

# Compromise profit, help Myanmar

Suu Kyi urges investors, warns against 'reckless optimism'

REUTERS, Bangkok

Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi yesterday urged foreign firms to invest cautiously in fast-changing Myanmar and give priority to creating jobs as much as making profits to help defuse the "time bomb" that is the country's high unemployment rate.

Speaking during her first trip outside her country in 24 years, the leader of the fight against dictatorship in Myanmar warned against "reckless optimism" about its rapid reforms, which could be easily undone if not supported by the military.

Suu Kyi, 66, said the country, also known as Burma, faced a crisis due to the number of people without work and urged foreign companies to provide jobs and training. Their investments should not fuel corruption or line the pockets only of the business elite.

"The proportion of young people unemployed in Burma is extremely high. That is a time bomb," she said in a speech to the World Economic Forum on East Asia in Bangkok.

"Please don't think about how much benefit will come to those who are investing. I understand investors invest because they

hope to profit from ventures - I agree with that - but our country must benefit as much as those who invest.

"I want this commitment to mean quite simply jobs - as many jobs as possible."

Millions of people in Myanmar have been forced abroad, many to Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia, because of a lack of jobs.

Western sanctions have prevented foreign companies from investing in the country of 60 million people, but most restrictions have been suspended in recent months in response to reforms by the quasi-civilian government that took office just over a year ago.

The Oxford-educated daughter of Myanmar's slain independence leader, Aung San, Suu Kyi has received an ecstatic welcome in Thailand during a visit that

would have been unimaginable 18 months ago, when she was under house arrest under a military junta.

She spent a total of 15 years in detention before her release in late 2010 and her venture abroad is one of the clearest signs yet of her confidence in the changes taking place under President Thein Sein, a former general in the junta.

For years she refused to leave, fearing the generals she was challenging would not let her back.

Suu Kyi said she felt Thein Sein was committed to improving the country but the extent to which his reforms were irreversible depended on the military, by far Myanmar's most powerful institution.

"I do believe in the sincerity of the president," she said. "But I also recognise he's not

the only person in government and as I keep repeating, there's the military to be reckoned with."

Even if the government was pushing through democratic, social and economic reforms, it did not seem interested in overhauling a judiciary that lacked independence, she said.

"Would-be investors in Burma please be warned: even the best investment law will be of no use whatsoever if there are no courts clean or independent enough to be able to administer those laws justly," she said.

Suu Kyi played down talk of Myanmar being caught up in a geopolitical tug-of-war between the United States and China, its main ally during decades of isolation, and said she welcomed responsible investment from any country.

"I'm concerned when people say Burma is a battleground for the United States and China. It should not be so," she said.

"It's imperative we have good relations with our neighbours and at the same time, we want to open up the country to others interested in our welfare and helping our country to progress."



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# Obama stepped up cyberattacks on Iran

Reports New York Times

AFP, Washington

US President Barack Obama accelerated cyberattacks on Iran's nuclear program and expanded the assault even after the Stuxnet virus accidentally escaped in 2010, the New York Times reported yesterday.

The operation, begun under president George W Bush and codenamed "Olympic Games," is the first known sustained US cyberattack ever launched on another country, and used malicious code developed with Israel, the Times said.

The Times said the article was based on 18 months of interviews with current and former US, European and Israeli officials, and was adapted from the book "Confront and Conceal: Obama's Secret Wars and Surprising Use of American Power," by David Sanger, set to be published next week.

The cyberattack, aimed at preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons and keeping Israel from launching a preventive military strike, sowed widespread confusion in Iran's Natanz nuclear plant, the Times said.

However, top administration officials considered suspending it after Stuxnet -- a complex virus developed jointly with Israel -- "escaped" the facility and began appearing in computer systems in several countries, the Times said.

Obama eventually ordered the attacks to continue, and within a week of Stuxnet's escape a newer version of the bug temporarily brought down 1,000 of Iran's 5,000 nuclear

# Prince Charles tells tales of 'Mama'

GUARDIAN ONLINE

The Prince of Wales has paid tribute to "my Mama", sharing his childhood memories of the Queen and dusting off home movies in a personal appreciation, which was broadcasted yesterday.

In it he recalls how, as a four-year-old, he watched his young mother practising with the heavy (2.2kg) St Edward's crown ahead of her coronation. "I remember my Mama coming, you know, up, when we were being bathed as children, wearing the crown. It was quite funny practising," he says.

Private cine camera footage, taken behind the scenes on coronation day in 1953, shows the Queen juggling the dual role of mother and monarch, as she walks along the corridors of Buckingham Palace. Charles, watching the films 59 years later, draws attention to his mother's "amazing poise" and her "natural grace".

Previously unreleased footage from cine films taken on various family



Prince Charles with his mother on sports day at Hill House School, west London. This picture was taken in 1957.

holidays include one sequence filmed by the Queen.

Showing a young Prince Charles and Princess Anne being buried in the sand at Holkham beach, Norfolk, the footage is similar to that stored in boxes in millions of homes across Britain. Only the presence of the ubiquitous corgi signifies its royal provenance.

"My Mama takes great pride in her family, from being a young mother at the start of her reign, to now being a great grandmother twice over," says the prince, as he views videos taken aboard

the Queen's beloved royal yacht Britannia, at Windsor, and at Balmoral.

He also divulges how he and his parents practised for his investiture as Prince of Wales in 1969 by rehearsing in the gardens of Buckingham Palace.

Charles says: "The fact that my Mama has been a constant feature on the scene has provided that sense, I think, of continuity in a time of immense change over 60 years."

He expresses admiration for "the way she has managed to hold that unique association the Commonwealth together". He adds: "I think just the sheer number of heads of state who are coming to the jubilee celebrations shows the respect and affection with which my Mama is held all around the world."

"The Queen has provided an amazing record of devotion, dedication and commitment," the heir-to-the throne says in A Jubilee Tribute to the Queen, to be aired on BBC1 at 8:00pm.

# US base attack kills 14 in Afghanistan

AFP, Kabul

A suicide truck bomber attacked a US-run base yesterday, sparking clashes that killed up to 14 people in eastern Afghanistan near the Pakistani border, officials said.

Nato's US-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) said none of its personnel was killed in the attack in Khost province, a Taliban flashpoint that borders Pakistan.

The Taliban militia, which is leading a 10-year insurgency against foreign troops and the Kabul government, claimed responsibility for the attack.

But the precise details of what happened were murky. An Afghan security official told AFP that the bomber drove a truck packed with explosives into the outer security checkpoint of Forward Operating Base Salerno, which is run by the US military.

According to the official, the victims are Afghan workers involved in a construction project at the base.

A spokesman for the Taliban claimed that a "large number" of foreign soldiers were killed, but the militia is known to exaggerate its claims.

On August 28, 2010 Nato said about two dozen Taliban militants were killed in a failed attempt to storm both US-run bases in a city in eastern Afghanistan, Nato said.

Khost is one of the most volatile parts of the country. It shares a porous border with Pakistan's tribal belt, which lies outside government control, and where US officials say the Taliban and al-Qaeda have carved out rear bases for operations in Afghanistan.



An Egyptian man paints his national flag on the arm of a comrade as they protest against the results of the first round of presidential elections.

PHOTO: AFP

# Egypt ends state of emergency

AFP, Cairo

Egypt's decades-old state of emergency came to an end on Thursday as its last renewal expired, the ruling military said, vowing to continue to "protect" the nation.

The military will continue its "national and historic responsibility, taking into account that the state of emergency has ended, in accordance with the constitutional declaration and with the law," it said.

It said it would continue in that role until it hands over power, as it has promised it would to an elected president by the end of June. A runoff between the two frontrunners from the first round of the election is to be held on June 16-17.

Egypt has been under a state of emergency continuously since president Anwar Sadat's assassination in 1981, allowing authorities to detain people without charge and try them in emergency security courts.

Parliament renewed the emergency law for two years in May 2010 when now ousted president Hosni Mubarak was still in power, but limited its application to terrorism and drug crimes.

The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), which took charge after Mubarak's overthrow in February 2011, at first extended the law to include strikes but then said it would apply only to "thuggery."

A constitutional declaration ratified in a referendum in March last year gave the military the responsibility to "protect" the country but said only parliament had the right to proclaim a state of emergency, at the executive's request.

The military had suspended the constitution after Mubarak's overthrow.

Essam Erian, the deputy leader of the Islamist Freedom and Justice Party, which has the most seats in parliament, told AFP the military's statement indicated it would not ask parliament to extend the law.

The party's leader and presidential candidate Mohammed Mursi has said the law will not be renewed.

Speaking in Washington, US State Department spokesman Mark Toner said he understood the scrapping of emergency law takes effect at midnight.

Ending the state of emergency was a key demand of protesters who toppled Mubarak in an 18-day popular uprising in January and February last year.

Thousands of Egyptians had been jailed under the law over the previous decades. Many have been released since the military took power.

# Ireland backs EU fiscal pact

AFP, Dublin

Ireland has voted with a large majority to back the EU fiscal pact aimed at shoring up the eurozone, final results from its referendum showed yesterday.

Riona Ni Fhlanghaile, returning officer for the referendum, said 60.3 percent of voters had voted in favour of Ireland ratifying the pact, which will penalise countries that fail to keep their deficits in check.

The result comes as a huge relief to the debt-laden Irish government as only countries that ratify the pact will have guaranteed access to the EU's new permanent bailout fund.

It will also spare the EU a headache, as a "no" vote could have fuelled a growing backlash in Europe against austerity measures.

EU president Herman Van Rompuy hailed the vote as a key step towards Europe's economic recovery.

Ireland was forced to accept an 85-billion-euro (\$105 billion) bailout by the EU and IMF in 2010, and the "no" camp sought to harness public anger against the spending cuts and tax rises brought in as part of the deal.

Although pre-referendum opinion polls had predicted a clear victory for the "yes" campaign, only half the 3.1 million-strong electorate turned out to vote, raising fears that the low turnout could help the "no" camp.

But most voters appeared to accept the government's warning that if Ireland did not ratify the pact, it would not be able to access the European Stability Mechanism (ESM), the permanent rescue fund that comes into force in July.

Ireland is the only country to hold a national referendum on the fiscal pact, which all 27 EU members have signed except Britain and the Czech Republic.



India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh talks to Iran's Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi during their meeting in New Delhi yesterday. India and the United States recently had a rift as Washington urged the import-dependent emerging economy to cut oil imports from Iran. Salehi is on a two-day visit to India.

# US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, 2012 Bill Clinton predicts strong Obama win

AFP, Washington

Former US president Bill Clinton said Thursday he thought that fellow Democrat Barack Obama would be easily re-elected to the White House, even though polls currently show a close race.

"I still think the president will win by five or six points," Clinton told CNN, in an interview with movie producer Harvey Weinstein.

Obama faces presumptive Republican nominee Mitt Romney in the November 6 election.

Obama and Romney are even in a number of nationwide polls.

At this point polls show support for the two men closer than it will be in November, Clinton said, due to continued stress on the US economy.

But if Obama's supporters hit the trail and tout his achievements as president, Clinton said he was confident "he'll be fine and he'll be re-elected."

Meanwhile, Nancy Reagan announced Thursday she's backing Mitt Romney in the 2012 presidential election.

The endorsement came after Romney and his wife, Ann, met with the former first lady at her home outside Los Angeles over "lemonade and cookies," according to a statement. Reagan called him the "clear choice" in the 2012 race.

# Serbs, Nato troops clash in Kosovo

BBC ONLINE

At least three Serbs and one K-For soldier were injured yesterday in a clash in northern Kosovo during an attempt by peacekeepers to clear roadblocks.

Reports said soldiers from the Nato-led force had fired rubber bullets or live rounds after rioters threw stones at a roadblock near the town of Zvecan.

A witness told Reuters news agency that some Serbs had fired hand-guns.

Serbs set up roadblocks last year after the Kosovo and EU authorities tried to take control of the border with Serbia.

The border has been the scene of recurrent violence between peacekeepers and ethnic Serbs who make up the majority in northern Kosovo.

# Two killed in Gaza border clash

BBC ONLINE

An Israeli soldier and a Palestinian were killed during an exchange of fire along the Gaza border yesterday.

The Israeli army said that the Palestinian cut through the border fence and opened fire on Israeli troops, who then shot back.

Separately, an Israeli air strike targeted militants travelling on a motorbike, sources in Gaza say. There are reports of serious injuries.

The incidents come after several months of relative calm along the Gaza border.

The Israeli military maintains an exclusion zone on the Gaza side of the boundary between Gaza and Israel, and troops regularly carry out military activity in the area and fire on Palestinians

# Greek leftist vows to scrap bailout

Conservatives warn of euro exit nightmare

AFP, Athens

Greece's radical leftist party Syriza, likely to win crucial June 17 elections, vowed yesterday to scrap an international bailout, freeze loan payments and reverse austerity reforms including privatization amid rising fears.

"The bailout deal is an automatic pilot to utter disaster," Syriza leader Alexis Tsipras told party supporters as he unveiled an election programme that runs contrary to many of Greece's loan obligations.

"We ask for the vote of the Greek people in order to annul it" so that it can be renegotiated, he told a packed auditorium in a run-down Athens neighbourhood.

The vote will determine whether Greece will meet the terms of a deal under which the European Union and International Monetary Fund agreed to lend it hundreds of billions of euros (dollars) in return for economic austerity reforms.

Tsipras promised to boost the minimum wage, increase taxes on the



Antonis Samaras



Alexis Tsipras

rich and freeze a major privatisation drive designed to raise 19.5 billion euros (\$24.2 billion) in state asset sales, a key condition of its bailout deal.

Tsipras's stance has raised speculation that Athens could be forced to leave the eurozone if the reforms falter, raising fears for the future of the single currency.

However, the 37-year-old radical leftist leader has said Greece can stay in the eurozone.

He likened the loan agreement to a "deadly medicine" which has caused a "tragedy" in Greece, where more than a million people are jobless and suicides are mounting in an economy now in its fifth year of recession.

"You don't save a patient's life by changing the dosage of a deadly medicine. You need to change the medicine itself," Tsipras said.

Earlier, conservative leader Antonis Samaras said on Thursday if Greece rejects the 130-billion-euro (104 billion pounds) rescue package meant to dig it out of a debt crisis the country will be plunged into a nightmare that it cannot control.

"Denouncing the bailout will lead to an exit from the euro and Greek living standards will drop by a third in very little time. It will be a real nightmare," Samaras told supporters, outlining his 18-point economic policy platform.

"Those who talk of denouncing the bailout are like little children playing with matches in a gunpowder warehouse and they are driving us towards an isolated Greece."

Although he did not name SYRIZA, his leftist rivals, by name, his comments were aimed at rebutting the radical party's proposals to keep the euro but ditch the bailout, the conditions of which it believes are too harsh.