

BURMA BULLETIN

A month-in-review of events in Burma

ALTERNATIVE A S E A N N E T W O R K O N B U R M A
campaigns, advocacy & capacity-building for human rights & democracy

Issue 5

May 2007

- SPDC extends Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's detention for another year, ignoring unprecedented outpouring of domestic and international appeals for her release.
- Pro-democracy activists continue to carry out campaigns and initiatives in support of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi defying threats, attacks, and arrests.
- The regime heavily cracks down on activists, arresting in May at least 60 NLD members and other political activists for praying and peacefully expressing their support of Daw Suu.
- SPDC outlaws 24 independent organizations, in yet another attempt to cripple independent civil society groups and replace them with junta-backed groups.
- A new outbreak of polio in Arakan State exposes the regime's inability to respond to serious health issues. UNICEF steps in to address the crisis.
- More migrant workers from Burma arrested in Thailand, as tougher restrictions are imposed by Thai authorities.
- Russia-SPDC relations cozy up with deals on oil and nuclear energy.
- India and S. Korea relations sour over SPDC decision to give gas to China.
- UN appoints Gambari as special advisor on Burma.

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KEY STORY

SPDC still afraid of "The Lady"

On 25 May, the SPDC extended the detention of pro-democracy leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi for another year. Eager to put an end to the unprecedented outpouring of domestic and international appeals for her release, the junta issued the extension order two days before her detention was set to expire.¹

Obviously more afraid of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's popularity than international opinion, the regime ignored all calls for the release of the Nobel Peace Prize laureate:

¹ Reuters (25 May 07) Myanmar junta extends Suu Kyi detention; BBC News (25 May 07) Burma extends Suu Kyi's detention; AP (25 May 07) Myanmar junta extends detention of democracy leader Suu Kyi by a year; Nation (25 May 07) Burma extends Aung San Suu Kyi's detention

- **6 May:** Malaysian FM Syed Hamid Albar urged the SPDC to release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. “Our position has not changed. They [SPDC] should not continue with her detention,” he said.²
- **10 May:** 14 United Nations human rights experts joined together to call on the SPDC to free Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. “As of one of the world's most acclaimed human rights defenders, the Nobel Peace Prize laureate is a major political and spiritual leader of Myanmar,” the experts said in a joint statement.³
- **14 May:** 59 former heads of state and government from Asia, Europe, the Americas, and Africa jointly called on the SPDC to immediately release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.⁴
- **14 May:** The ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Myanmar Caucus (AIPMC) reiterated calls for the immediate release of Burma's democracy icon.⁵
- **14 May:** The National League for Democracy (NLD) called on the SPDC to immediately release its leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.⁶ The call was reiterated on 18 and 27 May.⁷
- **22 May:** ASEAN nations appealed to the SPDC not to renew Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's detention. “It's a consensus that we want to see her early release,” Philippine Foreign Undersecretary Erlinda Basilio said.⁸
- **24 May:** The European Union called on the SPDC to release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.⁹
- **26 May:** UN Sec-Gen Ban Ki-moon repeated his call for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi after the SPDC extended her detention.¹⁰

Campaigns and activities

Defying threats, attacks, and arrests, pro-democracy activists carried out various campaigns and initiatives in support of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi throughout May:

- **1 May:** NLD launched a month-long prayer campaign calling for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. The campaign called on activists to pray for the release of the pro-democracy leader at pagodas around the country.¹¹
- **20 May:** Members of the 88 Generation Students group concluded their “White Sunday” campaign by visiting Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's cousin, sister, and brother in Rangoon to express solidarity ahead of the review of the Nobel Peace Prize laureate's detention term.¹²
- **21 May:** NLD youth members launched a t-shirt campaign in support of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. The groups distributed t-shirts bearing her image and the slogan “Free Aung San Suu Kyi”.¹³
- **27 May:** About 500 pro-democracy activists gathered at the NLD headquarters in Rangoon to mark the election the party won in 1990. NLD members were joined by former student activists and several foreign diplomats. About 50 plain-clothed police were stationed outside the NLD

² Daily Times (07 May 07) Malaysia urges Myanmar to free Suu Kyi

³ All Headline News (10 May 07) Over A Dozen U.N. Human Rights Experts Urge Burma To Release Suu Kyi; DVB (11 May 07) Rights experts call for release of Daw Suu

⁴ AP (15 May 07) 59 former heads of state demand release of Myanmar pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi Mizzima News (14 May 07) Fifty former heads of state rally for release of Suu Kyi

⁵ AP (15 May 07) 59 former heads of state demand release of Myanmar pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi; Reuters (15 May 07) Former world leaders urge Myanmar to free Suu Kyi; Mizzima News (14 May 07) Fifty former heads of state rally for release of Suu Kyi

⁶ DPA (14 May 07) Burma opposition pleads for Suu Kyi

⁷ AFP (18 May 07) Myanmar opposition demands release of Suu Kyi, supporters; AFP (27 May 07) Myanmar pro-democracy activists rally in Yangon

