

BURMA BULLETIN

XXXXXXXX A month-in-review of events in Burma XXXXXXXX

ALTERNATIVE ASEAN NETWORK ON BURMA
campaigns, advocacy & capacity-building for human rights & democracy

Issue 43

July 2010

- The pre-election period continues to be characterized by double standards, media censorship, and coercion – all favoring the SPDC proxy Union Solidarity and Development Party.
- In the latest offensive in Karen State, SPDC Army soldiers rape a woman, kill three villagers, burn down a village, and lay landmines. Over 500 civilians flee to the jungles as a result of the attack.
- A 14-year-old boy is arrested for possession of books by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and U Win Tin.
- The Tripartite Core Group ends its two-year mandate for recovery efforts in the Irrawaddy delta region after cyclone Nargis.
- Labor groups petition the Thai government to investigate reports of human abuses of migrant workers deported back to Burma.
- The SPDC's pursuit of a nuclear program remains the topic of discussion during high-level ASEAN meetings. The US urges ASEAN members to remind the SPDC of its commitment to nuclear non-proliferation.
- SPDC FM Nyan Win gets an "earful" about the junta's upcoming elections at the ASEAN Regional Ministerial Meeting. He then tells Japan's FM that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi will be able to run in the election when she is released from house arrest.
- SPDC Chairman Sr Gen Than Shwe's visit to India results in substantial economic and military aid deals.
- US extends sanctions on Burma and 32 US Senators call for the US to support a UN Commission of Inquiry on junta war crimes and crimes against humanity.
- The vast majority of Burmese struggle under the SPDC's economic mismanagement while the junta continues to enrich itself and its cronies.

For comprehensive monitoring of the 2010 elections, please visit the "[2010 Election Watch](#)" at www.altsean.org

IN THIS ISSUE

KEY STORY

- 2 Unfair resource allocation
- 2 Unfair registration process
- 2 Censorship intensifies
- 3 Coercion and bribes
- 3 Acts of defiance continue

INSIDE BURMA

- 3 Military offensive continues
- 3 Junta and ceasefire groups
- 4 NLD marks Martyrs' Day
- 4 More restrictions on Daw Suu
- 4 Aid still needed in the delta
- 4 Dengue spreads and kills

HUMAN RIGHTS

- 5 Monks targeted
- 5 Arrest and prison sentence
- 5 Win Htein released

DISPLACEMENT

- 5 Deported migrants in jeopardy

INTERNATIONAL

- 5 SPDC in the hot seat at AMM
- 6 US turns up the heat on SPDC
- 6 SPDC nuclear program
- 7 North Korean FM visits Burma
- 7 Than Shwe goes to India

ECONOMY

- 7 Economic mismanagement
- 8 New deals for cronies
- 8 SPDC shuts Thai border
- 9 Thailand signs new gas deal

9 OTHER BURMA NEWS

10 REPORTS

Receive the Burma Bulletin monthly!
email publications@altsean.org
Online copies are available for
download at www.altsean.org

KEY STORY

“A crooked election sold as a valid exercise is a blasphemy.” - Michael Maley, special adviser electoral reform and international services, Australian Electoral Commission, responding to the argument that any election is better than none.¹

Despite the SPDC’s phony attempts to show that the upcoming elections will be fair and inclusive, the pre-election period continued to be characterized by double standards, media censorship, and coercion – all favoring the SPDC proxy Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP).

Unfair resource allocation

While most parties denounced the prohibitive costs of participating in the elections, the SPDC made sure that the USDP would have access to massive resources. In mid-July, the SPDC granted permission for the pro-junta mass organization Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA) to dissolve and transfer all its assets to the USDP.²

Unfair registration process

As of 31 July, the SPDC Election Commission had approved the registration of 39 political parties. However, three ethnic parties (the Kachin State Progressive Party, the United Democracy Party (Kachin State), and the Northern Shan State Progressive Party) that submitted registration papers to the SPDC Election Commission in April were still waiting for permission to register. On 12 July, SPDC Minister of Industry No.1 Aung Thaug revealed that the Kachin State Progressive Party would not be able to register for the elections because of its ties with the Kachin Independence Organization.³

By contrast, the pro-junta Unity and Democracy Party of Kachin State (UDPKS), led by former local SPDC official and USDA patron Khet Htein Nan, obtained permission to register from the SPDC Election Commission just two weeks after filing registration papers. To add insult to injury, the USDP gave the UDPKS 50 million kyat (US\$52,814) as a start-up election fund.⁴

In addition, on 30 July, the SPDC Election Commission told four leaders of the National Democratic Force (NDF) that they must seek pardons for their past political activities if they want to participate in the upcoming elections. The four NDF leaders were elected in the 1990 elections and subsequently served prison sentences for their opposition to the military regime.⁵

