

PANEL DISCUSSION

POLITICAL TRANSITION IN MYANMAR – IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIA

Date: 04 December 2012

Time: 9.30 am Registration ; 10.00 am Panel Discussion

Venue: Azad Bhavan, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies (MAKAIAS)

IB Block, Plot No. 166 Sector III, Salt Lake. Kolkata – 700106

Myanmar has been witnessing significant political changes in the recent past. Aung San Suu Kyi has been released from house arrest and so were some of her colleagues after prolonged incarceration. In the by-elections held in April 2012, Suu Kyi's party National League for Democracy (NLD) secured an emphatic victory winning 43 seats out of 45 seats. Pre-publication censorship has been lifted and restrictions for accessing international websites, which were banned earlier, have been eased. The Right to protest legislation has been promulgated and the government has taken up the monetary reforms process seriously. Sustained efforts are being made to address ethnic conflict and there have been ceasefire agreements with numerous armed groups. All these prompt us to ask as to what caused the recent opening up in Myanmar. Specifically, it is important to explore the political, social and economic factors that may have propelled a movement towards a participatory political process. There is a need to map the changing contours of ethnic conflict and the principles on the basis of which ethnic conflict can be addressed. The exogenous factors impacting the above processes need to be examined as well.

India has strong historical ties and shares more than 1600 kms border with Myanmar. The borderlands of India-Myanmar are dotted with groups that share similar ethnic identity. An increase in intensity of ethnic conflict or a stalled transition will definitely have a negative spill-over impact on India. On the other hand, Myanmar is a land-bridge to Southeast Asia and provides immense opportunities in trade and other economic activities. Given the interconnectedness, it is important to map the consequences of recent developments in Myanmar for India. The proposed panel discussion intends to reflect on some of the above mentioned issues. Experts from Myanmar, members of the Kolkata academic community, policy makers, representatives from the corporate sector and others will participate in the panel discussion.
