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`Suu Kyi release a political progress'

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday described the release of pro-democracy opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi after 19 months of house arrest as a progress towards democracy in Myanmar.

"I think it is a progress and we should accept it. It shows common sense on the part of both Suu Kyi and the Myanmar Government," the Prime Minister told newsmen after the opening of the 35th International General Meeting of Pacific Basin Economic Council in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

He said both (Suu Kyi and Myanmar Government) should be commended for the action.

"I don't think anything can be achieved overnight. This has taken us a long time. We have to be patient," he said.

The release of Suu Kyi by the ruling junta yesterday was considered a breakthrough after more than a decade of political stalemate.

The 56-year-old Nobel peace laureate has been confined to her home with her telephone line cut since September 2000 after trying to defy a government ban on travel outside the capital, Yangon.

Myanmar is a member of the Association of South-East Asian Nations.

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