arrived as soldiers, civil servants, construction workers, traders and alongside with the Anglo-Burmese community, dominated commercial and civil life in Burma.

Rangoon became the capital of British Burma and an important port between Calcutta and Singapore.

But during the period, the Burmese resentment was strong and resulted in violent riots that paralyzed Rangoon on occasions all the way until 1930s. The discontent was caused by the disrespectful to Burmese culture and traditions as British refused to take off their shoes when they entered the pagodas. The Buddhist monks led the independence movement. An activist monk, U Wisara, who died in prison after a 166-day hunger strike to protest against the rule that forbade him to wear his Buddhist robes while imprisoned. That can show you how determined the activist monks are ready to sacrifice for the peaceful protest.

It was from 1 April 1937 onward, Burma became a separately administrated colony of Great Britain. Ba Maw was the first Prime Minister of Burma and he was for Burma's self-rule and he opposed the participation of Great Britain. During the WWII, Ba Maw became the head of the state from 1943 to 1945.

General Aung San, who started first as a communist, was a Burmese politician and revolutionary. He served as the 5th Premier of the British Crown Colony of Burma from 1946 to 1947, He founded the Myanmar Armed Forces and considered as the Father of the Nation of modern-day Myanmar. Aung San formed the Burma Independence Army in Japan in 1940 before Japan formally entered into WWII.

During WWII Aung San initially collaborated with Japan following them to invade Burma before switched side to the British. In another word that he was helping the Japanese army to drive out the British but switched side afterwards.

Burma became a major battle during WWII, and Japanese advanced on Rangoon and the British administration collapsed in 1942. Japanese established the Burmese Executive Administration headed by Ba Maw in August 1942. By late 1944, British and American soldiers who formed different long-range penetration groups operated behind enemy lines and formed the allied troops to launch series of attacks that brought down the Japanese rule in July 1945. The battles were intense and the Burmese suffered from heavy casualties and Japanese army lost some 150,000 soldiers in Burma and only 1,700 prisoners were taken.

The Burma Independence Army fought with the Japanese in the beginning, from 1942 to 1944 but switched their allegiance to the Allies side in 1945.

Following the war, in 1947 Aung San negotiated the Panglong Agreement with the ethnic leaders that guaranteed the independence of Myanmar as a united-state. Aung San together with several cabinet members formed a transitional government, and himself became Deputy Chairman of the Executive Council of Myanmar. But in July 1947 he and several cabinet members were being assassinated by political rivals.

The Burma Independence Act 1947 was an act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom that allowed Burma's independence on 4 January 1948. The country was named Union of Burma, with Sao Shwe Thak as its first President and U Nu as the first Prime Minister. Unlike most of the other former British colonies and overseas colonies, Burma did not become a member of Commonwealth. Instead a bicameral parliament was formed.

One thing I would need to mention is U Thant, the former secretary to the Prime Minister, became Union of Burma's Permanent Representative to the United Nations and was elected Secretary-General of the United Nations in 1961 and he held that position for ten years.

The period from 1948 to 1962 was considered as the post-independence Burma.

Modern History

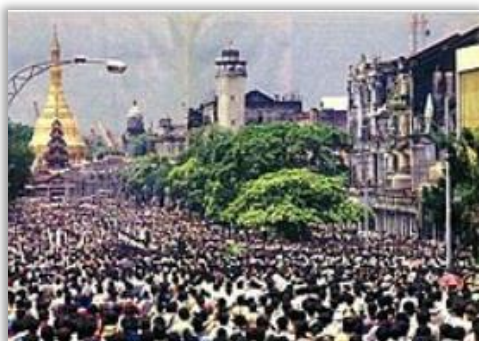
Burma entered into the military rule from 1962 to 2011. On 2 March 1962, General Ne Win took control of Burma by a coup, and since then the country has been controlled by the military either directly or indirectly.

Between 1962 to 1974, Myanmar was ruled by a revolutionary council headed by the general. Almost all aspects of society were nationalized combined with Soviet-style nationalization and central planning.

In 1974 a new constitution of the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma was adopted. The country remained as a one-party system until 1988. The Burma Socialist Program Party took over and the General Ne Win and his military officers resigned.

During Ne Win's years, there were sporadic protests against military rule and they were suppressed violently. Several student protests were suppressed by overwhelming force. One thing that should be mentioned was in 1974 during the funeral of U Thant, the military violently suppressed the anti-government protest.

The Buddhist monks took the self-infliction by burning themselves in front of the international new coverage for their protests. In Burma there were many occasions that these activist monks chose this act to fight for democracy.



On 8 August, 1988 also known as the 8-8-88 Uprising, or 8888 Nationwide Popular Pro-Democracy Protest, or also the People Power Uprising, organized largely by the university students in Rangoon. It was caused by the country's one-party rule by General Ne Win and Burma was one of the world's most impoverished countries. The protest began on 8 August and ended 18 September where hundred of thousands of students, monks, children, students, housewives, doctors and common people took to the street to protest against the government. The uprising ended on 18 September after a bloody coup and thousands were killed.

On 26 August, Aung San Suu Kyi entered the political arena by addressing to half a million people at Shwedagon Pagoda and at this point she became a symbol for this movement and the western world accepted her immediately. Her background as the daughter General Aung San helped as he was also fighting for democracy during his time. Aung San Suu Kyi urged the crowd not to turn against the army but find peace through non-violence means.

The country entered into martial law to control the widespread protests. The military finalized plans for the election on 31 May 1989 and changed the country's official name from Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma to the Union of Myanmar in 18 June 1989.

Now that Aung San Suu Kyi emerged as a national icon and when the military junta organized another election in 1990, Aung San Suu Kyi and her party, the National League of Democracy won 81% of the seats in the government, in fact it was 392 seats out of 492. It was a landslide. However, the military junta refused to accept the result and continued to rule the country and Aung San Suu Kyi was put under house arrest.

