

ISP Data Matters

Conflict Economy

Five Key Insights into Myanmar's Rare Earth



Photo : MRHZ



PROMOTING LEADERSHIP AND
STRENGTHENING CIVIC PARTICIPATION

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Five Key Insights into Myanmar's Rare Earth

Technological advances and the shift toward clean energy have heightened the demand for rare earth elements (REEs), which are crucial for high-tech products ranging from everyday gadgets like smartphones and electric vehicles to sophisticated military technologies. Rare earth elements have thus become strategically significant materials. Myanmar emerges as a major player, contributing significantly to the global production of Heavy Rare Earth Elements (HREEs), accounting for nearly half of it. In contrast, China dominates the global supply, producing almost 90 percent of the world's refined rare earths. Myanmar's position in the rare earth market is pivotal. ISP-Myanmar offers five crucial insights into Myanmar's involvement in the rare earth sector, focusing on its "Conflict Economy."

(1) Rare Earth Extraction in Kachin State

In Kachin State, the townships of Chipwi and Momauk are pivotal for extracting rare earth elements. Together, these areas house approximately 370 rare earth mining sites, with at least 2,700 pits for collecting rare earth solvents. Notably, Chipwi Township is a hotspot, hosting around 350 mining sites and more than 2,500 solution collection pits. Additional experimental mining activities are underway in the Mansi and Tsawlaw townships.

(2) Expansion of Rare Earth Mining Sites Post-Coup

Since the coup, the number of rare earth element mining sites has tripled, reaching at least 370 sites from 2013 to 2024. Over this 12-year period, more than 240 sites—about 66 percent of the total—were established in the nearly four years following the coup, covering an area larger than Singapore.

(3) Surge in Rare Earth Solution Collection Pits

The count of solvent collection pits, vital for separating rare earth elements from mixed ores, has significantly risen alongside the increase in mining sites. Specifically, in Chipwi and Momauk townships, home to at least 370 mining sites, there are now over 2,700 pits. Remarkably, at least 1,500 pits have been constructed in the nearly four-year coup period.

(4) Myanmar's Rare Earth Exports to China

From 2017 to 2024, Myanmar's rare earth exports to China surpassed 4.2 billion USD, with 3.6 billion USD exported in the nearly four-year span post-coup. This marked a fivefold increase in exports compared to the same duration before the coup. Additionally, between 2019 and 2024, Myanmar stood as China's primary rare earth supplier, contributing over 60 percent of the total value of China's rare earth imports.

