

Democratic Voice of Burma

Political Prisoners News

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Appeal for two Burmese journalists to be lodged

Apr 01, 2006 - The lawyer defending two Burmese journalists who were each sentenced to three years in jail for taking pictures of Burma's new administrative capital Kyappayay, said that appeals for them will be submitted to higher courts step by step.

Thaacho (Hinthada), a.k.a., Thaung Sein, 52 yrs, and Moe Tun, a.k.a., Kyaw Thwin, 42 yrs, were arrested and detained on 23 December 2005, and sentenced on 24 March for videotaping and taking pictures of the new capital.

“The two of them visited Pyinmana and dropped in on Kyappayay by riding Taw-win buses. They took photographs and videotaped. They do not deny that. They did that with sincere intention. There is no prohibition, or signboard that says you can't do that. So they did what they did. They did that so that they could show them to their families and friends. That's how I put my argument,” said their lawyer Khin Maung Zaw. “And Video Act-31A, is for only those who are involved in video business. They (the defending team?) argued on the path of Video Act 42 which states that the law doesn't apply to home videos and borrowing and showing video tapes without taking fees. We followed that line of argument. But the court decided that they violated the law and the judge at Pyinmana court passed the sentenced. Now if we are to submit the appeal we have to go to Yamethin district court.”

The two journalists are being detained at nearby Yamethin Prison and they are allowed to see their family members. As the letter of 'empowerment' for appeal had been issued by the court, the appeal must be submitted at Yemethin District within 60 days, said Khin Maung Zaw.

Paris-based Reporteurs Sans Frontiers (RSF) and exiled Burma Media Association (BMA) denounced the action of the Burmese authorities saying that it is the violation of freedom of press.



Burmese students detained for writing and distributing poems

Apr 01, 2006 - Seven students from Pegu College in lower central Burma have been arrested by authorities for writing and distributing a poem titled Daung Man (the might of the fighting peacock).

The seven students - Hnin Wint Wint Soe, May Su Su Win, Ne Linn Kyaw, Thet Oo, Win Min Htut, Maung Maung Oo, and Zeya Aung - were arrested on 29 March.

Zeya Aung, son of U Aung, the proprietor of King Star teashop in Pegu, was detained in the border town Myawaddy in eastern Burma on 29 March with copies of Daung Man poem. Local residents said some Pegu College students were arrested in connection with the issue.

When DVB contacted Pegu Police Station No 1, the police officer on duty neither confirmed nor denied the arrest of the college students. When DVB contacted the Police Special Branch as suggested by Police Station No.1, there was no answer.

Moreover, Aung Aung Oo, proprietor of A2O Desktop Publishing Business in Pegu was also arrested by authorities for printing the Daung Man poem.



Appeal for two Burmese farmers rejected

Apr 01, 2006 - The appeal lodged on behalves of two Burmese farmers from Kyisuu Kyonphar Village, Bogale Township, in Burma's Irrawaddy Division – who were sentenced to two years each for reporting corrupt practices of their authority chairman – was summarily rejected by the divisional court on 8 March.

Their lawyer Aung Thein told DVB that he is continuing to lodge the appeal at the High Court in Rangoon. Farmer/teacher Aye Win and pro-authority Union Solidarity and Development Association

(USDA) member/farmer Win Nyunt, are being detained at Myaungmya Jail and Aung Thein was allowed to see them recently. They were arrested on 9 December.

They were arrested after they reported to higher authorities that their village authority chairman San Shwe was taking 10% of 10,000 Kyat subsidy money granted to each 56 farmers by the government. Myaungmya district authority members investigated the matter and warned San Shwe not do that gain but the two farmer leaders were sued and Bogale Township court imposed sentences on them for 'obstructing government officials on duty'.

TOP

Burmese students detained for writing poems still not released

Apr 03, 2006 - Students from Pegu College in lower central Burma who have been detained since 29 March for writing and distributing a poem titled Daung Man (the might of the fighting peacock), were still not released causing serious concerns among their family members and loved ones.

The students were continued to be detained at Pegu Police Station No.1, without allowing them to meet with their parents. But some local residents said that they were being interrogated behind closed door inside Pegu Jail. Nevertheless, an official on duty at the prison insisted that there were no detained students when contacted by DVB.

