

**Daily News updates**  
**Archives – 16-31 August 2007**

**Detained Myanmar protesters launch hunger strike**

Agence France Presse - 30 August 2007

YANGON : A group of pro-democracy protesters detained in military-ruled Myanmar launched a hunger strike Thursday, demanding that authorities provide medical treatment for a wounded colleague, activists said.

Ye Thein Naing, 37, suffered a broken leg when police and pro-government militia violently broke up a demonstration in Yangon on Tuesday and arrested up to 20 people, activists said.

He and an unknown number of other protesters are being held at an improvised detention centre at the city's Kyaikkasan sports grounds, they said.

"Some of the people arrested with him started a hunger strike this evening because their colleague Ye Thein Naing hasn't received any medical treatment for his broken leg," one activist told AFP on condition of anonymity.

At least 100 people have been arrested since a rare string of anti-government rallies began on August 19 in protest at a massive hike in fuel prices, according to activists.

"Ye Thein Naing was beaten and thrown onto a waiting truck by militia," one activist said.

"His leg was broken at that time, when he was beaten up. Even then, they still kept kicking him on the truck," the activist added.

Like many of the protesters, Ye Thein Naing is a member of the opposition National League for Democracy (NLD).

-----  
**Myanmar police raid homes as manhunt intensifies**

Reuters - 30 August 2007

Myanmar's military junta tightened the net around leaders of a rare string of protests on Thursday, raiding homes of known activists and their friends and distributing their photographs in a Yangon-wide manhunt.

"I know they've been after me since our protest on Tuesday," Suu Suu Nway, an outspoken critic of the ruling generals, told Reuters by telephone. "I heard they have sent pictures of three women activists, including me, to several of their offices."

The other two are believed to be Ma Mee Mee and Ma Nilar, two well-known women members of the so-called "88 Generation Students Group", the still influential leaders of a mass uprising against the former Burma's military rulers in 1988.

Fourteen people from Tuesday's demonstration, videotaped and photographed by undercover government spies, had now been picked up, Suu Suu Nway added.

The 34-year-old was roughed up by the junta-backed gang that broke up the march against soaring fuel prices and has gone into hiding since, apart from a brief hospital check-up.

"I'm not afraid of being arrested but I'm not feeling well at the moment," she said.

On Wednesday night, police and plainclothes officials raided homes in the north of the former capital, apparently looking for the few well-known activists to have evaded capture.

"They didn't find the people they were after," one activist said.

-----

**Courage in Burma: Pro-democracy protesters dare to take to the streets**  
***Will the world respond as bravely?***

Washington Post - Thursday, August 30, 2007; Page A20

THE MOST STRIKING feature of the remarkable protests taking place across Burma for the past 10 days is that they are taking place at all. That Southeast Asian nation is ruled by one of the world's most repressive and brutal regimes, led by dictator Than Shwe. Those who dare speak out risk imprisonment and torture not only for themselves but for their relatives. Yet since Aug. 19, hundreds of men and women, students and Buddhist monks, have peaceably taken to the streets across Burma to protest economic mismanagement and political oppression. Scores have been swept into prison; many more have been beaten by government-sponsored thugs. Min Ko Naing, released in November 2004 after 15 years in prison for leading pro-democracy protests in 1988, took to the streets again -- and is once again in prison, facing a possible 20-year sentence for a nonviolent demonstration.

What response does such courage call for from the outside world? A lot more than we've seen so far, that much is certain. U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki Moon's special envoy for Burma has been missing in action, and Mr. Ban himself belatedly issued a mealy-mouthed statement that "encourages all parties to avoid any provocative action." Meaning what? That 50 million Burmese citizens -- disenfranchised, impoverished and press-ganged into involuntary servitude -- should refrain from "provoking" the regime by exercising their inalienable right to assemble and speak out?

The U.N. Security Council should be at the forefront of global demands for an end to repression in Burma. The military junta has been responsible for a kind of slow-motion Darfur. More than 3,000 villages in eastern Karen state have been razed, more than 1.5 million people displaced. Soldiers routinely bayonet peasants' pots so that they cannot cook and will go hungry. If this isn't a fit subject for the Security Council, it's hard to know why the organization exists.

The Bush administration and first lady Laura Bush in her own right have been far more impassioned about Burma. Yet the United States, too, should have learned by now that rhetoric is not enough; a strategy is needed. Unlike so many dictatorships, Burma (called Myanmar by its junta) has a legitimate political authority waiting in the wings: Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy won a landslide electoral victory in 1990. She has been under house arrest for most of the years since. Now the administration needs to make clear to other nations with influence in Burma -- China, India, Thailand and Singapore, to name a few -- that a democratic transition there is a U.S. policy priority and a prerequisite for peace and stability in Asia. As former South African archbishop Desmond Tutu told The Post, when "the courageous people of Burma, in spite of the viciousness of the military junta," are ready to come out by the thousands, "we in the free world cannot stand by."

-----

**UN Security Council action sought over Myanmar crackdown**

Agence France Presse - 28 August 2007

WASHINGTON - US lawmakers on Wednesday called on President George W. Bush's administration to demand an urgent UN Security Council meeting on the Myanmar military junta's crackdown on dissent.