(5) Myanmar: China's Premier Rare Earth Supplier

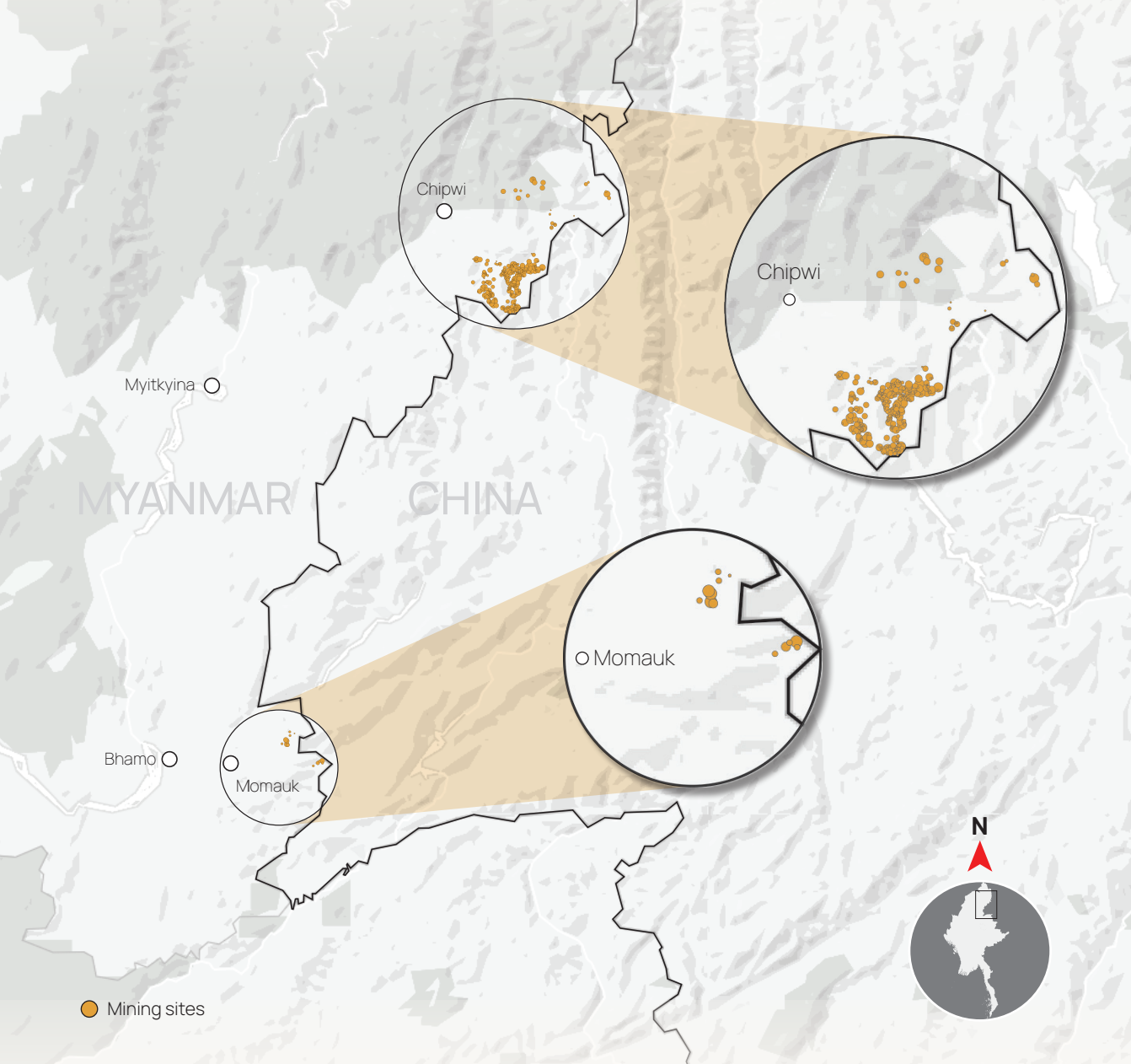
From 2017 to 2024, Myanmar was responsible for nearly two-thirds of China's annual rare earth imports. Over these eight years, Myanmar exported more than 290,000 tons to China, with over 170,000 tons sent in the nearly four-year post-coup span. This massive volume equals the combined weight of about 23 Eiffel Towers. ■

Location of Rare Earth Mining Sites Across Kachin State

ISP Mapping Number 89

ISP Mapping

ISP-Myanmar identified **at least 370 mining sites and 2,700 pits** spreading across Chipwi and Momauk townships in Kachin State. Chipwi township has the most mining sites and pits with **at least 350 mining sites and 2,500 pits**. The area of these mining sites is larger than that of Singapore.



