

Myanmar's Suu Kyi to hold rare meeting with president
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YANGON, April 10 — Myanmar Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi will have a rare meeting with President Thein Sein tomorrow following her party's triumph in a by-election that won her a seat in parliament, an aide said.

The talks at the presidential palace in the capital Naypyitaw will be the second time the 66-year-old Suu Kyi has met the reform-minded president, a heavyweight in the ruling junta that kept her in detention for 15 years.

"It will be a one-to-one meeting between the president and her and there will lunch hosted by the president's family," Suu Kyi's security officer, Khun Tha Myint, told Reuters today, adding that some ministers were also expected to attend.

The meeting comes less than two weeks before Suu Kyi takes a seat in the lower house after her National League for Democracy (NLD) party won an April 1 by election in a landslide, scooping 43 of 45 available seats in the legislature.

The invitation illustrates the huge political clout carried by the Oxford-educated Suu Kyi, the influential and wildly popular daughter of Myanmar's slain independence hero Aung San.

The election appears to have been endorsed by the West, and countries such as Britain, France and the United States have given heavy hints they may start to undo some sanctions in response to the ballot and other reforms in the year since the authoritarian military regime ceded power to a civilian-led administration.

Thein Sein, the former junta fourth-in-command widely seen as a moderate with a clean image, won the trust of Suu Kyi during a landmark meeting last August. She views him as "honest" and "sincere" and believes she can work with him for the benefit of the country.

Thein Sein, also 66, is widely believed to have convinced Suu Kyi to end the NLD's boycott of Myanmar's new political system, which is dominated by retired or serving soldiers and contains remnants of the regime that persecuted her allies, dissidents and journalists.

Although the president's ruling Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) was trounced in the ballot, Suu Kyi's new role as a parliamentarian is a boon for a government seeking domestic and international acceptance for its fledgling parliamentary system. — Reuters

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