



RANGOON — At least 10 businessmen close to Burma's military regime will be candidates for the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) in the Nov. 7 election, according to sources.

An official from the Rangoon Division of the USDP told *The Irrawaddy*, on condition of anonymity, that more than 10 businessmen, including Khin Shwe (Zay Kabar company), Win Myint (chairman of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry), Tint Hsan (ACE company), Yan Win (A-1 company), Htay Myint (Yuzana company), Aung Than Oo (president of the Myanmar Rice and Paddy Traders' Association) and Tin Win (president of the Myanmar Rice Millers Association), will contest the election as USDP candidates.

He said USDP officials met with the businessmen, asked them to take part in the election, and they agreed.

As a USDP candidate, Khin Shwe will contest for a seat in the Nationalities parliament in No. 9 constituency, a combination of three townships in Rangoon Division.

Khin Shwe is an in-law of junta No. 3 Gen. Thura Shwe Mann, who allegedly retired in the recent military reshuffle. Khin Shwe's daughter is married to the general's son.

“I am not a politician, but I have to compete in the election as I was asked to by the State. I will represent the USDP in the election,” Khin Shwe told *The Irrawaddy*.

He said he was born in Moulmein [Mawlamyaing] in Mon State in southeastern Burma, but was asked to contest in Rangoon.

“I don't think I need to persuade locals in my constituency anymore because I have donated more than 2.5 billion kyat (US \$2,564,102) to those areas since cyclone Nargis struck there,” he said. “I think people will accept me. If they do, I will work for them. Otherwise, I will keep my focus on my businesses.”

Win Myint, the chairman of the UMFCCI, will contest the election in No. 3 constituency, a combination of four townships in Sagaing Division.

As the chairman of the UMFCCI for five successive terms, he is also involved in a number of different businesses including rice export and other agricultural products. Win Myint is believed to be a native of Shwe Bo District in Sagaing Division, the constituency he will contest in the election.

A UMFCCI central executive member told *The Irrawaddy* that the UMFCCI is the biggest nongovernmental organization in the country, and its constitution used to bar its members from being involved in any political party. However, the restriction was removed from the UMFCCI constitution in the organization's 2009 annual meeting in Naypyidaw, he said.

Dr. Maung Maung Lay, the general secretary of the UMFCCI, said, “It is true that some UMFCCI officials will participate in the election, but I won't. I will continue to take the same position in the organization.” He said he still cannot say who will be the next UMFCCI chairman.

Doing businesses in construction, hotels, palm oil production, fishery products, trade and other areas, Htay Myint will contest the election for a seat in the Nationalities parliament representing Margwe Township in southern Tenasserim Division.

The constituencies in which Tint Hsan, Yan Win, Aung Than Oo, Tin Win and other businessmen will contest for are not known at this time.

A businessman told *The Irrawaddy* that other top businessmen such as Tay Za (Htoo Co., Ltd.), Zaw Zaw (Max Myanmar Co., Ltd.) and Chit Khaing (Eden Group Co., Ltd.) have no plans to take part in the election.

Junta incumbent Prime Minister Thein Sein honored businessmen who have close ties with the regime, in a ceremony in Naypyidaw on Aug. 31. A state-run newspaper reported the ceremony recognized people who have contributed to the construction of storm-resistant buildings in cyclone-affected areas.

However, an army officer in the Naypyidaw Command, said the Aug. 31 ceremony was for people who have donated money to the USDP.

“I have heard 20 businessmen will donate money for USDP party funds,” he said. “Authorities just changed the title of the event because it might not look good if they said they honored those who donated money to them.”

According to a USDP source, some businessmen who don't contest in the election will be asked to donate at least 50 million kyat (\$51,282) to the USDP.