

# Burmese rebels kill 49 troops in border areas

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**BURMESE** rebel groups, striking as the army occupies cities to suppress a national revolt, have killed 49 government troops in frontier areas, the state radio said.

Rangoon Radio said on Tuesday night guerrillas of the outlawed Burma Communist Party had driven army soldiers from three hill outposts in Mong Yang, killing 44 army soldiers and wounding 92.

Karen rebels overran a government outpost near Hlaingbwe in eastern Karen State on Monday, killing five government soldiers, said the radio, monitored by Reuter in Bangkok.

Western diplomats said the BCP as well as Karen, Kachin, Shan and other ethnic minority rebel movements had gone on the offensive since Burma's army seized power on September 18.

Since the coup, the 180,000-strong army has occupied Rangoon and other cities where one-

fifth of the population live to suppress a nationwide revolt against 26 years of military-dominated rule.

One day after the coup, BCP radio said the BCP and the National Democratic Front, a grouping of 10 ethnic minority guerrilla groups to which it is allied, "would 'step up armed revolutionary activities against the Burmese armed forces to help the Burmese people'".

It called the army takeover a "threat to the democratic aspirations of the Burmese people that must be fought with all determination".

Mong Yang is a valley town near the Chinese border about 560 km northeast of Rangoon amid hills that are home to about 1,000 ethnic Shan guerrillas allied to

the BCP.

Rangoon Radio said 36 communist troops had been killed since September 14.

## CONTROL

Hlaingbwe, 88 km east of Rangoon, is crucial for control of lucrative smuggling routes. The guerrillas overran a military base outside the town, the state radio said.

More than a dozen rebel groups, mostly non-Bur-

mese ethnic minorities, are fighting for various degrees of autonomy from the central government. Some of the rebellions broke out soon after Britain granted independence to Burma in 1948.

Western diplomats estimate the BCP to have about 10,000 guerrillas. The main partners in the National Democratic Front are the Kachin, with 6,000 to 8,000 fighters, the Karens with about 4,000 and the Shans with several thousand fighters.

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