

CLAWS Newsletter



Myanmar Snippets | Volume I | Issue No. 004

by Dhanapriya Devi Chungkham

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

July 31 ([Reuters](#)) Min Aung Hlaing outlines the government agenda and criticises ASEAN

President Min Aung Hlaing used a parliamentary address to present the priorities of Myanmar's military-backed administration. He rejected ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus as discriminatory and warned that Myanmar would respond to actions it considered non-constructive. The president said the government would strengthen the military and police and continue implementing the conscription law. He also claimed that the authorities had invited armed organisations to talks without preconditions and had already met representatives of several ethnic armed organisations. The address indicated that the new administration intends to combine a federal-democratic development narrative with continued military consolidation and central control.

August 10 ([Reuters](#)) Government rejects ASEAN envoy role and calls to release Aung San Suu Kyi

Myanmar's military-backed government argued that ASEAN no longer needed to appoint a special envoy after the completion of the military-managed election. It also resisted renewed regional calls for the unconditional release of Aung San Suu Kyi and other political detainees. The authorities maintained that any release must follow domestic legal procedures, while describing ASEAN pressure as interference. The dispute came as Myanmar remained excluded from the bloc's highest-level meetings for failing to implement the Five-Point Consensus. The exchange deepened the political standoff between Naypyitaw and ASEAN and reduced expectations of an early compromise over political prisoners.

August 12 ([Mizzima](#)) CDF-Thantlang orders surrender of military-grade weapons

The Thantlang Township Council and the Chin Defence Force-Thantlang issued a directive regulating weapons in territory under their control. Residents were instructed to surrender military-grade weapons, explosives and related materiel discovered in the township. The order was presented as a measure to protect community peace, law and order and regional stability. It illustrates the growing administrative role assumed by resistance organisations in parts of Chin State where formal state authority has weakened. For India, such governance measures

are important because Thantlang lies close to Mizoram and developments there can affect refugee movement and cross-border security.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

August 5 ([Reuters](#)) Diplomatic activity creates a possible opening for talks

A period of increased diplomatic engagement raised cautious expectations that Myanmar's conflict might be approaching a limited opening for dialogue. Regional governments and intermediaries explored ways to bring the military-backed authorities and their opponents closer to negotiations. The initiative developed despite continuing combat, deep political mistrust and the absence of agreement on a ceasefire framework. Resistance groups remained wary that talks could be used to legitimise the post-election order without addressing military violence or political exclusion. The development was therefore significant as an opening for communication, but it did not yet amount to an inclusive peace process.

August 6 ([Reuters](#)) Min Aung Hlaing continues foreign visits with a high-profile trip to Thailand

Myanmar President Min Aung Hlaing received an official welcome in Bangkok as Thailand pursued what it described as calibrated re-engagement with Naypyitaw. He met Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul, inspected a guard of honour and pledged to seek peace and improve Myanmar's relations with ASEAN. The visit followed earlier 2026 presidential trips to China, India and Laos, reflecting a sustained campaign to obtain recognition for the military-backed political order. Min Aung Hlaing also promoted investment and bilateral trade while presenting Myanmar as open for business despite the continuing civil war. His subsequent visit to Russia later in August confirmed that frequent foreign travel has become an important instrument for reducing isolation and demonstrating acceptance by regional partners.

August 7 ([Reuters](#)) United States and ASEAN chair call for Suu Kyi's release

The United States and the ASEAN chair separately renewed calls for the complete and unconditional release of Aung San Suu Kyi. Both welcomed a visit by the International Committee of the Red Cross and expressed hope that it would lead to regular access and medical care. Their statements also called for broader access to people detained in Myanmar since the February 2021 coup. Aung San Suu Kyi, now in her eighties, remains imprisoned

under convictions that she and her supporters reject. The coordinated pressure showed that the treatment of political prisoners continues to shape Myanmar's relations with ASEAN members and Western governments.

August 18 ([Reuters](#)) Putin hosts Min Aung Hlaing as Russia-Myanmar ties deepen

Russian President Vladimir Putin received Myanmar President Min Aung Hlaing in Moscow for talks on bilateral cooperation. The meeting was Min Aung Hlaing's first visit to a non-neighbouring country since becoming president in April 2026. The leaders discussed energy, defence, economic cooperation and possible collaboration in space-related activities. Russia has become one of Myanmar's most important diplomatic partners and a major supplier of military equipment since the 2021 coup. The visit demonstrated Naypyitaw's attempt to reduce international isolation by strengthening relations with a partner that is willing to provide political, technological and material support.