The new capital of Myanmar is Naypyidaw which is located at the Naypyidaw Union Territory. It was an unusual movement of the military junta and is entirely planned outside any state or region. This replaced Yangon as the administrative capital of Myanmar in 2006. One of the decisions for this move was the strong presence of military nearby that could provide stability to those chronically turbulent regions and 320 kilometers away from the old capital, Rangoon. It is also a new city and the inhabitants are still very few compare to older cities like Rangoon and Mandalay.

In August 2007, the famous Saffron Revolution led by thousands of Buddhist monks which was suppressed by the government.

In October 2012, the continuous conflicts in Myanmar included the Kachin conflict, a civil war between the Rohingya Muslims, fight with the non-government group in Rakhine State, conflicts between the Shan, Lahu and Karen minority groups. In additional, al-Qaeda also addressed their involvement with the Muslims there. Border conflicts between the ethnic Chinese rebels and the Myanmar Armed Force also took place in the northeast part.

In this period of time, the country went through the Burmese constitutional referendum of 2008 and part of the referendum was to change the name from Union of Myanmar to Republic of the Union Myanmar, followed by the general election in 2010 and United Nations and a number of Western countries who acted as observers for the elections condemned the whole process as fraudulent. Nevertheless, the military backed Union Solidity and Developing Party declared victory and claimed that it had been favored by 80% of the votes. The military junta was dissolved on 30 March 2011. But the military was still presence although liberal democracy was the purpose for the elections. The transition to democracy was for a quasi-military rule.

Included in the reform was a mixed economy blending the market economies as the country needed for the release from the economic sanctions. This was followed by the release of pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest, established the National Human Rights Commission, granted of general amnesties for more than 200 political prisoners, new labor laws that permitted the form of labor union and strikes, relaxation of press censorship, and regulation of currency practices.

As the result of the post-election reforms, the free world encouraged Myanmar to host the chair for ASEAN in 2014, and the visit of US President Obama and Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton in December 2011. During that visit, Aung San Suu Kyi was presence for meeting and her party, National League for Democracy (NLD) was revived.

But conflicts between the Burmese Army and the local insurgent groups continued and as of July 2013, 100 political prisoners remain imprisoned.

In 1 April 2012, party led by Aung San Suu Kyi, National League for Democracy (NLD) won 43 of the 45 seats and this election was monitored by international representatives.

General elections were held on 8 November 2015 and the results gave NLD the absolute majority of seats in both chambers of the national parliament, but Aung San Suu Kyi was barred from the presidency again due to the constitution. New parliament convened on 1 February 2016 and by 15 March 2016, Hin Kyaw was elected as the first non-military president since the military coup of 1962.

If you look back at the history of Burma, it started the fighting with the British in the 1930s. In the 1940s, it was fighting with the Japanese army during the WWII. The British government allowed the Burmese the Burma Independence Act 1947 and by 4 January 1948 the country was independent.

Followed by the treacherous of the military leaders, the country was fighting until 2012. The fighting continued for 80 years and today the country is still in the hand of the military junta's influence, although it claimed that it is a constitutional republic. Myanmar also has a multiple ethnic group.

Key facts

- Official name - Republic of the Union of Myanmar
- Capital - Naypyidaw
- Government type - Unitary parliamentary constitutional republic
- Population - 53,582,855
- Land area - 678,500 square kilometers
- GDP (nominal) - \$66 billion
 - Per capita - \$1,245
- GDP (PPP) - \$355 billion
 - Per capita - \$6,707

Currency

- US\$1 to 1,470.5 Myanmar Kyat

Geographic and Administrative Divisions



To Myanmar's northwest, it has Chittagong Division of Bangladesh and the various states of India. To its north and northeast, it is bordered to Tibet Autonomous Region and Yunnan of China. To its southeast is has Laos and Thailand. It has 1,930 kilometers of contiguous coastline along the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea to its southwest and the south, which is the quarter of its perimeter.

To its north, the Hengduan Mountains is bordered with China and Hkakabo Razi, the highest point in Myanmar stands at 5,881 meters, and with the many mountain ranges which run from north to south from the Himalayas.

The mountain chains divide Myanmar's three rivers, Irrawaddy River, is the longest river, runs 2,170 kilometers, flows into the Gulf of Martaban. In between the mountain valleys, lies the fertile plains and the majority population of Myanmar lives in the Irrawaddy valley.

Myanmar is the largest of the Mainland Southeast Asian states by its size. It consisted of 14 states and regions, 63 districts, 324 townships, 312 cities and towns, 2,548 wards, 13,742 village tracts and 65,148 villages.

