

Title : Need to support Myanmar's freedom struggle led by Gandhian Aung San Suu Kyi.

SHRI B. MAHTAB (CUTTACK): Madam Speaker, the matter which I raise today relates to Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi who is under house arrest for more than a decade. It is 19 years since the National League for Democracy swept the last national election winning over 80 per cent of the seats it had contested. Over 10,000 people were killed in six months of military repression before the election. Instead of governing the country whose people had given her party an overwhelming mandate, Aung San Suu Kyi has become a symbol of grace under duress, someone whose freedom was taken away by the military junta misruling her country, but not her steadfast courage.

The world has been transformed since Suu Kyi was put under house arrest. Berlin Wall has fallen, the iron curtain has disappeared and India, where Suu Kyi had her education, has become one of the fastest growing economies of the world. The world has moved on. Yet Burma or Myanmar has remained in a time wrap. The walls of her Rangoon residence at 54, University Avenue are covered with quotations from Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and her father Aung San who led Burma's freedom struggle.

When Dalai Lama took asylum some 50 years ago, China and India had good relations. Some would argue that it is in India's national interest to maintain close ties with Myanmar's military junta. But can the world's largest and populous democracy, which subscribes to the values practiced by Suu Kyi, close its eyes indefinitely to the military junta's repression of the people of Myanmar? Recently, Aung San Suu Kyi has been conferred with the Mahatma Gandhi International Award for Peace and Reconciliation at Durban.

I would request the Government to rise to the occasion. India should extend full support to Myanmar's struggle for freedom. It is our moral duty and also our political duty.