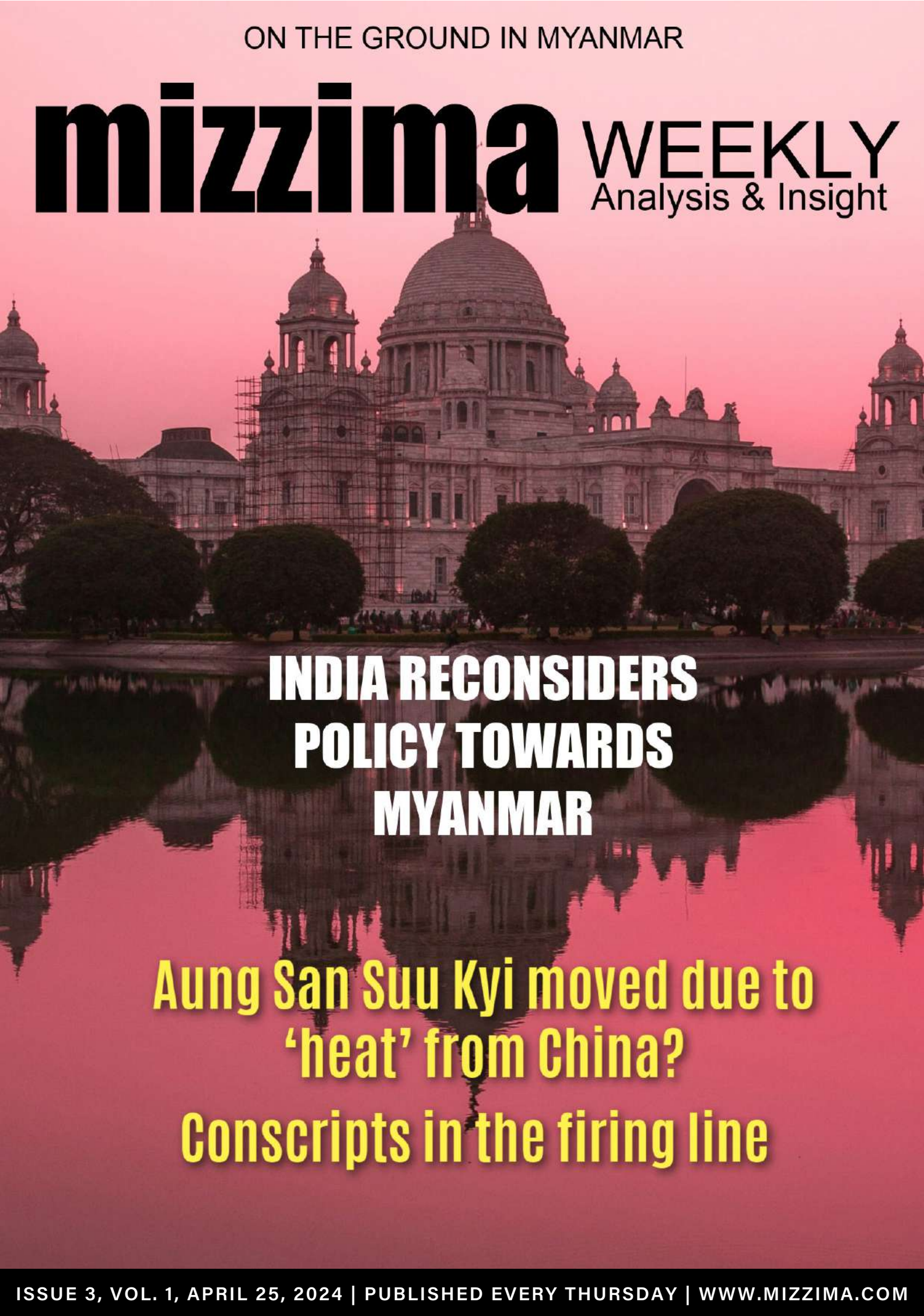


ON THE GROUND IN MYANMAR

# mizzima

WEEKLY  
Analysis & Insight



## INDIA RECONSIDERS POLICY TOWARDS MYANMAR

Aung San Suu Kyi moved due to  
'heat' from China?

Conscripts in the firing line

# mizzima WEEKLY

Analysis & Insight



# DIGITAL MAGAZINE

Our relaunched magazine Mizzima Weekly provides readers with a more focused read on what matters in Myanmar and the wider region, with an emphasis on analysis, insight and providing key talking points.

# MYANMAR JUNTA LEADER STRUGGLES WITH SETBACKS AND A DEMOCRACY ICON

**N**obody envies the current predicament of Myanmar junta leader Min Aung Hlaing.

Military positions are falling and soldiers are deserting. Generals within the ranks are grumbling. Even some of his supporters are upset at his performance and speaking out.

If that wasn't bad enough, the potential horror of a public-relations nightmare of Myanmar's democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi possibly dying of heatstroke in a non-airconditioned "prison box" has prompted a scramble to rehouse her and the former president Win Myint in more salubrious living quarters.

There is the tut-tutting of the dragon to the north. It has not gone without notice that China's ambassador to Myanmar, Chen Hai, recently met with former military regime strongman Than Shwe in Naypyidaw and members of the current junta with, no doubt, messages to "cool it" and seek solutions to the worsening Myanmar crisis that is threatening Chinese investments, infrastructure, trade and friendly relations. China is no fan of democracy but is certainly pragmatic.

Min Aung Hlaing hangs out in his ivory tower in Naypyidaw, a city purportedly built with astrologers' advice to protect the "men in green" from foreign invaders but in reality to protect them from their own irate people – Bamar and ethnic – living in the Golden Land.

It is impossible to know what Min Aung Hlaing is thinking but it may be dawning on him that he made a grave mistake in the early hours of 1 February 2021 when he pulled the rug from under the duly-elected civilian government of Aung San Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy (NLD) party and incarcerated its leaders. Now rumours are swirling that the junta may release

some jailed members of the NLD, a party removed from registration ahead of what Min Aung Hlaing claims will be a "free and fair" – though "limited" – election in the not-too-distant future.

Min Aung Hlaing – by ripping the reins from Suu Kyi's hands – misjudged the Myanmar people, particularly Generation Z, who had got used to expanding freedoms brought in under the Thein Sein regime, and picked up by the democrats in the NLD, in the wake of the 2015 election. He expected protests and then eventually a return to teeth-grinding normality as happened during previous challenges to military regime rule – particularly in 1988 and the early 1990s, and in the wake of the 2007 Safron Revolution. But Generation Z hit back under the banner of the Spring Revolution.

Now, one by one, the military junta's pawns are being removed from the chessboard, army positions falling, military colleagues growing doubtful, the failures adding up, leaving the power-hungry general with shrinking options, and an opposition of Spring Revolutionaries growing increasingly bold, knocking at the gates.

Min Aung Hlaing will be hoping that he can play a game in which when "peace" is sought by Myanmar players and the international community, he and his generals will be at the negotiating table, with a clear intent to include his military in a future federal Myanmar. But such a stance is anathema to the Spring Revolutionaries who are seeking to tear down revered General Aung San's hard-won creation.

## EDITORIAL

### mizzima WEEKLY

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Cover photo by Martin Jernberg





The heart of India - Delhi.  
Photo: Shalender Kumar

# INDIA RECONSIDERS POLICY TOWARDS MYANMAR

*Nicholas Nugent*

India is reviewing its relations with neighbour Myanmar in the wake of instability in Manipur State and as Myanmar's Rakhine State seems close to falling under rebel control.