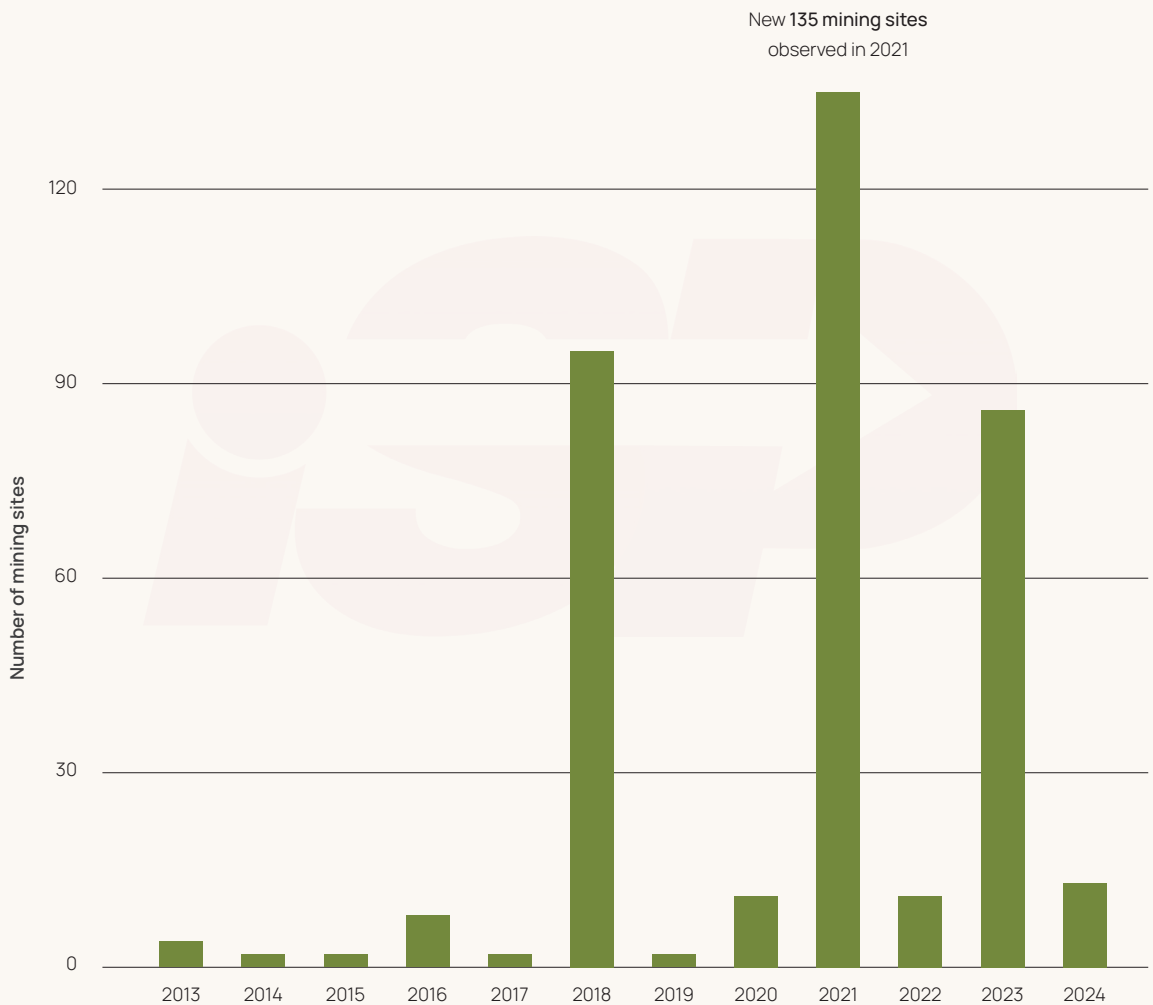
Data as of December 2024. The data are based on ISP-Myanmar's research through google earth satellite images. Please note that the data presented may vary from other sources due to differences in methodology and data availability.

Rare Earth Mining Sites Tripled After the Coup

ISP Data Matters **Number 146**

ISP Data Matters

The number of rare earth mining sites in Kachin State has tripled in four years following the coup. In the 12 years span of 2013 to 2024, at least **370 mining sites** have been identified, with more than **240** discovered after the coup.



