

STAR 2 4 JUL 2003

Dr M and Thaksin to discuss Myanmar

BANGKOK: Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr and his Thai counterpart Thaksin Shinawatra will discuss the political crisis in Myanmar during talks in Langkawi this weekend.

During the two-day talks, Thaksin will also meet with United Nations envoy to Myanmar Tan Sri Razali Ismail, said Thai Foreign Minister Surakiart Sathirathai.

Razali is the only outsider to have seen Myanmar opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi since she was taken into detention in the wake of the May 30 political violence.

"Razali will brief Thaksin on the problem and his meeting with Aung San Suu Kyi and Razali wants to listen to Thaksin's ideas on how to convince Myanmar's government to free her," Surakiart told reporters on Tuesday.

Thailand has reportedly presented to Myanmar a "roadmap" towards national reconciliation, which Surakiart plans to discuss with his Myanmar counterpart Win Aung when he visits Thailand later this month for economic talks.

The international community has responded angrily to the democracy activist's detention, with the United States and European Union beefing up sanctions and Asean issuing an unprecedented call last month for her release.

Dr Mahathir warned on Sunday that Myanmar may as a last resort face expulsion from Asean if it continues defying world pressure to free the 1991 Nobel peace laureate.

The Thai government said in a statement yesterday that Dr Mahathir had invited Thaksin to the weekend meeting in Langkawi.

The two leaders are expected to discuss other bilateral issues. — AFP