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## **Commodity price protestor Thein Zan released**

*April 02, 2007*

U Thein Zan from Rangoon Thingangyun township, who was arrested on March 7 for defacing a copy of a government newspaper but released on bail 28 March, was acquitted by a local court today.

“The two guarantors on a Land Rover came and picked me, my wife and our two children up from my house at 8.30 in the morning,” U Thein Zan said. “They asked me to come inside the court and I was told that I was acquitted and everyone applauded.”

U Thein Zan’s wife Daw Ma Ma Lay said, "I would like to thank lawyer U Aung Thein, new (88) generation students, friends, relatives and all."

“I’m very, very happy that my father has been released,” said his daughter Ma Khin Aye Thant said. His son Kyaw Khin Lin also said that his father action was right as he just expressed what the people have been enduring.

88 generation student leaders welcomed the good news and added that the whole episode convinced them that everyone in Burma has the rights to, and must express their sufferings and injustices meted out on them by government officials.

“I pray that we have more people like U Thein Zan who express their desires, and when they are confronted by the authorities and the law, we will be behind them like we were in the case of U Thein Zan,” said human rights activist Ma Su Su Nway who successfully sued her local authorities over forced labour practices, but later countersued and sent to prison in revenge.

U Thein Zan himself also urged the people of Burma to follow his example and demand their basic rights bravely. Early last month, he wrote “Are you sure, Maung Kalu?”-a common headline on pro-military propaganda articles-over the top of a copy of the state-run Myanmar Ahlin newspaper he had stuck on his fence after becoming enraged by recent commodity price rises.

The two mysterious guarantors, identified to U Thein Zan’s family only as U Soe Myint and U Kyi Maung, gave 10 million kyats to the authorities to guarantee U Thein Zan’s release.

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## **Book on political activities of Burmese students to be published**

*April 03, 2006*

A history of political activities of Burmese students compiled by Rangoon Institute of Technology student Ko Aung Tun who is currently detained long-term in Insein Jail, is to be published soon in Thailand.

The cover of 896-page long book is designed by All Burma Federation of Student Union – Foreign Affairs Committee member Ko Kyaw Win and it includes more than 400 historic pictures and paintings.

“Successive military governments have been trying to erase history and we published the book so that the new generation of students be able to link historical events,” said ABSFU-FAC spokesman Zin Maung.

Many students, former students and lawyers were tortured and imprisoned for trying to publish a history of student activism in Burma even if some of the events occurred long before the military rule which started in 1962, former Rangoon University Student Union leader U Hla Shwe told DVB.

The original compiler Ko Aung Tun was arrested in 1998, along with 22 others and given lengthy jail terms. Among them, two people including 52-year old U Min Thu died while in detention. The health of Ko Aung Tun is also said to be very dire.

The publication was welcomed by former student leaders including 88 generation student leader Min Ko Naing who argued that the book will help people understand the roles of politicians, students and armed groups in the history of Burma better.

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### **Thayat prisoners used for cheap labour**

*April, 04, 2007*

Inmates from Magwe Division’s Thayat prison are being forced by prison officials to work in local factories for meager salaries, sources close to several prisoners told DVB.

Inmates are reportedly being forced to work at a soy bean juice factory in the Thayat area. While the prisoners are supposed to receive half of the money they earn, they are only receiving 20 percent with the other 80 percent going to prison officials, according to local sources.

“Inmates were being ordered to deliver and squeeze the juice from the soy beans in factories in the area. This has been going on for some time but before the prisoners were paid half of their wages. Now they are only given 20 percent,” a source close to the prison said.

Inmates from the prison are also reportedly being forced to work as wood cutters for 1000 kyat a day. But sources close to the prison said officials are only declaring 500 kyat of their wages.

“They are asking for bribes of 15,000 kyat from every inmate who does not want to work in the labour camps,” a local source told DVB.