Senior lawmakers from the House of Representatives and the Senate wrote to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice asking her to press for such a meeting, as pro-democracy supporters in Myanmar defied a clampdown and staged rare street protests against a staggering increase in fuel prices.

More than 100 people have been arrested, including some of the nation's top pro-democracy leaders, following the largest non-violent demonstrations in Myanmar in five years.

"We strongly urge you to send a letter to the President of the Security Council requesting UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon to expeditiously provide a complete briefing to the Security Council," Tom Lantos, the Democratic head of the House's foreign relations committee, and four other lawmakers from the chamber wrote.

A similar call was made in a separate letter to the chief US diplomat by the Senate's Republican Leader Mitch McConnell and senior Democratic senator Dianne Feinstein.

"The current situation in Burma merits a strong and meaningful response by our government," they said.

The lawmakers welcomed the Bush administration's swift condemnation of the Myanmar junta's "brutal behavior" as well as similar condemnations from France and Britain -- two other permanent members of the Security Council -- along with Canada, Sweden, Ireland, Denmark, the European Union, and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

"However, at this critical juncture, words of support from the world's democracies are not enough," McConnell and Feinstein said. "The matter needs to be addressed by the UN Security Council."

There was no immediate reaction from Rice's office but Tom Casey, a State Department spokesman, said earlier Wednesday that Washington expected discussions on Myanmar in the Security Council as well as during the upcoming meetings of the General Assembly.

With full bipartisan support from Congress, the United States has led a diplomatic drive to place the Myanmar issue on the permanent agenda of the UN Security Council.

"We must avail ourselves of this diplomatic forum; the brave people of Burma deserve no less," Lantos and the other House legislators said.

-----

### **Myanmar's National Convention writing final draft of constitution**

Deutsche Presse-Agentur - 29 August 2007

Myanmar's constitution-drafting process will be concluded next week, supposedly paving the way for an eventual election in the military-run state, delegates said Wednesday.

Delegates attending the National Convention in Nyang Hna Pin camp, on the outskirts of Yangon, said the final session was scheduled to wrap up on Monday, although authorities have yet to confirm the date.

The session began on July 18 with 1,058 military-appointed delegates in attendance. It's conclusion comes at a time of growing signs of discontent with Myanmar's military rulers, especially for mishandling the economy.

A decision to double fuel prices on August 15 has sparked angry demonstrations in Yangon, the former capital, and led to crackdowns and over 100 arrests over the past 10 days.

It is likely that Myanmar's ruling junta will use the conclusion of the national convention to calm discontent with the promise of an eventual election in the country which has been under military rule since 1962.

The National Convention - dubbed a "sham" by many western observers and Myanmar's chief opposition party the National League for Democracy (NLD) - was launched on October 2,

1992, to draft a new charter for the country which had by then been under military rule for the past 30 years.

The military argued that a new constitution was necessary before it could hand over power to a civilian government, a manoeuvre that was quickly seen as a ploy to hang on to power in the aftermath of the 1990 general election which the NLD, led by Aung San Suu Kyi, had already won by a landslide.

The junta has yet to set a date for the country's next polls.

-----

### **Protests spread around Myanmar**

Agence France Presse 28 August 2007

YANGON - Pro-democracy supporters expanded their protests against Myanmar's military Tuesday, marching through the streets of the port town of Sittwe while attempting to rally in the main city Yangon.

Protesters have for the last 10 days defied a clampdown on dissent by Myanmar's military regime and staged a rare series of demonstrations against a staggering increase in fuel prices.

For the first time Tuesday, Buddhist monks were seen joining a protest in Sittwe, about 500 kilometres (310 miles) northwest of Yangon.

Monks are important standard-bearers in this devoutly Buddhist country. Their participation was credited with helping to bring popular support to a pro-democracy uprising in 1988.

"I saw hundreds of people, including monks, protesting this afternoon," one resident told AFP.

"Authorities rode on motorcycles alongside them, but I don't know what happened" to the protesters, he added.

Meanwhile, activists said up to 20 people were arrested after the rally in Yangon, where about 50 activists had gathered near a bus stop close to the former campus of Yangon University on the north side of the city.

The march was led by Su Su Nway, a labour activist sent to prison in October 2005 for more than seven months after reporting cases of forced labour to the United Nations.

"We were just trying to express ourselves peacefully," she said.

"We will solve the problem by standing for the people. I will continue whether the authorities arrest me or not. I will face up to them," she added.

Su Su Nway is a member of the opposition National League for Democracy (NLD), but party officials said they had no details on the arrests.

The almost daily protests mark the most sustained demonstrations against the military regime in at least nine years.

-----

### **Civilian thugs doing Myanmar junta's dirty work**

Reuters - 28 August 2007

BANGKOK - Rather than stir up memories of their bloody 1988 crackdown by putting troops on the streets, Myanmar's junta is relying on gangs of paid thugs and criminals armed with brooms and spades to crush a rare outbreak of dissent.

Accurately predicting public anger at this month's shock fuel price rises, the rulers of the former Burma released hundreds -- maybe thousands -- of prisoners to clear the decks for mass arrests, diplomats and exiled dissidents said on Tuesday.

