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Suu Kyi refuses to walk free sans supporters

Yangon, November 8

MYANMAR'S GENERALS have freed democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest, but she is refusing to accept liberty until 35 colleagues are released from detention, UN envoy Paulo Sergio Pinheiro said on Saturday.

"She will not accept to have any privilege or any access to freedom of movement until everyone detained since May 30 has been released," Pinheiro told a news conference.

The UN human rights envoy said he had been told by the ruling generals during talks in Yangon this week that Suu Kyi, detained after a bloody clash between her followers and government supporters, was no longer under house arrest.

Pinheiro, who spent two hours with Suu Kyi on Thursday, said she demanded the release of 35 colleagues in the National League for Democracy before she would consider herself free.

She also demanded an inquiry into the May 30 violence, which each side blames on the other, and for those responsible to be held accountable, he said.

"She wants justice, not revenge," the Brazilian academic added. He quoted her as saying: "Let's move forward. Let's work so it doesn't happen again."

However, Pinheiro said, the generals who have ruled Myanmar since 1962 "have not yet agreed" to his offer to conduct "an independent assessment" of the May violence and gave no indication on when Suu Kyi might move around again.

Nor, he said, did he win agreement from the ruling generals for an independent investigation of alleged human rights abuses such as forced labour in Shan state, one of several minority regions that have long fought the Yangon government.

Suu Kyi has made similar pronouncements before during the long periods she has spent confined to her lakeside house in Yangon, including the last time when she emerged just weeks before the May violence.

Diplomatic sources said Suu Kyi emerged then because she was confident that UN efforts to get so-called national reconciliation talks restarted were going to be successful. Instead, she was detained at a secret location after the clash — for her own safety, according to the government — from which she was allowed to go to hospital for surgery, then to house arrest in September.

Pinheiro made his own calls on the government to clear the way for talks with the NLD on moving toward democracy by freeing all political prisoners and re-opening political party offices.

Reuters

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

9 NOV 1988

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MYANMAR'S EASY RIDE

11/10 S. S. Anir 10-10

THE MILITARY RULERS of Myanmar have snatched a diplomatic victory at the just concluded Bali summit of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN). When the junta rearrested Aung San Suu Kyi last May, the 10-nation grouping made a surprising departure from its policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of member-states to demand her release. It held out hope that the Nobel laureate would be freed before the summit. But that did not happen. Instead, ASEAN leaders seem tamely to have accepted Myanmar's claim that it is committed to democracy. In a joint statement, they welcomed Myanmar's "seven-point road map" to democracy announced recently by the Prime Minister, General Khin Nyunt, even though it contains no time frame for implementation. They have also accepted the junta's explanation that by recently moving Ms. Suu Kyi from a secret prison to imprisonment in her home, it has made a major political concession to the jailed leader.

ASEAN's readiness to believe Myanmar may have been due to its well-known dislike of confrontation between member-states and its fears that the summit might be hijacked by this issue, thus jeopardising discussions on regional trade and security. But by accommodating Myanmar's uniformed rulers yet again, the regional bloc has put its own commitment to democracy on the line. Ms. Suu Kyi, who has spent most of the last 15 years in detention, was released in May 2002. But as her popularity was too much for the generals to tolerate, her freedom proved short-lived. Since her re-arrest earlier this year, ASEAN, which defied world opinion to admit Myanmar as a member in 1997, took steps, unprecedented for it, to sort out the issue. The former Foreign Minister of Indonesia, Ali Alatas, visited Myanmar

in an effort to secure the release of Ms. Suu Kyi. Other ASEAN members went so far as to issue statements demanding her release.

Evidently, Myanmar's generals did not take them seriously. Even though Ms. Suu Kyi is allowed no visitors at her home, General Nyunt claimed at the summit that she was no longer under arrest. On his road map to democracy, the first step is the revival of a national convention to draft a new constitution but the Prime Minister has not said if Ms. Suu Kyi or her party, the National League for Democracy (NLD), will participate in it. In letting all this go unchallenged after its initial activism on her behalf, ASEAN has only reinforced Myanmar's confidence that the grouping will not press the issue beyond a point. The helplessness of some of the wealthiest and most powerful nations in the developing world in dealing with a government that is little more than a bully in uniform is puzzling. After all, Myanmar needs ASEAN more than the other way round. The regional grouping might profess to believe that the best way to achieve democracy and reconciliation in Myanmar is to remain engaged with the military regime, however repressive and brutal it might be, rather than take a confrontational stand. But not keeping the issue of democracy constantly in focus cannot be the way. For engagement to yield positive results, ASEAN must not let up pressure on Myanmar. Countries with influence in the region — that includes India, which too must follow a policy of critical engagement with Myanmar — must at least ask for a guarantee that the junta will allow Ms. Suu Kyi and the NLD to participate in the process it has outlined for a return to democracy. Myanmar should be persuaded to set its house in order before 2006, when it is due to take up the ASEAN chair.

100 died in attack on convoy when Suu Kyi was held

Washington: Up to 100 people were killed and an unknown number of women raped in the area of northern Myanmar where pro-democracy



Suu Kyi

opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi's convoy was attacked on May 30, Radio Free Asia (RFA) has said.

A pro-government activist interviewed by the US-based station said the Yangon Junta organised a cover-up to conceal the number of dead, and that the strike on the Nobel laureate's convoy was carefully organised.

The man, who was paid to take part in the incident, said on the night of May 30, a junta official hired men to dig makeshift graves in Depayin township, northern Myanmar.

"Later, they brought the bodies, maybe 100 there, including people who were alive with serious injuries," the man said in the interview. Scores of bodies were later taken to a local crematorium, RFA said.

Sources in Yangon told AFP in early June that the toll from the clashes was around 80.

The US has maintained the incident was a 'premeditated ambush' by government affiliated 'thugs'— an allegation disputed by the junta which said Ms Suu Kyi was taken into custody to protect her from a disturbance. AFP

Myanmar announces democracy roadmap

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

YANGON, Aug. 30. — Myanmar's ruling military government announced a seven-point roadmap for democracy today that includes the holding of "free and fair" elections based on a new constitution.

"Free and fair elections will be held based on a new constitution spelled out by the national constitutional convention," newly-installed Prime Minister Gen. Khin Nyunt said in a speech here.

Gen. Khin Nyunt, the number three general in the country, gave no time frame for the elections or for what he described as the "seven-point roadmap for democracy." But, in his first public

Suu Kyi release

WASHINGTON, Aug. 30. — The USA has demanded the immediate release of Burmese pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi. "The Burmese junta's continued detention of Suu Kyi and other members of the National League for Democracy is unacceptable and should end immediately," state department deputy-spokesman Mr Philip Reeker said yesterday. — PTI

speech since his appointment as premier five days ago, he said the plan envisions first the reconvening "as soon as possible" of the national constitutional

convention, suspended in 1996 following a boycott by the Opposition National League for Democracy.

A new constitution would then be drafted and go through a national referendum process before it is passed into law.

Only then would national elections take place, the general said, followed by the convening of a new parliament and the formation of a "government of elected members." Myanmar has been ruled for the past four decades by its military, which in 1990 refused to recognise national election results that gave a landslide victory to democracy campaigner Ms Aung San Suu Kyi's NLD party.

THE STATESMAN

31 AUG 2003

S. S. in Myanmar 8/11

Crisis in Myanmar!

6/8

It has been fifteen years since 8/8/88 when the military junta broke up a movement for free institutions and democracy in the erstwhile Burma, now Myanmar, and over ten years since Aung San Suu Kyi was denied the mandate she won to lead her nation. She has been imprisoned, her movements restricted, brother encouraged to contest her title to their father's house to dispossess her and other manifestations of a caring and considerate bunch of colonels and generals; caring and considerate only to their own ambitions. Yet her experience has not embittered her as those few who have been able to visit her have testified. Not even when her husband died in Britain and she dared not leave her country to say her last goodbye for fear that the frightened men in uniform would not let her return to her people.

Very little is known in the past decade about her and her League for Democracy except that they function in a hostile environment but function they do, much to the chagrin of the junta who must hope that they would just fade away. Things have periodically come to a head but have cooled somewhat as the cowardly men who hold her in thrall hesitate to go too far. The events of 30th May have been worse than in the past and have set alarm bells ringing wherever democracy dwells and also in capitals where it is not as firmly rooted as it might be – such is the power of ideas and ideals. On that day the junta lost patience. Her convoy was set upon as she was travelling outside the capital to visit outposts of her party organisation. Goons acting for the junta pounced on her and her people – even the official version notes four dead and 50 injured. Informed sources place the toll at between 70

and 80 dead. It is put out that Suu Kyi has been taken into *protective custody*; those who need protection are not Suu Kyi and her loyal band but the colonels who dare not speak their mind in public and content themselves with official handouts. Offices of the League for Democracy have been shut down and opposition leaders detained. Nothing is known about the Vice-Chairman of the League who was travelling with her, Tin Oo, is he alive or dead?

The UN special envoy, Razali Ismail, on a five-day visit demanded that Suu Kyi be released forthwith; he had to threaten to cut short his

her and her party. It is necessary to add that Colin Powell's words would have carried more conviction if President Bush and his Administration had behaved less cynically and more responsibly in Iraq.

Nevertheless I must record with approval that America and Japan have imposed significant sanctions on Myanmar. Other countries must do the same. The Security Council might take a view making it easier for individual states. On 2nd July the Thai Prime Minister announced that Myanmar's special envoy had assured him that Suu Kyi was not being held in the notorious Insein prison but the jury is out on the question of what reliance can be placed on the word of a representative of the junta which has repeatedly broken some promises and forgotten to implement others.

Mahatma Gandhi used to say – turn the searchlight inwards! When I do that on this issue I am dismayed. Delhi has maintained a sphinx-like silence. The excuse is two-fold. One that Myanmar is sheltering assorted insurgent groups from the Manipuris and the Nagas to the Ulfa and we do not want to antagonise them further. The other is that China has made inroads into Myanmar by befriending the colonels and if we open our mouths it will be worse for us. The explanations are an exercise in appeasement and an example of cowardice. We ought to remember that *one reason why there is so much evil in the world is that enough good men do nothing*. I say that our weak-kneed attitude has encouraged the junta to accommodate more insurgent groups and left the Chinese a free hand.

