

54 more students flee to Karen camp

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Tak — Fifty-four more Burmese students arrived yesterday at a Karen military camp at Kle Day, opposite Ban Mae Salit of Tha Song Yang district, bringing to 309 the number of students known to be there, a provincial source reported.

The latest group was led by Ko Ko, 35, an instructor at Rangoon University, who said they departed on foot from Rangoon on September 19.

Ko Ko, who claimed to be a member of the All Burmese Students Federation, said the new Rangoon administration is keeping an eye on students fleeing into the jungle and is taking counter-measures — including killing — to stop the exodus.

He said the students would start training with

arms today in hope of returning to towns to fight for democracy.

Meanwhile, 62 Burmese students, teachers and civil servants taking refuge at Wat Thai Watanaram yesterday asked governor Somboon Prommes to grant them political asylum.

At the same time, four other students crossed the Moei River from Kle Day requesting political asylum, a source said.

The governor said Thailand is providing temporary shelter for them on humanitarian grounds. Those entering the country from Burma must remain in a restricted area for the time being, until the situation in their homeland improves.

U Ne Win, a former student leader, said at the temple that a few Burmese student leaders are

currently in Bangkok to seek help from Thai students. Others, he said, are trying to establish contacts with international organisations to seek food and medical supplies, and, if possible, weapons.

He said most students believe that no major political changes will take place in Burma after the pending election as long as military strongman Saw Muang remains in power.

Some of the escapees taking refuge at a Karen-held camp at Ghay Baw Bo claimed they witnessed "systematic" killings by Burmese soldiers.

Soe Hlaing, a 36-year-old lawyer from Pegu, said he saw nine people executed by soldiers on a bridge in the town of Tharrawdy during his flight to the Karen-held territories.

A student from the Rangoon Institute of Technology said he witnessed the "systematic killing" of 10 people in Mudon, south of the coastal city of Moulmein.

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