

Burma Alert

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EMERGENCY N.D.F. MEETING

The presidium of the National Democratic Front (NDF), the united front of Burma's ethnic organizations, held a two-day emergency meeting in Karenni State from 24-25 April 1996. This was the first meeting of the NDF since the fall of Manerplaw in January 1995. The meeting was attended by representatives from: the Arakan Liberation Party (ALP), the Chin National Front (CNF), the Karen National Union (KNU), the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP), the Pa-O People's Liberation Organization (PPLO), the Palaung State Liberation Front (PSLF), and the Wa National Organization (WNO). All the NDF leaders agreed that it was essential for member organizations to hold firm to the basic principles of equality, self-determination, and federalism. The NDF reaffirmed its determination to oppose military dictatorships and to work with Burmese democratic forces led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. The Front also agreed to the tripartite dialogue to resolve Burma's problems as proposed by the United Nations General Assembly. Lieut-Gen Tamalabaw (KNU) assumed the Presidency. Gen Aung Than Lay (KNPP), Col Hkun Okker (PPLO) and Salai Myo Aye (CNF) were appointed to executive positions. The NDF also resolved to convene the Fourth Congress of the NDF and a National Democracy Seminar to further consolidate the political position of Burma's ethnic peoples [NLD-LA960428].

CEASEFIRE GROUPS MEET

Senior representatives from several cease fire groups met on 1 Feb.96 in the Loi Kha area of Hsipaw in northern Shan State to discuss a common strategy to resist increasing pressure from the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) to lay down their arms. Participants included the Palaung State Liberation Organization led by Ai Mung, the United Wa State Party from Pang Sang, the Kokang group led by Peng Kya Shin, the Kachin Defence Army led by Mathu Naw, the Shan State Army led by Sao Sai Nong, Sao Kai Fah, and Sao Pang Fah, the Shan National Army led by Karn Yord and Sai Yi and the Shan United Revolutionary Army led by Sao Yod Serk. A delegation from the KNPP also attended the meeting [SHAN960410].

GENEVA CONDEMNS SLORC

The United Nations Human Rights Commission meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, for the 6th consecutive year adopted a consensus resolution condemning the State Law and Order Restoration Council's (SLORC) continued human rights violations in Burma including forced labour and abuse of women [Reu960423].

THINGYAN CELEBRATION BLOCKED

On 16 Apr, SLORC prevented the National League for Democracy (NLD) from celebrating the Burmese New Year (Thingyan). The plan called for participants to walk from Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's house to a place by the lakeshore to perform a fish releasing ceremony to gain merit for the New Year. On 15 April, SLORC informed the NLD that they would not be permitted to do so. The NLD then decided to continue with the portion of the ceremony (paying respect to elders) that could be carried out indoors at Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's residence. But SLORC barricaded the road in front of her house and stopped people from entering. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi believes that SLORC did so because it was afraid that public support for her might become too obvious [A960503].

GANDHI AWARD TO DAW SUU

The 1996 Indira Gandhi Golden Award for International Understanding was given Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on 6 May by the Asiatic Society of Calcutta [FTUBWB960502].

MA THIDA WINS P.E.N. AWARD

The 1996 PEN/Barbara Goldsmith Award was given to Ma Thida by the PEN American Center at its 1996 PEN Literary Gala on 25 April at the New York State Theater at Lincoln Center. Ma Thida is a qualified physician, founder of a clinic for women and a prolific writer of fiction, most of which is banned in Burma. She served as a campaign assistant to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi during the 1990 elections. She was arrested and sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment for "endangering public peace, having contact with illegal organizations, and distributing unlawful literature". She is being held in solitary confinement in Insein Jail [PEN960423].

Karen State:

KARENS HOLD MORE TALKS

On 28 April, a six-member delegation led by Karen National Union (KNU) Joint General-Secretary Mahn Sha Lar Phan left for Moulmein for the third round of talks with SLORC. The KNU wants a comprehensive peace agreement with the Rangoon military government, including political concessions. But to date, SLORC has refused to discuss any political issues [IA960429].

Europe:

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Glenys Kinnock, Labour Member of the European Parliament from South Wales East and member of the Group of the Party of European Socialists, organized a Burma briefing at the European Parliament in Strasbourg in April. NGOs from Canada, Belgium, France, Germany and the Netherlands, and the NCGUB Netherlands participated.

