

The Burmese regime has reportedly already selected several former high-ranking military officials as the future chief ministers for regional and state governments to be formed after the Nov. 7 election.

All the selected retired military officials are candidates of the junta's proxy Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), according to sources.

Myint Swe, the former military chief of the Bureau of Special Operations (5), is selected to be the chief minister in the Rangoon Region [previously the Rangoon "Division"] government, while the same posts for Mandalay Region, Tenasserim Region, Sagaing Region and Mon State would go respectively to ex-Lt Gen Ye Myint, ex-Lt Gen Khin Zaw, ex-Lt Gen Thar Aye, ex-Maj Gen Aye Myint.

All were formerly the military commanders in their respective regions and states.

According to the junta-drafted 2008 Constitution, the country will have a bicameral parliament at the national level and a regional parliament in each of seven states and seven regions. The president of the national government can appoint elected candidates for the positions of chief ministers of the state and regional governments.

While seven regions are mostly Burman-populated, seven other states have large ethnic majorities.

Since the parliaments in ethnic-populated States are expected to have an ethnic representation, some chief minister posts have reportedly been reserved for former military officials with an ethnic background.

Retired military colonel Kyaw Zan Hla, an ethnic Arakan and a USDP candidate running for a parliamentary seat in western Burma's Arakan State, is rumored to become the chief minister of the Arakan State government.

Some members of opposition parties contesting the election say they are not surprised by the news since they have been experiencing different forms of dishonesty since the election laws were announced.

"We know that the government has set up everything for the post-election [period], but we are not frustrated," said Nay Yee Ba Swe, one of the leaders of the Democratic Party (Myanmar) in Rangoon. "We will try to face all obstacles."