

CLAWS Newsletter



Myanmar Snippets | Volume I | Issue No. 005

by Dhanapriya Devi Chungkham

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

25 August (DONARE): UN report describes worsening repression and minority rights abuses

A UN human rights report described deepening civilian suffering, abuses against Rohingya communities and growing illicit economies. DONARE reported findings of airstrikes, forced displacement, restrictions on humanitarian assistance and expanded surveillance. The report attributed serious abuses against Rohingya to both the military and the Arakan Army, including forced recruitment and arbitrary detention. It also linked unregulated mining and criminal networks to environmental damage and exploitation.

21 September (The Irrawaddy): USDP congress retains Khin Yi as party chairman

The military-aligned Union Solidarity and Development Party re-elected Khin Yi as chairman at its fourth congress on 19–20 September. Myat Hein remained first vice-chairman, while Thaung Aye became second vice-chairman, replacing Hla Tun. The Irrawaddy reported that the congress had been postponed from early September amid an internal struggle over the party leadership. Its account described a central executive committee containing figures close to Min Aung Hlaing. The appointments reinforced continuity in the party's leadership following the delayed congress.

23 September (Associated Press): Rights group urges release of women political prisoners

Human Rights Watch called for the immediate release of women held for political reasons after documenting allegations of torture, sexual violence and dangerous denial of medical care. AP reported interviews with 17 former women prisoners, alongside relatives, lawyers and advocates. Accounts covered interrogation centres and prisons, with pregnant detainees facing particular risks. The report described degrading searches, unsanitary detention and abuse during questioning. Myanmar's military authorities had not commented on the findings when AP reported. The allegations were attributed to the rights group and interviewees.

24 September (The Irrawaddy): Social media arrests leave a lasting chilling effect

Data for Myanmar documented 2,029 arrests over online criticism in the five years after the coup, according to The Irrawaddy. Yangon and Mandalay accounted for 969 cases, and women represented about 35 per cent of those detained. Most recorded arrests involved Facebook. Although the dataset counted only 26 arrests in 2026 through 31 August, the report argued that this decline reflected fear and self-censorship rather than restored freedom of expression.

24 September 2026 (The Irrawaddy): Authorities ban TIME after disputed interview coverage

Myanmar's authorities banned TIME following publication of an interview with Min Aung Hlaing and objected to the magazine's presentation of his responses. The Irrawaddy reported that the interview had taken place in August and appeared on 23 September. Officials accused the publication of misrepresentation and sought removal of the article. The report also described a blacklist affecting interviewer Charlie Campbell, while noting that the blacklist had not been publicly announced. The episode illustrates the restrictions facing international reporting on Myanmar and the government's sensitivity over how its leader's diplomatic and political messages are presented.

30 September(The Irrawaddy): Dawei flood deaths rise as communities remain isolated

Flooding and landslides in Dawei District had killed 32 people by 29 September, according to the Tavoyan National Federation, as reported by The Irrawaddy. Numerous villages in Launglon Township remained inundated or cut off. Landslides obstructed the road linking Dawei, Launglon and Shin Maw, complicating rescue work and the movement of relief supplies. Civil society groups were trying to reopen access with heavy equipment, while rough seas limited alternative transport. The death toll was a reported rescue update and could change as access improved. The immediate priorities were reaching isolated settlements, restoring transport and delivering emergency assistance.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

7 September (Anadolu Agency): UN rights chief calls for ICC referral and tighter arms restrictions

Volker Türk urged states to refer Myanmar's situation to the International Criminal Court during the UN Human Rights Council session in Geneva. He also called for an end to transfers of weapons, ammunition, aviation fuel and dual-use items where these could facilitate serious violations. Anadolu reported his warning against normalising relations without evidence of compliance with international law. Türk argued that engagement should require an end to violence, humanitarian access and release of arbitrarily detained people. He also opposed refugee returns under prevailing insecurity. These were recommendations to governments, rather than newly adopted sanctions or a completed court referral.

