

ELECTION MONITOR NO. 5

REOPENING OF NLD RANGOON BRANCH?

A group led by National League for Democracy (NLD) Rangoon Division Vice-Chairman Dr. Than Nyein, Dr. Than Win and U Hla Thein recently met with U Khin Maung Tun, Chairman of Election Commission Office. According to Dr. Than Nyein, they were instructed to submit a list of currently active committee members of NLD-Rangoon Division and that further discussions would be held after the submission of the lists. This follows a recent appeal by the NLD-Rangoon office to the Commission in early October related to repairs and reopening of its Divisional Office located in Tarmway Township which was closed in 2003 soon after the Depayin incident. Many other NLD offices throughout the country still remain closed with some even being totally non-operational.

PROSPECTIVE SPDC ELECTORAL CANDIDATES

The following is a list of prospective SPDC candidates and their electoral constituencies compiled from confirmed sources. This list will be amended in the future.

Ayeyawaddy Division

1. Maj-Gen. Soe Naing, Minister for Tourism – Dadeye
2. Brig-Gen Thein Aung, Minister for Forests – Ingapu
3. Colonel Thein Nyunt, Minister for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs – Maubin

Bago Division

1. Maj-Gen Aung Min, Minister for Railways – Kawa

Mandalay Division

1. U Aung Thaug, Minister for Industry 1 – Mandalay
2. Lt-Col Nyan Tun Aung – Nahtogyi
3. Brig-Gen Than Htay – Meiktila, Tharzi

Magwe Division

1. Col Zaw Min, Minister for Electric Power – Magwe

Yangon Division

1. Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin, Rangoon Mayor
2. U Maung Maung Thein, Khayan Township Association Patron & Brig-Gen – Khayan
3. U Soe Tha, Minister for National Planning and Economic Development – Twante

Sagaing Division

1. Dr Chan Nyein, Minister for Education – Kantbalu

2. Brig-Gen Kyaw San, Minister for Information – Pale

Kachin State

1. Maj-Gen Thein Zaw, Minister for Telecommunications – Myitkyina

Mon State

1. Brig-Gen Ohn Myint, Ministry of Mines – Paung Township

Rakhine State

1. Maj-Gen Thein Swe – Sittwe

Others

1. Maj-Gen Htay Oo, Minister for Agriculture – constituency not yet known.
2. Maj-Gen Tin Naing Thein, Minister for Commerce – Constituency not known yet

MON YOUTH STATEMENT

In a statement issued at its recent 2nd Annual Conference, the Mon Youth Progressive Organization (MYPO) condemned the SPDC's pressure tactics against the New Mon State Party to disarm and participate in the 2010 Elections. At the two-day conference held on the 3rd and 4th November on the Thai-Burmese border, Vice-Chairman, Nai Nyan Seik Ra Mann, voiced the group's decision to support the New Mon State Party (NMSP) and to continue the fight for equal national rights for the Mon people and the goal of achieving a democratic Burma. The 2nd Annual Conference brought together Mon youth groups and people from around Mon State to determine the MYPO's future long term goals and action plans.

CHAIRMAN OF RAKHINE STATE CCI TO RUN IN 2010 ELECTION

U Oo Bo Thein, Chairman of the Rakhine State Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) will run in the forthcoming 2010 election in Rathidaung Township, said one town elder. "U Oo Bo Thein has been renting a house in Rathidaung since August 2009 and the house is now being opened as a campaign office for the 2010 election," he said. "The house being rented by U Oo Bo Thein was owned by the late Khin Maung Shwe in Roon Tet Land in Rathidaung's Chaung Wa Ward. Rathidaung is located on the eastern banks of the Mayu River 20 miles north of Arakan's State capital Sittwe. He is now organizing people from our township by giving presents like money, food, and cloth to them in order to gain their support in the 2010 election. But he has not told us if he will run in the 2010 election as an individual or for a party," the elder said. According to another local source, U Oo Bo Thein recently conducted several visits to rural Rathidaung Township to organize people for the 2010 elections.

TPDC CHAIRMAN ORDERS VPDC TO CAMPAIGN FOR 2010.

The Maungdaw Township Peace and Development Council (TPDC) Chairman recently instructed Village Peace and Development Council (VPDC) members of Maungdaw Township to begin campaigning for the forthcoming elections. This follows a recent visit to Rakhine State by Lt-Gen Khin Zaw of the Ministry of Defense from Napyidaw, during

which the TPDC Chairman and authorities concerned were given direct orders to implement the campaign and make preparations for the 2010 Elections.

ANALYSIS

The recent meeting between the NLD-Rangoon and government Election Commission officials to reopen the Rangoon NLD office could be regarded as a goodwill gesture by the government to show its flexibility towards the opposition. The instruction to submit a list of current NLD committee members will provide the authorities with updated information and the opportunity to more closely monitor the NLD members and their activities. The opportunity to reopen its Rangoon Division office would provide a much needed boost for the NLD. However, with many of its members arrested and detained, the daily activities and running of its offices will prove to be a test for the NLD. On the other hand, the government's campaigning has already gained momentum, since the politically motivated USDA and its members have already been assigned their respective electoral constituencies, with more to come in the near future. The mandates and instructions being given to the local TPDC and VPDC offices at the grassroots level provides the regime with the upper-hand to manipulate the on-going political situation for its own benefit against a weakened or if not a defunct opposition. The MYPO's statement is further testimony highlighting the SPDC's pressure tactics imposed on ethnic and ceasefire groups to disarm and participate in the elections. MYPO together with the NMSP share one common voice similar to the same aspirations of many other ethnic groups. However, in order to pose any major threat or opposition to the regime, the existing disunity within the inner circles of each and every ethnic and ceasefire group must first be addressed. Until such time, the SPDC will continue to succeed in its divide and rule policy.