India has traditionally regarded the northeast as a backwater, not significant in either political or economic terms. The eight states of the north-east will together send only 25 members to the 543-seat Lok Sabha in Delhi following the national election being held in April and June.

Yet the region abuts onto three important neighbours, Bangladesh, China and Myanmar, and can be a worry because of the narcotics, heroin and amphetamines, that permeate the porous international borders, especially that with Myanmar. Four Indian states, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram have borders with Myanmar.

## MANIPUR FRICTION

The government is currently concerned at the situation in Manipur where a violent civil conflict between Meitei and Kuki-Zo tribal communities has been raging since April 2023 killing at least 200 and displacing as many as 70,000 people. Delhi is worried at the apparent breakdown of law and order. In February a police officer was abducted by a radical Meitei group after a Meitei leader was arrested over an incident with a car. State police effectively went on strike, laying down their arms in protest, before both detained men were released. Police are said to be demoralised.

Lawlessness in Manipur is causing India's central government headaches but so too is the spilling over the border of refugees from the escalating war in Myanmar. Tens of thousands have taken refuge in the southern border state of Mizoram since the military junta seized power in Myanmar three years ago in February 2021 and started to wage war against its own people.

The exodus from Myanmar's Chin State has continued but lately it is often members of the country's security forces that have been seeking refuge in both India and Bangladesh. In February Bangladesh's foreign minister Hasan Mahmud told journalists in Delhi his country had agreed to return 388 people, mainly soldiers and border guards, to Myanmar.

India's National Security Adviser, Ajit Doval, said

over 700 "regime troops" had sought sanctuary in India since the previous November. Nearly 300 crossed into India on just one day, 17 January this year. The Bangladesh minister said the escalating conflict in Myanmar was "a matter of concern" for both India and Bangladesh.

Incursions by Myanmar security forces are believed to have resulted from military successes by the Three Brotherhood Alliance against the junta's army, known as the Tatmadaw. Since October three Ethnic Armed Organisations (EAOs) constituting the Alliance, the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) and the Arakan Army (AA), have engaged the Tatmadaw close to Myanmar's border with China.

## ETHNIC-PDF ALLIANCES

Ethnically based groups have long opposed successive central governments while seeking control of local fiefdoms. Since the 2021 military takeover they have operated in a loose alliance with the so-called People's Defence Forces or PDFs, whose main purpose is to contest military rule and restore democracy to Myanmar.

Since the start of this year, the fierce war for control of territory has spread and there are now battlefields on Myanmar's border with Thailand and in mountainous districts around the Chindwin River close to India in Chin State, Sagaing Division and Rakhine State, the last being the homeland of the Arakan Army.

## BORDER FENCE

Narendra Modi's BJP-led government in Delhi fears Myanmar's civil war spilling over into India because of the affinity between tribal communities on both sides of the international frontier, though its response appeared to be somewhat drastic. Home Minister Amit Shah told parliament in February the government planned to abrogate a long-standing agreement with Myanmar, last revised in 2018, which allows citizens of both countries to wander freely across the frontier without formalities, known as the Free Movement Regime (FMR). This allows free movement up to 16 kilometres on either side of the border.

Mr Shah said the government would erect a fence along the entire 1,643 km frontier with Myanmar "to ensure the internal security of the country and to maintain the demographic structure of India's north-

eastern states bordering Myanmar.” The government wants to stop the influx of illegal immigrants, drugs and gold smuggling. Official sources estimate the fence will cost a massive \$3.7 billion equivalent and, given the mountainous terrain, will take several years to complete.

The plans received a mixed reception in the four Indian states which border Myanmar. Arunachal Pradesh, which has the longest stretch of border at 512 km, was supportive. The state has a much longer - and disputed - border with China to the north and is not thought to receive much of an influx of people or drugs from Myanmar.

Manipur, whose border with Myanmar is 398 kilometres long, also backed the plan. Chief minister N. Biren Singh blames the FMR for allowing groups involved in Manipur’s current ethnic-based conflict, dubbed Indian Insurgent Groups or IIGs, to take refuge in Myanmar from the Assam Rifles, the Indian paramilitary force responsible for security along the border. The state’s political leaders hope that restricting cross-border movement will help quell the serious unrest in the state. In March the chief minister announced the repatriation of 77 Myanmar nationals including women and children.

## SOME GROUPS UNHAPPY

But Nagaland in the north and Mizoram to the south - with 215 kilometres and 510 kilometres long



Myanmar nationals protest in India's capital Delhi. Photo: AFP



borders with Myanmar respectively – protested at the plans because their tribal communities straddle what they regard as an artificial boundary created when Britain ruled both territories.

Nagaland’s chief minister Neiphiu Rio told reporters: “My village is on one side (of the border) and my kheti (farmland) is on the other. So there has to be a workable formula.” His deputy, Yanthungo Patton, said suspension of the FMR “will seriously disrupt the age-old historical, social, tribal, and economic ties of the Naga people living on both sides of the international border.”

The state assembly passed a resolution asking central government to reconsider its proposals because “traditional land holding system straddles across the international border in many areas, and people have to cross the international border on a daily basis for their normal cultivation activities”.

Mizoram’s ruling Zoram People’s Movement also opposed restrictions on free border crossing as did civil organisations such as the Young Mizo Association

and Zo United. Chief minister, Lalduhoma, said fencing the international border would mean accepting the demarcation imposed by the British during colonial period without consulting the Mizo people.

Mizos, the dominant group in Mizoram, and the Kuki-Zomi minority group of Manipur belong to the same Zo tribal or ethnic community as the Chins of Myanmar and Kuki-Chins of Bangladesh. Sometimes known collectively as ‘Zofas’, their traditional homeland, known as Zogam or the land of the Zo people, once embraced the area now encompassed by the Mizoram and Chin states.

Mizoram’s ruling party, which leads the only northeastern government not allied with prime minister Modi’s BJP-led National Democratic Alliance, has given support to Chin people fleeing Tatmadaw aggression in Chin State, much to the annoyance of the Delhi government. As many as 35,000 migrants are said to have moved from Chin State to Mizoram since the February 2021 military takeover. Most have crossed the steel bridge connecting the Myanmar border town of Khawmawi with Zokhawthar, enrolling their children



Women take to the streets in Manipur to protest the violence. Photo: AFP



FLASHBACK: Myanmar military chief Min Aung Hlaing, left, meets Indian PM Narendra Modi on a visit to Delhi in 2015. Photo: AFP

in schools in the border area. Others make their way onwards to the Mizoram capital, Aizawl.

## DELHI RETHINK

Meanwhile there are indications that Delhi is reconsidering its relationship with the military junta in power in Naypyidaw. There are healthy trade relations between the neighbours and India is believed to have supplied the junta with weapons as well as a submarine and played a role in modernising the Tatmadaw, while expressing its concern at the military leaders overthrow of the country's democratically elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy in 2021.

India has committed to a plan to build a 3,200 kilometres road connecting Guwahati in Assam to Bangkok in Thailand via Mandalay and Yangon in Myanmar. A plan to connect the port of Kolkata to

Sittwe in Myanmar is in doubt following the capture in January of the strategic town of Paletwa by the Arakan Army, which is now thought to control most of Rakhine State. Junta control of Sittwe port is now under threat as it is of the nearby Chinese-built port of Kyaukphyu. Of the Arakan Army's recent advance, an anonymous source told the Hindu newspaper "It is a matter of time before they establish control over the entire State of Rakhine, an unprecedented situation."