10 September (DVB): Myanmar rejects UN investigative mechanism's findings

Myanmar's Foreign Ministry rejected the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar after its head, Nicholas Koumjian, addressed the Human Rights Council. DVB reported that the authorities described the allegations as one-sided and repeated their refusal to recognise the mechanism. The government said military airstrikes were directed at military targets, while UN investigators had raised concerns about attacks on civilians and serious international crimes. The mechanism's role is to collect and preserve evidence for accountability proceedings; it does not itself conduct criminal trials. The response underlined the continuing dispute between Myanmar's authorities and international institutions over investigations and access to evidence.

11 September (Associated Press): Cambodia visit advances bilateral outreach within ASEAN

Min Aung Hlaing visited Cambodia for talks with Prime Minister Hun Manet, Senate President Hun Sen and other officials. AP described the two-day trip as part of efforts to restore regional engagement and obtain international legitimacy. It was his fourth visit to an ASEAN member since becoming president. Critics warned that such bilateral meetings could weaken collective pressure over Myanmar's failure to implement ASEAN's peace plan. The visit did not establish

that ASEAN had lifted its restrictions on participation by Myanmar's political leadership in high-level bloc meetings.

13 September (Reuters): Authorities challenge Kyaw Moe Tun's UN representation

Myanmar's military-backed government said it had revoked Kyaw Moe Tun's diplomatic status and was seeking legal action over alleged unauthorised activities. Reuters reported that he remained Myanmar's permanent representative because the UN Credentials Committee had deferred a decision on representation. The National Unity Government disputed the authorities' ability to remove him unilaterally through a domestic announcement. Kyaw Moe Tun did not respond to Reuters' request for comment. The development therefore concerned a renewed challenge to the envoy, rather than confirmation that the UN had transferred Myanmar's seat.

16 September (Reuters): Malaysia links invitation to negotiations on refugee returns

Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said he would invite Min Aung Hlaing for an official visit in exchange for Myanmar accepting thousands of Rohingya refugees. Reuters reported that Anwar defended engagement as necessary to negotiate returns, while saying Malaysia and ASEAN were not ready to recognise Myanmar's new government. He said Myanmar had accepted a plan covering 5,000 people, with further returns expected in stages. UNHCR's position remained that conditions were unsafe for return. The proposed invitation exposed tensions between bilateral diplomacy, refugee protection and ASEAN's collective approach.

30 September (Reuters): October Malaysia visit reported as return talks continue

Malaysia's state news agency reported that Min Aung Hlaing would visit Kuala Lumpur in October, according to Reuters. Government spokesperson Fahmi Fadzil linked continuing contacts to negotiations over further returns of Myanmar nationals. The announcement followed the departure of nearly 1,500 people and a stated plan for another 3,524 in a second phase. Anwar rejected accusations that Malaysia was ignoring safety concerns. This entry records an announcement made within September; the planned October visit had not occurred by the newsletter's cut-off and should not be treated as a completed diplomatic event.

ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

3 September (DVB): WFP opens emergency transport capacity for flood relief

The World Food Programme activated a free emergency cargo transport service for eligible humanitarian organisations responding to monsoon floods in Ayeyarwady and Sagaing. DVB reported that the service was intended to overcome damaged routes and deliver food, medicines, water and sanitation supplies, and shelter materials. Initial operations focused on an approximately two-week period, subject to continuing needs. Flooding in Sagaing compounded difficulties caused by conflict and restrictions on access. Opening WFP logistics to partners widened the relief response beyond its own food deliveries. The announcement concerned temporary emergency transport, rather than reconstruction of damaged roads or permanent restoration of connectivity.

4 September (The Irrawaddy): Teng Hui announces closure affecting over 3,000 garment workers

Chinese-owned Teng Hui Myanmar announced plans to close its Yangon garment operations at the end of September, putting more than 3,000 jobs at risk. The Irrawaddy reported that management attributed the decision to declining orders from its main buyer, H&M. The company operated five factories in Hlaing Tharyar and employed mainly women. Workers were notified of closure and compensation arrangements, although detailed amounts were not disclosed. The report placed the announcement against wider pressures from power outages, political instability, labour shortages and foreign brands reducing Myanmar sourcing. It described a planned shutdown, rather than independently verified completion at month-end.

