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BURMA - World weekly news round-up 21 4 December 2007 – 11 December 2007

Inside Burma

The Karen National Union (KNU) issued a statement saying that the Burma army has stepped up its offensive against ethnic Karen rebels since the crackdown of the pro-democracy marches in September 2007. (Date: 10 December 2007. Source: Agence France Presse
http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20071210/wl_asia_afp/myanmarunrestethnic_071210060744)

UN

UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon told the Burmese military regime on Monday 10 December that the international community's "patience is running out" and called them to embrace democracy and alleviate the suffering of the Burmese people. (Date: 10 December 2007. Source: Associated Press found at <http://www.ihf.com/articles/ap/2007/12/10/asia/AS-GEN-Thailand-UN-Myanmar.php>)

On Tuesday 11 December, Sergio Pinheiro, the UN Human Rights Council's Special Rapporteur on Burma, reported back to the council on his findings during his 5 day visit to the country in November. He said that at least 31 people were killed during the military's crackdown of the pro-democracy marches in September. He also said that the military regime show no real signs of ensuring human rights and fundamental freedoms, although he acknowledged they had opened a dialogue with the UN by allowing him access. (Date: 11 December 2007. Source: http://www.bangkokpost.com/breaking_news/breakingnews.php?id=124364)

In an interview with the Financial Times, Charles Petrie, the expelled former leading UN official in Burma warned that a "more volatile situation" could occur in Burma if the military regime refuses to listen to advice and accept that the recent protests were fuelled by people's anger over the deteriorating economic situation. (Date: 6 December 2007. Source: <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/32d17c9a-a386-11dc-b229-0000779fd2ac.html>)

IMF

The IMF launched a report saying that the increased Western sanctions imposed on Burma would have little impact on the economy. The overall macro-economic impact will be limited due to the sanctions already in place and because the new sanctions only cover a small proportion of trade. Never-the-less, a fall in demand for the more labour intensive industries such as textiles and tourism could result in increased unemployment. (Date: 8 December 2007. Source: Reuters
<http://in.reuters.com/article/southAsiaNews/idINIndia-30874620071207>)

China

A Chinese company has won the rights to export natural gas from the biggest field in Burma. Daewoo International, the operator of the field has chosen PetroChina as the preferred bidder to extract the gas, beating India in the race for resources. (Date: 5 December 2007. Source: Bloomberg
<http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?sid=ak7BQp3sanUk&pid=20601080>).

On Monday 10 December, the seventh China-Burma border trade fair opened in Muse, a border town in China's Southwestern Yunnan province. The trade fair is aimed at promoting bilateral trade between the two countries. This will be also be the second time that other neighbouring countries, including Thailand, India and Bangladesh have been invited to participate. (Date: 10 December 2007. Source: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2007-12/10/content_7224200.htm)

ASEAN

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo of the Philippines has said that the release of Burma's detained pro-democracy leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, will play a key deciding role in the country's decision to ratify ASEAN's new charter. (Date: 6 December 2007. Source: <http://www.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSSP14648220071207?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews>)

USA

On Tuesday 11 December, the US House of Representatives approved sanctions against Burma's gemstone (including rubies and jades) exports and natural gas industry. The President took the opportunity to threaten the Burmese military that the United States would continue to push for global sanctions unless they make genuine progress towards democracy. (Date: 12 December 2007. Source: Agence France Presse
http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20071212/wl_asia_afp/myanmarunrestussanctions)