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MYANMAR JUNTA TRASHES AUNG SAN SUU KYI'S PARTY AS ELECTION RACE PICKS UP PACE

One can sense the Myanmar generals ensconced in Nay-pyitaw had smirks on their faces on at the end of last month as they oversaw the trashing of their opponents' main political party, the National League for Democracy or NLD.

With the NLD party leader Aung San Suu Kyi effectively jailed for life, the military generals believe they have put the final nail in the coffin of political opposition to military rule by using their Union Election Commission (UEC) to dissolve the party, and 39 other parties, including the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD) that said it would not re-register, setting the scene for a planned election tentatively lined up for later this year or next year with the hope that a "military-leaning party" will win.

March 28 was the deadline for political party registration or re-registration. The UEC has made it hard for political parties to register. And the NLD said it would not re-register and take part in what they call a "sham election".

In simple terms, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and his cohorts are hoping the pro-military Union Solidarity and Development Party or USDP will come out top in their poll and place a democratic fig-leaf on military rule, with enough foreign governments tipping their hat to the new status quo.

With Aung San Suu Kyi incommunicado - locked up in a small house without her dog and servants, forgotten about, as far as the generals are concerned - the men in green hope their election and themilitary-written 2008 Constitution - plus "shock-and-awe" aerial bombing campaigns and ground offensives - will put paid to the opposition who Min Aung Hlaing labeled "terrorists" in his Armed Forces Day speech this week.

But all this has set the scene for chaos going forward, both sides entrenched in a battle for survival.

Min Aung Hlaing has yet again not realized the strength of the will of the people. In retrospect, his coup did not result in the scenario he had hoped for - protest and then a sullen acceptance - and now he is pushing ahead with a process that Myanmar people and many in the international community view as not only illegitimate but also highly disruptive.

Under the banner of the Spring Revolution the National Unity Government (NUG), People's Defence Forces and Ethnic Revolutionary Organizations are pulling out the stops to take on the Myanmar junta both militarily and politically, with growing support from a number of Western governments, in terms of sanctions and calls for a resolution of the conflict.

This pushback is not going to be pretty. Even the NUG is warning about the fallout if election workers are attacked and killed, with the concern that this might tarnish the opposition. Yet the Spring Revolutionaries will more than likely seek to scupper any attempt at an orderly national poll. At the same time, there are indications that the junta will step up its "fighting season" offensives and bombing attacks ahead of the monsoon season.

Clearly, the buck stops with the military junta. They are the ones who executed the illegal coup. And they are therefore responsible and hopefully will be able to be held accountable for their crimes.

That said, this is both a battle for survival and a battle for the heart of Myanmar. After decades of military rule, the Spring Revolution seeks to once and for all get rid of the rot at the centre of the Golden Land.

EDITORIAL

mizzima
WEEKLY

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MIZZIMA MAGAZINE

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Cover of Ta'ang National Liberation Army fighters in northern Shan State.
Photo: AFP

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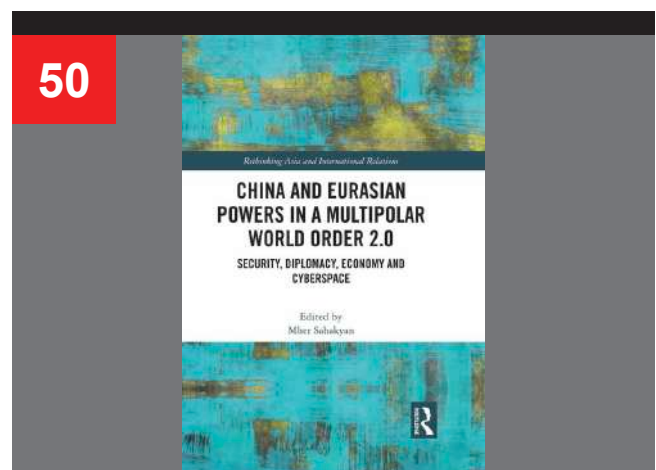
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FINALIST



Khin Ye Yupar
MYANMAR TEA LEAF

MYANMAR COMPANY OUTREACH

Khin Ye Yupar of Myanmar Tea Leaf speaks at a promotional event at the 2023 Bar & Restaurant Expo and World Tea Expo Devan Shah Tea Tycoons contest at the Las Vegas Convention Center on March 28 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Photo: AFP

OVER 300 MYANMAR ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS ARRESTED IN MARCH IN THAILAND

Over 300 Myanmar migrants have been arrested in Thailand in March as illegal immigrants.

According to the data compiled on the arrests of these illegal immigrants by the news media in Thailand, most of them entered Thailand to seek jobs and some intended to go to Malaysia through Thailand.

The Thai media reported that Thai authorities arrested 43 Myanmar migrant workers along with a Thai driver found on a bus in Nakhon Pathom Province in Thailand on 22 March.

These 43 migrant workers were on their way to a coconut warehouse in Bankhon Mae village, Damnoen

Saduak District, Ratchaburi Province from the coconut warehouse in Nakhon Pathom Province when they were arrested.

Moreover, Thai authorities raided and searched a 4-storied building in Mae Pa village, Mae Sod on 22 March where Myanmar nationals were staying and then they questioned all the people found there and finally they took two Myanmar youths into custody.

The people staying in that area said that the Thai authorities questioned over 100 Myanmar nationals found there but not arrested them. They took away only two young boys along with some material found there with them.

Many people fled to Thailand after the coup in Myanmar and about 50,000 of them are reportedly taking refuge in Mae Sod and nearby areas.

Myanmar permanent representative to UN Kyaw Moe Tun said that about half of the population of Myanmar was under the poverty line after the coup and the women and girls were facing the danger of being trafficked.

About 1.6 million people became internally displaced persons (IDPs) and over 17.6 million need humanitarian assistance, he added.

Almost every day Myanmar nationals are arrested on the Thai-Myanmar border when they tried to enter Thailand illegally to seek a job. NGOs working for Myanmar migrant workers said that most of them were lured by the agents with lucrative job offers and then these workers were trafficked by these agents and brokers.

AIRBNB SUSPENDS HOSTING OF ALL LODGINGS IN MYANMAR DUE TO STRICT FOREIGNER STAY LAWS

Airbnb, the US-based accommodation booking site, has suspended hosting of all lodgings in Myanmar in response to the country's strict laws prohibiting foreigners from staying in unregistered hotels and guesthouses, reports TTR Weekly.

Airbnb sent out email notices to hosts in Myanmar informing them that their listings and reservations are no longer available, and that their listings will no longer appear on Airbnb's platform. However, the hosts will still have access to the details of past reservations and payment transactions.

According to Airbnb, their local business in Myanmar consisted of only a small number of active listings, as their pool of potential hosts is limited to registered hotels and guesthouses due to the strict laws in the country.

In contrast, other booking services such as Agoda, Expedia, and Booking.com continue to feature Myanmar hotels, with online payments possible using international credit cards.

However, popular travel websites caution that it is illegal to host foreigners in private homes or offer short-term rentals to tourists in Myanmar, with violators facing up to three years in jail. Only permanent residents and foreigners holding business visas are permitted to rent apartments or houses.

JUNTA ELECTION COMMISSION OFFICE IN YANGON BOMBED

A remote-controlled bomb was detonated at the junta Election Commission office near to Shwe Lin Ban Bridge in eastern Hlaing Thar Yar Township, Yangon Region, at 7:50 pm on 25 March.

The attack was carried out by the Hlaing Thar Yar Region Defense Force (HRDF), according to a statement by the group.

It said that HRDF attacked the office because it finds the election completely unacceptable. It added that if the junta continues to disregard the people's voices, it will carry out more aggressive attacks.

A resident who lives close to the blast site said: "I heard a loud bomb explosion last night. Because it was night time I did not know what the sound was. This morning I found out that the Election Commission Office had been attacked. Because it was at night I don't think there were any casualties."

As of the time of reporting, there were no re-

ports of casualties following the bomb blast.

The HRDF has warned members of the public not to go near any junta offices and pro-junta informers as they are targeting them and attacking anything and anyone to do with the junta.

Mizzima tried phoning the Election Commission to get further information about the attack, but the phone call was not answered.

It has been widely acknowledged by people inside and outside Myanmar that the upcoming elections being organised by the junta will not be free or fair.

A political analyst who wishes to remain anonymous said: "Everyone knows that the election this regime will hold cannot be fair. Many people do not want this unfair election, as it could officially legitimize the military's puppet government. Because of this, there may be more attacks in the future."

HOUSEHOLDS FROM TAUNG NYO DAM AREA IN BAGO ONLY ALLOWED TO BUY 4KG OF RICE

Myanmar junta soldiers have restricted people living in villages near to Taung Nyo Dam in Bago Region's Nattalin Township to buying 2 pyi (approximately 5.11 litres or about 4.1kg) of rice per household.

The people from those villages often go to the markets in Taung Nyo and Nattalin Townships. To get there they have to go through the small port of Magpyin, where junta troops have stationed themselves and are searching villagers returning from the markets.

A villager from Kwinkyel Village, one of the affected villages, said: "One household can only buy two pyi of rice. It's been going on for almost one week. If people are going to the market, they must take a boat from Magyipin's small port. It takes about 30 minutes to drive from the villages to the port. The harbor is patrolled by army soldiers. If you buy more than two pyi of rice, it is confiscated. It's not only rice, other products are also being checked and seized at their discretion."

The villager added: "There used to be about 20 soldiers at the port before but they have recently

increased in number. They only allow villagers to buy two Pyi of rice. The main reason for this is because they accuse the villagers of supporting the resistance forces [based] in the Shan Yoma mountain range [also known as the Shan Highlands] if they have extra food."

There are about 13 villages in the area of the Taung Nyo Dam. They include Kwinkyel, Thanpayarkhon, Sinswell Ywarma, Yonekone, Kyetmanet, and Kwaegyí.

A Yonekone Villager said: "Army soldiers took chickens and ducks from village homes. They're still doing it. They also beat people and accuse them of being connected with PDFs."

Martial law has been declared in Nattalin Township and there has been frequent fighting between defence forces and the junta army in the area around the Taung Nyo Dam.

MANIPUR GOVERNMENT TO ISSUE MYANMAR REFUGEES WITH TEMPORARY ID CARDS

A camp will be built for Myanmar refugees in Manipur State, India and they will be issued with temporary ID cards, according to the Burma Refugee Committee Kabaw Valley (BRCK).

The Manipur Government decided to issue Myanmar refugees temporary ID cards after meeting with representatives of BRCK and Myanmar refugees on

26 March.

The temporary ID cards, which will be issued to all Myanmar refugees who have fled the military coup and are sheltering in Manipur, will show the holder's name, age, place of origin and current place of residence in Manipur.

BRCK asked the Manipur Government to allow the refugees to stay until the revolution in Myanmar succeeds and also asked if

the government can supply aid to the refugees.

A camp will be built for the Myanmar refugees and Manipur Government officials will be responsible for the camp's construction, electricity supply, healthcare, education, and security.

BRCK is assisting Myanmar refugees the Manipur districts of Tengenoupal, Chandel and Kamjong.

TWO NAYPYITAW PDF FIGHTERS ARRESTED BEFORE THEY CAN ATTACK ARMED FORCES DAY PARADE

Two people's defence force (PDF) fighters who were planning an attack on the junta's 28 March Naypyitaw Armed Forces Day parade were arrested by junta soldiers on 24 March.

The news was reported by Captain Tayza, the commander of Naypyitaw PDF who said that the two captured PDF fighters were being interrogated by junta soldiers at the Ywartaw Investigation Centre.

The two PDF soldiers had been planning to attack the parade using 107mm mortars.

"I believe they were being followed through their phones. Our members' phone numbers were leaked three or four days ago.

