

Monks, officials divided in Burma

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CIVIL servants and Buddhist monks in the Burmese border town of Myawaddy have split into two groups, with one supporting anti-government demonstrators and the other backing the authorities.

Burmese student sources based in Mae Sot said yesterday that the split in five administrative sections in the township was influenced by "agitation" from Rangoon-based student activists and monks.

The activists were led by Ko Aung from Rangoon University, while the monks were headed by Ubazin Aung Min.

The sources said all high school students, headed by Ko Myint Ko, and most Buddhist monks support the call for abolition of the one-party system, restoration of democracy and installation of a multi-party system.

Only one monk, U Vimala, secretary of the Buddhist organisation in Myawaddy, openly supports the Government.

The activists have reportedly been touring the township, urging residents to join a nationwide demonstration today.

Burmese troops have been confined to barracks and have done nothing to stop the agitators, it is said.

Two battalions of troops — the 97th Light Infantry Battalion and the 5th Light Infantry Battalion — are based in the township.

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