NETWORK OF POLITICAL LEADERS

The International Network of Political Leaders Promoting Democracy in Burma was launched in Geneva in April. The chairman of the network is former Norwegian Foreign Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik, who presented a five-point plan to promote the democratization process in Burma by:

1. Increasing coordination between countries and institutions in relation to Burma.
2. Persuading Japan and ASEAN to promote the democratization process in Burma.
3. Increasing political and financial support of the Burmese democratic movement.
4. Increasing awareness and knowledge of Burma for international decision-makers.
5. Maintaining international pressure on SLORC to democratize Burma.

Leading politicians from Asia, Europe and the USA are members of the Network. Contact: PD Burma Secretariat, Sporveisgt 2, 0354 Oslo, Norway. Tel: 47 2256-4830, Fax: 2260-6399, Email: pdburma@telepost.no

KAREN HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP

Kevin Heppner of the Karen Human Rights Group presented testimony of SLORC human rights violations to the UN Commission for Human Rights, the International Labour Organization and the European Commission.

MISSION TO GENEVA

The Burmese democracy movement spearheaded by the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB) successfully lobbied at the 52nd session of the United Nations Commission for Human Rights in Geneva for a strong resolution against SLORC. Delegates included Prime Minister Dr Sein Win, Col Khun Okker, representative of the National Council of the Union of Burma and the National Democratic Front, Dr. Zahleithang, NCGUB Social Welfare Minister and elected Chin representative, Saw Nadah Mya, KNU representative, and Dr. Thaung Htun, head of the Burma-UN Affairs Office in New York. The mission was supported by various NGOs and Burmese from Canada, France, Germany and Switzerland.

NORDIC MISSION

NCGUB Prime Minister Dr Sein Win led a delegation to Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Norway in Feb.96 to brief the various governments on the situation in Burma. He met with parliamentarians, Foreign Ministry officials, business executives, support groups and members of the Burmese community.

MISSION TO POLAND

Prime Minister Dr Sein Win led another mission in March to Warsaw at the invitation of the Polish Government. He led a similar mission to the Czech Republic last year.

Shan State:

SURA TROOPS AMBUSH SLORC

On 23 March, a SLORC patrol was ambushed by Shan United Revolutionary Army troops. SURA headed by Sao Yod Serk is a break-away faction of the Merng Tai Army which refused to surrender to SLORC after Khun Sa made his deal with Rangoon. The SLORC patrol was led by Capt Myo Min Oo of No.5 Company from the 346th Light Infantry Regiment stationed at Wan Long village in Mong Kung. One lieutenant, one 2nd lieutenant, one sergeant and three privates were killed. Many were wounded [SHAN9604].

CHINESE GET IDENTITY CARDS

After Khun Sa's deal with Rangoon, SLORC officials in Ho Mong, Mai Soong, Mong Hsat, Kengtung and Tachilek have been issuing temporary identity cards to Mong Tai Army members who surrender. But in places like Piang Long, Mai Soong and Tachilek, Chinese traders and muleteers who had never belonged to the MTA are bribing SLORC officials for identity cards. In Tachilek, Chinese who live in Hin Taek, Mae Chan, Huey Khrai, Huey Nam Khun, Ban Tham, Nam Cham and Mae Sai, are getting ID cards immediately. However, bone fide Shan soldiers and officials of the MTA from the former strongholds of Par Ko, Loi Lam, Par Zang and Phak Tu Mong, usually have to wait 5-6 days [SHAN9604].

1,000 VEHICLES SEIZED

Between late March and early April, SLORC commandeered about 1,000 vehicles in the Shan State to facilitate transport requirements for tactical operations in the Kun Hing, Mong Nai, Nam Sarn, Loilem, Mong Kung, Laikha and Kese areas [SHAN9604].

FORCED RICE PRODUCTION

On 7 March, SLORC 99th Infantry Battalion in Langkho ordered the people of Pang Thun village to grow rice for them. When the Pang Thun villagers refused to comply, villagers from three other wards, 12 miles to the north of

Langkho were forced to come and work in the fields. Ten villagers from each village took turns to work the fields until the rice was harvested and taken to the military camp at Pang Keng [SHAN9604].