Some commentators believe that since the start of the Operation 1027 offensive of the Three Brotherhood Alliance - named for the October date it commenced - Delhi has started to question whether the junta can win what is undoubtedly a civil war against fighters of the large number of Ethnic Armed Organisations and Peoples Defence Forces (PDFs). Estimates of how little of the country's territory is under central government control range from 25 to 50 per cent. In Chin State,

junta-controlled territory is said to be as low as 10 per cent and following the latest rebel offensive the figure for Rakhine State may soon approach that.

The junta that rules Myanmar is an international pariah, shunned even by ASEAN, the regional organisation of which it is nominally a member. In early December its principal backer, China, considered switching sides after the regime lost control of the strategic trading township of Laukkai, heart of the Kokang region on Myanmar's border with China.

## CHINESE INTERVENTION

Then on 14 December China's top diplomat Wang Yi announced it had negotiated a ceasefire between the junta and the insurgents, apparently reaffirming Beijing's support for the government of Senior General Ming Aung Hlaing. China is far and away the main supporter and trading partner of Myanmar, a fact that causes some anxiety in Delhi. It has allegedly sold the junta \$250 million worth of arms including fighter aircraft.

Delhi has said little publicly about recent developments in Myanmar, but clues to official thinking can be gleaned from the words of former Indian ambassadors to Yangon, where Myanmar's diplomatic community are based. Writing last year in *The Wire*, an Indian on-line journal, former Indian ambassador Gautam Mukhopadhyaya argued that unless India's government starts to talk to the underground National Unity Government (NUG), which loosely coordinates the insurgency of EAOs and PDFs, it risks losing influence in Myanmar.

Another former ambassador to Yangon, Rajiv Bhatia, wrote recently in the Hindu newspaper that the unrecognised NUG "has defied the odds" winning many battles through the Peoples Defence Forces including in rural Bamar areas where EAOs have not traditionally been active.

Saying the military "has never faced such a dismal situation" as its defeat at the hands of the Three Brotherhood Alliance, and pointing to "considerable discontent within the military against its current leadership", Bhatia said the Indian government should be engaging with the National Unity Government, which is mainly made up of deposed former parliamentarians, as well as with some of the rebel groups.

## BROADENING SPACE

"India should balance its friendly ties with the military government by broadening the space for engagement with other shareholders." In this way, argued Bhatia, India can protect its national interests, while not interfering in Myanmar's internal affairs.

He also called on his government to negotiate the release from solitary confinement of the country's former leader, Aung San Suu Kyi. It would be surprising if India's current ambassador to Yangon was not giving similar advice to that of two of his predecessors.

For the next two months India will be preoccupied with its own exercise of democracy, while trying to maintain stability and security in the border state of Manipur. By the time the promised fence is built along the international frontier there is a strong likelihood that different forces will be in control in Myanmar.



# AUNG SAN SUU KYI MOVED DUE TO 'HEAT' FROM CHINA?

Myanmar was abuzz last week on the eve of New Year's Day when news slipped out that the country's democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi and former president Win Myint had been moved from prison to house arrest. News broke through Yangon-based Eleven Media, and independent media, on the evening of 16 April that Suu Kyi had been moved from her "hot house" solitary confinement in a Naypyidaw prison to her Naypyidaw house, and that Win Myint had been moved from a prison in Bago to a house in Naypyidaw. Concern had been voiced by Kim Aris that his mother was suffering from the heat in her confinement, without air-conditioning, and her health was deteriorating.

However, there is speculation from Myanmar watchers that the Myanmar junta may have faced some "heat" from China over The Lady's confinement.

The junta appears to be painting the move as a humanitarian gesture. RFA reports that junta spokesman Maj. Gen. Zaw Min Tun confirmed the transfers to Voice of America's Burmese service, saying that Suu Kyi and Win Myint were moved to relieve them from the brutal daytime heat during the hot season, when temperatures in Naypyidaw have soared above 40 degrees Celsius (102 F).

But the rising political heat from an imposing neighbour may have come into play, according to political commentators. China's ambassador to Myanmar in Yangon, Chen Hai, recently traveled to Naypyidaw to meet with former junta chief Than Shwe and other leaders of his military regime, which ruled from 1992 to 2011, RFA noted, though it is unclear whether he met with Suu Kyi. There is speculation that China may have turned up the heat on the Myanmar

junta to treat 78-year-old Suu Kyi with more decorum, given it has a great deal of leverage. China, for its part, is pragmatic and recognizes that the status quo will not hold in the medium term, and that the Myanmar junta's public image on the international stage is appalling – something that would not be helped if Suu Kyi fell ill – or worse - due to the conditions of her incarceration.

It is unclear what game the Myanmar junta is playing with the country's democracy icon. This may be part of concessions on the path to negotiations in which the military junta is involved – an idea anathema to the opposition National Unity Government (NUG) that does not want to see the junta sitting at the table. China and regional players may seek to put on pressure for peace negotiations, blaming the NUG and other opposition players if they decide not to sit at the table.

### Pressure building on captured trade hub Myawaddy?

Questions hang over the fate of the Myawaddy trade hub in Karen State on the Myanmar-Thailand border.

As of 23 April, approximately 200 soldiers of the State Administration Council (SAC), who lost their last defense base - No.275 Battalion, were forced to flee from a refuge on the border, as they were attacked

by joint resistance forces, primarily led by the Karen National Liberation Army-Karen National Union. At the time of writing, these SAC troops were in disarray.

Vice-Senior General Soe Win, leading the operation to reclaim Myawaddy, has encountered significant challenges. Based in the Southeastern Command in Mawlamyine, he was reportedly targeted twice by drone attacks operated by the People's Defense Force (PDF), sustaining injuries during the second assault. Rumours suggest he is undergoing treatment by Indian medical specialists, his absence from public view, particularly at the recent closing ceremony of the water festival, fueling speculation. The junta denies he was injured.

As SAC forces grapple with losses in border trade cities bordering China and India, including Lwegel in Kachin State, Chin Shwe Haw in Shan State and Rikhawdar in Chin State, they are reportedly intensifying efforts to retain control over Myawaddy. Reinforcements, comprising troops from the 22nd, 44th, 55th, and 77th Light Infantry Divisions, bolster the SAC's position. Soldiers from 55th LID were transported by Air KBZ, owned by a crony businessman, to Mawlamyine before marching toward Myawaddy.

Despite initial progress, the reinforced convoy faced fierce resistance along the road to Myawaddy, notably in Kawkareik. Ambushes orchestrated by KNLA/KNU



Junta troops on patrol. Photo: AFP



Resistance forces pose for a photo in Myawaddy. Photo: Supplied

forces result in significant impact on the convoy, leading to the loss of some armoured vehicles, trucks and 100 troops during a battle in Ta Tanku village, according to local media. The convoy appears to be regrouping for another attempt to reach their destination - Myawaddy, a critical trading city for the Thai-Myanmar border trade. To reach Myawaddy, the convoy has to traverse a 40-mile hillside road while enduring well-prepared ambushes from the joint resistance forces.