Hnin Wint Wint Soe (f), May Su Su Win (f), Ne Linn Kyaw, Thet Oo, Win Min Htut, Maung Maung Oo, and Zeya Aung, son of U Aung, the proprietor of King Star teashop in Pegu, were arrested on 29 March with copies of Daung Man poem.

TOP

Seven Rangoon trishaw drivers interrogated over death of Thet Naing Oo

Apr 03, 2006 - Seven trishaw drivers have been detained and interrogated by the Burmese authorities over the murder of former political prisoner Thet Naing Oo by a mob led by the police and fire brigade members of Rangoon Kyimyintaing (Kemmdine) Township on 17 March.

The fire brigade members were interrogated during the previous session of the 'special' tribunal set up in Rangoon Insein Jail to investigate the murder, but they were not detained. Moreover, it is not clear whether the municipal police who actually carried out the fatal beating were among the seven detained, Thet Naing Oo's mother San Yi told DVB.

She added that an eyewitness for the litigant also appeared at the court for cross-examinations, on the same day witnesses for the police and fire brigade members testified.

At the same time, two witnesses and friends of the victim, Khin Maung Zaw and Win Myint are continued to be detained on remand for two more weeks from 31 March at Insein Jail.

"They have an appointment on 12 (April), I was told. Today, people from their homes went to see them at the prison. They were allowed to see them and give them food. They were allowed to talk about family matters. As for the remaining matters, that side didn't say anything and neither this side. What they have written in the papers is that they are being charged with Act-333, obstructing (government officials) on duty, I was told. That is what I heard. I don't know the exact charge."

San Yi said she heard that the two cases are being heard separately in Insein Jail. She was told by the authorities that she would be given a 'special' permission to attend the special hearing on the cause of son's death, but when she did turn up on the following day, she was turned back at the entrance of the prison.

TOP

Ex-Burmese political prisoners absconded to Thai-Burmese border

Apr 04, 2006

Two former political prisoners, a married couple, Tun Tun and his wife Toe Toe Myint (a.k.a.) Phoe Tha Htoo, had arrived at an unidentified location on the Thai-Burmese border on 3 April, having fled the military-ruled Burma.

“The reason for fleeing to the Thai-Burmese border was, I took photographs regarding the case of Ko Thet Naing Oo (who was brutally beaten to death by the police and fire brigade members in Rangoon),” said Tun Tun. “(Members of) the SB (Special Branch police) and Sa-Aa-Pha (Military Affairs Security Force) said they want to see me regarding the photographing and distribution (of the photographs). They came to see my wife and gave an appointment for me to come and see them to discuss the matter...I didn’t go and see them, and they came to see me. As I was not there, they asked my wife to follow them (to their office for questioning), but my wife refused and they all went back. So me and my wife left for this area.”

Tun Tun added that currently, the SB and Sa-Aa-Pha members have been closely monitoring and interrogating former political prisoners frequently inside the country.

“They have been instructed to always tail and watch politicians (political activists) and to tighten security measures on them. They were tailing at the funeral of U Tin Tun. They use around 30 agents of SB and Sa-Aa-Pha at an event. As they had to carry out the (spying) activities again from the scratch, they are using big man power so that they could follow each person.”

Thailand based Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) spokesman Bo Kyi confirmed that there has been an increase in the monitoring and restriction on the movement and activities of former political prisoners within last year.

“The case of Ko Thet Naing Oo is an obvious example. Similarly, other ex-political prisoners are subjected to intimidation and uncivilised treatment of the authorities on each level. We are very concerned about this,” said Bo Kyi.

He added that former prisoners are neither safe in Thailand once they had escape from Burma as they are living in the country as aliens, subject to the ever fluctuating policies of the Thai governments. He advised his colleagues who are still inside Burma and still thinking to flee the country to study the situation on the border carefully before they decide to leave the country.

“Or else we will be in a position where the south king could not rescue the north king. Whether you are going to leave or not depends on the individual. There are also many difficulties on this side. I want to say that you need to prepare your strength and morale to face them before you leave.



