

In fear lest they will be further away from the goal (1)

Kyaw Ye Min

Really, we the people are pleased with the thought that we will have to wait just one year to 2010. Our thought is that next year, our country will see multiparty democracy general elections to which the entire people are looking forward, thereafter there will emerge people's representatives. Then, there will be hluttaws (parliament) in accordance with the State Constitution. By then, our country will be able to set its foot in democracy we have been waiting for ages.

In spite of the people awaiting with much expectation, anti-government groups are getting louder in their protest at democratic transition. I think **they even cannot stand the thought that they are going to face the public decisions in 2010.**

NLD issued the so-called special announcement 1/01/09 on 4 January. According to the resolutions passed at the CEC meeting held on 1 January 2009, NLD and seven other parties demanded that all the political prisoners including Daw Suu Kyi be released unconditionally as soon as possible. Shortly after that, they issued announcement 2/01/09 urging the people to support their announcement 1/01/09. They have been opposing and having a go at the government in their own party's interest. But, I noticed that they have come to deceive the people into supporting them.

Have no idea about the directives and arrangements of the NLD CEC, but I noticed that the woman secretary of Meiktila District NLD in an interview by the BBC said, "We are now collecting the signatures to comply with the directive of the headquarters." It was merely an attempt to revive the Signature Campaign launched by Min Ko Naing and group. In their bid to attract public support for their party's announcement, they tried to mislead the people into misunderstanding the government, pointing out the shortage of electric power and water supply, instead of following an honest way.

The woman said, "We local people of Meiktila demand, putting our signatures at the end of the letter that we should be provided with enough electricity and safe water, the most fundamental requirements. In this case, we have written that we suggest that the government should do something to supply electricity and safe water for us, and we put our signatures at the end of the letter." It is vividly clear that there is not even a grain of truth in what she said. They are used to telling lies, exaggerating the situations and making a mountain out of a molehill. Their demand carries their implicit hopes that after the demand more people may come to support them, and a large number of people may sign the letter, and one day they may organize the people into a mass demonstration they target.

Regarding the party, at the press conference of National Unity Party to mark the 62nd Union Day, Joint-General Secretary U Khin Maung Gyi disclosed his views that a powerful party was taking direct organizing measures to attract the public support by issuing a variety of public requests; that in 2009, they had plotted many conspiracies to incite riots; that they were organizing the people both directly and indirectly; that they had many

clandestine schemes to hinder the nation and the people from carrying out the tasks to restore peace and stability and achieve economic and social development; and that in that regard, certain countries were trying to interfere in the affairs, and aiding and abetting the party.

He said that he had learnt that the party had split into two factions: the one that wants to work in a moderate, fair way and prioritize national interest, and the other with left-wing attitude. The latter was arousing emotional feelings of the people to take to the streets and create riots if there was a mass protest in the nation in 2009; that the countries concerned were providing funds and other aids for the party; and that parties should give priority to national interests, rather than that of their own.

He added that the people were upset because the party was playing a political game without claiming whether it would stand for election or not; that the people would make decisions in the elections; that if it dealt a serious blow to the elections, that would be against the public desire; and that if they wanted to do as said by Communists to demolish first, then build a new one, that would also get the people upset.

In my opinion, there was no exaggeration in his words. And he is the joint-general secretary of a prestigious party, so he did not use any harsh words in his speech. Frankly speaking, there were many points about NLD he did not mention. Now, the people have realized the attitude of the party. Some persist in cheering the party due to personality cult and party attachment, whereas so many people no longer support the party because they have understood well the party's innate nature.

NLD will not hesitate even at the slight degree to do everything evil to come to power. What is always on its mind is 'power'. If necessary, it is very ready to deceive the people who will decide on its future. It harshly criticized the National Convention in which more than 1000 delegates of the people held discussions actively to adopt principles. It also shows disregard to the public decisions, saying it does not accept or recognize the State Constitution that has been approved with the support of 92.48 per cent of the voters, and it will have to re-write and amend the constitution. In addition, it said that it took no interest in the 2010 elections. Playing a game for political gains, it said that it would not stand, then it said it would stand for election. Then, it said that it would have to consider whether it would stand for election or not.