### Yangon security issues

On the evening of 9 April, two powerful explosions targetted the No. 323 Supply and Transport Battalion of the Myanmar military in Mingaladon township, Yangon. The North Okkalapa People's Defense Force (PDF) and the NOKA Urban Guerrilla group claimed responsibility for the explosions. In a statement, they declared their goal of continuing further attacks on sites associated with the SAC and urged the public to donate finances to implement their future missions.

On the following day, three members of the SAC security forces sustained injuries in a bomb explosion near the Mingaladon police station. Comrade Ayeik, the spokesperson of Dark Shadow Urban Guerrilla force, revealed that the bombs were strategically set near the

police station on the night of 9 April, and then detonated when security personnel attempted to clear them the following morning. Among the injured, one suffered a life-threatening injury, another lost a hand, and the third sustained a serious head injury. The Dark Shadow Urban Guerrilla group justified the operation as part of an "Urban Liberation" mission aimed at assisting the urban populace enduring oppression under the junta. They also appealed for financial support from the public for further operations.

### 'Divide and rule' and worsening situation for Rohingya

The Myanmar military junta continues its programme of "divide-and-rule" with the forced conscription of Muslim Rohingya in war-ridden Rakhine State, and their disinformation campaign including trolls and negative social media posts.

Reportedly, there have been increasing numbers of social media posts, purportedly from Rohingya complaining about attacks and crimes allegedly carried out by the Arakan Army (AA) against the Rohingya. As one Myanmar watcher noted, this smacks of disinformation, as the AA has reportedly been going out of its way to avoid civilian casualties and Rohingya

casualties. The AA understands the junta's game. But it may need to do more to counter false accusations, says the commentator.

## Myanmar military suffers from falling morale

With the number of military bases falling to the resistance, and the recent drone attacks on Naypyidaw, the morale of Myanmar's military forces has taken a blow.

A combination of factors negatively affect rank-and-file soldiers and the generals. The most obvious is the collapse of junta military positions, including resistance success in northern Shan State, Kachin State, Myawaddy in Karen State, and a string of losses at the hands of the Arakan Army in Rakhine State. Secondly, there are the deaths, capture or surrender of junta troops at the hands of the resistance forces. Thirdly, there is a growing sense of insecurity, as the resistance hit key junta positions, including the recent drone attacks on the military headquarters and airport in Naypyidaw, and the preceding attack on the Defence Service Academy grounds. And, fourthly, the reshuffling of generals, including the jailing of generals who failed to defend their positions in the field.

The junta hierarchy has been re-organized four separate times and only 11 of 51 individuals beneath the level of prime minister and deputy prime minister have served their full terms, reports RFA. At present, the junta has only 18 members, as Min Aung Hlaing surrounds himself with his most loyal followers – particularly after some supporters publicly voiced complaints against him for his failure to defend the country, as they put it. The Institute of Strategy and Policy (ISP), recently reported that there have been 56 personnel changes to the junta's State Administration Council (SAC) since it was established just after the February 2021 coup.

Since March, the SAC has replaced four regional military commanders. In early April, the SAC fired its deputy minister of defense, Maj. Gen. Aung Lin Tun – at China's urging – for his alleged profiteering from transnational crime scam centres. While there was little physical damage, the psychological impact is more important. Naypyidaw is the impregnable fortress of the SAC. That's why and how it was built. It's the physical manifestation of the mental bubble that the generals live in.

The National Unity Government says the attack conveys a sense that the junta does not have a safe place to reside. The junta reportedly is redeploying troops to Naypyidaw.

That said, the drone attacks on the capital are lowering morale.

## India-Myanmar border issues

India's Union Home minister, Mr. Amit Shah, has mentioned several times that their government plans to construct a fence over the 1,000 miles (1,643 kilometers) long India-Myanmar border. This decision follows Shah's initial announcement on 20 January in Assam. In addition, they would like to enhance surveillance and have a patrol track along the border. The move comes amidst escalating armed conflicts in Myanmar's border states, such as Rakhine State, between the Myanmar Army and Ethnic Revolutionary Organizations. Concerns have been voiced over potential spillover effects into Indian states like Mizoram and Manipur, where existing civil unrest between the Meitei majority and indigenous Kuki communities persists.

The Indian central government's characterization of the Kuki community as foreigners in Manipur, further fuels tensions. Blame for civil unrest is directed towards refugees and drug dealers purportedly entering India from Myanmar. The expenditure of the India has allocated \$3.7 billion to spend over the next 10 years on the ambitious border project aimed at stopping illicit activities, though specifics of how the money will be spent have not been disclosed. Concerns over internal security and maintaining the demographic balance of India's northeastern states bordering Myanmar caused India's Home Affairs Minister to declare the suspension of the Free Movement Regime (FMR) with Myanmar. This decision reflects India's proactive measures to mitigate potential security threats stemming from the volatile situation in Myanmar.

On the other hand, Chin State in Myanmar has witnessed a surge in drug production and trading following the February 2021 coup. Illustrating the extent of the problem, on 18 March 2024, Mizoram police and the Assam Rifles army unit seized over 2 kilogrammes of heroin in a border area operation.



Yangon revelers during Thingyan.  
Photo: AFP

## MYANMAR'S DAMPENED AND EXPLOSIVE THINGYAN WATER FESTIVAL CELEBRATION

The public turnout for Myanmar Thingyan celebrations put on by the military junta in cities in Myanmar 13-15 April was low and suffered from some disruptions.

The annual water festival, known as Thingyan in Myanmar, typically sees people gathering to celebrate by splashing water and throwing powder at each other as a symbol of cleansing and washing away the sins from the past year. The festival marks the start of the traditional New Year and is similarly celebrated in countries such as Thailand, Laos and Cambodia.

While Thailand saw millions of people on the streets in the cities and countryside throwing water, Myanmar had a dampened celebration, with junta supporters turning up at "pandals" or stages in the major cities including Yangon, Naypyidaw and Mandalay.

Festivities in Mandalay were disrupted at approximately 10:30 am on 14 April near the Mayor's Pavilion, when two bombs exploded, resulting in injuries to at least 10 individuals, according to a local resident. The explosions occurred in the car and bike parking area adjacent to the Mayor's Pavilion in the middle of the city. Revelers left the area, but some returned in the evening.

Yangon was largely quiet. Local resident said, "There

are very few cars on the streets and neighborhoods. It was almost impossible to see a car or group that came out to play in the water. Walking street and the People's Square and Park, I saw people."

The resident added that for those who did attend festivities there were strict security checks.

The opening ceremonies of the 2024 Thingyan Festival were not attended by the top leaders of the military junta, such as General Min Aung Hlaing and General Soe Win. The opening ceremony of the Naypyidaw Mayor's Thingyan Pavilion and Walking Thingyan Pavilion was led by the Secretary of the Military Junta Gen Aung Lin Dwe and the opening ceremony of the Water Sports Pavilion of the Defense Headquarters (Army, Air, and Air) families was attended by the Commander-in-Chief General Maung Maung Aye, according to Kyemon newspaper.

Meanwhile, on the evening of 14 April, the tranquility Pyin Oo Lwin was broken by a resistance rocket attack that reportedly killed four people and wounded 12, including cadets from the military's elite officer academy, Myanmar's equivalent of West Point or Britain's Sandhurst. Residents reported on social media that they heard loud explosions, the result of rockets hitting the area.





