

BURMA BULLETIN

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

Issue 1

January 2007

- China and Russia acknowledge Burma's problems but veto US/UK-sponsored resolution at the UNSC.
- Days later China is rewarded with lucrative gas deals
- As the new "Open Heart" campaign gets underway, prominent "88 Generation Students" group leaders are released.
- SPDC leader Than Shwe returns from Singapore medical check but doubts remain about his condition and ability to lead the junta.
- SPDC grants amnesty to 2,831 prisoners. Only 50 political prisoners are freed. Harassment, arbitrary detention and imprisonment of NLD members and activists continue. SPDC renews threats on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi via state-controlled media.
- SPDC Army cracks down on Burma-based anti-Indian militants following New Delhi's pledge to provide the regime with military hardware.
- At their annual ASEAN Summit, ASEAN countries reject UNSC move and maintain Burma is "their problem". ASEAN Charter draft envisages a region with no room for dictatorships.

IN THIS ISSUE

KEY STORY

China and Russia veto 1

INSIDE BURMA

Student leaders 2

NLD activities 2

SPDC attacks Daw Suu..... 3

Than Shwe health..... 3

SPDC Corruption..... 4

Bombs..... 4

KNU and the "ceasefire"..... 4

KIO and drugs..... 4

Infectious diseases threat..... 5

HUMAN RIGHTS

Prisoner releases, detentions..... 5

DISPLACEMENT

Rohingya Exodus..... 5

Migrant workers in Thailand..... 6

INTERNATIONAL

ASEAN Summit..... 6

ASEAN Charter..... 6

India military ties..... 6

ECONOMY

Rice Harvest..... 7

Energy Deals..... 7

CHRONOLOGY..... 8

REPORTS..... 9

KEY STORY

China and Russia veto UNSC Resolution on Burma

On 12 January, China and Russia vetoed a joint US/UK resolution on Burma before the UNSC.¹ Because of the vetoes, the resolution failed even though the final vote was 9 to 3 in favor of adoption.

- **Voting in favor:** US, UK, France, Belgium, Italy, Ghana, Peru, Panama and Slovakia.²
- **Voting against:** South Africa, China and Russia.³
- **Abstaining:** Indonesia, Qatar and the Congo.⁴

Despite their failure to support the resolution, China, South Africa, and Indonesia were in general agreement that there were serious human rights problems in Burma and the immediate need for democratic reform.

¹ Bangkok Post (13 Jan 07) China, Russia veto UN Burma resolution

² Reuters (13 Jan 07) China, Russia cast rare veto against U.S. on Myanmar

³ Bangkok Post (13 Jan 07) China, Russia veto UN Burma resolution

⁴ Bangkok Post (13 Jan 07) China, Russia veto UN Burma resolution

- **South Africa** - Deputy FM Aziz Pahad expressed deep concern about the human rights situation in Burma and said that South Africa would continue to fight for democracy, human rights and freedom in Burma and seek the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.⁵
- **Indonesia** - Indonesian ambassador to the UN Rezlan Ishar Jenie expressed frustration over Burma's military regime's promise to implement its 'roadmap to democracy' and said that the process had been too slow with no significant progress.⁶ He also said that Burma must respond to the imperative of restoring democracy and respect for human rights as a matter of principle.⁷
- **China** - China's UN Ambassador Wang Guangya acknowledged that there were problems in Burma but did not feel the problems constituted a threat to international peace and security.⁸ Wang urged the SPDC to move toward "inclusive democracy" and "speed up the process of dialogue and reform".⁹

The final draft resolution submitted to the UNSC members had called on the SPDC:

- to take concrete steps to allow full freedom of expression, association, and movement by unconditionally releasing Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all political prisoners;
- to lift all constraints on all political leaders and citizens, and allowing the NLD and other political parties to operate freely;
- to begin without delay a substantive political dialogue, which would lead to a genuine democratic transition, to include all political stakeholders, including representatives of ethnic nationality groups and political leaders;
- to cease military attacks against civilians in ethnic minority regions;
- to end human rights violations against ethnic minorities - including widespread rape and other forms of sexual violence carried out by members of the SPDC armed forces; and
- to allow humanitarian organizations to operate without restrictions and to cooperate with the International Labour Organization and its representatives in the eradication of forced labor.