Again, it is persuading the people to provide it with their signatures in its demand for release of political prisoners. The people are not interested at all in mass riots, demonstrations and political campaigns. If it keeps on doing the same thing, NLD will lose all the support of the people.

VOA said that a Signature Campaign was in progress at NLD Headquarters for release of political prisoners; and that among those who had put their signatures were some diplomats from the embassies of the US, UK, France, Germany and Italy to Myanmar. However it is,

today's people will not get involved in the campaign. The incidents are still fresh in their minds that the nation faced instability due to some persons who had been caught in its snare of instigation and incitement. The people have realized that they have to prevent their children and relatives from getting involved in such pointless incidents.

Meiktila NLD is attempting to make small matters grow into riots. In fact, there is no particular weakness of the ruling government it can point out, so it is trying to provoke public outrage through the issues of shortage of electricity and water supply. However, the government has never ignored supply of water and electricity to the people. Present projects are tangible evidences in that regard. The people have understood and accepted it. So, I would like to present some projects with exact data and figures for the knowledge of all anti-government groups including Meiktila NLD.

Regarding irrigation water supply, our country has placed emphasis on irrigation water necessary for boosting cultivation capacity and ensuring cultivation of crops all-year round. Up to January 2009, the number of irrigation facilities rose to 356 from 138 in 1988, accounting for progress of 218. The new facilities benefit 2.78 million acres (1.13 million hectares) of farmlands.

And during the same period, the number of river water pumping stations has surged to 322 from only 4. They irrigate 500,000 acres (2.02 million hectares) of farmlands. Furthermore, the government has sunk 4893 tube-wells and 2973 hand pumps, totaling 7876. The facilities benefit 96,000 acres (38851 hectares) of farmlands.

In some dam projects, irrigation systems are ongoing. So, the government is working hard to complete them by this financial year to benefit 0.189 million acres (0.0765 million hectares) of arable lands. Simultaneously, it is speeding up construction of river water pumping stations and underground water tapping stations. Therefore, farmers will be able to grow more acres of lands and boost per acre yield of their crops. About 1.8 times of the turnover of agricultural produce is on target for 2008-2009 with the aim of increasing the per capita income of rural people.

In Mandalay Division alone, during the period between 1988 and today, the government has constructed 52 irrigation facilities that add to the total number to 113. Moreover, seven dams are under construction and 10 more projects are due to be implemented soon. Meiktila has got several new large dams such as Nyaunggon, Lethkhopkin, and Shanmange.

Apart from them, the government is implementing an underground water tapping project in Meiktila District, an arid region, in case it may have its crops unsuccessful due to climate changes. The feasibility study proved possible to tap underground water on a large scale in Meiktila and Thazi townships. So, the project will soon be put into action. The two townships have deposits of 70,000 acre feet of water and 800 tube-wells will be sunk at an estimated cost of 271.26 million kyats. And the project will be able to benefit some 11,000 acres of farmlands. It will ensure safety of irrigation supply, will supply irrigation water when the regions' rainwater is less than usual, and will benefit the region's greening programme. These are the projects the government is implementing for adequate supply of water.

(To be continued)
Translation: MS

Up to January 2009, the number of irrigation facilities rose to 356 from 138 in 1988, accounting for progress of 218. The new facilities benefit 2.78 million acres (1.13 million hectares) of farmlands.

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I would also like to present the programmes for supply of clean water. Now, the 10-year plan (2000-2001 to 2009-2010) is ongoing in line with the guidance of the Head of State. The project covers 8042 villages of three arid divisions: Sagaing, Magway and Mandalay divisions and 15,183 villages of other states and divisions, totaling 23,225 villages. So far, of 8042 villages of the three arid divisions, 8039 villages have got 12,551 water supply facilities. That accounts for over 99 per cent fulfillment of the target.