I later learned that two of them had been arrested by the Military Council", said Captain Tayza.

He added that since the men's arrests, the remaining members of Naypyitaw PDF had fled to liberated areas.

The junta media outlet, MRTV, said that the two men were arrested after "responsible citizens" reported them to the authorities.

According to MRTV, two 107 mm mortars, one pistol, one sniper scope, one MG-1 grenade, four hand grenades, one home-made landmine, 146 cartridges, 16 detonators, 800 grams of gunpowder, and ammunition were seized.

MTRTV also reported that Sein Lwin (aka) Maung Sein was apprehended with ammunition near Aweiyar Dam, in Zee Phyu Pin village, in Naypyitaw's Pyinmana Township on the morning of 24 March.

According to Sein Lwin's testimony, Win Myo Htet (aka) Win Noe was arrested at his home in Zee Phyu Pin village, also in Pyinmana Township, on the afternoon of 24 March.

According to reports junta soldiers are now looking for the Naypyitaw PDF commander Captain Tayza and the junta has branded him a terrorist.

12-YEAR-OLD KILLED BY UNPROVOKED JUNTA ARTILLERY FIRE IN SAGAING

A 12-year-old child was killed and 12 people were injured by unprovoked junta artillery fire on Sai Pyin Town, in Sagaing Region, on 27 March.

According to locals a military column that was staying in Sai Pyin Police Station started firing artillery at houses in Sai Pyin's No. 6 Ward at around 7:00 p.m. on 27 March.

The junta soldiers fired five rounds of artillery into No 6 Ward. They killed one child, injured 12 people and destroyed

seven houses.

Three of the injured, including two family members of the murdered child, are in a critical condition.

A member of a Sai Pyin based social assistance organisation said: "Army soldiers frequently fire unprovoked into civilian areas. I heard that the deceased child's family members were also injured, and that their homes were damaged."

Fierce fighting between defence forces and junta soldiers

had started in Sai Pyin Town at 3:30 p.m. on 28 March, according to residents of Sai Pyin.

The junta has made no comment about the incident.

More than 130 military personnel are currently stationed at Sai Pyin police station. Their presence has caused residents to flee from 13 nearby villages, including Thetyetkaung, Kyaukphyar, Eain yar, Ywar Shal, Shwe Darkan, Gwepinkone, Shantaw, and Tawlal.

TWO ATTACKS ON YANGON TRAFFIC POLICE IN ONE DAY

There were two grenade attacks on junta traffic police in Yangon City on the morning of 28 March.

The attacks took place at two police traffic inspection points in Tamwe and Hlaing townships, some of the most crowded areas of Yangon these areas are congested with traffic and have a variety of shops, markets and shopping centers.

According to the Special Task Agency of Burma (STA) urban guerrilla force, which was involved in the attacks, police officers at both of the attacked inspection points had been extorting money from drivers.

A group of police officers that was inspecting vehicles and extorting money from drivers in East Horse Racing Road, in Tamwe Township was attacked with grenades at 10.05 a.m. on 28 March.

Police Officer Su Sandi Soe, a female traffic police officer, was injured when she was hit in the shoulder by shrapnel from the explosion. Police Sergeant Tin Min and Police Corporal Aung Ko Ko Tun were unharmed.

"Three traffic officers and one soldier were inspecting the vehicles. A grenade was thrown at them whilst they were clearing traffic on the road. The female traf-

fic police officer had to be taken away in an emergency vehicle", said a person who witnessed the incident.

A short while later, at 10:30 a.m. the STA guerrilla force carried a grenade attack on a group of police officers inspecting vehicles on Bayintnaung Road in Hlaing Township. There were no reports of damage.

SHAM

Dangers posed by Myanmar junta election





With so many active armed groups in Myanmar, it will be hard for the junta to hold a viable election. Photo: AFP

Fears have been voiced over the Myanmar junta's preparations to hold "stage-managed" elections, with tensions rising and the danger the conflict in the country will worsen dramatically.

The International Crisis Group (ICG) has just issued a report entitled: "A Road to Nowhere: The Myanmar Regime's Stage Managed Elections" on 28 March – a day after the Myanmar junta held a celebration of Armed Forces Day in Naypyitaw – warning of the dangers of holding an illegal poll that will not represent the will of the people.

The military regime in Myanmar has started laying the groundwork for elections, passing a new party registration law and updating the voter list. But with most of the country engulfed in civil war, and most citizens opposed to the poll, no regime-run vote can be viewed as credible. Critics claim it is a sham.

Myanmar's most popular party, the National League for Democracy (NLD), is boycotting the process, with many of its leadership including Aung San Suu Kyi and former president Win Myint in jail, sentenced to lengthy terms, hiding in the country, or in exile.

The deadline for new political parties to reg-

ister ran out on 28 March, after which no new parties can take part in the process and those parties that did not re-register have been dissolved, according to the junta.

The NLD has been outlawed by the junta and party representatives have told the media that their party will not participate in the sham election.

What is clear, states the ICG report, is that the stage-managed elections will trigger escalated violence, with the regime using the polls as a pretext for intensifying its counter-insurgency operations. It will likely respond to any boycott with repression. In addition, ethnic armed organisations and resistance groups have threatened to disrupt the polls, with some already reportedly killing voter list enumerators.

ICG is calling on Western and regional actors that have tools or channels for influencing Naypyitaw to press the junta not to impose elections by force, and send a strong message that polls are illegitimate and withhold electoral support. At the same time, they are calling on the National Unity Government (NUG) – the parallel or opposition government - to unambiguously oppose resistance attacks on electoral targets.



POLITICAL FAÇADE

So, what is the façade of democracy that the junta is trying to paper over their illegal rule?

The Myanmar junta, which grabbed power in a coup on 1 February 2021, is pushing ahead with plans to hold national elections, under a façade of legitimacy, seeking to install a pro-military civilian government, having ousted the duly-elected NLD-led government that won the 2020 polls that was so publicly popular.

The junta initially talked of holding the national poll in August of this year but on 1 February 2023, the second anniversary of the coup, the regime unexpectedly, and unconstitutionally, extended the state of emergency by a further six months.

The junta claims the elections will bring in a return to civilian rule, but every indication is that it wants to enshrine its own political pre-eminence in the country. Its template remains the military-drafted 2008 Constitution, which provides as one of its “basic principles” for the military to play the “leading political role” in Myanmar. The coup was intended not to overturn this constitutional order, but to remove Aung San Suu Kyi and the NLD from the political landscape, in favour of the military’s vision of sharing power with a civilian administration deferential to its prerogatives. This comes



Junta leader Min Aung Hlaing appears to be playing games as he pushes ahead with an election. Photo: AFP

under the rubric of what the military terms “disciplined democracy”.

The elections are intended to achieve this outcome, rather than to be any kind of exercise for channelling the will of the people.

As the report notes, the problem for junta leader Senior General Min Aung Hlaing is that his personal interests do not fully align with the military’s institutional objectives. The 2008 Constitution was designed to prevent the emergence of a solitary autocrat, dividing authority between the commander-in-chief and the president, who cannot be the same person. But Min Aung Hlaing does not want to share power. Thus, if he aspires to be president, he must be sure that his replacement as commander-in-chief will do his bidding. If he stays on as commander-in-chief, he will need to install a president who will act as his proxy. To do that, he will need full control of the military’s chosen electoral vehicle, the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), which in the NLD’s absence, is positioned to dominate the polls.

The extension of the state of emergency, and corresponding election delay, suggest that Min Aung Hlaing is not yet confident in his plans for the post-election period. He may foresee major competition for the top job, probably a more significant consideration than the prevailing insecurity, his stated reason for putting off the vote.

Even with more time to prepare, the regime undoubtedly faces huge challenges in rolling out elections. Given the extent of popular opposition to the polls, the military will have to impose them by force – pacifying areas of the country where its hold is tenuous, attempting to deter attacks on electoral targets, and intimidating poll workers and voters into participating. Resistance groups, determined to disrupt the vote, have already killed enumerators in service of that goal. The lead-up to the polls will almost certainly see a further increase in violence and instability.

DILEMMA FOR NUG

The NUG thus faces a dilemma. As the main anti-regime political force, it logically wants to express its strong opposition to the elections by encouraging a popular boycott and condemning anyone who participates in or supports the polls. That, however, could be seen as endorsing violence by armed resistance groups against electoral targets, making it easier for the regime – and countries that want to normalise relations with it – to cast the opposition as “terrorists”.

Although the NUG does not have control over many resistance groups, as the opposition’s apex political body its reputation could be damaged by their actions.

The report argues that the NUG should therefore issue as soon as possible a set of principles governing dissent from the regime's elections, stating unambiguously that no one should attack electoral targets.

NO TO FOREIGN SUPPORT

ICG suggests that no foreign government or electoral organisation should provide support for the elections, which the regime would cite as evidence that its polls are legitimate. Foreign governments need to take clear public positions that the conditions are not in place for credible elections.

Western countries appear to be already convinced, but others, particularly those in Asia that are anxious to move on from the Myanmar crisis, may be inclined to consider the polls a step toward restoring constitutional rule.

The report argues that Western governments should work with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and its chair, Indonesia, to promote consensus as to the conflict risks of the elections and their lack of credibility. Japan and India – which are presidents of the G7 and G20, respectively, in 2023 and which have tended to pursue self-interested engagement with the Myanmar regime – should adopt more principled stances, given the clear security risks of the elections, and the damage that a business-as-usual approach could do to important alliances in the region and with the West.

These countries should use what influence they have with Naypyitaw to press the regime to desist from violently imposing the elections. For its part, the West should engage with Japan and India and encourage them to be more outspoken on the risks of the elections and to deploy their influence with Naypyitaw. It is also worth exploring the space for further steps by the UN Security Council, of which Japan is now a non-permanent member.

In December 2022, the Council adopted its first-ever Myanmar resolution, achieving consensus on Myanmar despite the geopolitical rifts at play. More broadly, countries should work to address the multiple crises in Myanmar by continuing to impose targeted sanctions on the military and its business interests. In particular, they should expand targeted sanctions on senior police and military officers most responsible for post-coup abuses and repression, including in relation to the elections, as well as military-owned or linked companies. They should make clear that election-related repressive violence will be a basis for further sanctions.

HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

Donor countries should also continue to provide, and whenever possible increase, assistance to address the humanitarian emergency in Myanmar as well as the long-term health, education and livelihoods needs of its people. It remains extremely challenging to deliver aid in Myanmar. Donors should make funding flexible so as to channel it to the partners that can most effectively reach those in need, including local organisations, and give appropriate amounts of cross-border assistance.

NEW FORM OF RULE

As the report notes, the junta's emphasis on the elections is not merely rhetorical but reflects a real desire to shift from emergency rule to a more enduring form of military-directed political regime.



The constitution, drafted under the previous period of military rule, describes as the “basic principle” that the military have a “national political leadership role” – which the military felt was shrinking under the NLD government (2016- 2021). It has sought to restore and bolster this role via it’s coup and subsequent violence. The military remains committed to the 2008 Constitution, which is why the regime goes to great lengths to present its actions as conforming to the charter, even though the coup itself was manifestly unconstitutional.

