

Ne Win's party changes name

THE Burma Socialist Programme Party changed its name yesterday ahead of promised general elections and opposition sources said protest leaders would field candidates.

Official Radio Rangoon said the BSPP, which brought Burma 26 years of increasing poverty and political repression, had become the National Unity Party.

Diplomats in Rangoon said the change was essentially cosmetic, and followers of BSPP founder Ne Win would try to regain their dominant role in the polls promised soon by the country's new military rulers.

The BSPP was purportedly overthrown by a military coup on September

18, but diplomats say the army's action was only a way of suppressing widespread dissent and keeping power in the hands of the old guard.

Leading dissident figures Gen Tin Oo, Aung San Suu Kyi and Brig Aung Gyi have reversed their opposition to the polls and will contest them, sources said.

Diplomats have said the main opposition figures stood to lose the backing of students, at the centre of months of anti-government demonstrations, if they contested the polls.

The three opposition leaders met yesterday to decide what form their party would take and to select candidates.

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