If we aspire to a permanent seat in the Security Council, we must do more to deserve it.

caveat
CRIRANI

visit if he could not see her. He was able to meet her for a few minutes at the last moment. Razali was told Suu Kyi would be released perhaps in two weeks. This was on 10th June and we are now in August. Even Asean, which makes such a fetish of not interfering in the internal affairs of member states, felt obliged to call for her release but took a lot away by adding the next day that the organisation does not pressure member states. The American Secretary of State, Colin Powell, took a separate press conference at the end of the Asian Regional Forum meeting to urge the international community to stand together. He said and his words cannot be bettered – *The brutal rulers of Myanmar need to understand that the only acceptable way forward is to release Aung San Suu Kyi and her supporters and resume dialogue with*

Military unmoved in Myanmar

By V. Jayanth

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THE FUTURE of Myanmar and the pro-democracy movement led by the Nobel Laureate, Aung San Suu Kyi, remains at a crossroads despite years of intermittent efforts for a return to the democratic path. In the latest showdown with the military junta ruling Myanmar, Ms. Suu Kyi was 'arrested' on May 30, following a clash between her supporters and some pro-junta groups. Ever since, there have been several attempts by regional groups and the international community to secure Ms. Suu Kyi's release and open the door for a fresh dialogue in Myanmar. The U.S. too has got into the act, slapping some economic sanctions on the regime in Yangon.

Now, under pressure from the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), of which it is a member, Myanmar has agreed to 'resolve' the impasse before the next regional summit, or take Indonesia's help in doing that. Indonesia currently chairs ASEAN and its Foreign Minister, Hassan Wirajuda, discussed the controversy with his Myanmar counterpart, Win Aung, before securing this commitment.

It is eight years since Ms. Suu Kyi was released by the junta, in July 1995, after six years of incarceration — and 15 years since the military junta assumed power in what was then called Burma. But there has been no tangible progress on the path to democracy. Except for cos-

metic changes, including in the renaming of the State Law and Order Restoration Council as the Peace and Development Council in 1997, not much has changed.

The problem really burst in the open with the uprising of the youth in 1988 against a military takeover.

It may be in Myanmar's own interest to begin a genuine national debate on a democratic form of governance.

This was followed by a clampdown. Under international pressure, the junta conducted a general election in 1990, in which the National League for Democracy (NLD) led by Ms. Suu Kyi won a nearly four-fifths majority in parliament. But the election of Ms. Suu Kyi, daughter of Dow Aung San, popularly acknowledged as the 'father of the nation,' was set aside by the junta which went on to assume complete power and control.

Periodically from 1990, the military rulers have come under pressure from the international community to at least open a dialogue with the pro-democracy forces and implement a package of political and economic reforms. To Ms. Suu Kyi's credit, it must be noted that from the day of her release in 1995, she has only asked for a dialogue. An ardent follower of Mahatma Gandhi, she remains committed to non-violence. Through these trying times, Myanmar

was isolated not just from its neighbours but the rest of the world too, though the United Nations periodically publicised the human rights violations that were being reported from the country by activists and opposition members. But during this phase of isolation, Myanmar turned

Indonesia has always been a model for the military junta. For about 10 years now, the military rulers have been trying to frame a new Constitution for Myanmar based on the earlier Indonesian concept of a 'socio-political role' for the armed forces. This was a system that saw Gen. Suharto rule for over three decades, before his regime was virtually overthrown by a popular uprising across the archipelago. The armed forces had a 25 per cent share in parliament seats and controlled the elections to determine the composition of parliament. The President was elected by parliament.

Even after a decade, the ruling Generals in Myanmar have yet to come up with an acceptable Constitution for the country and have shown no signs of conducting an election. It may be in Myanmar's own interest to begin a genuine national debate on a democratic form of governance suited to the nation and announce a time-table for its implementation. Such a course will also prevent its further marginalisation.

Myanmar to 'resolve' Suu Kyi impasse soon

NO. 15 31/7 ✓
BANDUNG (INDONESIA), JULY 30.

Myanmar has told Indonesia it will resolve an impasse over the arrest of the democracy icon, Aung San Suu Kyi, before a summit of the South-East Asian nations in October, Jakarta's Foreign Minister said today.

Hassan Wirajuda also said Indonesia was 'heading' in the direction of mediating Myanmar's political crisis. "The Myanmar side has told Indonesia they hope that before the ASEAN summit, this problem will be resolved. We have received a guarantee that the Aung San Suu Kyi case will be over before the ASEAN summit," Mr. Wirajuda told reporters.

Ms. Suu Kyi was arrested on May 30 after a clash between her supporters and pro-government groups, drawing international condemnation. This week the United States imposed fresh economic sanctions on the troubled country.

Mr. Wirajuda was speaking on the sidelines of a meeting of Asian-African officials in the West Java capital Bandung attended by the Myanmar Foreign Minister, Win Aung. Mr. Wirajuda made clear the ASEAN could not ignore an issue that has stained the grouping's image. Jakarta currently chairs the association, which will hold its annual summit on October 7-8. "If they can do it themselves, we will be very appreciative. But we know that there is a gap of perceptions here, and we need to tighten the contacts," Mr. Wirajuda said. — Reuters

3 1 JUL 2003

THE HINDO

Sanctions: Myanmar comes down on U.S.

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, JULY 29. Even as the Foreign Minister of Myanmar, U Win Aung, today criticised the latest democracy-related sanctions by the U.S., the military rulers in Yangon indicated that they might be willing to let Indonesia to play a role in resolving the issues concerning the continued detention of Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of the National League for Democracy in Myanmar.

The latest signal from the Yangon junta is indicative of its desire to let a regional player, rather than the United Nations, to intervene in its affairs. However, Myanmar's ruling outfit, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), has not at all slammed the door on the

U.N.'s face. Speaking at Bandung in Indonesia, on the sidelines of an Asia-Africa meeting there, Mr. Win Aung said the sanctions marked a 'unilateral' move without any consultations with others.

The sanctions were also based on a 'one-sided' view of the developments in Myanmar.

In a meeting with the Indonesian Foreign Minister, Hassan Wirayudha, and the Indonesian President, Megawati Sukarnoputri, Mr. Win Aung indicated that Myanmar's SPDC would be ready to open a channel for dialogue with Jakarta on the entire range of issues concerning Ms. Suu Kyi, who was taken into "protective custody" on May 30 following violent clashes between government supporters and her NLD members in northern Myanmar.

The Indonesian Foreign Minister said, after the meeting, that Myanmar had now come to realise that the arrest of Ms. Suu Kyi, Nobel Peace Prize winner, had placed the entire Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in a 'dilemma' on the wider international stage.

As a result, Yangon was now willing to talk to Indonesia on ways to resolve the crisis. An official of a humanitarian agency told an international news channel today that Ms. Suu Kyi was being "detained in fair and decent conditions". The official, Michel Ducreaux, was allowed by the Yangon authorities to meet her on Monday.

U.S. steps up pressure

WASHINGTON, JULY 29. The U.S. President, George W Bush, has signed a bill and issued an executive order putting pressure on the Myanmar Government to release Ms. Suu Kyi and other political prisoners.

The Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003 bans the import of Myanmarese products among others. The executive order freezes the assets of senior officials and bans virtually all remittances to the country. — PTI

Junta rules out release of Suu Kyi for now

JAKARTA, JULY 28. Myanmar today brushed off international demands for the immediate release of the Nobel Peace laureate, Aung San Suu Kyi, claiming the domestic political climate was still too "hot".

"We are waiting for things to cool down," said Myanmar Foreign Minister, Win Aung, after meeting with the Indonesian President, Megawati Sukarnoputri.

Indonesia, as the current Chairman of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), has been leading regional pressure on Myanmar to immediately release Ms Suu Kyi, detained on May 30.

Mr. Win Aung, who arrived in Indonesia on Sunday to attend the Asia-Africa Sub-Regional Organisation Conference, made it clear that Myanmar would release Ms Suu Kyi only when it deemed it safe to do so. "Sometimes when the heat is on we need to cool down," said Mr. Win Aung. "It depends on how hot it is."

"There is no intention for us to prolong this," he said, without given a definite time-table for Ms Suu Kyi's release. "I do not see a definite time-frame."

Indonesia has proposed sending a delegation led by the former Foreign Minister, Ali Alatas, to Myanmar to assess the political situation. — DPA

29 JUL 2003

THE HINDU

Asean to plea for Suu Kyi release

Star/ ANN & agencies

PUTRAJAYA (Malaysia)/BALI, July 23. — The Asean will send a delegation to Myanmar in an attempt to win the release of pro-democracy leader Ms Aung San Suu Kyi, officials said today.

The process to free the Opposition leader would also include some gentle persuasion from Southeast Asian countries, one official said. "We will be nagging the Myanmar junta for the release of Ms Suu Kyi," Mr Blas Ople, the Philippines' secretary of foreign affairs, said on the sidelines of a three-day Asia-Europe summit here.

He, however, refused to elaborate on the kind of pressure the group would place on the military government. We want them to "speed up the political transition to a democratic government", he added.

Meanwhile, Malaysian Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Asean may still get a response from Myanmar over its request that the military junta release Ms Suu Kyi.

He, however, said the Asean's methods to achieve democracy in that country "must not involve invading Myanmar".

The two leaders were asked, at the joint press conference, what other methods could be employed by Asean to seek the release of Ms Suu Kyi as the constructive engagement approach seemed to have failed.

Junta frees 91 detainees: Myanmar's military government said yesterday it has freed 91 Opposition members, mostly from pro-democracy leader Ms Aung San Suu Kyi's party, from detention since her arrest more than 50 days ago, AP adds from Yangon.

24 JUL 2003

THE STATESMAN

Myanmar lashes out at U.S.

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YANGON, JULY 16. Myanmar's military rulers lashed out on Wednesday at the United States for moving toward imposing tough economic sanctions, calling them "weapons of mass destruction" that would create havoc in their Southeast Asian country.

Dissidents welcomed the U.S. move, but some observers cautioned that the sanctions would hurt ordinary people in Myanmar while failing to topple the junta.

The U.S. House of Representatives voted Tuesday to impose sanctions in response to the junta's latest detention of the Opposition leader and Nobel Peace laureate, Aung San Suu Kyi, as well as its crackdown on her pro-democracy party.

The generals moved against Ms. Suu Kyi after a deadly May 30 clash between her supporters and government backers.

The U.S. vote came a month after the Senate approved a similar measure. The President, George W. Bush, was expected to sign the bill into law when the two chambers agree on a common version. A Myanmar spokesman said in a faxed statement that "sanctions, by definition, shut down interaction" and stop the flow of ideas.