⁸ AP (22 May 07) Asean urge Burma Not to Renew Suu Kyi's Detention

⁹ Zeenews (24 May 07) EU demands Myanmar release Aung San Suu Kyi

¹⁰ Narinjara News (27 May 05) UN Secretary Repeats Call for Release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

¹¹ DVB (03 May 07) Free Daw Suu campaign gathers support

¹² AFP (20 May 07) Myanmar activists visit Suu Kyi's family as more supporters held; AP (20 May 07) Myanmar political activists visit relatives of detained pro-democracy leader Suu Kyi; DPA (20 May 07) Myanmar activists visit Aung San Suu Kyi's cousins; DVB (21 May 07) 88 Generation Students to step up peaceful protests

¹³ Irrawaddy (21 May 07) Young Activists Launch New 'Free Suu Kyi' Campaign; DVB (21 May 07) NLD youth members launch t-shirt campaign

headquarters, many taking photographs and videos of the activists.¹⁴ The NLD reiterated in a statement its call on the regime for tripartite dialogue. The 88 Generation Students group also issued a statement calling for a political solution to achieve national reconciliation.¹⁵

Harassment and arrests

During the month of May, the regime's crackdown against NLD members and other political activists intensified. At least 60 activists were detained for peacefully expressing their support to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

- **15 May:** Plain-clothed SPDC special branch police officers and members of the junta-backed Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA) arrested and took into custody 31 activists, including human rights defender Su Su Nway. The activists were on their way to pray for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi from two different locations in Rangoon.¹⁶
- **16 May:** USDA members arrested 15 activists, including NLD youth members, as they left a pagoda in Rangoon after praying for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. They were released later the same day.¹⁷ SPDC authorities arrested 62-year-old NLD member Daw Tin Tin Maw in front of Rangoon's City Hall after she staged a protest calling for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.¹⁸
- **19 May:** Three activists were arrested as they headed to a temple in central Rangoon to pray for the release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.¹⁹
- **20 May:** About 100 activists headed to a pagoda in Rangoon to pray for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her supporters were reportedly prevented from entering the pagoda and had to pray outside. The activists were then trailed and photographed by plain-clothed police.²⁰
- **21 May:** SPDC authorities arrested two NLD members in Rangoon. A woman was taken into custody as she led a prayer vigil for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and a man was arrested at a different location in the city.²¹
- **24 May:** SPDC authorities in Myitkyina, Kachin State, arrested former political prisoner U Htun Lwin for staging a protest calling for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.²²
- **25 May:** SPDC authorities arrested six NLD members after they went to pagodas in Rangoon to pray for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.²³ A large group of people from the USDA and the paramilitary group, Phythu Swan Arr Shin, assaulted 30 NLD members praying for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi at Kyauktutgyi pagoda in Rangoon. Lae Lae Win Swe, Secretary of Tarmwe USDA, reportedly led the group of assailants.²⁴

¹⁴ AFP (27 May 07) Myanmar pro-democracy activists rally in Yangon; Reuters (27 May 07) Police Block Suu Kyi Prayers at Famed Myanmar Pagoda; IHT (27 May 07) Myanmar pro-democracy activists demand release of Aung San Suu Kyi; Philippine Star (27 May 07) Myanmar pro-democracy activists rally in Yangon; AAP (27 May 07) Clashes in Burma with Suu Kyi Supporters;

¹⁵ AFP (27 May 07) Myanmar pro-democracy activists rally in Yangon; IHT (27 May 07) Myanmar pro-democracy activists demand release of Aung San Suu Kyi

¹⁶ Mizzima News (15 May 07) Over thirty prayer campaigners arrested in Rangoon; Statesman (15 May 07) Myanmar detains activists seeking Suu Kyi's freedom; DVB (15 May 07) Activists face spate of arrests; Irrawaddy (15 May 07) More rights advocates arrested in Rangoon

¹⁷ AFP (16 May 07) Myanmar rounds up Suu Kyi supporters as crackdown widens; Irrawaddy (16 May 07) Fifteen more pro-democracy activists arrested, released; DVB (16 May 07) More activists arrested then released; Mizzima News (16 May 07) Junta-backed mob rounds up more activists

¹⁸ Irrawaddy (18 May 07) Old Woman Stages Solo Protest in Rangoon; DVB (18 May 07) Elderly woman arrested after solo protest

¹⁹ AFP (20 May 07) Myanmar activists visit Suu Kyi's family as more supporters held

²⁰ AFP (20 May 07) Myanmar activists visit Suu Kyi's family as more supporters held; AP (20 May 07) Myanmar political activists visit relatives of detained pro-democracy leader Suu Kyi