After the vote, US Ambassador Alejandro Wolff said that Washington would continue to work throughout the UN system to address the deplorable situation in Burma and urged all council members, including those who did not vote for this resolution, to use their influence to press the SPDC for change.¹⁰

INSIDE BURMA

Student leaders released, a new campaign kicks off

On 4 January, the "88 Generation Students" group launched a new campaign called "Open Heart".¹¹ The campaign, scheduled to run until 4 February, called on Burmese people to directly address letters to the SPDC leader Senior General Than Shwe to describe the country's deteriorating economic, political, and social situation. On 11 January SPDC authorities released Min Ko Naing, Ko Ko Gyi, Htay Kywe, Min Zeya, and Pyone Cho, the five "88 Generation Students" group activists detained by the junta since the end of September 2006.¹²

NLD activities continue despite harassment

National League for Democracy (NLD) activities continued, despite ongoing harassment and intimidation by the military regime and its sponsored organizations.

⁵ AFP (17 Jan 07) South Africa defends vote against UN resolution on Myanmar

⁶ Xinhua (11 Jan 07) Indonesia rejects U.S. draft on Myanmar

⁷ Houston Chronicle (13 Jan 07) China, Russia veto Myanmar resolution

⁸ New York Times (13 Jan 07) U.S. Rebuke to Myanmar Is Defeated by U.N. Vetoes

⁹ Houston Chronicle (13 Jan 07) China, Russia veto Myanmar resolution

¹⁰ Bangkok Post (13 Jan 07) China, Russia veto UN Burma resolution

¹¹ Mizzima News (03 Jan 07) 88 to start "open Heart" campaign tomorrow; Irrawaddy (03 Jan 07) Activists in Burma start new campaign

¹² IHT (10 Jan 07) Myanmar student activist says he and four comrades freed after more than 3 months' detention

- **2 January:** the NLD opened an art exhibition at their headquarters in Rangoon featuring 51 paintings with political messages aimed at the SPDC. Proceeds from sales of the paintings would be donated to the NLD Central Humanitarian Assistance Committee, to assist political prisoners and their families.¹³
- **4 January:** more than 500 people, including activists, veteran politicians, members of the 88 Generation Students group, and political prisoners released from prison on 3 January attended an event held at the NLD headquarters in Rangoon to mark the 59th anniversary of Burma's independence. Some 30 plainclothes police monitored the ceremony from across the street, taking video of those entering. During the celebration, the NLD called for the immediate release of all political prisoners, including party leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, her deputy Tin Oo, and ethnic Shan leaders. The group also demanded that the regime stop forcing its members to quit the party and allow the reopening of NLD offices throughout the country.¹⁴
- **11 January:** NLD issued a statement calling on all members of the United Nations Security Council to support the US endorsed resolution on Burma.¹⁵
- **15 January:** NLD issued a statement calling on China and Russia to reconsider their opposition to United Nations Security Council action on Burma. "The NLD would like to say to the people of Burma and citizens of the world that as Burma has become an international issue, the NLD, in accordance with our policies, will continue working to reach dialogue on national reconciliation, non-violently," the statement added.¹⁶
- **16 January:** about 200 pagoda police, Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA) members, and special police physically attacked and drove out of the pagoda precincts a group of ten pro-democracy activists during weekly prayers at Rangoon's Shwedagon pagoda. According to one of those praying, 10 members of the USDA from each township in Rangoon division had been summoned by the SPDC authorities to carry out the raid.¹⁷ On 22 January, the ten activists filed a complaint over the incident with the local religious authorities.¹⁸

Junta: why didn't Daw Suu go shopping?

Emboldened by the UNSC outcome, the SPDC renewed its attacks on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. On 18 January, the state-run newspaper New Light of Myanmar accused the pro-democracy leader of tax evasion for not spending her money from the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize and other awards inside Burma. The paper said the 61-year-old Nobel Laureate was lucky to be under house arrest and not in jail for her criticism of the military regime and its constitution-drafting body. "It was very considerate of the government to put only restriction on her, instead of punishing her in accordance with law," the paper said in an editorial.¹⁹

Is Than Shwe fit to rule?