— AP

THE HINDU

17 JUL 2003

Suu Kyi sowing chaos: Junta

Yangon, July 7 (Reuters): Myanmar's ruling military accused detained pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi today of sowing chaos and squandering chances to engage the government in talks on the country's political future.

The comments, made in the third instalment of a commentary carried in all state-run press, said Nobel Peace Prize winner Suu Kyi was detained after trying to stir up unrest while touring the country.

"The real aim behind the trip was to confuse the political situation all along the way, and to further inflame and confound it to cause chaos," the commentary said.

Suu Kyi was arrested on May 30 following a clash between supporters and pro-junta groups as she visited supporters outside the capital, Yangon.

The government has so far refused to bow to international pressure to release her.

Witnesses to the violence who fled to Thailand, say hundreds of pro-government supporters set upon a convoy in which Suu Kyi was travelling, killing dozens of people.

The junta denies the claims, blaming Suu Kyi for the clash in which it says four people were killed.

The newspaper commentaries today were accompanied by undated photos of Suu Kyi meeting junta chief General Than Shwe and other military leaders and said Suu Kyi had failed to make the most of opportunities for talks with the government.



Aung San Suu Kyi

Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy, which won 1990 elections in Myanmar but has never been allowed to take power, says the government has refused to begin substantive dialogue.

Official newspapers quoted General Khin Nyunt, chief of military intelligence, on yesterday as saying international sanctions to press Myanmar to release Suu Kyi were acts of bullying and a violation of international law.

The general said every nation had the right to prevent unrest, hinting that Suu Kyi would not be released any time soon.

Myanmar's epic struggle

Myint's release sends a message of hope

The acquittal of Burmese student Soe Myint, of the charge of hijacking a Thai International aircraft eleven years ago is of course very welcome. Hijacking is a terrorist act and the International Convention against it to which we are a party, obliges us to proceed with the trial once a charge is framed and served. However for our commitment to apply, it must be established at the threshold that the incident was a hijack within the meaning of the Convention. An essential ingredient of the offence is the use of a weapon; to say *boo* to a member of the crew of an aircraft in flight, does not amount to a terrorist act! In the case in question, it is an admitted position that the patriotic students motivated by a desire to free their country of military rule, placed towel on a hand and pointed fingers to resemble a pistol or revolver — and they got away with it!

The CID in Kolkata investigated the case and a charge was duly framed. This despite the absence of a weapon and the fact that Thai International did not press charges, nor did the crew, nor did anybody else except our overzealous police. The trial was an object lesson in how not to press charges. Every day for a whole week witnesses were put down for appearance. In the event, either they did not turn up or they did not give evidence. The judge had no option but to acquit the accused. But consider the trauma suffered by the young patriots for so long. And the expense! Surely this calls for a full investigation as to how the charge was framed in the first place.

The acquittal sends a message of good cheer to those brave souls working for a democratic form of government in the old Rangoon and wresting control of the country from the colonels and generals who have held Burma in thrall for so long. It also comes at a time when Aung San Suu Kyi, the elected leader of her people is not allowed to assume her rightful office by a bunch of military men afraid to let go. They are so terrified of this frail woman that they pick a quarrel with her supporters on a highway in order to provide what they think is the reason, for taking her into so-called *protective custody*. Suu Kyi is not in danger, the colonels are. Those who need protection from an alienated populace are not Suu Kyi and her loyal band but the colonels themselves. When the UN special envoy came calling he was allowed to meet Suu Kyi at the end of his visit only for a few minutes. The cover, if ever there was one is blown. Entirely by the way, President Bush keeps talking about democracies and the need to support them, about how terrorism will continue to be countered and mouthing other platitudes in the same vein. If only Burma, alias Myanmar had oil reserves!

Newspaper pours scorn on Suu Kyi

YANGON, JULY 5. Photographs of the detained pro-democracy leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, talking and dining with Myanmar's ruling generals appeared in official newspapers Saturday, but there were no indications the bitter rivals had met recently.

The photographs, carried in all three official newspapers, were accompanied by a stinging commentary against Ms. Suu Kyi, a Nobel Peace prize winner held by the junta since a bloody confrontation May 30. Diplomats said this did not augur well for Ms. Suu Kyi's early release.

The photographs showed Ms. Suu Kyi shaking hands with junta leader Senior Gen. Than Shwe and eating with him and other top military figures at what a caption said was a "family dinner." Another caption said "frank and cordial exchange of views can lead to consolidated national political future of the nation."

The newspapers did not say when or where the meetings



Myanmar's Opposition leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, meets the junta leader Senior Gen. Than Shwe as shown in this undated photo released on Saturday on the website of the official *New Light of Myanmar* newspaper. — AP

took place, and the regime has made no mention in recent days that its leaders had held discussions with Ms. Suu Kyi, who was taken into custody following a clash in northern Myanmar between her followers and government supporters.

On Friday, two Myanmar dis-

sidents testified before a Senate panel in Thailand that a drunken mob of about 3,000 people — some dressed as monks — surrounded Ms. Suu Kyi's motorcade, stripping the clothes off supporters and beating them mercilessly with bats, rods and spears.

The testimony by witnesses Khin Zaw and Wunna Maung was the most comprehensive and detailed yet of the May 30 violence.

Their statements also lend credibility to other Opposition claims that up to 70 people were killed in the incident.

In contrast to the photographs, a commentary in the official *New Light of Myanmar* newspaper described Ms. Suu Kyi as a "willful and hard-headed person liable to rash judgments followed by blind action, in her relations with the present government."

The commentary, purportedly written by a member of Ms. Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy, said there had been a "ray of hope" after Ms. Suu Kyi's release from one of her several periods under house arrest in May 2002.

But the unnamed author said hopes for reconciliation were dashed by Ms. Suu Kyi's behaviour and actions. — AP

Suu Kyi savage story

9-4 577 86 Asian Myanmar

Bangkok, July 4 (AFP): Two Myanmar pro-democracy activists who witnessed the May 30 riots that triggered Opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi's detention today described a savage scene that left some 70 people dead.

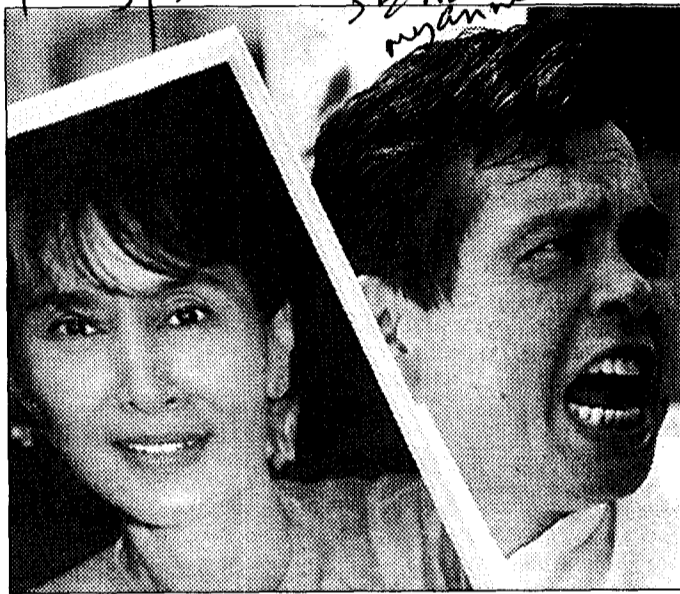
The men said they fled for their lives after the violence, eventually finding their way into Thailand to give the first direct account of the attack mounted by thousands of members of a pro-junta gang, some disguised as monks.

In sworn affidavits, the two members of Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) said they witnessed a brutal attack on her convoy as she carried out a political tour of northern Myanmar.

They said the attackers who were crazed with drink and drugs used rods to smash their way into Aung San Suu Kyi's car and that she only escaped a beating because she did not emerge from the vehicle, which was later able to speed off.

NLD vice-chairman Tin Oo who was travelling in another vehicle was wounded in the head, and women in a third vehicle were dragged out, stripped and bashed, said NLD youth wing member Wunna Maung.

"I saw the attackers jump onto them and wrapped the hair around their heads and pounded the heads against the stone surface of the road, with all their



A Myanmar national protests during a demonstration in Tokyo. (Reuters)

force," he said. "From my mind, I still cannot get rid of the sight of people, covered in blood, being beaten mercilessly and inhumanly."

The other escapee, Khin Zaw, who was a senior NLD member in northern Myanmar, said some 3,000 attackers used iron bars, bamboo sticks and bats to attack Suu Kyi's supporters.

"I was hearing the wounded, dying victims moaning and wailing in pain, shrieking in agony and crying out for help ... Truly, it was a murderous attack. The

beating was done until the victims died," he said.

The two men had planned to reveal their account of the violence in a press conference here but it was cancelled due to fears they would be arrested amid a crackdown on Myanmar dissidents living in Thailand.

After testifying before the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee they instead went directly to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) office in Bangkok to apply for refugee status.

Suu Kyi shifted to new prison

7-3 897 S. Kyi - Myanmar
Bangkok, July 2 (AFP): Myanmar's Opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi has been transferred from the notorious Insein prison following UN criticism that she was being held under "absolutely deplorable" conditions, an informed source said today.

The gesture was too minor to calm the international community's outrage over her detention and could signify that the ruling military government intended to keep the leader detained for a long period, diplomats said.

Aung San Suu Kyi "has been transferred, probably at the end of last week, and is now being held at an undisclosed location," the source told AFP.

He said the junta had "many military camps and guest houses where it can detain its opponents incommunicado. One possible option is that Suu Kyi could have

been brought to the military camp of Yemon, some 40 km outside Yangon, where political prisoners have been held in the past," the source said.

Aung San Suu Kyi was taken into "protective custody" after riots broke out on May 30 when her convoy and supporters were attacked by a junta-backed mob during a political tour of northern Myanmar.

The government says four people were killed in the clashes but dissident groups say dozens died.

Despite an international furore over her detention, Myanmar's ruling junta has given no sign of when it will release the 1991 Nobel Peace prize winner.

The government has not revealed where she is being held but the British government said last month that the National League for Democracy (NLD) leader was being held in a two-room hut at Insein without even a change of clothes.

UN special envoy Razali Ismail met her on June 10 and is the only independent person to have seen her since her isolation. After his visit, Razali declined to confirm the reports that Aung San Suu Kyi was being held at Insein, but acknowledged her detention conditions were appalling.