4 September (The Irrawaddy): Authorities tighten pressure over migrant wage remittances

Overseas workers and employment agencies told The Irrawaddy that families in Myanmar could face scrutiny when workers failed to remit 25 per cent of earnings through official banking channels. Agencies were required to collect receipts and report compliance, with business suspensions among the possible penalties. Workers also faced risks to passport and overseas worker card renewals. The remittance requirement itself predated September; the news concerned heightened enforcement and warnings. Interviewees said the gap between

official and informal exchange rates discouraged use of official channels, creating a conflict between household income needs and the authorities' effort to obtain foreign currency.

15 September (Mizzima / Burma News International): Fuel prices rise amid mandated import reductions

Mizzima reported higher fuel prices in Naypyitaw and other major cities as authorities pursued a 30 per cent reduction in foreign fuel imports. Official reference prices issued on 13 September placed 92-octane petrol at 3,930 kyats per litre in Naypyitaw and 95-octane at 4,055 kyats. Informal roadside sellers reportedly charged as much as 7,000 kyats for a litre. The report described pressure on transport, generators and public services during power outages. Given Myanmar's heavy reliance on imported fuel, the announced substitution by domestic refineries remained a policy claim rather than proof that additional domestic supply had materialised.

28 September (World Bank): Transport disruption continues to reshape trade and livelihoods

The World Bank's transport and logistics monitoring described persistent disruption to Myanmar's supply chains. Restrictions on land routes to China and Thailand encouraged greater use of sea transport, including Yangon and the Ranong connection. Agricultural exports through Yangon had recovered more strongly than imports, which remained constrained by foreign exchange shortages and licensing. The analysis also noted garment export activity alongside employment far below its pre-2020 level. These uneven trends show that higher trade through a particular port does not mean nationwide recovery. Costly and unreliable movement of goods continued to affect businesses, food availability and household purchasing power.

DEFENCE UPDATES

5 September (Reuters): Vietnam and Myanmar agree to expand defence cooperation

Vietnam and Myanmar agreed to make defence and security a major pillar of bilateral relations during Min Aung Hlaing's visit to Hanoi. Reuters reported plans for military training, exchanges between young officers, search and rescue, disaster response and information sharing against crime. Vietnamese leader To Lam hosted the talks, and both sides pledged that their territories would not be used for activities against the other. The announcement set out intended cooperation; it did not disclose a new weapons purchase or establish that all the proposed programmes were already operational.

7 September (DVB): Large naval convoy moves upstream toward industrial corridor

DVB reported that a convoy of 38 Myanmar Navy vessels reached Singu on 6 September after leaving Mandalay's Gaw Wein jetty. A local source said the operation was intended to support restarting the Chinese-backed Tagaung nickel processing plant. Production had been suspended after resistance forces took Tigyaing in July 2024, before the military regained the town in March 2026. The convoy demonstrated the use of river transport to reinforce northern positions and protect an economically important site. Its reported purpose was attributed to a resident; the article did not establish that the plant had actually resumed production.

22 September (The Irrawaddy): Defence minister seeks cooperation with China

Defence Minister General Tun Aung visited Beijing on 15–17 September and met Chinese Defence Minister Dong Jun at the Xiangshan Forum. The Irrawaddy reported that the discussions covered military cooperation and stability along the border, according to regime media. Tun Aung also toured Chinese defence technology companies. The trip took place while the military faced pressure on several fronts and sought to reinforce its relationships with external partners. The report identified meetings and visits, but did not disclose a signed procurement contract, delivery schedule or specific new equipment package.

22 September (The Irrawaddy): Security adviser discusses training and intelligence ties in Belarus

National Security Adviser Tin Aung San visited Belarus on 14–19 September, meeting senior security and interior officials in Minsk. The Irrawaddy reported discussions on intelligence sharing, cybersecurity, riot police training, counter-terrorism and training for Myanmar personnel. The delegation also visited the Belarusian military academy. These contacts followed earlier high-level engagement between the two governments and reflected Myanmar's effort to maintain external security partnerships. The publicly reported agenda concerned cooperation and training; it did not confirm a newly delivered weapons system or provide detailed financial terms for military assistance.

