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Canada wants to help Myanmar in the 'march toward democracy'

Saturday, 23 February 2013 16:22 | Rosie Gogan-Keogh



The head of a Canadian delegation to Myanmar has welcomed the country's reforms to date but has called for further moves forward, stating that "Canada is here to help Burma [Myanmar] in the march toward democracy."

"I see the reforms that have taken place and we are here to continue with that," said Deepak Obhrai, parliamentary secretary to the Canadian minister of foreign affairs, speaking at the end of his visit on February 22.

The delegation met with opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi and speakers of the upper and lower houses during their five-day tour.

Obhrai said that it was clear that the parliamentarians needed "all the assistance they can get" and that Canada hoped to help establish good practices in areas such as elections and taxes.

When *Mizzima* asked about Canada's continuing sanctions on Myanmar, Obhrai said, "The sanctions that are still in place are on individuals and



Deepak Obhrai, parliamentary secretary to the Canadian minister

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companies who are violating the Canadian values of human rights and rule of law. In those areas we want to engage with the people and help provide capacity building.”

“We are encouraged by the reforms here and the moves towards democracy in this country but there are still issues of ethnic violence, issues of human rights, minority rights, the availability of free press—all those issues which are now moving forward,” he said.

A Canadian Embassy will open in Yangon in the coming months.

A reciprocal visit by Myanmar representatives to Canada is expected to take place later this year.

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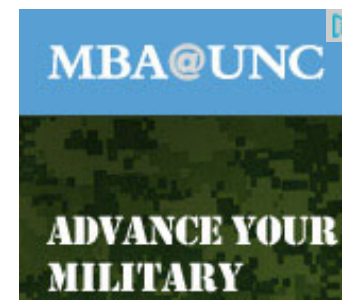
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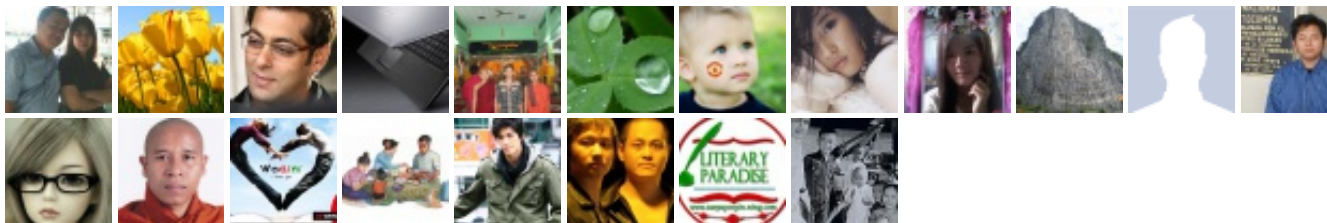
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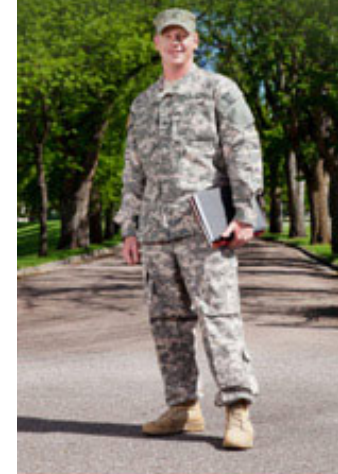
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