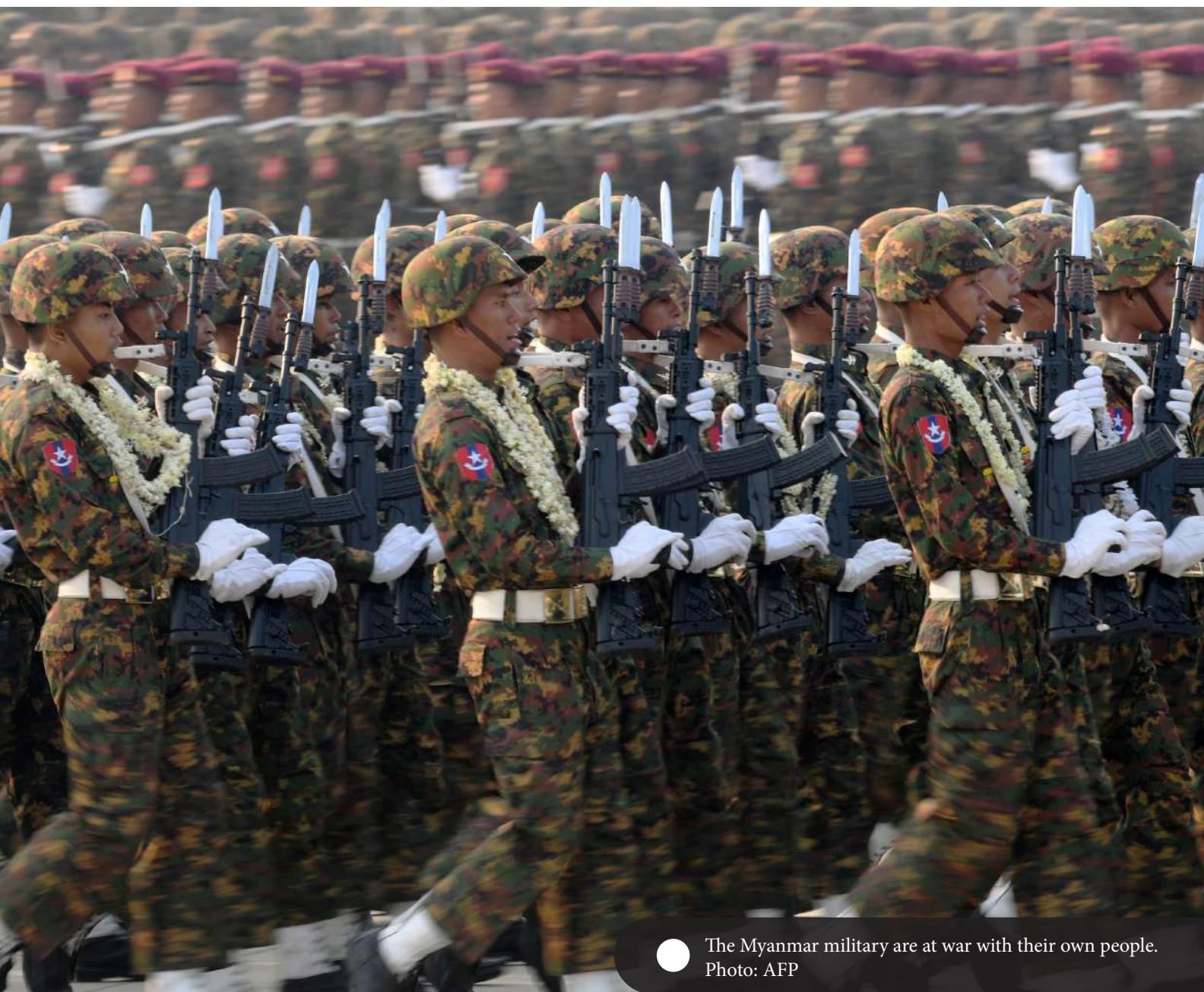
UPTICK IN VIOLENCE EXPECTED

The transition that the regime is engineering is thus from direct military rule to a new political landscape of the military’s design, in which it continues to exercise political authority via an elected adminis-

tration. Min Aung Hlaing’s repeated references to the constitution suggest that he envisages a return to the military-civilian power-sharing arrangement provided for in the 2008 charter, purged of popular democratic forces such as the NLD. That is, the military would be sharing power with its civilian proxy, the USDP. Such an arrangement would be abhorrent to much of the population.

There is therefore no reason to believe it will offer relief from the political and security crisis set off by the coup. Indeed, in the short term, it is certain to unleash a surge in violence, which has already started.

There are indications that the coming months will see a major uptick in violence as the junta seeks to clamp down and the resistance groups seek to fight back and throw water on attempts to hold their ramshackle election.



● The Myanmar military are at war with their own people.
Photo: AFP

MYANMAR JUNTA ELECTION IS A CON, SAYS DEMOCRACY ACTIVIST

The Myanmar junta's election is misinformation and "continuation of the war with other means," says pro-democracy activist Igor Blazevic, speaking on a webinar of Myanmar's National Unity Consultative Council NUCC last week organized to mark the second anniversary of the Federal Democratic Charter.

The webinar was entitled: "Our Way, Our Goal".

Speaking to the participants, Blazevic outlined four main points:

RUSTY TRAIN ABOUT TO CRASH

The first point is that the Myanmar Military is seriously weakened and very vulnerable. They are cracking and will implode.

The Military is committing all those terrible atrocities to hide its weakness. The SAC (State Administration Council) is creating different narratives, about fake, sham elections, about "dissolution" of legitimate and popular parties. All that is just smoke bombs to make a fog and hide their vulnerability.

The Military is bleeding every single day, every week, week after week. They are losing every single day. The profound problem is that the Military has and is not able to solve it any more – they simply have too little manpower. They have too many small units stretched over vast territory and being exposed to constant multi-layered attacks. It is like hundreds of bees hitting them on points of vulnerability.

Yes, the resistance has few weapons. However, the resistance has remarkable determination, there is

growing and truly remarkable cooperation between the EROs (Ethnic Revolutionary Organizations) and PDFs (People's Defence Forces) and resistance is on a constant learning curve.

The Military junta is like a slow, heavy, depleted, rusty train that is moving to its inevitable crash.

Yes, the "sit tat" (Military) can implode and will implode. We do not know when that will exactly happen, but that will happen. Myanmar's "Tet offensive" will happen in one way or another, sooner or later, but it will happen.

We just do not know how much more damage and suffering Myanmar's neighbours and ASEAN will allow Min Aung Hlaing (MAH) to inflict on the people before his final end in defeat and ignominy will come. There is no way MAH and SAC can regain control over the country. The only thing that will happen is for him to lose.

REJECT THE COUNTER NARRATIVES OF DISUNITY

The second point is that we should resolutely reject the counter narratives of disunity.

The junta is trying to split the alliance between the NUG (National Unity Government) and the EROs, between the Bama struggle for democracy and ethnic struggle for federalism and self-determination. That is understandable. That is the only way how they can sur-

vive.

China, Thailand, Saksakawa and various disingenuous "peacemakers" are trying to spread the narrative of disunity so that they can place themselves in the role of "facilitators" and gain undeserved influence.

They are trying to "facilitate" negotiations of "all stakeholders", which means nothing else but to appease junta which anyhow does not have the intention for any negotiations and is only trying to find the way to achieve full victory through terror and destruction.

Those outside players are not able to imagine a future for Myanmar without authoritarian and corrupt military, very often because they are themselves authoritarian and corrupt. But what the disingenuous and self-interested outside players cannot imagine, the people of Myanmar are able to achieve.

What we need to do instead of letting us being dragged into "narratives about disunity"?

We need to counter them with a "winning narrative", the one I mentioned in the first point.

We also need to counter harmful "narratives about disunity" with "positive, visionary narratives".

We have more cooperation between EROs than we had ever before. Cooperation between different EROs and PDFs is just remarkable. Key stakeholders, ethnic, Bama, Spring Revolution stakeholders, young protesters and CDM-ers, civil society stakeholders and independent media, they are all firmly committed to a

common struggle and they enjoy the support of the people and diaspora. The criminal, murderous gang in uniform cannot prevail over such level of determination.

We also need to be patient with the few relevant stakeholders with whom we need to be patient. And there is also a certain number of fake “stakeholders” who are completely irrelevant and completely corrupt. We simply do not need to pay attention to them, do not treat them as stakeholders. Let them disappear into the dustbin of history.

One more important remark regarding the issue of unity and disunity.

I do not think that we need complex, elaborated formal agreements about the future Myanmar. We need first to make that future happen.

If the junta will prevail and consolidate repressive kleptocracy, there will be no future for the next twenty years at least. Or if the junta’s terror will break country into five or seven territories that are controlled by different armed groups, like for example Libya or South Sudan nowadays, there will be no future at all for decades. What we will have is a Hobbesian “Warre” in which life is “poor, nasty, brutish, and short”.

So, what we need at this point is what I call “minimum consensus” about basic principles and overarching, inspiring vision. We also need a series of small victories achieved through collaborative actions, until we achieve the final victory. Once we have common victory achieved through joint effort and joint struggle, we will have a completely different level of mutual trust and “social capital” and we will have security and time to discuss all the complexities and look for needed compromises.



Pro-democracy activist Igor Blazevic. Photo: Facebook

We do not need formalized agreements at this moment. We need collaborative actions in which we achieve joint small victories. We need from time to time more ambitious bigger collective actions. We will need in one moment also strategic, targeted attacks on critical military supply lines, economic sources of their revenues or symbolically important posts.

More than anything else, we need “Stories and Narratives of Togetherness”.

Particularly when we speak with outside actors, with the UN agencies, with Indonesia, India, Thailand, the rest of ASEAN, China, Japan, Australia, US, European Union, and the UK, we need to speak with them together and with confidence. They are welcome to help with the heroic struggle of the people of Myanmar if they chose so, but they do not have any right to tell to the people of the country that they should accept servitude and oppression under the predatory gang in uniform.

PSYOPS PLAN THAT WILL FAIL

My third point is about the elections. There are no elections. And there will be no elections.

What the junta is trying to achieve is not even a sham, fake election. What they are doing is pursuing a “continuation of the war with other means”. The fake narrative about elections is an attention-diverting operation, it is a disinformation operation to confuse and divide and it is a time-buying operation.

There will be no elections simply because people will reject it. People will not participate. Resistance, both civic and armed will disrupt it. It will never happen.

The Military tried with a

coup, and failed. They tried with terror and violence, and they are failing as well. They had that Plan A with elections after two years but they themselves admitted that they failed. So they are trying to see if they can achieve something with a psychological warfare operation which they call postponed “elections”, collecting voters lists or census.

Nothing of that will happen. Full stop.

We just need to stay alert and active, and discredit, undermine and disrupt any attempt to even start to prepare the scaffolds of a fake Potemkin village, which the junta would like to call “elections”.

BIG PROMISE

Let me make the last point. Currently the leadership of the Spring Revolution are promising democracy, freedom, rights, federalism and self-determination. The younger generations of activists are also promising refreshing progressivist ideas about non-discrimination, equal opportunities and inclusion. That is all good and necessary.

However, one more “Big Promise” is necessary.

Leaders of the Spring Revolution need also to promise to the people of Myanmar social-economic reparation, radical programmes of land justice and not just economic growth but also the transformation of the economy.

For decades, the wealth of the county has been plundered and misused by the predatory military and by the kleptocratic mafia on the top. Natural resources and wealth has been used to pay for repression and wars against the people of the country, and also to pay for luxury and the vanity of a

small circle of top brass families and their business cronies.

The Spring Revolution should make a credible promise to the people of the country, to all those whose villages have been burned to ground, all those who have been violently expelled from their land, all those who have been incarcerated and tortured in jails, all those who have lost their dear ones, all those who put their lives at ultimate risks by fighting in the jungle or by organising street protests, all of them and many others should be promised that for at least twenty years, if needed even longer, revenues from the national wealth will be primarily used to compensate and affirm their loss, trauma and disadvantage.

The people of Myanmar deserve socio-economic justice and catch-up, which can be given to them only by state policies, not by neoliberal economic competition. The Spring Revolution should clearly promise that as well - and it should keep that promise.

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MYANMAR JUNTA BANS 40 POLITICAL PARTIES



Following the Myanmar junta's banning of 40 legitimate political parties prior to its discredited elections, Burma Campaign UK (BCUK) has called for sanctions against Myanmar to be properly and quickly implemented.