# MAYOR'S WATER FESTIVAL PAVILION ROCKED BY EXPLOSIONS IN MANDALAY

Partying at the Mayor's Pavilion in Mandalay, just before the attack. Photo: Supplied

In Mandalay, at approximately 10:30 am on 14 April which was the second day of the Thingyan water festival, near the Mayor's Pavilion, two bombs detonated, resulting in injuries to at least 10 individuals, according to a local resident.

The explosions occurred in the car and bike parking area adjacent to the Mayor's Pavilion, situated between 26th and 27th Street.

"I initially couldn't pinpoint the source of the explosion. Upon hearing the sound, I fled. While fleeing, I heard another blast. People scattered around the Mandalay moat and city walls. Performances at the mayor's pavilion also ceased," said a taxi driver awaiting passengers on 26th Street.

A nearby resident said, "The blasts occurred in the car parking and bike stop area. There were one or two detonations roughly five minutes apart. As of now, I haven't heard of any fatalities. However, more than 10 individuals sustained injuries."

Despite extensive armed security deployed throughout the vicinity to safeguard the Mayor's Pavilion and ensure visitor safety, the bombs were still detonated.

"The Mayor's Pavilion is in close proximity to the city hall and municipal office. Following the bomb explosion, festivities and entertainment for Thingyan ceased. The area has been evacuated but festivities and entertainment resumed later in the evening," said a charity worker who arrived to assist the injured.

The wounded have been transported to Mandalay Hospital, and charity workers have been prohibited by the Military Council from disseminating images of the injured.

In the aftermath of the explosion, reports indicate that the Military Council is conducting clearance operations for landmines and bombs around the Mandalay moat and city walls, with a focus on inspecting young bikers, as reported by residents.

Despite the bomb blasts, it has been reported that the Mayor's Pavilion remained crowded with individuals engaging in water activities on the evening of 14 April and into 15 April.



# MYANMAR RESISTANCE ROCKET **ATTACK KILLS FOUR, WOUNDS** MILITARY CADETS IN PYIN OO LWIN

**A** rocket attack by Myanmar anti-coup fighters killed four people and wounded 12, including cadets from the military's elite officer academy, junta officials said 15 April.

Myanmar's military authorities, who are struggling to maintain their grip on the country in the face of rising armed opposition, condemned the attack in the central town of Pyin Oo Lwin as targeting civilians.

Fighters from a local "people's defence force" (PDF) - armed groups of pro-democracy civilians that have risen up to battle the army - "randomly shot" 11 rockets on 14 April evening, hitting a hospital, monastery and hotel, the junta said. The dead include two monks, it said.

Pyin Oo Lwin, a former British hill station near the central city of Mandalay, is home to the Defence Services Academy - Myanmar's equivalent of West Point or Britain's Sandhurst.

Junta spokesman Zaw Min Tun confirmed three cadets from the academy were wounded in the attack.

A spokesman for Mandalay PDF said its fighters carried out the attack, saying they targeted only the academy.

AFP



**CONSCRIPTS IN THE FIRING LINE**

Captured conscripts. Photo: Supplied

A worrying development was revealed recently that indicates the fears of many Myanmar youth may be realized. Conscripts – forcibly inducted into the Myanmar military, following a junta announcement on 10 February – have been attacked and killed by resistance forces in at least one incident.

Resistance forces in Sagaing attacked a Myanmar junta convoy killing 20 soldiers, including new recruits, and capturing 49 alive, reports the No. 1 Military Region of the Ministry of Defense under the National Unity Government (NUG) on 14 April.

The attack happened at about 2 pm near Kamphyu village in Ayadaw Township in the Sagaing region.

On 12 April, a convoy comprising of five twelve-wheel vehicles, a military vehicle, 250 new recruits, and junta soldiers from the Military Council's Supply and Transport company (929) of the Northwest Military Command in Monywa Town were en route to the No. (10) training Depot in Ayadaw Township through Monywa.

During the assault by local People's Defence Forces (PDF), three twelve-wheel vehicles belonging to the Military Council were damaged, resulting in approximately 20 recruits, including a captain, being killed and 15 injured and No. 1 Military Region confirmed the capture of 49 individuals.

"Avoiding harm to civilians, some of whom ran in front of us during the attack, was a priority. The remaining soldiers fled in the remaining vehicles," said a member of the PDF involved in the operation.

The No. 1 Military Region reported the seizure of seven small arms and 5,500 assorted ammunition, including 80 types of bombs, 10 RPG-7 rockets, and other military equipment.

The attack was carried out by various groups including Monywa District Battalion 6, 19, and 24, Monywa District Commando Force, Monywa District Armed Force, Ayadaw Township PDF, Ayadaw local resistance force, Meikhtila District Battalion-2, Danger Force LPDF, Black Panther LPDF, and the Special Revolution Force LPDF.

The attack came at a time when the Myanmar junta is stepping up its mandatory military conscription programme, originally announced on 10 February. Originally, the junta claimed the conscription would begin after the Thingyan water festival period.

But even before this announcement, on 29 March, recruits who had been enlisted were observed being sent for military training, as reported by family members of the victims. The junta has yet to disclose the precise number of trainees participating in training.



Photo: AFP

## ROHINGYA MARK EID IN INDONESIA LIMBO AFTER TREACHEROUS SEA VOYAGE

**A**t a damaged temporary shelter in western Indonesia, Rohingya men slick their hair with gel while women apply make-up and colourful hijabs to look the part for prayers at the start of Eid-al-Fitr festivities.

But the group of refugees are spending the end of Ramadan celebrations away from their families after surviving a dangerous sea journey from squalid Bangladesh camps for an uncertain future in the world's most populous Muslim-majority nation.

At least 75 refugees are staying at a local official's office in ultra-conservative Aceh province where many of the persecuted Myanmar minority land every year.

Most of them survived their rickety boat capsizing last month and being stranded on its rusty hull for more than a day.

Men, women and children unfolded mats by tent

shelters for a sombre morning prayer at the start of the Muslim holiday, with some mothers drawing henna tattoos on the hands of their young daughters.

As a preacher began to sing the notes of the morning prayer in front of makeshift tents, tears rolled down the faces of Rohingya men who stared at the floor with their arms crossed.

"Here, we have no siblings. My family is not here, that's why I cried," said Mohammad Rizwan, 35.

"Some also cried earlier because their mother, father, or siblings died due to the boat capsizing. One friend of mine lost six or seven family members."

The mostly Muslim ethnic Rohingya are heavily persecuted in Myanmar, and thousands risk their lives each year on long and expensive sea journeys to try to reach Malaysia or Indonesia.

## CORE DEVELOPMENTS

From mid-November to late January, more than 1,700 Rohingya refugees landed on Indonesian shores, according to the UN refugee agency.

### 'Want to go'

The Rohingya men are sleeping on mats on a crumbling floor strewn with trash inside the shelter building, after being relocated from an old Red Cross facility due to local anger.

But some are still trying to make the best out of a bad situation.

"In our hometown, there's a celebration for Eid. There were mothers, fathers, siblings, relatives. Now, even here, I still feel happiness, despite the disaster at sea," said Dostgior, who goes by one name. He added that he was thankful for the "feasting and chatting" with fellow survivors.

"If God willed it, I might have died at sea. But my fate is good, so I am alive."

Others were praying to carry on their journeys to another country, with Indonesia not giving them permanent stay and Aceh locals holding protests against their presence in recent months.