Weather

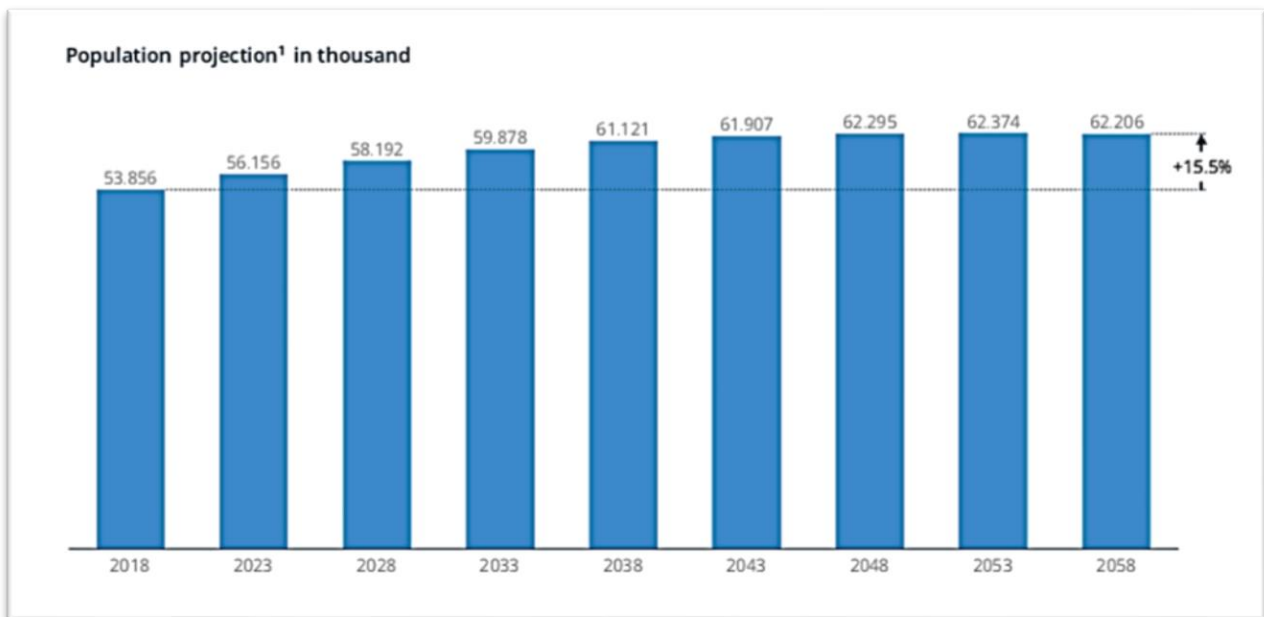
The country lies in between the Tropic of Cancer and the Equator. It is in the monsoon region of Asia with its coastal regions receiving more than 196.9 inches of rain annually. In its delta area it is about 98.4 inches and in its dry area in central Myanmar, it is less than 39.4".

The northern region, where the mountain ranges are, the average temperature is 21° C. The coastal and delta regions, they have the average maximum temperature of 32° C.

Demographics

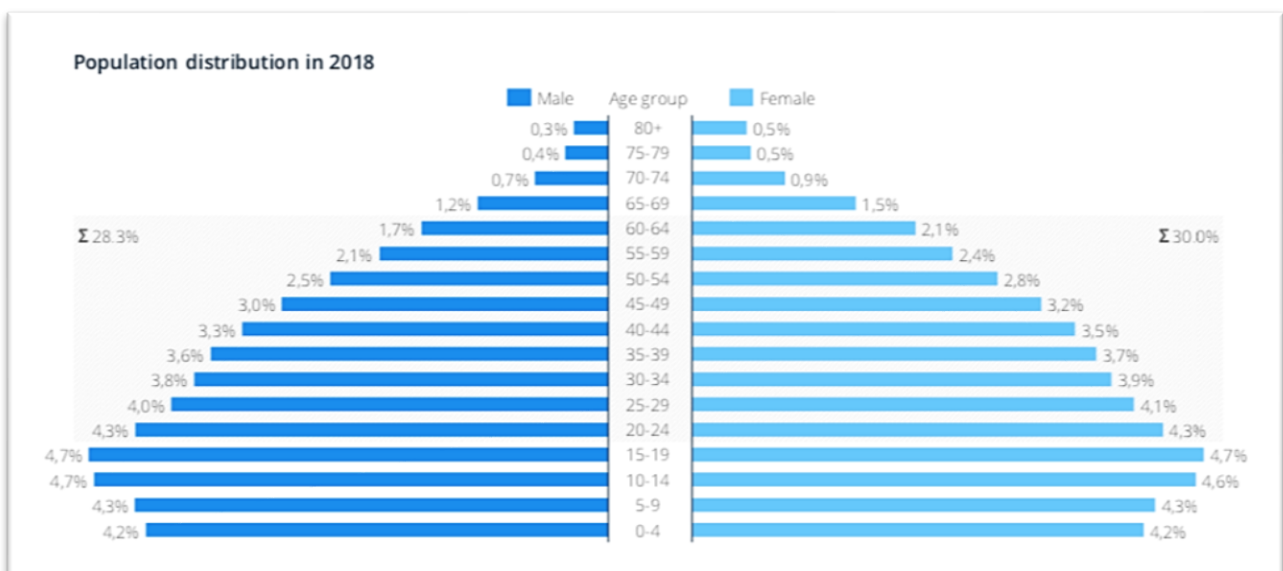
With its population of 53.5 million and a growth of 0.9%, and Yangon has the largest urban area of 5.2 million in population. In Mandalay, it has 1.4 million. Its ethnic groups are: Burman 68%, Shan 9%, Karen 7%, Rakhine 4%, Chinese 3%, Indian 2% and Mon 2%.

With its population growth of 0.9%, it is below the regional average. Myanmar is also the 26th highest total population in the world.