On 28 March 2023, the Myanmar military announced that it had banned 40 political parties, including the National League for Democracy (NLD), which has won every election it has been able to contest.

The ban follows the military demanding that political parties reregister, or register for the first time, with the military-appointed Union Election Commission, something the parties refused to do as the military has no legitimacy or legal power to set election rules.

The Burmese military have arrested, killed, jailed and tortured NLD members, and closed their offices, but have never gone so far as to impose a complete ban.

According to BCUK, the ban is a sign of how desperate and insecure the Burmese military are as they face unprecedented resistance after their attempted coup began two years ago.

“The Burmese military banning 40 political parties should be a wake-up call to those in the international community who still think there can be genuine dialogue and compromise with the military,” said Mark Farmaner, Director of Burma Campaign UK.

“For decades the Burmese military has held the country back from building democracy, human rights, and economic development. The people of Burma want a future without the Burmese military and the international community should be supporting them in achieving that goal. At the present time, the Burmese military receives far more international support than Burma’s democracy movement, with even the USA and UK still dithering over whether to sanction gas revenues”, he added.

According to BCUK, there are no soft-liners or genuine reformers in the military waiting in the wings. The Burmese military is not an institution that can be reformed. Each leader is more hardline and brutal than the last.



Even the so-called reform period during the 2010s saw a significant escalation of violence and human rights violations perpetrated against ethnic people in Burma, including genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

BCUK says that the plodding pace of sanctions implementation enables the Burmese military to continue to receive revenue, arms and equipment, including aviation fuel, which it is using to commit violations of international law against the population of Burma.

“Faced with increased repression, airstrikes, artillery bombardments and a humanitarian crisis, the people of Burma need swift and decisive action to cut off revenue and arms to the Burmese military, including gas revenue and aviation fuel. The pace of sanctions implementation is simply too slow, and people are dying as a result,” said Mark Farmaner.

According to Myanmar state media, the following 40 political parties have not applied to re-register. They will be declared illegal and dissolved.

1. Lahu National Development Party
2. Democratic Party (Myanmar)
3. Kayen National Party
4. Ta'ang (Palaung) National Party
5. Party for Democracy and Peace
6. Shan Nationalities Democratic Party
7. Wunthanu Democratic Party
8. National Democratic Party for Development
9. Ethnic National Development Party (ENDP)
10. Kaman National Development Party
11. Bamar People's Party
12. National League for Democracy
13. Democratic Party for a New Society
14. Myanmar National Congress Party
15. Asho Chin National Party
16. Shan National League for Democracy
17. United National Congress Party
18. National Prosperity Party
19. Dawei Nationalities Party
20. Federal Union Party
21. Union Pa-O National Organization
22. Khumi (Khami) National Party
23. Democratic Party for a New Society
24. Karen National Party
25. Mro National Democracy Party
26. Guiding Star Party
27. 88 Generation Democracy Party
28. Lhaovo National Unity and Development Party
29. New Era Union Party
30. Zo National Region Development Party
31. National Development Party
32. Daingnet National Development Party
33. Arakan League for Democracy Party
34. Kayah State Democratic Party
35. National United Democratic Party (NUDP)
36. The Yeomanry Development Party (YDP)
37. Chin National League for Democracy Party
38. Chin National Party (CNP)
39. Kachin National Party
40. Alliance of Myanmar's Worker and Farmer Party (AMWFP)

NUG, OPPOSITION, RESPOND TO MYANMAR JUNTA CHIEF'S THREATS

Spokespeople for the Myanmar National Unity Government (NUG) and other opposition players have rebuffed the Myanmar junta leader's threats made on the 78th Myanmar Armed Forces Day.

Myanmar's junta chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing said in his speech in Naypyitaw 27 March that the junta would take decisive action against its opponents and ethnic armed organizations supporting them.

"The terror acts of NUG and its lackey so-called PDFs need to be tackled for good and all," he said, referring to the NUG, a body dominated by ousted legislators working to overturn the military takeover.

"In accordance with the five work plans established by the government, the Tatmadaw will work seriously to achieve stability and the rule of law throughout the Union for the security of the social and economic life of the people throughout the country. In doing so, I would like to say that we will take decisive action against NUG and terrorist organizations, as well as EAO (Ethnic Armed Organizations) organizations that support them," the junta leader told the attendees on the Naypyitaw parade ground.

In response to Min Aung Hlaing's speech, Nay Phone Latt, spokesperson of NUG Prime Minister's Office, remarked that despite the junta leader's rhetoric, the junta's army is actually losing ground in the ongoing armed con-

flict.

"Min Aung Hlaing and a group of his colleagues are the ones guilty of committing treason against the law. If taking action is necessary, we, the legal government, must take action. Now, NUG and ethnic alliances are trying to take action regarding the crimes committed by Min Aung Hlaing and his colleagues, in an international court. NUG is the official government. PDFs are the people's defense army, while EAOs [ethnic armed organizations] are revolutionary forces that have existed in Myanmar for many years. It is not possible for Min Aung Hlaing to pretend to be legitimate and take action against them," he told Mizzima.

He added: "The junta says that it will take action to crush the revolutionary forces, but in fact, its battalions are in a state of collapse."

Thura Nagani, battalion commander of Kyaukse District Battalion-1 (Red Dragon Battalion) said that the junta's attempts to use evil spirits will fail and their frantic efforts to satisfy their army indicate their fear.

"They thought that they would have a cheap victory, but everything they did with evil spirits is already doomed. That's why he talked frantically because it is sure that their failure will arrive. He just tried to satisfy his army. They [the junta] are already very scared. They know for sure that they are going to lose. It's an obvious fact that we are not far from

success," Thura Nagani told Mizzima.

NUG President's Office spokesperson Kyaw Zaw criticized the junta's threats of violence, and stated that the junta's actions and promises are not successful.



“On the Anti-Fascist Resistance Day, the evil said stupid words. His speech was nothing strange. He threatened to kill. He said last year that this year would be a year of peace, but where is the peace now? They threatened the public more and more. So, I would like to say that what they are saying and doing is not successful at all,” he said.

An activist based in Yan-

gon highlighted that while the junta’s military may have control over larger cities, they are losing power and influence in rural areas where the revolutionary forces remain strong.

“Only big cities like Yangon and Mandalay are the ones that Min Aung Hlaing’s army can fully control. Everybody knows that the revolutionary forces in rural areas are strong, but Min Aung

Hlaing’s army has become weaker than before. Then, they threaten with words,” said the activist.

However, the junta chief said in his speech that his Tatmadaw [army] is in possession of modern weapons and is working to ensure unity within the army.

Chase, Penrose Thitsa



NUG supporters protest in front of the Myanmar Embassy in Bangkok. Photo: AFP

US CONDEMNS MYANMAR DISSOLVING SUU KYI PARTY



The United States on Wednesday last week condemned Myanmar's junta for dissolving the party of deposed leader Aung San Suu Kyi and warned that the move would bring more instability.

Myanmar's junta-stacked election commission on Tuesday announced that the National League for Democracy would be dissolved for failing to re-register under a military-drafted electoral law.

The move comes as the junta prepares to hold elections that opponents believe would only aim to cement the power of the military, which toppled Suu Kyi's elected government in February 2021.

"We strongly condemn the Burma military regime's decision to abolish 40 political parties, including the National League for Democracy," State Department spokesman Vedant Patel said, using Myanmar's former name.

"Any election without the participation of all stakeholders in Burma would not be and cannot be considered free or fair and, given the widespread opposition to military rule, the regime's unilateral push towards elections likely will escalate instability," he said.

Suu Kyi cofounded the NLD in 1988, and won a landslide victory in 1990 elections that were subsequently annulled by the then-junta.

The United States has vowed to keep up pressure on Myanmar. In its latest move last week, the Treasury Department warned of the risk of US sanctions on anyone who provides jet fuel to the junta.

But the United States has stopped short of taking action against Myanmar's state-owned oil and gas company, with neighboring Thailand, a close US ally, worried about the move's impact.

AFP

MYANMAR JUNTA USING LIES TO INCITE ETHNIC HATRED



Census forms inside a plastic envelope can be seen near bodies lying on the ground of a Buddhist monastery in Nam Nein village, Pinlaung township, Shan state, eastern Myanmar on March 12, 2023. Photo: Pa-Oh National Defense Force-Kham Koug

The NGO Progressive Voice says the junta is trying to incite hatred between ethnicities by using the military's old 'divide and rule' tactics and falsely blaming certain ethnic groups for military-committed atrocities

The most recent massacre in southern Shan State committed by the Myanmar military junta and its use of an ethnic proxy militia to accuse other ethnic groups of alleged involvement in a massacre is a reminder of the same pattern and old tactics used by the Myanmar military to incite hatred between ethnic groups.

Such tactics are all too familiar as they were also used to persecute Rohingya, leading to the genocide in 2017.

Progressive Voice believes that the international community must take immediate and concrete actions to hold the military to account so that justice is served and democracy, rule of law and protection of human rights of all people can be achieved.

In the early morning of 11 March, Myanmar military troops raided Nam Nein Village, in Pinlong Township, southern Shan State after launching an airstrike.

Following this, the junta troops killed 22 innocent civilians, including three monks, who were sheltering in the monastery. The deep bullet holes in the wall of the monastery showed that victims were lined up and shot from a very close range.

According to the autopsy report conducted by the National Unity Government's (NUG) health officials, the victims had been tortured before being killed as the bodies were found to have broken limbs, bruises as well as knife wounds.

The NUG Ministry of Human Rights indicated that a total of 766 civilians, including 62 children, were killed in 64 mass killings of more than five civilians since the attempted coup. During the first two weeks of March this year, 51 civilians were massacred in four mass killings.

In an attempt to incite racial hatred, the military junta and its proxy militia, the Pa-O National Organization (PNO), alleged that a local resistance group, the Karenni Nationalities Defence Force (KNDF), had been involved in the Nam Nein massacre. A day later, a rally was organized by the PNO in Taunggyi, Shan State amplifying the junta's narratives.

There were ample indications that the military junta was responsible for the massacre, including a post by the pro-junta's Telegram channels which were the first to publish the photos of victims' bodies with captions about, "teaching a lesson to Kayah [Karenni] PDF – killing 24 PDF with our snipers".

Also, cartridges and paper ammo boxes that were scattered around the dead bodies were labeled KaPaSa, which is the junta's arms factory, also known as the Myanmar Directorate of Defence Industries. This clearly indicates that the junta soldiers used these bullets to commit these atrocity crimes, which have been increasing in scale and brutality.

The Special Advisory Council for Myanmar has previously urged states to investigate and initiate legal proceedings against companies whose products are enabling the KaPaSa to produce weapons used by the Myanmar military stating, "Foreign companies that profit from the suffering of the Myanmar people must be held accountable."

Despite the clear and numerous indications of the military's hand in committing this mass murder, false news and hate speech were spread on social media platforms to incite racial hatred – for example, posts were circulated highlighting that most of the victims were ethnic Pa-O and alluding to KNDF activity in the region.

In response, the Pa-O National Federal Council (PNFC), comprised of the political leadership body of Pa-O armed resis-

tance forces, members of the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) and Pa-O civil society organisations, stressed in a statement that the junta intends to sow mistrust between Pa-O and Karenni people.

The PNFC attributed the root cause of the massacre to the Myanmar military's attempted coup. The group highlighted the fact that the current conflict in the region is "not about race or religion" and reminded what is at stake for the revolution in Myanmar, amid acts and instigations of falsehood by the junta and its lackey, the PNO.

Aung San Myint, the chair of the Karenni State Consultative Council (KSCC), said in an interview with Myanmar Now that it was obvious that the military junta was spreading false news with the intention of creating racial conflict between ethnic groups.