²¹ AFP (23 May 07) Myanmar arrests two more democracy activists

²² DVB (24 May 07) Solo protestor arrested in Myitkyina

²³ AFP (26 May 07) Myanmar arrests six Suu Kyi supporters; Narinjara News (27 May 07) Burmese Military Authority Arrests Two NLD Members

²⁴ Mizzima News (25 May 07) Suu Kyi supporters assaulted in pagoda

- **27 May:** SPDC authorities arrested eight activists, including NLD elected MP U Bala. They were all released the following day.²⁵ Junta-backed thugs prevented about 300 supporters of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi from marching to Rangoon's Shwedagon pagoda to hold a prayer vigil for the detained pro-democracy leader.²⁶
- **29 May:** SPDC authorities arrested activist Ko Tun Tun for attending a prayer meeting at Rangoon's Shwedagon pagoda.²⁷

INSIDE BURMA

Soe Win's *adieu*

While no official retirement has been announced, it is apparent that the SPDC's current premier, Gen Soe Win, will not return to active duty. He is currently in Singapore where he is reportedly being treated for leukemia. On 18 May, the state-run newspaper New Light of Myanmar referred to Lt-Gen Thein Sein, the SPDC Secretary-1, as "acting Prime Minister" of the SPDC.²⁸

NGO closures

In yet another attempt to cripple independent civil society groups and replace them with junta-backed organizations, on 16 May the SPDC outlawed 24 independent organizations, including the Free Funeral Service Society and the Guru Nanak Hospital and threatened them with legal action.²⁹ The Ministry of Home Affairs informed the groups that they would not be issued new registration licenses. In the space created by the outlawing of these organizations, the USDA has reportedly begun providing free funeral services.³⁰ There have also been reports of the USDA opening free clinics in townships of Rangoon Division and coercing local doctors to donate their services. Businesses and patients have also been asked to make donations.³¹

Karen offensive continues

During May, the regime's military offensive in Karen State continued unabated, with the SPDC Army amassing new troops on the frontline.³² Military forces continue to indiscriminately target civilians. The attacks are sustained with the use of forced labor and extortion from villagers.³³

- **Early May:** SPDC Army troops burned five villages that were home to more than 540 internally displaced Karen civilians in an area controlled by the Karen National Union (KNU)'s 3rd brigade. SPDC Army troops reportedly also burned villages in an area located on the northern edge of Papun District, Karen State, resulting in 4,200 villagers from 28 villages fleeing their homes.³⁴

WHO IS THEIN SEIN?

- **Age:** early 60s
- **Rank:** SPDC Secretary-1
- **Duties:** in charge of the National Convention; Adjutant General of the War Office
- **Previous position:** Commander of the Triangle Regional Command (2001)
- **Health:** pacemaker installed in May 2004
- **Note:** regarded as one of Than Shwe's strongest supporters

²⁵ Narinjara News (28 May 07) Junta's thugs block prayer march to Shwedagon Pagoda; DVB (29 May 07) Eight detained protestors released

²⁶ AFP (27 May 07) Myanmar pro-democracy activists rally in Yangon; Reuters (27 May 07) Police Block Suu Kyi Prayers at Famed Myanmar Pagoda; AP (28 May 07) Myanmar junta thugs confront Suu Kyi supporters demanding her release: witnesses; Narinjara News (28 May 07) Junta's thugs block prayer march to Shwedagon Pagoda; DVB (28 May 07) Pro-military mob confronts Daw Suu supporters

²⁷ DVB (30 May 07) Activist Ko Tun Tun arrested

²⁸ Reuters (13 May 07) Myanmar PM gets medical treatment in Singapore; Bangkok Post (03 May 07) Burma PM home from S'pore hospital; Irrawaddy (18 May 07) Burmese Junta Tips New Prime Minister; DVB (18 May 07) Burma's state press names new acting prime minister

²⁹ DVB (16 May 07) Burmese military bans civil groups

³⁰ DPA (18 May 07) Myanmar military reins in private associations and services

³¹ Irrawaddy (17 May 07) Free USDA Clinics Open in Rangoon Division Townships

³² Narinjara News (25 May 07) Burmese Army battalion leaves for Karen frontline

³³ Free Burma Rangers (21 May 07) FBR Report: Deaf Villager Shot and Killed at Point Blank

³⁴ DVB (24 May 07) Karen villages torched by Burmese troops

- **12 May:** SPDC Army troops from LIB 542 and 544 attacked the Ber Ka Lay Ko village, located in northern Toungoo District, Northwestern Karen State. During the attack soldiers raped and murdered a local woman.³⁵
- **15 May:** SPDC Army soldiers from LIB 542 shot and killed villagers Saw Hsar Mee, 55, Saw Kwa Kwa, 20, and Saw Mu Der, 36.³⁶