On 31 December 2005, SPDC leader Senior General Than Shwe flew to Singapore for what official sources described as a "medical check up".²⁰ Although the check up was intended to take a day, Than Shwe's hospitalization at Singapore General Hospital drew longer than expected, fuelling intense speculations about his condition and his ability to lead the junta. "Now he [Than Shwe] is not safe. He is very afraid. Not only because he is sick [...] He might have already organized some mechanism [for his successor]," a source close to the military said on 16 January.²¹ For the first time in his 15-year tenure, the 73-year-old general could not attend the Independence Day official dinner on 4 January and

¹³ DPA (02 Jan 07) Myanmar opposition hosts political art exhibition

¹⁴ Irrawaddy (04 Jan 07) Burma's opposition groups honor Independence Day in Rangoon; Mizzima News (04 Jan 07) NLD reiterates call to release Aung San Suu Kyi

¹⁵ AFP (11 Jan 07) Aung San Suu Kyi's party urges UN to back resolution on Myanmar

¹⁶ DVB (15 Jan 07) NLD urges China, Russia to consider UN action

¹⁷ DVB (16 Jan 07) Prayer campaigners bashed at Shwedagon pagoda; Mizzima News (18 Jan 07) USDA members clash with Suu Kyi supporters

¹⁸ DVB (23 Jan 07) Prayer campaigners file complaint over Shwedagon brawl

¹⁹ Washington Post (18 Jan 07) Myanmar junta accuses Suu Kyi of tax evasion; Irish Times (18 Jan 07) Suu Kyi accused of tax evasion; AP (18 Jan 07) Myanmar state media accuses Aung San Suu Kyi of tax evasion

²⁰ Mizzima News (01 Jan 07) Than Shwe in Singapore for medical check-up

²¹ DVB (16 Jan 07) Than Shwe on TV amid illness rumours

the SPDC quarterly military meeting in Naypyidaw scheduled to be held on 8 January had to be postponed.²² The SPDC leader eventually returned to Burma on 12 January and attended the junta's re-scheduled quarterly meeting in Naypyidaw.²³ Than Shwe is believed to suffer from diabetes and hypertension. Some sources attributed his Singapore trip to intestinal cancer, others to a coronary artery blockage.²⁴

SPDC: corruption? What corruption?

On 26 January, SPDC authorities released about 372 custom officers who had been detained at Rangoon's Insein Prison as part of the junta's self-proclaimed anti-corruption campaign on the Customs Department in November and December 2006. Authorities warned the released customs officials to refrain from corruption and told them to return to work on 29 January. Sources in the Customs Department said that the release was caused by the authorities' fears that further investigations would expose corruption cases involving Daw Kyaing Kyaing, wife of SPDC leader Sr Gen Than Shwe.²⁵

Bombs

On the night of 1 January, local authorities defused a hand-made bomb found in a garbage bin within the USDA office in Pegu.²⁶ On 15 January, a postal clerk was injured when a small letter bomb addressed to the national police headquarters exploded at the Bahan Township post office on Shwegonedine road in Rangoon.²⁷ The underground group Vigorous Burmese Student Warriors (VBSW) claimed responsibility for the bomb blast in a written statement dated 17 January.²⁸

KNU rejects KNLA 7th Brigade's ceasefire agreement with SPDC

- **5 January:** without the approval of the Karen National Union (KNU) Central Committee, a 10-member Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) delegation led by Brig Gen Htain Maung, Commander of the KNLA 7th Brigade met with SPDC Army Maj Gen Ye Myint in Rangoon on 5 January.²⁹
- **8 January:** Col Ner Dah Mya, the tactical commander of the KNU's general headquarters, said that the two sides were discussing the status quo of troops in their controlled area and more discussions were scheduled.³⁰
- **24 January:** a statement issued by Brig Gen Htain Maung announced that a "peace" agreement was reached with the SPDC on 16 January.³¹ In response to the announcement, KNU General Secretary Pado Mann Shar firmly rejected the agreement and urged Htain Maung to stop his unilateral action against the KNU leadership and KNU principles.³²
- **30 January:** The KNU Central Committee expelled Brig Gen Htain Maung from the organization and relieved him of all command and Central Committee responsibilities.³³