Censorship intensifies

- **Early July:** Difference and Peace Party Chairman Myo Wei said that the SPDC Censorship Board suppressed his and other party leaders’ interviews from the latest issue of the weekly journal Pyithu Khit.⁶
- **Mid-July:** The SPDC Censorship Board suspended the publication of the Voice journal for two weeks for publishing an article that said the SPDC’s 2008 constitution was “hard to explain to Burmese.”⁷
- **20 July:** The SPDC Censorship Board issued a directive that media outlets will lose their publishing licenses if they fail to correctly quote the constitution, electoral laws, and other election rules⁸

¹ ABC (28 Jul 10) Burma poll must be judged on merit: election expert

² Irrawaddy (16 Jul 10) USDA 'Abolished': Official

³ Mizzima News (13 Jul 10) Kachin party ineligible to form, junta minister says

⁴ Kachin News Group (20 Jul 10) UDPKS gets 50 million Kyat from junta-backed USDP

⁵ Irrawaddy (31 Jul 10) NDF Leaders Told to Appeal Past Treason Charges

⁶ Mizzima News (07 Jul 10) Media outlets expect drop in junta propaganda

⁷ Irrawaddy (21 Jul 10) Journal Closed Following Article on Constitution

⁸ Mizzima News (27 Jul 10) Censorship rule puts electoral laws, constitution off-limits, editors say

Coercion and bribes

The USDP continued to forcibly recruit party members and offer bribes. USDP officials in Mudon Township, Mon State, told local village headmen to recruit 40 to 50 villagers in each village to join the party.⁹ In addition, the USDP offered low interest loans to street vendors and merchants if they become USDP members.¹⁰

Acts of defiance continue

Despite the pervasive climate of oppression, Burmese activists remained defiant and expressed their opposition to the elections.

- **Early July:** Unidentified individuals distributed leaflets urging people not to participate in the elections in Muse and Namkham, Shan State.¹¹
- **7 July:** A group of university students in Rangoon's Kamayut Township distributed leaflets that urged people to boycott the upcoming elections.¹²

INSIDE BURMA

Military offensive in Eastern Burma

Despite the onset of the rainy season, the SPDC stepped up attacks on civilians in Karen State.

- **10 July:** An SPDC Army soldier from LIB 704 raped a 27-year-old woman in Kay Kaw Village, Papun District, Karen State.¹³
- **13 July:** SPDC Army troops from IB 73 arrested and subsequently killed three villagers from Peltaw Dey and Bommatee Village in Htantabin Township, Eastern Pegu Division.¹⁴
- **23 July:** SPDC Army LIB 370 and LIB 361 shelled and subsequently entered Tha Da Der Village in Papun District, Northern Karen State. SPDC Army troops burned about 70 houses, a school, and a church.¹⁵ Over 500 villagers fled into the jungle as a result of the attack.¹⁶
- **24 July:** SPDC Army troops laid landmines around Tha Da Der Village to prevent the villagers from returning.¹⁷

Junta and ceasefire groups still at odds

Despite the SPDC's decision to scrap its ultimatum that all ethnic ceasefire groups transform into Border Guard Forces (BGF) until after the elections [See *June 2010 Burma Bulletin*], tensions between the junta and ethnic ceasefire groups escalated.

- **17 July:** A skirmish between the SPDC Army and United Wa State Army (UWSA) troops in Hopang Township, Shan State, resulted in the death of a UWSA soldier.¹⁸
- **26 July:** About 500 Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) troops from Brigade-5 defected to the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) because of its opposition to the SPDC's BGF plan.¹⁹ Fears of hostilities between the SPDC Army and DKBA as a result of the defection caused over 500 villagers in Myawaddy Township, Karen State, to flee to the Thai border.²⁰

⁹ IMNA (06 Jul 10) Headmen pressured to handpick for USDP membership

¹⁰ DVB (12 Jul 10) PM's party flashing money at supporters

¹¹ SHAN (09 Jul 10) Ethnic parties gaining support in Northern Shan State

¹² Mizzima News (08 Jul 10) Students make risky public call for right to form unions

¹³ KNU (26 Jul 10) Pre-Election Military Operations by SPDC

¹⁴ KIC (28 Jul 10) Three detained villagers killed by Burmese Army

¹⁵ Free Burma Rangers (24 Jul 10) FBR Report: Burma Army burns villages and chases over 900 people into the jungle, attacks continue in Northern Karen State 24 July 2010

¹⁶ KNU (26 Jul 10) Pre-Election Military Operations by SPDC; DVB (27 Jul 10) Burma army torches Karen village

¹⁷ DVB (27 Jul 10) Burma army torches Karen village

¹⁸ Irrawaddy (19 Jul 10) Wa Soldier Killed in Border Skirmish; DVB (20 Jul 10) Wa army investigate shooting