And so far, of 15,183 villages of other states and divisions, 13,626 villages or about 90 per cent have got 19,311 water supply facilities. As for the whole project, of the 23,225 targeted villages, 21,665 have got 31,862 facilities. So, work progress is about 93 per cent.

As for Mandalay Division alone, so far, 6396 water supply facilities have been built for all the 4119 targeted villages. So, all the villages in Mandalay Division have access to clean water. Meiktila District is constituted with 757 villages, and all the villages have got 1260 water supply facilities. Therefore, all the villages in Meiktila District have access to safe water. Due to scarcity of water, there was a well-known expression in the arid regions including Meiktila District "We need water rather than gold". Now, all the villages in the arid regions have had access to safe water thanks to the rural water supply project. So, local people are appreciating the goodwill of the government. However it was very awkward of Meiktila NLD to have leveled such groundless accusations against the government, thus showing their malevolent attitude to the government in spite of the government working hard and making a good headway in the services for community well-being.

Now, I would like to present development in the electric power sector. The nation's total electric power supply has jumped remarkably to 4507.916 million units from only 1559.308 million units in 1988. It indicates that in the time of the Tatmadaw government, the nation uses 2948.608 million more units. In order to achieve that result, the government put great emphasis on generation of hydropower.

The total size of the water that flows along the rivers and creeks in Myanmar a year is 870 million acre feet. About 40,000 megawatts can be generated if the water flows are controlled at 267 sites along the rivers and creeks. Therefore, the government is constructing hydropower plants on a large scale. Now, all the hydropower plants of Myanmar generate 1420 megawatts a year, and hydropower plants under construction will be able to generate 21,043.5 megawatts on completion.

In 1988, under the Ministry of Electric Power (1) were 14 hydropower plants, two of which could generate more than 10 megawatts each: Baluchaung -2 (Lawpita) and Kinda hydropower plants. From 1988 to date, 36 more hydropower plants have been constructed, and 13 of them are large ones. Now, Myanmar has 50 hydropower plants including 15 large ones — Baluchaung (2), Kinda, Hsedawgyi, Baluchaung (1), Zawgyi (1), Zawgyi (2), Zaungtu, Thaphanseik, Monchaung, Paunglaung, Yenwe, Khabaung, Shweli (1), Kengtawng and Tikyit.

Twenty-three ongoing hydropower projects are designed to help meet the increasing domestic demand of electricity. Six of them — Paunglaung (upper), Nancho, Yeywa, Kunchaung, Pyuchaung and Shwekyin hydropower projects are due to be completed in 2009-2010. After completion of the six projects, the electric power supply will meet the demand. Thaukyaykhat (2) and An hydropower projects will be

completed in 2010-11; Thahtay hydropower project, in 2011-12; and Upper Kengtawng hydropower project, 2012-2013. By then, Myanmar's electric power supply will hit 2999.5 megawatts, and that will exceed the demand. And no regions of the nation will face shortage of electricity any longer.

In conformity with one of the four economic objectives: "Development of the economy inviting participation in terms of technical know-how and investments from sources inside the country and abroad", hydropower is being generated extensively to fulfil the local demand. Now, 13 hydropower projects namely Shweli (2), Htamanthi, Tahsan, Hatkyi, Chibwe, Chibwenge, Tapein (1), Tapein (2), Thanlwin (upper), Thaninthaty, Baluchaung (3) and Sai Tin are being implemented jointly with foreign investors. Upon completion, the projects will be able to produce over 21,000 megawatts.

Thirteen hydropower projects are due to be implemented in the near future, and they will be able to generate 11,850 megawatts, on completion. Some are undertaken by related ministries, and some, through Joint Venture (JV) system and Build, Operate and Transfer (BOT) system. Therefore, local electric power demand will be fulfilled soon, and the surplus will be exported to neighbouring countries. In reality, those projects are very heartening.

