

# Obama makes historic visit to Myanmar

En route to the ASEAN conference in Cambodia, Barack Obama will become the first U.S. president to visit Myanmar, endorsing the fragile transition to democracy that his administration believes could help counter China's influence in a strategically important region

**Twin Sino-Burma pipelines:** Due to open in 2013, will carry gas from Myanmar's offshore reserves and oil from Middle East to China



Shwe field



*Human rights groups say visit is premature given Myanmar's continuing insurgency, ethnic violence and detention of political prisoners*

**Rakhine State: Government criticised for not doing enough to stop clashes between Muslims and Buddhists that have killed over 180 people**

## PATH OF REFORM IN MYANMAR

**Nov 2010:** First polls in 20 years replace ruling junta with military-backed civilian government.

**Pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi freed from house arrest**

**Mar 2011:** Former junta general **Thein Sein** sworn in as president

**Oct:** Over 200 political prisoners freed. New labour laws allowing unions passed

**Nov:** Myanmar granted **ASEAN** chair in 2014

**Dec:** **Hillary Clinton** becomes first U.S. secretary of state to visit Burma in 50 years. Thein Sein signs law allowing peaceful demonstrations

**Jan 2012:** Ceasefire signed with ethnic Karen rebels. Hundreds of prominent political prisoners released

**Apr:** Suu Kyi wins seat in parliament as **National League for Democracy** takes 43 out of 45 seats in landmark by-elections. **U.S. and EU ease sanctions**