Happily for the generals, those booted out of Yangon's fetid cells also made perfect recruits for the shadowy Swan Aah Shin, or "capable strong person", organisation which has emerged as the junta's main weapon against protesters.

"It's an underground organisation and I don't know who would admit to it existing, but it exists and it exists in force, and it has been evident over the last week," said one diplomat who watched the Swan Aah Shin in action on the streets of Yangon.

A Reuters reporter at the scene of what was probably a Swan Aah Shin gang detaining 30 members of the opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) last week was ordered not to take photographs and then chased away.

"Basically, they are junta-backed thugs. They come from anywhere, and are the unemployed underclass. And they've been really effective -- they are threatening," the diplomat said.

"Everywhere you go, there are groups and truckloads of grubby-looking men looking bored and looking for a fight."

#### POLITICAL PARTY

A Home (Interior) Ministry source said the Swan Aah Shin took orders from the junta's feared Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA).

Whereas the Swan Aah Shin operate mainly in Yangon, a city of 5 million people, the USDA and its network of activists and informants are the generals' eyes and ears in the provinces, analysts say.

The Democratic Voice of Burma, a dissident news service based in Norway, played dramatic secretly filmed footage of a gang dragging away social activist Htin Kyaw and a colleague after their attempt to stage a protest at a bus stop.

"Had the authorities wished, they could have sent uniformed police officers to make an arrest," the Asian Human Rights Commission said of the footage.

Instead, they chose to order an unknown gang to "grab and drag off their quarry in the manner of criminals", the Hong Kong-based group added.

-----

#### **S.E. Asian nations concerned over Myanmar unrest**

Reuters- 28 August 2007

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) voiced concern over unrest in Myanmar on Tuesday, its first comments after soaring fuel prices prompted rare public protests in the military-ruled nation.

But ASEAN, several of whose 10 members consider the excesses of Myanmar's military regime to have cast all of Southeast Asia in a bad light, will stop short of sending an envoy to Yangon to express its concern, Secretary-General Ong Keng Yong said.

"What we have done is to make our views known in a certain way, maybe it's not the high-profile way where we send a special envoy to go to Yangon, or to the new capital, to make a case," he told reporters in the Malaysian capital.

"But we have learnt through the last 10 years the way to work with Myanmar is to present a logical and good ASEAN position and they will find a way to answer our queries."

Ong warned against overreacting to the wave of arrests, however. "Immediately after the protests, the presumption is there is no wrong done by protesters, but there is all the evil-doing by the Myanmar government. Is that a fair assumption?" he said.

-----

### **UN Rights Chief Urges Release of Myanmar Demonstrators**

UN News Centre, New York - Aug 27 2007

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has called for the immediate release of student leaders and other protesters arrested by the Myanmar authorities following a series of peaceful demonstrations against the sharp increase in fuel prices.

In a weekend statement, Louise Arbour also urged the authorities to "engage in consultation and dialogue with the demonstrators on their concerns."

Stressing that freedoms of expression and association are "touchstones of human rights," Ms. Arbour said that allowing greater space for citizens to express their views and discontent will be essential in fostering the way towards a democratic transition and reconciliation in the South-East Asian nation.

The High Commissioner's appeal came just days after Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called for "constructive dialogue towards national reconciliation at this important time in Myanmar's history."

Mr. Ban also urged the authorities to exercise maximum restraint in responding to any demonstrations and encourages all parties to avoid any provocative action.

-----

### **UN Warns That Fuel Price Hikes Could Hit Myanmar's Economy**

Associated Press - 27 August 2007

YANGON --The United Nations Monday warned fuel price hikes in Myanmar could worsen the country's precarious economic situation, as dozens of pro- democracy activists resumed their protests against the increase.

Charles Petrie, the U.N. humanitarian chief in Myanmar, said the price hike will hit most Myanmar families hard, since almost 90% live below or near the poverty line, which he defined as living on US\$1 a day.

"It's going to make things more expensive and make it more difficult for people to survive," Petrie told The Associated Press. "It will contribute to the continued deterioration of the standard of living for a significant portion of the population."

Petrie also said the fact that the increase was imposed all at once, rather than phased in over time, showed the regime was "out of touch" with the average citizen.

"It's a policy that has been applied in a draconian matter that doesn't take into account the fact that people lack the reserves necessary to absorb such shocks," he said.

Myanmar's ambassador to the Philippines, Thang Tun, told The Associated Press on Sunday that Myanmar could no longer afford to subsidize fuel so heavily due to steep oil price increases worldwide. He said cutting the subsidies was not a political move.

Myanmar activists have speculated that the government needed to slash the subsidies to remedy a cash shortage. Some analysts said the measure could be a prelude to privatization, or that it may even reflect conflict within the junta - and could be a deliberate attempt to provoke unrest, further stalling the approval of a long-awaited constitution and embarrassing military ruler Gen. Than Shwe.