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### **Rangoon man protests lack of HIV treatment in Burma**

*April 05, 2007*

A man living with HIV in Kanma town, Pakhuku township staged a solo demonstration outside Rangoon’s Dagon Centre shopping mall at about 3pm yesterday.

According to bystanders, Ko Tin Ko handed out educational HIV/AIDS leaflets he had written himself, held up placards and shouted slogans for about 30 minutes.

“He said the reason he was demonstrating was to raise awareness of the fact that it is not easy for HIV/AIDS victims to come to Rangoon to get treatment because of the accommodation and travel expenses,” one bystander told DVB.

“He said he wanted [antiretroviral treatment] to be available in victim’s local hospitals.”

Ko Tin Ko reportedly lives with his wife and three-year-old son, who are also HIV positive. On February 10, he attempted to open an educational HIV/AIDS reading club outside the local Kanma township, before being thwarted by the police.

“Two people who were in civilian clothing and a police man in full uniform showed up and questioned him. They were there for about five minutes before they took him away,” an eyewitness said.

Officers at the Sanchaung township police centre later told DVB that Ko Tin Ko had been detained for questioning but denied that he had been arrested.

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## **Men caught with Thandar Shwe video denied bail**

*April 09, 2007*

A court in Nyaung Don township has rejected requests for bail from two men charged with watching an illegal VCD of the wedding of senior general Than Shwe’s daughter, Thandar Shwe.

Ko Than Htun and Ko Tin Htwe, both from Nyaung Don township, were charged with defaming Burma’s leaders and threatening the stability of the state after Ko Than Htun was caught with a copy of the illegal recording.

Ma Lwin Lwin, the wife of Ko Tin Htay, told DVB both men were denied bail during court hearings on April 5 and 6.

“They are still getting testimonies from prosecution witnesses. We offered bail for the men but [the court] refused to accept it. They said it is impossible to accept bail on this kind of case,” Ma Lwin Lwin said.

“The court will be hearing testimony from persecution witnesses again on the 9th. We don't know if they want to hear any witnesses from our side. If they asked for it, we will testify,” she said.

Illegal copies of the video of Thandar Shwe’s lavish wedding ceremony, which was held in July last year, hit the internet in October. Despite being widely circulated inside and outside the country, Ko Than Htun and Ko Tin Htwe are the first people known to have been prosecuted for watching the video.

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## **Two rights activists bashed in Irrawaddy Division**

*April 19, 2007*

Human rights activists Ko Myint Naing and Ko Maung Maung Lay were savagely bashed by a group of about 100 people yesterday when they tried to leave Oat Pho village in the Irrawaddy township of Henzada.

Ko Myint Naing, from Henzada, and Ko Maung Maung Lay, from Rangoon's Kyi Myint Taing township, were in Henzada yesterday with several other activists as part of a human rights awareness-raising campaign.

"We heard that Ko Myint Naing and Ko Maung Maung Lay were leaving Oat Pho village on a motorbike when they got beaten up by a group of about 100 people. Ko Myint Naing was seriously wounded but Ko Maung Maung Lay's wounds are not too bad," activist Ko Aung Min Naing said.

Early yesterday staff at the Henzada hospital told DVB that the two men had been admitted and were having surgery. They were then transferred to Rangoon hospital at about 6pm last night.

Officials from the Henzada Peace and Development Council said they had been notified about the incident by police but that it was still unclear why the two men had been bashed.

"According to the [police] information, those people and the villagers had an argument and it led them into a brawl," one official said on condition of anonymity.

The Henzada police said they were trying to catch the people responsible for the attack, but because so many people were involved, it was difficult to determine who had actually beaten the men and who had not.

"We are trying to filter out who really did this . . ." a police officer on duty said.

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## **Activists slam government groups over attack**

*April 20, 2007 (*

Human rights activists in Burma have condemned local officials and Union Solidarity members in Irrawaddy Division's Henzada township over Wednesday's attack on two men.

