

BURMA BULLETIN

XXXXXXXX A month-in-review of events in Burma XXXXXXXX

ALTERNATIVE ASEAN NETWORK ON BURMA
campaigns, advocacy & capacity-building for human rights & democracy

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- **WikiLeaks releases diplomatic cables that reveal India's, China's, and Singapore's view of their relations with the junta.**
- **As battles rage between the SPDC Army and ethnic nationality groups in Eastern Burma, more evidence of SPDC war crimes surface in Karen State.**
- **The SPDC's media restrictions continue. The junta sentences a reporter to eight years in prison bogus charges, refuses to allow local media to publish interviews by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and bars about a dozen artists from appearing on TV and radio programs.**
- **UNODC documents an astounding 76% increase in opium production during 2010. Amphetamine production also increases.**
- **Two UN reports on HIV/AIDS and malaria show that the diseases are still prevalent in Burma because of the SPDC's failure to adequately fund healthcare.**
- **UN Sec-Gen Ban Ki-moon and his Chief of Staff Vijay Nambiar urge the SPDC to implement broad-based political reforms and release political prisoners.**
- **US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Joseph Yun spends four days in Burma to assess the post-election environment.**
- **Two months after cyclone Giri, tens of thousands of people in cyclone-affected areas in Arakan State still lack permanent shelter, adequate food, and livelihood support.**
- **The regime continues to sign and implement deals with Asian countries and offer lucrative contracts to its cronies.**

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KEY STORY

WikiLeaks and the junta

The release by WikiLeaks of US diplomatic cables revealed that the SPDC's traditional backers have been frustrated with their relations with the junta. The cables shed light on India's, China's, and Singapore's diplomatic opinions about the SPDC and further exposed the junta's ties to North Korea.

China: "Fed up with foot-dragging"

In a July 2008 cable, US Chargé d'Affaires Shari Villarosa reported on a meeting with the Chinese ambassador to Burma and said that the Chinese were worried about political turmoil that could affect their business interests. Villarosa reported the Chinese ambassador no longer tried to defend the regime

and acknowledged that “the generals had made a bad situation worse.”¹ Villarosa said that “the Chinese clearly are fed up with the foot-dragging by the Than Shwe regime.”² “The Chinese can no longer rely on the generals to protect their interests here, and recognize the need to broker some solution that keeps the peace, including bringing in the pro-democracy supporters,” she added.³

India: “We’re getting screwed on gas!”

- **November 2004:** After a visit by SPDC Sr Gen Than Shwe, India’s then Joint Secretary of Ministry of External Affairs Mitra Vasisht reported that Than Shwe’s delegation wondered whether they would have to “go nuclear” to get the US’s attention.⁴
- **April 2007:** In an obvious reference to the SPDC’s preference for doing business with China over India on lucrative oil and gas contracts, India’s former Foreign Ministry of External Affairs Joint Secretary Mohan Kumar resisted US requests to pressure the junta and said that Delhi was “getting screwed on gas.” The cable quotes US embassy officials as warning Kumar that “any assistance to the SPDC would be poorly received by Washington.” Kumar responded and said that the more the US pressed India to bring Burma before the UN Security Council, the more the SPDC told India to “go to hell.”⁵ Kumar also reported that junta officials said that they “hate” the Chinese and would prefer not to cooperate with China, but were doing so because they felt Beijing was more reliable than New Delhi.⁶

Singapore: “Like talking to dead people”

October 2007 cables said that Singapore’s former PM and current Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew related his opinion about his dealings with the junta and described SPDC generals as “dense” and “stupid” and people who have “mismanaged” Burma’s vast resources.⁷ Lee told two former US State Department officials that dealing with the SPDC was like “talking to dead people.”⁸

SPDC and North Korea: “Something is certainly happening”

- **January 2004:** A cable said that a Burmese expatriate businessman told the US embassy that he saw a “massive” barge with a large rebar offloaded in Magwe and that the rebar was too big to be used for a factory and was more likely for a nuclear plant, which was rumored to be under construction near Minbu in Magwe Division.⁹
- **August 2004:** A cable stated that the US embassy in Rangoon had received reports that North Korean workers were “assembling SAM missiles and constructing an underground facility at a Burmese military site in Magwe Division.”¹⁰
- **August 2009:** After receiving information from the Australian embassy about the junta’s ties with North Korea, US Chargé d’Affaires in Burma Larry Dinger concluded that “something is certainly happening; whether that something includes ‘nukes’ is a very open question which remains a very high priority for Embassy reporting.”¹¹

INSIDE BURMA

War crimes committed as violence escalates in Eastern Burma

In December, ethnic nationality groups fought back against SPDC Army aggression in Karen and Shan States.