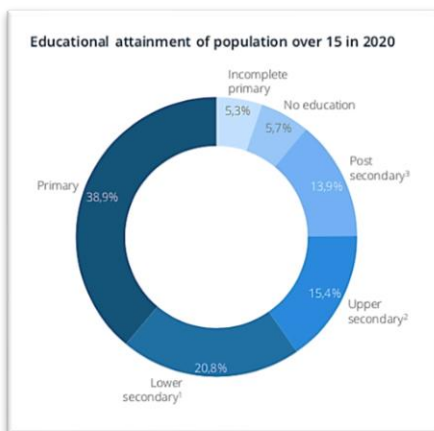
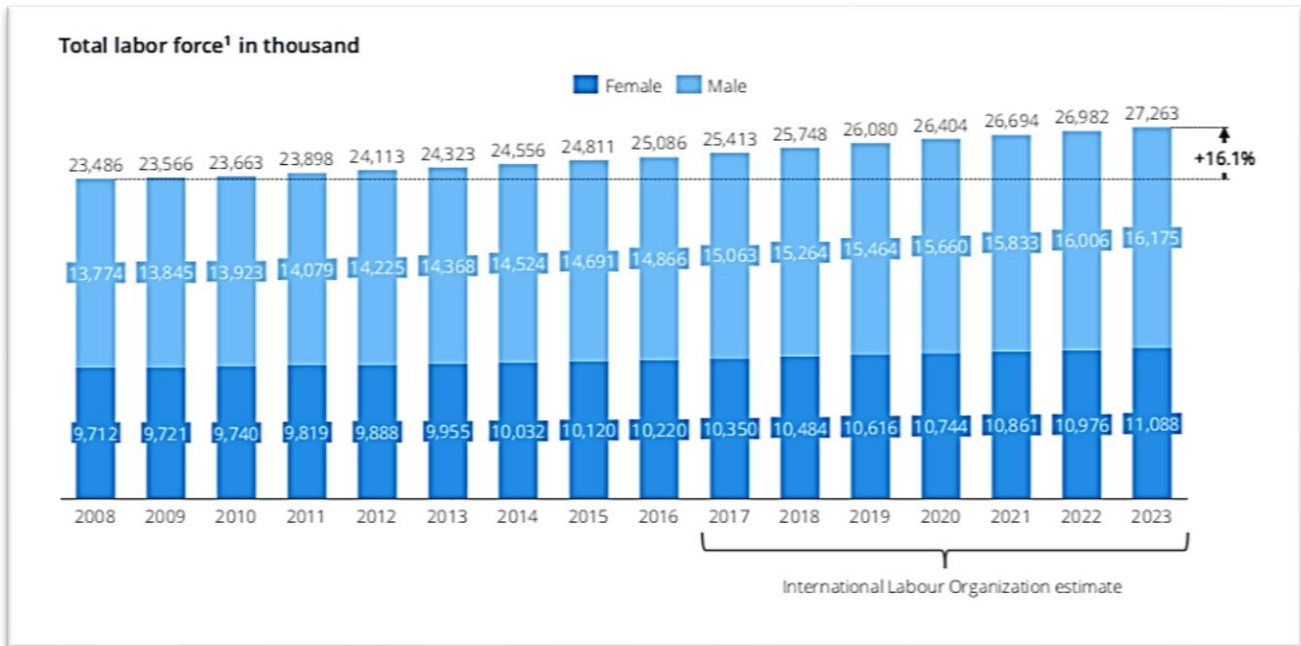
The population has been projected to reach 62.2 million by 2058, which is an increase of 16% from now.

We can refer to the following for the population distribution by sex and by the age group. The core part, from the age of 20 to 64, for the male it is representing 28.3% and for the women it is 30%.



Myanmar, is a medium size country, with its the labor force of 26.404 million in 2020, and compare it with 27.263 million in 2023, the growth is 3.5%. And again, the ratio for the female part is higher than the male.

Myanmar is still a very much agricultural country where close to 50% of the working population in working in the farm. Service industry is about 35% and the remaining 15% is in the manufacturing.



Unlike its neighboring countries like Vietnam and Cambodia, where in Vietnam the labor force is mostly working in the electronics and garment, and Cambodia with its majority in the garment and footwear. Myanmar has only 1 million workforces in the garment business.

The level of education of Myanmar is not higher than the other Southeast Asian countries. Close to 85% have received very minimal education.

The country has a minimum level of human development of 57.8% which ranks #148 in comparison of 189 countries.

Other Facts - Taken from World Almanac 2020

People	Population	56,111,671	
	Age Distribution	<15	26.3%
		65+	5.8%
	Growth	0.9%	
	Urban Population	30.9%	
	Ethnic Group	Burman	

Geography	Total Area	261,228 square miles
	Arable Land	16.70%
	Capital	Yangon (Rangoon)

Major Cities' Population	Nay Pyi Taw (administration)	546,487
	Yangon	5,243,989
	Mandalay	1,405,821

Economy	Industries	Agricultural product
		Wood and Wood product
		Copper
		Tin
		Tungsten
		Iron
		Cement
		Construction materials
		Phamaceuticals
		Fertilizer
	Chief agriculture	Rice
		Pulses
		Beans
		Sesame
		Groundnuts
		Sugarcane
		Fish

Economy	Natural resources	Petroleum	
		Timber	
		Tin	
		Antimony	
		Zinc	
		Copper	
		Tungsten	
		Lead	
		Coal	
		Marble	
		Limestone	
		Precious stones	
		Natural gas	
	Hydropower		
	Labor force	Agricultural	50.1%
		Industry	16%
Services		33.9%	
Unemployment	1.60%		

Finance	GDP (billion)	\$357.8		
	Per capita	\$6,662		
	GDP growth	6.20%		
	Import (billion)	\$15.3	China	31.4%
			Singapore	15.0%
			Thailand	11.1%
			Saudi Arabia	7.5%
			Malaysia	6.2%
			Japan	6.0%
			India	5.5%
	Export (billion)	\$10.10	China	36.5%
			Thailand	21.8%
			Japan	6.6%
Singapore			6.4%	
India			5.9%	
Tourism (billion)	\$2.60			
Budget (billion)	\$11.50			
Inflation	6.9%			

Transportation	Railways	3,126 miles
	Airports	36

Communications	Telephone	1 per 100
	Mobile	113.8 per 100
	Broadband	75.1 per 100
	Internet	30.7%

Health	Expenditure	5.10%	
	Life expectancy	Male	67.3
		Female	70.7
	Births	17.4 per 1,000	
	Death	7.3 per 1,000	
	Infant mortality	33 per 1,000	
	Undernourished	10.6%	
HIV	0.8%		

Education	Compulsory	Age 5-9
	Literacy	75.6%

Religion	Buddhist	76.2%
	Ethnic religionist	8.2%
	Christian	8.0%
	Muslim (Sunni)	3.6%

Language	Burmese
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Economy

Myanmar is one of the poorest nations in Southeast Asia, suffering from decades of stagnation. Myanmar was granted for independence in 1948 and for most of its independent years, the country has been involved in one of the world’s longest-ongoing civil war that led to isolation. The lack of educated workforce hindered its economy with also the corruption of its government linked to smuggling and illegal trade activities that the trade figures are underestimated due to value of goods both smuggled in and out of the countries are all deflated.

