

New year, same behaviour: Burmese lawyer Aye Myint's appeal rejected

Jan 02, 2005 - An appeal lodged on behalf of detained Burmese lawyer Aye Myint from Pegu in Lower Burma, was unceremoniously thrown out by a district court within the day of the submission of the appeal on 2 January.

Aye Myint was accused of supplying false reports to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) office in Rangoon and given a lengthy jail term in the late 2005.

His lawyer San Maung told DVB that he pointed out to the court in his appeal that Aye Myint is innocent as his reports were true and that as a citizen of an ILO member nation, Aye Myint has the rights to cooperate with the organisation and the like.

San Maung also demanded the authorities to release Aye Myint immediately and vowed to continue to appeal at higher courts.

Aye Myint was arrested in October 2005, after he helped the farmers of Paungdawthi Village, Daik-U Township near Pegu report the seizures of their pasturelands by military organisations to the ILO, and he was sentenced to seven years in prison by a local court.



Burmese Heroine Su Su Nway's health deteriorates

Jan 09, 2006 - The health condition of human rights defender Su Su Nway who has been serving a 18 month prison sentence at the notorious Insein Jail, is said to have deteriorated and being treated at the prison's clinic.

Her legal representative, the National League for Democracy (NLD) lawyer Nyan Win confirmed the report.

"Su Su Nway is being hospitalised. On the day she was hospitalised, on 4 January, she complained of breathing difficulty and sweating," Nyan Win said. "Her family went to her on Saturday, 7 January. They were allowed to see her. Her condition is slightly better. Medicines could be bought at the prison clinic. She is said to be anaemic. She was in the clinic up until last Saturday."

Su Su Nway, who has been suffering from chronic heart disease, was counter-sued by her local authorities and sent to prison on 13 October for successfully suing them over forced labor practices. She insisted that she is innocent of the charges and that she is wrongfully imprisoned.



Breaking News : Another political prisoner died in prison

Jan 11, 2006 : Khin Maung Lwin, a political prisoner in PutaO, died this morning. Khin Maung Lwin, alias Nay Min Aung was sentenced for 10 years imprisonment for writing to the senior monks of the Sangha Maha Nayaka (Top Buddhist Abbots) Council to help because the people of Burma were facing hardships.

According to Assistant Association for Political Prisoners (Burma) bases in Thailand, he is the 87th person who died in prison while serving imprisonment term.



Another Burmese political prisoner dies in prison

Jan 11, 2006 – Another Burmese political prisoner, Khin Maung Lwin who was detained at Puta-O in northern Burma's Kachin State, died on the morning of 11 January.

38-year old Khin Maung Lwin, alias Nay Min Aung, had been suffering from high blood pressures,

heart diseases, severe piles and dysentery and he died as the direct result of not being allowed to treat his illnesses.

“He died at 9am this morning . . . He was not allowed to receive medical treatments,” a colleague of his told DVB. “His mother is very old now. She went to see him at the prison and his condition was very bad and she tried to hospitalise him instead of going home (to Rangoon). He died while she was trying to do so. He had piles from the beginning. He started to suffer from severe stomach ache in the last two months . . . He could not sleep the whole night. He could not eat for two weeks. He screamed through the nights. He suffered so. It happened thus because he was not taken to the hospital.”

Before he died, the permission to treat Khin Maung Lwin at the hospital was requested through the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), but it was rejected by the Burmese authorities concerned.

Khin Maung Lwin was actively involved in 1988 nationwide pro-democracy uprising and stood as a candidate for Rangoon Koonchankone Township constituency during the 1990 election. In 1995, he was sentenced to a year and half in prison for trying to give legal protection to a woman who was raped.

In January 1998, he was again given 10 years for writing a leaflet named ‘Help’ describing the plights of Burmese people, and sending copies to Aung San Suu Kyi, the ruling military junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) and the Sangha Maha Nayaka (Top Buddhist Abbots’ Council). He was to imprisoned in the notorious Rangoon Insein jail and transferred to Loikaw Prison in Kayah State before he was again transferred to Puta-O Prison.