¹⁹ Irrawaddy (28 Jul 10) DKBA Battalions Defect to KNLA

²⁰ KIC (27 Jul 10) Over 500 Karen flee to Thailand; DVB (27 Jul 10) Burma army torches Karen village

NLD marks Martyrs' Day

On 19 July, the NLD marked Martyrs' Day with a gathering at the house of party Vice-Chairman Tin Oo in Rangoon. More than 300 NLD members attended the event, which was monitored by plain clothes police.²¹ About 100 NLD youth members marched to the Martyrs' Mausoleum where they were allowed to pay their respects amid tight security.²² Representatives of some political parties attended the SPDC's ceremony at the mausoleum.²³ The SPDC Censorship Board heavily suppressed any tribute to Martyrs' Day heroes in print media.²⁴

More restrictions on Daw Suu

On 10 July, the SPDC imposed more absurd restrictions on the meetings between Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her lawyers. In addition to obtaining authorization from the local Special Branch police to meet Daw Suu, her lawyers now have to send a letter to Daw Suu to request permission to meet with her. Moreover, the Special Branch police prohibited Daw Suu's lawyers from discussing any matters other than those related to her pending court cases.²⁵ Defying those restrictions, on 27 July, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi met her lawyer Nyan Win and told him that the upcoming elections were unlikely to be free and fair because political parties will not have enough time to campaign.²⁶

Aid still needed in the delta as TCG ends

Chances of a full recovery in the Irrawaddy delta dimmed as the SPDC took full control of coordinating the cyclone Nargis relief efforts at the end of July. On 31 July, the Tripartite Core Group (TCG) officially ended its mandate of coordinating the recovery and passed the reins to the SPDC Ministry of Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement.²⁷ On 27 July, the Tripartite Core Group (TCG) released the fourth Periodic Review of the Post-Nargis Joint Assessment (PONJA). The Review found that 27% of families had insufficient food supplies.²⁸ The report also stressed that homes rebuilt after pre-cyclone Nargis were not constructed with sufficient safeguards to protect people from another cyclone.²⁹ Meanwhile, aid contributions continued to decline, forcing NGOs to scale back their operations.³⁰

Dengue spreads and kills

The spread of dengue fever is posing a serious health risk to people in Burma. The following statistics were reported on 14 July:

- **Irrawaddy Division:** The total number of cases reported from January to the middle of this year was 1,221 and the death toll was 18.
- **Mon State:** The total number of cases in the State from 3 January to 3 July was 1,236 and the 11 deaths.
- **Pegu Division:** The total number of cases reported in the Division from March to July was 188 and two died in that period.
- **Karen State:** As many as 516 people from six Townships in the State contracted dengue fever in the first half of 2010 and two died.³¹

²¹ AP (19 Jul 10) Martyrs remembered; DPA (19 Jul 10) Disbanded but defiant, Myanmar opposition marks Martyrs' Day; AFP (20 Jul 10) Low key celebrations for Myanmar Martyrs' Day

²² AFP (20 Jul 10) Low key celebrations for Myanmar Martyrs' Day; AP (19 Jul 10) Martyrs remembered; AFP (20 Jul 10) Myanmar marks Martyrs' Day; Xinhua (19 Jul 10) Myanmar holds ceremony to mark martyrs' day

²³ AP (19 Jul 10) Martyrs remembered; AFP (20 Jul 10) Myanmar marks Martyrs' Day; Xinhua (19 Jul 10) Myanmar holds ceremony to mark martyrs' day

²⁴ Irrawaddy (19 Jul 10) Martyrs' Day Tributes Censored

²⁵ Mizzima News (16 Jul 10) Authorities impose tighter controls on lawyers visiting Suu Kyi

²⁶ Irrawaddy (29 Jul 10) Election 'Absolutely Unlikely' to be Fair: Suu Kyi

²⁷ ASEAN (20 Jul 10) ASEAN Post-Nargis Humanitarian Mandate in Myanmar Concludes

²⁸ TCG (27 Jul 10) Periodic Review IV

²⁹ TCG (27 Jul 10) Periodic Review IV

³⁰ TCG (27 Jul 10) Periodic Review IV

³¹ Mizzima News (14 Jul 10) Truth and official lies about dengue in Burma's hot spots

HUMAN RIGHTS

Monks targeted

In July, the SPDC stepped up its persecution of Buddhist monks.

