

Myanmar's track to democracy irreversible, says Najib
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PUTRAJAYA: Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak believes that the track towards democratisation and more inclusive form of governance in Myanmar is a course that is irreversible.

The Prime Minister said he believed that the view was shared by many people in Myanmar, and for that reason, the Asean Summit held recently put forward the case for countries that had imposed sanctions on Myanmar to review or at least suspend the sanction.

Najib said after meeting Myanmar President U Thein Sein in Naypyitaw recently, he believed that the president was sincere about reform in Myanmar, and this had been supported and underscored by former political detainee Aung San Suu Kyi's remarks on the president herself.

He pointed out that it was important to support Thein Sein, so that he would feel encouraged if he received support from the international community adding "because there will be elements that would want to take a much more conservative approach, a much more totalitarian approach which will certainly not augur well for the future of Myanmar."

Najib was at a joint press conference with British Prime Minister David Cameron here.

The United States and the European Union imposed investment and trade sanctions on Myanmar following almost five decades of military rule in the country.

However, following the general election in Myanmar 2010, the military junta was dissolved and Yangon made several dramatic changes, including opening up of the April 1 by-elections in the country to the opposition, releasing hundreds of political prisoners, signing truces with rebel groups and easing restrictions on the media.

Cameron, who arrived here for a two-day official visit to Malaysia, said as Britain played a leading role in the EU in placing tough sanctions on the Myanmar regime to reform, Britain should not be the one being backwards in its response, if the country was satisfied that there was real change taking place in Myanmar.

"In the world where there are many dark and depressing chapters of history being written, there is a potential chapter of light that is being written in Burma (Myanmar) where there does seem to be a prospect of flowering of more democracy and freedom," he said.

"Aung San herself who has spent so many years in such a long and lonely but powerful struggle for freedom and democracy in Burma, believes that he (Thein Sien) is acting in good faith, that is why I want to visit Burma to see and hear myself what is happening there," he added.

On Syria, Cameron said there is no doubt that the deadline put in place by the United Nation (UN) backed peace plan, was breached by Syrian President Bashar Assad.

Source:

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