

# Global protests against Myanmar junta

AP, Yangon

A day of global protests against Myanmar's junta began in cities across Asia Saturday, after the military regime admitted detaining hundreds of Buddhist monks when troops turned their guns on pro-democracy demonstrators last week.

Hoping to send a message to the generals that the world is still watching the situation, rights group Amnesty International organised marches in more than two dozen Asian, European and North American cities.

Hundreds marched in the Australian city of Melbourne behind a banner demanding "No More Bloodshed." A smaller crowd of about 50 turned out in Bangkok, Thailand. In Malaysia's biggest city, Kuala Lumpur, 300 people attended a candlelight vigil Friday evening outside the city's tallest buildings, the Petronas Twin Towers.

More rallies were planned in New Zealand, Austria, Belgium, England, France, Ireland, Spain and Switzerland, the US and

Canada.

The junta's treatment of the Buddhist monks who are revered in this deeply religious nation and led the street protests is a key issue that could further inflame the people of Myanmar and anger soldiers loyal to the military rulers.

The government insisted most of the monks it detained had already been freed, with only 109 still in custody, according to an official statement broadcast Friday night on state TV. The report noted the junta was still hunting for four more monks it believed were ring-leaders of the rallies.

Demonstrations that began in mid-August over a fuel price increase swelled into Myanmar's largest anti-government protests in 19 years, inspired largely by the thousands of monks who poured into the streets.

Television images last week showed soldiers shooting into crowds of unarmed protesters but the government described the troops' reaction as "systematically controlling" the protesters.

The government says 10 people were killed in the Sept. 26-27 crack-

down and 2,100 were detained. But dissident groups put the death toll at more than 200 and the number of detainees at nearly 6,000.

The military has ruled Myanmar since 1962. The current junta came to power after routing a 1988 pro-democracy uprising, killing at least 3,000 people. Pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi's party won elections in 1990, but the generals refused to accept the results.

Suu Kyi, who has spent nearly 12 of the last 18 years under house arrest, won the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize for her democracy campaign.

Sixty Nobel laureates added their voices to the global outcry over the Myanmar crisis, saying they were "outraged" by the "ongoing violent repression" of monks and other citizens.

In a statement issued by The Elie Weisel Foundation, the Nobel laureates called on the international community, particularly China, Russia and India, who have been competing for Myanmar's bountiful oil and gas resources to use their influence to secure democracy in Myanmar and the release of Suu Kyi.

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Protesters carry signs during a demonstration Friday in San Francisco, California against the violent military crackdowns on protesters in Myanmar, formerly known as Burma. Hundreds of demonstrators, including some Buddhist monks, gathered to urge the government in Myanmar to stop the violence and release detained monks.

## 'Attack on Iran would be fatal mistake'

Bush determined to confront Tehran's nuke ambitions

AP, Washington/Dubai

A top Iraqi government adviser admitted Friday that Iran was meddling in his country's affairs, said Gulf leaders should tell America and the West that an attack would have negative consequences for our relations with you."

Tamim, who was speaking at a forum on Friday night, was arguing for closer Gulf Arab ties with Iran and advocating that it join the Gulf Cooperation Council, whose six member states are close US allies.

US President George W Bush on Friday expressed his determination to confront Iran's nuclear ambitions and warned that Tehran should not expect a more complacent attitude from his successor.

In an interview with the Al-Arabiya satellite network, Bush said he was determined to seek resolution of these issues through diplomatic means and that he will try to impose new sanctions that will force the Islamic state to renounce its uranium enrichment activities.

Dubai's influential police chief has said Western powers should be warned that their relations with Gulf Arab states would suffer if they launch a military strike on Iran over its nuclear programme.

General Dhahi Khalfan Tamim,

## Suicide bomber hits US convoy in Kabul

AP, Kabul

whose remarks often reflect the views of the political establishment in the United Arab Emirates, said Gulf leaders should tell America and the West that an attack would have negative consequences for our relations with you."

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### Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the US

More than 5,100 people have died in insurgency-related violence in 2007, according to an Associated Press count based on Afghan and Western officials.

The bombing on the sixth anniversary of the US-led invasion of Afghanistan threw several vehicles on their side. Five Afghans were killed and several others wounded, the Interior Ministry said.

The attack was against US troops responsible for training the Afghan military and police. Lt Col David Johnson, a US spokesman, said one American soldier died in the blast and one was wounded.

Dozens of shops were damaged.

"There was an enormous explosion, the windows of my shop shattered," said tailor Mohammad Isaq.

"When I came out I saw the foreigners' vehicles on fire. I saw two injured Afghans and I ran to help them."

This year has been the most violent of the six-year effort, the result of the US-led invasion to oust the Taliban for hosting al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden following the

### Little progress in talks over US nuclear deal

AP, New Delhi

India's ruling Congress party made little progress in fresh talks Friday with its communist allies with whom it is locked in a bitter row over a nuclear deal with the United States, its leaders said.

Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee described the talks as "cordial" and said the two sides will meet again on Tuesday.

The meeting carried forward earlier discussions on the basis of inputs provided by the two sides, Mukherjee told reporters after the talks.

Ahead of the meeting, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) adopted a tough stand, threatening to withdraw support if the government went ahead with the accord.

"If they proceed, we have made it clear that we will no longer support the government," senior party leader Sitaram Yechury told reporters.

The government last month set up a 15-member committee headed by Mukherjee to review objections by its left-wing allies to the nuclear agreement.

"The lawyers tried to storm into the provincial assembly and we used mild baton-charges and teargas to disperse them," Peshawar police chief Abdul Majid Marwat told AFP.

Witnesses said several lawyers

were injured because of the stone throwing and baton charge but there was no official confirmation.

Small but unruly protests also erupted in Karachi, Pakistan's biggest city, as lawmakers voted in the assembly of southern Sindh province, police and witnesses said.

The demonstrators set fire to a

police armoured car and threw

wires at the parliament building, witnesses said.

Television footage showed the

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