

Burma

Civil Society Groups Learn to Harness ICT at 'Tech Camp'



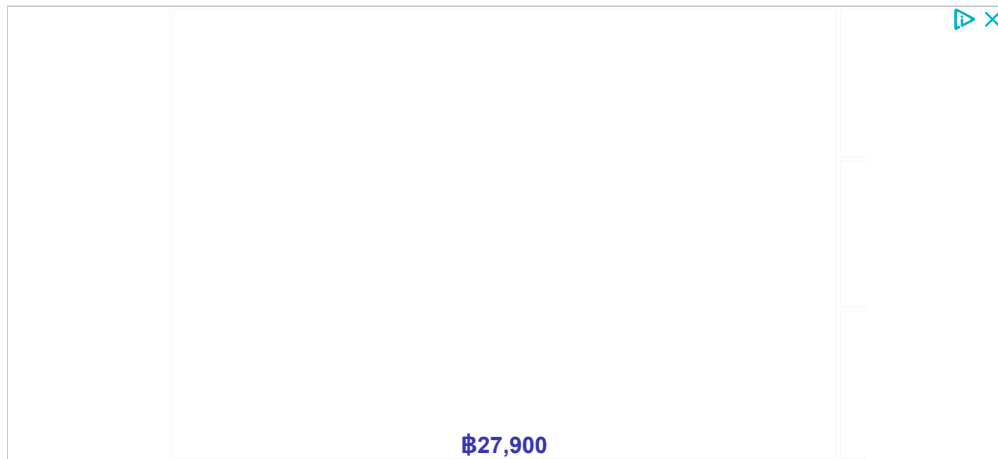
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By **SAN YAMIN AUNG** 16 January 2014

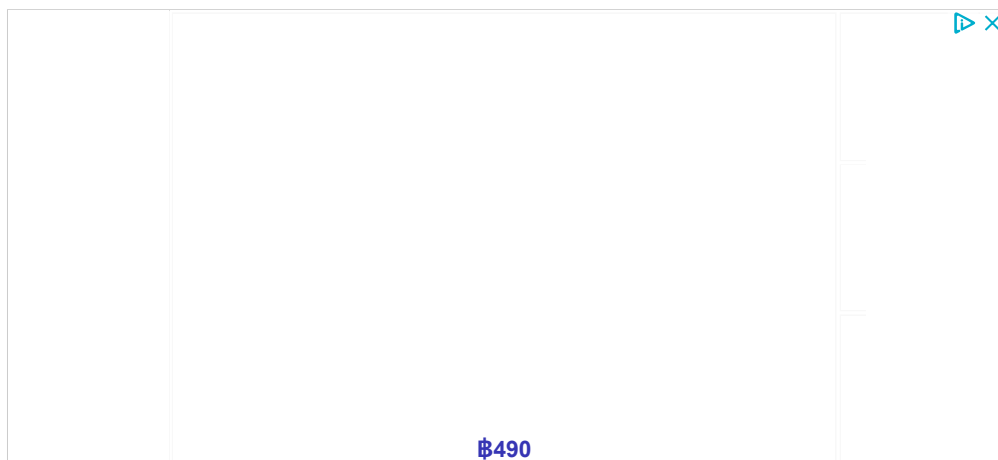
RANGOON — About 150 members of 80 Burmese civil society organizations (CSOs) participated in a US-funded 'Tech Camp' in Rangoon this week, where they learned how to use information and communication technology to promote their organizations' goals.

The two-day event began on Monday at the Myanmar ICT Park and was organized by the Myanmar ICT for Development Organization (MIDO) and the United States Embassy.



"There are many ways to apply technology in civil society works. This conference will let them know how technology can help. We also hope to develop a network through this conference and foster collaboration between civil society and technologists," Nay Phone Latt, MIDO's executive director and a well-known Burmese blogger, said during a press conference.

Fifteen international and local tech experts instructed dozens of CSO members on ways to use ICT for fundraising, advocacy, monitoring, mapping and other activities, according to Yatanar, a MIDO staff member.



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She said particular attention was paid to using ICT for election monitoring during Burma's much-anticipated 2015 elections, which are expected to be the country's first free and fair elections after decades of military rule.

"Election monitoring is a topic that most participants were interested in and foreign technical experts want to help them learn techniques," Yatanar said.

Some 30 students from Rangoon's Technology and Computer University also joined the event and participated in a training session dealing with online education.

Zaw Thurein Tun from Sagaing Youth Network said he had learned how ICT mapping programs could be used to create flyers that explain to the public where to find polling stations. He said he also learned about a digital complaint-registration program that election monitors can call by phone to file election irregularities.

The system can be used, he said, "to report if some injustice and threats happened during polling, and all election information from across the country can be shared by using this network."

Ola, a coordinator at Green Network, an environmental group, said he had benefited from courses on the issue of digital security.

"Without safely saving our data and information, we can't do our work," he said. "And if someone hacks or disturbs our data that was saved in a computer or accounts, we need to know how we can get back in and how we can protect that information."



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San Yamin Aung is Senior Reporter at the English edition of The Irrawaddy. She has consistently covered many of the m...

Burma

Burma's Frontier Appeal Lures Shadowy Oil Firms

By **WILLIAM BOOT** 9 May 2015

While the major non-American Western oil companies adopt and wait-and-see policy and US firms remain barred by Washington's sanctions, shadowy oil enterprises are gaining footholds in Burma.

Among firms which have recently won licenses to explore for oil and gas are little-known businesses based in Panama, Nigeria and Azerbaijan—countries where corporate accountability can be murky.

Not only does the bidding process remain opaque, the pedigree of some of the participants is too.

CIS Nobel Oil Company claims to be London based, but on investigation its only contact address is in Baku, capital of Azerbaijan, a former republic of the Soviet Union on the Caspian Sea.

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