Up to 1988, Mandalay Division had only one large hydropower plant "Kinda". After 1988, it has seen Hsedawgyi (25 megawatts) and Paunglaung (280 megawatts) hydro plants. Yeywa (790 megawatts), Paunglaung (upper) (140 megawatts), and Nancho (40 megawatts) hydropower plants are under construction. On completion, they will be able to generate 970 megawatts. The electricity consumption of Mandalay Division was 183.59 million units in 1988, and now it has increased to 1058.613 million units.

In order to distribute the electric power to the people, the Ministry of Electric Power (2) is now implementing grid projects and main power station projects in states and divisions. Under the ministry are 18 small-scale hydropower plants with the total annual generation capacity of 35,859.2 kilowatts. In Mandalay Division, electric power is distributed with the use of eight 230 KV grids, seven 132 KV grids, seven 230 KV main power stations, and two 132 KV main power stations, apart from Shweli-Mansan-Shwesaryan grid. In 1988, the number of households using electricity was 80,420 in Mandalay Division, and the number has increased to 311,696.

The above-mentioned hydropower projects are large ones. There are many medium- and small-scale State-owned and private-owned hydropower plants, diesel-fired power plants, biogas power plants, coal-fired power plants, recycled biogas electric power plants, and steam power plants. Anyhow, the government's efforts to boost generation of electricity are very rewarding. For the time being, the nation still has to deal with the issue of power shortage. However, the government is implementing a large number of electric power projects with huge investments across the nation at the same time for long-term interests. Now, the way has been paved to meet the domestic electric power demand, and then to sell it to neighbouring countries, and

what is needed is just to keep on going on the way. I am sure the expression "electricity is out" will no longer be common in the near future.

The projects the government is undertaking to boost supply of electricity and clean water for the whole country and for Mandalay Division and Meiktila District make it clear that the plot that the anti-government groups say "Signature Campaign" is particularly designed to deceive the people. They are indeed trying to exploit the public with the intention of inciting riots. If a person gets involved in the campaign, he is the one to suffer. It is common knowledge that they are deceiving the people into opposing the government, but they fail to back the people in times of serious problems. The people have known well that they are such kind of persons who set fire to a building, but when the building is ablaze, they flee for a safe place earlier than others, bringing together with their belongings.

As said by U Khin Maung Gyi, they said that they would not stand for 1999 election, and then they changed their mind and said that they would stand for election. Again they said they would not attend the National Convention, then they said they would attend it. In the end, they did it. Then, their representatives left the National Convention under the directive of Daw Suu Kyi. And again they are saying they will not stand, then will stand for election. If they want to stand for election, they should do it, and accept the decisions of the people. They should not get the people confused by expressing their indecisive words.

In the run-up to the referendum, they tried their best to disrupt it through the campaign of 'No-vote' or 'Vote-no'. However, their attempts were all abortive in the end. Despite their tremendous attempt, the people did not comply with their campaign. So, the State Constitution was approved with the record percentage of votes. When the constitution was approved with massive public support, they complained that the results were unacceptable, so it was needed to review that. They could accept it only after the process. In fact, they should have given up leveling such baseless accusations. To be blunt, their acts imply that they fail to honour the public desire and mandate.

In democracy, decision maker is the public. Political parties have to respect the people's desire and accept the public decisions. I am sure those responsible of NLD must know that point. They persist in inciting anti-government campaigns and mass demonstrations, taking full advantage of the government's forbearance towards them. If their acts become harmful enough to stability and peace of the nation, the government may take action against them. I wish they would know that no one or organization is above the law.

In conclusion, I would say it is high time they stopped deceiving the people into getting involved in their campaigns for their interest or to come to power. They should have honoured the people's decisions and wishes as their party is a prestigious one serving its interest in the framework of the law. If they persist in exploiting the people and provoking riots, they will be further away from the goal. Now, it is not too late for them to mend their ways. They have the hope of reaching the goal only if they apply correct and honest ways.

Translation: MS

In order to distribute the electric power to the people, the Ministry of Electric Power (2) is now implementing grid projects and main power station projects in states and divisions.