Rights activists Ko Myint Naing and Ko Maung Maung Lay were savagely bashed by a group of about 100 people yesterday when they tried to leave Oat Pho village in Henzada after participating in a human rights awareness campaign.

Other activists who were also in the village on Wednesday said the mob that bashed the two men was made of officials from the Henzada Peace and Development Council, top police officers and the head of the township's Union Solidarity and Development Association.

"Henzada's USDA secretary U Nyunt Oo was there with a walkie-talkie in his hand. He was shouting through that thing, praising everyone who beat them up. The township chairman and the police chief were there as well and the unlawful attack took place right before them. They are the culprits behind this," U Myint Aye, an activist who was in the nearby Talokehtaw village at the time, told DVB.

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The two men were taken to a hospital in Henzada for surgery after the attack before being transferred to Rangoon General Hospital's neurological department where they are still receiving treatment for their injuries.

"When I saw them . . . Ko Myint Naing was unable to talk. He couldn't answer any of my questions. Ko Maung Maung Lay was moaning in pain from his wounds," U Myint Aye said.

"Slingshot bruises were all over his body. There was one about four inch-long slash wound on his leg. I don't know whether it was from a stick of some kind of blade," he said.

Henzada USDA officials claimed yesterday to know nothing about the attacks and local police insisted that Ko Myint Naing and Ko Maung Maung Lay received only superficial injuries during the incident.

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## [Rangoon protestors bashed, detained by police](#)

*April 23, 2007*

The Burmese special police launched a violent crackdown on a group of nine protestors in Rangoon yesterday, bashing and arresting several people, according to eyewitnesses.

The group, including high-profile activist Htin Kyaw, arrived at the Thingangyun Sanpyat market at about 9am yesterday and started waving placards and shouting demands for lower inflation and higher living standards.

Two men held pictures of junta leader senior general Than Shwe. They were immediately intercepted by police and removed from the area.

"The situation became rather tense. There were quite a lot of people," one onlooker told DVB.

After the two men were arrested, the remaining protestors reportedly tried to continue their demonstration before also being stopped by police.

"The SB arrested the seven . . . They were still shouting when they were arrested and the situation became out of hand. There were about 40 people there and there were 200 special police and six police cars," the eyewitness said.

Onlookers said most of the protestors were beaten by the police as they were taken into custody. While the identities of all the detained protestors are not yet known, they are believed to have also been involved in the February 22 protest near Rangoon's Sule Pagoda.

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## [Bashed activists speaks out against USDA](#)

*April 25, 2007*

Rights activist Ko Myint Naing, who was bashed by a crowd of people in Irrawaddy's Henzada township on April 18, has confirmed that government-backed officials were involved.

Ko Myint Naing, from Henzada, and Ko Maung Maung Lay, from Rangoon's Kyi Myint Taing township, were in Oak Pon village last Wednesday with several other activists as part of a human rights awareness-raising campaign.

As they were leaving the town, the pair were attacked and brutally bashed by a large group of people wielding sticks and slingshots filled with metal bolts.

In an interview with DVB today, Ko Myint Naing, who suffered severe head injuries as a result of the attack, said that as he and Ko Maung Maung Law left the village, they saw Union Solidarity and Development Association leader Ko Nyunt Oo on a walkie-talkie preparing to intercept them.

"Then he ordered his people to beat us up while he started to hit me with a stick. I got hit on right side of the back of my neck. Then he yelled, 'Kill them!' and a group of about 50 people armed with sticks and slingshots chased us," Ko Myint Naing said.

"We tried to escape on our motorbike but the road was so bumpy that we couldn't drive fast. A member of the Village Peace and Development Council named Satku and a guy named Ko Thang Aung dragged me off the bike and started hitting me," he said.

The two men tried to run away from the group but were unable to escape. They were savagely bashed until a car carrying a monk passed, scaring the attackers away, according to Ko Myint Naing.