"What I can say is that where I met her was absolutely deplorable. It was not in keeping with the stature and the status of Aung San Suu Kyi as a political leader or as a national leader," he said.

Insein prison, built on the outskirts of Yangon, has the most sinister reputation of Myanmar's jails.



Aung San Suu Kyi

Britain pressure for Suu Kyi release

London/Tokyo, June 25 (Reuters): Britain and Japan heaped pressure on Myanmar today to free pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi while UN secretary general Kofi Annan was said to be growing "increasingly alarmed" about the Nobel laureate.

A UN envoy, who saw Suu Kyi on June 10, said she was being held in "deplorable" conditions but that she was well and as feisty as ever.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair told parliament Britain had made "the strongest possible representations" on behalf of Suu Kyi and urged British companies to halt trade with Myanmar. Foreign secretary Jack Straw wrote in the *Financial Times* newspaper that an existing asset freeze, embargoes on arms and a suspension of high-level contact might be expanded.

"We've made the strongest possible representations, not merely in respect of the release of the leader of the opposition but also on the restoration of proper human and democratic rights," Blair said.

"In relation to British trade, we are making it clear to British companies that we do not believe that this is appropriate in circumstances where this regime continues to suppress the basic human rights of its people," he added.

Straw called Myanmar's military rulers brutal, corrupt and incompetent and he reiterated Britain's assertion that Suu Kyi, held since May 30, was being detained in the notorious Insein jail near Yangon.

Suu Kyi, daughter of independence hero Aung San, has



Aung San Suu Kyi

been in detention since a clash between her followers and supporters of the government in the north of the country.

Her National League for Democracy won the country's last elections in 1990 by a landslide but has never been allowed to govern, treated instead to imprisonment, harassment and intimidation.

Speaking after UN special envoy Razali Ismail met officials in the Japanese capital, a senior government official told reporters that Tokyo had informed Myanmar that aid would be halted if it refused to release Suu Kyi, who turned 58 this month.

"First of all, we want the early release of Suu Kyi. Under the current circumstances we will not extend economic assis-

tance," the official, who declined to be identified, told reporters.

"This is Japan's policy and we have said this to the Myanmar government," the official said. The move by one of Myanmar's biggest aid donors and a country that has been relatively willing to engage with Yangon is likely to have even greater weight than strong criticism by the US and Britain.

Razali said that when he left Myanmar, he had sought specific assurances about Suu Kyi's release which he did not get.

"The UN, the secretary general and a lot of people there are...increasingly alarmed about the situation," Razali told reporters in Tokyo.

"I had said then that in one week or two weeks, one might expect that she would be released," he said. "It is now past two weeks." Razali declined to clarify where she was being held.

He was earlier quoted by Kyodo news agency as telling Japanese foreign minister Yoriko Kawaguchi that he met Suu Kyi in a "concrete house" within the grounds of a Yangon prison.

"What I can say is that where I met her was absolutely deplorable," he added. "It was not keeping with the stature and the status of Aung San Suu Kyi as a political leader or as a national leader."

He repeated earlier statements that he saw no signs that Suu Kyi had been injured when he met her and was in strong spirits. "She's uncowed and feisty, she was outraged that this had happened to her," he said. "That's the Suu Kyi I've always known."

Suu Kyi is not detained in infamous Insein jail, Myanmar tells Japanese envoy

Bangkok: Myanmar's detained pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi is not being held at the infamous Insein prison as stated by the British government, the ruling military junta has told a Japanese envoy.

Japan's deputy foreign minister Tetsuro Yano said military intelligence chief General Khin Nyunt had made it clear to him during talks on Monday that Ms Suu Kyi was not being held in the jail.

Britain's assertion last week that the Nobel Peace laureate was being held at Insein under a draconian internal security act, after the junta said she was in "protective custody", drew widespread interna-

tional outrage. Asked if Ms Suu Kyi was being held at Insein, Mr Yano said, "Secretary Khin Nyunt made it clear that he is aware of this kind of information, however, (he said) it is Ms Suu Kyi was being held."

Mr Yano, speaking to reporters in Bangkok on his arrival from a one-day mission in Yangon, did not say whether Mr Nyunt specified where Ms Suu Kyi was being held. AFP

25 JUN 2003

Fears increase over Suu Kyi's safety

28/6

SE Asia
- Myanmar
11-12

By Harvey Stockwin
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Hong Kong: The Myanmar military junta has reacted to growing international disquiet over its current crack-down on duly-elected Myanmar leader Aung San Suu



Suu Kyi

Kyi and the National League for Democracy (NLD) by telling lies which increase fears for her personal survival.

Ms Suu Kyi and the NLD won the last general election in Myanmar in 1990 but the junta has never honoured that result. International anxiety arose initially from the ambush of Ms Suu Kyi and her supporters when they were travelling in northern Myanmar on May 30th.

Varied international reactions were observable at the recent the week-long ASEAN conferences in Phnom Penh.

Amidst other pressing issues, the May 30th ambush attack has aroused varying degrees of anger and outrage in the US, Britain and the EU, varying degrees of concern for Ms Suu Kyi in ASEAN, India and Japan, and concern for 'Myanmar's stability' in Beijing. Faced with these reactions, the Myanmar military regime has been both defiant and intransigent, as can be clearly seen from the stream of falsehoods issuing forth from Rangoon, some of which were repeated by the foreign minister in Phnom Penh.

The junta has tried to maintain that the NLD started the May 30th clash, which flies in the face of all that is known about the incident, as well as Ms Suu Kyi's long-time insistence on non-violence. This lie helps to explain, amidst the junta's tight media control within Myanmar, why NLD supporters are now being arrested, detained and jailed, and why

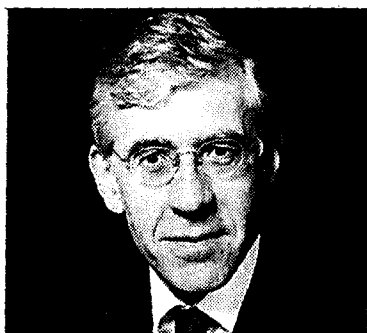
NLD offices all over the nation, newly reopened in the last 12 months by Ms Suu Kyi, are now being closed down again.

American diplomats who investigated the attack concluded that there it was a premeditated ambush conducted by "government-affiliated thugs". The few journalists who have managed to get to the area have confirmed this assessment.

The world's sole superpower has been the only nation to mount an on-the-spot enquiry. As far as can be seen no Asian nation has sought to find out for itself what actually happened. In China's controlled media the May 30th incident has been seldom, if ever, reported. There is still no certainty as to how many NLD officials or supporters were killed by the thugs, although guesstimates hover between 70 and 100. The estimated number of thugs varies between 500 and 1,000.

Happy birthday, Suu Kyi

The Burmese junta and its cronies are a cancer gnawing at the heart of South East Asia. The international community must ensure that Aung San Suu Kyi is released immediately



JACK STRAW

YESTERDAY was Aung San Suu Kyi's 58th birthday. What should be a day of quiet celebration with family and friends for the Nobel Peace Prize Winner was instead spent in detention in a military barracks somewhere in Burma. The Burmese regime claims she is in "protective custody" after her supporters clashed with opponents on May 30. But we know from eyewitness accounts that the regime's version of events that day totally lacks any credibility.

Armed thugs attacked Aung San Suu Kyi and her supporters in a premeditated attack planned by elements of the regime itself. Tens of people were killed and injured, scores arrested and many more are in hiding. The regime has closed the offices of Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy and detained party leaders and workers in Rangoon and other cities.

Her crime? None that any of us would recognise as a crime. To the fury of the Burmese military junta, Aung San Suu Kyi commands the support and respect of the Burmese people. Ever since her party won an election in 1990, the regime has harassed and intimidated Aung San Suu Kyi and her supporters endlessly. She has already suffered long spells of house arrest and imprisonment, hundreds of her supporters are in prison, many without trial. Others have been blackmailed or intimidated into giving up politics.

The government-controlled media denies her a voice and publishes malicious propaganda about her. But whenever and wherever she travels, ordinary people still turn out in their thousands to see and hear her. For them she is a beacon of hope for a better future.

The military regime, which attempts to run Burma through fear and intimidation, is not only brutal but also corrupt and incompetent. A once-prosperous country is being run into the ground. Poverty is rife and diseases such as malaria, TB and

HIV/AIDS are spreading. For the Burmese regime, Aung San Suu Kyi's vision of peace, stability and freedom is a threat. But for the rest of the world, the Burmese junta and its cronies is a cancer gnawing at the heart of South East Asia. There can be no possible excuses for the continued misrule and intransigence of the regime.

Aung San Suu Kyi must be released immediately. So must all the other leaders of the National League for Democracy currently detained. The National League for Democracy must be allowed to reopen its offices. And the regime

must enter into meaningful dialogue with the National League for Democracy and other groups as a first step towards bringing democracy to Burma.

Burma's neighbours, especially its fellow members of ASEAN, have been dismayed by the detention of Aung San Suu Kyi, and have called publicly for her release. We hope that they will continue, publicly and privately, to make clear to the regime the impact its behaviour is having on ASEAN's standing and the need for it to change its ways. The meeting this week of the ASEAN Regional Forum in Cambo-

dia offers a timely opportunity for them to do so. And private individuals, tempted to visit Burma for its undoubted beauty and its cultural attractions, may wish to delay doing so until the present tension and uncertainty has been lifted and ordinary Burmese people can welcome them in a climate free from fear and persecution.