KIO: less timber, more drugs

According to sources, the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) is becoming increasingly dependent on drug production to support its activities after the SPDC stopped cross-border timber trade a year ago. Before 2006, the KIO's income could be roughly broken down into four categories: timber 40%, jade 30%, casinos 20%, and others 10%. However, since the arrival of the new SPDC regional

²² Mizzima News (05 Jan 07) Than Shwe misses Independence Day dinner

²³ AFP (12 Jan 07) Myanmar ruler returns home after medical check

²⁴ Xinhua (05 Jan 07) Myanmar's leader misses Independence Day dinner; DPA (01 Jan 07) Head of Myanmar's junta hospitalized in Singapore; Mizzima News (02 Jan 07) Than Shwe in hospital

²⁵ Mizzima News (26 Jan 07) Burma releases over 300 jailed customs officers; Irrawaddy (26 Jan 07) Burma Junta Frees Customs Officials in Anti-corruption Drive

²⁶ Mizzima News (03 Jan 07) Bomb defused at USDA

²⁷ AP (15 Jan 07) Burma Official Says One Injured in Rangoon Explosion; AFP (16 Jan 07) Myanmar says letter bomb was meant for police

²⁸ Mizzima News (18 Jan 07) 'Student Warriors' claim responsibility for letter bomb

²⁹ Mizzima News (08 Jan 06) Karen-junta talks on maintaining status quo of troops

³⁰ Mizzima News (08 Jan 06) Karen-junta talks on maintaining status quo of troops

³¹ Irrawaddy (26 Jan 07) 7th Brigade, Junta Reach Agreement Without KNU's Central Committee

³² Irrawaddy (26 Jan 07) 7th Brigade, Junta Reach Agreement Without KNU's Central Committee

³³ NMG (30 Jan 07) Brig-Gen Htain Maung expelled, regiments remain loyal to KNU

commander Maj Gen Ohn Myint in Kachin State in 2005, the timber trade has come to a stop. A source said that the KIO headquarters in Laiza and most of its brigades are low on income. Poppy fields have reappeared for the 2006-2007 season in the townships of Namkham, Kutkhai, Hsenwi and Lashio, areas controlled by the KIO and Kachin Democratic Army (KDA). A source said that the poppy production is occurring with the knowledge of SPDC Army and that five to six opium refineries are in operation.³⁴

Infectious diseases impact border areas and neighboring countries

At a conference on infectious diseases held in Bangkok in late January, participants were provided with a rare opportunity to compare the health status of ethnic communities that live in border areas of Burma and neighbors. Experts revealed that in the India-Burma border regions of Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur, about 8 percent of pregnant women suffered from HIV/AIDS, higher than anywhere in India. Meanwhile about 10 percent of ethnic people living in the border area between Burma's Karen State and Thailand's Tak Province were suffering from malaria.³⁵

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mass release of prisoners

On 3 January, the SPDC granted amnesty to 2,831 prisoners ahead of the country's Independence Day 59th anniversary.³⁶ However, according to the NLD, only 50 political prisoners were freed as part of the mass release. About 20 of those freed from prisons around the country were low-level NLD members, while another 30 were student leaders or other pro-democracy activists.³⁷ Among those released were Than Htay, MP from Lashio in northern Shan State, and journalists Thaung Tun and Than Win Hlaing.³⁸

In and out of jail

- **5 January:** SPDC authorities released activist Ko Tun Tun from a psychiatric institution after detaining him for shouting politically sensitive prayers at Rangoon's Shwedagon pagoda on 2 January. Ko Tun Tun said he had been seized by officials after he arrived at the pagoda wearing a general Aung San t-shirt with friend Naw Ohn Hla who wore a t-shirt bearing the image of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.³⁹
- **18 January:** detained NLD member Dr Than Nyein had his prison sentence extended by one year under Act 10/A. Dr Than Nyein was first arrested for political reasons in 1997 and was due to be released in 2004. Since then his period of detention has been extended several times.⁴⁰
- **22 January:** the Insein northern-district court in Rangoon dismissed the appeal of NLD member U Myint Tun, who was sentenced to five years in prison for manslaughter. U Myint Tun's lawyer U Myint Thaung said the court rejected the appeal without giving a reason. He indicated that another appeal would be filed before the Yangon division court.⁴¹

