

EU envoy to visit Thailand for talks on Myanmar

BANGKOK - THE EU's special envoy for Myanmar will make a three-day visit to Thailand next week to discuss efforts to prod the ruling junta to make good on promised reforms, the Thai foreign ministry said on Wednesday.

Mr Piero Fassino will meet with Foreign Minister Nitya Pibulsonggram Monday, the ministry's spokesman said.

'He will have a discussion with the minister on Myanmar,' spokesman Tharit Charungvat said, adding that no other meetings with Thai officials had been scheduled.

Mr Fassino, a former Italian justice minister who was appointed the EU special envoy on Myanmar last November, was also expected to meet with UN agencies and non-governmental organisations based in Bangkok.

The Italian diplomat last week called for UN mediator Ibrahim Gambari to return to Myanmar soon and to seek the release of democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

Prof Gambari has visited Myanmar twice since the bloody military crackdown in September on peaceful protests led by Buddhist monks, who spearheaded the biggest pro-democracy uprising in nearly 20 years.

The United Nations says at least 31 people were killed during the suppression, and 74 remain missing.

Prof Gambari has asked to return to Myanmar this month but was told by authorities there that an April visit would be more convenient. -- AFP

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