

ELECTION MONITOR NO. 43

NDF OPENS OFFICE IN MANDALAY

The National Democratic Force (NDF) recently opened its party office in Pyigyitagun Township, Mandalay Division. At the opening, U Aung Khaing, the NDF's deputy chairman for Mandalay Region, said the party would start distributing more campaign materials at the end of September. "We plan to focus more on distributing pamphlets instead of giving speeches because public speeches need permission from the Union Election Commission in advance. They are also costly because we have to hire venues and we can't say that we'll definitely have a large audience," said U Aung Khaing, who will stand as a Pyithu Hluttaw candidate for Pyigyitagun. He added that campaign material would focus on familiarising voters with the party's logo, the khamauk, or bamboo hat.¹

FOUR POLITICAL PARTIES AND THREE INDIVIDUALS TO CONTEST BUTHIDAUNG

Four political parties - the Union Solidarity Development Party (USDP), the National Unity Party (NUP), the National Democratic Party for Development (NDPD), the National Development and Peace Party (NDPP) - and three individuals will take part in the elections in Buthidaung and Maungdaw, according to the District Election Commissions. The USDP, the NUP and the NDPP are going to contest the Amyotha Hluttaw (Upper House) seats, the Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower house) seats and the State Hluttaw. A local community elder from Maungdaw has said that USDP members are organizing local people in rural areas to vote for them and in return for benefits such as free movement and with promises to give permission to repair religious buildings within the local communities.²

PARTIES CONSIDER FORMING AN ALLIANCE

A group of parties are now exploring ways to form an alliance in order to compete against the USDP and NUP, according to Thein Htay of the Union Democracy Party (UDP). A coordinating meeting is scheduled to take place in the first week of October, and the parties likely to be involved include the Union Democracy Party (UDP), the Rakhine Nationals Development Party (RNDP), the National Democratic Force (NDF), the Democratic Party (Myanmar), the Peace and Diversity Party, the Shan Nationalities Democratic Party (SNDP) and the Chin National Party (CNP). The NDF, the Democratic Party (Myanmar) and the RNDP have initially welcomed the idea, while the remaining parties invited to take part remain tight-lipped concerning the proposal.³

FORMER HEADMASTER "CERTAIN" TO WIN IN CAPITAL CONSTITUENCY

An independent standing for election in a Nay Pyi Taw constituency has said that he was "certain to win" against candidates from the country's two largest parties. Speaking at a press conference at Yangon's Traders Hotel on 21 September, U Tin Aye, a 68-year-old former headmaster, said he expected to win votes from "thousands" of his former students. He will compete in the Nay Pyi Taw Lewe constituency against U Htay Win from the USDP and U Myint Oo from the NUP. "I am certain to win [my constituency] in the election," he told journalists at the event. "There are about 60,000 of my [former] students in that constituency. I have been a teacher there for 38 years and the local people know who I am. I told the people that if they want a candidate who will speak out truthfully in the Hluttaw and do what he believes is correct, please vote for me. And if they want a 'yes man', vote for another candidate. I can't give you anything else for voting for me," U Tin Aye added. "When I said that, people replied to me that if I really do as I say they will cast their vote for me."⁴

¹ NDF opens office in Mandalay - <http://www.mmmtimes.com/2010/news/542/54206news.html> (Myanmar Times) 27 September 2010

² Four political parties and three individuals to contest Buthidaung - http://www.kaladanpress.org/v3/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2801:four-political-parties-and-three-individuals-to-contest-buthidaung&catid=126:election-2010&Itemid=50 (Kaladan) 27 September 2010

³ Parties consider forming an alliance - http://www.rfa.org/burmese/news/parties_form_alliance-09302010123714.html (RFA) 30 September 2010

⁴ Former headmaster certain to win capital constituency - <http://www.mmmtimes.com/2010/news/542/54209news.html> (Myanmar Times) 27 September 2010

ELECTORAL PROCESS COURSE OPENS IN PASAWNG TOWNSHIP

An electoral process course for polling station officers and deputy polling station officers, supervised by Bawlake District Election Sub-commission of Kayah State and organized by Pasawng Township Sub-commission, opened along with a demonstration session at the Pasawng Township Basic Educating High School on 23 September. District Sub-commission Secretary U Chan Myae Saw explained the purpose of opening the course and responsible persons lectured on the electoral process, followed by demonstrations on the voting process. A total of 150 trainees attended the course.⁵

ELECTORAL COURSE CONDUCTED IN KAWA TOWNSHIP

The Bago Region Election Sub-commission opened the electoral course No. 2/2010 for Ward/Village Sub-commission Chairmen, Secretaries, Polling Station Officers and Deputy Officers at the town hall in Kawa on 16 September. Chairman of the Township Peace and Development Council U Hla Win spoke on the occasion. Chairman of the Township Sub-commission U Aung Myint and Secretary U Thein Maung explained the duties and functions of the polling station officers and deputy officers. Members of the Township Sub-commission township level departmental officials provided lectures to the trainees, and displayed a sample polling station. The training course was attended by 169 trainees from ward and village sub-commissions.⁶

MULTIPLIER ELECTORAL COURSES CONDUCTED IN SINGU TOWNSHIP

The Singu Township Election Sub-commission of Pyin Oo Lwin District in Mandalay Region held electoral process courses for polling station officers, deputy polling station officers and members on 22 September, which a total of 984 trainees completed at seven separate locations in the township. The trainers of courses included Chairman of Township Election Sub-commission U Tun Than, as well as the Secretary and members of Township Election Sub-commission.⁷

ELECTORAL COURSE CONDUCTED IN MYEIK

The Myeik Township Election Sub-commission held an electoral course for polling station officers, deputy polling station officers and members of Myitnge and Kangaung wards at the hall of Basic Education High School No. 1 in Myeik on 17 September. Member of Taninthayi Region Election Sub-commission Region Education Officer U Than Htay spoke on the occasion. Members of the Sub-commission U Myint Kyaing and U Tin Tun explained the election law, rules and work guidelines. Members of the township sub-commission gave lectures on election law, rules and work guidelines to the 228 trainees who attended the course.⁸

Campaigning is now in full stride and many parties are being provided the opportunity to air live broadcasts on state-run television, with 15 minutes allocated to each to introduce their policies and objectives.

⁵ Electoral process course opens in Pasawng Tsp - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs09/NLM2010-09-25.pdf> (NLM) 25 September 2010

⁶ Electoral course conducted in Kawa Tsp - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs09/NLM2010-09-27.pdf> (NLM) 27 September 2010

⁷ Multiplier electoral courses conducted in Singu Township - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs09/NLM2010-09-28.pdf> (NLM) 28 September 2010

⁸ Electoral course conducted in Myeik - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs09/NLM2010-10-01.pdf> (NLM) 1 October 2010