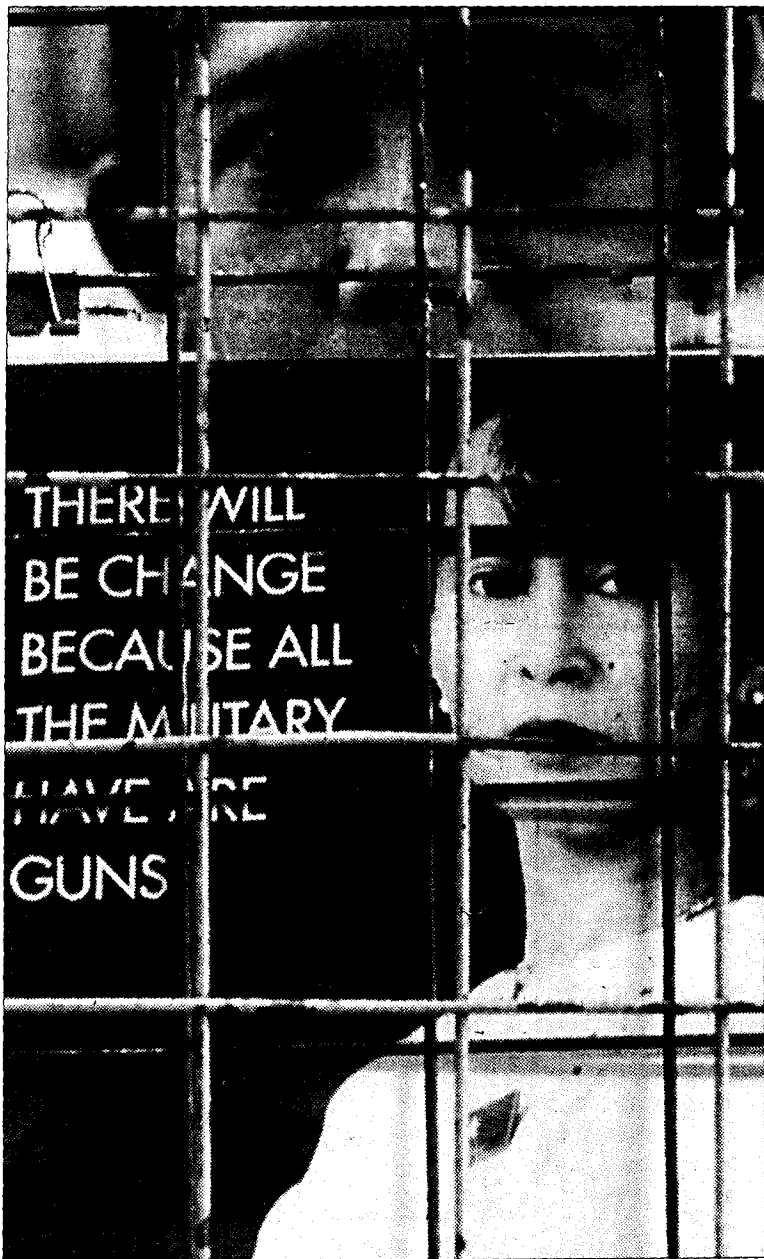
The United Kingdom, together with our partners in the EU, with the US and with other countries stands ready to help Burma move towards national reconciliation and democracy. We are committed to supporting the UN Secretary General's Special Representative on Burma, Tan Sri Razali Ismail, in his efforts to broker a dialogue between the regime and opposition groups.

We hope the Secretary General himself will consider what more the United Nations might do. But the regime there has shown a cynical and blatant disregard for the views of others and responds only to pressure. That is why the European Union has decided to increase the pressure. We already applied an arms embargo, a ban on the sale of any items that could be used for torture or repression, a ban on defence links and a ban on non-humanitarian aid. High level contacts were also banned.

We have now agreed to take these measures further. Our ban on Burmese Ministers visiting the EU will be extended to include senior managers of state-run enterprises and officials from organisations linked to the government. We have already introduced an assets freeze and the European Union has suspended Burma's trading privileges under the Generalised System of Privileges (GSP). The United States has taken similar steps. Further pressure will follow unless the regime moves rapidly to restore civilian rule and democracy.

The United Kingdom and the international community will not accept that the hopes and aspirations of the Burmese people should perennially be frustrated. The spirit and justness of the democracy movement cannot be contained by sticks or prison cells. We call on friends of Burma in Asia and around the world to redouble their efforts to help Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the people of Burma rapidly achieve the national reconciliation, respect for human rights and democracy they so richly deserve. On her birthday we pay tribute to Aung San Suu Kyi, an inspiration to us all.

(The author is the British Foreign Secretary)



“ Burma's neighbours have been dismayed by the detention of Aung San Suu Kyi, and have called publicly for her release. The United Kingdom, together with our partners in the EU, with the US and with other countries stands ready to help Burma move towards national reconciliation and democracy ”

Deception game

SRB 206 S. B. Anie Junta's bid to hoodwink the world

The Myanmar military junta is again at its old game — deception. What else can be said when it claims to have taken pro-democracy NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi into "temporary protective custody" to shield her from possible assassins! This is the first time that the junta has put forward anything as absurd to justify her detention. No one made this claim when the UN special envoy to Myanmar Razali Ismail met them during his high-profile five-day stay in Yangon last week; his avowed purpose was to secure her release but he got no commitment from the junta. The question that naturally arises is why didn't the junta inform Ismail about the threat to her life if indeed that was the cause?

The reason is simple. The junta knew that the Asean ministerial meeting at Phnom Penh would ask for Suu Kyi's release. Singling out the junta in a joint statement and asking it to give due weightage to the request are unprecedented developments given the policy of non-interference in the affairs of member states. Before the Phnom Penh meeting the demand for her release was mounting with the prime ministers of Malaysia and Thailand issuing statements interpreted as building pressure on Yangon. Hence the assassination theory. But what is significant is that even after propounding it, Asean could not be dissuaded from issuing a statement asking for the NLD leader's release. This is because of the low credibility of the junta. Even after a decade of its rule it has not fulfilled promises to draft a constitution to pave the way for multi-party democracy. Hoodwinking the world by making false promises is passe. And Asean knows that massive turnout at her rallies and her pleas for restoring democracy are indicators of a gathering storm. This can be ignored only at junta's own peril.

THE STATESMAN

20 JULY 2003

THE STATESMAN

Suu Kyi held in notorious jail

London, June 19 (Reuters): Myanmar pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi is being held in the "notorious" Insein Jail on the outskirts of Yangon, Britain said today.

Foreign office minister Mike O'Brien said in a statement he was trying to contact the Suu Kyi and said her detention was "totally unacceptable".

Suu Kyi and other Opposition leaders touring the north of Myanmar were detained on May 30 after violent clashes between her supporters and pro-government groups. The military said the Nobel peace laureate was taken into "protective custody".

"I am appalled to learn today, on her 58th birthday, Aung San Suu Kyi is being held in the notorious Insein Jail on the outskirts of Rangoon in a two-room hut," O'Brien said.

"I understand that she continues to wear the clothes in which she was arrested."

He said he was "particularly disturbed" to hear that Suu Kyi was being held under Section 10(a) of the 1975 State Protection Law. O'Brien described this as the "most draconian" of the Burmese military regime's laws, allowing detention without access to family or lawyers for 180 days at a time, for up to a total of 5 years, with no prospect of appeal.

"This completely discredits the regime's claim that she is being held in 'protective cus-



Aung San Suu Kyi poses in Chin costume during a trip to Chin state in Myanmar in April. (AP)

today," he said. He said he had the telephone number of the jail and was trying to contact her.

"It is totally unacceptable that she should be detained in this manner, and I call upon senior Gen. Than Shwe to release her, and all other political prisoners, immediately," O'Brien added. Yesterday, US secretary of state Colin Powell demanded Myanmar's "brutal rulers" release Suu Kyi.

20 JUN 2003

Yangon claims assassination bid against Suu Kyi

Straits Times/ANN

SF-3 17/6

S S Asia Myanmar

PHNOM PENH, June 16. — Ms Aung San Suu Kyi was being kept in custody to protect her from a possible assassination attempt, Myanmar has said, adding that no time-frame can be given for the pro-democracy leader's release. The junta, however, refused to say who the possible assassins were or why they would target Ms Suu Kyi.

Myanmar's foreign minister Mr Win Aung said yesterday: "We have heard there were assassins coming in the country... We know that whatever happened to her (Ms Suu Kyi) will be real trouble to us. Because everything will be blamed (on) us and there will be attempts to create a situation where the country will be in deep anarchic situation."

This is the first time that the junta has put forward an assassination theory as an excuse for detaining the Opposition leader.

He said the government cannot give a committed date for her release. "Don't press us to commit ourselves to a timeframe and date of releasing her... The important thing is that the will (to free her) is there."

THE STATESMAN

17 JUN 2003

Suu Kyi faces threat to life: junta

PHNOM PENH, JUNE 15. Myanmar's Foreign Minister said today that the pro-democracy leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, is being kept in custody to protect her from a possible assassination attempt, and added that no time-frame could be given for her release.

"We have heard there were assassins coming in the country. I don't know who their target will be," said the Minister, Win Aung. But if "anything happened to her it will be blamed on us," he told reporters in Phnom Penh where he will attend an annual ASEAN conference beginning tomorrow.

"We know that whatever happened to her will be real trouble to us. Because everything will be blamed (on) us and there will be attempts to create a situation where the country will be in deep anarchic situation."

Though the Government has said in the past that she is in "protective custody," this is the first time that an assassination theory has been put forward.

Mr. Win Aung refused to say who the possible assassins were or why they would target Ms. Suu Kyi. Ms. Suu Kyi was detained on May 30 after a clash between her supporters and a pro-government mob in northern Myanmar. — AP

US steps up pressure for Suu Kyi's release

Singapore: US Secretary of State



Suu Kyi

Colin Powell turned up pressure on Myanmar's military rulers over the detention of Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, saying he would seek action from their Asian neighbours at a meeting next week.

Mr Powell's comments, in a signed article published in the 'Wall Street Journal' on Thursday, were the latest expression of international outrage over the treatment of the pro-democracy activist, who is now in her 13th day of detention.

"The junta that oppresses democracy in Burma (Myanmar) must find that its actions will not be allowed to stand," he said in the commentary in which he called for financial measures against Myanmar's military rulers. The military government took Ms Suu Kyi into what it called "protective" custody during a trip to the north on May 30 after a violent clash between her supporters and government henchmen.

"The administration agrees with members of the US Congress...that the time has come to turn up the pressure on the SPDC," Mr Powell wrote, referring to Myanmar's ruling military body, the State Peace and Development Council.

12/16 11-90 S. H. Asia - Myanmar
The US Senate voted 97-1 on Wednesday to approve a bill to ban all imports from the South-east Asian country in response to Ms Suu Kyi's detention.

Ms Suu Kyi and about two dozen senior members of her National League for Democracy have been held at locations in or outside the Myanmar capital, sources told Reuters in Yangon. Some of the locations are undisclosed.

Mr Powell said he would use a trip to Asia next week for an annual meeting of the ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) Regional Forum to push Myanmar's neighbours to bring pressure to bear.

"I will press the case in Cambodia next week when I meet with the leaders of South-east Asia despite their traditional reticence to confront a member and neighbour of their association," he wrote.

Myanmar's military rulers said on Tuesday they would release Ms Suu Kyi as soon as possible, but gave no timeframe. Ms Suu Kyi has spent more than half of the last 14 years in detention in her Yangon home.

