

DVB Debate is produced by DVB Multimedia Group Ltd. Co. The debate is recorded every Saturday morning in Yangon with a live audience, which is invited to join the discussion as well.



DVB TV timetable

Sun	19:15	21:00	night repeat
Mon	10:15	15:15	21:00
Wed	10:15	15:15	21:00
Fri	10:15	15:15	21:00

DVB Debate aims to contribute to a new culture of open debate, in which anyone can participate and agree to disagree, in order to exchange ideas, create better mutual understanding and find solutions for societal issues to improve the future of Myanmar.

The team invites fellow media and debating clubs to join this initiative for open debate. A weekly press release, press picture and cartoon are available shortly after the recording. DVB Debate also has a modest budget to support local debating initiatives.

For any inquiries, remarks or questions, please call 01292743 (office hours), leave a comment on facebook.com/dvb.debate or email debate@dvb.no.

DVB DEBATE



Welcome to DVB Debate, Myanmar's 1st open debate program. This week's debate question is:

"Do you like your new SIM?"

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.This week's topic is SIM CARDS

Historical context:

Under Burma's Military government, telecommunications were tightly controlled. The state run telecoms company, Myanmar Posts and Telecommunications (MPT) was the sole provider, and the government's monopoly on the sector allowed them to charge extremely high prices, making SIM cards prohibitively expensive for the majority of the population. When they were first introduced around a decade and a half ago SIM cards could sell for as much as 5,000 US Dollars, several times the average annual income. As a result, Burma had the lowest mobile penetration rate in the world. Over the years prices gradually began to drop, and when the new government took power in 2011, prices lowered further still, and less than a year later SIM cards could be bought for around 250 dollars. However, this was still far above an affordable price for ordinary citizens, and in 2012, still less than 4 percent of the country's population was connected. The new government, looking to increase foreign investment after liberalising economic policies, realised they could not make the infrastructure investments necessary without foreign capital and technology. Putting an end to the monopoly of MPT, they invited competition in the country's telecommunications sector. More than 90 companies expressed interest in a tender issued for two licences last year by the government. The winners were Qatar's Ooredoo, who have now sold about 1 million SIM cards since launching in August, and Norway's Telenor. However, Burma still has the region's least-developed telecommunications infrastructure there are many challenges ahead.

Facts & figures:

- Just 12.3 percent of the population now has access to a basic mobile phone.
- Qatar based Ooredoo, launched services on August 2nd.
- Telenor became the third mobile operator in Myanmar after launching services in Mandalay on September 27

- MPT has partnered with Japanese firms Sumitomo Corp., a trading house, and KDDI, Japan's second-largest wireless carrier, which has pledged to invest about \$2 billion to expand its existing network.
- All three telecoms companies have priced their SIM cards at 1,500 kyat.
- Telenor plans to reach 90 percent of the country within five years.
- The Government announced they plan to sell 30 million GSM mobile SIM cards between 2011 and 2016 in order to put Burma on par with the rest of the world.

Points of view:

"We have a plenty of quality personnel and excellent techniques. We know very well that there is very intense competition as all the operators are well experienced. But MPT has been transformed to provide better services." Khin Maung Tun, deputy chief executive officer of MPT-KDDI-Sumitomo joint operations.

"There's little doubt that Ooredoo and Telenor have the resources and support to drive the infrastructure development and increased bandwidth... But it will likely be mid-2015 before we see significant activity. It will take time to iron out things like land allocation for base station expansion, SIM card provisioning, and the construction of the towers themselves" Jarit Sidhu, analyst IDC research firm.

"Even a farmer in Bangladesh can afford a hand phone for communication. There is, I think, 7 % of mobile penetration here in this country. This small scale of the usage hurts the image of the country. So we must strive to improve it" President Thein Sein.

Information links:

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