According to Thailand-based Assistant Association for Political Prisoners – Burma (AAPP), Khin Maung Lwin is the 87th political prisoner to have died in prison.



Mandalay NLD member and supporters sent to prison

Jan 15, 2006 - A member of National League for Democracy (NLD) from Thabeikkyin Township, Mandalay Division in central Burma and his friends, were recently given prison terms up five years long.

The sentences were passed down on 34-year old NLD youth official Aye Thein and his friends Tin Htoo, Maung Khaing, Zaw Lwin and Phoe Phyu by nearby Chan Aye Tharzan Township court.

The authorities indicted Aye Thein with Act – 366, an anti human-trafficking law, for eloping and marrying his girlfriend, a local girl who had been in love with him for more than seven years, at a registrar and sentenced to five years in prison, and his friends were accused of abetting the ‘crime’ with Act – 114 and they were each given three years.



Prisoners die from cholera outbreak at Sittwe in west Burma

Jan 16, 2006 - At least 12 prisoners had died from an outbreak of cholera, which started in December at Sittwe (Akyab) Prison, Arakan State in western Burma.

More than 80 people have also been admitted to the prison clinic, according to sources close to the prison.

The outbreak was reported to have started from eating cabbages grown on the plots and laced with human excrements within the prison.

The relatives of the victims are said to be very upset by the secret burials of their loved ones without notifying them, according to local residents at Sittwe who are close to the prison circle.



Burmese political prisoner Than Win Hlaing not well

Jan 16, 2006 - Burmese writer and political prisoner, Than Win Hlaing who has been detained

inside the notorious Tharawaddy Prison near Rangoon, is not well, according to his wife Moe Moe Kyi who went to see him at the prison recently.

“He has a type of kidney stone in his bladder. He is quite thin. He is feeling dizzy because of anaemia, I presume. He told me that he is not feeling very well and the living condition is very bad and the like. He was in a situation that he was able to speak his mind.”

Moe Moe Kyi added that she is worried that her husband might face the same fate as another political Khin Maung Lwin who recently died unnecessarily and painfully because of the lack of proper medical cares within the prisons.

Than Win Hlaing was sentenced to seven years in prison in 2000 for trying to write a biography of Gen Aung San, Burma’s national hero, architect of the nation’s independence and father of detained Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi. inside the notorious Tharawaddy Prison near Rangoon, is not well, according to his wife Moe Moe Kyi who went to see him at the prison recently.

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Burmese MP Than Nyein’s sentence extended again

Jan 18, 2006 - The ailing elected representative (Member of Parliament) of Rangoon Kyauktan Township, Dr. Than Nyein who is being detained at Prome (Pyay) Prison, had been given another extension of detention with the so-called Act – 10A, on 18 January.

The latest extension came after Than Nyein’s sentence was extended with the same act in January 2005 and he was expected to be released soon.

His wife, Khin Aye who went to see him at the prison recently told DVB that intelligence officials notified the prison governor about the extension and she learnt about it from the authorities inside the prison.

“Therefore, I requested the permission to see Uncle (her husband). I will be allowed to see him only on next Monday. I won’t be able to do so. Therefore, I had to leave the situation like that and came home,” said Khin Aye. “I think that they (the authorities) have no humane spirit.”

Than Nyein was sentenced to seven years in prison in 1997 for arranging a public rally for democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi at nearby Mayangone Township. With regular situation, he was supposed to be released on 23 July 2004, but the authorities extended his sentence two months each time twice with the same act before he was given the one-year long extension last year.



Roadblock to Suu Kyi’s house lifted: Good sign for Burma, says NLD

Jan 18, 2006 - The roadblock outside detained Burma’s democracy leader and Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi’s house on University Avenue in Rangoon was removed from 16 January.

A Rangoon resident told DVB that barbed-wired security checkpoints at Hledan and Kokekine Streets, situated on each end of University Avenue were lifted, but added that only personal cars, no taxis nor buses, were allowed into the Avenue.