Diplomats say ASEAN, which operates under the principle of not interfering in the internal affairs of its members, may be forced to discuss Myanmar-- but in closed-door forums and preferring to keep the issue under the table. Reuters

U.N. puts pressure on Myanmar junta

By P.S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, JUNE 11. The United Nations is beginning to lean heavily on the Myanmar military rulers by mounting pressure on them to release the democracy-campaigner, Aung San Suu Kyi, from "protective custody" without any further delay.

The U.N. Secretary General, Kofi Annan, today raised the diplomatic stakes in this connection in the specific context of the report he received from his special envoy, Razali Ismail, who met Ms. Suu Kyi in Yangon shortly before the completion of his mission on Tuesday.

Mr. Annan left Myanmar's ruling State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) in no doubt about the impatience of the international community over the continued detention of Ms. Suu Kyi since her latest arrest on May 30 following some disturbances during one of her rare political campaigns in freedom at a place in the country's north.

Drawing upon the findings and impressions of Mr. Razali, Mr. Annan bluntly told the SPDC's military leaders that the situation in Myanmar was not merely a question of law and order.

He was transparently referring to the SPDC's version that Ms. Suu Kyi, whose release from an earlier phase of incarceration had been brokered by the U.N. itself, had to be taken into custody over a week ago in order to safeguard Myanmar's law and order situation.

The punchline in Mr. Annan's comment in New York was that the crisis 'derived' essentially from the "political aspirations" of its people who, in his opinion, were overwhelmingly in favour of 'change' in their country. This was as firm a message to Myanmar's military rulers as the U.N.'s top mandarin could go in diplomatic parlance at this stage.

Expressing satisfaction over Mr. Razali's report that he had found Ms. Suu Kyi to be 'well' physically and in "strong spirits" as a political leader, Mr. Annan "strongly urged" the SPDC to release her immediately so that the U.N.-brokered process of national reconciliation in Myanmar could be carried forward.

The U.N.'s activism, as reflected by Mr. Annan's call and Mr. Razali's observations in Kuala Lumpur, is qualitatively different from the international mood that determined the tentative and aborted efforts of an informal kind by some multilateral financial institutions and the U.N. itself to explore the feasibility of a project in the late 1990s that came to be dubbed "dollars for democracy".

The idea then was to persuade Myanmar's junta to move towards democracy in a reciprocal gesture for the planned promises of massive economic assistance from multilateral institutions. The promise of external economic assistance, in the event of moves by the SPDC to democratise the country, is not altogether missing from the present pro-democracy diplomacy by the international community.

However, as Mr. Annan has now pointed out, the imperative of democracy is a matter of Myanmar's own internal dynamics at the level of its people. It is against this background that Mr. Razali's latest post-mission observations become relevant.

He said, on his return to Kuala Lumpur from Yangon, that he sensed a certain degree of willingness on the part of both Ms. Suu Kyi and the SPDC to place the reconciliation agenda back on course. He also described her as a feisty person whose spirit was still high.

THE HINDU

1 2 JUN 2003

Suu Kyi in good health: Razali

117 14 By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, JUNE 10. The United Nations' special envoy to Myanmar, Razali Ismail, today sounded a note of guarded optimism after meeting the detained pro-democracy leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, in Yangon and noticing that she appeared to be in good health.

Somewhat buoyed on that score, Mr. Razali looked ahead towards ways of placing Myanmar's national reconciliation agenda back on course. He was earlier allowed by the military junta in Yangon to meet the Ms. Suu Kyi shortly before the completion of his five-day mission.

The main objective of the U.N. envoy's mission was two-fold: to secure Ms. Suu Kyi's immediate release from "protective custody" and to meet her in detention if her freedom could not be arranged at this juncture.

In the event, he achieved the secondary objective, and this in turn helped reassure that international community that the Nobel Peace Prize winner was not injured as feared at the time of her latest arrest on May 30.

Reporting that he found Ms. Suu Kyi to be unhurt and in good spirits, Mr. Razali underlined the steps that were now required to be taken for Myanmar's reconciliation process to

move forward. Speaking to reporters, Mr. Razali drew attention to the "potential dangers" that could 'undermine' the process of sustaining the U.N.-brokered efforts to bring about a political settlement between Myanmar's military rulers and Ms. Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD). He hinted that the most important step in this direction at this juncture was for the Myanmar Government to release Ms. Suu Kyi from detention. It would then be essential for the two sides to begin talking. The international community still had work to do to put Myanmar's national reconciliation process back on track, he pointed out.

Mr. Razali's trip to Yangon was the 10th in a series since he undertook the U.N.'s diplomatic mission of bringing about a rapprochement between Myanmar's Government — the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) — and the NLD. His stated objectives were to meet Ms. Suu Kyi and to try and secure her immediate release. The SPDC authorities took her into "protective custody" on May 30 following clashes between the pro-junta protesters and her own supporters at a place in northern Myanmar during a political tour that she had undertaken. Her detention is but the latest incarceration that she has had to endure over the years at the hands of the military rulers.

Free Suu Kyi!

Junta organises cowardly attack

It was put out by Myanmar's ruling military junta that Aung San Suu Kyi, the country's pro-democracy Opposition leader, was taken into "temporary protective custody", an euphemism for house arrest, after fighting broke out between her National League for Democracy supporters and those of the junta in northern Myanmar where she had gone to campaign with the knowledge of the junta. The fight left at least 70 demonstrators dead and more than 100 people injured. Soon thereafter, all universities and colleges, which are a breeding ground of pro-democracy movement, were closed for an indefinite period. But what worried her supporters and well-wishers the world over was that she was injured in the clash and the whereabouts of her deputy, retired Brigadier Tin Oo, who was accompanying her, were unknown.

The junta was clearly nervous. The massive turnout at her public meetings and her repeated pleas for restoration of democracy prompted the reaction. The unprovoked attack on NLD supporters was led by paid goons of the Union of Solidarity Development Association (USDA). They had not only been intimidating her and those attending her public meetings but also attempted to disrupt her campaign whose main theme was to underscore the urgency for national reconciliation for the sake of people and country. Ever since her release from house arrest a little over a year ago which had given rise to hope that the junta would enter into talks to facilitate a democratic transition, Suu Kyi has been urging the junta to proceed from confidence building to full cooperation, specially in the humanitarian area, which would lead both sides to general reconciliation and dialogue.

But this evoked no response forcing her to depart from her usual conciliatory stance and publicly complain, for the first time last April, about lack of progress in reconciliation talks. Lately she had begun to question the integrity and sincerity of the junta and had even come to the conclusion that it was not interested in national reconciliation. Her latest quotable quote, "National reconciliation is change. They don't want change but change is inevitable," made the generals both nervous and angry.

Frustrated that her calls for talks were falling on deaf ears, she termed the past year as Myanmar's wasted year. The military junta was only releasing political prisoners it regarded as posing minimal threats to its rule. More than 1,400 political prisoners are still in jail even though many of them have completed their sentences and are in critical health. An angry United Nations rights envoy, Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, abruptly cut short his visit to Myanmar after discovering there was a bugging device while interviewing a political prisoner.

It is not yet clear whether the UN special envoy Razali Ismail, currently in Yangon, would be given access to Suu Kyi to restart UN-brokered talks between the Nobel peace laureate and the junta who show no sign of accepting a timetable for the country's return to democracy. On the contrary, it has continued to intimidate Suu Kyi on her travels and lately limited her party's activities including ordering the closure of all NLD offices. There is little hope that the junta will take its own declaration of "restoring multi party democracy soon" seriously because of its allergy to a genuine political dialogue with Suu Kyi. It is time for the international community to act.

Suu Kyi: U.N. mission hangs in balance

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, JUNE 8. The U.N. mission to secure the release of the pro-democracy leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, today hung in the balance. There was no indication whether the U.N. special envoy, Razali Ismail, might at least be able to meet her. Ms. Suu Kyi is in the "protective custody" of the military junta.

The expectation today was that Mr. Razali might be able to meet Myanmar's top ruler and Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council, Senior General Than Shwe, in Yangon on Monday. Should that meeting take place, the U.N. envoy might be able to assess the possibilities of securing Ms. Suu Kyi's release in the present circumstances.

At the very least, Mr. Razali might then know whether he could call on the Nobel Peace

prize winner and leader of Myanmar's National League for Democracy (NLD).

Apart from the U.S., several regional players, as also China besides India, are believed to be exerting pressure, varying from the very mild to the very abrasive kind, on the Myanmar authorities.

It is important for Mr. Razali to meet Ms. Suu Kyi if only because he could then ascertain the circumstances in which she was taken into custody over a week ago and know whether she was injured in the clashes that preceded her latest detention. The military authorities, some of whom Mr. Razali has met since his arrival in Yangon three days ago, have maintained that those clashes, which involved the NLD activists and the pro-junta protesters, justified the curbs on Ms. Suu Kyi's movement.

Razali on mission to seek Suu Kyi's release

By P. S. Suryanarayana

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myanmar*

SINGAPORE, JUNE 7. The United Nations' Special Envoy on the Myanmar issue, now on a trouble-shooting mission to that South East Asian nation, said in Yangon today that he would like to meet and talk to all those concerned with the current political crisis there.

The U.N. envoy, Razali Ismail, has had talks with some leaders of the military junta in Yangon — the State Peace and Development Council — and he has also made no secret of his desire, on behalf of the wider international community, to meet Aung San Suu Kyi, the detained pro-democracy leader.

Mr. Razali's diplomatic brief extends to efforts aimed at securing the immediate release of Ms. Suu Kyi who, according to the Myanmar Government, was now in "protective custody" following clashes between her supporters and the pro-junta protesters at a place in northern Myanmar just over a week ago.

Ms. Suu Kyi is central to the U.N.'s efforts to

bring about national reconciliation in Myanmar through dialogue between the military rulers and her National League for Democracy.

An aspect of current concern to the international community is whether Ms. Suu Kyi was indeed injured in the clashes that preceded her latest in a series of detentions.

Even as the U.S. raised the diplomatic stakes by denouncing the latest Myanmar action against Ms. Suu Kyi and by threatening more concrete measures against the Yangon regime, the top authorities of the State Peace and Development Council today blamed her directly for the violence that occurred a week ago.

On the wider regional front of direct concern to Myanmar, the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) hinted today that it had been given some indications that Ms. Suu Kyi might be well.

However, the current standoff in Myanmar was of interest to the Association whose image, too, was at stake, it was pointed out. Myanmar is a member of the ASEAN group.

