



EURO - BURMA OFFICE
Square Gutenberg 11/2, Brussels, B-1000, Belgium
Tel: +32 2 280 0691 Fax: +32 2 280 0310
Email: ebo@euro-burma.be

BURMA - World weekly news round-up 29 July – 4 August 2007

Inside Burma

Reports suggest that the final session of the widely criticized National Convention, which was convened on 18 July will last two months. According to state media, the detailed basic principles for the three chapters on 'Election', 'Political Parties' and 'Provisions on State of Emergency' were adopted by delegates on Wednesday 1 August in a plenary session. (Date: 30 June 2007 for report of two month NC. Source Kyodo News. On adopted chapters, source: New Light of Myanmar <http://www.myanmar.com/newspaper/nlm/index.html>. Date: 2 August 2007).

ASEAN

During ASEAN's Annual Ministerial Meeting in Manila, Foreign Ministers used the opportunity to criticize Burma's military for failing to restore an inclusive democracy to the country. On 30th July, despite opposition from the SPDC, ASEAN Foreign Ministers agreed to set up a regional human rights body to promote respect of fundamental freedoms among the 10 member countries. This will now be part of the draft ASEAN charter, which will be submitted to Heads of State at the annual summit in November.

They also adopted a five-year work plan to ensure that nuclear power plants in the region are not used to produce weapons. This follows reports that the Burmese military plans to explore possibilities of nuclear technology with Russia. (Date 31 July 2007. Source: Associated Press & ASEAN Secretariat <http://www.aseansec.org/20764.htm>)

Australia

While revealing his frustrations with the Burmese military, Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer called for India and China, who have strong economic ties the Burmese military, to put further pressure on the Burmese military to demand reform and change. (Date: 31 July 2007. Source: Agence France Presse)

New Zealand

During a meeting with his Burmese counterpart, U Nyan Win in Manila, Foreign Minister Winston Peters expressed concern at the human rights situation. Burma will be New Zealand's coordinating country on ASEAN for the next three years. (Date: 31 July 2007. Source: New Zealand Government::<http://www.beehive.govt.nz/ViewDocument.aspx?DocumentID=30208>)

EU

Javier Solana, the EU's High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, raised with the Burmese military the issues of continued detention of all political dissidents and the slow implementation of its so-called road map to democracy in a retreat session of the ASEAN Regional Forum in Manila. He also called for a more transparent National Convention process. (Date: 2 August 2007. Source: Japan Economic Newswire. Full article found on Burmanet: <http://www.burmanet.org/news/2007/08/02/japan-economic-newswire-eu-calls-for-transparency-in-myanmars-national-convention/>)

USA

After the US Senate approved the import ban last week, George Bush renewed the import sanctions on 1 August for another year. (Date 1 August 2007. Sources: Agence France Press & White House Press Release <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/08/20070801-1.html>)

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Burma is one of the least developed countries in the world with failing health and education systems suffering from several decades of under-investment. Thus, the UK's renewed effort to bring together a new global humanitarian alliance to meet the Millennium Development Goals could be of critical importance to the future of the country. The British Prime Minister said 12 world leaders, including France, Japan, Germany, Spain, India and Brazil, had signed a joint pledge for "urgent action" to help meet a global "development emergency". The statement has also been supported by the head of the European Commission and the World Bank President. (Date 31 July, 2007 Gordon Brown, British Prime Minister Speech: <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/28b08110-3f73-11dc-b034-0000779fd2ac.html>, President of the European Commission comments: http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/president/pdf/comments_20070731_en.pdf 31 July 2007).