**World outlook in 2021**

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The year 2020 was marked with unprecedented chaos, unthinkable confusion, and unparalleled commotion. The pandemic that spread across the world compelled entire continents to experience a lockdown—a sight we never thought to witness. From Europe to Asia; from North America to Australia; the world was shell shocked when people began falling ill because of the virus and losing the battle of life. Strict SOPs including social distancing measures, using hand sanitisers and wearing masks became a part of our lifestyle. This lifestyle, however, was without the freedom of enjoying get togethers at restaurants or family events and socialising with peers and colleagues at the office. The new normal, as the world calls it, soon enveloped us. The concept of work-from-home became the modus operandi as online video calls replaced board room meetings and the same happened to how faculty members interacted with their students; from the comfort of their home as physical classes were suspended.

[Global COVID deaths up 60% in last 6 weeks: WHO chief](https://nation.com.pk/12-Dec-2020/global-covid-deaths-up-60-percent-in-last-6-weeks-who-chief)

Now as we are in the last month of 2020—a year that we wished never arrived—we need to look to the future. It is hard to predict what will happen in 2021, but some analysis can be shared. The new normal will continue to be our motto and routine as we enter 2021. Meetings, interviews, discussions, and debates will be held through online video calling applications. Webinars, seminars, workshops, and conferences will be held digitally. While this has limited our interaction with colleagues, it has reduced organisational costs as well. Moreover, such online events can be witnessed by a global audience and do receive traction on digital and social media. Such virtual events will continue to be held as the second wave of COVID-19 is gaining strength across the world.

While talking about the new normal, we must keep an eye on the ‘Great Reset’. It is a proposal to restructure the world economy presented by the World Economic Forum (WEF).

Interestingly, it was presented in May 2020, almost two to three months after the countries began going into a lockdown. It was proposed by Prince Charles and Klaus Schwab, Director of WEF.

[Pakistan reports 2,729 new coronavirus cases in one day](https://nation.com.pk/12-Dec-2020/coronavirus-kills-71-pakistanis-infects-2-729-in-one-day)

According to the Great Reset, such policies will be implemented that will enhance capitalism through investments targeted towards environmental projects. The proposal gained a backlash as nearly 80,000 people in less than 72 hours signed a petition against implementing such a policy.

Where the Great Reset will take the world in terms of socio-economic, environmental, and political progress is yet to be seen. What matters is that the powers that be do not use the pandemic to their unfair advantage.

At the political and diplomatic forefront, the year 2021 may witness the forging of new relations and mending of old ties. China and South Korea signed the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) recently that may bolster their ties. However, this equation may change if US President-elect Joe Biden’s policies bring South Korea closer to Washington and take it farther away from China. Where China and the US had a turbulent relationship under Donald Trump’s era, they will certainly try to create new grounds to co-exist in a changing world. Two countries that did not have a diplomatic relationship until now were Bhutan and Germany. The two countries, having a distinct socio-political structure, aim to strengthen their newly developed ties when Ambassador of Bhutan Maj. Gen. Vestop Namgyel and Ambassador of Germany Walter Lindner, met at the Royal Bhutanese Embassy in New Delhi recently. Time will tell what exchange of resources and ideas these countries will experience. Similarly, Saudi Arabia formally established relations with Zimbabwe intending to expand the mutual corporation. One must wonder what interest will Germany and Saudi Arabia have in Bhutan and Zimbabwe respectively. Either it will be to tap into natural resources or to use them as a shield against their regional adversaries. The year 2021, therefore, will be a year when people, societies, communities, and nations will try to adjust to the new normal and in circumstances never experienced before. From the change in the US Administration to the rolling out of the COVID-19 vaccine, the social, economic, and political changes will continue to happen in 2021.