17 May: SPDC Army troops killed Naw Bu Ru, a 27 year-old villager from Papun District.³⁷

SPDC Army attacks KNU, aborts talks with SSA-S

- On 22 May, joint forces from the SPDC Army and the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army renewed attacks on Karen National Union (KNU) forces in Kawkayeik, Karen State.³⁸ KNU reported killing seven opposition forces and wounding seven others.³⁹
- Ceasefire talks scheduled for 23 May between SPDC Army and Shan State Army – South officials collapsed when the SPDC delegation failed to appear at the designated meeting site.⁴⁰

Polio outbreak

Despite a SPDC declaration that Burma has been free of polio since 2000, a recent outbreak of the disease that infected at least seven children was reported in Maungdaw Township in May. The outbreak resulted in a rapid international response, which further illustrates the regime's inability to respond to serious health crises.⁴¹ UNICEF announced that it will conduct cross-border immunization campaigns, the first to be launched in early June and the second campaign in July. Altogether, the campaigns are expected to immunize 2 million children under age 5 in Burma and Bangladesh.⁴²

HUMAN RIGHTS

New wave of arrests

- **1 May:** SPDC authorities took into custody about 30 people attending public lectures on workers' issues held at the American Center in Rangoon. Twenty-seven were released after several hours of interrogation.⁴³ SPDC authorities also detained three members of the rights group Human Rights Defenders and Promoters (HRDP) in Latha Township, Rangoon Division, and sentenced them to seven days in Insein Prison.⁴⁴
- **2 May:** SPDC authorities in Rangoon arrested human rights activists Ko Aung Kyaw Soe, Ko Aye Lwin, and Ko Yin Kyi on charges of violating guest registration laws.⁴⁵
- **21 May:** SPDC authorities arrested NLD youth member Khin Htun after he visited Su Su Nway at the Muslim Free Hospital in Rangoon.⁴⁶

Detention conditions

The month of May provided more evidence of the regime's failure to comply with minimum standards for treatment of prisoners in Burma.

³⁵ Free Burma Rangers (21 May 07) FBR Report: Deaf Villager Shot and Killed at Point Blank

³⁶ Free Burma Rangers (21 May 07) FBR Report: Deaf Villager Shot and Killed at Point Blank

³⁷ Free Burma Rangers (21 May 07) FBR Report: Deaf Villager Shot and Killed at Point Blank

³⁸ Mizzima News (23 May 07) KNU outpost comes under attack

³⁹ NMG (25 May 07) Fresh offensive on KNU

⁴⁰ SHAN (23 May 07) Planned junta-SSA meeting called off

⁴¹ Narinjara News (11 May 07) Polio virus infects seven children in Arakan.

⁴² IHT (25 May 07) Myanmar battling to contain polio outbreak that afflicted three

⁴³ Irrawaddy (02 May 07) May Day event participants arrested in Rangoon; Mizzima News (02 May 07) Workers attending May Day lecture arrested; Narinjara News (03 May 07) Six Still Detained, Others Released

⁴⁴ Irrawaddy (03 May 2007) Beaten rights activists face trial

⁴⁵ DVB (03 May 07) Three more rights activists arrested

⁴⁶ Irrawaddy (25 May 07) Junta still targeting Suu Kyi supporters

- On 18 May, U Maung Thein Aung, a 28-year-old villager from Akyab Township, Arakan State, died in the Kauk Kouk labor camp, in Mrauk U Township. He had been sentenced to three years in jail on 5 May for burglary.⁴⁷
- Detained rights activist Su Su Nway was hospitalized at the Muslim Free Hospital in Rangoon, days after she was taken into custody following a peaceful prayer campaign for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on 15 May.⁴⁸
- The health of U Aye Kyaw, a 74-year-old former political leader who is detained in Pauktaw police detention center, is reportedly deteriorating since his arrest at the end of April.⁴⁹
- Rights activist Ko Myint Naing was reportedly denied medical treatment and meetings with his family members. Ko Myint Naing, is being detained in Hintada Jail.⁵⁰

Freedom of information

On the occasion of World Press Freedom Day, several independent organizations released studies that document the oppressive media environment created by Burma's military regime:

- **1 May:** Rights watchdog Freedom House released its "Freedom of the Press 2007" annual survey. Burma ranks as one of the worst places in the world for press freedom, beaten only by North Korea.⁵¹
- **2 May:** The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) stated that Burma is among the worst-rated countries for press freedom.⁵²
- **3 May:** Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF) included the SPDC leader Sr-Gen Than Shwe on a list of 34 world leaders and organizations that stand as direct threats to the freedom of the press.⁵³

Evidence of the regime's iron grip on media and writers surfaced again in the month of May:

- On 21 May, SPDC authorities took into custody Aung Shwe Oo and Sint Sint Aung, two journalists on assignment for the Japanese television news agency Nippon News Network (NNN) in Rangoon. The reporters were believed to have been detained for covering the arrival of a North Korean ship supposedly carrying armaments to Burma. [See *International Relations* below] They were both released on 23 May.⁵⁴
- The SPDC's Press Scrutiny Board banned the publication of a biography of Burma's late Prime Minister U Nu, which was to be released on 25 May. The censorship board denied permission saying that it was not the right time for a book on U Nu.⁵⁵