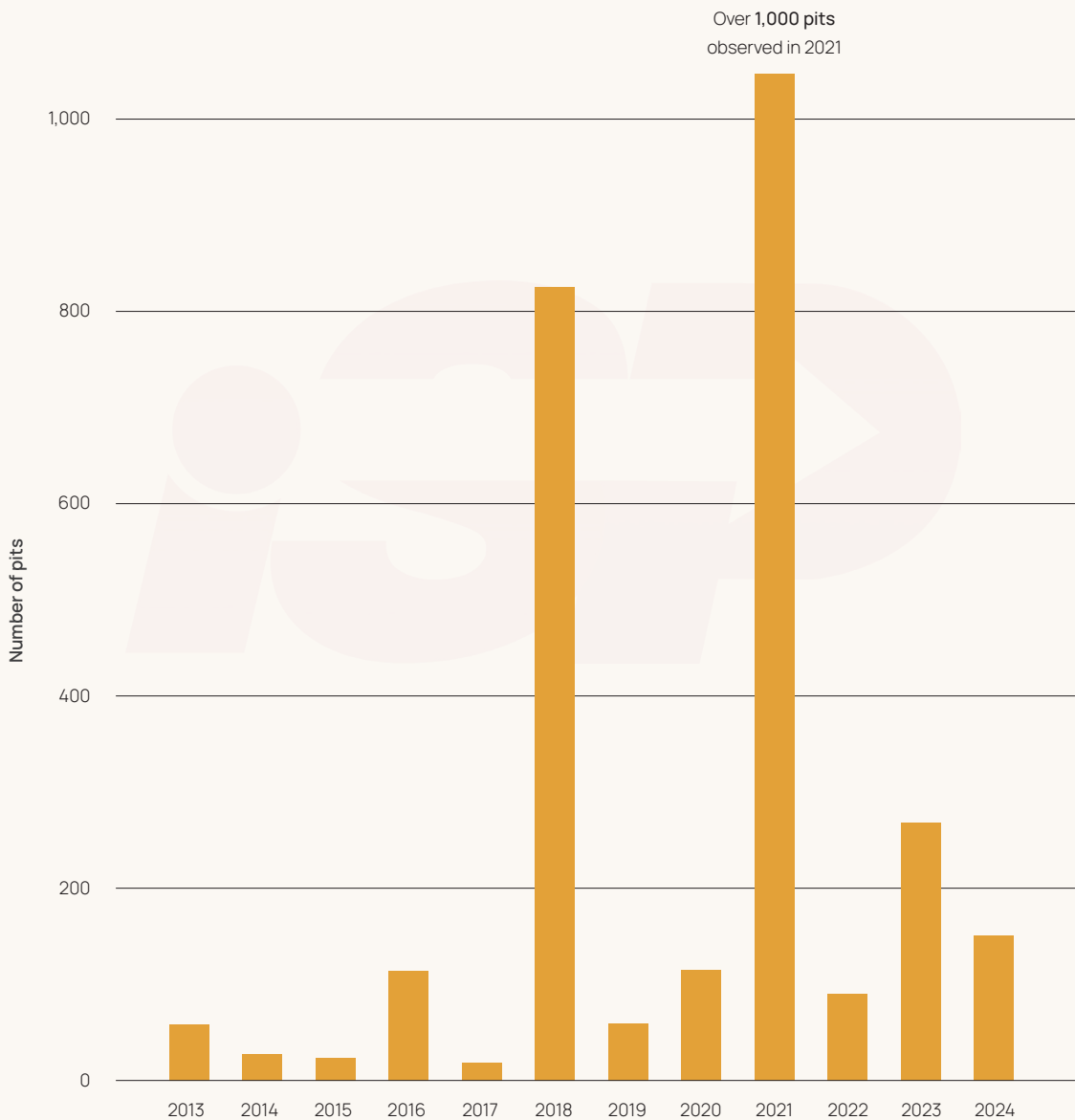
Data as of December 2024. The data are based on ISP-Myanmar's research through google earth satellite images. Please note that the data presented may vary from other sources due to differences in methodology and data availability.

Major Surge in Rare Earth Collection Pits After the Coup

ISP Data Matters **Number 147**

ISP Data Matters

ISP-Myanmar identified at least **2,700 rare earths collection pits** located across **370 mining sites** in Chipwi and Momauk townships. Of these, **more than 1,500 pits** were newly discovered, emerging after the coup.