- Monks in Rangoon complained that local SPDC authorities were refusing to renew their passports.³²
- At the end of July, the SPDC-controlled board of trustees of the Shwedagon Pagoda closed three monasteries located within the pagoda's compound and evicted more than 30 monks who were living there.³³ The closure of the three monasteries occurred at the beginning of the Buddhist Lent, when monks are not supposed to leave their monasteries.
- On 27 July, SPDC authorities in Akyab, Arakan State, arrested Buddhist monk and prominent historian U Pyinya Sara on charges of abusing Buddhist principles.³⁴

Arrest and prison sentence

- **15 July:** Rangoon's Western District Court sentenced former NLD-LA member Than Myint Aung, 31, to an additional 10-year prison term for violating the Electronics Act. Than Myint Aung will now serve a total of 15 years in prison.³⁵ [See *June 2010 Burma Bulletin*]
- **19 July:** Police in Rangoon's South Okkalapa Township arrested a 14-year-old boy for possession of books written by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and Win Tin.³⁶

Win Htein released

On 15 July, the SPDC released NLD member Win Htein, 68, from Katha prison, Sagaing Division. A close aide of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Win Htein was arrested in May 1996, and sentenced to 14 years in prison for disrupting national security.³⁷ After his release, Win Htein vowed to continue to work for democracy in Burma and to help political prisoners and their families.³⁸

DISPLACEMENT

Deported migrants in jeopardy

On 19 July, labor rights groups petitioned the Thai government to investigate reports of human abuses of migrant workers deported back to Burma.³⁹ Since 2 June, Thai authorities have arrested and deported more than 1,200 undocumented Burmese migrant workers.⁴⁰ Upon returning to Burma, these migrants face conscription into SPDC Army-backed militias, torture, extortion, and other human rights abuses.⁴¹

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

SPDC in the hot seat at the AMM

The SPDC was once again in the hot seat at the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM) in Hanoi.

³² DVB (01 Jul 10) Burma clamps down on travelling monks

³³ Irrawaddy (21 Jul 10) Monks to be Evicted at Start of Buddhist Retreat; Mizzima News (28 Jul 10) Shwedagon Pagoda monasteries sealed after monks, students evicted

³⁴ Narinjara News (28 Jul 10) Prominent Historian Monk Arrested in Sittwe

³⁵ Mizzima News (16 Jul 10) Court extends prison sentence of NLD Liberated Area member

³⁶ Irrawaddy (20 Jul 10) Boy Arrested With Banned Books

³⁷ AP (15 Jul 10) Former Suu Kyi aide released after 14 years in Myanmar prison; DPA (15 Jul 10) Myanmar junta releases opposition politician; Irrawaddy (15 Jul 10) Former Suu Kyi Assistant Win Htein Freed

³⁸ AFP (16 Jul 10) Freed Suu Kyi aide to continue struggle; AP (17 Jul 10) Win Htein Vows to Keep Up Struggle

³⁹ DPA (19 Jul 10) Rights groups petition Thai premier over migrant labour rackets

⁴⁰ NMG (21 Jul 10) Appeal to Thai PM to review security of migrants

⁴¹ ABC (22 Jul 10) Burma junta accused of extortion, rape

- **19 July:** ASEAN FMs gave SPDC FM Nyan Win an “earful” about the junta’s planned elections.⁴² ASEAN FMs told Nyan Win that elections must be “free, fair and inclusive.”⁴³ The FMs “strongly suggested” that the SPDC consider having ASEAN observers at the elections.⁴⁴
- **20 July:** ASEAN Sec-Gen Surin Pitsuwan that whatever happens in Burma will have implications in ASEAN - positive or negative.⁴⁵ Malaysia’s FM Anifah Aman echoed these concerns and said that the SPDC should not only look at its own interests but that of ASEAN’s credibility.⁴⁶
- **21 July:** ASEAN, together with China, South Korea, and Japan (ASEAN+3) called on the SPDC to make sure the elections were “free and fair.”⁴⁷ Japan’s FM Katsuya Okada raised concerns about Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s participation in the upcoming election with Nyan Win and was told that Daw Suu will be able to run in the upcoming elections once she is released from house arrest.⁴⁸

US turns up the heat on the SPDC

- **14 July:** the US House of Representatives voted unanimously to extend sanctions on the SPDC.⁴⁹ The US Senate followed suit by a vote of 99-1 on 22 July.⁵⁰ On 27 July, US President Barack Obama signed the extension into law.⁵¹
- **23 July:** Clinton said that the US was “deeply concerned” about oppression in Burma and called for the release of political prisoners, especially Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and an end to attacks against ethnic nationalities. Clinton said that the SPDC’s “restrictive electoral laws” further stifled civilians’ lives and made polls due this year “unlikely” to be free and fair.⁵²
- **30 July:** Thirty-two US senators urged Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to back the creation of a UN Commission on Inquiry to investigate crimes against humanity and war crimes in Burma. The group said a UN Commission of Inquiry was needed to look into a number of reports that showed “a consistent pattern” of serious human rights abuses by the SPDC.⁵³

SPDC nuclear program

On 21 July, Jane’s Intelligence Review published pictures of possible nuclear facilities near Naypyidaw.⁵⁴ In addition, Jane’s Intelligence Review said that the SPDC “may be able to outsource the technical know-how and tools to reach its goals far sooner than expected.”⁵⁵ The SPDC’s pursuit of a nuclear program remained the topic of discussion during two regional multilateral meetings in Hanoi, Vietnam.