DISPLACEMENT

Migrant workers arrivals and arrests Thailand

An increased number of migrant workers from Burma entered Thailand in May despite heavy rains, and tighter controls. More than 2,000 arrived at the Chong Zon check point, Three Pagoda's Pass between

⁴⁷ Narinjara News (23 May 07) Prisoner dies in labour camp

⁴⁸ DVB (23 May 07) Su Su Nway hospitalised

⁴⁹ Narinjara News (24 May 07) Health of 88 Uprising Leader Deteriorates in Pauktaw Jail

⁵⁰ DVB (08 May 07) Detained rights activist Myint Naing denied medical treatment

⁵¹ Mizzima News (02 May 07) Burma second to bottom in press freedom

⁵² Irrawaddy (03 May 07) Press Freedom Day means nothing to Burma's censors

⁵³ Mizzima News (03 May 07) Than Shwe singled out as a menace to press freedom

⁵⁴ AFP (22 May 07) Myanmar detains two Japanese TV journalists; Mizzima News (24 May 07) Junta frees two journalists detained for reporting arrival of North Korean ship; DVB (24 May 07) Special police release Japanese TV reporters

⁵⁵ Mizzima News (25 May 07) Biography of Burma's late Prime Minister banned; DVB (25 May 07) U Nu book banned by censorship board

18 April and 6 May.⁵⁶ Meanwhile the Thai army, police, and immigration officers continue to arrest migrant workers and their families, including children.

- **8-9 May:** Thai army, police, and immigration officers arrested about 800 migrant workers from Burmain Mae Sot.⁵⁷
- **24 May:** Thai border police arrested over 160 Burma nationals in Sangkhlaburi, Kanchanburi Province.⁵⁸

Migrant workers protest new law

Reports that restrictions on migrant workers put in place in Phuket, Ranong and Suratthani, Southern Thailand, will now also be implemented in Chiang Mai angered migrant groups. On 1 May, 50 migrant workers from Burma along with thousands of others from the Workers' Union of Thailand demonstrated in front of the Thai parliament hall in Bangkok, demanding removal of the stricter laws.⁵⁹ On 11 May, migrant workers and labor activists in Chiang Mai submitted a letter to the province's governor protesting the restrictions, which include a banning of cell phone and motorcycle use, and a night time curfew.⁶⁰ [See *April 2007 Burma Bulletin*]

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Russia: SPDC gets nuclear energy, gives oil

In a move that will finally fulfill the SPDC's desire for nuclear energy, on 15 May the Russian atomic energy agency, Rosatom, announced that Russian and the SPDC officials signed an agreement to build a nuclear reactor in Burma.⁶¹ Rosatom indicated that the agreement covers the design and construction of a nuclear research center that will contain a 10 megawatt light-water reactor and facilities for processing and storing nuclear waste. Russia will also train 300-350 specialists for the center.⁶² Rosatom said the site will be monitored by the UN nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). However, on 17 May the IAEA said that Burma's military regime had not reported plans to build a nuclear reactor to the group.⁶³

On 16 May, the US State Department expressed its opposition to the Russian plan to build the nuclear research center in Burma. A State Department spokesman said Burma has no standards for safe handling of nuclear materials and that the US has serious concerns about nuclear fuel being diverted for use in a weapons program.⁶⁴

On 12 May, a joint oil exploration venture between SPDC owned Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE) and two Russian companies, Silver Wave Sputnik Petroleum and Silver Wave Energy, held a ceremony in Pinlebu, Sagaing Division, to launch the drilling of their first test well.⁶⁵

India: energy and arms top agenda with SPDC

On 12 May, Jane's Defense Weekly confirmed that the Indian Navy is in the process of transferring two BN-2 'Defender' Islander maritime surveillance aircraft to the SPDC.⁶⁶ Indian Navy Chief, Admiral Sureesh Mehta, was expected to finalize details of aircraft transfer during his four-day visit to Burma that ended on 13 May.⁶⁷

⁵⁶ Kaowao News (06 May 07) Thousands of migrants gather on Thai-Burma border

⁵⁷ NMG (09 May 07) Burmese migrants arrested in Maesot

⁵⁸ IMNA (25 May 07) Over 160 Burmese arrested while entering Thailand

⁵⁹ NMG (01 May 07) Burmese migrant participate in May Day celebrations

⁶⁰ NMG (01 May 07) Burmese migrant participate in May Day celebrations; Irrawaddy (11 May 07) Migrant Workers in Chiang Mai Protest Proposed Restrictions

⁶¹ Mizzima News (15 May 07) Russia to build nuclear reactor in Burma

⁶² Radio New Zealand (16 May 07) Russia signs nuclear agreement with Myanmar

⁶³ DVB (17 May 07) World atomic agency not told of Burma nuclear deal

⁶⁴ Irrawaddy (17 May 07) US Opposes Russian-backed Nuclear Center Planned for Burma