"The people of Indonesia have helped us a lot with food and clothes. They show their humanity to us," said Zlabul Hoque, 33.

"Eid is knocking (on) the door. I don't know where

they take us after Eid. We want to go to Malaysia."

### 'We are silent'

Aid agencies have appealed to Jakarta to accept more, but Indonesia is not a signatory of the UN Refugee Convention and says it is not compelled to take in refugees from Myanmar.

As the prayers ended, the men stood up from their mats, wiped their faces. The mic'd-up preacher also began to cry.

The men hugged each other, wailing out loud with grief as they remembered the relatives lost on the treacherous ocean journey.

After praying behind the men, the women returned to their tent, holding one another and weeping in unison. One cried so hysterically that she had to be helped back to one of the shelter tents.

"We do not understand any language here. We don't know anything yet. So we are silent, we can't even go anywhere," said 17-year-old Dilkayas.

"What else will we do during Eid? We don't have a home here."

AFP

# mizzima WEEKLY

Analysis & Insight



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A private school. Photo: Mizzima

## MYANMAR JUNTA TERMINATES UNREGISTERED PRIVATE SCHOOLS

According to the junta's Private Education Law implemented in May 2023, unregistered schools face termination, according to an announcement by the Private School Supervisory Board of the Ministry of Education on 11 April.

The recently enacted Private Education Law requires all private institutions, offering primary, secondary and tertiary as well as those providing technical and vocational education and training, to register with a new central registration body.

Private higher education, technical, and vocational schools, along with basic education and language institutions, were expected to have registered by 12 April.

The registration entails a five-year fee of 6 million kyats and an annual fee of 5 million kyats, totaling 11 million kyats, which poses challenges for self-established schools, said a school founder in Rakhine State.

"The registration fee for five years is 6 million Kyat, and the annual fee must be paid every year. This poses a significant financial burden for self-established schools. While it may not be an issue for well-established schools with around one to two hundred students, smaller self-established schools opening this year face challenges," he said.

Dr. Zaw Myint, the junta's Minister of Education, revealed on 28 March that despite the junta setting

the final registration deadline for 8 March, some large private schools had not yet submitted their applications.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, the leader of the coup, signed the enactment of the Private Education Law, which includes restrictions on private schools, on 12 May, 2023.

According to the law, the establishment, termination, and curriculum of private schools are under the control of the junta's Private School Supervisory Board.

The law also prohibits private schools from lecturing, teaching, or discussing political parties and issues. Failure to comply could result in imprisonment for six months to a year and fines ranging from three to 5 million kyats.

Additionally, establishing private schools without registration may lead to imprisonment for one to two years and fines ranging from 30 to 50 million kyats.

Before the February 2021 coup, the Ministry of Education had approved over 1,000 private schools to operate nationwide. The number of private schools currently applying for registration with the junta is yet to be determined.

# NUG'S YE-U TOWNSHIP EDUCATION BOARD FINING OF STUDENTS NOT AUTHORISED BY NUG

The National Unity Government's (NUG's) Ministry of Education is at loggerheads with its own Ye-U Township Education Board over the board's plan to fine students who have studied in the military-run education system.

In Ye-U Township and the neighbouring Khin U Township in Sagaing Region, defence forces control most of the area but fighting still erupts in different parts of the townships where there are still junta forces.

There is a lack of formal administration in Khin U Township and many other areas of Sagaing Region. Despite ongoing fighting in some areas, to help resolve the situation the NUG has tried to establish interim governance and education in Ye-U and the rest of Sagaing Region.

To that end, the Ye-U Township Education Board was established under the NUG.

In a 10 April statement, the Ye-U Education Board said that students who had not taken part in the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) against the junta, or who had attended interim education schools run by the junta would have to pay fines of between 300,000 to 500,000 kyats to the Ye-U Township Education Board, if they wanted to attend any middle or high schools operated by the NUG.

A spokesman for the NUG's Ministry of Education, Nay Phone Latt, said that the Ministry had not authorised the statement.

He said "It [the fines] was not authorised by the Ministry of Education. We were not instructed to implement it."

Mizzima spoke to Thingyan Phyo, the head of the Ye-U Township Board of Education who explained that the decision was taken at a Township Education Board meeting.

He said: "We are primarily concerned about the well-being of CDM teachers, students, and our displaced citizens. We convened a meeting due to the military council's repeated destruction of eight schools and airstrikes on five schools in Ye U Township."

Unfortunately, he did not explain how issuing unauthorised fines on non-CDM students and students who had studied in the junta education system and who wanted to continue their studies under the NUG would help the well-being of teachers, students and displaced citizens.



# BEWARE THE GAMES THAT SEEK TO KEEP THE MYANMAR MILITARY IN A POSITION OF POWER

Igor Blazevic

On 17, April, Thai Prime Minister reposted a Facebook post by Thai Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Pampree Bahiddha-Nukara welcoming the news that former Myanmar State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and former president Win Myint had been moved from prison to their respective homes.

It is really a pity that Thai Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Pampree Bahiddha-Nukara is making such statement and that Thai Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin is reposting it. They should be more considerate with the feelings of the hard-tested people of Myanmar who have endured over three years of military terror.

First, there are no positive steps done by military junta. Aung San Suu Kyi and U Win Myint have not been “moved from prison to their homes”. They are still prisoners and hostages of the junta. They have been “moved” from one prison to another prison. That is all. What the junta is doing is once more throwing smoke bombs to divert attention from the fact that their rule is

crumbling and they are suffering humiliating defeats. The military is cracking on all sides and the junta is trying to hide that behind the fog of false narratives.

Second, calling imprisoned Aung San Suu Kyi and U Win Myint “former” is adding insult to injury. Political leaders of this friendly neighbouring country should be more careful in the language they chose.

Third, it is not Aung San Suu Kyi or U Win Myint who are “former”. It is coup maker Min Aung Hlaing who will be “former” and not too much time will pass before this will happen.

The people of Myanmar have proven with their own heroism and readiness to endure hardship and struggle that they are the only ones who will decide who will be “former” and who will shape the future of Myanmar.

It is, however, no surprise that such a statement is coming from Deputy Prime Minister Pampree and Prime Minister Srettha.



China and Thailand (ASEAN) have been playing a very problematic diplomatic game since the end of last year and since Myanmar military junta started to suffer one significant defeat after another.

China and Thailand do not want the junta to be a total winner, but they are also afraid of the military being defeated. They see how incompetent, hated and weak the junta is. They understand that the military is not able to consolidate control over the country. However, they cannot imagine Myanmar without dominant military rule. Neighbours are afraid of the military collapsing.

For that reason, they are trying to persuade the junta to become more "cooperative" and "tame". They are trying to make them more acceptable.

Min Aung Hlaing junta is not able to be tame and acceptable, but neighbours believe that the moment is right, that the military is so weakened and in existential crisis, that they will be ready for some compromises.

That is why both Thailand and China are so loudly welcoming "positive steps" when there are no positive steps in reality - just the junta's pathetic and well-known stupid game of cheating and creating false narratives.

China and Thailand want to persuade and pressure all Myanmar stakeholders to come to the negotiating table.

They also want to take revolution out of the political future of Myanmar. They do not believe in the possibility and they do not want deep and big change in Myanmar - one in which the military will be removed from politics and Myanmar will become decentralized, federal democratic country.

