

In a Workers' Day statement, Snr-Gen Than Shwe warns that 'conspiracy saboteurs' are trying to undermine the election.

Burmese junta chief Snr-Gen Than Shwe warned on Saturday that “conspiracy saboteurs from inside and outside the country are making to harm the election and to hinder the seven-step road map [to democracy]” in a message released on Workers' Day, May 1, and published in state-run media.

*The New Light of Myanmar* newspaper carried a story quoting Than Shwe as saying, “I would urge you all to ward off attempts of saboteurs and aliens to interfere and to sow seeds of mistrust in our country.”

Recently, several bombs exploded across Burma: at the main Sino-Burmese trade gate in Muse, Shan State, on April 14; in Rangoon during the annual water festival on April 15; at the Myitsone dam project in Kachin State on April 18; and at Loikaw police station in Karenni State on April 27.

The Burmese military government has blamed all of the bomb blasts on armed ethnic groups or opposition groups in exile, but despite accusations and arrests it remains unclear who launched the attacks.

Than Shwe also urged workers to join hands with the entire population for the successful implementation of the road map and emphasized that the Constitution has already been approved by the overwhelming support of national races and the Union Election Commission.

He also said that a greater number of international-level production businesses and services in the country means more job opportunities for workers.

However, in a statement released by the opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) for Worker's Day, the party said workers' rights have been cut severely since the military assumed power in 1988, and that Burmese working abroad have no guarantees and are discriminated against regarding working times and wages.

The NLD requested the International Labor Organization and the military government to solve Burmese workers' problems, the statement said.

Win Tin, a leading NLD member, told *The Irrawaddy* on Saturday that the government has failed to improve workers' lives.

“Burmese workers sell their labor at low wages to international business that invest in Burma, just as we sell our resources at low prices to other countries,” said Win Tin.

He added that wages for Burmese workers are very low compared to neighboring countries, and that the authorities did not try to solve the recent workers' strikes in Rangoon when workers demanded better working conditions and higher wages. Instead, they sent in riot police and the fire brigade, he said.

Meanwhile, Burmese Prime Minister Thein Sein urged the public to “choose good people's representatives with consideration and farsightedness” at the 19th Annual General Meeting of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI), held at Naypyidaw City Hall on Friday.

It was Thein Sein's first speech since quitting his military post last week.

The UMFCCI was formed mostly by businessmen and says it has 19,834 members across the country.

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