¹ Guardian (09 Dec 10) WikiLeaks cables: China ‘fed up’ with Burma’s footdragging on reforms

² NYT (10 Dec 10) On Myanmar, U.S. and China worked closely, cables show

³ Guardian (09 Dec 10) WikiLeaks cables: China ‘fed up’ with Burma’s footdragging on reforms

⁴ AFP (17 Dec 10) Myanmar officials talked of ‘going nuclear’: US cable

⁵ Times of India (19 Dec 10) MEA fought off US pressure on Myanmar

⁶ DVB (27 Dec 10) Burmese generals ‘hate China’, says India

⁷ AFP (15 Dec 10) MM Lee says Myanmar junta ‘dense’: WikiLeaks

⁸ DVB (15 Dec 10) Ex-S’pore PM berated ‘stupid’ Burma leaders

⁹ Mizzima News (10 Dec 10) Cables add to talk of Burma, N Korea nuclear co-operation

¹⁰ Mizzima News (10 Dec 10) Cables add to talk of Burma, N Korea nuclear co-operation

¹¹ Irrawaddy (11 Dec 10) US Cables Reveal Concern About Burma Nukes, N Korea Ties

- **13 December:** DKBA Brigade 5 forces killed nine and wound four SPDC Army soldiers from IB 299 in grenade and rocket attacks near Chukalee, Kweethao, and Tanawhta Villages in Kawkareik Township, Karen State.¹²
- **17 December:** SSA-S troops from Battalion 404 killed three SPDC Army soldiers from IB 277 in a clash on a road between Maeken and Napakao Villages in Mongton Township, Shan State.¹³
- **18 December:** SSA-N Brigade-1 troops wounded three SPDC Army soldiers from LIB 516 in a clash in Mongshu Township, Shan State.¹⁴
- **18 December:** SSA-S troops from Battalion 404 wounded dozens of SPDC Army soldiers including the Monghsat-based MOC 14 Commander on the road between Monghsat and Mongton Townships, Shan State.¹⁵
- **19 December:** DKBA soldiers killed seven SPDC Army soldiers in a clash in Myawaddy Township, Karen State.¹⁶
- **22-23 December:** KNLA Brigade 7 killed 13 SPDC Army soldiers from LIB 106 and IB 588 in attacks near Manerplaw in Hlaingbwe Township, Karen State.¹⁷

As battles raged throughout Eastern Burma, more evidence of SPDC war crimes surfaced. On 8 December, villagers in Phaluu Village in Myawaddy Township, Karen State, discovered the mutilated remains of six soldiers from the KNU Peace Council, a ceasefire group that rejected the SPDC's BGF plan.¹⁸ The bound, headless corpses also showed evidence of torture.¹⁹ The SPDC Army did not limit its wrath to armed groups. On 22 December, villagers near Wah Lay Village in Myawaddy Township, Karen State, discovered the bodies of two teenage girls. Both had been raped and one was beheaded. SPDC Army troops were suspects in these crimes as well.²⁰

SPDC rejects dialogue, prepares new regime

In December, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi reiterated her willingness to compromise and engage in discussions with the regime.²¹ As it has in the past, the SPDC rejected Daw Suu's calls for dialogue. A 25 December commentary in the state-run newspaper *New Light of Myanmar* warned pro-democracy forces to cooperate with the newly elected parliament and said that "any effort to achieve national reconsolidation through non-violent, violent, indirect and direct approaches [...] will never come to fruition."²²

The junta also began preparations for the post-elections regime. On 21 December, about 400 elected Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) MPs gathered for three days of closed-door talks that focused on the nomination of Burma's new top leaders.²³