DISPLACEMENT

Rohingya exodus continues

On 16 January, 37 more Rohingya were intercepted by the Thai Navy off the southern coast of Thailand, attempting to enter the country by boat. The group was the latest in what the Thai-based NGO

³⁴ SHAN (18 Jan 07) Push coming to shove for Kachins

³⁵ "Responding to Infectious Diseases in the Border regions of South and South East Asia Conference", 24-25 January, Bangkok

³⁶ AFP (03 Jan 07) At least 27 political prisoners among 2,800 released in Myanmar

³⁷ Peninsula (05 Jan 07) Myanmar frees 50 political prisoners

³⁸ RSF (04 Jan 07) Two journalists among 2,831 prisoners pardoned by junta; AFP (05 Jan 07) Two journalists freed in Myanmar, say rights groups

³⁹ DVB (08 Jan 07) Man snatched from prayer meeting released

⁴⁰ DVB (19 Jan 07) NLD member's detention extended

⁴¹ DVB (23 Jan 07) NLD member's court appeal rejected

Grassroots Human Rights education estimates is 2,000 Rohingya arrivals since the calming of seas at the end of the wet season in November 2006. Groups are mostly young men arriving in small and mostly un-seaworthy cramped boats. After arrest, they are generally taken to Mae Sot and deported.⁴²

In Bangladesh, arrests and deportations are indicating increased departures. On 15 January, eight Rohingya were found waiting in a hotel in Cox's Bazaar for transportation abroad.⁴³ On 25 January, six people were arrested in Teknaf and 33 escaped as they were preparing to leave for Malaysia.⁴⁴

Thailand migrant worker quotas

In early January, Thai Labor Minister Aphai Janthanajulaka announced that 10,000 more workers from Burma would be accepted in the month, brought in from Tachilek to Mae Sai in groups of between 100 and 200. Thai employer groups notified the authorities that labor shortages continued, and that 20,000 more workers were needed.⁴⁵

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

ASEAN to UN/US: Burma is "our" problem

Forgetful of the group's 10 years of ineffectiveness in promoting democratic change in Burma, ASEAN members reverted to the failed policy of constructive engagement. On 14 January, at its annual summit, ASEAN leaders issued a statement that indicated that it would take responsibility for handling the situation in Burma.⁴⁶

Even though the 10-nation bloc has the opportunity of having one of its members seated at the UN Security Council to assume the lead to pressure the SPDC to implement reforms, ASEAN leaders spoke out against the UNSC resolution and asserted that the problems in Burma could be best addressed and resolved by ASEAN.⁴⁷

ASEAN Charter: no room for dictators?

ASEAN leaders agreed at the annual summit to let a high-level panel draft a charter that could be completed by late 2007. Government-appointed advisers said members that breach ASEAN's principles could have their rights and privileges suspended—or even be expelled in extreme cases. Under the proposed Charter ASEAN would reject military coups and other extra-constitutional ways of changing a government.⁴⁸ Indonesia also proposed that ASEAN establish a three-country committee tasked with finding new ways to constructively engage Burma and spur it to fulfill its promise to implement democratic reforms.⁴⁹

India arms SPDC

On 15 January, during a meeting with Indian PM Dr. Manmohan Singh, SPDC PM Gen Soe Win assured his counterpart that the junta would help India tackle the insurgency in the northeastern States.⁵⁰ A week later, Indian Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee announced that New Delhi approved the junta's request for military assistance. Reports indicated that the SPDC request for military hardware included field guns, helicopters, mortars, submarines, submarine-detecting sonar equipment, Islander