- At the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM), Thai FM Kasit Piromya raised concerns about the SPDC’s nuclear program. On 20 July, ASEAN Sec-Gen Surin Pitsuwan reiterated that ASEAN Charter and the South-East Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone treaty required that South-East Asia be free of nuclear weapons.⁵⁶
- At the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) which took place in Hanoi immediately after the AMM, while Russia and the EU expressed caution over the SPDC’s nuclear program,⁵⁷ the US reiterated its concerns about the nuclear ties between Pyongyang and Naypyidaw.⁵⁸ On 23 July, US Secretary of

⁴² AP (21 Jul 10) ASEAN calls for fair poll in Myanmar

⁴³ AP (21 Jul 10) ASEAN calls for fair poll in Myanmar

⁴⁴ AP (21 Jul 10) ASEAN calls for fair poll in Myanmar

⁴⁵ Straits Times (21 Jul 10) Asean observers at Burmese polls?

⁴⁶ Bernama (20 Jul 10) Plan for Asean observer for Myanmar election

⁴⁷ DPA (22 Jul 10) US supports ASEAN position on Myanmar elections

⁴⁸ DVB (22 Jul 10) Suu Kyi ‘can run if freed’: Burma FM; Kyodo News (21 Jul 10) Japan urges Myanmar to ensure Suu Kyi’s participation in poll

⁴⁹ AP (14 Jul 10) US House votes to extend sanctions banning imports from Myanmar

⁵⁰ AFP (22 Jul 10) US Congress renews Myanmar sanctions

⁵¹ Irrawaddy (28 Jul 10) Obama Renews Sanctions on Burma

⁵² AFP (23 Jul 10) Clinton denounces Myanmar’s oppression at Asia meet; Irrawaddy (24 Jul 10) Burma’s FM Gets an ‘Earful’ from Asean and Partners

⁵³ AFP (30 Jul 10) US senators call for UN probe on Myanmar

⁵⁴ Bloomberg (22 Jul 10) Myanmar Nuclear Weapon Program Claims Supported by Photos, Jane’s Reports; Telegraph (26 Jul 10) Burma is working on nuclear weapons programme, experts claim; Pravda (28 Jul 10) Myanmar Tries To Build Nuclear Weapons with North Korea’s Help

⁵⁵ Bloomberg (21 Jul 10) Myanmar Nuclear Weapon Program Claims Supported by Photos, Jane’s Reports; Bloomberg (23 Jul 10) Burma building nuclear weapons

⁵⁶ DPA (20 Jul 10) ASEAN leaders unsure about Myanmar’s nuclear ambitions

⁵⁷ DPA (23 Jul 10) Russia, EU: More study needed on Myanmar’s alleged nuclear activity

⁵⁸ AP (23 Jul 10) US wades into thorny Asian disputes

State Hillary Clinton urged ASEAN members to remind the SPDC of its international obligations with regard to nuclear nonproliferation, saying that recent events had “called that commitment into question.”⁵⁹ SPDC FM Nyan Win did not stay in Hanoi for the ARF in an obvious attempt to avoid questions regarding the junta’s nuclear program and its military cooperation with North Korea.⁶⁰

North Korean FM visits Burma

Fueling the controversy swirling around the military and nuclear ties between the junta and North Korea, on 29 July North Korean FM Pak Ui Chun arrived in Burma on a four-day visit. Pak was the highest-level delegate from North Korea to travel to Burma since relations were normalized in 2007.⁶¹ On 30 July, Pak met with SPDC PM Thein Sein and FM Nyan Win in Naypyidaw.⁶²

Than Shwe’s pilgrimage to India secures military and economic deals

On 25 July, Indian officials welcomed SPDC Chairman Sr Gen Than Shwe on a visit that was aimed at strengthening diplomatic and economic ties between the two countries.⁶³ Than Shwe spent the first two days of his five-day trip visiting important Buddhist shrines in Bodghaya. On 27 July, Than Shwe went to the site of Mohandas Gandhi’s cremation in Delhi.⁶⁴ Than Shwe’s visit was met with numerous street demonstrations in New Delhi and was heavily criticized by civil society and human rights groups.⁶⁵

On 27 July, India and the SPDC agreed to a treaty on security cooperation which Delhi believes will enable it to deal with anti-India armed groups operating on both sides of the Indo-Burma border.⁶⁶ India also pledged high-speed patrol boats, rifles with night vision capabilities and armored personnel carriers to the SPDC to help in these efforts.⁶⁷

The two sides also signed four economic agreements which covered extending a line of credit of over US\$130 million to develop railways and roads connecting its India’s Northeastern States to Burma, the procurement of agriculture equipment, and upgrading telecommunication links between Mandalay and Moreh in Manipur State.⁶⁸ The two sides also agreed to ramp up energy investment and bilateral trade, which currently stands at US\$1 billion.⁶⁹ Than Shwe wrapped up his trip with a visit to Hitec City, an IT hub in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, on 28 July and to the Tata Motors plant in Jamshedpur, Jharkhand, on 29 July.⁷⁰

ECONOMY

Economic mismanagement reaches new lows

The vast majority of Burmese students, merchants, and farmers continued to struggle under the SPDC’s economic mismanagement.