Opium and amphetamine production in Burma increases

On the heels of a November UNODC report on amphetamine production in Asia [See *November 2010 Burma Bulletin*], in December the UNODC released two reports, "2010 South-East Asia Opium

¹² Mizzima News (14 Dec 10) Renewed clashes between junta troops, DKBA faction kill nine

¹³ SHAN (20 Dec 10) Junta army, SSA 'North' at it again

¹⁴ SHAN (20 Dec 10) Junta army, SSA 'North' at it again

¹⁵ SHAN (20 Dec 10) Junta army, SSA 'North' at it again

¹⁶ Irrawaddy (20 Dec 10) Eight Reported Dead in Latest Karen State Clashes

¹⁷ Irrawaddy (27 Dec 10) Refugees Hide After Forced Repatriation

¹⁸ DVB (08 Dec 10) 'Hacked' corpses of Karen troops found; Irrawaddy (14 Dec 10) KPC Demands Junta Officers Be Held Accountable for Killings

¹⁹ Irrawaddy (14 Dec 10) KPC Demands Junta Officers Be Held Accountable for Killings

²⁰ DVB (24 Dec 10) Mon teenager raped, beheaded

²¹ Japan Today (01 Dec 10) Suu Kyi calls for Japan's continued support for democracy in Myanmar; Statesman (02 Dec 10) Democracy comes first, says Suu Kyi; AFP (13 Dec 10) Suu Kyi to 'persevere' for dialogue with military rulers; Hankyoreh (20 Dec 10) Aung San Suu Kyi calls for support from S.Koreans; Irrawaddy (01 Dec 10) A Visit with Suu Kyi in Her NLD Office; Mizzima News (01 Dec 10) Aung San Suu Kyi talks to Mizzima; Deutsche Welle (15 Dec 10) Suu Kyi calls on Europe and Germany to be more supportive

²² DPA (25 Dec 10) Myanmar junta sends warning to political opposition; Irrawaddy (25 Dec 10) Don't Try to 'Control' New Gov't, Regime Tells Opposition

²³ DPA (23 Dec 10) Pro-junta parliamentarians gather for closed-door meeting; Irrawaddy (23 Dec 10) USDP Candidates Prepare for Opening of Parliament; Irrawaddy (24 Dec 10) Parliament Expected to Open in Late January

Survey” and “Myanmar: Situation Assessment on Amphetamine-Type Stimulants.”²⁴ Key findings in the two reports included:

- Burma’s opium production had increased by an astounding 76% since 2009. The area for poppy cultivation had increased by 20% during the same period. These increases took place for the fourth straight year. Burma’s share of world opium output is now 16%, compared to 5% in 2009.²⁵
- Methamphetamine seizures in the region continued to show an upward trend in 2010, with more than 44 million pills being seized in Thailand, and more than 22 million pills seized in Laos from January to September 2010.²⁶
- Seizures of amphetamine tablets in Burma’s neighboring countries such as Bangladesh appear to signal the existence of trafficking routes from the production centers in Burma to South Asia.²⁷

HIV/AIDS and malaria still problematic in Burma

Two global health surveys released in December on HIV/AIDS²⁸ and malaria²⁹ clearly illustrate the impact of inadequately funded healthcare on Burma’s people.

The UNAIDS report estimated that 240,000 people in Burma are HIV positive.³⁰ Tragically, just a fifth of those in need of anti-retroviral treatment actually receive it.³¹ The report said that 18,000 patients died from the disease or related ailments in Burma in 2009. During 2009, an estimated additional 16,000 adults were infected with HIV - the highest number of new infections in Southeast Asia.³² The SPDC spends nearly half of its budget on defense, but just 0.3% of GDP on healthcare. Of that, only a small amount goes towards prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS.³³

Giri survivors still in need of assistance

Two months after cyclone Giri, tens of thousands of people in cyclone-affected areas in Arakan State still lacked permanent shelter, adequate food, and livelihood support.³⁴ On 20 December, UN OCHA reported that the region had only received US\$20.5 million of the estimated US\$57 million needed to fund the recovery effort.³⁵ On 14 December, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi donated 10 million kyat (US\$11,110) for humanitarian assistance to cyclone Giri survivors.³⁶ On 21 December, the European Commission announced that it had allocated around US\$4 million in aid.³⁷