Chin State:

U.N.D.P. STAFF MURDERED

Ming Hnin, a United Nations Development Programme representative in Chin State, was found shot on the road between Haka and Thlantlang in early May. A Chin graduate of the University of Rangoon, Ming Hnin held a Master's degree and was supervising UNDP projects in the area - water supply, bridge and road building, and distributing pencils and exercise books to school children. A local police investigation said that Ming Hnin had been shot by an M16 rifle and they also found footprints at the crime scene consistent with marks made by Burma Army boots. The report was, however, never published. In the meanwhile, the Burma Army claimed that Ming Hnin had been mistaken for their Military Intelligence Chief in Thlantlang and murdered by the Chin National Front. Both men travelled on motorcycles. The Intelligence officer mistreated the Chin people and was hated by them. Ming Hnin's family refused to sign a document provided by the Burma Army stating that he had been killed by the CNF. On 16 May, the Military Intelligence Chief in Thantlang was killed in retaliation for Ming Hnin's murder [CNF960519].

CURFEW IN CHIN STATE

A curfew was declared by SLORC in the Chin State following the shooting of Burma Army officers. The victims were the Military Intelligence Chief in Tiddim, a major, who was making excessive demands for bribes; the chairman of the Falam Law and Order Restoration Council, also a major; and the tactical commander of the Burma Army unit stationed in Haka, a colonel. The colonel reportedly demanded locals to supply him with young virgins. The assassinations have not been made public by SLORC [CNF960519].

Investments:

SOURCES: B = Bangkok Post, F = Far Eastern Economic Review, NST(M) = New Straits Times (Malaysia), Net/MB = BurmaNet/MB, PRNW = PR NewsWire, and SCMP = South China Morning Post.

BRITAIN:

JOHNNIE WALKER with the Myanmar Golf Association, is co-sponsoring the May 17-18 golf tournament in Rangoon to select the team to represent Burma this year in the Johnnie Walker International Club Championship. In 1995, the Lashio Golf Club was crowned the Johnnie Walker International Club Champions ahead of the Yaju Country Club of Korea [Net/MB9960517].

JAPAN:

HAKUHODO, the advertising agency is opening an office in Burma. All Nippon Airways, a major client of the agency, is also planning to establish direct flights between Kansai airport and Rangoon. Other clients include Ajinomoto, National and Konica [N960520].

N.K.K. is supplying 145,000 tons of steel pipes for the underwater portion of the **TOTAL/UNOCAL** Yadana natural gas pipeline. An Italian steelmaker will supply 25,000 tons for the overland portion of the pipeline to the Thai border [Net/MB960517].

N.K.K., NIPPON STEEL, SUMITOMO METAL INDUSTRIES and KAWASAKI STEEL are bidding to supply the remaining 111,000 tons of steel pipes for the Thai portion of the Yadana natural gas pipeline [Net/MB960517].

MALAYSIA:

I.J.M. CORPORATION BHD's, wholly owned subsidiary, I.J.M. Overseas Ventures Sdn Bhd has incorporated I.J.M. Investments Pte Ltd as its wholly owned subsidiary in Burma. IJM Corporation said IJM Investments had a capital of Kyat 500,000 (US\$80.000) [NST(M)960213].

PHILIPPINES:

The INTERNATIONAL RICE RESEARCH INSTITUTE signed a five year agricultural cooperation agreement with SLORC to boost paddy production and to provide training on cultivation development and technical assistance. The Institute's Director-General, George Rothschild, held talks with Agriculture Minister Lieut-Gen Myint Aung during a recent visit. The Manila-based IRRI has cooperated with Burma on improving rice quality since 1974 [B960319].

THAILAND:

ANDAMAN CLUB, the resort hotel built by Vikhom Aisiri on Thahtay Kyun Island in the Andaman Sea, is paying SLORC more than US\$1 million per year in rent (35-year lease) [F960516].

SUNWOOD INDUSTRIES PLC's holding company, the **SANTI FORESTRY GROUP** is opening a high-technology teak wood factory in Burma, according to Thaveesak Vayakornvichitr, Sun Managing Director. Sunwood is Thailand's largest exporter of teak wood furniture. Its major export markets are the United States, Europe and Japan. SLORC has granted the Santi Group investment promotional incentives to build 2 factories that will cost about Bt200 million (US\$8 million). The factories in Burma will be equipped with modern machinery from Europe [N960427].

U.S.A.

APPLE COMPUTERS is selling 3,000 computers to SLORC to enable its Ministry of Education to teach computer science to students throughout the country. Basic computer courses for 120 teachers have already been held. Computer science in schools is now a compulsory subject [Net/MB960517].