Karenni civil society organizations also warned that the Myanmar military is deliberately inciting ethnic, religious, and territorial conflicts and that all parties in the region should be cautious of its act that could stimulate ethnic conflicts in the region, while declaring their solidarity with the Pa-O, Shan and other ethnic communities. Such calls are salient, particularly in consideration of Min Aung Hlaing's recent meeting with U Aung Kham Hti, the Patron of the PNO.

These attempts at incitement of racial hatred are not new to the Myanmar military propagandists. Looking back to the past, the same Myanmar military has used the same pattern of incitements and committed same pattern of atrocities and mass destruction against ethnic communities including the Rohingya, sowing distrust and mistrust along the way in its attempt to "divide and conquer" groups for decades.

Such patterns are now repeated to divide communities that have stood strong against the mil-

itary's campaign of terror to stamp out the nationwide democratic resistance movement.

As it continues to face fierce resistance by the people, the military junta is once again playing the cards of race and religion by inciting conflict between communities in southern Shan State.

Progressive Voice reminds us that this is the same military and the same war criminals who ordered "clearance operations" against the Rohingya in 2017.

Without being held accountable for their crimes against the Rohingya and other ethnic minorities for decades, they have now grown emboldened to perpetrate more heinous crimes against both majority and minority populations, in different parts of the country.

The Myanmar military's institutionalized barbaric mindset will not change until and unless their source of power from foreign governments and businesses is cut and they are held to account by law, according to Progressive Voice.

Local actors and communities must be cautious of the racial and religious incitement trap that the junta has been utilizing for decades to divide and rule them as a tactic of war to hold on to power.

At the same time, the international community must take concrete actions to pursue justice and accountability for all the victims and survivors of the Myanmar military's atrocities and take additional measures to end further atrocities through all feasible avenues, including imposing a coordinated global arms embargo and sanctions on institutions, enterprises, and individuals who are involved directly or indirectly, in the provision of services such as insurance, accreditation and verification services to vessels and infrastructure used to supply aviation fuel to the Myanmar military junta.

TWO DAWEI STUDENTS SENTENCED TO 10-YEARS IMPRISONMENT



Two students from Dawei Technological University were sentenced to 10 years imprisonment under counter-terrorism laws on 28 March.

According to Dawei Technological University Students' Union, they were charged and sentenced by Dawei District court under section 50 (j) of the counter-terrorism law.

The two students, Aung Wai Yan Tun and Myo Min Oo were both electrical engineering students at Dawei Technological College, Myo Min Oo was also previously the Dawei District Students' Union chairman. Both were accused of helping to finance people's defence forces (PDFs) in Dawei Township.

Aung Wai Yan Tun was arrested at his house in Kyet Sar Pyin Ward, Dawei Town on 11 September 2022.

Myo Min Oo was arrested at his house in Khon Win Dap Ward, Dawei Town, on 12 September 2022.

He had previously been arrested in 2021 and charged with incitement under Penal Code Sections 505 (a) and 505 (c). But, he was released in October 2021 under a government amnesty.

A representative of Dawei Technological University Students' Union said: "He was arrested twice by the Military Council, he should not have stayed in the country after being released the first time. He is now back in prison. It makes me so sad."

Over 20 students from Dawei Technological University (Dawei) have been arrested since 2021, according to the Students' Union that said, so far, only six of them have been released.

According to the Dawei Political Prisoners Network, 350 political prisoners are currently being held in Dawei prison.

CHINA'S PROACTIVE APPROACH ON MYANMAR IS COMPLEX

China's stand on Myanmar has always been very complex and multi-faceted. More than two years have passed since the coup, yet there are no indications of the Tatmadaw holding elections in the country. China has done little to pressure the military junta to hold elections, although it has been a major ally and arms supplier to the internationally isolated junta. It has no intention of pressuring the military junta to end violence against pro-democracy groups and restore a democratically elected government.

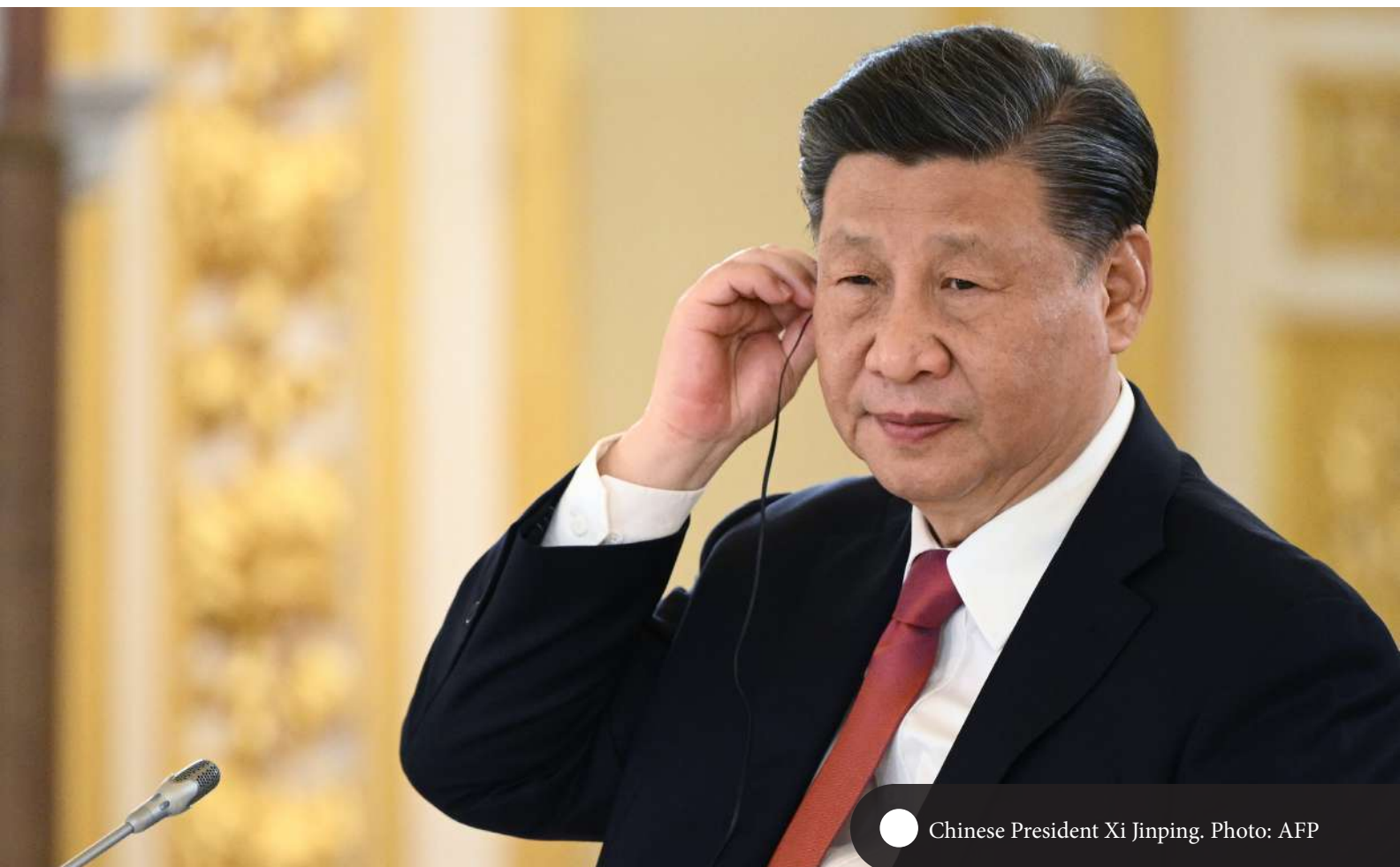
The recently held meeting between China's ambassador to Myanmar Chen Hai and the Myanmar junta's deputy prime minister

and home affairs minister Soe Htut has proved the real intention of China with regard to the ruling junta.

In the meeting Chen Hai called on the junta to step up security cooperation with his country, including collaboration between the two police forces. Chinese ambassador made an appeal for cooperation when he met the junta's deputy prime minister and home affairs minister Soe Htut. The two sides discussed security matters, border issues, and future cooperation. There was no discussion on how Myanmar's junta should end its bloody crackdown on pro-democracy opponents. The development has raised suspicion over

China's soft approach towards the military junta.

Chen Hai also urged home minister Soe Htut to step up efforts to combat cross-border crime, online fraud, and gambling, according to the South China Morning Post. In Myanmar, Chinese-run criminal gangs based near the Thai border have been operating telecoms scams and luring workers from China by promising high-paying jobs. However, Chen Hai was more concerned about such illegal activities as they harmed the interests and safety of Chinese people and undermined social stability and order. China urged Myanmar to take the matter seriously and work closely with



Chinese President Xi Jinping. Photo: AFP

China to combat the crimes and create a “clean” environment for friendly cooperation between the two countries, South China Morning Post reported.

Aung Zaw, editor of the Irrawaddy said in a commentary that the latest proactive approach by China on Myanmar was prompted by the US’s growing influence. The US has stepped up its engagement with Myanmar’s shadow government and signalled a willingness to support the democratic opposition and ethnic armed groups. But is China adopting the right strategy” asks Aung Zaw in his commentary.

China’s newly appointed special envoy Deng Xijun has visited Myanmar twice since December. He met coup leader Senior General Min Aung Hlaing in Naypyitaw. He also held separate meetings with representatives of the United Wa State Army (UWSA), the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), the National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA), the Shan State Progress Party (SSPP), the Arakan Army (AA), the Ta’ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) and the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA). These ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) have been under the sway of China and three of them—the KIA, TNLA and MNDAA—based in northeast Myanmar’s Shan State have been actively fighting the regime.

However, China has expressed its desire to talk to the regime and bring an end to the fighting along the border. The ethnic armed groups appreciated Beijing’s efforts stating that they “welcomed China’s mediation role in Myanmar’s internal conflict” and promised to work with it. This is all music to the ears of the regime leaders in Naypyitaw, says Aung

Zaw.

According to him, several theories have been doing the rounds over these developments. One theory is that the Chinese special envoy promised the Myanmar junta it would bring about a deescalation of military tensions in northern Shan State, where China is eager to build the Ruili-Mandalay railroad. The Chinese envoy told ethnic rebels from the north to stop fighting along the border.

Myanmar’s shadow National Unity Government (NUG) recently opened an office in Washington.

While there was no such office in the Chinese capital, NUG officials have reached out to Chinese officials in Beijing and Yunnan Province. The NUG was among an alliance of prodemocracy forces and EAOs that sent a congratulatory message to the Communist Party of China and the Chinese people during the party’s 20th National Congress in October 2022.

Another theory is that the Chinese special envoy’s shuttling between the regime leader and ethnic armed groups in the north was in response to the Burma Act, part of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) recently passed by the United States Congress. The Burma Act authorizes funds and technical assistance for anti-junta forces in Myanmar, including EAOs. China doesn’t want to see the spread of Western influence on its border and will intervene to block it. The powerful Wa leaders pledged to support the NUG, and the MNDAA has been providing arms and training to the NUG and PDF forces since last year. The regime in Naypyitaw wants to split this growing alliance—and to achieve that it needs China’s support.

The Irrawaddy editor has raised questions over China’s intentions. China has begun shifting gears, moving towards more explicit support for the criminal regime in Naypyitaw. Historically, China has always been on the wrong side in Myanmar, supporting and working with regimes that the Myanmar people loathe. More importantly, China’s investment projects in the country have always been unpopular. Unless it changes its priorities, China can’t win in Myanmar, Aung Zaw concludes.

