

Political parties planning to participate in Burma's general election will have to pay large fees that some of them say will place heavy strains on their finances. Political parties planning to participate in Burma's general election will have to pay 300,000 kyat (US \$300) to register, while 500,000 kyat (\$500) will be charged for each candidate—an expense that some of them say will place heavy strains on their finances and affect their ability to contest all constituencies.



The fees were announced by the state-controlled press on Thursday. Individual candidates will be able to spend up to 10 million kyat (\$10,000) on their campaigns, the press report said.

Democratic Party leader Thu Wai told The Irrawaddy on Thursday that the party planned to contest all 330 constituencies, but that now depended on the costs involved.

In the 1990 election, the Democratic Party financed its campaign through donations, Thu Wai said.

The Political Parties Registration Law (2/2010) Article 15 allows political parties to raise funds through donations, including money from companies or from party-run businesses.

Shwe Ohn, a prominent Shan leader, said: “Some want to donate but are afraid to do so.”

Although parties could raise money through business the process would take at least one year and could present parties with long-term difficulties, he said.

Cho Cho Kyaw Nyein, a leader of the Democratic Party, said she had raised money on her own property to help finance the party at the time of the 1990 election.

“Funding is a big problem for parties,” she said.

Aye Lwin, chairman of the Union of Myanmar National Political Force (UMNPF), suggested that constituencies should pay candidates' costs.

“We cannot afford to fund each and every candidate,” he said.

Ye Htun, the chairman of the 88 Generation Students of the Union of Myanmar (GSUM), said: “Funding is nowhere to be found.”

The GSUM was relying on funding from party members and hoped to finance businesses to raise money.

Despite their financing problems, both the UMNPF and GSUM are planning to register on Friday.