

CLAWS Newsletter



Myanmar Briefing | Volume I | Issue No II

by Anjali Manhas

Politics

1. **Myanmar Military Grants New Year Amnesty Amid Ongoing Conflict:** Myanmar's military government released nearly 4,900 prisoners, including at least 22 political detainees, as part of a traditional New Year amnesty, according to state media. Buses carrying released prisoners departed Yangon's Insein prison to emotional family reunions. Among the freed were journalists and a filmmaker jailed under incitement and electronic laws. The mass pardon excludes serious offenders, and reoffenders will serve full sentences. The amnesty comes amid continued civil conflict, following the 2021 military coup, and national mourning over a recent earthquake that claimed over 3,700 lives. Junta leader Min Aung Hlaing pledged post-quake reconstruction and reiterated plans for elections later this year. (*Associate Press*)
2. Interim President Duwa Lashi La delivered the Traditional Myanmar New Year speech live at 9:00 AM on April 17, 2025, emphasizing unity and progress for the revolution (*Radio NUG*).
3. The Union Parliament Representative Committee (CRPH) marked the fourth anniversary of the NUG, reaffirming support for the revolutionary efforts and collaboration with ethnic groups. (*CRPH Official Statement*)
4. **Union Prime Minister Expresses Concern Over Misconduct:** Union Prime Minister Man Win Khine Than raised alarm over reports that some People's Administration Teams are misusing funds, abusing authority, and drifting from the revolution's goals. He urged for refocused efforts and public accountability. (*Source: Radio NUG @RadioNUG*)

Foreign Affairs

1. U Than Swe, Myanmar's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, met with Indian Ambassador Abhay Thakur in Nay Pyi Taw to discuss enhanced cooperation following the recent earthquake. Myanmar expressed gratitude to India for its humanitarian support, including the deployment of search and rescue and medical teams. The two sides also explored ways to further strengthen bilateral relations and collaborate in ongoing relief efforts. (*Source: The Global New Light of Myanmar*)
2. **Myanmar Ceasefire Extension Signals Shift in ASEAN Engagement:** Following rare high-level talks, Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim announced that both Myanmar's military junta and the opposition National Unity Government (NUG) have agreed to extend

a ceasefire to facilitate humanitarian aid after a deadly earthquake killed over 3,600 people. As ASEAN chair, Anwar engaged directly with both parties and emphasized the need for inclusive dialogue and a fair election process. While this marks a possible breakthrough in ASEAN's stalled peace efforts, concerns remain over the junta's credibility and continued military actions despite previous ceasefire announcements. Ethnic groups like the Karen National Union demand inclusion in the peace talks, underlining the complexity of Myanmar's conflict. *(Reuters)*

3. **Russia Sends Condolences:** Russian Attorney General Igor Krasnov sent a formal message of sorrow to Min Aung Hlaing in response to the recent earthquake disaster. *(Source: Mizzima News @MizzimaNews)*

Revolution & Conflict Updates

1. **Civilian Casualties in Sagaing Region:** Butalin Township: A paramotor airstrike by junta forces struck Gyogone Village, killing one man and one woman. Monywa Township: Heavy artillery fired by the junta exploded in Kanpyargyi Village Tract, killing four civilians. Kani Township: An airstrike hit Sulegone Village, killing a man and injuring a woman and a child. *(Source: Mizzima News @MizzimaNews)*
2. **Violence Increases in Southern Shan State:** In Ywar Ngan Township of the Danu Self-Administered Region, junta forces have increased operations, reportedly committing acts of violence and intimidation against civilians. *(Source: Burma News International @BNOnline)*
3. **Junta Army Defection:** Min Khant, a military recruit from Batch 4 at the junta's Pagangwe Camp, defected on February 20 and joined the Students' Army. His defection underscores morale issues within junta ranks. *(Source: Radio NUG @RadioNUG)*
4. **Militia Leader Shot During Arrest:** In Kyaukbadaung Township, Popa Guerrilla Force attempted to arrest a militia leader from Minbu Township. The target resisted, resulting in a firefight in which he was shot dead. *(Source: Radio NUG @RadioNUG)*
5. **Mine Attack on Junta Troops in Bago Region:** In Paungte Township, resistance forces launched a mine attack on junta troops who were conducting clearance operations. The attack reportedly killed 3 junta soldiers and injured 7 others. *(Source: Mizzima News @MizzimaNews)*
6. **PDFs Receive Ethics Training from NUG Human Rights Ministry:** In Seik Phyu Township (Magway Region), members of the People's Defence Force underwent training

on soldier ethics and the NUG's established Chain of Command system. This aims to instill discipline and legal accountability among resistance fighters. (Source: Radio NUG @RadioNUG)