China’s past record has raised suspicion over China’s seesaw on Myanmar. While China distanced itself from Myanmar’s military regime following the coup in February 2021, but bilateral relations have improved significantly since Beijing appointed a new special envoy Deng Xijun to Myanmar in December who has been busy brokering talks between the junta and powerful ethnic armed organizations along the border. In his meeting, the special envoy said that his country wants to resume its projects in Myanmar and make new investments even as the international community imposes tighter sanctions.

China’s traditional emphasis on non-intervention in the internal affairs of other countries, concerns about maintaining stability in its own border regions, and a desire to protect its economic and strategic interests in Myanmar have prevented China from not taking action against the military junta as well working to try to prevent other countries including the ASEAN bloc from taking a tough stand on Myanmar.

Sun Lin is a pseudonym for a writer who specializes in covering Myanmar and Asia.

TAIWAN EX-PRESIDENT CALLS FOR BEIJING EXCHANGES DURING CHINA VISIT

Taiwan ex-president Ma Ying-jeou on Thursday last week called for maintaining exchanges with China as he met with a Beijing official during a historic mainland visit, a trip Taipei's ruling party has called

"regrettable".

Ma's visit is the first trip to the mainland by a former or current leader of Taiwan in over seven decades.

China claims the democratic island as part of its territory

to be retaken one day and, under its "One China" principle, no country may maintain official ties with both Beijing and Taipei.

Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen arrived in New York Wednesday for a 10-day overseas



trip that has triggered threats of reprisal by China if she meets with US House speaker Kevin McCarthy -- and US warnings for Beijing not to overreact.

Tsai will also travel to Guatemala and Belize to shore up ties with those diplomatic allies.

The visits come days after Honduras, one of Taiwan's few remaining official partners, cut off

diplomatic ties and established relations with Beijing.

"People on both sides of the strait belong to the same Chinese nation and are descendants of the Chinese people," Ma said in a statement Thursday.

"The two sides of the Taiwan Strait must maintain exchanges, work together, do everything possible to avoid wars and con-

flicts, and strive to revitalise China."

The 72-year-old former Kuomintang (KMT) party leader met with Song Tao, head of China's Taiwan Affairs Office, asking the official to convey his greetings to Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Ma oversaw a dramatic improvement in cross-strait ties during his 2008-16 rule, which culminated in a 2015 summit between him and Xi in Singapore.

Tsai's Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) has been far more wary of developing closer ties with Beijing.

"We should be more united... but it's regrettable that the KMT stands with the Chinese communists and ex-president Ma disregards public disapproval to visit China at this moment," the party said in a statement Monday.

Taiwan will hold a presidential election next year, with the KMT and DPP the main contenders for the position.

Ma's visit to the mainland includes stops in Shanghai, Nanjing, Wuhan, Chongqing and Changsha, his office said last week.

AFP



Taiwan ex-present Ma Ying-Jeou on his visit to China. Photo: AFP

TAIWAN PRESIDENT IN US FOR VISIT THAT HAS CHINA THREATENING REPRISAL



Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen on route to the USA. Photo: AFP

Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen arrived in New York Wednesday last week for a visit that has triggered threats of reprisal by China if she meets with House speaker Kevin McCarthy - and US warnings for Beijing not to overreact.

Tsai is stopping over in the United States en route to Central America, where she will meet with the leaders of Guatemala and Belize to shore up ties with those diplomatic allies. On her way back to Taiwan she will stop in California, where McCarthy had said he would meet her.

China claims the democratic island as part of its territory to be retaken one day and, under its "One China" principle, no country may maintain official ties with both Beijing and Taipei.

Beijing warned Wednesday that it was vehemently opposed to any meeting between Tsai and McCarthy and vowed to take "resolute measures to fight back" if it goes ahead.

The United States responded by saying China should not use Tsai's stopover as a pretext to act aggressively around the Taiwan Strait.

Tsai was seen arriving at her hotel in New York, where dozens of pro-Beijing demonstrators waving China's red flag gathered boisterously while nearby a similarly sized group of pro-Taiwan people cheered and waved their banner and the US stars and stripes.

Xu Xueyuan, the charge d'affaires at the Chinese embassy in Washington, said she had spoken

directly to US officials numerous times and warned them that Tsai's trip would violate China's core interests.

"We urge the US side not to repeat playing with fire on the Taiwan question," she told reporters, alluding among other things to last year's visit to Taiwan by then House speaker Nancy Pelosi.

Tsai's trip follows Honduras's decision this month to open diplomatic relations with Beijing, leaving Belize and Guatemala among just 13 countries that have official ties with Taipei.

After first visiting New York, Tsai will meet her Guatemalan counterpart Alejandro Giammattei and Belize Prime Minister John Briceno in their respective countries, her office said.

She will then stop in Los Angeles on her way home.

McCarthy has said he will meet Tsai in his home state, although the talks are yet to be confirmed by Taiwanese authorities.

Pelosi's visit triggered an angry response from Beijing, with the Chinese military conducting drills at an unprecedented scale around the island.

OFFICIAL VS UNOFFICIAL TIES

Analysts say the US stopover comes at a key time, with Beijing having ramped up military, economic and diplomatic pressure on Taiwan since Tsai came to power in 2016, poaching nine of its diplomatic allies.

"Beijing's attempts to poach Taiwan's diplomatic partners will lead to Taiwan developing closer ties with the United States," said James Lee, a researcher on US-Taiwan relations at Academia Sinica.

The United States remains Taiwan's most important ally -- and its biggest arms supplier -- despite switching its diplomatic recognition to Beijing in 1979.

"The loss of official relations with third countries will be offset by a deepening of Taiwan's unofficial relations," Lee said.

Recent visits by a Czech delegation and a German minister were met with rebukes from Beijing.

One of Tsai's most prominent domestic opponents, ex-president Ma Ying-jeou, was in China on Wednesday, the first such trip by a former Taiwanese leader.

DIPLOMATIC BATTLEGROUND

China has increased investment in Latin America, a key diplomatic battleground between Taipei and Beijing since the two sides split in 1949 after a civil war.

Taiwan accused China on Sunday of using "coercion and intimidation" to lure away its allies after Honduran Foreign Minister Enrique Reina and his Chinese counterpart Qin Gang officially launched relations in Beijing.

Honduras, one of the poorest countries in the region, made the switch due to economic necessity, Reina had said earlier.

The move continued a trend in Latin America, with Nicaragua, El Salvador, Panama, the Dominican Republic and Costa Rica all switching diplomatic recognition to Beijing in recent years.

In addition to Guatemala and Belize, Taiwan still has official ties with a handful of countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, including Paraguay and Haiti.

AFP

SAUDI ARABIA AGREES TO PARTNER WITH CHINA-LED SECURITY BLOC

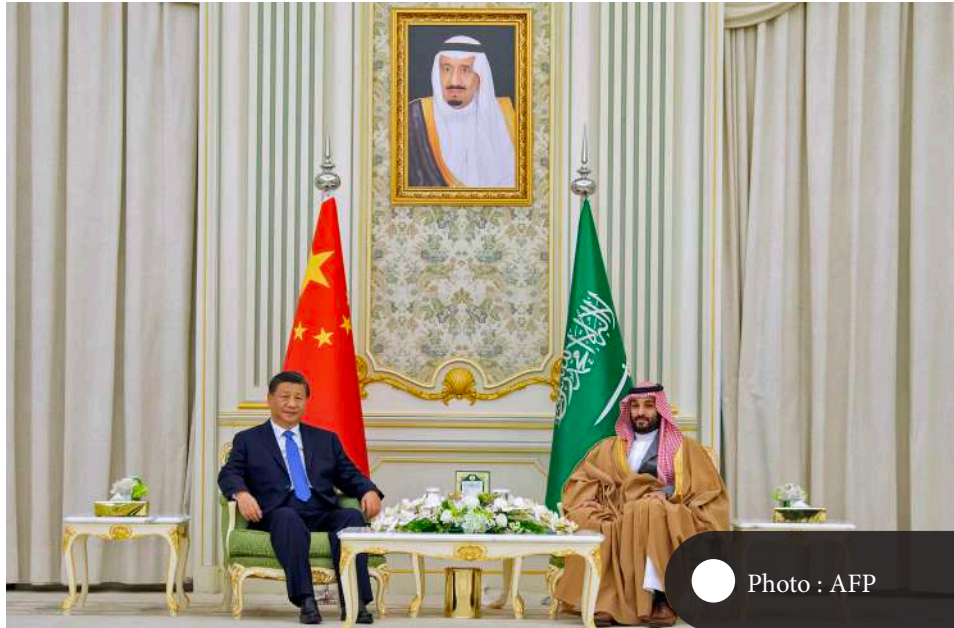


Photo : AFP

Saudi Arabia has agreed to join the Shanghai Cooperation Organization as a “dialogue partner”, state media reported on Wednesday last week, the latest indication of closer political ties with China.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization was established in 2001 as a political, economic and security organisation to rival Western institutions.

Besides China, its eight members include India, Pakistan and Russia, as well as four central Asian countries - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

The cabinet approved the decision at a meeting on Tuesday chaired by King Salman, the official Saudi Press Agency reported.

The move would grant Riyadh “the status of a dialogue partner in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization”, it said.

Other countries with either observer or dialogue partner status include Egypt, Iran and Qatar.

Riyadh’s move to partner with the bloc comes less than three weeks after the unveiling of a landmark China-brokered reconciliation deal with Iran to restore full diplomatic relations that were severed seven years ago.

Long bitter rivals, Shiite-majority Iran and mainly Sunni Saudi Arabia have engaged in a series

of proxy conflicts in the region, such as the protracted fighting in Yemen.

Riyadh has said that while it had engaged in previous rounds of bilateral talks with Tehran, the reconciliation process was jump-started by President Xi Jinping’s offer last year to serve as a “bridge” between the two Middle East heavyweights.

Xi’s role in the rapprochement raised eyebrows given Saudi Arabia’s traditionally close partnership with Washington, though that relationship has been under strain recently because of disputes over human rights and oil production.

In Washington, State Department spokesman Vedant Patel played down the impact of China’s move, saying that it was long expected.

“Each country has its own relationships,” Patel said.

Xi, in a phone call on Tuesday with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, King Salman’s son and the Gulf nation’s de facto ruler, lauded what he called the easing of tensions in the Middle East.

In his first comments on the matter to be made public since the Saudi-Iran deal was struck, Xi said the dialogue promoted by China would “play a major role in strengthening regional unity and cooperation”.

AFP

RICHARD GERE URGES US LAWMAKERS TO BACK TIBET



Actor Richard Gere with the Dalai Lama in Bodh Gaya in 2018. Photo: AFP

Hollywood star Richard Gere voiced outrage last week over the “cruelty” of Chinese policies in Tibet, as US Congress debated ways to pressure Beijing over alleged human rights violations in the Himalayan region.

Testifying before the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, the “Pretty Woman” actor accused Chinese authorities of separating Tibetan families, prohibiting their language, destroying religious sites and engaging in nonconsensual DNA collection.

“For decades, as we know, the Chinese Communist Party’s ethnic policies have been largely predicated on containment, denial, destruction and assimilation,” said Gere, a longtime champion of Tibet who has testified in Congress several times.

The 73-year-old accused Beijing of “cruelty, collective violence and persecution” of the Tibetan people, whom he said were repressed by a “pervasive surveillance system.”

Tibet has alternated over the centuries between independence and control by China, which says it “peacefully liberated” the rugged plateau in 1951 and brought infrastructure and education to the previously underdeveloped region.

But many exiled Tibetans accuse China’s ruling Communist Party of repression, torture and eroding their culture.

Around a million Tibetan children have been separated from their families and put through “forced assimilation” at Chinese residential schools, three United Nations experts said in February.

“Identifiable mechanisms like arbitrary detention, forcible transfer, rape, torture, disappearance are all tools that have been well-documented throughout the course of Beijing’s assimilation practices,” Gere said.