Myanmar is also lack of the adequate infrastructure and its railway needs a total overhaul since it was constructed in the late 19th century. Highways are normally unpaved, except in major cities. Otherwise, the goods would have to ship along the Irrawaddy River and the smuggling with Thailand for illegal drugs are taking place.

Countries like the US, Canada and European Union have imposed investment and trade sanctions on Myanmar, but since 2012, the US and Canada have eased most of their sanctions. Today, foreign investment comes from China, Singapore, South Korea, Japan, India and Thailand.

In 2018, Myanmar per capita income was \$1,245 in GDP and per capita was \$6,707 in PPP.

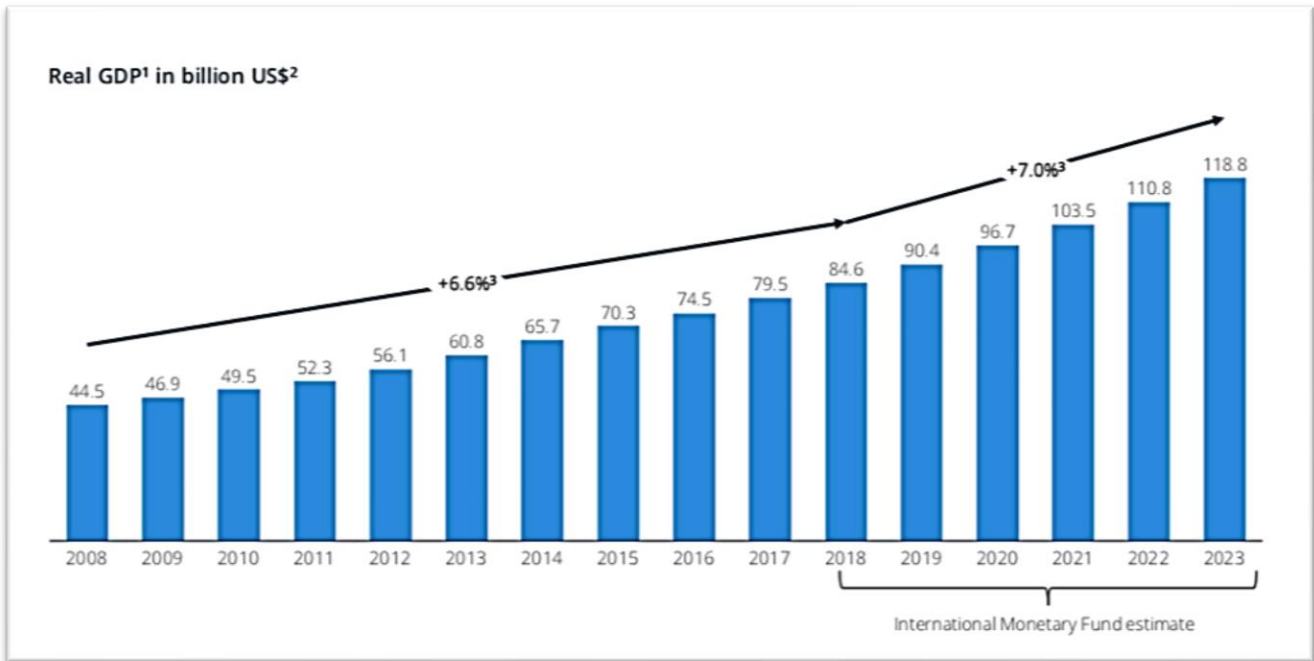
Real GDP per capita¹ in US\$² in 2018

#	Country/region	GDP	#	Country/region	GDP	#	Country/region	GDP	#	Country/region	GDP	#	Country/region	GDP
1	Luxembourg	111,404	30	Slovenia	26,841	59	Turkmenistan	8,561	88	Ukraine	3,086	117	Angola	1,219
2	Norway	99,968	31	South Korea	26,783	60	Uruguay	8,328	89	Guyana	2,976	118	Pakistan	1,003
3	Qatar	82,251	32	Cyprus	25,312	61	Belarus	8,316	90	Armenia	2,804	119	Zimbabwe	992
4	Switzerland	79,567	33	Portugal	24,851	62	South Africa	7,492	91	Albania	2,731	120	Bangladesh	971
5	Ireland	78,275	34	Greece	23,614	63	Dominican Republic	7,336	92	Nigeria	2,422	121	Moldova	949
6	Iceland	67,038	35	Czechia	23,459	64	Botswana	7,081	93	Paraguay	2,416	122	Djibouti	887
7	Australia	64,087	36	Bahrain	23,054	65	Serbia	6,200	94	Azerbaijan	2,363	123	Rwanda	867
8	Denmark	62,543	37	Saudi Arabia	21,062	66	Brazil	6,164	95	Algeria	2,313	124	Laos	864
9	Singapore	56,354	38	Slovakia	20,718	67	Suriname	6,048	96	Venezuela	2,310	125	Cambodia	847
10	Netherlands	55,380	39	Estonia	19,717	68	Montenegro	5,896	97	Georgia	2,191	126	Cameroon	836
11	United States	53,820	40	Oman	17,731	69	Bosnia and Herzegovina	5,746	98	India	2,185	127	Tanzania	834
12	Japan	53,306	41	Lithuania	17,685	70	Argentina	5,418	99	Philippines	1,952	128	Senegal	824
13	Sweden	51,942	42	Chile	16,688	71	Peru	5,326	100	Bhutan	1,947	129	Chad	796