Neighbours do not want what the people of Myanmar want. That is why they are meddling.

Neighbours want to bring back the 2011 situation, in which the military will remain in the centre of Myanmar politics and will remain the dominant player. Neighbours would also like to find someone else who will politically "represent" the Bama population and they would like to break the current NUG & EROs alliance to make the EAO a separate political actor, which will represent ethnic nationalities.

China and Thailand want to bring back Myanmar politics in the 2011 triangle of an "elite pact". They do not want the victory of the people's revolution.

This is why they are helping the junta play this manipulative game with Aung San Suu Kyi and U Win Myint. They want to give the impression that there is "positive development" when there is none.

Neighbours would like, anyhow they can, to replace the revolutionary NUG-EROs alliance with someone with the reputation and popularity of Aung San Suu Kyi to become part of an "elite pact".

This will not work.

Min Aung Hlaing has never been and is still not able to agree to any compromising move. In his disillusioned Napoleonic mind, he will continue to try to gain control through destruction, terror, lies and cheating. He will do that until his own fall.

There is very little reason to assume that Aung San Suu Kyi will accept becoming a puppet of manipulative games that intend to help the military junta survive.

The people of Myanmar and resistance forces, both from ethnic and from the Bama side, have learned the hard way that they cannot trust the military. Now when they have the military on the ropes and they have a historic opportunity to remove military regime, they have little reason to accept military dominance once again.

Unfortunately, key Myanmar neighbours believe that bringing back Myanmar politics to the triangle of the elite pact can work. This is what China and Thailand, each on its own, are trying to achieve.

By doing that, they are prolonging the conflict in Myanmar and they are deepening the suffering of the people of the country.

*Igor Blazevic is a democracy activist with many years of experience in Myanmar.*



Iran and Israel get the headlines, less so Myanmar. Photo: AFP

## KEEPING MYANMAR IN THE NEWS AS WORLD WATCHES EXPANDING MIDDLE EAST CONFLAGRATION

Mizzima Commentary

Two items of news screamed for world attention on Friday 19 April as accounts were published on Israel's missile attacks on Iran and at the same time ASEAN foreign ministers expressed "deep concern" over the Myanmar conflict escalation.

The two issues are not directly linked but in the highly politicized world media realm the Israel-Iran conflict garnered a slew of "breaking news" headlines, whereas the Myanmar conflict gained limited attention.

It is hard to stress that Myanmar matters when a world crisis looms on the horizon. The major danger is the Israel-Iran conflict could spiral out of control, further drawing in major players including the USA, China and Russia, and one of the fallouts could be an oil and trade crisis, with growing warnings the standoff could descend into World War III.

World media attention is likely to rise to fever point over the Middle East conflagration, drowning out even the 24/7 coverage of the Ukraine conflict, as US politicians argue about Ukraine and Israel aid packages – efforts that continue to fuel both conflicts.

Under these circumstances, keeping Myanmar under scrutiny by the world media is a tough call.

But the Myanmar crisis matters on a local, regional and world level.

Regional bloc ASEAN said it is "deeply concerned" about the recent upsurge in fighting in Myanmar, after fierce clashes over a key trading hub near the Thai border. The foreign ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations urged "all parties for an immediate cessation of violence" in Myanmar, which has been roiled by conflict since the military seized power in a February 2021 coup.

The ministers' statement issued late Thursday last week said ASEAN was "deeply concerned over the recent escalation of conflicts, including in the area of

Myawaddy".

ASEAN's reputation as a regional forum is sullied by the ongoing conflict in Myanmar and the forum's failure to make progress with their 5-Point Consensus for peace, an agreement not worth the paper it is written on. The Myanmar conflict also negatively affects neighbourly relations with the bordering states of China, India, Bangladesh and Thailand. It affects plans for communications and infrastructural development – particularly for China and India – and puts on hold Delhi's "Act East" drive. The conflict worsens geopolitical divides, as seen in the competition for influence between the USA and China, and the negative effects of Russia's financial and military support for the junta.

Aside from Afghanistan, which is currently relatively calm under the iron rule of the "Islamist" Taliban, the conflict in Myanmar is the only critical war in the economically growing and developing Asia region. It should garner attention. It is a bitter civil war that has seen instances of horrific brutality and the arrest and imprisonment of thousands of civilians perpetrated by the military junta. And even the most poorly informed news watcher recognizes its "democracy icon" and Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi. For a short time, she led an emerging democracy that was eventually trashed by the country's military generals. The intensifying battle by Myanmar's Spring Revolutionaries is a historical and game-changing development that calls out for media attention.

Aside from such independent local media outlets, such as Mizzima, Irrawaddy, Myanmar Now and DVB, Myanmar does on occasion receive media attention through news stories and occasional documentaries, such as those put out by Al Jazeera, ABC and Sky News, and briefer video news from Reuters and AFP. A number of documentaries demonstrate the dedication of TV and video journalists to cover certain aspects of the conflict – reporting that poses a significant personal threat.

Right now, all eyes are on the Middle East. There is good reason for that. But one would hope that world media organizations pencil in Myanmar in their news planning. After all, keeping the Golden Land in the news matters.

*Additional reporting: AFP*

## UN SAYS SOLUTIONS EXIST TO RAPIDLY EASE DEBT BURDEN OF POOR NATIONS

The heavy debt weighing on developing countries can be alleviated through readily available measures, the UN's trade and development chief said, pleading for bold international action.

Rebeca Grynspan compared the debt burden facing poorer countries to "a reverse blood transfusion", with money flowing "from the ones that need it to the ones that don't".

In 2022 - the last year for which there are clear statistics - developing countries "paid almost \$50 billion more to their external creditors than they received in fresh disbursements", UNCTAD said in a recent report.

"What we need to be aware is that the markets are not in distress, people are," Grynspan told AFP in an interview this week. "We are in a debt crisis."

The former Costa Rican vice president and government minister pointed out that it was "the small and medium-sized countries that don't move the markets, that are the ones that are in the distress".

They are "in a situation where they are spending more on their debt than on human development, on their own health or education" systems.

### 'Too slow'

UNCTAD, she said, estimated that currently "there are 52 countries that are either in debt distress or on the brink of debt distress".

Grynspan said she planned to address the issue during this week's meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank in Washington.

Grynspan, who in 2021 became the first woman to lead the agency, has raised its profile by participating

in G20 meetings, and also by representing the UN on difficult briefs.

She has among other things played a vital role in negotiations towards ensuring the continued export of fertilisers from Russia -- vital for global food security.

There have been numerous efforts over the decades to resolve debt problems weighing on poor countries, but Grynspan said they have been so slow and complicated that they often act as a "deterrent".

"Countries think twice before they go into a restructuring process that takes so long," she said, so "they prefer to pay, although the cost and pain is so big".

"It's a huge cost for the population."

Grynspan hailed efforts underway to lessen the burden on countries appealing for aid, including an IMF call to speed up the treatment of debt relief applications.

She stressed though that "these are ad hoc mechanisms".

In the long term, "we need an internationally-agreed, stable mechanism for debt restructure."

### 'Great relief'

Some countries do not have the luxury of waiting for the creation of such a mechanism, and need immediate relief, she said.

Grynspan highlighted that the dire situations many countries face stem more from cascading crises suffered during the Covid-19 pandemic than from government mismanagement.