⁶⁵ New Europe (17 May 07) Myanmar-Russian oil exploration starts in Sagaing

⁶⁶ Mizzima News (13 May 07) India supplies more BN2 aircrafts to Burma

⁶⁷ IANS (12 May 07) India sells maritime aircraft to Myanmar

Indian petroleum companies, GAIL and ONGC Videsh are reassessing their involvement in their Burma operations following a reported SPDC decision to sell gas to China. The SPDC decision to sell the gas to China was made despite the fact that China was not the high bidder for the gas. GAIL is now questioning its future investments in Burma, as well as its participation in the pipeline from A-1 and A-3 blocks.⁶⁸ GAIL's concerns follow an ONGC decision earlier this month to withdraw from the Burma-India pipeline project due to China's influence on the SPDC.⁶⁹

South Korea: SPDC decision to give gas to China irks Daewoo, too

Following the announcement to sell gas to China, Daewoo Corporation, the largest stakeholder in the A-1 and A-3 blocks, sent a team of legal experts and senior company executives to explain to the SPDC the legal consequences of their decision. However, the SPDC is unlikely to reverse its decision which is viewed as an expression of gratitude for "Beijing's support to Myanmar in the UN".⁷⁰

North Korea: second mystery ship from docks in Burma

On 20 May, a North Korean cargo ship, The Kang Nam I, docked at Thilawa port, 30 kilometers south of Rangoon.⁷¹ This was the second North Korean vessel to dock in Burma in the last seven months and the first to arrive since the SPDC restored diplomatic ties with Pyongyang at the end of April.⁷² [See *April 2007 Burma Bulletin*] In a statement that strained credibility, on 23 May the SPDC Foreign Ministry said that the ship was allowed to dock because it was in distress and taking shelter from a storm – the same reason given for the ship that docked in November.⁷³

US extends sanctions on Burma

On 17 May, US President George W. Bush informed the US Congress that he would renew sanctions against Burma because of concerns over the deepening deterioration of freedom in the military-ruled country.⁷⁴

UN: Gambari returns

On 22 May, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, appointed Ibrahim Gambari as his special adviser to Burma. In this capacity, Gambari will lead UN efforts to pursue the release of all political prisoners and promote democratic reforms in Burma.⁷⁵

ECONOMY

Trade figures at a record high

According to the SPDC's latest trade figures, Burma's foreign trade hit a new record high US\$8 billion in 2006-07, exceeding the original target of US\$7 billion. Burma's exports accounted for US\$5 billion, while the imports took US\$3 billion.⁷⁶

Burma traded most with Asian countries and regions in the fiscal year 2006-07, which ended in March.⁷⁷ [See Table]

SPDC's top 5 trading partners 2006-2007 fiscal year¹	
Thailand	US\$2.659 billion
China	US\$1.274 billion
Singapore	US\$1.217 billion
India	US\$895 million
Hong Kong	US\$424 million

⁶⁸ Financial Express (29 May 07) Myanmar prefers China as gas buyer; India sees red

⁶⁹ Deccan Herald (14 May 07) India to quit Indo-Myanmar gas pipeline project

⁷⁰ Times of India (03 May 07) Daewoo sends legal experts to Myanmar

⁷¹ DVB (21 May 07) North Korean ship docks in Burma

⁷² AP (23 May 07) Myanmar says North Korean ship docked near Yangon to take shelter from storm

⁷³ AP (23 May 07) Myanmar says North Korean ship docked near Yangon to take shelter from storm

⁷⁴ DVB (18 May 07) US extends Burma sanctions

⁷⁵ AP (22 May 07) U.N. chief designates special adviser Ibrahim Gambari to continue efforts in Myanmar