⁴² DVB (19 Jan 07) More Rohingyas arrested in Thailand

⁴³ Kaladan News (18 Jan 07) Eight Burmese citizens rescued from traffickers

⁴⁴ Narinjara News (28 Jan 07) Six arrested, 33 escape raid on Bangladesh border

⁴⁵ SHAN (02 Jan 07) 10,000 Burmese workers to arrive in Thailand in January

⁴⁶ AFP (14 Jan 06) ASEAN says it must take lead on Myanmar

⁴⁷ Reuters (11 Jan 07) ASEAN declines to defend Myanmar at U.N.; The Peninsula (12 Jan 07) Asean closes in on Myanmar; Bangkok Post (13 Jan 07) Thailand calls for action on Burma; NST (Malaysia) (12 Jan 07) Myanmar urged to co-operate with Asean; Bloomberg (14 Jan 07) Asean Says It Needs to Push Myanmar Toward Democracy; The Jakarta Post (05 Jan 07) RI disagrees on Myanmar draft

⁴⁸ AP (12 Jan 07) Military coups would be rejected in proposed ASEAN charter, officials say

⁴⁹ Irrawaddy (15 Jan 07) Asean Disciplinary Plan Troubles Burmese Officials

⁵⁰ DailyIndia.com (15 Jan 07) Myanmar to help India in tackling North East insurgency

aircraft and spare parts for MiG fighters.⁵¹ Within days of Mukherjee's announcement, the SPDC Army, eager to uphold their part of the bargain, raided and burned down the general headquarters and two camps held by the S.S. Khaplang faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN-K), located about 60 km from the Nagaland town of Mon. During the operation, some United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) camps were also reportedly overrun.⁵²

ECONOMY

Rice harvest: prices up, harvest down, procurements continue

Low yields and high prices in this season's rice harvest are being blamed by farmers on flooding and increased fuel and fertilizer costs [see box]. The harvest has coincided with the usual procurements of the SPDC for army rations.

Rangoon Prices ⁵³	
	January Price
Gasoline	1004 kyat/liter (US\$0.74)
Diesel	1189 kyat/liter (\$0.88)
Fertilizer (sm pkt)	25,000-30,000 kyat (\$18.52-22.22)
High quality paddy	230 kyat per kg (US\$0.17)
Low quality paddy	172 kyat per kg (US\$0.13)

- Rice mills in Mudon Township, Mon State, unable to meet paddy quotas of 750,000 kg were threatened with closure.³
- Also in Mudon Township, farmers were expected to provide 50 kg per acre to local SPDC authorities – and were only paid one third of the market price.⁵⁴
- In Kyaikmayaw, Pong and Moulmein Townships, Mon State, 15,000,000 kg have been taken at less than half the market price from farmers.⁴
- In Kyaikmayaw, Pong and Moulmein Townships, rice mills are forced to pay arbitrary “taxes” of between 3750-7500 kg.⁵⁵
- In Kengtung Township, Mon State, farmers were forced to sell 75 kg per acre at half the market price.⁵
- In Tharyawaddy Township, Mon State, farmers were being forced to destroy bean crops and plant summer paddy, despite the lack of suitable conditions⁵⁶
- Restrictions were placed on the transportation of rice to Rangoon, and sellers are required to have a letter of permission from local authorities.⁵

Energy for sale

- **Thailand:** on 3 January, Thailand's PTT Exploration and Production (PPTTEP) announced a new natural gas reserve had been found in block M9 on 4 December. Tests since have indicated a flow rate of 71.4 million standard cubic feet per day.⁵⁷
- **China:** on 15 January - three days after China's veto of the UNSC resolution on Burma -, the SPDC awarded oil and gas exploration rights to the China National Petroleum Corporation at blocks AD 1, AD 6 and AD 8 – an area covering 10,000 square km off the coast of Arakan State.⁵⁸ The contract is a production sharing one between China's top oil producer, and the SPDC-controlled Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE).
- **Junta's cronies:** on 18 January, MPRL E and P Ltd – an oil and gas company based in the British Virgin Islands but headed up by Burmese investor Moe Myint - and the MOGE signed a production sharing contract to explore and produce oil and natural gas in Block A 6 off the Arakan Coast. MPRL contracts have channeled US\$84 million to the MOGE since 1997.⁵⁹

⁵¹ Australian (23 Jan 07) India to snub US on Burma arms embargo

⁵² Telegraph (28 Jan 07) Junta overruns NSCN-K base - Leaders flee but Khaplang stays put; AFP (29 Jan 07) Myanmar crackdown puts Indian insurgents on the run: rebels