"So there is a reason and a rationale for the international community to come with much more help



United Nations. Photo: Mathias Reding

and support for these countries," she said.

"A low-hanging fruit," she said, would be to remove the surcharges that 17 countries currently pay to the IMF.

Exempting them from those charges, which are aimed at encouraging countries to quickly exit IMF assistance, would swiftly free up \$2 billion, according to Grynspan.

That money, she said, could provide "great relief" if used towards "the needs of the people of these countries".

She also hailed an idea put forward by the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and its African counterpart to provide guarantees to "really lower the premium of the interest rates in the developing countries" to attract private investment.

And she suggested accelerating the IMF's Resilience and Sustainability Trust (RST), aimed at helping vulnerable countries build resilience to shocks, including from climate change.

Other interesting proposals, she said, included to swap debt for nature, and to automatically suspend interest payments for countries hit by natural disasters.

"Those are things that can be decided today," Grynspan said.

"We don't have to wait a decade to have results."

# RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE

**S**aw Htee Char, working under a pseudonym for safety reasons, has been heavily involved in Myanmar since the devastating Cyclone Nargis in 2008, according to Insight Myanmar in a recent podcast interview.

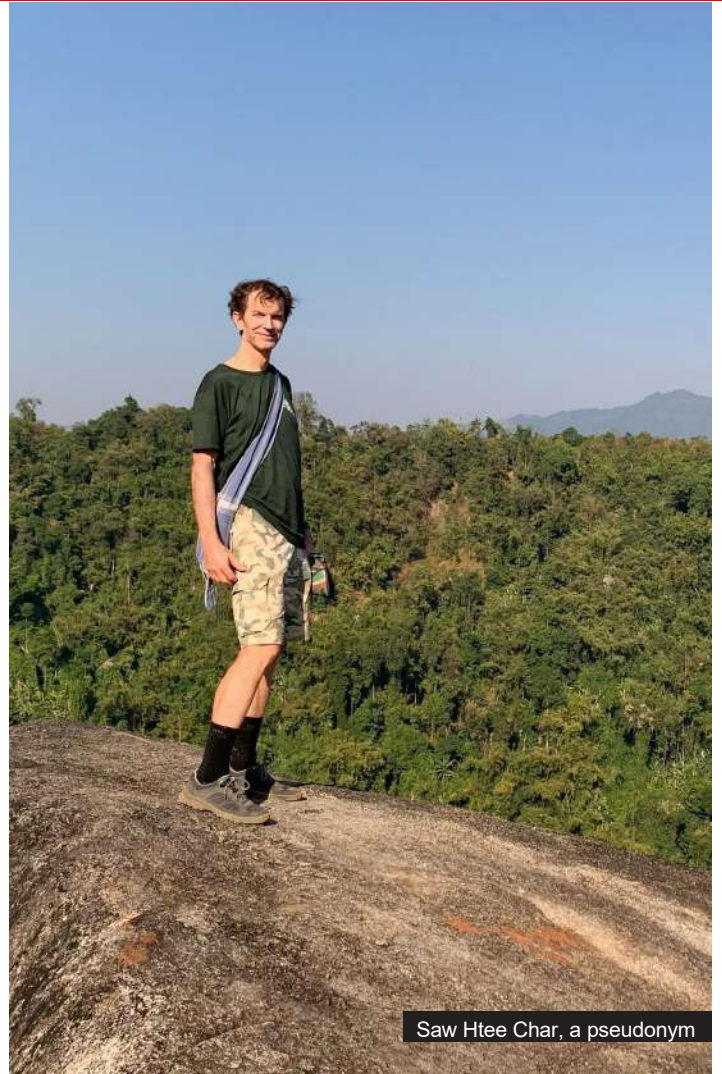
Recognizing a significant gap in accessible, reliable information about the conflict in Myanmar, Saw Htee Char established the Substack page, "Burma Coup Resistance Notes".

Insight Myanmar says that contrary to the often simplistic and misleading interpretations of the conflict as an internal issue with blame on both sides, Saw Htee Char presents a starkly different picture. He exposes the brutal and sadistic nature of the military regime's efforts to monopolize power, and highlights the desperate struggle of the Burmese people for a return to the semblance of democracy they experienced between 2015 and 2020.

Saw Htee Char's analysis delves into the military's strategic and operational failures. Despite its significant manpower and armaments, the military has consistently lost territory and failed to suppress the ethnic militias it has faced for decades. They now face widespread resistance that has grown in sophistication and determination, challenging the military's control even in traditionally Bamar-majority regions.

Saw Htee Char points to Operation 1027 and subsequent actions that have fueled momentum for the resistance, leading to a progressively shrinking sphere of control for the military. The junta's reliance on air power, he explains, is a sign of desperation rather than strength, drawing parallels with historical lessons on the limitations of air superiority in achieving control without effective ground forces.

"I just consider this this story so inspiring," he says in closing. "And you also have to acknowledge that the people of Myanmar have received very little support from outside! They've been left to themselves and they've done it anyway, and that's even more incredible,



Saw Htee Char, a pseudonym

given that they've got some powerful countries against them, including China, Russia, and India, ... those who have supplied weapons to the junta or diplomatic recognition, even United Nations agencies that have played into the hands of the junta... So the people of Myanmar have carried through the struggle on their own against some very powerful foreign forces. And when they win, this victory will belong entirely to them. They will not owe anybody anything!"

#### CHECK OUT PODCAST HERE:

<https://player.captivate.fm/episode/fa695df8-c254-489c-be8b-46332c49c2ff>



## JUNTA GRANTS AMNESTY TO OVER 3,300 PRISONERS FOR MYANMAR'S BUDDHIST NEW YEAR

**M**ore than 3,300 prisoners were granted amnesty by the Myanmar junta on April 17, in celebration of the country's traditional Buddhist New Year, according to state media.

However, prison watchdog groups said that only a few of the people released were political prisoners, reported Radio Free Asia.

Later on April 17, data from Political Prisoner Network-Myanmar revealed that out of those granted amnesty that day, approximately 90 people were identified as political prisoners.

Following the 2021 coup in the country, thousands of civilians have been detained for supporting anti-junta organizations, participating in protests, and expressing dissent against the junta.

## JUNTA CHIEF WELCOMES EURASIAN ECONOMIC COMMISSION DELEGATION

**T**he junta chief, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, welcomed a delegation led by Sergei Glazev, member of the Board and Minister in Charge for Integration and Macroeconomics of the Eurasian Economic Commission, during a courtesy call at the military council's office in Nay Pyi Taw on April 10, as reported by the junta-controlled newspaper.

The meeting was attended by ministers from the junta, as well as members and officials from the Embassy of Russia to Myanmar.

Discussions during the meeting centered around various topics including mutual export of goods, direct payment issues, technical cooperation in agricultural production, development of the tourism sector, establishment of direct flights, production of petroleum as high-grade finished products, cooperation in the textile industry, and collaboration in other sectors between Myanmar and the Eurasian Economic Commission.

The Eurasian Economic Commission is the executive body of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) responsible for implementing decisions, upholding the EEU treaties and managing the day-to-day business of the EEU, which is an economic union of five post-Soviet states located in Eurasia.



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# DIGITAL MAGAZINE

Our relaunched magazine Mizzima Weekly provides readers with a more focused read on what matters in Myanmar and the wider region, with an emphasis on analysis, insight and providing key talking points.