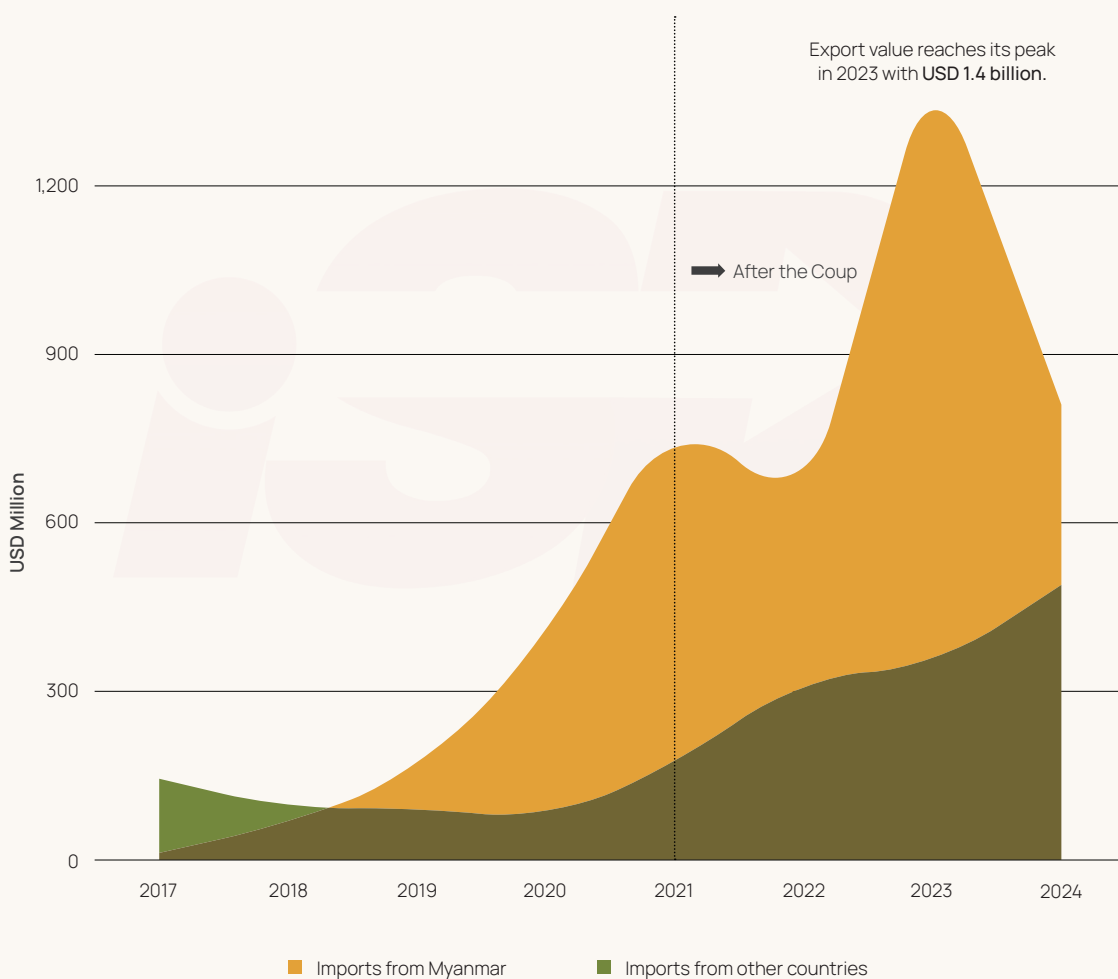
Data as of December 2024. The data are based on ISP-Myanmar's research through google earth satellite images. Please note that the data presented may vary from other sources due to differences in methodology and data availability.

Rare Earth Exports to China Increased Fivefold After the Coup

ISP Data Matters **Number 148**

ISP Data Matters

Rare earth exports from Myanmar to China increased **fivefold** in **four years** since the coup, reaching **USD 3.6 billion**. In terms of value, Myanmar was the largest supplier of rare earth minerals to China for **six consecutive years** from 2019 to 2024 making up **over half** of China's total rare earth imports.



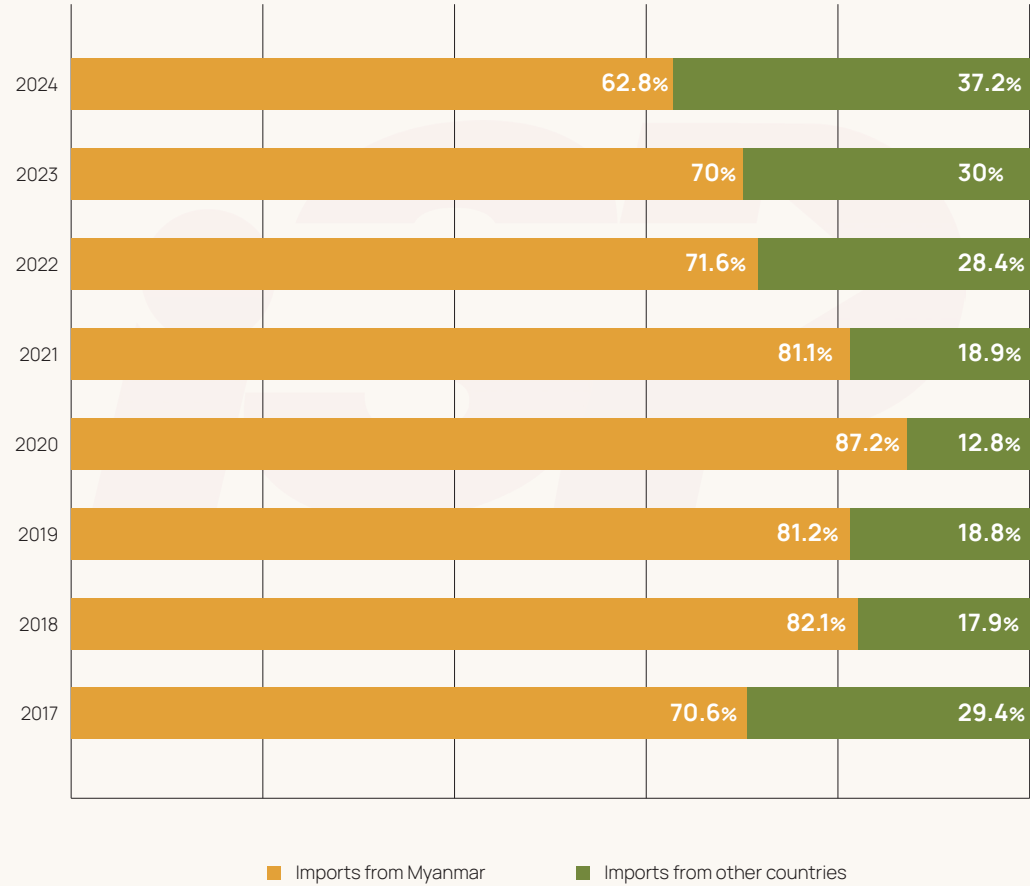
The data presented here is based on the data from General Administration of Customs of China (GACC) from 2017 to 2024.

Myanmar: China's Largest Supplier of Rare Earths

ISP Data Matters Number 149

ISP Data Matters

On average, Myanmar was the largest supplier of rare earth minerals to China from 2017 to 2024 by volume. Myanmar's rare earth minerals account for approximately **two-thirds** of China's annual rare earth imports. From January 2017 to December 2024, Myanmar exported **over 290,000 tonnes** of rare earth to China. Of these, **over 170,000 tonnes** were exported after the coup.



The data presented here is based on the data from General Administration of Customs of China (GACC) from 2017 to 2024.