HUMAN RIGHTS

Freedom of information: ban on local Daw Aung San Suu Kyi coverage

- **1 December:** The SPDC Information Ministry ordered local TV and radio stations not to broadcast interviews and performances of about a dozen actors, film makers, singers, and writers who had previously criticized the junta or showed support for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.³⁸
- **Mid-December:** It was reported that the SPDC Censorship Board barred various local news journals from publishing interviews with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.³⁹

²⁴ DPA (13 Dec 10) Myanmar’s opium production up 76 per cent; UN News Center (21 Dec 10) Myanmar major source and user of amphetamine drugs, says UN report

²⁵ Irrawaddy (18 Dec 10) Opium Poppy Production Rises in Burma; Straits Times (14 Dec 10) Burma facing drug threat

²⁶ UN News Center (21 Dec 10) Myanmar major source and user of amphetamine drugs, says UN report; UNODC (20 Dec 10) Myanmar: Situation Assessment on Amphetamine-Type Stimulants

²⁷ UN News Center (21 Dec 10) Myanmar major source and user of amphetamine drugs, says UN report; UNODC (20 Dec 10) Myanmar: Situation Assessment on Amphetamine-Type Stimulants

²⁸ UNAIDS (23 Nov 10) Global Report on the AIDS Epidemic - 2010

²⁹ WHO (14 Dec 10) World Malaria Report - 2010

³⁰ Irrawaddy (01 Dec 10) AIDS Day Highlights Plight of Burma’s Sufferers

³¹ Independent (01 Dec 10) In Burma only one in five people with HIV are treated

³² Irrawaddy (01 Dec 10) AIDS Day Highlights Plight of Burma’s Sufferers

³³ Irrawaddy (01 Dec 10) AIDS Day Highlights Plight of Burma’s Sufferers

³⁴ Narinjara News (10 Dec 10) Thousands of Giri Victims Still Homeless

³⁵ UN (21 Dec 10) Myanmar Cyclone Victims Start to Rebuild But Need More Funds, UN Reports

³⁶ Irrawaddy (13 Dec 10) Suu Kyi Donates for Cyclone Victims; Mizzima News (15 Dec 10) Suu Kyi gives 10m kyat to Giri victims

³⁷ Mizzima News (22 Dec 10) Mizzima News: Giri victims have just 45pc of basic needs, UN aid office in Rangoon says

³⁸ DVB (02 Dec 10) Airtime scrapped for ‘political’ artists; Mizzima News (03 Dec 10) Artists off-the-air after backing Suu Kyi; Irrawaddy (06 Dec 10) Socially-active Artists Banned from State TV, Radio

Political prisoners: 8 years for photos, solitary for hunger striker, poor health for others

- **2 December:** Political prisoner Nilar Thein began a hunger strike in Thayet prison in Magwe Division. Prison authorities subsequently placed her in solitary confinement and on 6 December prevented family members from visiting her.⁴⁰
- **8 December:** Buddhist monk U Naymeinda aka Myo Min aka Nay Win, 50, died in Moulmein prison, Mon State, because of the lack of adequate medical care for a serious health condition that prevented him from eating and drinking.⁴¹ He was the 145th political prisoner to die in Burmese prisons since 1988.⁴²
- **16 December:** It was reported that 88 Generation Student leader Min Ko Naing was in poor health in Kengtung prison, Shan State, due to inadequate food rations and lack of exercise.⁴³
- **17 December:** The SPDC released 16 political prisoners who had completed their prison terms from various jails across Burma.⁴⁴
- **21 December:** A court in Rangoon's Mingala Taungnyunt Township sentenced reporter Sithu Zeya, 21, to eight years in prison for taking photos near Kandawgyi Lake when there were a series of deadly bomb blasts on 15 April.⁴⁵

DISPLACEMENT

Refugee “ping-pong” on the Thailand-Burma border criticized, Xmas refoulement

In December, refugees fleeing fighting in Karen State continued to seek shelter in Thailand. From 3 December, over 1,100 refugees sought shelter at a Thai border police base in Mahawan in Thailand's Tak Province after SPDC Army troops shelled Metta Linn Myaing and Phaluu Villages in Myawaddy Township, Karen State.⁴⁶ On 7 December, Thai authorities ordered around 1,000 of the refugees to return to Burma.⁴⁷ On 11 December, 300 Karen villagers near Manerplaw in Hlaingbwe Township, Karen State, attempted to seek refuge in Thailand's Mae Hong Son Province but Thai authorities prevented them from seeking long term refuge at the Mae La Oon refugee camp.⁴⁸

