

# All the News Without Fear or Favor The CAMBODIA DAILY

Volume 54 Issue 10

Thursday, January 31, 2013

1,800 riel/45 cents

## Education Minister Rails Against Lack Of Funding

BY CHIN CHAN  
AND BEN WOODS  
THE CAMBODIA DAILY

Education Minister Im Sethy yesterday accused the Ministry of Economy and Finance of consistently failing to disburse sufficient funds to the education sector, forcing it to rely heavily on foreign aid to achieve reforms.

Eschewing a prepared speech during an education workshop hosted by the European Union (E.U.) at the Cambodiana Hotel in Phnom Penh yesterday, Mr. Sethy said the Ministry of Education has received a smaller proportion of the government's total budget every year since 2007—funds essential to increasing student enrollment and raising teachers' low salaries.

"To be blunt...now the proportion [of education spending] is decreasing, so the Ministry of Economy and Finance needs to take this into account," Mr. Sethy said in a speech to the workshop.

"The Finance Ministry doesn't

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Protesters use slingshots to launch stones at riot police during clashes near Qasr el-Nil bridge in Cairo yesterday. Egypt's army chief said political unrest was pushing the state to the brink of collapse—a stark warning as Cairo's first freely elected leader struggles to curb bloody street violence.

## Burma's Police Used Phosphorus on Protesters

BY THOMAS FULLER  
THE NEW YORK TIMES

BANGKOK - A group of lawyers investigating a violent crackdown in Burma that left Buddhist monks and villagers with serious burns has concluded that police used white phosphorus, a munition normally reserved for warfare, to disperse protesters.

The suppression in November of a protest outside a controversial copper mine in central Burma shocked the Burmese public after images of critically injured monks circulated throughout the country. It also gave rise to fears that the civilian government of President

Thein Sein, which came to power in 2011, was using the same repressive methods as the military governments that preceded it.

Burmese attorneys together with a U.S. human rights lawyer gathered evidence at the site of the protest, including a metal canister that protesters said was fired by the police. The canister was brought to a private laboratory in Bangkok, where a technician determined that residue inside it contained high levels of phosphorus. Access to the canister and a copy of the laboratory report were provided to a reporter.

"We are confident that they

used a munition that contained phosphorus," said U Thein Than Oo, the head of the legal committee of the Upper Burma Lawyers Network, which helped conduct the investigation. "They wanted to warn the entire population not to protest. They wanted to intimidate the people."

White phosphorus has many uses in war—as a smoke screen or incendiary weapon—but is rarely if ever used by police forces.

Reached yesterday, Zaw Htay, a director in the office of Thein Sein, declined to comment on what kind of weapon was used. "I can't say. I

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## AND ALSO

## Babylon, Me Dreadlocks Be Gone

GLOBALPOST

The Times, a Johannesburg newspaper, has reported that a growing number of people with dreadlocks are having their hair stolen. Jasper Munsinwa described how his friend's dreads were stolen while out partying at a Johannesburg club.

Munsinwa's friend, Mutsa Madonko, was found passed out, and his hair shorn—but unusually for

South Africa, his mobile phone and wallet were untouched.

The demand is thought to be coming from the hairstyle trend of dreadlock extensions—with the ultimate being real hair rather than synthetic—and trendsetters are willing to pay for a natural look.

Shoulder-length dreadlocks are sold for between \$22 to \$77 and longer dread extensions can cost as much as \$277.

## Funding...

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know how to make policy at all," the minister continued, turning from the crowd and angrily pointing a finger at Chou Kimleng, undersecretary of state at the Finance Ministry, who was seated onstage near Mr. Sethy and who had just given the opening remarks at the workshop.

"As we can see, reform can't be deadlocked by a deadlocked policy. It needs to be updated and improved," Mr. Sethy continued.

Using as an example the construction of a new building at the National Institute of Education, Mr. Sethy said that when the building's expense came in over budget, the Finance Ministry refused to give them more money. He added that four letters he personally sent to the ministry on the

subject went unanswered.

"But I'm thankful to our partner [the E.U.] that helped us because sometimes Cambodians don't listen to each other. I'm thankful to our partner, who stuck with us and saw the issue and resolved it," Mr. Sethy said, going on to express his gratitude to the E.U. for spending 36 million euros, or about \$48.7 million, on Cambodian education initiatives to date.

E.U. Ambassador Jean-François Cautain—who at the workshop pledged an additional 37.2 million euros, or about \$50.3 million, to Cambodia's education sector for 2014 to 2016—said the E.U.'s support for the education sector should merely supplement, not replace, proper funding by the government.

"The support we are providing at the E.U. should not substitute a lack of support by the government... It should be the other way

around," Ambassador Cautain said on the sidelines of the workshop.

"It is something we say to the government behind closed doors, but also in public," he added. "On that, we are fully aligned with the minister [of education]."

