

Burma holds first elections in 20 years

Myanmar's military rulers say the elections will mark a democratic transition from military to civilian rule. However, critics warn they are a sham aimed at further entrenching military rule, albeit in civilian guise



320km
200 miles



ELECTION RESTRICTIONS

■ **National League for Democracy** – which won 1990 polls but was never allowed to take power – forced to disband after refusing to run due to laws banning detained leader, Nobel laureate **Aung San Suu Kyi**, from taking part

Yangon
(Rangoon)

■ **80% of candidates up for election belong to parties broadly aligned with government. Pro-democracy parties allowed to run complain of harassment and intimidation**

■ **Polls scrapped in restive ethnic areas pursuing long-held dream of semiautonomy, disenfranchising around 1.5 million people**

■ **Foreign observers not allowed into country over election period. Internet service severely limited ahead of polls**

KEEPING GRIP ON POWER

■ **One quarter of seats in national and local assemblies reserved for military officers**

■ **Army-dominated parliament expected to nominate member of junta, possibly leader *General Than Shwe*, as president**

■ **Parliament cannot veto President's appointment of ministers, which must include three serving generals**

■ **Army can assume full control in state of emergency and retains veto on constitutional changes**

Two weeks before polls, junta changed country's flag, national anthem and official

name – from Union of Myanmar to Republic of the Union of Myanmar