Burma NLD concerned for Aung San Suu Kyi’s health, security

Apr 07, 2006 – Burma’s main opposition party, the National League for Democracy (NLD) announced today that it is concerned for the security and health of its leader Aung San Suu Kyi because she has been illegally detained for almost three years and her family physician has not been allowed to see her for more than a month now.

The concern expressed in Statement No 5/0406 released today also called on the military junta to urgently address the problem.

NLD spokesperson Myint Thein explained about Aung San Suu Kyi’s health as follows:

“It is the same as applying for the right to appeal. The elders in the party and all the NLD members are very concerned about the health of our general secretary because we have been given to understand that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s personal physician Dr Tin Myo Win has not been allowed to visit her. It has been for more than (?a month) already.”

The appeal Myint Thein spoke about concerns the request made by NLD Chairman Aung Shwe to State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) Chairman Senior General Than Shwe on 3 April seeking permission for the right to ascertain the charges made against Aung San Suu Kyi and to file an

appeal for her release.

The statement by the NLD can be described in essence as: “In accordance with the itinerary agreed upon by the SPDC, NLD Vice Chairman U Tin Oo and General Secretary Daw Aung San Suu Kyi went on organizational tours of different townships in Kachin State and Mandalay and Sagaing Divisions in May 2003,” said Myint Thein. “During the tour, the local people voluntarily accorded a warm and rousing welcome to U Tin Oo and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. However, on the night of 30 May, ruffians cruelly attacked NLD members who were travelling in the motorcade of the leaders near Kyi Ywa in Tabayin Township. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has been detained since then. Following that, the SPDC announced that it is investigating the attack at Tabayin and that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is being detained temporarily.”

The final part that says “temporarily” by SPDC means until now, and it is critical of the fact that there is no explanation why she is being detained and on what charges and the fact that there is no right of appeal for her.

“But, the temporary detention has continued until now. There has been no transparency in conducting the inquiry and the results of the inquiry have not been made public yet. Hence, the chairman of the NLD applied to the Ministry of Home Affairs on 1 December 2005 for the copy of the order authorizing the detention of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi under the Law Safeguarding the State from the Dangers of Subversive Elements because it was needed by the NLD central committee to file an appeal for her. The copy was not given. Let it be known that: NLD Chairman U Aung Shwe has sent a request to Gen Soe Win, prime minister of the Union of Burma, on 16 March 2006 asking his permission for the right to appeal the case.”

Furthermore, the NLD chairman has also submitted a request to the SPDC Chairman on 3 April 2006 so that necessary action can be taken to prepare for the appeal against the order confining Aung San Suu Kyi to her home.



Burmese prisoners not well

Apr 07, 2006 - Nanda Sit Aung, a Burmese political prisoner who has been serving a lengthy jail-term at Pa-An Prison, Karen State in eastern Burma, is suffering from severe degenerative nerve diseases.

His family members are also said to be very concerned for his condition as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) staff have not been allowed to carry out prison visits for more than three months.

Similarly, the health conditions of prisoners Saw Win and Aye Aung who are being detained at Kalemmyo Prison in northwest Burma, are said to be deteriorating. Their family members have been unable to see them regularly due to the high costs of commodity and medicines and travel fares.

A former political prisoner told DVB that those who were released from prisons feel guilty that they have been unable to look back and give effective help for their detained colleagues mentally and physically as they themselves have to struggle for their own survival



Burmese writer Than Win Hlaing detained beyond release date

Apr 11, 2006 - Burmese author Than Win Hlaing who was jailed for writing a biography of Burma's national hero Gen Aung San, is still detained beyond his release date at the notorious Tharawaddy Jail in lower Burma near Rangoon.

Than Win Hlaing's health is reported to be not good as he has been suffering from high blood pressure and kidney complaints. He was sentenced to seven years in prison in June 2000 with Printing Act (20). His literary colleagues insisted that Than Win Hlaing did not break any law, but the authorities

deliberately villified him and sent him to prison because he described the life of Aung San in his book.

A relative of his who went to see him at the prison on 6 April said that Than Win Hlaing is very angry with the reading ban imposed on him and this in turn worsens his high blood pressures.