-----

### **Myanmar detains at least 65 activists over fuel-price protests**

Associated Press - 24 August, 2007

YANGON, Myanmar: Myanmar's junta has detained at least 65 activists who protested fuel-price hikes, a state-controlled newspaper and witnesses reported, including two arrested Saturday as they were about to launch a fresh demonstration.

The New Light of Myanmar said 13 of those arrested Tuesday from the prominent pro-democracy 88 Generation Students group "are being interrogated" for allegedly undermining the government, colluding with insurgent groups and harming the community peace. If charged, the activists face up to 20 years in jail.

One of those arrested Saturday was Htin Kyaw, the 44-year-old leader of the pro-democracy group Myanmar Development Committee. He has repeatedly been arrested in the past for organizing protests over the country's dire economy, most recently in April.

Of the more than 50 others, the newspaper said eight people were arrested in the country's largest city Yangon as they marched in an anti-government protest Wednesday. The rest were picked up in the same city Thursday and Friday ahead of other planned rallies.

Yangon was quiet Saturday, with pro-junta supporters and plainclothes police deployed throughout the city to prevent further protests. Trucks stood ready to take demonstrators away.

Nyan Win, a spokesman for the opposition National League for Democracy party, said Saturday the eight demonstrators detained Wednesday had been released, but that the fate of the others was unknown.

Peaceful protests have been taking place since Sunday, mainly in Yangon. No new demonstrations were reported early Saturday.

The junta quickly broke up burgeoning protests Friday, but the defiant demonstrators could claim a partial victory after the government ordered some bus companies to lower fares that were raised because of the higher fuel prices.

-----

### **Protesters sent to notorious Myanmar prison**

Agence France Presse - 25 August 2007

YANGON - A group of 13 activists arrested for organising a rally against Myanmar's junta over its massive hike in fuel prices have been sent to the country's notorious Insein prison, a source said Saturday.

The prison is home to some of the nation's estimated 1,100 political prisoners, and international rights groups have alleged abuse and torture were rampant there.

Myanmar, under military rule since 1962, tolerates little public dissent.

Min Ko Naing and 12 others were sent to Myanmar's notorious Insein prison this week, the source close to Min Ko Naing told AFP. The source declined to give further details.

The 13 were members of the pro-democracy 88 Generation Students group, which is made up of former student leaders who led an uprising against military rule in 1988.

-----

### **Exiled Burmese Dissidents May Get Rare Recognition from Asean Lawmakers' Group**

Associated Press - August 24, 2007

Southeast Asia's main lawmakers' group may let the victors of Burma's 1990 election join its annual congress, officials said Friday—a rare recognition of pro-democracy politicians exiled from the military-ruled country.

Nearly 100 dissident leaders, mainly members of Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy party, recently sought "special observer" status at the general assembly of the lawmakers' group known by its acronym, AIPA.

AIPA, or the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, said in a statement that it agreed at its congress in Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia this week to refer the matter to its top committee for a decision by next year. AIPA comprises legislators from eight Southeast Asian countries.

"This is a big and long-overdue move," said San Aung, who was elected to Myanmar's parliament in 1990 and now lives in neighboring Thailand. "We look forward to a positive and progressive decision by AIPA to grant us our rightful place among them."

The National League for Democracy won a landslide victory in Burma's 1990 election, the first freely contested poll in nearly three decades. But the ruling military refused to hand over power, insisting that a new constitution was needed before it could do so.

Activists say at least 33 of those elected to the parliament now live in exile, while more than 80 are considered "stateless" and their whereabouts are uncertain.

The military's continued rule has left Burma isolated from much of the world community, which wants power handed to a democratically elected government.

AIPA has members from Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. Two other Asean member nations—Burma and Brunei—are "special observer" countries. Burma's junta usually sends diplomats to AIPA's congress.

Another group of Asean lawmakers who have been pushing for democratic reforms in Burma expressed hopes that AIPA will "decide favorably and grant Burma's elected MPs observer status, if not full participatory presence."

Burma's elected parliamentarians "have long awaited recognition from AIPA and other regional parliamentary groupings," the Asean Inter-Parliamentary Myanmar Caucus said in a statement Friday.

-----

### **Time for world to back Myanmar's people**

South China Morning Post - 23 August 2007

The rights of Myanmar's people are so trampled that they are not even allowed to object to hefty petrol price rises foisted on them last week without announcement or explanation by the military regime. Peaceful protests have been broken up with arrests and beatings, invalidating repeated claims by the junta that it is dedicated to restoring democracy.

Such actions suggest a disregard by the military for the people it claims to govern. If it was truly working towards giving citizens a voice, as it says a constitution being drafted by a national convention will do, it would not so unashamedly abuse its authority.

Fear of retribution makes protests in Myanmar rare, despite grinding poverty, a lack of basic liberties and rampant corruption. But the increases of up to 500 per cent on August 15 have caused such increased hardship through knock-on fare and food price rises that some citizens have ignored the risks and taken to the streets.

They have been led by pro-democracy advocates, but the cause of the protests is not a call for democracy: rather, it is about survival.

Similar circumstances - a series of rises in the price of rice, and a decree that some banknote denominations had no value - led to protests headed by pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi that were brutally crushed in 1988. But whereas the struggle of the country's people was little noticed then, the plight of Ms Suu Kyi and at least 1,100 of her supporters either under house arrest or in prison is now being closely watched around the world.