⁵⁹ AP (23 Jul 10) US wades into thorny Asian disputes; AFP (23 Jul 10) Clinton denounces Myanmar’s oppression at Asia meet

⁶⁰ Irrawaddy (23 Jul 10) Burmese FM’s Conflicting Messages

⁶¹ DVB (29 Jul 10) N Korean visit clouded in secrecy

⁶² Bloomberg (31 Jul 10) N. Korea, Myanmar Discuss Expanding Ties Amid Nuclear Concern; Mizzima News (30 Jul 10) N Korean foreign minister meets junta PM Thein Sein

⁶³ CNN (25 Jul 10) India welcomes Myanmar military leader

⁶⁴ DVB (26 Jul 10) Than Shwe to visit Gandhi site as protesters say ‘go to hell’; Guardian (25 Jul 10) Burma junta leader begins controversial five-day tour of India; Mizzima (26 Jul 10) Dictator’s tour group arrives at five-star hotel in New Delhi; Times of India (27 Jul 10) Myanmar military ruler donates \$11282 to Mahabodhi Temple

⁶⁵ Irrawaddy (26 Jul 10) Protests Dog Than Shwe in India; Mizzima News (27 Jul 10) Burmese activists in Delhi label Than Shwe a war criminal; Kachin News Group (26 Jul 10) Burmese in India protest Than Shwe’s visit; IANS (27 Jul 10) Burmese refugees disappointed over Than Shwe’s India visit; Irrawaddy (24 Jul 10) Than Shwe Visit Condemned in Letter to Indian PM; AFP (21 Jul 10) India blasted by rights group over Myanmar visit

⁶⁶ Indian Express (28 Jul 10) India, Myanmar ink anti-terror pact

⁶⁷ Irrawaddy (28 Jul 10) Burma, India Sign Wide-ranging Agreements

⁶⁸ IANS (27 Jul 10) India, Myanmar sign 5 pacts, to boost counter-terror cooperation; IANS (27 Jul 10) India inks anti-terror pact with Myanmar, loosens purse strings; ANI (27 Jul 10) India, Myanmar sign MoU for 60 million US Dollars credit line; VOA (27 Jul 10) Burma, India Sign Defense, Economic Deals; Hindu (28 Jul 10) India, Myanmar reach security accord

⁶⁹ IANS (27 Jul 10) India inks anti-terror pact with Myanmar, loosens purse strings

⁷⁰ Sify News (28 Jul 10) Myanmar’s ruler visits IT hub in Hyderabad; IANS (28 Jul 10) Myanmar ruler to visit Jamshedpur Thursday

- According to the Economist Intelligence Unit, Burma's projected GDP growth rate for next year will be less than one percent.⁷¹ This is in stark contrast to the double-digit growth figures traditionally used by the junta.
- SPDC authorities in Rangoon and the Internal Revenue Department ordered small and medium businesses, including retail shops, tea shops, restaurants and pharmacies to pay taxes two years in advance if they want to renew their business licenses.⁷²
- On 5 July, over 300 students from the Government Technical College in Akyab, Arakan State, demonstrated against the doubling of bus fares as a result of an increase in gas prices due to the SPDC's privatization of petrol stations [See *June 2010 Burma Bulletin*].⁷³
- SPDC authorities banned roadside vendors across 33 Townships in Rangoon and threatened violators with arrest.⁷⁴
- SPDC Central Statistical Organization reported that rice exports fell by more than 60% during the first half of 2010, amounting to only just over 270,000 tons, compared to more than 750,000 tons over the same period in 2009. Traders blamed red-tape on the part of the junta for the poor figures.⁷⁵

New deals for regime allies

In July, the junta continued to enrich the military and its cronies:

- **5 July:** SPDC Army-controlled Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings took over the Bo Aung Kyaw Jetty, a major port facility in Rangoon.⁷⁶
- **6 July:** State-run New Light of Myanmar reported on a profit-sharing contract between the SPDC State Mining Enterprise-1 and Top Ten Stars Manufacturing to jointly mine lead from the Bawsai mines in Kalaw Township, Shan State.⁷⁷
- **7 July:** Three-hundred state-owned and private jewelry companies earned over US\$885 million from the sale of over 7,000 jade lots and gems at a gems emporium in Rangoon.⁷⁸
- **25 July:** State-run New Light of Myanmar reported that the SPDC and China signed a joint venture between China's YPIC International Energy Cooperation and Development Company and Burma's International Group of Entrepreneurs to build a 1,055 megawatt hydro-power plant on the Ngawchanka River in Kachin State.⁷⁹
- **27 July:** The SPDC awarded road construction contracts to six private business groups with close ties to the junta, including Asia World, which won a contract to build a 182-km highway between Rangoon and Bassein, Irrawaddy Division.⁸⁰

SPDC shuts Thai border

Starting on 12 July, the SPDC shut all three official border crossings with Thailand. The SPDC officials closed the Friendship Bridge connecting Myawaddy to Mae Sot to commercial traffic and closed some 20 ports along the Moei River.⁸¹ The junta then closed the border at Tachilek, Shan State, and Kawthaung, Tenasserim Division, a few days later.⁸² The closure was suspected to be a protest over Thailand's construction of a river bank erosion project on the Moei River, which the SPDC claimed

⁷¹ DVB (06 Jun 10) Economic growth 'to accelerate' in 2010-11

⁷² Mizzima News (08 Jul 10) Rangoon merchants face tax bill two years in advance

⁷³ Narinjara News (06 Jul 10) Sittwe GTC Students Stage Demonstration for School Taxis; Narinjara News (07 Jul 10) School Closed After Demonstration; Irrawaddy (07 Jul 10) Sittwe Students Protest Bus Fare Hike

⁷⁴ Mizzima News (08 Jul 10) Old capital's roadside vendors meet bureaucratic end

⁷⁵ Reuters (13 Jul 10) Myanmar Rice Exports Slump in First Half of 2010; DVB (20 Jul 10) Burma rice exports plummet 60%

⁷⁶ Irrawaddy (07 Jul 10) Military Firm Takes Control of Jetty in Rangoon

⁷⁷ DVB (06 Jun 10) Private firms swoop on mineral sector; Xinhua (06 Jul 10) Roundup: More private companies cooperate with Myanmar gov't in mineral extraction

⁷⁸ Irrawaddy (02 Jul 10) Jade, Jewelry Show has Good Sales; Xinhua (28 Jul 10) Myanmar to participate in int'l jewelry show in India

⁷⁹ DPA (26 Jul 10) Myanmar and China agree to develop Kachin hydropower plant; DVB (27 Jul 10) New China-backed Kachin dam signed off

⁸⁰ DPA (27 Jul 10) Myanmar junta hands out road contracts to cronies

⁸¹ Irrawaddy (13 Jul 10) Burma Closes Cross-border Bridge at Mae Sot; Radio Australia News (14 Jul 10) Thai-Border checkpoint remains closed

⁸² SHAN (15 Jul 10) Extension of ban on Thai imports with new bridge closure; Irrawaddy (16 Jul 10) Burmese Block Imports at Three Thai Border Crossings

would erode embanks on the Burmese side.⁸³ Observers said that the closure was also linked to the crackdown on illegal trade and to rising tensions between the junta and the DKBA [See above *Junta and ceasefire groups still at odds*].⁸⁴

Thai and SPDC officials met on 26 and 30 July to discuss the border closure, but as of 31 July, the SPDC still refused to reopen the border.⁸⁵ According to Thai officials, the border closure was costing border trade about 100 million baht (US\$3.1 million) per day.⁸⁶

Thailand signs new gas deal with junta

On 30 July, Thailand's PTT Exploration and Production (PTTEP) signed a 30-year agreement with Burma's state-run Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE) to buy natural gas from the M9 offshore block in the Gulf of Martaban beginning in 2013.⁸⁷

