

Burma's newly registered Union Democratic Party (UDP) has launched a newsletter to support its general election campaign.



The UDP is the first of Burma's 39 registered political parties to take advantage of an election law provision allowing them to publish newsletters provided they do so within 90 days of their registration.

More than a dozen parties have received Election Commission approval to publish newsletters.

The Shan Nationalities Democratic Party (SNDP) is likely to launch its newsletter this week, according to a leading SNDP member in Rangoon. The cost of printing and distributing a newsletter is expected to be a handicap for many of the smaller parties. Parties also have to pay 100,000 kyat (US \$100) for permission to publish.

The first issue of the UDP newsletter, named "The Union," has a cover picture of Burma's independence hero Gen Aung San, The 18-page publication had an initial print run of 1,500, with 1,100 copies distributed in Rangoon, Mandalay and Taungyi, UDP Chairman Phyo Min Thein said. It has a cover price of 500 kyat (\$0.5).

Phyo Min Thein said the purpose of the new letter is to inform the public about the party's

policies and also to raise money for party funds. Some businesses were reluctant to distribute the newsletter, however, he said.

UDP General Secretary Thein Tin Aung said Phyo Min Thein had financed the first issue on behalf of the party. If it sold well, the newsletter would be published as a bi-monthly or a weekly, he said.