On 5 December, Human Rights Watch called on the Thai government to stop treating refugees as “human ping pong balls” by returning them to Burma prematurely.⁴⁹ On 11 December, Kraissak Choonhavan, deputy leader of Thailand's ruling Democrat Party, issued an open letter urging the Thai Army not to send back refugees while it was still unsafe.⁵⁰

On 14 December, Thailand's 1st Army Region Commander Lt Gen Udomdet Sitabutr reported that the situation along the border had returned to “normal.”⁵¹ However, on 19 December, another 100 refugees fled into Thailand to escape renewed fighting in Myawaddy Township, Karen State.⁵² In a separate incident, on 25 December, the Thai Army compelled 166 refugees to return to Burma from Tak Province's Phop Phra District, despite the fact that the refugees told the UNHCR that they were not

³⁹ Irrawaddy (17 Dec 10) Local Media Barred from Publishing Suu Kyi Interviews; Mizzima News (20 Dec 10) Censor tightens grip on Suu Kyi stories; Irrawaddy (22 Dec 10) Junta Scrutinizing Censored Suu Kyi Interviews

⁴⁰ Irrawaddy (09 Dec 10) Political Prisoner Nilar Thein on Hunger Strike; Irrawaddy (09 Dec 10) Hunger Striker Nilar Thein Barred from Seeing Daughter

⁴¹ Mizzima News (11 Dec 10) Ashin Naymeinda dies in jail

⁴² UN News Center (13 Dec 10) Independent UN rights expert calls for release of political prisoners in Myanmar; OHCHR (13 Dec 10) Myanmar: UN expert urges Government to release over 2,200 remaining prisoners of conscience

⁴³ Irrawaddy (16 Dec 10) Min Ko Naing in Poor Health as Temperatures Drop

⁴⁴ Mizzima News (17 Nov 10) 16 political prisoners released

⁴⁵ DVB (22 Dec 10) DVB reporter gets 8 year jail term; Irrawaddy (22 Dec 10) Bomb Scene Photographer Sentenced to Eight Years; Mizzima News (24 Dec 10) Lensman receives eight-year jail term over blast photos; Straits Times (23 Dec 10) Myanmar blast 'reporter' jailed for 8 years

⁴⁶ AFP (06 Dec 10) Rights group slams Thai-Myanmar refugee 'ping pong'; Irrawaddy (06 Dec 10) More Refugees Flee Karen State Fighting

⁴⁷ Mizzima News (10 Dec 10) Thai officials 'force refugees into harms way in Karen State'

⁴⁸ Irrawaddy (17 Dec 10) KNU Eye Manerplaw

⁴⁹ AFP (06 Dec 10) Rights group slams Thai-Myanmar refugee 'ping pong'; Bangkok Post (06 Dec 10) New wave of refugees flees Burma; DVB (06 Dec 10) Refugees treated like 'ping pong balls'

⁵⁰ Irrawaddy (09 Dec 10) Leading Thai Politician Wants Suspension of Repatriations; Mizzima News (10 Dec 10) Thai officials 'force refugees into harms way in Karen State'

⁵¹ Bernama (14 Dec 10) Thai-Myanmar Border Situation Returns To Normal, Says Thai Army

⁵² Irrawaddy (20 Dec 10) Eight Reported Dead in Latest Karen State Clashes

ready to return because of security concerns.⁵³ On 28 December, the UNHCR told the Thai Government that returns should take place on a strictly voluntary basis and only under safe conditions.⁵⁴

Rohingya push-backs lead to new wave of boat people

Rohingya resumed their annual exodus from Bangladesh by boat while Bangladeshi authorities continued to push back Rohingya fleeing persecution in Burma. In December, Bangladeshi authorities arrested around 80 Rohingya and pushed 21 of them back to Burma.⁵⁵ On 18 December, more than 60 Rohingya set out towards Malaysia in wooden boats from Bangladesh. On 20 December, Bangladesh authorities arrested 30 people, including a number of Rohingya, from another boat that set off for Malaysia.⁵⁶ In 2010, Bangladesh pushed over 2,000 Rohingya back to Burma.⁵⁷