He called on the United States and its allies to “speak with a unified voice” on the need for Beijing to resume talks leading to “meaningful autonomy” for Tibetans.

Congress should pass legislation underscoring US support the Tibetan people, Gere said, urging Washington to press China at the United Nations to halt the expulsion of nomadic herders from their ancestral lands.

He urged lawmakers to produce a report on China’s efforts to influence perceptions of Tibet and spiritual leader the Dalai Lama abroad - and to curb US support for the forced collection of DNA and other medical data.

AFP

DEATH TOLL IN INDIA TEMPLE COLLAPSE RISES TO 36

The death toll after a floor collapsed at a Hindu temple in India had risen to 36 on Friday last week after rescuers discovered the body of the last person still missing, police told AFP.

Dozens of worshippers celebrating a major religious holiday plunged into the stepwell – a stair-lined communal water source -- on Thursday after the floor covering it collapsed in the central city of Indore.

“Seventeen people were rescued yesterday. Thirty-six bodies have been recovered,” senior police officer Manish Kapoor told AFP.

Women, children and an 18-month-old baby were among those standing on the grill covering the well when it buckled and gave way, plunging them into about 7.5 metres (25 feet) of water.

The bodies of dozens of victims were cremated on pyres near the scene of the accident on Friday after brief funeral rites.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Thursday he was “extremely pained” by news of the accident.

“My prayers with all those affected and their families,” he added.

Modi’s office said compensation payments of 200,000 rupees (\$2,400) would be given to the next of kin.

Narottam Mishra, home minister of Madhya Pradesh state, told reporters on Thursday that an investigation had been launched into the mishap.

Television footage on Thursday showed emergency workers using ropes and ladders to reach those trapped in the well in Madhya Pradesh state.

Other videos showed the caved-in floor and mangled steel bars as well as police officers using ropes to seal the area.

Temples across India were brimming with devotees on the occasion of Ram Navami, the birthday of the Hindu deity Lord Ram.



Photo : AFP

Deadly religious accidents

Deadly accidents are common at worship sites in India during major religious festivals.

At least 112 people died in 2016 after a huge explosion caused by a banned fireworks display at a temple marking the Hindu new year.

The blast ripped through concrete buildings and ignited a fire at a temple complex in Kerala state where thousands had gathered.

Another 115 devotees died in 2013 after a stampede at a bridge near a temple in Madhya Pradesh.

Up to 400,000 people were gathered in the area, and the stampede occurred after the spread of a rumour that the bridge was about to collapse.

About 224 pilgrims died and more than 400 others were injured in a 2008 stampede at a hilltop temple in the northern city of Jodhpur.

AFP

CAMBODIAN OPPOSITION LEADER APPEALS AGAINST TREASON CONVICTION

A top Cambodian opposition leader on Thursday last week appealed against his treason conviction for trying to topple long-ruling Prime Minister Hun Sen's government, his lawyer said, criticising the verdict as "unjust".

A court this month found Kem Sokha, a co-founder of the opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP), guilty of conspiring with foreign entities to overthrow Hun Sen's government.

Sokha was sentenced to 27 years in prison and immediately placed under house arrest.

He was also stripped of his political rights and banned from meeting with foreigners or anyone who is not a family member without permission from the court.

"He appealed against the verdict because it is unjust," Meng Sopheary, one of Sokha's lawyers, told AFP.

Sokha, 69, has repeatedly denied the charges against him since his arrest in 2017.

Another lawyer Ang Udom said Sokha "refused to accept the unjust verdict that made him lose a lot of rights".

Rights groups say the charges against Sokha were designed to bar him from politics ahead of July's elections.

The United States characterised Sokha's sentence as a "miscarriage of justice" based on a "fabricated conspiracy".

Hun Sen, who has ruled Cambodia for more than 38 years, has wound back democratic freedoms and used the courts to stifle political opponents, according to rights groups.

Hun Sen boasted on Thursday that he was the world's longest-serving prime minister.

"First, I broke the record as the world's youngest prime minister 38 years ago. Now, I have broken



 Kem Sokha. Photo: AFP

another record as the longest-serving prime minister in the world," Hun Sen said at a graduation ceremony.

Two months after Kem Sokha's arrest in 2017, Cambodia's Supreme Court dissolved the CNRP, once considered the sole viable opponent to the ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP).

That paved the way for the CPP to win all 125 parliamentary seats in 2018, turning the country into a de facto one-party state.

Scores of opposition figures were convicted of treason last year and Hun Sen ordered the shut-down of one of the country's few remaining local independent media outlets last month.

AFP



FOOD RATIONING FOR ROHINGYA REFUGEES A ‘MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH’: RIGHTS EXPERT

As food rationing begins for Myanmar’s Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, a top UN-appointed independent rights expert on Thursday urged the international community to step in and reverse the policy as “a matter of life and death”.

The development follows the UN World Food Programme (WFP)’s announcement that it would be cutting back on assistance to those sheltering in the vast Cox’s Bazar camp complex from 1 March because of a lack of funding.

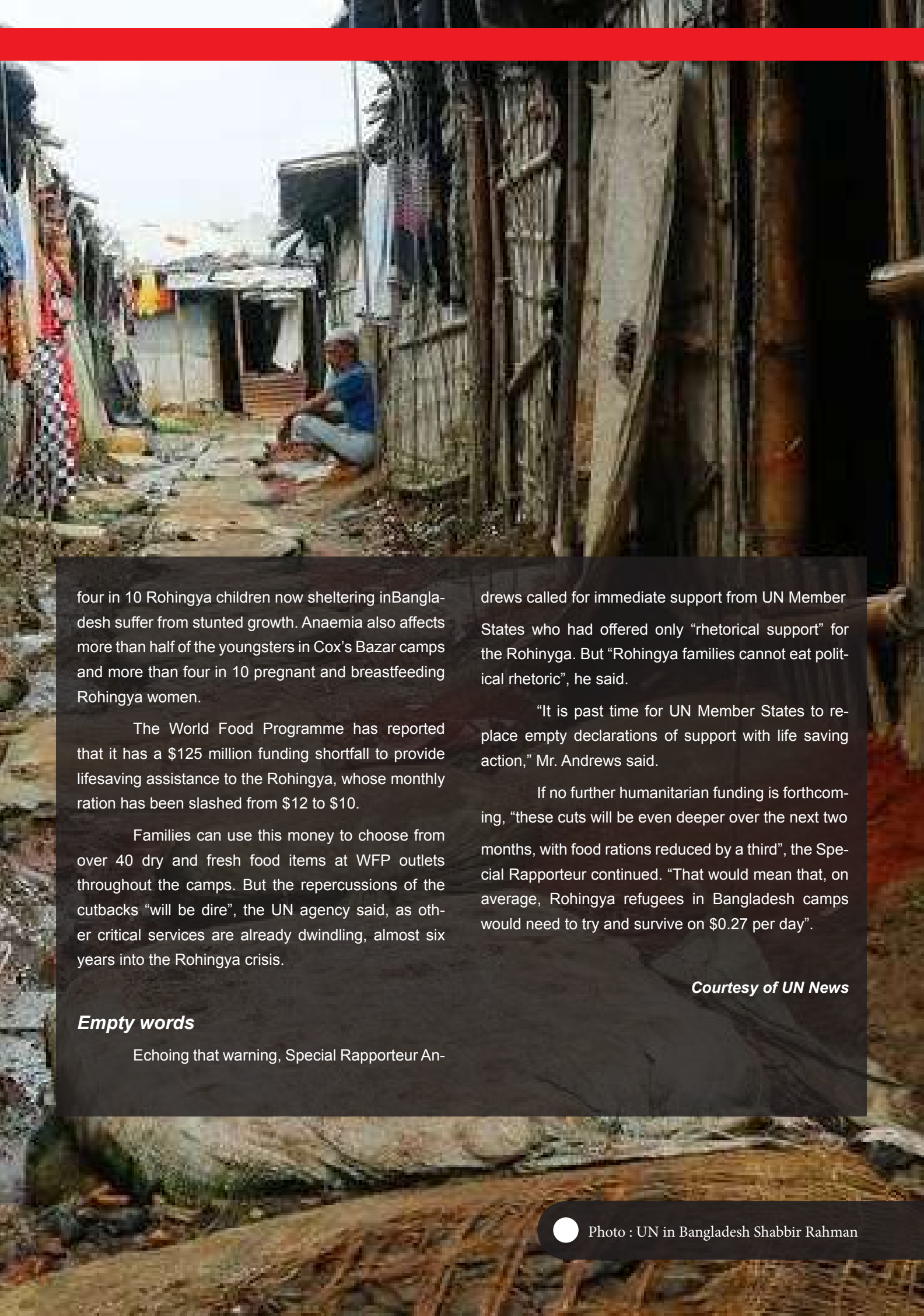
“These rations cuts are a stain on the conscience of the international community,” said Tom Andrews, UN Special Rapporteur on Myanmar. “I have

spoken with desperate families in the camps who have already had to cut back on essential food items due to a spike in prices. Reversing these cuts in food aid is literally a matter of life and death for Rohingya families.”

One million impacted

Mr. Andrews, who reports to the Human Rights Council in Geneva in an independent capacity, said that the cuts would impact nearly one million Rohingya refugees who fled attacks and persecution by the Myanmar military in 2017.

UN humanitarian have already warned that



four in 10 Rohingya children now sheltering in Bangladesh suffer from stunted growth. Anaemia also affects more than half of the youngsters in Cox's Bazar camps and more than four in 10 pregnant and breastfeeding Rohingya women.

The World Food Programme has reported that it has a \$125 million funding shortfall to provide lifesaving assistance to the Rohingya, whose monthly ration has been slashed from \$12 to \$10.

Families can use this money to choose from over 40 dry and fresh food items at WFP outlets throughout the camps. But the repercussions of the cutbacks "will be dire", the UN agency said, as other critical services are already dwindling, almost six years into the Rohingya crisis.

Andrews called for immediate support from UN Member States who had offered only "rhetorical support" for the Rohingya. But "Rohingya families cannot eat political rhetoric", he said.

"It is past time for UN Member States to replace empty declarations of support with life saving action," Mr. Andrews said.

If no further humanitarian funding is forthcoming, "these cuts will be even deeper over the next two months, with food rations reduced by a third", the Special Rapporteur continued. "That would mean that, on average, Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh camps would need to try and survive on \$0.27 per day".

Courtesy of UN News

Empty words

Echoing that warning, Special Rapporteur An-



Photo: Ajay Karpur

KAREN STATE

ASIA HIGHWAY BLOCKED BY FIGHTING

Since fighting started on the Asia Highway in Karen State on 25 March, civilians have been unable to use the highway and have had to rely on smaller roads to get around.

The areas of the highway that are affected are from Myawaddy to Kawkareik and Kyone Doe in Karen State.

On 25 March defence force fighters led by the Karen Nationalities Liberation Army (KNLA) attacked military council posts on the Asia Highway in Myawaddy, Kawkareik, Kyon Doe, and Kyainseikgy.

According to the KNLA about 20 junta soldiers were killed in fighting near to the Myawaddy trading zone on 25 March.

By 26 March fighting had stopped in the vicinity of Myawaddy, but was continuing in Kawkareik and Kyon Doe.

A Myawaddy resident said to Mizzima: “There is still fighting in Kawkareik and Kyon Doe. Small cars can use small roads to get to Myawaddy Big cars and trucks cannot travel yet.”

According to reports both the Asia Highway and the old road from Myawaddy are blocked and locals are using the Hpa-An to Htilon to Nabu Nabu Routa and traveling to Myawaddy through Toh Kaw Koe Village.

But, only small cars can use this route, it is not passable to trucks.

