

## **Suu Kyi to visit Norway, Britain after 24 years in Myanmar**

**Reuters**

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YANGON, April 18 — Nobel Peace Prize laureate and newly elected lawmaker Aung San Suu Kyi will travel outside Myanmar for the first time in 24 years after accepting invitations to visit Norway and Britain in June, her party said today.

Her travel caps months of dramatic change in Myanmar, including a historic by-election on April 1 that won her a seat in a year-old parliament that replaced nearly five decades of oppressive military rule.

Her trip will include a visit to British city Oxford, where she attended university in the 1970s, said National League for Democracy (NLD) party spokesman Nyan Win.

“But I don’t know the exact date yet,” Nyan Win said, adding he did not know which country she would visit first. She has previously indicated that it would be Norway.

Suu Kyi, 66, was first detained in 1989, and spent 15 of the next 21 years in detention until her release from house arrest in November 2010, refused to leave the country during the brief periods when she was not held by authorities, for fear of not being allowed to return.

She won one of her party’s 43 seats in this month’s by-election following a series of reforms under President Thein Sein, a former general, including the release of political prisoners, more media freedom, dialogue with ethnic militias and an exchange rate unification seen crucial to fixing the economy.

‘Great progress’

Suu Kyi was invited to visit Britain when she met Prime Minister David Cameron in Yangon on Friday. At the time, she said the fact that she would consider the offer, rather than reject it outright, showed “great progress” had been achieved in Myanmar.

“Two years ago I would have said thank you for the invitation, but sorry,” she added.

Suu Kyi’s long refusal to leave Myanmar characterised her steely determination to defy the ruling junta, which offered to release her from house arrest to be with her late husband, Michael Aris, who died of cancer in Britain in 1999.

Their story was played out on the big screen late last year in the film “The Lady”, as she is affectionately known, with Malaysian action star Michelle Yeoh playing Suu Kyi.

The daughter of assassinated independence hero Aung San visited Myanmar in April 1988 to take care of her dying mother, Khin Kyi, a former ambassador to India and Nepal.

Her NLD went on to win by a landslide a 1990 election for a constitution-drafting assembly, but the military ignored the result, leading to a two-decade political stalemate between the junta and Suu Kyi’s opposition. — Reuters

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