The US and European governments have for a decade been pushing the junta to change its ways through sanctions. Southeast Asian nations are increasing pressure, but China and India continue to prop up the regime with trade and financial support.

It is time the world united through the UN to let the military know that its 45-year mismanagement of the nation is no longer tolerated. When a government claims to be working for democracy, yet arrests people walking along a street to say they cannot afford price rises, a gap clearly exists between truth and reality.

The world's leaders have to join hands and back Myanmar's downtrodden people with an unequivocal and lasting response.

-----  
**Ban Ki-Moon Calls for 'Constructive Dialogue' Following Arrests**

UN News Centre - Aug 23 2007

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said today that he is following events in Myanmar closely and with concern following reports of arrests of student leaders and others by the authorities in the South-East Asian nation.

"In the spirit of the efforts of mutual engagement being pursued by the United Nations and Myanmar in the context of his good offices, the Secretary-General calls on the authorities to exercise maximum restraint in responding to any demonstrations and encourages all parties to avoid any provocative action," Mr. Ban's spokesperson said in a statement.

The Secretary-General also called for "constructive dialogue towards national reconciliation at this important time in Myanmar's history."

Earlier this month, Mr. Ban's Special Adviser on Myanmar Ibrahim Gambari held talks with government officials in Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia, while in June, he toured Asia and Europe.

-----  
**Myanmar Protesters March Despite Arrests**

Associated Press - 23 August 2007

YANGON, Myanmar - Defiant pro-democracy activists took to the streets Thursday for the third time this week, forming a human chain to try to prevent officers from dragging them into waiting trucks and buses.

The demonstration came a day after 300 people marched to protest the military junta's imposition of fuel price increases despite the earlier arrest of at least 13 democracy activists.

On Thursday, about 40 people, mostly from Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy, walked quietly without placards for about two miles toward the party headquarters in eastern Yangon before being stopped by a security cordon.

Authorities ordered bystanders, and especially reporters, out of the area as the protesters were overwhelmed after a 30-minute standoff. Some reporters were roughed up by security personnel who shouted abusive language.

Protesters sat on the pavement and formed a human chain in an attempt to prevent officers from dragging them into the waiting trucks and buses. A dozen protesters, however, were dragged and shoved into the vehicles, where some were slapped around, said witnesses, who asked not to be identified for fear of being called in by the police.

A former political prisoner, Ohn Than, also staged an apparently solo protest outside the U.S. Embassy before being hauled away by plainclothes officers. He was holding a sign calling for U.N. intervention to make the government convene parliament, a witness said.

The NLD party called on the ruling junta to stop brutal suppression and inhumane treatment of protesters and demanded an immediate release of those arrested.

"Unable to bear the burden of spiraling consumer prices, the public express their sentiments through peaceful means. However authorities have arrested, tortured, beaten up and endangered the lives of those who are peacefully expressing their wishes," the NLD said in a statement.

Wednesday's march was broken up prematurely when a gang of government supporters assaulted some protesters with sticks and seized eight who were accused of being agitators, witnesses and participants said. The eight were later freed unharmed.

"Though our leaders had been arrested, we will continue with our movement. We will not fear any arrest or threat," Mie Mie, a member of 88 Generation, said during the Wednesday march, which was monitored by plainclothes police.

-----

### **Myanmar junta faces calls to free protesters**

Agence France Presse - 23 August 2007

YANGON - Myanmar's military junta on Thursday faced mounting calls from western governments and rights groups to release at least 13 activists arrested for protesting against a massive hike in fuel prices.

Myanmar has confirmed the arrests of 13 members of the 88 Generation Students group, including Min Ko Naing, the country's most prominent dissident leader after detained democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi.

Western governments including Canada, France and the United States, issued sharp demands for the immediate release of the activists.

The United States demanded "an end to the regime's blatant attempt to intimidate and silence those who are engaged in peaceful promotion of democracy and human rights in Burma," State Department spokesman Gonzalo Gallegos said.

Washington wants the junta to engage in "meaningful dialogue" with leaders of Myanmar's democracy movement and ethnic minority groups, and to take "tangible steps toward a transition to civilian democracy rule," Gallegos said.

France's foreign ministry said it was "concerned by the use of force by pro-government militias in Rangoon against the peaceful, pro-democracy protesters."

"The military junta is responsible for the possible consequences that this unacceptable repression could have on the protesters," it said.

Canadian Foreign Minister Maxime Bernier also joined calls for the release of the activists, saying "their arrest is yet another example of the Burmese authorities' continued disregard for freedom and democracy."

New York-based Human Rights Watch said the arrests only worsened the plight of Myanmar's people.

"The recent price hikes in Burma make it harder for ordinary people to sustain themselves by driving up prices of essential goods and services. Peaceful protest should not land them in jail," said Arvind Ganesan, director of the group's business and human rights program.

