

Private newspapers return to Burma

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People in Burma could buy a newspaper from a private news company on Monday for the first time in 50 years. Burma's government has allowed the printing

of 16 newspapers, although only four were ready for the first day of sale. The Burmese military took control of the press and the news it published in 1964. From then until Sunday, the government controlled what news people read. Life was made impossible for journalists from the free press. The government tortured and imprisoned many reporters who broke the rules. Burma is also allowing international news agencies to work in the country. The Associated Press became the first when its six staff opened for business on Saturday.

The re-introduction of private newspapers comes on the first anniversary of the election of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi to parliament. She has been a strong supporter of bringing back the free press to Burma. Her political party, the National League for Democracy, will start printing its own daily newspaper later this month. The editor of the "Voice Daily" newspaper thinks the private newspapers will be better than the government ones. He said: "I can say with absolute confidence that we can compete with government papers in terms of content and quality of news." He added: "I am very excited that we are finally printing daily editions. It is a dream come true." The "Voice Daily" printed its first edition on Monday.

Sources: BBC / TIME / Washington Post

Writing

Newspapers should be allowed to print anything they want. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

newspaper / the first time / 50 years / military / journalists / tortured / broke the rules / anniversary / political party / absolute confidence / quality of news / daily editions

True / False

- No private newspapers have been sold in Burma for five decades. T / F
- Sixteen private newspapers went on sale on Monday. T / F
- Burma's government tortured journalists in the past. T / F
- CNN became the first international news agency to open in Burma. T / F
- Private newspapers went on sale a year after a special election. T / F
- Aung San Suu Kyi's party will start its own newspaper next year. T / F
- An editor said private newspapers could match government ones. T / F
- The editor suggested the sale of his paper was nothing special. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. buy | a. jailed |
| 2. printing | b. belief |
| 3. military | c. chief |
| 4. imprisoned | d. publishing |
| 5. allowing | e. issue |
| 6. leader | f. armed forces |
| 7. supporter | g. total |
| 8. absolute | h. backer |
| 9. confidence | i. purchase |
| 10. edition | j. letting |

Discussion – Student A

- What are your favourite sections of the newspaper?
- Should political parties make newspapers?
- Which are better, government newspapers or private newspapers?
- What news stories are you following at the moment?
- Will the Internet kill off newspapers?
- Have you ever been in a newspaper?
- Do you think celebrity gossip is news?
- What questions would you like to ask a newspaper editor?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. the first time | a. and quality of news |
| 2. The Burmese military took | b. the rules |
| 3. The government tortured and | c. business on Saturday |
| 4. reporters who broke | d. anniversary |
| 5. its six staff opened for | e. imprisoned many |
| 6. on the first | f. control of the press |
| 7. the free | g. come true |
| 8. I can say with absolute | h. press |
| 9. in terms of content | i. in 50 years |
| 10. It is a dream | j. confidence |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about private newspapers selling in Burma?
- How important are newspapers to you?
- Why do governments want to control newspapers?
- Do you believe everything you read in newspapers?
- How good are newspapers in your country?
- Are newspapers the best place to go for news?
- What kind of life does a journalist have?
- What would you like to report on if you were a journalist?

Spelling

- Burma's gvmeetornn
- adllweo the printing of 16 newspapers
- Burmese lmaiyytr
- Life was made impossible for iurnosstalj
- edtortru and imprisoned many reporters
- international news ancieesg
- on the first vsyanieanrr
- the National League for ymDcroeac
- The irodte of the "Voice Daily" newspaper
- I can say with absolute nedioecncf
- in terms of content and auqlyti of news
- first eoinitd

Answers – Synonym Match

1. i	2. d	3. f	4. a	5. j
6. c	7. h	8. g	9. b	10. e

Role Play

Journalist - You think freedom of speech is very important. You think you should be able to write anything in newspapers. Tell the others three reasons why. You think the government is afraid of journalists. You think everyone should know the truth about everything and everyone.

Government leader - You think freedom of speech is very dangerous. You think journalists should not be able to write anything in newspapers. Tell the others three reasons why. You think the government should check what journalists write. You think many stories in the news can start wars.

Newspaper reader - You think newspapers are very important. Tell the others three reasons why. You need to know what is happening in the world. You think the government should check what journalists write because their information is sometimes wrong. Journalists who write lies should go to jail.

Newspaper owner - You think newspapers should be able to write anything about anyone. Tell the others three reasons why. Newspapers write stories people want to hear. They must also attack the government if it is doing wrong things. The government should stay away from newspapers.

Speaking

Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put your favourite newspaper sections at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| • world news | • celebrity gossip |
| • sport | • technology news |
| • environment | • national news |
| • local news | • business news |

Answers – True False

a	T	b	F	c	T	d	F	e	T	f	F	g	T	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.