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

UNGA condemns SPDC

On 24 December, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution that condemned the SPDC's "ongoing systematic violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms" of the Burmese people.⁵⁸ It was the 20th resolution passed by the UNGA against Burma's military regime since 1991. The resolution was passed by a vote of 85-26 with 46 abstentions. ASEAN members Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Vietnam voted against it while the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand abstained.⁵⁹

Ban and Nambiar urge reforms in Burma

In December, Burma's elections remained a topic under discussion at the UN. On 2 December, UN Sec-Gen's Chief of Staff Vijay Nambiar urged the SPDC to implement a broad-based political transition that included those who did not participate in elections.⁶⁰ On 6 December, Ban told his "Group of Friends" that the next two months would be crucial for Burma and would potentially determine its political future and its place in the international community. Ban stressed that the transition should involve those who did not participate in the elections and should include the release of political prisoners. On the same day, Nambiar briefed the UN Security Council in a closed-door session on his recent visit to Burma.⁶¹

US assesses post-election situation in Burma

On 7 December, US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs Joseph Yun arrived in Burma on a four-day visit.⁶² Based on Yun's activities during the trip, it was apparent that his mission was to assess Burma's post-election environment and receive feedback on US policy on Burma.

- **7 December:** Yun met representatives of ten political parties that won seats in the November elections and discussed election-related fraud and US sanctions.⁶³
- **9 December:** Yun met with SPDC FM Nyan Win, police Chief Khin Yi and officials from the Science and Technology Ministry in Naypyidaw.⁶⁴

⁵³ Irrawaddy (27 Dec 10) Refugees Hide After Forced Repatriation

⁵⁴ UN News Center (28 Dec 10) UN refugee agency calls on Thailand not to forcibly return Myanmar nationals

⁵⁵ Kaladan News (04 Dec 10) Rohingya family arrested and pushed back; Kaladan News (07 Dec 10) 17 Rohingya pushed back to Burma; Kaladan News (13 Dec 10) Residents of unofficial Kutupalong camp complain of harassment

⁵⁶ Kaladan News (21 Dec 10) Voyagers to Malaysia resume their journeys

⁵⁷ Narinjara News (11 Jun 10) Bangladesh Conducts Census of Illegal Burmese Citizens in Bangladesh

⁵⁸ UNGA, 65th session - Resolutions; <http://www.un.org/en/ga/65/resolutions.shtml>

⁵⁹ UNGA (23 Dec 10) 65th General Assembly Plenary - 73rd Meeting; <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2010/ga11043.doc.htm>

⁶⁰ UN News Center (02 Dec 10) Myanmar transition should include those who did not take part in polls – UN envoy

⁶¹ UN News Center (06 Dec 10) Next two months crucial for Myanmar's political future, warns Secretary-Genera

⁶² AP (07 Dec 10) Senior US official visits Myanmar

⁶³ Reuters (07 Dec 10) Senior US diplomat in Myanmar for post-election negotiations

⁶⁴ Irrawaddy (10 Dec 10) Suu Kyi Meets Senior US Official

- **10 December:** Yun met with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, NLD Central Executive Committee members, and Committee Representing the People's Parliament (CRPP) members to discuss the current political situation and US policy toward Burma.⁶⁵

ECONOMY

Report slams Chinese dam

On 14 December, the Shan Sapawa Environmental Organization and the Shan Women's Action Network issued a report that documented the impact of Chinese dams on villagers in Burma. The report "High and Dry" said that China's Longjiang River [called the Shweli River in Burma] dam, 30 km north of the Burmese border town Muse, is responsible for dramatic drops in water levels downstream, which adversely affected the livelihoods of 16,000 villagers in 20 villages in Northern Shan State. The report added that Chinese companies were planning to build 25 more dams in Burma.⁶⁶

On 15 December, the Yeywa hydropower project went online on the Myitnge River in Northern Mandalay Division. The SPDC Ministry of Electric Power-1 and China's CGCG International and Sinohydro Corporation implemented the 790 megawatt project, Burma's largest to date.⁶⁷

Deals inked, implemented

While the SPDC Ministry of Commerce reported that Burma's exports hit US\$5.5 billion for the first eight months of the 2010-11 fiscal year, observers predicted that the revenues would be monopolized by the generals and their associates and do little to benefit Burma's people.⁶⁸ In December, the regime continued to sign and implement deals with Asian countries and offer lucrative contracts to its cronies.