He and Ko Maung Maung Lay were then taken to a local hospital before being transferred to the neurological wing of Rangoon General the same night.

"I'm still suffering a terrible headache and chest pains due to the sling shot wounds. Other parts of my body where I was beaten are also still painful," Ko Myint Naing said.

Ko Maung Maung Lay told DVB that about 100 people were involved in the attack.

"They chased us . . . They caught up with us . . . and the mob split up into two groups to beat up each of us," Ko Maung Maung Lay said.

A variety of Burma lobby groups, human rights organisations and activists have condemned the attacks this week and have called on the Burmese military to punish the people involved.

The 88 Generation Students said in a statement that the attack proved there was no rule of law in Burma.

"We seriously urge the authorities concerned to carry out investigations into who allowed people to gather for the purpose of committing violence rather than solving problems according to the rule of law, and to reveal the culprits, and to prevent similar incidents from occurring in the future."

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[Men get jail time for watching Thandar Shwe video](#)

*April 25, 2007*

Two men were sentenced to a total of six years in prison by the Nyaung Don township court in Irrawaddy Division today after being caught with a documentary on the wedding of senior general Than Shwe's daughter, Thandar Shwe.

Ko Tin Htay and Ko Than Htun were sentenced to two and four and-a-half years in prison respectively after they were caught in possession of a copy of "A night decorated with diamonds", containing unauthorised footage of the wedding of Thandar Shwe, according to their lawyer.

Both men also face hard labour after being charged and found guilty of defaming Burma's leaders and threatening the stability of the state.

U Than Htun's son, Maung Aung Aung, told DVB today that his father's sentence was unfair.

"My father does not sell lottery tickets or illegal alcohol. Neither does he run a prostitution business. There are a lot of people who run those businesses in our town and they escape the law by bribing police . . ." Maung Aung Aung said.

"I'm not please that the Nyung Don authorities and the military junta are letting these criminals go free but have unjustly sentenced my innocent father," he said.

Copies of the video of Thandar Shwe's wedding ceremony, which was held in July last year, started circulating on the internet in October. Despite being widely available inside and outside Burma, Ko Than Htun and Ko Tin Htay are the first people known to have been charged over watching footage of the event.

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## **Brutal attack victim and supporters sued by Burmese authority**

*April 27, 2007*

Henzada township Oak Pon village authority chairman U Aung Than is taking rights activist Ko Myint Naing who was bashed by a mob affiliated to the authorities on 18 April and villagers who saved his life by transporting him to a hospital in time, to court.

Myint Naing and Oak Pon villagers Ko Win, Ko Mya Sein, Ko Hla Shein, Ko Myint and another rights activist Ko Kyaw Lwin from nearby Taloke Htaw village were sent notifications which said that they are to be sued for defamation of the State and inciting unrest, and summoned to a court on 2 May.

"We gave a successful talk on human rights at the village and the authorities didn't like it," said Ko Myint Naing who suffered severe head injuries and discharged from a hospital recently. "And when we were beaten up, the villagers arrived and sent us to the hospital in time. The reason why I am still alive today is due to the charitable act of Oak Pon villagers. But as for the authorities, they think that the reason why I am still not dead is due to the fault of Oak Pon villagers...therefore they are trying to create problems for them thus."

Ko Myint Naing told DVB that the violent attack on him and his colleague Ko Maung Maung Lay was orchestrated by Henzada Union and Solidarity and Development Association

secretary U Nyunt Oo, and that local authorities and police were also involved. Although the two activists reported the matter to the police, only the occurrence was noted down and no complaints were recorded officially. At the same time, the authorities are still failing to take action on the perpetrators but continuing to pressurise family members of those being sued, Ko Myint Naing added.

“They issued an edict that their children and farmers are not allowed to come out of their homes and walk on the streets, and that if anything happened to them they would take no responsibility. “

He also said that the authorities and Taloke Htaw police were continuing to intimidate and threaten family members of the activists and their supporters and treat them like criminals.

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