

The Burmese military junta's third-and-fourth ranking officials, Shwe Mann and Tin Aung Myint Oo, have been approved by the election commission as candidates for the junta's proxy party, the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP).



They will run in Zeyar Thiri and Pobba Thiri townships in Naypyidaw as candidates for seats in the People's Parliament, according to the official notification of approved candidates issued by the commission on Tuesday.

Both are among the second batch of high-ranking military generals resigning from the army within the last month to join the USDP; however, they remain members of the ruling State Peace and Development Council.

The state-controlled media in Burma have not officially announced their resignations from the military nor have they confirmed that the ex-generals have joined the USDP, except that recent state-media reports no longer carry their military titles, but instead attribute them with the Burmese honorific title of “ U.”

The notification also states that Prime Minister Thein Sein and other retired military officials, including Myint Hlaing, the former chief of air defense, and ex-Maj Gen Maung Oo who currently remains minister for home affairs, will also stand for constituencies in Naypyidaw for seats in the People's Parliament as USDP candidates.

USDP chairman Thein Sein will run in Zabbu Thiri, one of the eight townships in Naypyidaw.

Only the USDP and the pro-regime National Unity Party (NUP) will compete in Naypyidaw. Pro-democracy parties said they will not run in the new capital because they fear they will have next to no vote among the town's military-influenced population.

Among the approved candidates, ex-Lt Gen Myint Swe, will run as a USDP candidate in Seikgyikanaungto Township in Rangoon for a seat in the Nationalities' Parliament.

The USDP is widely expected to claim an overwhelming victory in the election in the absence of the main opposition party, the National League for Democracy (NLD), which was dissolved by the election commission on Tuesday.

This will pave the way for the former senior military personnel to be elected as civilian representatives in the new government, which is in addition to the fact that the Constitution already guarantees the military a quarter of the seats in the parliament.

Vice-presidents will also be nominated by a majority of army and civilian representatives in the parliament, and will most likely be the elected candidates of the USDP. One of the three vice-presidents who is required to be “acquainted with political, administrative, economic and military affairs” will be selected as president.

The presidency is expected to go to either junta chief Snr-Gen Than Shwe or Shwe Mann. On Tuesday, the election commission published its list of candidates approved to run in the November election.