- **12 December:** State-run media reported that China had signed a US\$2.4 billion loan agreement with the SPDC related to reinforcing infrastructure around the construction of the natural gas pipeline from Kyaukpyu, Arakan State, to China's Yunnan Province.⁶⁹
- **Mid-December:** The SPDC granted Asia World, run by junta crony Steven Law, the rights to build 13 jetties in the ports of Rangoon and Thilawa in Rangoon Division. The junta also gave permission to the SPDC Army-controlled Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings and crony-run Htoo Trading and Max Myanmar to build new jetties at the Thilawa port.⁷⁰
- **19 December:** India began construction of the port and waterway terminals of the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transport Project in Akyab, Arakan State. The US\$120 million facility is expected to be completed in 2013.⁷¹
- **23 December:** South Korea signed an agreement with the SPDC to assist in the development of Burma's natural resources including oil and rare-earth minerals.⁷²

Gems sales net nearly US\$3 billion in 2010

Sales of Burmese gems totaled nearly US\$3 billion in sales in 2010. On 7 December, an SPDC official reported that gem traders in Burma took in a record US\$1.44 billion over a 13-day emporium in Naypyidaw in late November.⁷³

⁶⁵ Irrawaddy (10 Dec 10) Suu Kyi Meets Senior US Official

⁶⁶ Shan Sapawa Environmental Organization and the Shan Women's Action Network (14 Dec 10) High and Dry: The cross-boundary impacts of China's Longjiang dam

⁶⁷ Bernama (15 Dec 10) Myanmar Launches Largest Hydropower Plant To Fulfil Electricity

⁶⁸ Irrawaddy (16 Dec 10) Burma's Eight-Month International Trade Value Hits \$8.8 Billion

⁶⁹ DPA (12 Dec 10) China loans Myanmar 2.4 billion dollars for gas pipeline project; Irrawaddy (13 Dec 10) China Loans Burma \$ 2.4 Billion for Gas Pipeline; Myanmar Times (13 Dec 10) Massive loan from China to fund gas investment

⁷⁰ Irrawaddy (14 Dec 10) Asia World to Build New Jetties in Rangoon

⁷¹ Xinhua (20 Dec 10) India starts Kaladan river project in Myanmar; IANS (20 Dec 10) India starts river project in Myanmar

⁷² Bloomberg (26 Dec 10) South Korea to Develop Rare Earths, Energy Resources Jointly With Myanmar; Xinhua (23 Dec 10) Myanmar, S. Korea meet on energy cooperation in Nay Pyi Taw