WENTE VINEYARDS has set up a distribution network in Burma. Wente is one of California's most prestigious wineries based in the Livermore Valley. Wente's export portfolio consists of Wente Vineyards, Murrieta's Well, Ficklin Vineyards, Sergio Traverso, Ivan Tamas, Concannon Vineyard, Sokol Blosser Oregon Winery, and St. Stan's beer, a California microbrew. One of Wente's importers is the Central Floating Hotel in Rangoon. Wente's Burmese partner is Asia World Co Ltd, the Rangoon-based trading company which is engaged in import/export, real estate development, industrial development, and food and beverage distribution. Asia World is owned by a group of Burmese companies that include Kokang Export/Import Co Ltd, controlled by Mr. Steven Law; Myat Mon Yadana Co Ltd, headed by U Kyin Htun; Golden Mountain Co Ltd, controlled by U Than Myint; and Asia Light Co Ltd, which operates local supermarkets and distributes well-known wine and spirit brands [PRNW960208]. John Schwartz is the vice president of international operations of Wente Vineyards. Tel: 1 (510) 447-3606.

Campaigns:

PEPSI BOYCOTT IN BURMA

Students in Mandalay, Moulmein, and other cities launched a boycott campaign in April against Pepsi and other products produced by foreign companies doing business with the country's ruling military junta. ``We realize how the Pepsi and other foreign investments are collaborating with the military regime in suppressing our struggle for democracy and human rights," a high school student from Mandalay said. ``We are very encouraged by this international campaign for Burma," the student said, ``That is why we decided to act locally in Burma." He said the boycott Pepsi campaign would be intensified when Burmese high schools and colleges reopen in May following the summer holidays [UPI/ABSDF960425].

PEPSICO PULLS OUT

On 22 April, officials from the Pepsico International Ltd announced in a press conference, that it is selling its 40% stake in a joint venture in Burma. However, Pepsi is not going to pull out of Burma totally. Pepsi will continue to honour its contract in the `short-term' to sell syrup concentrate and allow the use of the Pepsi trademark by the Burmese bottler.

SELECTIVE PURCHASING

Cities that have passed legislation prohibiting city contracts with companies doing business in Burma:

- Ann Arbor, Michigan (April 1996)
- Berkeley, California (February 1995)
- Madison, Wisconsin (August 1995)
- San Francisco, California (May 1996)
- Santa Monica (November 1995)

Much of the credit for the above can be attributed to the thousands of activists around the world in the Free Burma Coalition - Ed.

FREE BURMA CAMPAIGN - UPDATE

The grassroots Free Burma Campaign is gaining momentum especially in the US. Updates on FBC activities are compiled and posted once a month on BurmaNet News. For greater efficiency, the Free Burma Campaign has been re-organized as follows:

US Coordination:

- Aaron Erlinger ellrinad@uwec.edu
- Brad Simpson simpsonb@nwu.edu
- Brian Schmidt brischmidt@aol.com
- Dave Wolfberg freebrma@ix.netcom.com
- Kristina Wamsted wamstad@ucsu.colorado.edu
- Larry Dohrs dohrs@u.washington.edu
- Linda Kwon lkwon@students.uiuc.edu
- Nathan C-Kanarek nculwell@facstaff.wisc.edu
- Nick Thompson nickt@pangea.stanford.edu
- Ohnmar/Zaw Zaw ohmarkhin@aol.com
- Simon [simon\\$-billenness@mail.cybercom.net](mailto:simon$-billenness@mail.cybercom.net)
- Tun Myint tmyint@indiana.edu
- Zarni zni@students.wisc.edu

International Coordination:

- Australia hazell@coombs.anu.edu.au

- Australia p\$-\$webb@banks.ntu.edu.au
- Canada (Christine) cfob@web.apc.org
- Canada (Reid) ai268@freenet.carleton.ca
- England (Yvette) bagp@gn.apc.org
- England (Sue) tourconcern@gn.apc.org
- Finland ojasti@katto.kaapeli.fi
- France (Chris) cd@utopia.EUnet.fr
- Germany 101564.2652@compuserve.com
- India (Yazar) fdhr!chan@unv.ernet.in
- India aungsan@giasdl01.vsnl.net.in
- Japan-Nara (Kawasaki) brelief@gol.com
- Japan-Tokyo (Aung Thu/Carol) carol@gol.com
- NZ kyle.matthews@stonebow.otago.ac.nz
- Netherlands (Ni Ni Thein) nin@ihe.nl
- Netherlands (Kees) keko@antenna.nl
- Norway (Aye Chan Naing) dvb@mail.sn.no
- Slovenia (Zarni) zni@students.wisc.edu
- Switzerland boegner@cybergate.ibm.ch
- Thailand (Aung Myo Min) caroline@ksc.net.th
- Thailand (Win Min) lurie@mozart.inet.co.th