22 September (The Irrawaddy): Mandalay families report students included in draft lotteries

High school students in seven Mandalay townships were being included in conscription lotteries, according to The Irrawaddy. Parents and guardians described threats of arrest for failing to attend and demands for documents proving school enrolment. Although the conscription law provides for student deferment, approval rests with regional or state draft committees. Residents said renewed draws followed earlier selected recruits fleeing before training. The report distinguished a legal possibility of deferment from the practical pressure facing families. It also described allegations of street raids and abductions, which should be attributed to interviewees rather than treated as independently verified nationwide practice.

29 September (DVB): Returning migrant workers face military service pledges

Returning overseas workers were being required to sign a pledge agreeing to military service if summoned, DVB reported. Labour rights advocates warned that people visiting relatives or taking short leave could be trapped inside Myanmar or exposed to recruitment. The report also described a 20 September Labour Ministry directive requiring proof of payment of a two per cent income tax and remittance of 25 per cent of earnings through official channels before departure. These measures tied overseas employment administration to military manpower policy. The article reported advocates' concerns; it did not establish that every returning worker had already been conscripted.

CONFLICT UPDATES

3 September (DVB): KIA reports attacks on naval supply convoy near Bhamo

The Kachin Independence Army said it attacked four military vessels on the Irrawaddy River on 2 September as a convoy moved toward Bhamo. DVB reported claims that two boats sank, two ran aground and roughly 100 military personnel surrendered. These battlefield claims were attributed to the KIA and local sources, and an independently verified casualty figure was unavailable. The remaining convoy continued toward military positions in Bhamo, where fighting had persisted since December 2024. The incident highlighted the vulnerability of river resupply along a contested northern corridor, without establishing that resistance forces had captured Bhamo itself.

11 September (Reuters): Mandalay airport closes following reported drone attack

Mandalay airport suspended operations after a reported drone attack, with Myanmar Airways International cancelling flights scheduled for 11–12 September. Reuters described conflicting accounts of the incident: resistance forces claimed an attack, while state media said six first-person-view drones had been intercepted. The disruption affected civilian air travel at an airport also associated with military operations. The competing accounts did not provide an independently verified assessment of damage. The confirmed operational consequence was the interruption to flights; claims about successful strikes or interception should remain attributed to the respective parties.

17 September (Mizzima / Burma News International): Pale airstrike reportedly kills three members of one family

Mizzima reported that an airstrike on Kan Bauk (East) village in Pale Township killed a mother, her son and her daughter-in-law on 15 September. Residents and monitoring groups said four other people were injured and that there was no active ground fighting in the area. The report described two bombing runs by military gyrocopters and said the victims were cremated the following evening. Military positions remained in Pale town and nearby villages, while repeated bombardments had prolonged civilian displacement. The deaths and circumstances were based on local accounts, rather than an independently accessible official casualty register.

25 September (The Irrawaddy): Airstrike on NUG command headquarters reportedly kills six

A military airstrike on 24 September hit the National Unity Government's Special Region Command headquarters near the Mon-Bago boundary, killing six people, The Irrawaddy reported. Those killed included former air force sergeant and military analyst Nay Win Aung, who had defected after the coup. Sources close to resistance forces said command leader Aung San Shar and three fighters were injured, with further bombing and artillery fire following the initial attack. Neither the NUG nor the command had issued an official statement when the article appeared. Reported casualties and details therefore remained attributed to sources close to the resistance.

29 September (Reuters): Kyauktaw airstrike death toll reported at 50

The Arakan Army and aid worker Wai Hun Aung said the death toll from a 28 September airstrike on Kyauktaw in Rakhine State had risen to 50, with at least 58 injured. Reuters reported that rescuers recovered additional bodies, including women and children. The Arakan Army accused the military of targeting civilian areas. A government spokesperson did not respond to a request for comment; the military had previously said it sought to avoid civilian harm. The figures were attributed to the armed group and aid worker, not independently confirmed by Reuters.