The White tiger Column, one of the defence forces involved in the fighting released a statement telling people to avoid travelling between Kawkareik, Kyon Doe and Myawaddy.



JUNTA CHIEF SHUFFLES MILITARY COMMANDERS AND OFFICERS

The Myanmar junta chief removed some of the military commanders and top officers from their military positions while promoting others on 30 March, according to local news outlets and sources close to the military.

It has been reported that the junta removed Lieutenant General Khin Hlaing from his position as the head of the Bureau of Special Operations 4, responsible for overseeing Karen and Mon states and Tanintharyi Region, following substantial losses in fighting with the Karen National Union (KNU).

Major General Nyunt Win Swe, Commander of the Yangon Region Command, was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General and has replaced Lieutenant General Khin Hlaing's position, according to a source close to the military.

WORLD FAMOUS CLOTHING BRAND UNIQLO STOPS MANUFACTURING IN MYANMAR



Photo : AFP

Japanese casual wear manufacturer and retail company Uniqlo, the wholly owned subsidiary of Fast Retailing Co. Ltd., had stopped its manufacturing business in Myanmar, Asia Nikkei reported 30 March.

A number of foreign manufacturing companies have left Myanmar in the wake of the 2021 military coup.

The company said that it was driven off by the rampant human rights violations in cracking down the protests against their military coup.

Similarly London based clothing giant Marks & Spencer also announced in October last year that they would leave Myanmar in March because of human rights violations in Myanmar.

And also the parent company of Muji household and consumer goods retailer, Ryohin Keikaku, said that they were planning to stop their clothing and other goods retailing business in August this year.

Moreover, Ireland based fast fashion retailer Primark also said that they would leave Myanmar.

These foreign companies are facing many difficulties in their manufacturing businesses with severe and frequent power outages, disruption of supply chains and logistics which made it difficult for timely completion of their manufacturing business in the country and are consequently unable to manage in supplying finished goods on time.

Two Chinese garment factories had to stop their manufacturing permanently and almost 2,500 workers lost their jobs.

The labour activists said that about 200,000 garment factory workers had lost their jobs as the result of political and economic instability in the country after the military coup.

LNG POWER-GENERATING VESSEL LEAVES MYANMAR



An LNG vessel owned by Hong Kong-based CNTIC VPower Co. Ltd., which was helping produce electricity for Myanmar, has left Myanmar although they have two more years of their contract with the government to fulfil.

This LNG vessel, which arrived in Myanmar in 2020 when the National League for Democracy-led government was in power to provide LNG gas for the gas turbines connected with the national power grid, left Yangon on 31 March.

The company won the state-level tender for power generation invited by the government and was anchored in Thilawa port in Yangon.

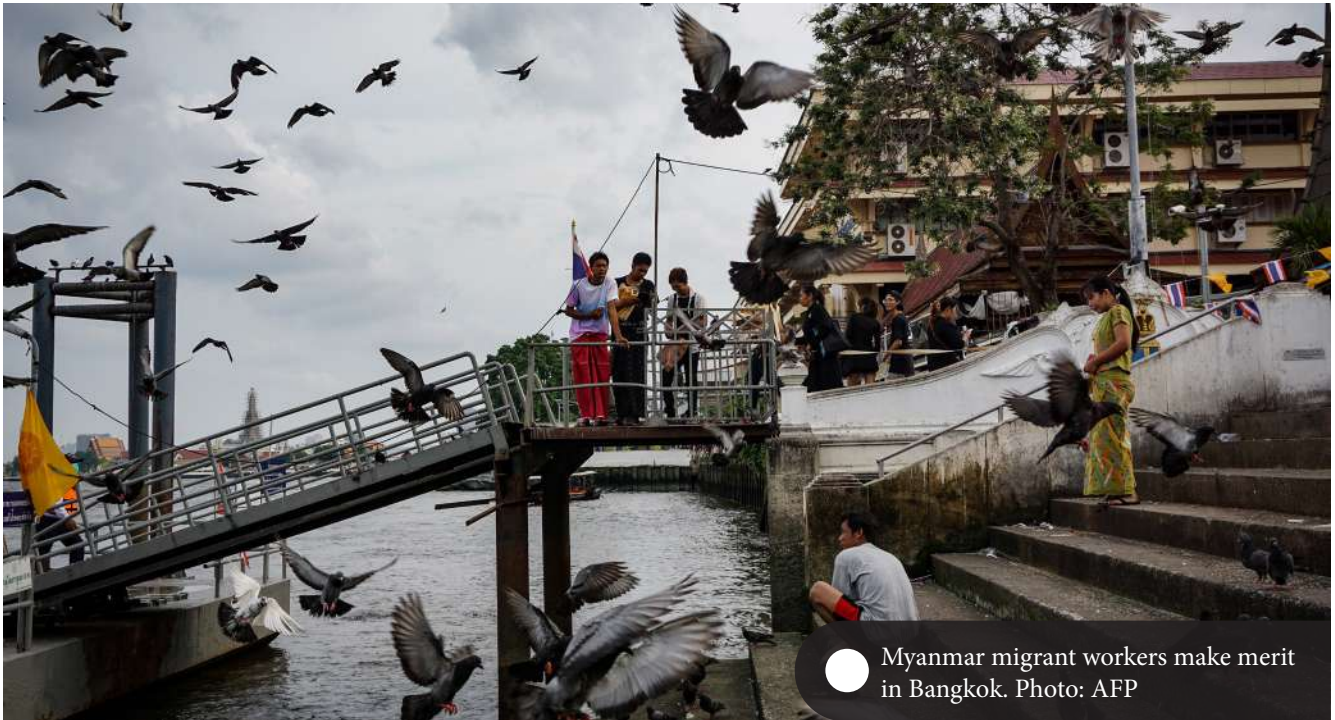
The company signed a contract with the government for the Thilawa project with 350 MW capacity and the Thaketa project with 400 MW installed capacity at the end of 2020 for a five-year term.

Reportedly these two projects had to be stopped in July 2021 as the Military Council could not pay for the service in foreign exchange after the coup.

Energy company sources said that after stopping the power generation the energy vessel was moored at Dolphin Jetty in Thilawa Port Block No. 14 for close to two years.

These power generation projects reportedly had to be stopped due to the rising price of LNG in the global market, the rising US dollar exchange rate in the country, low demand of power and difficulty faced by the ministry to pay for power generation.

THAI GOVERNMENT SEEKS MORE MIGRANT WORKERS FROM MYANMAR



Myanmar migrant workers make merit in Bangkok. Photo: AFP

NGOs working for Myanmar migrant workers say the Thai government is planning to call for more migrant workers from Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam.

The NGOs reportedly met with the Thai Ministry of Labour on 20 March and the officials discussed the issue but they have not yet disclosed how these migrant workers would be called for employment.

The people who are helping and assisting Myanmar migrant workers say Thai labour demand lies in manufacturing and construction work, primarily, and the use of Myanmar migrant workers would be convenient if the Thai government could give them temporary work permits, or pink cards, when the government implements this plan.

The Thai government reportedly issued about 700,000 temporary work permits (or pink cards) to the illegal migrant workers working in Thailand in 2022.

The migrant worker scene in Thailand was negatively affected by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-22, particularly as the borders were closed and care was taken to control the spread of the pandemic.

Penrose Thitsa

MYANMAR'S ECONOMY TO REMAIN DIMINISHED DUE TO VIOLENCE, POWER SHORTAGES, POLICY FAILURES: WORLD BANK REPORT

Myanmar's economy continues to suffer due to widespread violence, power shortages, and policy failures, resulting in severely diminished economic growth, Reuters reported citing a regional report by the World Bank.

The report predicts that Myanmar's GDP will only increase by 3 percent in the fiscal year until September.

The country's political and social turmoil has crippled its economy, and the situation is unlikely to improve anytime soon. The report states that electricity shortages, logistics disruptions, trade and foreign exchange restrictions, and regulatory uncertainty will continue to cause disruptions, and the business environment will not improve materially.

The World Bank reports that Myanmar's economic output is expected to remain well below pre-pandemic levels. Household purchasing power has decreased, and food and fuel prices have increased, according to the World Bank's report.

A Business owner told Mizzima in the condition of anonymity, "The extended power outages and rising fuel costs have a severe impact also on urban residents and adding to the unpredictability faced by businesses operating in the country."

CLOTHING RETAILERS HALT PRODUCTION IN MYANMAR DUE TO LABOUR AND HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES

Clothing retailers including Japan's Fast Retailing and the UK's Marks & Spencer are stopping their outsourced production in Myanmar, citing labour and human rights issues as well as logistical challenges, reported Apparel Resources, sourcing platform in India for the textile value chain.

The move comes after foreign businesses left Myanmar following the military takeover in February 2021, particularly those with joint ventures with militarily connected local partners.

The military junta has been accused of widespread human rights abuses and has suppressed protests against its takeover.

The minimum pay for factory workers has remained at 4,800 Kyat (\$1.68) since 2019, and trade unionists cannot safely negotiate with employers.

About 1.6 million workers in Myanmar lost their jobs in 2021 alone, as reported by the International Labour Organization in January 2022.



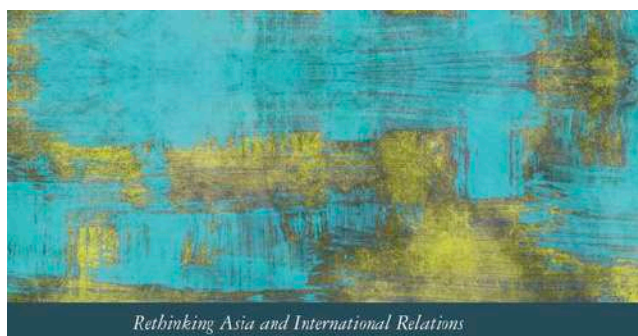
CALM IN MANDALAY

Visitors walk in front of the Mahar Myat Muni pagoda in Mandalay on March 29.

Photo: AFP

IN FOCUS





**CHINA AND EURASIAN
POWERS IN A MULTIPOLAR
WORLD ORDER 2.0**

**SECURITY, DIPLOMACY, ECONOMY AND
CYBERSPACE**

Edited by
Mher Sahakyan



**NEW BOOK ON ASIA AND
EUROPE TALKS OF A
MULTI-WORLD ORDER**

Russo–Ukrainian war, the Sino–Russian strategic partnership, China’s relations with the United States and the European Union, the influence of the Belt and Road Initiative, the expansion of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Eurasian Economic Union, China’s policies in the Middle East, Central Asia, Indo-Asia Pacific, the South Caucasus, Central and Eastern Europe, as well as focus on details of growing contradictions and collaboration in the Eurasian continent over markets, technologies, digital leadership, vaccine distribution, and financial institutions in the Era of Multipolar World Order 2.0.

Showing that the US-centred unipolar world order is replaced by Multipolar World Order 2.0 where conflicting powers fight to keep or extend their spheres of influence, this volume is of great interest to decision makers, diplomats, scholars and students of international relations, politics, global governance, Eurasian studies, Chinese studies, cybersecurity, and economics, and for those studying human security, international organizations, and geopolitics.

China and Eurasian Powers in a Multipolar World Order 2.0: Security, Diplomacy, Economy and Cyberspace, edited by Mher Sahakyan, looks at the changing world order as the balance of power shifts eastward.

The book is published by Routledge in March 2023.

The book argues that the world order is no longer unipolar, and the war in Ukraine proves this fact.

As this study describes and theorizes, it has been transformed into a Multipolar World Order 2.0 stage. This title critically examines Chinese, US, Russian, EU, Indian, Myanmar and a number of other powers’ cooperation and competition over security, diplomatic, economic and cyberspace issues.

Accomplished scholars from various regions of the Eurasian continent consider the impact of the



The world's focus is shifting eastward.
Photo: AXP Photography



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