⁵³ Irrawaddy (24 Jan 07) Fuel, Fertilizer Costs Push Up Rice Prices

⁵⁴ IMNA (03 Jan 07) Township authorities to close rice mills failing to meet paddy quota

⁵⁵ IMNA (06 Jan 07) Farmers disgruntled over rice procurement

⁵⁶ Irrawaddy (19 Jan 07) Junta Forces Rice Sales to Military in Burma at Devalued Prices

⁵⁷ Bangkok Post (04 Jan 07) PTTEP discovers gas reserve in Burma

⁵⁸ Xinhua (15 Jan 07) CNPC to Explore Oil, Gas in Three Myanmar Offshore Areas

⁵⁹ Xinhua (21 Jan 07) British-Virgin-Island-based oil company to explore gas in Myanmar

JANUARY CHRONOLOGY

3	SPDC frees 2,831 prisoners ahead of the 59th anniversary of Burma's independence.
3	SPDC vice-chairman Senior-General Maung Aye says the National Convention will be completed soon.
4	88 Generation Students group begins "Open Heart" campaign.
4	National League for Democracy reiterates its demand for the release of its leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi
4	United Nationalities League for Democracy (Liberated Areas) issues a statement calling on all people and nationalities to work together to fight the SPDC's roadmap to democracy.
5	Burmese embassy in Seoul rejects visa application of former South Korean President and Nobel laureate Kim Dae-Jung to visit Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
5	A 10-member KNLA delegation led by Brig Gen Htain Maung, Commander of the 7th Brigade, begin discussions with the SPDC regarding a ceasefire agreement.
5	Indonesian FM Hassan Wirayuda expresses dissatisfaction with a draft UNSC resolution that calls Burma a threat to international security and peace.
8	SPDC bans proxy sites such as www.polysolve.com , www.glite.sayni.net , www.3proxy.com , www.unipeak.com .
8	SPDC authorities release activist Ko Tun Tun from a psychiatric institution after detaining him for shouting politically sensitive prayers at Rangoon's Shwedagon pagoda prayer meeting on 2 January.
8	UN Sec Gen Ban Ki-Moon urges SPDC to release all political prisoners, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
9	US introduces revised draft resolution on Burma at the UNSC.
10	EU Development Commissioner Louis Michel announces 15.5 million Euros in humanitarian aid for Burma.
10	Report by the Kachin Development Networking Group claims the world's largest tiger reserve located in Kachin State is threatened by SPDC-authorized extensive gold mining operations.
10	Activists launch campaign calling for the end of double taxing of migrant workers from Burma in Singapore
10	Thai authorities in Ranong arrest two Burma nationals with 16 kilograms of heroin.
10	Philippine Foreign Secretary Romulo meets with SPDC FM Nyan Win on the sidelines of the ASEAN summit and urges more progress on democratic reforms in Burma.
11	Prominent 88 generation student leaders Min Ko Naing, Ko Ko Gyi, Htay Kywe, Pyone Cho, and Min Zeya are released.
11	National League for Democracy calls on all members of the United Nations Security Council to support the US-endorsed UN resolution on Burma.
12	SPDC leader Senior General Than Shwe returns to Burma after two weeks of medical treatment in Singapore.
12	China and Russia veto a US resolution on Burma in the UNSC. The vote is 9-3 in favor of the resolution, with three abstentions.
13	East Timor PM Jose Ramos Horta calls on the SPDC to free Daw Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest.
15	A small letter bomb explodes at the Bahan post office on Shwegonedine road in Rangoon, injuring one postal worker.
15	National League for Democracy issues a statement calling on China and Russia to reconsider their opposition to United Nations Security Council action on Burma.
15	State-run newspaper New Light of Myanmar accuses the United States of trying to install a puppet government and establish military bases in Burma to counterbalance Chinese influence in the region.
15	SPDC holds its first 2007 quarterly meeting in Naypyidaw.
15	Dr Cynthia Maung recognized with the 2007 World Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child, along with activists from India and Zimbabwe.
15	China National Petroleum Corporation awarded exploration rights at blocks AD 1, AD 6 and AD 8.
15	Dr Salai Lian Hmung Sakhong, General Secretary of the Ethnic Nationalities Council and a prominent Chin activist, receives the 2007 Martin Luther King award.
15	SPDC assures India that it will cooperate to end border insurgency problems.
16	A group of ten activists attending a regular Tuesday prayer vigil for political prisoners at Rangoon's Shwedagon pagoda driven out of the pagoda by about 200 pagoda police and Union Solidarity and Development Association members.
16	37 Rohingya arrested by the Thai Navy on Ko Phra Thong for migration law violations