14	Austria	50,150	43	Poland	16,461	72	Colombia	4,868	101	Guatemala	1,936	130	Uganda	747
15	Belgium	49,447	44	Latvia	16,132	73	Jamaica	4,517	102	Vietnam	1,920	131	Gambia	707
16	Finland	48,515	45	Croatia	15,846	74	Indonesia	4,323	103	Libya	1,784	132	Kyrgyzstan	675
17	Germany	48,104	46	Russia	15,217	75	Macedonia	4,314	104	Jordan	1,748	133	Yemen	666
18	Canada	47,558	47	Hungary	13,975	76	Mongolia	4,246	105	Honduras	1,691	134	Ethiopia	663
19	United Kingdom	45,812	48	Turkey	13,816	77	Ecuador	4,217	106	Ivory Coast	1,655	135	South Sudan	662
20	France	44,956	49	Equatorial Guinea	12,049	78	Iraq	4,055	107	Zambia	1,634	136	Mozambique	620
21	Hong Kong (SAR)	43,986	50	Malaysia	11,767	79	Timor-Leste	4,023	108	Nicaragua	1,622	137	Malawi	474
22	Italy	35,294	51	Costa Rica	11,397	80	Tunisia	3,989	109	Myanmar	1,602	138	Burkina Faso	437
23	Israel	34,841	52	Romania	11,346	81	Gabon	3,719	110	Ghana	1,562	139	Mali	433
24	United Arab Emirates	33,829	53	Mexico	10,990	82	Belize	3,632	111	El Salvador	1,504	140	Sierra Leone	433
25	Spain	33,593	54	Panama	10,362	83	Thailand	3,589	112	Bolivia	1,354	141	Nepal	407
26	New Zealand	31,830	55	China (Mainland)	9,771	84	Morocco	3,393	113	Republic of the Congo	1,333	142	Afghanistan	344
27	Brunei Darussalam	31,744	56	Lebanon	9,576	85	Egypt	3,315	114	Sudan	1,329	143	Congo (Dem Rep) ¹	280
28	Kuwait	30,830	57	Kazakhstan	8,772	86	Namibia	3,228	115	Uzbekistan	1,291	144	Tajikistan	261
29	Malta	28,684	58	Bulgaria	8,688	87	Iran	3,132	116	Kenya	1,288	145	Niger	228

For the easy reference, I listed the following countries that are the hot spots for manufacturing in these days. This is referring to the GDP per capita.

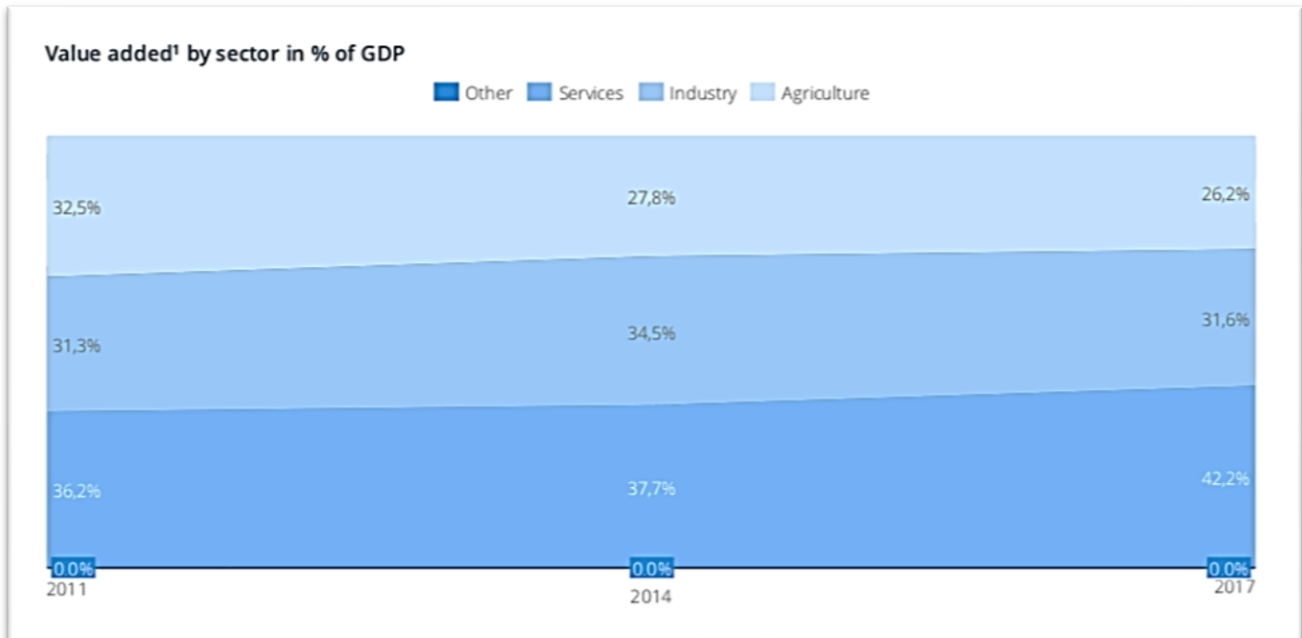
- China - \$9,771
- Indonesia - \$4,323
- Thailand - \$3,589
- India - \$2,185
- Philippines - \$1,952
- Vietnam - \$1,920
- **Myanmar - \$1,602**
- Bangladesh - \$971
- Laos - \$864
- Cambodia - \$847
- Ethiopia - \$663

The country ranked at 109th position for real GDP per capita in 2018. Going forward, Myanmar is expected to grow at 7% per annum.