According to the customary practice, Than Win Hlaing should only serve 5 years and three months of his sentence with the reductions of his sentence for good conduct, but he has already been in prison for more than 5 years and 10 months.



NLD Kyaw San's appeal rejected by Burma's high court

Apr 11, 2006 - The amended appeal submitted on behalf of detained upper Burma Sagaing Division's Tantse Township elected representative (MP) Kyaw San, was rejected by Rangoon High Court on 7 April.

The court accepted the amended appeal in October 2005 and it was kept for six months before it was allowed to be explained and elaborated on 20 March, Kyaw San's lawyer Thein Nyunt told DVB. He added that he was very encouraged by the fact that the court accepted the appeal while other appeals lodged on behalf of other political prisoners were rejected summarily, but deeply disappointed as the decision didn't go Kyaw San's way as expected.

"To say it clearly, what we were hoping for U Kyaw San was, as someone at his age who carried out his duties for the nation – he joined the army since (19) 49 and retired from the position of a Lt-Col, the commander of a battalion and he is now in his 74 years in Insein Jail suffering from high blood pressures, eye diseases and many other diseases, and by looking at his condition, we were hoping that he would be given a softer (lenient) punishment from the highest. Now, the case which has very good legal prospects didn't turn out as we expected. Therefore, it is very simple for us. We believe that the rejection of the appeal which was accepted shows that the ebb and flow of political tide in our country is affecting and lashing at the judicial system to some extent."

Kyaw San's wife May Nwet who went see him at the prison recently said that unlike before, her husband has been deteriorating badly recently.

Kyaw San was arrested in March 2005 and imprisoned for accepting at his Rangoon home 'illegal' goods belonging to his son's friends, members of Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKA) which signed ceasefire agreements with the ruling junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC).

Kyaw San was on a pilgrimage in upper Burma when the goods were planted at his home.



Murdered Thet Naing Oo's friends released in Rangoon

Apr 12, 2006 - Win Myint and Khin Maung Zaw, the two witnesses and friends of Thet Naing Oo who was brutally beaten to death by Rangoon Kyimyintaing (Kemendine) Township police and fire brigade members last month, were released today from the notorious Insein Jail.

But it is not clear whether they were released on bail or after they signed pledges, a source close to their families told DVB.

We contacted Thet Naing Oo's mother San Yi and the two released men for confirmation and comments, but we were unable to talk to any of them.



The appeal for Burmese lawyer farmer rejected by Pegu Court

Apr 12, 2006 - The appeal submitted on behalf of detained Burmese lawyer Aye Myint who was accused of giving 'wrong' information to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), was rejected by

Pegu divisional court on 7 March after it was also rejected by the district court.

Aye Myint's lawyer San Maung told DVB that the appeal was rejected by a woman judge named Khin Saw Nyunt who once sentenced Aye Myint to death. The new appeal will be lodged at the High Court in Rangoon on 7 May.

San Maung said that he recently saw Aye Myint at the Pegu Prison where he is being detained and that he was in good health and allowed to receive religious and legal books but barred from reading a Newsweek Magazine as it contained political matters.

"Mentally, his health is also good. He is very hopeful about his case," added San Maung. He added that ILO official in Rangoon, Richard Horsey has also been working hard for the Aye Myint's release and the latter is said to be very encouraged by it.

Aye Myint was arrested and imprisoned for helping the farmers of nearby Daik-U Townships' Phaungdawthi Village report the confiscation of their grazing lands by military authorities for their own benefits



Burmese students from Pegu College detained for writing poem released

Apr 13, 2006 - Students from Pegu College in lower central Burma who had been arrested and detained by authorities for writing and distributing a poem titled Daung Man (the might of the fighting peacock), were released on 10 April.

But it is not known why and how they were released.

Hnin Wint Wint Soe, May Su Su Win, Ne Linn Kyaw, (Kyaw) Thet Oo, Win Min Htut, (M)aug (M)aug Oo, and Zeya Aung - were arrested on 29 March. Zeya Aung, son of U Aung, the proprietor of King Star teashop in Pegu, was detained in the border town Myawaddy in eastern Burma on 29 March with copies of Daung Man poem. Aung Aung Oo, proprietor of A2O Desktop Publishing Business in Pegu was also arrested for printing the poem.



