Bangladesh Mulls Ban on Islamist Party

BY SYED ZAIN AL-MAHMOOD
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

DHAKA, Bangladesh - The Bangla-
deshi government said Sunday it was considering banning an Islam-
ist party that it blames for the death of an online activist who helped or-
ganize the mass protests that have swept the nation's capital.

Ahmed Rajib Haider was found hacked to death late Friday in front of his home, police said. The 29-year-old blogger helped coordi-
nate protests to demand harsher punishments for Islamists ac-
cused of committing atrocities in the country's 1971 war of indepen-
dence from Pakistan. The demonstra-
tions are Bangladesh's largest in two decades.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, speaking on television after visit-
ing Haider's home Saturday evening, blamed Jamaat-e-Islami, the
nation's largest Islamist party, for his slaying.

Shahidul Alam, the law minis-
ter, said Sunday that the govern-
ment was considering banning Ja-
amat-e-Islami because of its "vio-
 lent tactics."

"The parties which practice killing people cannot be allowed to op-
erate," he said at a news briefing.

Jamaat-e-Islami denied involve-
ment in Haider's death and ac-
cused the government of a "mas-
 sive propaganda campaign."

"Neither Bangladesh Jamaat-e-
islami nor its affiliates has anything
to do with this horrifying crime," Continued on page 2

French Judge to Investigate Death of Family

BY KHY SOVUTH
AND ZSOMBOR PETER
THE CAMBODIA DAILY

An investigating judge from France will arrive in Cambodia next month to probe the deaths of a Frenchman and his four chil-
dren, whose decomposed bodies were recovered from a pond at their home in Kompong Speu province early last year, court and embassy officials said yesterday.

The remains of Laurent Vallier, 42, and his four young children, aged 2 to 9 years old, were found inside the Frenchman's sub-
merged car when police discovered the vehicle at the bottom of

Phnom Penh shortly after mid-
year, said Graeme Hunter, Cam-
 bodia general manager for Hong
 Kong-based automobile retailer
 Le Shing Hong Limited, which
 will build and operate the facility
 on behalf of Porsche.

"The timing is right," Mr. Hunter
 said yesterday. "BMW is com-
ing...Mercedes is here already, so it
 makes sense for Porsche to be here as well."

Le Shing Hong—which is also
 Porsche's authorized distributor
 in Vietnam and South Korea—
 will invest an initial $2 million in
 Cambodia, and hopes to import
 between 40 and 50 vehicles by early 2014, Mr. Hunter said. With
 tax, the company's range of iconic
 911 coupes, Panamera sedans and
 Cayenne SUVs will sell for
 between $100,000 and $200,000.

Mr. Hunter conceded that mar-
teting the luxury cars won't be easy.

"It's going to be tough... The
 brand awareness is not what it
 would be in other countries," he
 Continued on page 21
Hun Sen and EU Ambassador Talk Elections, Land Reform

BY NEO VANARIN
THE CAMBODIA DAILY

The European Union’s ambassador to Cambodia raised issues of judicial reform, land reform and the upcoming national elections in a meeting with Prime Minister Hun Sen yesterday morning.

Speaking with reporters after the meeting at the prime minister’s office, Mr. Hun Sen’s personal assistant, Eng Sophalith, said that E.U. Ambassador Jean-Francois Cautain had offered his support for the July 28 national elections but made no mention of the E.U. sending observers to the polls.

“He [Mr. Cautain] said all 27 countries in the European Union and the European institutions will support and help Cambodia in the upcoming parliamentary elections. He expressed their support and urged good and fair elections,” Mr. Sophalith said.

In response, [Mr. Hun Sen] said regular elections in Cambodia were very important to push Cambodia toward development and democracy,” he added.

After the country’s last national elections, in 2008, the E.U. concluded that they had failed to meet international standards, and in October the European Commission said Cambodia’s electoral system still had “major flaws.”

Mr. Sophalith said the E.U. ambassador yesterday also praised Cambodia for passing recent laws on the Penal Code and Civil Code and for establishing the Anti-Corruption Unit, but also urged passage of laws addressing the independence of lawyers, judges and the Supreme Council of Magistracy.

“Jean-Francois also raised land issues,” Mr. Sophalith said. “In reply, [Mr. Hun Sen] explained the land reform in Cambodia and the student volunteers who are helping measure land for people.”

Since June, thousands of student volunteers have been mining out across the country in an initiative launched by the prime minister to supply hundreds of thousands of Cambodians with private land titles.

The European Commission’s directorate-general for trade is currently reviewing a report by the U.N.’s human rights envoy to Cambodia, Surya Subedi—which blamed the country’s policy of economic land concessions for serious and widespread human rights violations—to decide whether to launch its own investigation of the government’s land policies.