Website and Listserv Crew:

- Homepage (Glen) freeburma@pobox.com
- FBC Site (Alex) alturner@execpc.com
- FBC Site (Rick) rjvoitho@students.wisc.edu
- Penn State Site (Mike) mxe115@psuum.psu.edu
- Culture/Congress (Z Zaw) freeburma@aol.com
- Educ.Listserv (Tun Myint) tmyint@indiana.edu
- Adam Berrey aberrey@igc.apc.org
- FBC Listserv (Zarni) zni@students.wisc.edu

Ad Hoc Hunger Strike Committee:

- Dave Wolfberg freebrma@ix.netcom.com
- Larry Dohrs dohrs@u.washington.edu
- Nick Thompson nickt@pangea.stanford.edu
- Tun Myint tmyint@indiana.edu
- Yuki Kidokoro yuki@asucla.ucla.edu

Divestment/Shareholder Resolution/Selective Purchasing Group:

- Brad Simpson simpsonb@nwu.edu
- Betsy Mendelson etb2@midway.uchicago.edu
- Conrad MacKerron pam@igc.apc.org
- Chritopher Yu YucFCAA@aol.com
- Dawn J. Gremer djgremer@mailbox.syr.edu
- Douglas douglas.steele@law.georgetown.edu
- Emily White ewhite@emerald.tufts.edu
- Greg Wright gwright@pangea.stanford.edu

- Kristina Wamstad wamstad@ucsu.colorado.edu
- Larry Dohrs dohrs@u.washington.edu
- Lisa B Brooten lb252689@oak.cats.ohiou.edu
- Naomi Mudge (Arizona) naomi@indirect.com
- Ryan Dobson Friedrichs ryandf@umich.edu
- Simon simon\$-\$billenness@mail.cybercom.net

Free Burma Videos:

- Larry Dohrs dohrs@u.washington.edu
- Todd Price taprice@students.wisc.edu

Grassroots Lobbying Group:

- Brad Simpson simpsonb@nwu.edu
- Greg Wright gwright@pangea.stanford.edu
- Zaw Zaw freeburma@aol.com

Information and/or Brochure Projects:

- Brad Simpson simpsonb@nwu.edu
- Linda Kwon lkwon@students.uiuc.edu
- Ohnmar Khin ohmarkhin@aol.com
- INDIA aungsan@giasdl01.vsnl.net.in
- JAPAN-Tokyo (Aung Thu/Carol) carol@gol.com
- THAILAND (A Myo Min) caroline@ksc.net.th
- THAILAND (Win Min) lurie@mozart.inet.co.th

News Media:

- Aaron Stark stark@students.wisc.edu
- Betty Morse 74750.1267@compuserve.com
- Christina Fink christin@ksc.net.th
- David Horne dhorne@indiana.edu
- David Wolfberg freebrma@ix.netcom.com
- Larry Dohrs dohrs@u.washington.edu
- Leslie Kean geremi@ix.netcom.com
- Strider strider@igc.apc.org
- Todd Price taprice@students.wisc.edu
- CANADA (Christine) cfob@web.apc.org
- NORWAY (Aye Chan Naing) dvb@oslonett.no

Oil Group:

- Carol Richards 73030.64@compuserve.com
- Dan Ngo ngo@ucla.edu
- David Wolfberg freebrma@ix.netcom.com
- Don Erickson T. 1 (312) 421-5513/F.421-5762
- Edith Mirante c/o Carol Richards
- Gregory Wright mauddib@leland.Stanford.edu

- Jane Jerome jjerome@bellmicro.com
- John Peck jepeck@students.wisc.edu
- Jon Shay erc@cc.colorado.edu
- Kathy Polias kpolias@emerald.tufts.edu
- Lousia Benson T. 1 (310) 454-3123
- Pam Wellner pwellner@igc.apc.org
- CANADA (Dorothy) T. 1 (416) 631-3576/F.971-2292
- FRANCE (Yvette P) c/o Carol Richards
- FRANCE (Christopher) cd@utopia.eunet.fr