⁷⁶ Xinhua (28 May 07) Myanmar trades with Asian countries most in 2006-07

⁷⁷ Xinhua (28 May 07) Myanmar trades with Asian countries most in 2006-07

MAY CHRONOLOGY

1	KNLA forces ambush a car belonging to the DKBA 907th Battalion killing and critically wounding several DKBA soldiers.
1	50 migrant workers and thousands from the Workers' Union of Thailand demonstrate in front of Thai parliament hall demanding removal of strict prohibitions on migrant workers.
1	National League for Democracy launches a new campaign for the release of Daw Aung Suu Kyi.
1	SPDC authorities arrest over 30 workers participating in a May Day workshop held at the American Center in Rangoon.
2	US Commission on International Religious Freedom condemns the SPDC for violating religious rights.
2	New York-based group Committee to Protect Journalists states that Burma is among the worst-rated countries for press freedom.
2	SPDC authorities arrest human rights activists Ko Aung Kyaw Soe, Ko Aye Lwin and Ko Yin Kyi on charges of violating guest registration laws.
3	UN Assistant High Commissioner for Refugees Erika Feller says that Thailand should allow refugees from Burma living in camps to work.
3	SPDC Prime Minister Soe Win returns to Burma after a long hospitalization in Singapore.
3	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has her eyes checked by a specialist during her monthly medical check up.
4	EU and ASEAN announce that the two groups will start free-trade talks.
4	Four Mon migrants die, seven injured in car crash as they attempt to travel to Thailand.
4	ADB denies having any connection with SPDC infrastructure projects.
4	A villager from Htantabin Township, Pegu Division, loses his left foot in a landmine explosion.
5	SPDC police seize 1,000 tablets of methamphetamine and 1.5kgs of heroin during a search of a boat docked at the Akyab port in Arakan State.
5	A villager from Mone Township loses his left foot in a landmine explosion.
6	Malaysian FM Syed Hamid Albar urges the SPDC to free democracy Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
6	State-run media report four people killed in Rangoon by floods caused by the heavy rains.
7	US Ambassador to the UN Zalmay Khalilzad says that Burma continues to be a significant item on the agenda of the US at the United Nations.
7	Bangladesh authorities seize 400,000 taka worth of Burmese teak in Teknaf.
7	Burmese opposition groups in exile say the final draft of their Federal Constitution of Burma will be ready soon.
8	Thai Police in Mae Sot arrest a Karen woman from Burma on charges of trafficking methamphetamine drugs worth approximately 180,000 baht (US\$5,625).
8	Thai army, police, and immigration officers arrest about 500 Burmese migrant workers in Mae Sot.
8	WHO and UNICEF officials meet SPDC Health Minister Kyaw Myint to discuss how to curb the spread of polio.
9	India's Naval Chief, Admiral Sureesh Mehra, leaves on a nine-day tour of Burma and Singapore to discuss bilateral ties and military cooperation.
9	Thai army, police, and immigration officers arrest approximately 300 migrants in Mae Sot.
9	SPDC Health Ministry official confirms type-1 polio has infected two children in Maungdaw Township, Arakan State
11	60 Burmese migrants and NGO representatives hold an emergency meeting in Chiang Mai district, demanding that new restrictions on migrant workers not be imposed.
11	A group of 14 UN human rights experts call for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
12	Jane's Defense Weekly reports that the Indian Navy is in the process of transferring two BN-2 'Defender' Islander maritime surveillance aircraft to the SPDC.
13	A PT-6 fighter jet from the Myitkyina base 503 crashes in Kachin State during a training flight.
13	SPDC Prime Minister General Soe Win flies back to Singapore for medical treatment.
13	NLD youth members launch t-shirt campaign in support of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
14	A joint SPDC and Russian petroleum exploration carries out its first test drilling in Sagaing Division.
14	59 former heads of state demand that the SPDC release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
15	Russia and the SPDC sign agreement for the building of a nuclear research facility in Burma.
15	Weekly Eleven journal reports that SPDC bans sale of remote-controlled children's toys because of fears they could be turned into detonators for bombs.
15	International Press Institute awards the "Free Media Pioneer 2007" to the Burmese news agency Mizzima News.
15	Plain-clothed SPDC special branch police officers and USDA members arrest 31 activists.
16	US State Department says it is opposed to a Russian plan to build a nuclear research center in Burma.

