

Two Burmese government ministers have reportedly met in a Karen State monastery with the influential monk Ashin Pyinnyar Thar Mi and urged him to try and persuade the Phalon Sawaw Democratic Party (PSDP) to co-operate with the regime-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP).

Ashin Pyinnyar Thar Mi is a consultant for the PSDP, which fielded 18 candidates for parliamentary seats in Karen State in the Nov. 7 election, winning nine of them.

Sources said he met at his monastery, Taung Kalay, in Hpa-an Township on Tuesday with Information Minister Kyaw Hsan and Minister for Religious Affairs Brig-Gen Thura Myint Maung. The two ministers reportedly told him the government was ready to co-operate with the PSDP.

“But the party will not co-operate if the government opposes its policies,” said one source.

The USDP failed to win any seats in Hpa-an Township, the Karen capital

One PSDP candidate, Saw Tarry, said he had been told by USDP candidates in his home town that Ashin Pyinnyar Thar Mi had promised 1.5 million kyat (US \$1,500) to the winning parties in Karen State and 800,000 kyat (US \$800) to the losers.

The PSDP was one of three ethnic parties representing the Karen people in the election. The other two were the Karen People's Party and the Kayin State Democracy and Development Party.