“You could say that it is quite extraordinary because it is not like before, the situation has changed extraordinarily,” NLD spokesman Myint Thein told DVB. “But if you ask me if it is the sign for the release

of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, I dare not answer it. The reason being, this kind of thing happened quite often like this before. I dare not say anything because there were examples of things becoming more restrictive. But whatever it is, we live with/in hope. This is the first step to improved situation, and it is a good sign as it is the first step to the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. It is also good for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and a good sign for the country.” The roadblock was set up by the ruling military junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) in 1997 with only military vehicles and residents of the area allowed through the area.



Two Burmese political prisoners, Saw Win and Aye Aung serious ill

Jan 19, 2006 - Two Burmese political prisoners, Saw Win and Aye Aung who are being detained at Kalemyo Prison in remote northwest Burma, have been suffering from severe kidney and gastric complaints.

Saw Win has been enduring acute kidney problems and Aye Aung has been suffering from severe stomach ache due to gastric diseases. As the results of severe cold weather and lack of proper medical cares, Aye Aung’s face is swollen and he also has a severe form of back pain, according to his mother Mya Yi who went to see him at the prison on 19 January.

Ailing 78-year old Mya Yi also said her son’s cellmate Aye Aung’s family members didn’t know that their loved one has been seriously ill because they are still unable to visit him at the prison.

38-year old Saw Win and Aye Aung were arrested in 1997 for distributing political pamphlets, and sentenced to 10 years and 59 years respectively with the notorious Act – 5J.

Currently, there are four political prisoners inside Kalemyo Prison; the two others being, Lashio elected representative (MP) Than Htay and Shan National League for Democracy (SNLD) Secretary Sai Nyunt Lwin.



Burma NLD youth accused of human-trafficking to be sent to gulag

Jan 19, 2006 - Burmese prison authorities are preparing to send Mandalay Division, Thabeikkyin Township National League for Democracy (NLD) youth official Aye Thein who was accused and convicted of human-trafficking, to Kabaw police-controlled hard labour camp in northwest Burma.

His friends and NLD supporters Tin Htoo, Zaw Lwin, Maung Khaing and Phoe Phyu who were accused of helping him, have been put in stocks, and their parents are said to be very anxious, according to Mandalay Division NLD organising committee member Win Mya Mya.

“As they are to be sent to Kabaw, in fact, they didn’t commit the crime,” Win Mya Mya told DVB. “It was an honest case of ‘the nature of youth’ which was blown out of all proportion to a dishonest social case, and they were unfairly and unjustly exploited/punished... Ko Aye Thein, Ko Zaw Lwin, Ko Phoe Phyu, Ko Maung Khaing are the children of good parents. In deed, it is not a rape case. It is not a theft case, and sending them to a police-controlled camp is not fair and causing their parents great anxieties.”

The authorities charged Aye Thein with Act – 366, an anti human-trafficking law, for eloping and marrying his girlfriend, a local girl who had been in love with him for more than seven years, at a registrar and he was sentenced to five years in prison, and his friends were accused of abetting him and charged with Act – 114 and they were each given three years.



Asian Rights Commission appeals for rights defender Su Su Nway

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Jan 20, 2006- Hong Kong-based Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) made an urgent appeal to its supporters urging them to write to Burmese government authorities in Burma or the embassies or consulates in their respective countries for the release of ailing human rights defender Su Su Nway who is being detained at Rangoon Insein Jail.

In an appeal issued on 20 January, AHRC told supporters that the Supreme Court in Burma will hold a preliminary hearing on the case of Su Su Nway, detained for successfully complaining against her local authorities at Htan Manaing Villager in Rangoon Kawmoo Township about forced labour, on 1 February 2006.

She will be represented by Kyi Win and Myint Thaug, who have made successive appeals on her behalf to lower courts since she was jailed on 13 October 2005, all of which have been rejected. Myint Thaug has said that he is not hopeful of the outcome but they would argue to the court that the charges against Su Su Nway were fabricated as revenge for her successful complaint against the local officials.

If the appeal at the Supreme Court fails, the final recourse is to lodge a second plaint in the Supreme Court for a special review of the case.