16	SPDC bans 24 privately run associations and charities.
16	SPDC authorities arrest NLD member Daw Tin Tin Maw for staging a protest calling for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
16	USDA members arrest 15 activists, including NLD youth members.
17	US President George W. Bush tells the US Congress that he will continue sanctions against Burma.
17	ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Myanmar Caucus demands the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest.
17	India's Cabinet Committee on Prices decides to export 2,000 metric tones of wheat to Burma to help it tide over food grain shortage.
17	India decides to spend about Rs 3,000 million to construct a rail link to join Burma to the Trans-Asian railway network.
17	SPDC says the detention of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is "nothing unusual".
18	54 representatives from different Shan groups form a council that will speak for the diverse racial groups in Shan State.
18	State-run newspaper New Light of Myanmar describes SPDC Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Thein Sein as "acting prime minister".
18	National League for Democracy urges the SPDC to release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
18	A 28-year-old villager from Arakan State dies in the Kauk Kouk labor camp in Mrauk U Township.
20	North Korean cargo ship, Kang Nam I, docks at Thilawa port, 30 kilometers south of Rangoon.
20	United National Liberation Front forces in Northeast India seize and destroy 136 kilograms of ephedrine bound for Burma worth Rs.1,360,000 (US\$323,800).
20	About 70 members of the 88 Generation Students group visit Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's cousins.
21	Over 50 Indian parliamentarians from across the political spectrum call for the immediate release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
21	Malaysia FM Syed Hamid Albar urges ASEAN to stand united to push for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
21	UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour says that SPDC should release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the more than 1,000 other political prisoners.
21	Cambodian PM Hun Sen begins official visit to Burma.
21	SPDC authorities threaten to arrest a villager from Pegu Division who is assisting a family in filing a forced labor complaint with the ILO.
21	SPDC authorities arrested two NLD members in Rangoon.
21	SPDC authorities take into custody two journalists on assignment for the Japanese television news agency Nippon News Network in Rangoon.
22	ASEAN nations appeal to Burma's military regime not to renew Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's detention.
22	Indonesia FM Hassan Wirayuda says that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi should be released from detention.
22	UN announces appointment of that Ibrahim Gambari as the UN Sec Gen's special advisor on Burma.
22	Joint forces from SPDC Army and Democratic Karen Buddhist Army attack KNU 6 th Brigade in Kawkaeik, Karen State.
22	31 Karen refugees leave Thailand for resettlement in the United States.
22	SPDC authorities in Myitkyina, Kachin State, arrest former political prisoner U Htun Lwin for staging a protest calling for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
23	SPDC tells Cambodia FM Hor Namhong that a new constitution will be completed by the end of the year and promised an eventual election.
23	China's Foreign Ministry says that the detention of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is an internal matter for the SPDC.
23	ASEAN drops Burma from agenda at senior officials meeting and the ASEAN Regional Forum.
23	Women from the US Senate launch Women's Caucus on Burma.
23	Shan State Army-South and SPDC Army meeting fails to materialize because SPDC delegation is a no show.
23	SPDC Army Light Infantry Battalion 234 leaves for the Karen frontline from its base in Buthidaung, Arakan State.
24	EU calls on SPDC to release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
24	Thai border police arrest over 160 migrant workers from Burma in Kanchanburi Province.
25	US criticizes SPDC's human rights record at Asian Regional Forum.
25	SPDC opens a new terminal at the Rangoon International Airport.
25	Bomb explodes in the Nanphalong border market in Tamu Township, Sagaing Division.
25	SPDC authorities arrest six NLD members.
25	A large group of USDA and paramilitary group Phythu Swan Arr Shin members assault 30 NLD members praying for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi at Kyaukhtutgyi pagoda in Rangoon.
25	SPDC extend the detention of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi by another year.

26	Malaysian opposition leader calls on ASEAN to suspend or expel Burma because of the extension of detention for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
26	Indian and SPDC officials close border at Moreh.
26	UN Sec-Gen repeats his call for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
26	US, EU, and NLD condemn the SPDC decision to extend the detention of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
26	Gen Shwe Mann, SPDC Chief of Staff, is reportedly hospitalized in Singapore because of dysentery.
27	Bangladeshi government takes an initiative to import hydroelectricity from Burma.
27	About 500 pro-democracy activists gather at the NLD headquarters in Rangoon to mark the election the party won in 1990.
27	Junta-backed thugs prevent about 300 supporters of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi from marching to Rangoon's Shwedagon pagoda to hold a prayer vigil.
28	Australian FM Alexander Downer says there is no justification for the continued detention of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
28	Indonesian Foreign Ministry expresses deep concern over extended detention of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
28	SPDC Foreign Minister Nyan Win says the junta's one-year extension of detention for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was 'a very difficult decision'.
28	Eight pro-democracy activists arrested in Rangoon two days earlier are released.
28	Kachin Defense Army (KDA) forces reportedly attack and kill four SPDC police who were riding in a narcotics control vehicle near Panphate village in Kutkhine Township.
29	SPDC authorities arrest activist Ko Tun Tun in Rangoon.

REPORTS ON BURMA RELEASED IN MAY 2007

“Annual Report” - United States Commission on International Religious Freedom

<http://www.uscifr.gov/countries/publications/currentreport/2007annualRpt.pdf#page=1>

Report highlights violations of religious rights by the SPDC. Burma remains a Country of Particular Concern and on the Watch List.

“Forced migration/internal displacement in Burma: with an emphasis on government-controlled areas” -

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

[http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/D057F0FCA432F4B5C12572D7002B147B/\\$file/Burma_report_mai07.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/D057F0FCA432F4B5C12572D7002B147B/$file/Burma_report_mai07.pdf)

The report focuses on displacement in the areas not covered by the Thai Burma Border Consortium.

“Deaf Villager Shot and Killed at Point Blank” - Free Burma Rangers

<http://www.freeburmarangers.org/Reports/2007/20070521.html>

Report on the recent SPDC Army attacks and atrocities against civilians in Karen State.

“Freedom of the Press 2007 – Burma” - Freedom House

Report identifies the aspects that contribute to the oppressive media environment in Burma. In the report, Burma's status is recorded as “Not Free.”

“Predators of Press Freedom – Than Shwe” - Reporters Sans Frontières

http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=1051

Profile of SPDC leader Sr- Gen Than Shwe, one of the 34 world leaders and organizations that stand as direct threats to the freedom of the press.