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U.N. envoy to seek Suu Kyi's release

Two copies
Set this Myanmar

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, JUNE 6. The United Nations today began a delicate diplomatic intervention in Myanmar to defuse the internal political crisis there by securing the immediate release of Aung San Suu Kyi, pro-democracy leader and a long-time political prisoner of conscience and dissident. Ms. Suu Kyi, who has spent most of her political career in detentions of one kind or another at the hands of the long-entrenched military junta in Myanmar, was taken into "protective custody" following certain 'incidents' towards the end of last month during the latest of her rare political campaigns in freedom.

This action against her followed clashes between the pro-junta protesters and her camp followers at a location in northern Myanmar. She was seeking to revive a sagging pro-democracy campaign under terms that were set by the junta in an agenda towards "national reconciliation". The U.N. had itself played a part in brokering through the efforts that began in 2000.

The U.N. Special Envoy on the Myanmar issue and former Malaysian diplomat, Razali Ismail, arrived in Yangon today on his tenth visit to bring about a substantive dialogue between the State Peace and Development Council and Ms. Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy (NLD). The visit, originally scheduled to last five days, has acquired an altogether different political complexion in the context of the 'detention' of Ms. Suu Kyi. Mr. Razali is understood to have begun discussions with junta, but the issue of Ms. Suu Kyi's release is expected to be a tough one to crack.

While this has sparked speculation that the U.N. envoy might cut short his visit in the event of appearing to draw a blank on the release, Mr. Razali has sought to play down the question. Before leaving for Yangon from Kuala Lumpur, Mr. Razali told reporters that "there is a strong bid to get her released immediately". This effort was being made in the context of an overwhelming



An activist holds a poster of the Myanmar pro-democracy leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, during a rally demanding her release in Bangkok on Friday. — AP

international opinion in favour of her release and the resumption of the stalled process of "national reconciliation" involving her party and the Government in Yangon, he pointed out.

At the very least, in his opinion, the expectation of the international community was that he might be allowed to visit Ms. Suu Kyi. He believed that there was "a realistic chance" of persuading the Myanmar Government to allow him to meet the NLD leader. This aspect of a meeting with her has acquired importance in the context of strong suspicions that she might have suffered injuries during the clashes last Friday. The junta, on its part, has so far maintained that she was not injured and that she remained safe in "protective custody".

7 JUN 2003

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HINDA

Pressure mounts on junta for Suu Kyi release

Nation/ ANN

BANGKOK, June 5. — International communities including the UN, EU and Friends of Burma agreed unanimously that the detention of the Opposition leader, Ms Aung San Suu Kyi, last week was a setback to the reconciliation process and they need to coordinate and step up their pressure, diplomats said.

At a special meeting on Burma yesterday at the UNHQ in New York, UN members concurred that the regime's treatment of Ms Suu Kyi was unacceptable and that she must be released immediately.

The UN meeting agreed that the UN special envoy on Burma, Mr Ismail Razali, must have access to Ms Suu Kyi during his visit to Burma beginning today. "Otherwise, the Burmese regime could blame him for failure to follow-up on the dialogue," said a Western diplomat. The UN members expressed concerns that the Opposition, National League of Democracy, is no longer operational because all of its branch offices have been closed and their leaders were under arrest.

Myanmar clarification: Myanmar has explained to Thailand that the detention of Ms Suu Kyi was a temporary measure for the sake of national security, foreign minister Mr Surakiart Sathirathai said yesterday. The explanation was made in a letter dated 30 May from Myanmar's foreign minister Mr Win Aung.



Opposition leader and Ms Aung San Suu Kyi' deputy, Mr Tin Oo. His whereabouts are unknown following last week's clashes in Yangon.

Students turned away from varsities in Myanmar

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✓

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8/6

YANGON, JUNE 2. Myanmar authorities turned away students from universities on Monday, the first day of a new semester, suspending classes just days after they detained the pro-democracy leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, and closed her party's offices.

The crackdown on Ms. Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy party follows a violent clash on Friday between her supporters and thousands of pro-government protesters, which officials said left four people dead and 50 injured in northern Myanmar.

University sources said on condition of anonymity on Sunday that authorities had decided to suspend classes at all universities and colleges under the Ministry of Education.

No reason was given for the suspension, and there was no immediate official announcement.

Myanmar's university campuses in the past have been hotbeds of pro-democracy activism. After intermittent closures since 1988, they were shut down after 1996 student demonstrations and remained closed until mid-2000.

The latest order applies to institutions under the Education Ministry, but classes were also suspended on Monday at the Science and Technology Ministry's Yangon Technology University, known for student activism.

It was unclear whether universities and colleges under other Ministries, many of them vocational institutions, were affected.

Students at the gates of the University of Foreign Language in Yangon said no prior notice was given about the suspension of classes. — AP

US joins chorus for Suu Kyi's release

S S Ann - Myanmar

Reuters

Washington: Discounting Myanmar as an irresponsible member of the international community for its detention of Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of movement for democracy in the country, the US on Tuesday demanded her immediate release and reopening of her party's offices.

"The United States condemns placing National League for Democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi in any sort of custody. The recent detention of Aung San Suu Kyi and other senior leaders of her party marks a significant step back for the military regime in Yangon and for the people of Myanmar," State Department spokesman Phil Reeker said in a statement. "The closing of the offices of the National League for Democracy across the country hinders national reconciliation and a peaceful transition to democracy and is inconsistent with the will and rights of the people of Myanmar," he said.

"We call on the regime for the immediate release of these officials and the reopening of their offices. A government that does not allow peaceful political expression or an atmosphere in which citizens can peacefully express their views cannot be counted as a responsible member of the international community," Mr Reeker said.

UN secretary general Kofi Annan has urged Myanmar's military government to release Aung San Suu Kyi and other pro-democracy leaders from "protective custody" and cooperate with them in bringing about national reconciliation. Mr Annan maintains that Ms Suu Kyi, both as a national leader and the leader of the NDL, must be allowed to play a role at this crucial juncture in cooperation with the government and others to bring about national reconciliation in Myanmar, Mr Annan's spokesman Fred Eckhard said.

The spokesman said the UN chief had instructed his special envoy, Razali Ismail, in his capacity as "facilitator" to talk to the government of Myanmar, Ms Suu Kyi and other leaders during his visit beginning June 6 in an effort to start the process of national reconciliation.



Myanmar citizens hold up posters in Japan of leader Aung San Suu Kyi, during a demonstration in front of the foreign ministry in Tokyo on Tuesday. The protesters called for the release of Suu Kyi and a halt to Japanese economic aid to Myanmar's military government.

The European Union and Amnesty International also joined the growing global chorus, condemning the arrest of Ms Suu Kyi and her party members.

Meanwhile, the military regime told diplomats in a briefing on Tuesday, the measures taken against Myanmar's democratic opposition in recent days were temporary and its leader Aung San Suu Kyi was safe and well.

Sources close to the junta say Ms Suu Kyi is being held at a government "guest house" in Yangon. Myanmar's Thailand-based government-in-exile said it had learned that Ms Suu Kyi suffered a serious head injury in the melee and that up to 70 people had been killed, but deputy minister Khin Maung Win rejected the report. Agencies

Myanmar shuts down varsities

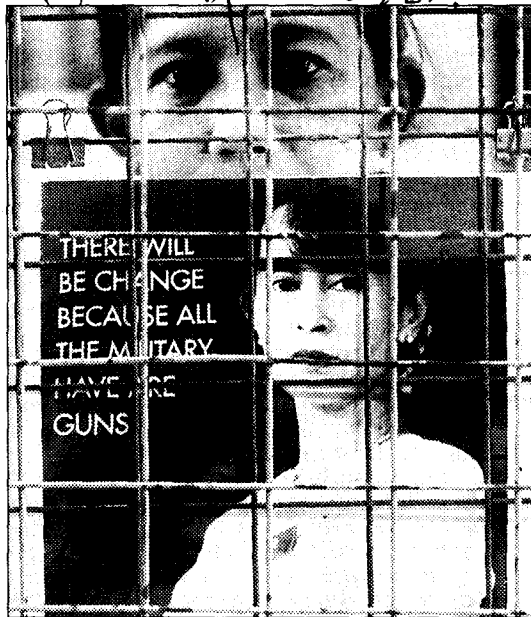
Yangon: Myanmar's military junta ordered universities closed despite Monday's opening of a new semester, after detaining pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi and closing her party's offices over the weekend, sources said.

The crackdown on Ms Suu Kyi's party followed a violent clash on Friday between her supporters and thousands of pro-junta protesters that left four people dead and 50 injured in northern Myanmar.

Professors said they were told to close universities and colleges, but that no reason was given.

Myanmar's university campuses in the past have been hotbeds of pro-democracy activism. After intermittent closures since 1988, they were shut down after the 1996 student demonstrations and remained closed until mid-2000.

Ms Suu Kyi was taken into "protective custody" and moved from Myanmar's north to a "safe



A file photo of a woman selling photographs of Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi at the headquarters of the National League for Democracy in Yangon on May 2.

place" in Yangon on Sunday, an official said on condition of anonymity.

She was not taken to her family's lakeside villa, where she was held under house arrest until last year.

The moves against Ms Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy have alarmed some foreign governments and the United Nations, which has been leading efforts to get the junta to negotiate with the opposition over political future for Myanmar.

The country has been ruled by the military for 40 years—the current junta came to power after crushing an uprising in 1988, leaving thousands of civilians dead.

It called general elections in 1990, which NLD won by a landslide, but the junta blocked the party from taking power. The country has been under a "transitional" military rule ever since. AP

Colleges ordered to close in Myanmar

YANGON, JUNE 1. Myanmar's universities and colleges have been closed indefinitely following the detention by military authorities of the Nobel Peace Prize laureate, Aung San Suu Kyi, university sources said on Sunday.

The move has not been officially announced, but one senior faculty member said on condition of anonymity that lecturers had been told by authorities at a meeting on Sunday to close universities for an indefinite period.

No reason was given for the closures, the faculty member said.

"It will not be announced officially, but university authorities will verbally inform students tomorrow (Monday)," a lecturer said. Myanmar's uni-



Aung San Suu Kyi's supporters taking out a rally demanding her release, outside the Myanmar Embassy in Tokyo on Sunday. — AP

versities and colleges had been scheduled to begin a new semester on Monday. It was not immediately known whether the closures were related to an ongoing

crackdown on Ms Suu Kyi, and her National League for Democracy party.