Meanwhile, Su Su Nway, who has a chronic heart condition and has reportedly been denied medicines after being jailed for 20 months, is said to have been hospitalized for January 4 to 7 after suffering shortness of breath and sweating. She is also reportedly suffering from anemia.



Trial of Burmese villagers accused of reporting to ILO adjourned

Jan 23, 2006 - The trial of three National League for Democracy (NLD) members at Aunglan (Allen) Township, Magwe Division in central Burma for helping report the death of Ngapyin villager Win Lwin who died during a forced labour session, was adjourned to 20 February.

Win Lwin was crushed to death by an avalanche of earth and stones while he was forced to take part in the building of a road in December 2001. His parents, relatives and friends reported the incident to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) office in Rangoon, but they had to withdraw their case after severe pressures were put on them by the authorities.

On 20 October 2005, the three NLD members who helped report the case were sued and indicted by the local authorities for alleged giving false information to the ILO. A local resident told DVB that the court hasn't been dealing with case properly because the ILO gave the junta until March to improve human rights situation in the country.

He added that the authorities are continuing to intimidate and pressurise the relatives of Win Lwin, and that forced labour practices are still continuing at many places within Aunglan Township



Burmese political prisoner Than Win Hlaing seriously ill

Jan 25, 2006 - Burmese writer, Than Win Hlaing who is being detained at the notorious Tharawaddy Prison for writing a book about patriotic deeds of Burma's national heroes including General Aung San, Thakhin Phoe Hla Gyi, Saya San, Reverend U Uttama, is seriously ill, according to Thailand-based Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP).

According to AAPP Secretary Teik Naing, Than Win Hlaing has been suffering from kidney complaints and diabetics.

"We learnt that the kidney disease is deteriorating considerably. It has gone beyond the time to go to the outside hospital," Teik Naing told DVB. "We learnt that prison authorities are not allowing him to receive treatments at outside hospital. Another fact is when the ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) visited the prison on the 12th of last month (December), they were not allowed to see (prisoners) and turned back. We learnt that medical care within Thrawaddy was very poor and quite dire because the

ICRC was not allowed to see him and the condition of his illness was very bad at the time. Because of that, around 80 people were hospitalised and 12 people died within last year.”

Than Win Hlaing’s wife Moe Moe Kyi told DVB that she is very worried that her husband might die like political prisoner Khin Maung Lwin who died a painful death recently at remote Puta-O Prison in northern Burma due to lack of proper medical care within the prison.

Teik Naing added that the imprisonment of Than Win Hlaing by Burma’s military junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), is one of the attempts to erase the true history of Burma.



England Sheffield confers Aung San Suu Kyi freedom of the city

Jan 26, 2006 - The northern English city Sheffield is planning to offer Freedom of the City to detained Burma’s democracy leader and Nobel laureate Aung San Su Kyi.

The award is usually conferred upon those who fight for human rights and democracy by the mayor of Sheffield himself. The award will be given on 8 March during an official ceremony in which a play about human rights and democracy will also be performed.

It is the second time Sheffield grants a distinguished award to Aung San Suu Kyi. In November, Sheffield Hallam University also conferred her an honorary doctorate degree, according to a report from the city’s administration office.



Prisoners beaten up and killed in Burma’s Kalemmyo Prison

Jan 28, 2006 - During a riot between prisoners and prison authorities at Sagaing Division’s Kalemmyo Jail in northwest Burma on 24 January, inmates including political prisoners were severely beaten up, according to someone who was released from the prison recently.

Private tuition teacher and Monya Township National League for Democracy (NLD) youth member Nyunt Aung was said to be among those beaten up badly.

“Two people died on that day,” a local resident of Kalemmyo told DVB. “They were beaten up until their heads were flattened and they died on the spot. Around 80 were beaten up and 17 are said to be in a serious condition. The 17 were just left unconscious in their cells. It happened like that. It is not known what will happen next. They are being treated inside the prison. Among them, 4 are said to be in a serious condition...it is not known whether they will live or die. A young boy who was released yesterday said that. He said that Nyunt Aung was among those left in that state.”