-----

Press Statement  
23 August 2007

**ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY MYANMAR CAUCUS  
Regional legislators calls for immediate release of peaceful  
protestors in Burma, condemns violence used by Junta**

The ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Myanmar Caucus (AIPMC) urges the military rulers of Myanmar to immediately release Burmese student leaders and human rights activists who have been arrested in Yangon over the last three days during peaceful protests against the increase of petrol prices in the country.

The arrests clearly indicate that the human rights situation in Myanmar continues to deteriorate and that the military junta continues to act with disregard to regional hopes for a peaceful democratic transition of the country's leadership.

ASEAN, having recently agreed in principle to form a regional human rights body, must take it upon themselves to urge Myanmar's military leader to respect the rights of its citizens and to immediately cease its acts of violence against those demanding justice and fair treatment.

It is reported that the peaceful protests against the sudden hike of fuel prices in Myanmar began in Yangon on Sunday, August 19. Numerous Burmese citizens have been arrested since and reports have surfaced of the junta's use of violent means to suppress these expressions of displeasure with the governance of the county.

AIPMC is extremely concerned that the military junta's handling of these peaceful protests may result in similar bloody scenes of the 1988 pro-democracy uprising in Myanmar that saw the killing of many innocent lives.

-----

**Myanmar arrests 13 dissidents to quash protests**  
Reuters - 22 August 2007

YANGON - Myanmar's military rulers arrested 13 leading dissidents on Wednesday in a series of midnight raids in Yangon designed to quash protests against rising fuel prices and falling living standards.

The junta also deployed armed police at street corners in the former capital, as well as truckloads of men from its feared Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA) network.

Dozens of USDA members carrying brooms and spades were seen in the city centre, pretending to be street cleaners.

In a rare announcement in all state-run newspapers, the junta said the dissidents had been arrested for "agitation to cause civil unrest" and "undermining peace and security of the state," charges that could put them in jail for up to 20 years.

The reports, which also referred to the "ill-intention of grabbing power," confirmed names given to Reuters by relatives and friends.

Min Ko Naing, Ko Ko Gyi, Min Zeya, Ko Jimmy, Ko Pyone Cho, Arnt Bwe Kyaw and Ko Mya Aye -- all leaders of a 1988 student-led uprising put down ruthlessly by the military with heavy loss of life -- were among those detained, they said.

"Military intelligence and government intelligence seized their houses and searched their houses," another dissident, Htay Kywe, said in a recording emailed to Reuters by Myanmar exile groups in neighboring Thailand, referring to the detained dissidents.

The government agents had seized papers and mobile phones, he added. Htay Kywe had managed to evade capture during a similar raid on his family home in Yangon and had gone into hiding, one of the exile groups said.

The arrests came ahead of a planned protest on Wednesday against huge fuel price rises, the latest in a rare series of small demonstrations against deteriorating living conditions and galloping inflation in the former Burma.

The government raised fuel prices by up to 500 percent without warning last week.

-----

#### **Dozens defy Myanmar junta with new protest**

Agence France Presse - 22 August 2007

YANGON - About 50 pro-democracy supporters Wednesday defied warnings from Myanmar's ruling junta and marched through the streets of Yangon, demanding the release of at least a dozen detained activists.

The protesters, mostly women, were greeted with applause from bystanders and from people hanging out the windows of their apartments on a main road near downtown Yangon.

"We are marching on behalf of the people! We are marching on behalf of the arrested 88 Generation Students!" shouted Mimi, a leader of the march who gave only her nickname.

-----

#### **Suu Kyi's party warns of new protests in Myanmar over fuel hike**

Agence France Presse - 20 August 2007

Aung San Suu Kyi's pro-democracy party on Monday warned Myanmar's military rulers that they could face more protests over a massive increase in fuel prices last week.

The National League for Democracy (NLD), which is headed by the detained Nobel peace prize winner, sent the statement to the military government a day after 500 people marched through Yangon in protest at skyrocketing costs.

"We warned the authorities that they would have to take responsibility for the consequences of any future demonstrations over the increased fuel prices last week. Many people were affected," NLD spokesman Nyan Win said.

"We pointed out in our statement today that this is not the right time to increase fuel prices because our economic situation is not stable," he told AFP.

"We will stand up for the people," he added.

-----

### **Indonesia Urges AIPA To Help Promote Democracy In Myanmar**

Bernama - 20 August 2007

KUALA LUMPUR -- Indonesia today urged fellow Asean Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) member countries to further promote democracy in Myanmar and Thailand.

Indonesian House of Representatives Speaker, Agung Laksono, said the people of Myanmar were growing desperate over their inability to change the situation at hand and define their own future.

"Through this year's AIPA general assembly, Indonesia requests that fellow member countries further promote political freedom for the people of Myanmar.

"They are truly in need of a better future," he said when addressing the first plenary session of the 28th AIPA conference here.

-----

### **ASEAN must nudge China, India on Myanmar: lawmakers**

Agence France Presse - 20 August 2007

Southeast Asian lawmakers on Monday said ASEAN must pursue diplomatic efforts to push economic giants China and India to help realise political reforms in Myanmar.

"ASEAN needs to do more to ensure a speedy and sustainable solution for Myanmar. A key step would be to more actively engage China and other regional partners on reforms in Myanmar," Zaid Ibrahim, president of the three-year-old ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Caucus on Myanmar (AIPMC) said.