Mr. Cautain added that while government funding for education has risen over the past few years, this increase is not proportional to the growth in total state expenditures.

"What we have seen the last years is that, even if in nominal terms, the budget for education has increased, the percentage which is allocated [to] education of the total government budget is decreasing, so that is a concern for us," he said.

"Usually, if you look at other countries, a reasonable share would be around 20 percent of the total budget of the government. I think the last year, we were around 16 percent, going down from 19,

18" percent in previous years, he added.

According to official figures, the government allocated about \$280 million to education for this year, roughly 9.1 percent of the \$3.1 billion total budget. In 2012, funding for education was \$245 million, or about 9.4 percent of the budget.

In contrast, some \$400 million has been apportioned to the defense and security sectors this year, which amounts to about 13 percent of all spending and a 17.3 percent increase over last year's allocation, with \$245 million going to the Defense Ministry alone.

But it was not always this way, as Mr. Sethy noted.

In 2007, \$132.7 million was set aside for education, about 11.5 percent of that year's total budget and an increase of 24 percent over the year before.

Officials at the Finance Ministry yesterday declined to comment.

## Protesters...

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can't answer," he said.

John Hart, a senior researcher at the Chemical Weapons Program of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, said by email that although white phosphorus is not considered a chemical weapon under a 1993 international convention, it is banned from uses that "cause death or other harm through the toxic properties of the chemical."

One of the monks injured at the protest, U Tilkhanyana, 64, has burns over 40 percent of his body and was flown to Bangkok by the government because Burma does not have the facilities to treat such a serious case.

Two months after the crackdown, Tilkhanyana remains in intensive care. In an interview yesterday in his hospital room, Tilkhanyana described the moment that the police came to disperse the crowds in the pre-dawn hours of November 29.

"I saw a fireball beside me and I started to burn," he said. "I was rolling on the ground to try to put it out."

Dr. Chatchai Pruksapong, a burn specialist treating Tilkhanyana, said it appeared that the monk was seared with something "severely flammable."

Tilkhanyana's wounds are similar to those he sees with soldiers injured by bomb blasts in Thailand's southern insurgency.

"Tear gas would definitely not cause this kind of deep wound," Dr. Chatchai said.

Burmese government officials were quoted in the local news media as saying that police had thrown "smoke bombs" at protesters.

The canister found at the protest site appeared to have "smoke" stenciled on it and looks similar in appearance to smoke hand grenades once manufactured by the U.S., said a security expert and former colonel in a European army who wanted to remain anonymous because he has dealings in Burma. Such smoke grenades emit burning particles within a radius of

about 17 meters, he said.

Roger Normand, the U.S. human rights lawyer who helped investigate the crackdown, said a report from the lawyers would be released "in the next few days."

Normand arranged to have the canister brought to the Bangkok laboratory, which is run by ALS, an Australian company that specializes in testing samples for their chemical content.

In an interview, Normand said it was "unheard of" for "highly volatile and dangerous weapons" to be used by police. "This raises serious questions about who in the military chain of command could have given the order to use these weapons."

The report prepared by Normand and the Burmese lawyers has been submitted to Aung San Suu Kyi, the Nobel laureate and opposition leader, who was appointed by the government soon after the crackdown to lead a separate, official commission of inquiry. The precise mandate of the commission is unclear, as is the timing of the release of the com-

mission's findings.

The government initially announced that the commission would report its work on December 31 but that was delayed by a month. It may be further delayed because Suu Kyi is currently on a five-day visit to South Korea.

The controversy over the copper mine centers on the government's attempt to relocate villagers in order to expand the mine, which is co-owned by a Chinese company and the Burmese military. The government ordered the dispersal of protesters after several months of intermittent demonstrations. The controversy received widespread coverage in the Burmese media partly because land rights have become a major issue as the country opens up to the world.

But it is a measure of the villagers' resolve that even after the violent crackdown they say they are refusing to back down. Aye Net, a villager who has helped lead the protest movement, said by telephone yesterday that villagers were calling for "justice for all those wounded in the crackdown."

## NEWSMAKERS

■ LOS ANGELES - American actress ASHLEY JUDD and her Scottish race car driver husband DARIO FRANCHINI are ending their marriage after 11 years. The movie star, 44, and the Indianapolis 500 race car driver, 39, married in 2001 and have no children. "We have mutually decided to end our marriage. We'll always be family and continue to cherish our relationship based on the special love, integrity and respect we have always enjoyed," a representative for the couple told People magazine in a statement on Tuesday. No reason was given for the split. Judd, the daughter of country music star NAOMI Judd, starred in movies like "Double Jeopardy" and "High Crimes." In recent years, she has turned her attention to humanitarian work with AIDS sufferers and young people. Judd has been mentioned as a possible Democratic candidate for the U.S. Senate in 2014, although she has made no formal announcement. (Reuters)