Pepsi Group:

- Brian Schmidt brischmidt@aol.com
- Dale Sharkey ds232624@wcupa.edu
- Darcy Hermann dhermann@envirolink.org
- George E. Hobart ghobart@warren-wilson.edu
- Greg Heller gph6574@is.nyu.edu
- Jaime Viola jvio@conncoll.edu
- Liz Abercrombie abercrew@jmu.edu
- Lynda Kellam lmkellam@hamlet.uncg.edu
- Mike/Andrew/Brian aem125@psuum.psu.edu
- Peter Apple prapple@cacd.rockwell.com
- Reid Cooper ai268@freenet.carleton.ca
- Sean Armstrong sga1@axe.humboldt.edu
- Terry Cottam cfob@web.apc.org
- Todd Price taprice@students.wisc.edu

Pre-college FBC Network:

- Leah Whitesel lwhitesel@madison.k12.wi.us
- Nathan C-Kanarek nculwell@facstaff.wisc.edu
- Aaron Stark stark@students.wisc.edu

Speakers Bureau:

- Zarni zni@students.wisc.edu
- John Tan johnny@icarus.weber.edu

Tourism Group:

- Andrew Miller aem125@psuum.psu.edu
- Linda Kwon lkwon@students.uiuc.edu
- Paul Michels pauglm@vt.edu
- Rachel Kleinfeld rachel.kleinfeld@yale.edu
- S Moeller/K Vandruff atsm@acad2.alaska.edu
- Tun Myint tmyint@indiana.edu
- Yuki Kidokoro yuki@asucla.ucla.edu
- CANADA CFOB cfob@web.apc.org
- ENGLAND (N Greenwood) T/F. 44 (171) 223-8987
- ENGLAND (Sue) tourconcern@gn.apc.org

- ENGLAND (Yvette) bagp@gn.apc.org

The Free Burma Coalition,

University of Wisconsin,

225 North Mills Street,

Madison, WI 53706.

Tel: 1 (608) 256-6572

Fax: 1 (608) 263-9992

<http://danenet.wicip.org/fbc/freeburma.html>

Fax:

BURMA FAX UPDATE

In Oct.94, the Burma Alert published fax numbers in Rangoon to allow readers the chance to send news to Burma. In April, telephone numbers in Rangoon were changed. The following is an update:

A&T Int'l 95 (1) 282410/290597

Airborne Travel/Tours 95 (1) 273121

Akai Travel/Tours 95 (1) 289961

Ambika Tour Agency 95 (1) 289582

Asia Global Travels/Tours Co Ltd 95 (1) 286688

Aung Associates 95 (1) 272552

Bagan Inn Ltd 95 (1) 549660

Bandoola Int'l 95 (1) 289965

Banque Indosuez 95 (1) 223038

Barani Hotel 95 (1) 223104

Beauty Land Hotel 95 (1) 549797

BJC (Jeep Cherokee) 95 (1) 273787

Blue Diamond Int'l 95 (1) 294174

Budget Tours 95 (1) 289599

Calberson Asia 95 (1) 531543

Charle's Michels Garment 95 (1) 289960

Cheery Myko Auto Co 95 (1) 222312

Columbus Travel/Tours 95 (1) 274806/533063

Comfort Inn 95 (1) 524256

Cozy Guest House 95 (1) 292239

Daewoo Corporation 95 (1) 284246

Daewoo Electronic Myanmar 95 (1) 662870

Dandaryi Travels/Tours 95 (1) 286429

Delta Combine Co Ltd 95 (1) 226552

Development Bank of Singapore 95 (1) 524112

Doo Pung Co Ltd 95 (1) 530947

Dream World 95 (1) 223160

Eagle Co Ltd 95 (1) 286350

Excellent Enterprise 95 (1) 272288

Export Services Ltd 95 (1) 282929

Free Bird Tours 95 (1) 275638

Fuji Asia Co Ltd 95 (1) 283634

Glover Electrical Industries 95 (1) 665842

Golden Burma Trading Co 95 (1) 531178

Golden Express Tours Hotels/Trade 95 (1) 227636

Golden Global Group Ltd 95 (1) 281940

Golden Land Jewelry/Gems 95 (1) 289007

Golden Land Travel Service 95 (1) 283898

Goldwin Co Ltd 95 (1) 289706

Gracious Myanmar Travel 95 (1) 297502

Grand Hotel 95 (1) 283360

Green Hill Inn 95 (1) 549388

Guest Care Hotel 95 (1) 273573

Happiness Tours Co 95 (1) 286686

Htwe Eindra Win Management 95 (1) 530507

Inakoshi Industrial (Myanmar) 95 (1) 530654

Irrawaddy Princess 95 (1) 223104

Jade Pavilion Inn 95 (1) 531916

Kabs Myanmar Co 95 (1) 280149

Kaiwa Marketing (Myanmar) 95 (1) 280193

King Hotel 95 (1) 524049

Komy Trading Co Ltd 95 (1) 531317

Korea Myanmar Tourism 95 (1) 662355

Lai Lai Hotel 95 (1) 227342

Lee Wah Travel/Tour 95 (1) 287806

Makiya Trading 95 (1) 281684

Malar Myaing Motel 95 (1) 278312

May Flower Bank 95 (1) 278812

MCC Business Centre 95 (1) 294724

Mingala Than Myint 95 (1) 291443

Ministry of Information 95 (1) 287916

Miwon Shwe Tha Jin Co 95 (1) 226654

Mok Yang Co Ltd 95 (1) 665955

Moon Light Hotel 95 (1) 292885

Multigate Corporation 95 (1) 552062

Mya Kyun Tha Co Ltd 95 (1) 286185

Mya Yeik Nyo Deluxe 95 (1) 665052

Mya Yeik Nyo Royal 95 (1) 548318

Myanmar Elephant House 95 (1) 660700

Myanmar Daewoo Int'l 95 (1) 278811/280147

Myanmar Golden Star 95 (1) 220860

Myanmar Inspection & Testing 95 (1) 284823

Myanmar Int'l Moving 95 (1) 287806/667058

Myanmar Korea Timber 95 (1) 287863

Myanmar Leading Logistics 95 (1) 289887

Myanmar Media Int'l 95 (1) 226773

Myanmar Pilgrimage Tours 95 (1) 287806

Myanmar Pilgrimage Tours 95 (1) 526400

Myanmar Pilgrimage Tours 95 (1) 665052

Myanmar Plastic Co Ltd 95 (1) 665251

Myanmar Silver/Ruby 95 (1) 665645

Myanmar Singapore Int'l 95 (1) 289590

Myanmar VES Joint Venture 95 (1) 665503

Myanmar Win International 95 (1) 286509

Myanmar-Yangon Duty Free 95 (1) 532717

Myint & Associates Co Ltd 95 (1) 664882

Myint-Projectsasia Jt-Venture 95 (1) 664882

Myko Co 95 (1) 533606

Naing Yadana Co 95 (1) 665478

Nawarat Hotel 95 (1) 667777

New Kan Taw Yeik Hotel 95 (1) 226080

New Wave Travels/Tours 95 (1) 273121/281233

Novel Garden Hotel 95 (1) 533704/879

NTN Myanmar Co 95 (1) 295797

Number One Services 95 (1) 287874

OCBC Bank 95 (1) 525864

OEM (Myanmar) Co 95 (1) 665769

Olympic Co Ltd 95 (1) 287879

Owitchki Myanmar Co Ltd 95 (1) 662624

Pearl Inn 95 (1) 524260

Pegasus Travel & Tours 95 (1) 289580

Peninsula Enterprise 95 (1) 289885

PMK Co Ltd 95 (1) 222677

Prime Commercial Bank 95 (1) 532420

Princess Inn 95 (1) 524096

Public Bank (Berhad) 95 (1) 223223

Purple Plain Travel/Tours 95 (1) 284981

Queen Inn 95 (1) 526640

Queen Shin Saw Pu Hotel 95 (1) 227126

Rahu Indus & Chem Enterprises 95 (1) 664088

Regal Hotel 95 (1) 524196