OTHER BURMA NEWS IN JULY

1	The SPDC moves its temporary passport office for migrant workers in Thailand from Kawthaung, Tenasserim Division, to Ranong, Thailand.
5	SPDC Army Commander of Tangyan-based IB 33 Lt Col Kyaw Kyaw Naing provides weapons to Lahu militia units in Nalao and Loizay Villages, Tangyan Township, Shan State.
5	Chinese Communist Party Central Committee member Li Changchun and SPDC Secretary-1 Lt Gen Tin Aung Myint Oo agree to further cooperation between the two countries.
6	NLD transfers about 2.55 million kyat (US\$2,500) to its State and Division offices for support to the families of 605 political prisoners nationwide.
6	Special Branch police and Military Affairs Security personnel raid the home of UWSA Major Aik Tun at Myazeya Ward in Hopang, Shan State.
7	SSA-S troops kill three members and injure several of the pro-junta PNO in a clash in Maukme Township, Shan State.
8	The ILO says that Burma has made limited progress in curtailing the use of forced labor.
9	Thai authorities arrest a Karen drug trafficker in Sangkhlaburi, Thailand, and seize nearly 10,100 amphetamine tablets that were being smuggled from Burma to Thailand.
10	Thai authorities arrest five people, including two Karen after they attempt to sell 36,000 methamphetamine tablets and 200 grams of methamphetamine powder near the Thai-Burma border.
10	SPDC authorities in Putao prison, Kachin State, beat Htet Htet Oo Wei, a 25-year-old female political prisoner because she attempted to stop an assault on two other political prisoners.
11	Seven soldiers from the DKBA 999 Brigade defect and join the KNLA.
12	DKBA soldiers detain the families, including the children, of DKBA soldiers that defected on 11 July.
12	SPDC Army soldiers from LIB 409 arrest three NMSP soldiers and force them to work as porters.
12	US State Department spokesman PJ Crowley says that the US does not have any expectation that Burma's upcoming elections will be remotely free, fair, or legitimate.
13	A court in Kolkata, India, sentences 34 Burmese political exiles, who have already been in detention for more than 10 years, to 15 months imprisonment and a fine of 6,000 rupees (US\$130) each for illegal entry into India.
14	SPDC Ministry of National Planning and Development says that investment in the in the fiscal year ending in March 2010 fell 68% to \$315 million from \$985 million in the previous fiscal year.
15	Lawyers Kyi Win and Nyan Win meet with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to discuss her special appeal.
15	Weekly Yangon Times reports that 87 trafficked Burmese were repatriated from Thailand during the first six months of 2010.
16	US Undersecretary of State Bill Burns says that the US and Thailand have a shared interest in pressing for an inclusive, transparent, and credible electoral process in Burma and that a first step should be genuine dialogue among all stakeholders and the release of more than 2,100 political prisoners including Daw

⁸³ AFP (20 Jul 10) Myanmar shuts checkpoint; Irrawaddy (20 Jul 10) Border Closure Halts Trade, Raises Prices; Irrawaddy (13 Jul 10) Burma Closes Cross-border Bridge at Mae Sot; Radio Australia News (14 Jul 10) Thai-Border checkpoint remains closed

⁸⁴ Bangkok Post (26 Jul 10) Alongkorn meets envoy on closure

⁸⁵ Bangkok Post (27 Jul 10) Burma border talks fail to end stand-off; MCOT (26 Jul 10) Mae Sot-Myawaddy border closure tiff likely to ease with Thai-Myanmar talks

⁸⁶ Mizzima News (27 Jul 10) Myawaddy-Mae Sot border trade takes a hit; Nation (27 Jul 10) Bt1 Billion if border remains blocked

⁸⁷ Reuters (29 Jul 10) Thailand to sign Myanmar natural gas purchase deal; Nation (29 Jul 10) Special zone for Mae Sot pushed to boost Burma trade; Bangkok Post (29 Jul 10) More reliance on Burma; Nation (30 Jul 10) Thailand, Burma to sign another energy pact; Bangkok Post (29 Jul 10) PTTEP to sign gas deal with Burma; Upstream Online (29 Jul 10) PTTEP closes up on M9 gas deal

	Aung San Suu Kyi.
16	A villager in Kunseik Village, Shwegyin Township, Pegu Division, loses his right foot after stepping on a landmine.
18	UK Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Jeremy Browne says that the British government does not regard the coming election in Burma as a legitimate expression of public opinion while more than 2,000 political prisoners remain in prison.
21	East Timor FM Zacarias da Costa says the Timorese government “believes” in the SPDC’s efforts to transition to civilian rule.
22	The biweekly Eleven journal reports that about 17,000 people out of 238,000 in Burma infected with HIV/AIDS died in 2009.
26	The Japanese government says it will allow 32 Burmese refugees living in Thailand to resettle in Japan.
27	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meets with her lawyer Nyan Win to discuss her special appeal and renovation work on her house.
27	Two Na Sa Ka personnel from Area 5 in Maungdaw Township, Arakan State, defect and flee to Bangladesh.
28	Air Mandalay says it has suspended its flight services for a major renovation of its aircrafts.
29	Four NLD CEC members raise about 40 forced labor complaints during a meeting with ILO Liaison Officer Steve Marshall in Rangoon.

REPORTS ON BURMA RELEASED IN JULY

“**Energy Insecurity: How Total, Chevron, and PTTEP Contribute to Human Rights Violations, Financial Secrecy, and Nuclear Proliferation in Burma (Myanmar)**”, Earth Rights International (ERI)
<http://www.earthrights.org/sites/default/files/documents/energy-insecurity.pdf>

“**Periodic Review IV**”, Tripartite Core Group (TCG) http://www.aseanhtf.org/periodicreview4_report.html