In Myanmar the value for each sector in the GDP is mapped out as the following:

- Service industry - 26.2%
- Manufacturing industry - 31.6%
- Agricultural industry - 42.2%



The country is still very much an agricultural country and through the collaboration with International Rice Research Institute, modern rice varieties were developed. It was recorded in 2008, the rice production was 50 million tons.

Myanmar is also the world's second largest opium producer and it is also a major source of illegal drugs. Its opium harvest is second to Afghanistan. Under the international pressure, the poppy-farmers stopped growing but they do not have any sustainable sources of income to replace the opium plantation.

It has the world's largest production of methamphetamines. The Golden Triangle, which is a no man's land located between the northeastern part of Myanmar, the Shan State, Thailand and Laos with China as its border. This is where the drug trafficking takes place and it is protected by the corrupted Burmese army.



Myanmar is also famous of its gem stones, those precious stones like rubies, jade stones and sapphires and especially the jades which I recalled the old folks were calling them affectionally as Burmese jade. So that you know Thailand built its world's renowned jewelry industry around the gemstones from Myanmar. Its rubies are known as the pigeon's blood rubies and the blue sapphires. But unfortunately, the mining of the Burmese gems is in deplorable conditions. The use of child labors and the forced labors that the Human Rights Watch urged for a complete ban on the purchase of Burmese gems. The mines are in the hands of the military junta that have kept away the more respectable jewelry companies.

The country is also rich in many ways, minerals, timber, oil and natural gas, agricultural, hydropower. The Myanmar Engineering Society has identified at least 39 locations capable of geothermal power production close to Yangon. There is a significant untapped resource for electrical production.

Tourism is not booming although there are many interesting places that can turn into the tourist attractions. Many of the regions are still sealed off to the public as it is still a very much military controlled state.

Many Burmese, over 600,000 of the registered workers are working in Thailand. There could be a million more illegally there.

On 23 June 1997, Myanmar joined the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

The Textiles and Garment Industry in Myanmar



Currently the country has 1.1 million workers working in garment, textiles, footwear and accessories in factories in Myanmar. It is a \$3 billion business that is mainly shipping to Europe and Japan.



The industry is organized by the Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association (MGMA) and it admits that Myanmar is still small comparing with its neighboring countries. It is inadequate in infrastructure once you go out from Yangon. Its banking system is underdeveloped. There is the lack of the international sourcing companies in Myanmar. The people are reluctant to go there because the human right is still an issue in Myanmar.

Historically, Myanmar has a relatively strong textile base, but in the old world where garment manufacturing was restricted to the tailor shops and limited to the domestic needs. And also, their traditional longyis, the Burmese traditional dress. But the biggest volume would have to deal with the uniforms, whether they are for the army, government employees or student uniforms, those are for the mass production. But everything was nationalized in the 1960s and still until today, the textile is still operating under the government.



It was only after the lifting of sanctions, the garment industry started to become the driving force for the manufacturing sector.

MGMA has more than 600 companies joined as members. And because of the rising of the production cost in China, the market has rushed over to Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia and Myanmar. With no exception, the abuse and harassment in the workplace is happening in every one of these countries. The International Labor Organization (ILO) and the NGOs are trying to mitigate, educate and hopefully to end this. But when you have a majority of female workers in this industry, in most cases it is over 90%, and some of the situations are difficult to avoid. All this is very counterproductive, and the preventive action will need to be topped down.



I am using the information that I gathered from the European Chamber of Commerce in Myanmar to make to you the following report. You are welcome to visit the website: www.eurocham-myanmar.org for full information.



Because of the lack of textile specialization, the country is still restricted only to “Cut-Make-Pack” process. This CMP is carried out in the garment factories where the materials and trims are provided before-hand by the buyers. The factories are only responsible for cutting, assembling and packing. They are also given the responsibility of shipping. Myanmar has a large pool of unskillful labors and they can be trained for the sewing and other relating activities. But the garment manufacturing is still dominated by woven products which is because of its

background with its domestic market.

According to MGMA, half of the existing garment factories are located in Yangon, they are concentrated in the Hlaing Thayar industrial zone and the Thilawa Special Economic Zone, and they are 25 kilometers south of Yangon. The Kyaukpyu Special Economic Zone is in Rakhine State is still under development. This project is led by Chinese investors.

Some international brands who are outsourcing in Myanmar are:

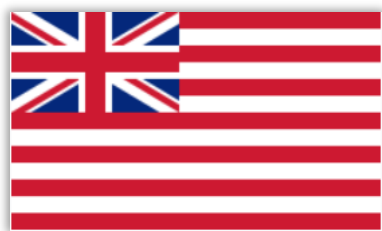
- Primark since 2012
- H&M since 2013
- C&A, New Look, Gap in 2014
- Muji in 2015

Myanmar has the privilege to foreign markets through the trade agreements, especially with EU and the trade is done through the Generalized Scheme of Preferences (GSP). Myanmar also enjoys duty-free exports with Japan. Its membership in the ASEAN also helps its trade with Korea and China. Its minimum wage for 8-hour work is not more than \$4 but its low productivity is a threat to its competitiveness. The shortage of electricity will need the backup generator to allow it to catch the shipment. The transportation system once going out of Yangon is becoming a problem. The limited coverage of internet is having a negative effect on the communication. According to the report, only 31.7% can have access to internet.

Foreign investors can allow to own 100% of the business enterprise. There are tax exemptions for different promoted regions and also promoted sectors. It takes 14 days to start a business in Myanmar. Good luck to your endeavor in Myanmar.