⁷³ Reuters (07 Dec 10) Myanmar gem fair nets record \$1.4 bln -govt official

OTHER BURMA NEWS IN DECEMBER

1	On the 90 th anniversary of Burma's National Day, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi urges political parties, citizens, and civil servants to unite in political activities.
1	Veteran politicians Chan Tun, Tin Mya, Thein Hpay, Tin Mya, and Hla Koon urge the SPDC to release all political prisoners and to address Burma's crises through a tripartite dialogue.
1	An NLD statement urges the SPDC to release all political prisoners and initiate talks with pro-democracy and ethnic groups.
1	More than 2,000 people, representing a broad spectrum of Burma's pro-democracy groups, marked the anniversary of Burma's National Day at the NLD headquarters in Rangoon.
1	Over 100 members of the Mon Peace Defense Group surrender their arms to the SPDC Army.
1	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi marks World AIDS Day with 300 HIV/AIDS patients at the NLD headquarters in Rangoon.
1	In a speech to mark Burma's National Day, SPDC Chairman Sr Gen Than Shwe says the 7 November elections were free and fair and a step toward handing power to the people.
2	FAO officials distribute seeds and livestock to villagers in Maungdaw Township, Arakan State, but give most of the livestock to relatives of local SPDC members and to those who voted for the USDP.
3	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meets with the Belgian ambassador at her home in Rangoon.
5	In an ad in the state-run newspaper Myanma Ahlin, the USDP thanks citizens for their votes and pledges to work with the people for security and human rights in Burma.
6	An All Burma Students' Democratic Front senior member confirms that the group intends to resume armed resistance alongside Karen armed groups.
6	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meets with South Africa's ambassador to Thailand Douglas Gibson in Rangoon.
6	UK ambassador to the UN Mark Lyall Grant says that he has raised the issue of UN Sec-Gen Ban Ki-moon naming a new, full time, envoy to Burma.
6	SPDC FM Nyan Win meets with Thai PM Kasit Piromya at the border town of Tachilek, Shan State.
6	Indian government delivers a consignment of heavy machinery and other equipment to SPDC Army authorities at a ceremony on the Indo-Burma border town of Moreh.
7	The SPDC Election Commission announces that the voter turnout for the 7 November elections was over 76%.
7	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meets with three independent candidates who lost in the elections and urges them to collaborate with the NLD in social work.
7	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi bids farewell to her younger son Kim Aris at Rangoon International Airport.
7	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meets with Danish and Thai diplomats at her home in Rangoon.
7	US Congressional Representative Joseph Crowley urges the international community to be "vigilant" in ensuring Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's safety.
8	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi takes part in a robe donation ceremony for about 700 Buddhist monks and 200 nuns at the NLD headquarters in Rangoon.
8	A commentary published in all state-run newspapers dismisses Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's proposal for a second Panglong conference as a "cheap political stunt."
10	The NLD begins selling postcards of seven paintings by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to raise funds for social welfare initiatives in Rangoon.
11	SPDC Army and KIA troops exchange gun fire near Lwaigyai, a Kachin State border crossing into China.
11	Thai PM Abhisit Vejjajiva dismisses claims made in a leaked US diplomatic cable that the SPDC is building a nuclear program with help from North Korea.
11	SPDC Chairman Sr Gen Than Shwe calls on the armed forces to provide assistance and support to Burma's new regime to achieve "national development."
13	About 90 NLD youth members and supporters in Rangoon and Mandalay donate blood to mark the one-month anniversary of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's latest release from house arrest.
13	SPDC allows border trade between China and Laiza in Kachin State to resume after the Chinese embassy in Rangoon protests the border closure.
13	UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Burma Tomás Ojea Quintana calls on the SPDC to release its remaining 2,200 political prisoners.
14	Thai authorities seize more than 3,000 teak logs believed to have been smuggled from Burma with an estimated worth of more than 200 million baht (US\$6,666,660).
14	SPDC establishes diplomatic relations with Oman.
14	An SPDC Army soldier shoots and kills a 21-year-old local Rakhine in Kyaukpyu Township, Arakan State.
15	Indonesia says that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi needs to play a role in resolving Burma's ongoing political problems.

15	A 25-year-old SPDC Army soldier from LIB 233 defects to Bangladesh.
16	SPDC authorities in Pegu Division demolish a 124-year-old Muslim cemetery.
20	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meets with ICRC officials in Rangoon to discuss ways of providing assistance to political prisoners and their families.
20	Indian and SPDC officials agree that Indian security forces can enter Burma to pursue anti-India armed groups after getting permission from SPDC authorities.
23	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meets with the Russian ambassador to Burma Mikhail Mgeladze at her home in Rangoon.
23	SPDC authorities arrest five demonstrators who protested during Rangoon Mayor Aung Thein Lin's opening of a new Thirimingala Market in Rangoon's Hlaing Township.
23	China appoints Yi Xiaozhun, 59, as its new ambassador to Burma.
23	Indonesia's FM Marty Natalegawa says that the Indonesian government and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi are determined to promote democracy in Burma.
23	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meets with Russia's ambassador to Burma Mikhail Mgeladze at her house in Rangoon.
23	A source close to the International Atomic Energy Agency says the agency sent a letter to the SPDC to request an inspection of suspected nuclear facilities in Burma.
27	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi holds a religious ceremony at her home and then pays tribute at her mother's tomb near Rangoon's Shwedagon pagoda.

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