



By: TA | AP Brief

Myanmar's president heads to Russia to deepen strategic ties with Moscow



The head of Myanmar's **military-backed government** embarked on an official visit to Russia to hold talks with President Vladimir Putin aimed at strengthening bilateral ties and strategic cooperation, state media said.

President Min Aung Hlaing departed from the capital Naypyitaw on Monday morning accompanied by members of his cabinet.

They will meet with Putin and other top Russian officials and discuss bilateral ties and economic, security and social affairs, state-run MRTV television reported.

Russia, along with China, is a major supporter and arms supplier to Myanmar.

Russian-made fighter jets are used in attacks on territory under the control of ethnic minority groups, including many allied with pro-democracy resistance forces.

Min Aung Hlaing previously met with Putin on the sidelines of Moscow's World Atomic Week Forum in September. Putin has never visited Myanmar.

The visit is among Min Aung Hlaing's latest in a series of trips to foreign countries, including neighboring China, **India**, Laos and Thailand as he seeks to strengthen international recognition and a return to the diplomatic standing.

Despite the visits, he has remained largely isolated internationally.

Min Aung Hlaing also will attend a Myanmar-Russia Business Forum during the trip, MRTV said.

Joint military drills

Min Aung Hlaing was **inaugurated president** in April following a general election judged by United Nations experts and rights groups to be neither free nor fair.

Critics dismissed the polls, held in phases in December and January, as a sham designed to

consolidate the military's grip on power while ostensibly restoring civilian rule.

The countries have held joint military drills and signed a nuclear power development pact

Monday's trip marks Min Aung Hlaing's seventh visit to Russia since the military, which he led at the time, seized power from the elected government of **Aung San Suu Kyi** in February 2021.

Western nations have imposed economic and political sanctions in response to the military takeover and violent repression of opposition, which has led to the deaths of thousands of civilians and given rise to a civil war.

Russia has defended Min Aung Hlaing's military government in international forums while Myanmar's ruling generals have generally supported Moscow's foreign policy agenda.

The countries have held joint military drills and signed a nuclear power development pact and agreed to cooperate in human space flight projects including the selection and training of Myanmar's first cosmonaut.