August 21 ([The Irrawaddy](#)) Border fighting dominates annual Thai-Myanmar military talks

Myanmar's commander-in-chief, General Ye Win Oo, met his Thai counterpart during annual high-level military talks in Bangkok. Fighting along the shared border was a central subject because clashes regularly affect Thai security, trade and refugee management. The talks also reflected Thailand's continuing direct engagement with Myanmar's military leadership despite international criticism of the regime. Bangkok has attempted to balance ASEAN concerns with its own need to contain instability and protect border communities. The meeting showed that neighbouring states are likely to maintain practical security contacts even while a broader political settlement remains distant.

ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

August 13 ([Mizzima](#)) Kachin group warns against efforts to revive the Myitsone Dam

Kachin Human Rights Watch urged the public not to participate in lobbying activities connected to a possible revival of the Myitsone Dam. The China-backed hydropower project has remained suspended since 2011 following widespread public opposition. Renewed campaigning reportedly followed higher-level engagement between Myanmar's authorities and

China. Local critics fear that restarting the project would intensify displacement, environmental damage and disputes over who benefits from Kachin State's natural resources. The controversy illustrates how major infrastructure projects remain inseparable from ethnic politics, conflict and anti-China sentiment in northern Myanmar.

August 18 ([Reuters](#)) Russia and Myanmar discuss refinery, hydrocarbons and LNG

Energy cooperation featured prominently during talks between Vladimir Putin and Min Aung Hlaing in Moscow. Russia said discussions were under way on building an oil refinery and exploring hydrocarbons on Myanmar's continental shelf. The two sides also considered possible liquefied natural gas supplies and wider commercial cooperation. For Myanmar, these projects could ease energy shortages and attract investment at a time when Western sanctions and conflict have restricted economic options. For Russia, an expanded energy presence would create commercial opportunities and a larger strategic role between the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea.

August 21 ([Reuters](#)) Military offensive linked to Russia-backed Dawei port project

Reuters reported that the military had intensified operations in Tanintharyi around land associated with a proposed Russia-backed development at Dawei. The plan includes a special economic zone, deep-sea port and power infrastructure on the Andaman Sea. Local resistance members and residents reported village burnings, displacement and civilian casualties during the campaign. The project has strategic value because Dawei could connect mainland Southeast Asia to the Indian Ocean while reducing dependence on routes through the Strait of Malacca. A stronger Russian role at Dawei would also carry implications for India's maritime neighbourhood and for great-power competition in the eastern Indian Ocean.

CONFLICT UPDATES

July 27 ([Reuters](#)) Monitor reports an escalation in civilian killings

Reuters reported that Myanmar's military had intensified attacks on civilians during the first half of 2026. Figures cited from the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project recorded more than a dozen mass-killing incidents and over 450 civilian deaths. A large share of the fatalities occurred in the central dry zone, also known as the Anyar region, where resistance

activity remains strong. The report linked the escalation to operations conducted after changes in the senior military command. The findings suggested that the government's diplomatic outreach and post-election claims of stability were not accompanied by a reduction in violence against civilians.

August 11 ([Reuters / IIMM](#)) UN investigators document intensified air attacks and abuses

The Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar reported an increase in aerial attacks on civilians before the election concluded in January 2026. Investigators documented strikes affecting homes, schools, hospitals, religious buildings and camps for displaced people. The report highlighted the growing use of drones, motorised paragliders and other low-cost aircraft that can conduct attacks at low altitude. The mechanism also recorded alleged crimes by anti-junta armed groups, including torture, sexual violence and the recruitment of children. Its findings are intended to preserve evidence for future prosecutions and show that serious abuses are not confined to one side of the conflict.

August 18 ([The Irrawaddy](#)) Air campaign intensifies across Rakhine and Paletwa

The Irrawaddy reported a sustained series of airstrikes on civilian areas in Arakan Army-controlled Rakhine State and neighbouring Paletwa. The Arakan Army said strikes in Thandwe, Gwa and other areas killed civilians, including children and older people, and damaged homes. Aid workers reported that bombardment continued even while communities were coping with severe flooding and displacement. Analysts quoted by the newspaper argued that the military was using attacks on civilians to pressure the Arakan Army after setbacks on the ground. The casualty figures and attribution are difficult to verify independently, but the reporting is consistent with the broader pattern documented by UN investigators.

August 21 ([Associated Press](#)) Airstrike kills meditators at a Sagaing monastery

An airstrike struck a Buddhist monastery in Swel Le Oh village in Myaung Township, Sagaing Region. An opposition-linked local organisation said fourteen people were killed and around twenty others were injured. The victims had gathered for a week-long meditation retreat during Buddhist Lent. Witnesses said a fighter jet dropped two bombs, one of which hit the monastery compound while another damaged a nearby house sheltering participants. The military did not immediately respond to the allegation, and the incident added to concern about the increasing exposure of religious and civilian sites to aerial attack.

