

Reporting Burma from Oslo

Khin Maung Win and his 15 colleagues report the news from a land without press freedom in a studio in Norway.

Burma/Myanmar

Capital city: Naypyidaw (since 2005, before: Rangoon/Yangon.)

Population: 52 million

Religion: 89 percent Buddhism, 4 percent Christianity, 4 percent Islam

Languages: Burmese (official language), Shan, Karen, Kayah.

GDP per capita: 1039 USD

Source: Caplex.no

Brief history of Burma

The area that today is Burma, was occupied by the British during three wars in 1826, 1852 and 1855. From 1886 the country was a part of the British India, and became a province of its own with local government in 1937. Occupied by Japan during WW2, and given sovereignty when the war ended. Military coup led by Ne Win in 1962, since then the country has been ruled by a military government, with only one party. The president (since 1992), is Than Shwe. Source: Caplex.no

By Mari Hauge Åsland

Photos Marius Sunde Tvinneim

In a peach-coloured concrete building in the Norwegian capital Oslo, a group of Burmese journalists are sending news updates and stories about Burma to their home country, and the world.

Burma's only free broadcaster has been based in Oslo for 16 years. The non-profit organization, which survives on support from 13 different organizations and governments, amongst them the Norwegian ministry of foreign affairs, struggle to provide accurate and unbiased news to the people of Burma.

- There are no free media organizations in Burma, everything is controlled by the military junta, and is pure propaganda. We have 60 journalists

based in Burma, but they have to work undercover, and taking a great risk. About 20 of our journalists in Burma have been arrested, says Khin Maung Win, deputy executive director.

Crazy change of capital

The television studio is small, consists of a desk and two chairs, and a robot camera, which is controlled from another room. The lights are off, but we can see the background, a pale blue map of Burma.

- This is Rangoon, the real capital of Burma, he says, and points to a city in the south of the country.

- But the military junta moved the capital from Rangoon to Naypyidaw in 2002.

- What do the Burmese people think about that?



Everybody think it's crazy! Maung Win comments on how the Burmese people feel about the moving of the country's capital in 2005.