Conclusion



When Myanmar was under the British administration, it was the second-wealthiest country in Southeast Asia. It was at one time the world's largest exporter of rice. It was one of the earliest crude oil producers. It produced 75% of the world's teak wood. It even had a highly literate population.

All these were given away because of the WWII and the Burmese destroyed their oil wells, their mines of tungsten, tin, lead and silver to keep them away from the Japanese hand. The country was bombed by both sides. After the country gained independence, it was in ruins with its major infrastructure totally destroyed.

After the independence, it was poorly managed by the government, and then followed by the social unrest which led to the political and economic struggle that brought decades of civil war. Once the country leaned toward socialism, it brought the country further backward.

Myanmar has a bad record for the human rights as the military leaders have been accused for genocide over their acts against Rohingya Muslim. Earlier on the case was brought to the United Nations and The US and the Western nations accused China and Russia for using their veto power in the UN Security Council to scuttle punitive action against Myanmar. China and Russia further urged for stopping the calling of Myanmar's military command to appear before the International Criminal Court in Hague. Although China offered to facilitate talks between Myanmar and Bangladesh, where more than 700,000 Rohingya fled across the border and to assure their safe return, but there were no signs of progress.

China's fear of the UN's involvement would set a precedent for their involvement in other border issues in the long running conflicts between Myanmar's military and the rebel groups along the Chinese border. Ethnic conflicts have been common along the Chinese border and China would like to solve it by themselves and not to involve the international interference.

Myanmar is also part of the Belt & Road Initiatives and the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor is a multibillion-dollar project that allows China to put its anchor by the Indian Ocean port at Kyaukpyu, which is the Rohingyas' home state of Rakhine. The invested amount was so big that the authorities in Myanmar were pressing it to scale back and worried that the country would be too indebted to China. There are further discussions about new roads, high-speed rail and industrial zones. Beijing has a long list for Myanmar but Myanmar's leaders are wary of China and quid pro quo would certainly be found.

Beijing has always been playing the role of the diplomatic protector for Myanmar in the past decades. The notorious military leaders were shunned by the West for resisting democracy and were confining Aung San Suu Kyi, then an opposition leader, under house arrest for 10 years. With Aung San Suu Kyi's release in 2010, Myanmar started to court with Western nations.

China remains as Myanmar's trading partner and the Chinese companies are responsible for a quarter of Myanmar's foreign direct investment.



Aung San Suu Kyi, the country's de facto leader, started as the party leader of the National League of Democracy, since then her party won the election and took 86% of the seats in the Assembly of the Union but she was prohibited to become the president because of her late husband and the two children are foreign citizens, she became the State Counsellor.

Aung San Suu Kyi turned into a politician on 8 August, 1988, also known as the 8-8-88 Uprising and during that day she was watching the TV with her mother. Soon she became the diplomat, author and Nobel Peace Prize laureate. She is now the first and incumbent State Counsellor of Myanmar. She is also the leader of the National League

for Democracy and she was the force behind to lead the state to transform from military junta to partial democracy.

Since she took the role as the State Counsellor, she was being criticized for her alleged inaction in response to the genocide of the Rohingya people in Rakhine State. Under her leadership, Myanmar was also condemned for prosecutions of journalists.

On 10 December, Aung San Suu Kyi arrived in Hague, to appear in the International Court of Justice to defense against genocide allegation. She gave this as the support to her political party support and created herself as the protector of the nation's honor.

United Nation's human-rights group alleged that violence since 2017, the Myanmar government backed the military's operation in Rohingya with the Buddhist-majority and committed genocide against Rohingya-minority. The military forced 700,000 Rohingya men, women and children to flee for the neighboring Bangladesh and resulted to live in refugee camps.



Also, a fact-finding team from United Nations have gathered testimonials of indiscriminate shootings of fleeing villages, gangrape of women and burning the whole Rohingya villages.

Back home, in the city of Yangon, hundreds of people rallied and chanted for this appearing of Aung San Suu Kyi to defend the genocide act for the dignity and the country's image in Hague. This lawsuit was brought by Gambia, a Western African country as a party to the 1948 Genocide Convention which deals with the crime under international law and alleged Myanmar accountable for its "genocide act" against its own people, the Rohingya, as the minority. The hearing would last three days.

Myanmar government does not consider the Rohingya as an indigenous race, but an illegal immigrant from the neighboring Bangladesh. This matter has been in dispute for a very long time.

Aung San Suu Kyi has put her interest for her political party as the election in next year. Either she can restore herself the honor of a Nobel laureate or she can continue to damage her image once seen as a human-rights icon fighting for democracy in a country under military rule.

During the hearing process Aung San Suu Kyi had not condemned the same Myanmar's military junta who put her under house arrest 30 years ago.



From my observation that Aung San Suu Kyi has a very difficult side to take. At this time of her age where her political life is limited. Threading herself between the human right activists and the military junta is not going to please anyone. This is also the picture of Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon where it witnessed so many demonstrations. It was Aung San Suu Kyi addresses half a million Burmese in her first speech when she decided to join the politics.

It also made me sad to read that Myanmar once had its days of glory but the greediness of human nature made the country to be the last, or almost the very last in every comparison that I read. You can refer to the following:

- Lowest real GDP per capita 109 out of 145
- Operational risk 127 out of 150 in the world, 17 out of 19 in East Asia and Pacific
- Level of human development 148 out of 189
- Internet penetration 113 out of 149
- Rule of law 174 out of 214
- Control of corruption 95 out of 150
- Regulatory quality 169 out of 214
- Risks from political instability and threat of violence or terrorism 125 out of 150

Because of the weakness in controlling corruption, the drug is a big problem for Myanmar to solve. It is also the world's largest producer of methamphetamines and in this respect, it is the world's enemy. This also leads to the high risk of political instability and threat of violence of terrorism.