30 September (The Irrawaddy): KIA says it retakes hilltop base above Mongmit

KIA-led forces recaptured the Shwe Myintin hilltop base on 28 September, according to frontline sources and KIA spokesperson Colonel Naw Bu. The Irrawaddy reported that the position overlooks Mongmit and controls an important route connecting Mandalay with northern Shan and Kachin. Military aircraft subsequently attacked the base and surrounding areas. Regime forces had retaken the position in August, making the new seizure another shift in a contested supply corridor. The report also described further resistance claims elsewhere, but these did not establish a complete change in control of Mongmit or the wider northern route.

BORDER UPDATES

28 August (The Irrawaddy): Myanmar presses Thailand over resistance supply routes

Myanmar Commander-in-Chief Ye Win Oo met Thai National Security Council head Chatchai Bangchud in Naypyitaw on 27 August. The Irrawaddy reported renewed pressure to restrict cross-border arms flows to resistance groups. According to the regime's readout, discussions included weapons and drug smuggling, restricted chemicals, border trade, cyber-scams, operations and real-time information sharing. The meeting followed earlier military contacts, but the article did not establish that Thailand had imposed a complete blockade or closed all supply routes. The distinction between requests made at the talks and measures actually implemented is important for assessing the border's subsequent operation.

6 September (The Times of India): Five Myanmar civilians detained in Arunachal Pradesh

Assam Rifles and Arunachal Pradesh Police arrested five Myanmar nationals, including two women, in Changlang district, The Times of India reported. Officials said they had entered through Lazu in Tirap district and were travelling to a religious event at Bethel Prayer Centre in Ledo. An investigation was underway to check their documents and the circumstances of entry. The report identified them as civilians and did not announce a conviction or establish links to an armed organisation. The incident concerned enforcement of entry and travel requirements on the Indian side of the Myanmar border, with their legal status still being examined.

9 September (The Indian Express): India files immigration charges in Myanmar drone training case

India's National Investigation Agency omitted anti-terror provisions from its chargesheet against an American and six Ukrainians accused of travelling through Mizoram into Myanmar to train ethnic armed groups. DVB reported that the filing instead used immigration and foreigner-law provisions, while prosecutors said further investigation under the anti-terror law remained open. The Indian Express had reported earlier allegations linking the group to a drone attack on a Myanmar aircraft. Lawyers disputed the accusations. The revised filing therefore changed the charges then presented to court; it did not constitute a conviction or confirmation that the wider investigation had ended.

16 September ([Mizzima / Burma News International](#)): Cargo dispute disrupts India–Myanmar border trade post

A dispute over cargo-loading priority on 14 September led to a fight and an attempted burning of a trade inspection post in Khaikhy village, Mizoram, Mizzima reported. Rakhine traders and boat operators clashed with members of the local Mara Youth Association. Assam Rifles personnel and nearby villagers intervened, and the traders withdrew across the border. A source said mediation had resolved the immediate altercation, while community representatives warned against further disruption. The corridor carries food and essential goods along the Kaladan River to western Myanmar, making continued access important for civilians as well as traders. Local inquiries were still being organised.

25 September ([The Irrawaddy](#)): Residents report Chinese warning fire near Laiza

Residents and KIA sources said Chinese forces fired warning shots on 24 September as Myanmar military aircraft circled near Laiza, the KIA's headquarters beside the Chinese border. The Irrawaddy reported heightened concern over airstrikes and temporary school closures. The article did not report a confirmed strike on Laiza during the episode, nor did it provide official Chinese confirmation of the warning fire. The development illustrated the sensitivity of military aviation close to the frontier and the disruption caused by alerts. Claims about Chinese action should therefore remain attributed to the witnesses and sources cited by the newspaper.

29 September ([Reuters](#)): Malaysia begins large-scale sea returns to Myanmar

Malaysia deported approximately 1,500 Myanmar nationals, including children, using two Myanmar naval vessels and a hospital ship from Lumut. Reuters reported a first phase covering 1,476 people within a broader programme of up to 5,000 returns. Malaysia described the process as voluntary. UNHCR said conditions did not support safe, sustainable returns and that

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.