Thet Naing Oo's friends released after forced to give false statement

Apr 14, 2006 - Two eyewitnesses and friends of murdered former political prisoner Thet Naing Oo, were released recently only after they were forced by the authorities to state that Thet Naing Oo was in the wrong when he was killed, according to sources close to their families.

Win Myint and Khin Maung Zaw were released on 12 April from Rangoon Insein Jail. In order to procure their release, the two had to 'confess' to the liking of the military government, stating that Thet Naing Oo was a drunken lout and that it was not the fault of the police that he was killed, in order to support the statement issued by Information Minister General Kyaw San (Hsan) during a press briefing on 9 April.

Thet Naing Oo's mother San Yi who was in great distress tearfully told DVB that she recently met with the two friends of her son and they told her that they were forced to give false statements about her son to the liking of the authorities.

A hearing on the case will be held on 19 April at Rangoon western district court and San Yi was also summoned to appear at the court.

40-year old Thet Naing Oo died on 18 March after he was brutally beaten up by the police and fire brigade members of Rangoon Kyimyintaing (Kemmendine) Township with help of a mob.

In response to the criticisms of pro-democracy groups within and without Burma, the ruling junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) Information minister Kyaw San stated during the press briefing that it was not the fault of the police that Thet Naing Oo was killed. But Kyaw San was unable to say as to why the police and fire brigade members who took part in the killing were still

not arrested and prosecuted.

The state-run newspapers also said recently that another youth from Mandalay, 19-year old Wai Phyo Naing (a) Naung Naung who died in police custody hanged himself rather than beaten to death by the police as reported and that he was a bad boy who wore tattoos.



Burmese prisoner not allowed to attend father's funeral

Apr 15, 2006 - The father of Saw Win, a Burmese political prisoner being detained at remote Kalemmyo Jail, Hla Kyi died at his home in Rangoon Dawpon Township on 14 April, at the age of 76.

Hla Kyi has been suffering from severe stroke and has been bedridden for several years and his 80-year old wife Mya Yi had been looking after him while struggling to pay comforting visits to their only son Saw Win.

It is not clear whether Saw Win has learnt of his father's death through the prison authority, and he was not allowed to attend his father funeral which was held on 15 April at Rangoon Ye Way Cemetery. It was attended by renowned student leaders including Min Ko Naing and Ko Ko Gyi, family members of political prisoners, National League for Democracy leaders and members and their relatives from Dawpon.

Mya Yi who was in bad health was unable to attend the funeral either. Saw Win has been in serving a lengthy jail term for his role in the 1998 student uprising.



Murdered Thet Naing Oo hearing deferred in Rangoon

Apr 19, 2006 - The official hearing on the death of former political prisoner Thet Naing Oo who was brutally killed by the police and fire brigade members of Rangoon Kyimyintaing (Kemendine) Township, was deferred today.

Western Rangoon District court summoned those involved to come to court on 19 April, only to be told that there was no time for the hearing and it was adjourned to 28 April, Thet Naing Oo's mother San Yi told DVB. She added that at the court, she saw only five trishaw drivers who have been detained in connection with the case and none of the police and fire brigade members were at the court. On 28 April, San Yi and three municipal staff will be cross examined.

40-year old Thet Naing Oo died on 18 March after he was brutally beaten up by uniformed civil servants. The Burmese military authorities still insist that it was the fault of Thet Naing Oo that he was killed.

At the same time, the hearing on the case of university student from Rangoon Hlekoo Township, who was seriously injured by a car during an accident, was postponed to 26 April because doctors failed to come to the court to testify for her.

18-year old Thida Swe, a second year Chemistry major student was hit by a car while she was taking her mother to the hospital on a trishaw in December 2005. The driver was released on bail and Thida Swe was paralysed and wheelchair-bound, unable to continue her studies.

Observers said that the trial was repeatedly delayed and no compensation was given to the victim because her family is close to political circles, in particular, the main opposition party, the National League for Democracy.



Three Burmese youths on trial for writing a poem

Apr 24, 2006 - Three youths who were arrested on 29 March with students from Pegu College in lower central Burma for writing and distributing a poem titled Daung Man (the might of the fighting

