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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		DVB RADIO	
Sunday	7.15 pm	Saturday	Evenings
Monday	1.15 am / 7.15 am / 1.15 pm	Sunday	Mornings
Wednesday	8.45 pm	DVB ONLINE	
Thursday	2.45 am / 8.45 am / 2.45 pm	dvbdebate.com	24/7
Friday	8.45 pm	facebook.com/ dvb.debate	
Saturday	2.45 am / 8.45 am / 2.45 pm	twitter @dvbdebate	

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 we need a protest law?

If you have any remarks, suggestions or questions,
please ask a team member,
call 01292743 (office hours) or email debate@dvb.no.

This week's topic is PEACEFUL PROTESTS

Historical context:

There is a strong history of protesting in Burma, and since the time of British rule, there have been several major protests movements calling for freedom and democracy. However, historically the restrictive former military government has cracked down fiercely on protesters. The most notorious protest crackdown came during the '8888 Nationwide Popular Pro-Democracy Protests', a series of demonstrations that began in 1988, eventually joined by almost all different parts of society, demonstrating against the regime. The uprising ended on 18 September, when a bloody military coup by the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) saw thousands of people gunned down by the military. The next brutal crackdown on protesters came in 2007 when demonstrations known as "The Saffron Revolution" (because of the participation of thousands of monks in maroon robes) were dealt with quickly and harshly by the junta. Dozens of protesters were arrested and detained and some groups estimate over 100 people were killed. Now that reforms are taking place in the country Burma has made marked improvements in civil liberties. The 2008 constitution guarantees the right to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly. In December 2011, President Thein Sein, formally approved legislation that allows citizens of Burma to engage in peaceful protests. However, the law comes with certain conditions and demonstrators are required to request permission for protests or risk imprisonment. Activists and rights groups say the law is used to silence activism instead of protecting the right to demonstrate.

Facts & figures:

- Article 354 Section (B) of the 2008 Constitution Law says that citizens have the right to assemble peacefully without arms.
- The Right to Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Act was signed into law in December 2011.
- Section 18 of the Peaceful Assembly Act states there are penalties of up to a year in jail if people protest without permission.
- An amendment to this law, was passed by Myanmar's parliament and signed into law on 24th June 2014.

- Since January 2012 hundreds of activists have been arrested under the Peaceful Assembly law for participating in protests, and authorities have targeted activists, journalists, farmers and land rights activists.

Points of view:

"There are weaknesses and faults in the rules and laws issued 2 years ago. So we will reevaluate them. We also have to nullify or amend some rules and laws that contradict one another."
(Shwe Mann, Speaker of the Lower House)

"The constitution provides fundamental rights of freedom of assembly and procession and freedom of expression to citizens, but Section 18 of Peaceful Assembly and Procession Law restricts these fundamental rights,"
(MP, U Thura Aung Ko)

"Even though this is a deer's step compared to a tiger's step, the amendment to Section 18 will spread beyond the parliament out to the people"
(MP, U Aung Zin).

"I was sentenced today under Section 18. We were there to ask for help, not to protest... No matter what is written in current laws, the judicial system was influenced by the government's decision today and we have to accept whatever they did to us."
(Htin Kyaw, Movement for Democracy Current Force)

Information links:

www.mofa.gov.mm/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Constitution_of_Myanmar.pdf
www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/2011-Peaceful_Assembly_and_Procession_Act-en.pdf
www.article19.org
www.burmapartnership.org
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