Human rights groups want the E.U. to end the duty-free access granted to Cambodian sugar currently being grown on government-awarded land concessions.

A brief statement from the E.U. about the meeting said the ambassador and prime minister had “addressed some of the key political issues of the moment, namely the upcoming legislative elections, the legislative and judicial reforms, the land reform and the education sector.”

Mr. Cautain declined to make any additional comment.

With Better Emergency Care, Thousands of Lives Could Be Saved

BY DENISE HURBY
THE CAMBODIA DAILY

Tens of thousands of lives could be saved each year if Cambodian hospitals had staff better trained in providing emergency care, U.S. medical experts said yesterday, the first day of a training workshop on such essential treatment.

Currently, the majority of hospital staff lack proper training to treat basic emergencies such as snakebites, heart attacks and burns, which if not treated quickly and correctly can lead to serious infections, poisoning and even death, one of the workshop’s organizers said.

“A lot of times, they [the doctors] don’t have a lot of training and we are trying to focus on things that can be easily treated and that the hospitals have the staff and capacity to do,” said Dr. Joan Woods, hospital improvement leader for University Research Corporation in Cambodia, the U.S.-based health organization that put together the four-day workshop.

“There are simple interventions to save someone’s life,” she added.

One example, said Dr. Beau Brise, one of the five medical experts from Stanford University in California who took part in the training yesterday, was to directly ask a patient if he or she is suffering from chest pain—a symptom of a heart attack—and immediately treating them with an aspirin tablet.

Asking such a question is not the norm in most local hospitals, but following the right line of enquiry would mean that 10 to 20 percent of patients would who otherwise could receive proper treatment, Dr. Brise said.

“It’s inexpensive and easy, and it’s the treatment that saves lives in heart attacks,” he said.

Workshop participants also learned the five steps of primary survey in trauma patients, which includes checking the patient’s airways and looking for possible bleeding. They also practiced putting on a neck brace.

Teaching local physicians such basic skills can have a dramatic impact for many Cambodians, Dr. Brise said.

“One of the great opportunities about Cambodia is that with a few very basic interventions tens of thousands of lives could be saved in emergency rooms,” he added.

Dr. Omar Niel, deputy director of Battambang province’s referral hospital and one of the 65 participating local doctors, admitted that his staff lacked training to treat certain emergencies properly.

“We need to improve the treatment in our hospital. At the moment, the staff doesn’t have enough knowledge in emergency treatment,” Dr. Niel said, adding that he would endeavor to teach his 60 physicians everything he learned during the workshop.

Better Factories Cambodia Slammed by Stanford Researchers

BY DENE-HERN CHEN
THE CAMBODIA DAILY

The International Labor Organization’s (ILO) Better Factories Cambodia program (BFC) must employ more transparency in their monitoring of Cambodia’s factories in order to effectively bring change to the country’s working and wage conditions, a report launched yesterday says.

Funded in part by the U.S. government and U.N. Development Program, the ILO’s BFC program was launched in 2001 to monitor working conditions in the country’s garment factories, and publishes biannual “synthesis reports,” which track the labor compliance of factories operating in the industry.

According to “Monitoring in the Dark,” a new report by researchers from Stanford Law School, wages and basic job security have actually declined for Cambodian garment workers in the past decade, and during the time the BFC has been in operation.

“Wages in Cambodian apparel factories have fallen significantly in real terms over the past ten years, while garment workers in some other apparel-exporting countries in the region have seen their wages rise, including in China, Indonesia and Vietnam,” the report says, adding that none of these three countries have the equivalent ILO program in operation.

Publication of incomplete reports on garment factories who are repeat labor law offenders was recommended by the researchers, as well as communicating these violations to the workers and unions in the factories, said Stephan Sonnenberg, a lecturer at the International Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Clinic in Stanford, California, who oversaw the research process last year.

“The theme of transparency comes up over and over again, from the workers, unions and the consumers,” Mr. Sonnenberg said, adding that interviews conducted with workers showed that they did not know how to communicate their grievances to the ILO.

“They [ILO] also need to do a better job communicating with the workers,” he said.

While the Better Factories program is “handicapped” by its institutional design as a tripartite organization—composing of the ILO, the manufacturers, and the government—the Stanford researchers proposed that the ILO could work with the brands on trying to create incentives for factories who do a good job.

Jill Tucker, chief technical adviser for BFC, agreed that her program needed more transparency, but noted that it was not an advocacy group.

“We also want transparency and we are working to get more transparency and we are working with our partners,” Ms. Tucker said.

“Because we are tripartite, we play a role as an intersection of employers, government and workers. We find that each one of those stakeholders feels that we are not meeting their needs.”