Defence Updates

August 18 ([Associated Press](#)) Russia-Myanmar defence relationship expands alongside strategic projects

Defence cooperation formed an important part of the wider relationship discussed during Min Aung Hlaing's visit to Moscow. Russia remains a major supplier of military equipment to Myanmar and has provided aircraft used by the armed forces during the civil conflict. The two countries have also conducted joint military exercises and expanded cooperation in nuclear technology, space and professional training. This relationship helps Myanmar's military sustain capabilities despite Western sanctions and restrictions on defence procurement. The visit indicated that military ties will remain a central pillar of the partnership even as both governments place greater public emphasis on energy, trade and infrastructure.

August 20 ([The Irrawaddy](#)) Myanmar army chief seeks Thai help to restrict arms flows

Myanmar Commander-in-Chief General Ye Win Oo met his Thai counterpart, General Ukris Boontanondha, in Bangkok. The Myanmar side requested cooperation to halt the cross-border movement of weapons and equipment to resistance organisations. The request followed a similar appeal made by Min Aung Hlaing to Thailand's prime minister during his visit earlier in August. Thailand subsequently directed its defence and interior authorities to tighten controls at official crossings and informal routes along the frontier. The development could affect the operational environment of ethnic armed organisations and resistance forces that depend on border networks for supplies and communications.

August 21 ([The Irrawaddy](#)) Thailand and Myanmar discuss training, counter-terrorism and border security

The ninth Thailand-Myanmar High-Level Committee meeting brought together the armed forces chiefs of the two neighbouring countries. Their agenda covered border stability, cybercrime, counter-terrorism and possible joint military training. The two sides also considered practical coordination intended to prevent fighting in Myanmar from destabilising Thai border provinces. For Myanmar's armed forces, closer cooperation with Thailand could improve intelligence exchange and restrict logistical space available to resistance groups. For Thailand, defence engagement provides a direct channel for crisis management but also creates reputational risks if it is seen as strengthening Myanmar's military campaign.

BORDER UPDATES

August 8 ([Mizzima](#) / [Thai PBS](#)) Thailand and Myanmar create a mechanism on river pollution

Thailand and Myanmar signed terms of reference for a joint working group on pollution affecting transboundary rivers. The initiative followed growing concern in northern Thailand about contamination associated with mining sites across the border in Myanmar. Communities and environmental groups have warned that pollutants may threaten fisheries, agriculture, drinking water and local livelihoods. Some of the mining areas are located in territories controlled by armed organisations or linked to Chinese investment, complicating regulation and enforcement. The agreement is an important border-management step, although its effectiveness will depend on transparent testing, access to mining areas and cooperation from multiple authorities.

August 14 ([Mizzima](#)) Myanmar studies conference focuses on borderlands and armed-group governance

The fifth International Conference on Burma/Myanmar Studies opened at Chiang Mai University in Thailand. Researchers, civil-society representatives and practitioners gathered to discuss the Myanmar crisis from academic and policy perspectives. The programme included Thai-Myanmar border issues, humanitarian assistance, governance by armed organisations and China-Myanmar relations. Its focus reflected the growing importance of borderlands as sites of displacement, informal trade, political authority and service delivery. The conference also provided a platform for perspectives that are often absent from state-centred security debates, including those of local communities and non-state actors.

August 21 ([The Irrawaddy](#)) Thailand seeks cooperation as clashes affect the shared frontier

Senior Thai and Myanmar military officials placed border fighting high on the agenda of their Bangkok meeting. Thailand is concerned that clashes can send civilians across the frontier, interrupt trade and create security risks for border provinces. Myanmar's military also seeks Thai cooperation against resistance forces operating near cross-border routes. The talks occurred as Bangkok continued a policy of practical engagement with Naypyitaw while publicly supporting regional stability. For India, the meeting is relevant because it shows how

Myanmar's neighbours are increasingly relying on bilateral border mechanisms when ASEAN-wide diplomacy produces limited results.



About the Author

Dhanapriya Devi Chungkham is currently serving as a Research Assistant at the Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS), New Delhi. She completed her PhD from Centre of Indo-Pacific Studies, School of International Studies (JNU). Her research focuses primarily on security and strategic studies of India's eastern frontier, with particular interest in the Act East Policy, India-Myanmar relations, borderland dynamics, Northeast India and the evolving geopolitical landscape of Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific. She specialises in fieldwork-based research and qualitative methodologies.

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