Nyunt Aung was actively involved in organising NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi’s trip in May 2003 and he was arrested and sentenced to three years in prison for giving ‘illegal’ private lessons.



Another award for Burma’s democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi

Jan 30, 2006 - Detained Burma’s democracy icon and leader of the main opposition party, the National League for Democracy (NLD) Aung San Suu Kyi is awarded the Olof Palme Prize 2005 for her unyielding fight for a democratic Burma.

In a statement issued on 29 January, the Olof Palme Memorial Fund based in Sweden, said “Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is an outstanding example of the efforts to attain democracy by the people of Burma, where respect for human rights, ethnic unity, and a life in peace remain only a dream.”

The statement added that, “to her compatriots she is known as the ‘Iron Butterfly’, a name alluding both to her peaceful struggle and her courage and strength of character. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has devoted her life to Burma, and is a stubborn believer in the final victory of its peoples’ will” and “to peoples

around the world fighting oppression, she is an important symbol of peaceful opposition to repressive power.”

The Fund was established by the Social Democratic Party and the family of former Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme who was assassinated in 1986. He was Prime Minister between the years 1969-1976 and 1982-1986, and he was instrumental in the democratisation of education and in the development of the Swedish social welfare system. He actively supported the dissident movement throughout the world and was one of the first to oppose the wars in Vietnam and Afghanistan.

The Fund’s purpose is said to be, through scholarships and grants, to give opportunities to young people for international exchange and for studies of peace and disarmament, to support work against racism and hostility toward immigrants and to foster in other ways work for international understanding and common security.

The Olof Palme Prize is awarded annually for an outstanding achievement chosen by the Fund’s Board. The prize consists of a diploma and 50.000 US dollars.

A prize ceremony will be held in Stockholm, February 28th, 2006. Dr. Sein Win, the Prime Minister of the exile Government of Burma, will receive the prize on behalf of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

Previous receivers of the prize include Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, UN Secretary General (1988), Václav Havel, Czechoslovakia (1989), the Amnesty International (1991), the Students for Sarajevo (1993), Wei Jingsheng, China (1994), Hanan Ashrawi, Palestine (2002), and Hans Blix, Sweden (2003).



ICRC to investigate recent fatal riot at Burma’s Kalemmyo Jail

Jan 30, 2006 - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) office in Rangoon said it’s going to launch an investigation into recent riot between prison authorities and inmates at Kalemmyo Prison in northwest Burma on 24 January.

During the riot, two prisoners were beaten to death by prison staff, and 80 prisoners including a political prisoner Nyunt Aung were seriously wounded. Moreover, other seven political prisoners such as Lashio MP Than Htay and Shan National League for Democracy (SNLD) secretary Sai Nyunt Lwin are being detained inside the prison and their family members are said to be very anxious for their safety.

An ICRC official in Rangoon, Patrick Vial told DVB that his organisation visited the prison recently before the riot started and had heard about it but hasn’t received detailed information on what had happened and how worrying the situation for the wounded is, and that the ICRC has been making plans to visit the prison again soon.

When asked if the secretive Burmese authorities would allow the ICRC to investigate the incident, the spokesman said that the ICRC has been negotiating and working with the authorities and he added that a solution could be worked out with the prison authorities on the latest incident at Kalemmyo Prison.

He also said that there had been some difficulties during January and the ICRC representatives were unable to visit the prisons, but as it has secured the permission to visit the prisons, the ICRC representatives will be meeting all prisoners including common criminals and it will carefully investigate into the deaths of six political prisoners during 2005.



Asian Rights group launches webpage on jail Burmese heroine

Jan 30, 2006 - The Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) launched a bilingual webpage dedicated to jailed Burmese human rights defender Su Su Nway on 30 January.

The webpage contains links to appeals, statements, press releases, and other information in English and Burmese on the case of the 34-year-old villager who was jailed in a vengeful action by local authorities after she had won an unprecedented victory in a complaint of forced labour.