Registn, Account& Consultancy 95 (1) 282574

Sai Travel Service (Myanmar) 95 (1) 530654

Samsung Co Ltd 95 (1) 277896

Santi Forest (Myanmar) 95 (1) 222308

Sanwa Trading 95 (1) 286648

SCS 95 (1) 285277

SEADE Tourism Co Ltd 95 (1) 277601

Segye International 95 (1) 661909

Seven O Seven Travel/Tours 95 (1) 283533

Shining Moon Co 95 (1) 289648

Shining Star Tour Express 95 (1) 289862

Showa Auto Enterprise 95 (1) 286090

Shwe Yee Win Co 95 (1) 284670

Silk Travel Co Ltd 95 (1) 553077

Simon Petroleum Technology 95 (1) 530032

SMI Corporation 95 (1) 667163

Soe San Trading 95 (1) 278045

South Asian Nautical Expl 95 (1) 665654

Sri Asia Tourism Service 95 (1) 227070/127

Sri Asia Tourism Service 95 (1) 283377

Strand Hotel 95 (1) 289880

Summit Parkview Hotel 95 (1) 227993

Sunkyong Co Ltd 95 (1) 553072

Tai Kwan Travels/Tours 95 (1) 227520/287806/887

Tai Yai Co 95 (1) 289972

Thai Military Bank 95 (1) 223127

Thanlwin Myanmar Ltd 95 (1) 284373

Thirinda Lodge 95 (1) 549872

Thitsar Travels/Tours 95 (1) 274670/284823

Thuriya Tours/Travels 95 (1) 525948

Tour Mandalay Co Ltd 95 (1) 287806

Tour Mandalay Co Ltd 95 (1) 297915/917

U Than Ohn & Sons 95 (1) 289271

UNDP Rangoon 95 (1) 292739

Unique Tours/Travels Co Ltd 95 (1) 524640

United Overseas Bank Ltd 95 (1) 525540

Venus Trading Co Ltd 95 (1) 278766

Virginland Tours/Travels Co Ltd 95 (1) 240103

W & W Co 95 (1) 292600

Welcome Hotel 95 (1) 525252

WHO Rangoon 95 (1) 530429

Win Vet Clinic 95 (1) 227274

Wooshin Sanghap Co Ltd 95 (1) 553268

Yadanabon Arts Gallery 95 (1) 533023

Yangon City Hotel 95 (1) 667763

Yiar Co Ltd 95 (1) 272373

YMCA 95 (1) 296848

YMCA Rangoon 95 (1) 273825

Yukong Corporation 95 (1) 553072

Zaburit Engineering Co 95 (1) 281364

Zizawa Tours/Travels 95 (1) 281706

Myanma Yaung Chi Oo Co 95 (2) 21743

Late News:

BUSINESSMAN SENTENCED

James Leander 'Leo' Nichols, 65, a well-known Burmese businessman and close family friend of 1991 Nobel Peace laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, was sentenced to three years imprisonment on 18 May. Nichols was accused of using telephones and fax machines without permission, and was arrested by SLORC on 5 April. Nicols, an Anglo-Burmese, was also the former honorary consul and contact person for Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland [N/Reu960519].

CONCERN OVER TOURISM

British tour operators took a unique stand on human rights abuses in Burma by sending letters to SLORC. Symbiosis Expedition Planning, Himalayan Kingdoms, Nomadic Thoughts, and Cycle South East Asia wrote explaining that the extreme nature of the human rights abuses in Burma, which are directly linked to tourism development, have prompted their decision not to operate in Burma. They asserted that they will not be operating tours to Burma until they are confident that SLORC's policy of forcibly relocating people and using forced labour to build the tourism infrastructure has completely stopped. Other agencies who operate in Burma - Imaginative Traveller, Indochina Travel, Bales Tours, Andrew Brock Travel, Explore Worldwide, Exodus, Silk Steps and Association of Independent Tour Operators also sent a joint letter to the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism in Rangoon stating their objections to the human rights abuses associated with tourism. According to Patricia Barnett, Director of Tourism Concern, UK, this is the first time that tour operators have made statements on human rights abuses related to tourism

NEWS SOURCES THIS ISSUE:

A = Asiaweek,

ABSDF = All Burma Students Democratic Front,

B = Bangkok Post,

CNF = Chin National Front,

F = Far Eastern Economic Review,

FTUBWB = Federation of Trade Unions, Burma (Western Burma),

IA = IntelAsia,

N = The Nation, Bangkok,

NLD-LA = National League for Democracy - Liberated Area,

PEN = PEN USA Center,

Reu = Reuters,

SHAN = Shan Herald Agency for News, and

UPI = United Press International.