

Several pro-democracy political parties have said that time and financial constraints have prevented them from forming alliances with other parties; however they are seeking to reach mutual understandings with their allies to avoid competing in the same constituencies in the general election on Nov. 7.



Cho Cho Kyaw Nyein, a leading member of the Democratic Party (Myanmar), also known as the DP, said, “We have negotiated with the National Democratic Force (NDF) and agreed not to compete in their constituencies.”

She said that due to limited time and money, the DP will compete in 80 constituencies and Chairman Thu Wai will run in Mingalar Taung Nyunt Township in Rangoon.

“All of the pro-democracy parties that are contesting the election are our brothers and sisters,” she added. “We share the same goals and try to help each other, but we have no time to organize or hold meetings. At the moment, we are busy concentrating on our candidates list.”

Led by Thu Wai, a veteran politician, the DP won one seat in the 1990 elections. It is best known in Burma for its inclusion of “the three princesses”—Than Than Nu, Cho Cho Kyaw Nyein and Nay Yi Ba Swe—who are the daughters of well-known Anti-Fascist People’s Freedom League former leaders.

To date, 47 political parties have applied for registration, of which 42 have been accepted. But short on funds and with limited manpower at their disposal, several politicians say they are looking to pool their resources in order to campaign effectively.

Burma's Election Commission has instructed registered parties to submit a list of candidates between Aug. 16-30.

NDF leader Khin Maung Swe said that the two-week period for candidate registration has interfered with the party's plans of negotiating with other parties.

Speaking to *The Irrawaddy* on Thursday, Thein Tin Aung, the general-secretary of the Union Democratic Party (UDP), said, "The NDF will not nominate candidates in the three townships where we are competing. We have agreed that with the NDF leadership."

He said the UDP's chairman, vice-chairman and general-secretary will compete in the constituencies of Pago Township in Pago Division, and Hlaing Tharyar and Tarmway townships in Rangoon.

He said that initially the UDP intended to run candidates in between 10 and 50 constituencies, but political circumstances led them to only field three.

On Nov. 7, parties and candidates will fight for a total of 1,187 seats: the people's parliament (lower house) has 330 seats; the nationalities' parliament (upper house) has 168 seats; and the state and regional parliaments have 689 seats.

The Union Solidarity and Development Party—which was founded by Prime Minister Thein Sein and 26 other senior junta ministers and officials—will compete for every parliamentary seat.