17	The underground group Vigorous Burmese Student Warriors claims responsibility for the 15 January bomb blast at the Shwegondaing post office in Rangoon.
18	Detained National League for Democracy member Dr Than Nyein has his prison sentence extended by one year under Act 10/A.
18	SPDC accuses democracy icon Daw Aung San Suu Kyi of tax evasion for not spending her Nobel Peace Prize money inside Burma.
18	Nagoya High Court upholds a court order that voided the deportation order of an asylum seeker from Burma
18	MPRLE E and P Ltd signs a production sharing contract for Block A 6.
20-22	Mines explosions injure four people in Kyaukkyi Township, Pegu Division.
21	Indian Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee says India will be supplying certain military equipment to Burma's regime to boost defense cooperation between the two countries.
21	A Lahu militia group ambushes Shan State Army-South troops 15 miles south of Kengtung, northern Shan State killing two SSA-S soldiers.
22	Burmese contemporary poet Tin Moe dies in a hospital in California, USA.
23	SPDC authorities report that 19 million ATS tablets were seized during 2006 – a five fold increase over 2005.
23	Activist and Kachin politician U Maran Baw La dies in Myitkyina, Kachin State at the age of 60.
23	India's Assam Rifles unit raids the Public Affairs Committee office of a Chin political group in Saiha town in southern Mizoram State, India. 22 health workers from Burma were arrested in the raid.
23	SPDC Chairman, Sr Gen Than Shwe meets with Ki Tieying, China's Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress.
23	British MPs table Early Day Motion calling on UN to investigate violations of religious freedom in Burma.
24	Brig Gen Htain Maung, commander of the KNU's 7th Brigade, issues a statement that says that a "peace" agreement was reached with the SPDC on 16 January.
25	A 32-year-old man from MyaungU Village in Kyaukkyi Township, Pegu Division, is injured after stepping on a land mine.
25	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is visited by her doctor and a dentist during her regular monthly check.
25	Indian authorities report arresting four Burma nationals during the month of January for possession of heroin. A total of 1.98 kilograms of heroin is seized.
25	SPDC FM Nyan Win meets with Sri Lanka FMr Mangala Samaraweera.
26	SPDC authorities free about 370 customs officials arrested and detained in Rangoon's Insein prison in 2006 on corruption charges.
26	Former member of the National League for Democracy Naw Ohn Hla files a defamation suit against 123 editors from 30 weekly local journals who published personal attacks against her.
26	Thai Supreme Commander General Boonsrang Niumpradit meets with SPDC Chairman, Sr Gen Than Shwe and SPDC Vice-Senior General Maung Aye during goodwill visit.
29	Nearly 200 Burmese activists in Malaysia gather at the Chinese and Russian embassies in Kuala Lumpur to protest the two countries for their veto of a UN Security Council resolution on Burma.
31	Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao meets with SPDC Army Chief of Staff, Gen Thura Shwe Mann, in Beijing.

REPORTS ON BURMA

“Valley of Darkness - Gold Mining and Militarisation in Burma's Hugawng Valley”, Kachin Development Networking Group

<http://www.aksyu.com/2007/AKSYU-Books/ValleyofDarkness.pdf>

The report describes how the SPDC colonized the previously virgin Hugawng Valley, home to the world's largest tiger reserve, facilitating - and profiting from – an unprecedented gold rush into the area.

“Freedom in the World 2007”, Freedom House

http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/press_release/fiw07_charts.pdf

http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/press_release/fiw07_overview_final.pdf

Annual survey of worldwide political rights and civil liberties

“Tsunami two-year progress report: Myanmar”, International Committee of the Red Cross

Discussion of delivery of emergency and post-disaster response by the Myanmar Red Cross Society two years on.

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/EVOD-6X9JSK?OpenDocument>