"China has a great deal of influence on the Myanmar authorities. If Myanmar continues to deteriorate, all of us are going to suffer, not just ASEAN but also China and the rest of East Asia, India and the rest of South Asia," the Malaysian lawmaker said.

Zaid, a member of Malaysia's ruling party, said ASEAN's credibility hinges on its ability to be able to solve the issue of Myanmar.

"A domestic problem (in Myanmar) has grown as a result of our inaction, to hurt us all -- in terms of security, economic and international reputation," he said.

Lawmakers from Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand -- all members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) -- have joined the caucus which was formed in 2004 to push for democratic reforms in Myanmar.

The group held its gathering on the sidelines of the five-day conference of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly attended by some 300 lawmakers.

Charles Chong, Singapore's AIPMC chapter chairman said ASEAN along with China and India could form a triangle to pressure and persuade Myanmar to bring about reforms.

"ASEAN is in a unique position to form a bridge between India and China. ASEAN can create a triangle of influence that will proactively and pressure Myanmar to deliver genuine reforms," he said.

Chong, a member of Singapore's ruling government, said AIPMC intends to send a petition to the governments of China and India to encourage them to actively engage Myanmar or reforms.

"The people of Myanmar cannot afford to wait for another 40 years for reforms, and frankly neither can we," he said.

Other members of the ASEAN Inter-parliamentary Myanmar Caucus (AIPMC) meeting here said ASEAN must do more to secure the release of jailed Aung San Suu Kyi and called diplomatic sanctions and for ASEAN companies not to invest in the pariah state.

Djoko Susilo, chairman of Indonesia's AIPMC chairman said ASEAN countries could stop investing in Myanmar and downgrade diplomatic relations to press the Myanmar government to bring about reforms.

"I think we should not send any envoys to Myanmar. This is something we can do to downgrade our relations," he said.

-----

### **Hundreds protest in Myanmar over fuel price hike**

Agence France Presse – 19 August 2007

YANGON, Myanmar - Pro-democracy activists led hundreds of people in a rare march through Myanmar's main city of Yangon on Sunday, in protest against an enormous hike in fuel prices last week.

Myanmar's ruling junta doubled key fuel prices on Wednesday without warning, leaving many urban workers unable to afford the cost of simply getting to their jobs.

Min Ko Naing, a prominent pro-democracy leader and one-time political prisoner, said a group of former student leaders decided to walk through the city in solidarity with residents who could no longer afford buses or taxis.

Hundreds of people marched through the city's outlying neighbourhoods, and the crowd grew in size as bystanders and passersby joined the protesters, Min Ko Naing said.

'The people from along the streets greeted and cheered us. Some people from the bus, they climbed down to participate in the demonstration,' he told Agence France Presse.

'We showed that the price increase for petrol was too much,' he said.

Myanmar's repressive regime tolerates little public dissent, but the protest unfolded peacefully.

-----

### **North Korean Diplomats Arrive In Myanmar To Open New Embassy**

Associated Press - 18 August 2007

YANGON, MYANMAR: North Korean diplomats arrived in Myanmar recently to open an embassy for the first time since being ousted from the country in the aftermath of a bloody attack more than 20 years ago, diplomatic sources said Saturday (Aug 18th).

The two countries, among Asia's most repressive regimes, agreed to resume diplomatic ties in April during a visit to Myanmar by North Korean Vice Foreign Minister Kim Yong Il.

Three North Korean diplomats \_ a minister, counselor and first secretary \_ are currently staying at a serviced apartment in the commercial capital of Yangon and have been looking for a new embassy site, said an Asian diplomat who did not want to be named because of diplomatic protocol.

A Myanmar Foreign Ministry official confirmed the arrival of the diplomats and said the North Korean ambassador will arrive after a new embassy location is chosen.

Asked if North Korea will open an embassy at the new administrative capital of Naypyitaw, 400 kilometers (250 miles) north of Yangon, the official said since other embassies have not yet moved to Naypyitaw, North Korea will open its embassy in Yangon.

The official requested anonymity since he was not authorized to speak to the press.

Earlier this month, Myanmar appointed its ambassador to China, Thein Lwin, to also serve as ambassador to North Korea.

-----

### **China studies Myanmar island for oil terminal**

Deutsche Presse-Agentur - 19 Aug 2007

Yangon - China is conducting a survey on the feasibility of using Myanmar's Yanbyai island as an oil terminal to supply a planned 1,440-kilometre pipeline from the Bay of Bengal to Yunnan province in southern China, news reports said Sunday. "The state China National Petroleum Corporation ... is conducting a detailed assessment with the state Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE) for a crude oil terminal on the Myanmar island of Yanbyai, off Myanmar's Rakhine coast, fringing the Bay of Bengal," said the Myanmar Times, an English-language weekly.

An 800-kilometre pipeline would be needed to connect the island to the Chinese border and then another 640 kilometres through Yunnan to the provincial capital of Kunming, where a refinery is also planned, said the article.

The pipeline plan, still in its infancy, is part of China's ambition to devise a new petroleum passage for imported oil from the Middle East to China without needing to go through the Strait of Malacca, diplomatic sources in Yangon say.