7. **Bago Region PDF Completes Basic Training:** In Military Region No. (2), Bago People's Defence Force completed its basic military training and was equipped with arms. This signifies an expansion of operational readiness in central Myanmar. (Source: Radio NUG @RadioNUG)
8. **NUG Defence Ministry Formalizes Prison Management Protocols:** On April 18, the NUG's Ministry of Defence issued a permanent directive regarding the management of military prisons and detention centers. The directive outlines procedures aimed at ensuring ethical treatment and legal alignment. (Source: Radio NUG @RadioNUG)
9. **NUG Health Minister Dr. Zaw Wai Soe Returns to Myanmar:** Dr. Zaw Wai Soe, the Minister of Health and Education under the National Unity Government (NUG), has reportedly returned to Myanmar. He is said to be directly providing healthcare services in areas under NUG control, a bold move demonstrating continued engagement on the ground. (Source: Radio NUG @RadioNUG)
10. Human Rights Minister U Aung Myo Min praised this year's Spring Revolution thangyat performances for effectively expressing public sentiment and resistance (Ministry of Human Rights Publication).

Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs)

1. **Arakan Army Detention Incident in Rakhine:** In Ponnagyun, 5 members of a local family were detained by the Arakan Army over gold theft allegations. One detainee, Ko Aye Min Swe, reportedly died in custody after four months. The others were released this week. (Source: Kachin News Group @KachinNewsGroup)
2. **KIA-Junta Clashes Intensify in Kachin State:** Heavy clashes erupted in Hpakant Township between the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and junta troops who invaded from Karmine and Indawgyi. Fighting remains intense in the area. (Source: Myanmar Now @Myanmar_Now_Eng)

Military Council Activities

1. **Junta Loses Military Outpost in Dawei:** Resistance forces captured a junta camp in Tita Village, Dawei Township. The military is now reinforcing positions along the Dawei-Myittar-Tiki Road. (Source: *Irrawaddy News @IrrawaddyNews*)
2. **Railway and Station Renovation Begins:** Plans are underway to reconstruct the Naypyidaw-Taungoo rail line and replace train stations damaged by the March 28 earthquake. New designs are to be used. (Source: *Irrawaddy News @IrrawaddyNews*)

International & Humanitarian

1. Rescue efforts continue in earthquake-hit Mandalay, with teams recovering bodies from collapsed buildings in Aung Myay Thazan and 84th Street areas (*Myanmar Fire Brigade Update*).
2. The Embassy of Switzerland expressed solidarity with earthquake victims in Myanmar, extending New Year wishes and emphasizing shared values of resilience and unity (*Swiss Embassy Official Statement*).
3. Union Minister Naw Susanna Hla Hla Soe received a \$250 earthquake relief donation from Dr. Myint Sonny Oo (USA) and issued a certificate of appreciation (*ANUMSA Emergency Relief Appeal*).
4. **UN Condemns Sale of Relief Goods:** After energy biscuits from the World Food Programme were found being sold in Naypyidaw, the UN Office in Yangon condemned the misuse of aid and promised swift action. (Source: *Myanmar Now @Myanmar_Now_Eng*)
5. **Myanmar Junta Violates Quake Ceasefire with Intensified Airstrikes:** Despite announcing a ceasefire following a devastating earthquake on March 28, 2025, Myanmar's military junta has carried out over 172 attacks, including 140 airstrikes and 24 artillery barrages, according to UN data. These strikes have continued unabated, even in regions hardest hit by the quake, killing at least 105 people since April 2. The junta's actions starkly contrast with the three aerial strikes recorded from opposition groups during the same period. Analysts and UN officials say the military is deliberately targeting civilians, with deadly incidents like the April 16 bombing in Karen state that killed a pregnant woman during Burmese New Year. Despite extending the ceasefire to April 30, the junta has intensified aerial assaults, particularly in Sagaing, northern Shan, Kachin, and Rakhine

states, allegedly to regain strategic control. UN officials have condemned the ongoing violence, stating the military has prioritized retaliation over humanitarian aid. (Source: Reuters @reuters)



About the Author

Anjali Manhas is a Research Assistant at the Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS), where she specializes in Defence and Strategic Studies with a focus on South Asian geopolitics. She completed her Master's in Defence and Strategic Studies from Rashtriya Raksha University, where she developed a strong foundation in security, international relations, and strategic analysis. Anjali's current research centers on Bangladesh, examining its security dynamics, regional relationships, and strategic posture in South Asia. Her work aims to contribute to policy development and strategic insights for enhancing regional stability and security. With a keen interest in defence and strategic affairs, Anjali is committed to advancing knowledge and fostering a deeper understanding of South Asian security issues.



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