The junta said on Saturday that it had placed Ms. Suu Kyi and 19 members of her party in "protective custody" after a clash between her supporters and thousands of pro-Government protesters in northern Myanmar.

Four people were killed and 50 injured in the violence.

Since the current military regime took power in 1988, universities and colleges have been closed intermittently.

All universities and colleges were reopened in mid-2000 after nearly 3 1/2 years of closure following student demonstrations in December 1996. — AP

Yan-
 ✓ Yangon, May 31 (Reuters): Myanmar's ruling military said today it took Opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi and 17 of her top party members into "protective custody" after violent clashes between her supporters and opponents in the north of the country.

Myanmar junta spokesman Tin Win said Suu Kyi was taken into custody late yesterday after hundreds of her supporters clashed with opponents, leaving four people dead and as many as 50 injured.

Myanmar officials did not say what sparked the violence in the northern town of Yaway Oo, about 560 km north of the capital, and denied media reports that her vehicle had been fired on by an unidentified gunman yesterday night.

"There was no shooting at all, and nobody accompanying Aung San Suu Kyi was injured," Brig Gen. Than Tun said. The announcement that

Suu Kyi placed in custody

Suu Kyi was in custody came just hours after security officials sealed her NLD party headquarters in the capital, amid mounting criticism of the pro-democracy icon by the country's ruling military.

"It is too early to talk about the future of the NLD party," Brig. Gen. Tun said. He declined to say how long the 1991 Nobel peace laureate would be held. Suu Kyi was released from house arrest only a year ago after intense international pressure.

Telephone lines to the homes of senior members of Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) party in Yan-

to the capital tomorrow.

Earlier today, witnesses saw security officials put a large padlock on the door of the NLD headquarters in Yangon and remove a party flag. The keyhole on the lock was sealed and several plainclothes officers were posted outside. The closure of the NLD's headquarters comes days before the scheduled arrival of a top UN envoy, Malaysian Razali Ismail, due to visit on June 6-10 in a bid to revive stalled talks between the junta and Opposition.

Those talks now appear problematic, despite Than Tun saying "confidence-building" between the government and Opposition would remain unaffected. The talks have been stalled in the confidence-building phase since they began in late 2000, after Suu Kyi was put under house arrest. The government has never responded to Suu Kyi's calls for substantive dialogue on change.

Sources close to the junta said Suu Kyi would be returned

The ordinary citizen in Myanmar confesses in hushed tones that he would like Aung San Suu Kyi to take control of the country as soon as possible, but his dream remains as elusive as ever

THE INVISIBLE WOMAN

11/5

By SAJEDA MOMIN 51-8 S.E. Asia - Myanmar

TO the outside world Aung San Suu Kyi has symbolised Myanmar's fight for freedom and democracy, but within her own country she is the invisible woman. Her photograph does not appear anywhere, her name is not uttered even in private conversations, but she remains the sole figure that the Myanmar people look to in hope, for change and for a free future. Scratch any ordinary citizen behind the passive, outward exterior and there is a volcano of expectation waiting to erupt. After looking over their shoulder for the ubiquitous "intelligence informer" and in hushed tones Myanmarers will tell you that the military government has made a mess of their country, and that the rightful ruler is their beloved Suu Kyi. They would like her to take control as soon as possible. But their dream remains as elusive as ever.

In the last elections in 1990, Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy won a landslide victory. But the military junta was not ready to relinquish power, and immediately banned the NLD and put Suu Kyi under house arrest. After 12 long years and a lot of foreign political pressure on 6 May last year the "junta" relented and lifted the restrictions placed on her movements, and promised to start a dialogue and reconciliation process with her National League for Democracy. With this sprung hope. But it turned out to be purely a publicity gimmick. A year on the Myanmar political scene is exactly where it was in 2002.

Technically Suu Kyi is free to go where she wants and see who she wants, but the reality is different. Her home on University Avenue is still blocked off by barricades on both sides and even driving past is not allowed. A member of the intelligence service checks identity cards at the barricade and politely, but firmly asks to take a detour. Foreign dignitaries are discouraged from visiting her, and local journalists do not meet

The author is Assistant Editor, The Statesman

her for fear of their jobs. Her phones are tapped, and if a conversation takes an "undesirable" turn, lines are immediately snapped. Though she is allowed to visit the NLD party offices, she can not hold public meetings in Yangon. She can travel out of the capital which she has done seven times in the last year, but even here her attempts to address the public are thwarted with petty moves. Loudspeakers are put up at the same venue by the government

languishing in jail. Even the publicity is not for internal consumption. The news of the release of prisoners on 4 May 2003 appeared immediately in papers around the world, but local papers could not publish a word. However the "jungle" press works so efficiently that whispers of the release are heard all over Yangon within hours. If newspapers accidentally mention Suu Kyi or her people, it is struck out before going to the press by the censors who scrutinise every

They promise elections but refuse to give a time-frame. The situation is not expected to change while Than Shwe is alive



blaring out patriotic songs so as to prevent her voice being heard or fire engines are sent in to disperse the crowd. Not one to be cowed down, Suu Kyi carries on relentlessly, even if it means having to climb on to the fire engine to deliver her speech. The spontaneous affection that people have for her is such that she does not need to look for crowds. Her presence is enough for a crowd to gather.

The NLD spokesman U Lwin, himself a former military man admits that the reconciliation process has stagnated. Gains made by the NLD in one year, he accepts, are that Suu Kyi is free to travel, and that they have been able to open about a 100 party offices — but that is all. Public demonstrations are still banned, and any attempts to flout this means imprisonment. On the eve of the 6 May anniversary this year, 21 NLD activists were released from jail in another publicity gimmick, but there are still around 1400 more workers

word. The military junta would like the Myanmarers to think that Suu Kyi doesn't exist. The chairman of the State Peace and Development Council and prime minister, senior general Than Shwe reportedly dislikes Suu Kyi so much that he will not hear her name mentioned even in private. To them she epitomises change and that is the one word that frightens them.

The fact that the junta have no intention of relinquishing power is clear. The government talks of dialogue with the NLD and other ethnic minority groups, but gives no date for it to commence. They promise elections but refuse to give a time-frame for them. The situation is not expected to change while Than Shwe is alive. He has just turned 70 and is fighting fit. The two other leaders Maung Aye and Khin Nyunt who complete the triumvirate are also 67 and 63 respectively, and have no desire to let go of power. The only hope the people have is Suu Kyi. Not ready to allow the demo-

cracy movement to turn into a people's agitation for fear of it turning violent Suu Kyi has boxed herself in. The only way forward for freedom to come to Myanmar is for a spontaneous uprising. With the military so entrenched, change cannot take place without bloodshed. Suu Kyi who is only 57, has surrounded herself with confidants much older than her too. She has not allowed a second rung of young leaders to grow for fear of it encouraging a militant movement. But how long she will be able to ensure this is debatable.

The mismanaged economy, rising unemployment, spiralling inflation and wasted resources are all factors for an extremely dissatisfied youth. While the world steps into the 21st century the military junta has kept Myanmar in the early 20th century simply to hold on to power. An average Myanmar home does not have a telephone, television or fridge. As the world grapples with the information revolution, mobile telephones, satellite dishes and internet surfing are only for the reliable few — and this means army generals in government. Passports are as rare as gold dust, and contact with the outside world is limited to foreigners, mostly Chinese who come for trade.

It will not be possible for the junta to keep the iron curtain around Myanmar indefinitely. Trade links with neighbours on all sides have become a necessity for economic growth. They already have strengthened trade with China, India and Thailand. This generates a momentum of its own which bring some external influences into the country irrespective of how much the junta dislikes it. Pirate satellite TV channels beamed out of Thailand are available but at exorbitant prices. As the youth begin to see the technological revolution and material goods they have been denied, dissatisfaction and resentment can only grow. It is then that Myanmar may see change. It may not come in a form that either Suu Kyi or the junta would like, but by then it will be too late.

Suu Kyi sceptical of talks

2014
Agence France Presse

YANGON, April 23. — Myanmar's democratic opposition leader Ms Aung San Suu Kyi complained for the first time publicly about the lack of progress in national reconciliation talks with the country's ruling military junta. Her statements marked a major turnaround on her usually conciliatory stance, said observers.

"We have been concerned with the lack of process. We should move on to a more advanced stage. We have been forced to question the integrity of the (ruling) State Peace and Development Council and their sincerity in achieving national reconciliation," she told reporters.

"If they truly have the interests of the people at heart, they have got to come to a settlement," she said, speaking at only the third press conference she has given since her release from 19 months of house arrest last May.

"I have come to the conclusion that the SPDC is not interested in national reconciliation. We need to come to national reconciliation quickly for the sake of the people and the country," she added.

The UN-brokered talks between Ms Suu Kyi and the junta began in October 2000, but grounded to a halt after some time. When asked why she thought the SPDC did not want national reconciliation, she said: "National reconciliation is change. They don't want change, but change is inevitable... It is high time to proceed from the confidence-building stage to full cooperation, specially in the humanitarian area, which would lead us to general reconciliation and dialogue," Ms Suu Kyi said.

Suspended prison term for Suu Kyi

Yangon, February 21

MYANMAR · OPPOSITION leader Aung San Suu Kyi was sentenced to a week in jail on Friday after being found guilty in a family dispute, but she walked free after a judge suspended her sentence.

A court in Yangon's Bahan township found her guilty of unlawful restraint of a person for keeping her cousin, Soe Aung, out of the residential compound they had shared in Yangon, colleagues from her National League for Democracy party said.

The offence by Suu Kyi is punishable by a fine of 500 kyat or a week in jail.

"Suu Kyi was asked to pay the fine, but she refused to do so as she said she was not guilty as charged," said Aung Shwe, chairman of her National League for Democracy party.

He and party Vice Chairman Tin Oo both attended the court session.

The case was heard on Friday, but the parties concerned remained at the court while Suu Kyi's lawyers filed for what is known as a revision of the case, a procedure similar to an appeal.

Suu Kyi's lawyer Nyan Win told reporters that the district magistrate's office, which has authority over the township, decided to suspend the sentence, but he did not know why



Aung San Suu Kyi
Adamant

or whether any conditions were attached.

The roots of the latest case go back to May last year when Suu Kyi sued Soe Aung after he allegedly punched her in the face during an argument. Sources familiar with the incident said it involved a dispute over changes Soe Aung made to the property while Suu Kyi was serving 19 months of house arrest that ended last May.

AP

22 FEB 2003

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES