



Ms Suu Kyi meeting the press on Tuesday in Prague, where she was attending a conference. She will arrive in Singapore today for a four-day visit.

PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

## Aung San Suu Kyi on first visit to S'pore

By JEREMY AU YONG

NOBEL peace laureate and Myanmar opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi arrives in Singapore today for what will be her first-ever visit to the Republic.

The four-day trip will also mark the first time Ms Suu Kyi has made a bilateral visit to an Asean country since she was released from house arrest in 2010.

Her visit has drawn widespread interest here, especially among the local Myanmar community. Some 5,000 have signed up for her scheduled meeting with Singapore-based Myanmar citizens.

At the government level, she will call on top leaders including

President Tony Tan Keng Yam, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Emeritus Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong, said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in a statement yesterday.

ESM Goh is due to host Ms Suu Kyi and her delegation to a lunch at the Istana.

She will also meet Speaker of Parliament Halimah Yacob and Second Minister for Foreign Affairs Grace Fu. Ms Suu Kyi chairs the committee for rule of law, peace and tranquillity in the Lower House of the Myanmar Parliament.

Her visit takes place against a backdrop of strengthening ties between Singapore and Myanmar.

Singapore's leaders have emphasised on several occasions that the Republic welcomes ongoing reforms in Myanmar and is willing to help the country with its development.

In recent years, there has been an increase in mutual visits by leaders from the two countries.

President Tan and ESM Goh both visited the Myanmar capital of Naypyidaw this year and met President Thein Sein as well as Ms Suu Kyi. President Thein Sein and Myanmar Lower House Speaker Shwe Mann have also come to Singapore in recent years.

Given that Mr Shwe Mann and Ms Suu Kyi have both voiced ambitions to run in the 2015 elections,

her visit means that all the leaders currently in the race for the top spot in Myanmar have stopped by Singapore.

Bilateral visits aside, improving ties have seen the two countries sign a Memorandum of Understanding on a Singapore-Myanmar Technical Cooperation Programme last year.

The MOU paves the way for Singapore to help Myanmar in economic development, human resource development and public administration.

Technical aspects will also feature in Ms Suu Kyi's itinerary in Singapore. She will visit the Institute of Technical Education College East and receive briefings

from the Economic Development Board, the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau and the Ministry of Education.

She is reportedly keen to learn more about Singapore's education system and its development model.

Ms Suu Kyi is also scheduled to deliver two speeches over the weekend.

Tomorrow, she will deliver the conference keynote address on "Myanmar in Transition" at the Singapore Summit. On Sunday, she will speak at the Singapore Management University's Ho Rih Hwa Leadership in Asia Public Lecture Series.

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