Analysts suggest one oil pipeline across Myanmar might cost between 2 billion and 3 billion dollars and might eventually handle up to 40 million tons per year.

There has been speculation that the Chinese would use the existing Myanmar port of Sittwe, closer to Bangladesh and founded by the British in the 19th century.

"But there are two reasons why the Chinese prefer the tiny port town of Kyauk Phyu, about 112 kilometres farther south: security and isolation. The island is remote with virtually no transport infrastructure linked to it. The only way to get there is by ship or by plane using a small airstrip," said the Myanmar Times.

-----

### **Gujral, Fernandes concerned over India's policies towards Myanmar**

Malaysia Sun - 19 August, 2007

New Delhi - Former Prime Minister I.K. Gujral and National Democratic Alliance (NDA) convenor George Fernandes have expressed concern over New Delhi's policies towards the military junta in Myanmar.

Gujral said it was an irony that India, a role model in democracy, is surrounded by military governments in its neighbourhood, and called for a review of foreign policies for its neighbouring countries.

"Burma (Myanmar) has a military regime, so do Pakistan and Bangladesh. The time has come that we seriously ponder and contemplate this possible ramifications of the situation," Gujral said.

Endorsing Gujral's view, former Defence Minister Fernandes said the government was not doing enough to counter China's growing influence in Myanmar.

"China is trying hard to spread its ideology in Burma. We are not doing anything to counter that. Our policies are limited to efforts to acquire their petroleum," Fernandes claimed.

-----

### **Myanmar leader meets Chinese PLA goodwill delegation**

Xinhua New - 16 August 2007

Member of the Myanmar State Peace and Development Council General Thura Shwe Mann met with visiting goodwill delegation of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) in Nay Pyi Taw Wednesday with the two sides expressing wishes to enhance friendly ties between the two countries and the two armed forces.

The Chinese PLA delegation is led by General Liu Dongdong, Political Commissar of the Jinan Military Area Command.

At the meeting also attended by Military Attache of the Chinese Embassy Senior-Colonel Fan Lianfeng, the two sides exchanged views on international and regional situation.

The Chinese PLA delegation, which will also visit Myanmar's military institute and technical institute, arrived Yangon on Tuesday on a four-day goodwill visit to the country.

-----

### **Myanmar confirms agreement to sell gas to China**

Reuters - 16 August 2007

YANGON - Myanmar has had agreed to sell gas from its A-1 and A-3 blocks to China, a major ally but not a stakeholder in the blocks, a senior Energy Ministry official said on Thursday.

"Yes, we have decided to sell the gas from A-1 and A-3 to China and details are under negotiation. Once we reach an agreement, we will go ahead," the official, who asked not to be named, told Reuters.

"If everything goes well, the gas from these offshore blocks will be sold to China through a pipeline," he added, refusing to give further details.

A senior Indian official said earlier this week Myanmar had decided in favour of China, but Thursday's comments were the first confirmation of that from Myanmar.

The A-1 and A-3 fields off the Rakhine coast have proven reserves of 5.7 to 10 trillion cubic feet with up to 8.6 TCF recoverable, according to assessments by the U.S.-based international certification agency GCA.

South Korea's Daewoo International Corp. , which had proposed building an LNG plant in Rakhine, has a 60 percent stake in the blocks.

Korea Gas Corporation has 10 percent, India's Oil and Natural Gas Corporation 20 percent and Indian natural gas utility GAIL has the other 10 percent.

Three energy hungry neighbours, India, China and Thailand, have been bidding to buy the gas from A-1 and A-3 through pipelines.

Myanmar has at least 90 TCF of gas reserves and 3.2 billion barrels of recoverable crude oil reserves in 19 onshore and three major offshore fields.

Altogether, 25 offshore blocks are under exploration, 12 of them in the Gulf of Martaban, six off the Tanintharyi coast and seven off the Rakhine coast.

Companies from Australia, Britain, Canada, China, Indonesia, India, Malaysia, Russia, South Korea, and Thailand have reached agreements with the government on exploration for gas and oil.

-----

### **Myanmar raises petrol prices to \$397 per gallon**

Middle East North Africa Financial Network - 16 August 2007

A spokesperson for the Myanmar's secretive military government announced that the government has increased fuel prices by up to 500 percent, Gulf News reported.

The manager of a government-owned service station said that due to this abrupt decision, compressed natural gas (CNG) jumped from \$8.6 per kilogram to \$43.3 per kilogram, while petrol prices soared from \$238.4 to \$397.3 per gallon and diesel prices grew from \$238.4 to \$476.8 per gallon.

The price of 92-octane gasoline was consistent for the past five months at \$80 per barrel in comparison to \$70-\$79 or below during the first quarter of 2007. Global benchmark U.S. crude oil prices recently dropped to \$72.85 after rising to its highest ever of \$78.77 per barrel on August 1.

It is worth mentioning that the last time isolated Myanmar raised fuel prices was in October 2005, when diesel prices were increased from \$25.4 to \$238.4 and petrol from \$238.4 to \$397.3 per gallon