

- [Home](#)
- [COVID-19](#)
- [National](#)
 - [Nay Pyi Taw](#)
 - [Yangon](#)
 - [Mandalay & Upper Myanmar](#)
 - [Week in Review](#)
 - [In Pictures](#)
- [Elections](#)
 - [Election 2020](#)
 - [By Election 2017](#)
 - [Election 2015](#)
 - [By Elections Special](#)
- [Business](#)
 - [Property News](#)
- [World](#)
- [Focus](#)
 - [SME Focus](#)
 - [Environment](#)
 - [Women](#)
 - [Technology](#)
 - [Asean Focus](#)
 - [Chats with the Chief](#)
 - [Happy 20th Anniversary](#)
 - [Opinion](#)
- [Lifestyle](#)
 - [Top 10](#)
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- [The Metro](#)
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 - [Property Watch](#)
 - [What's On in Yangon!](#)
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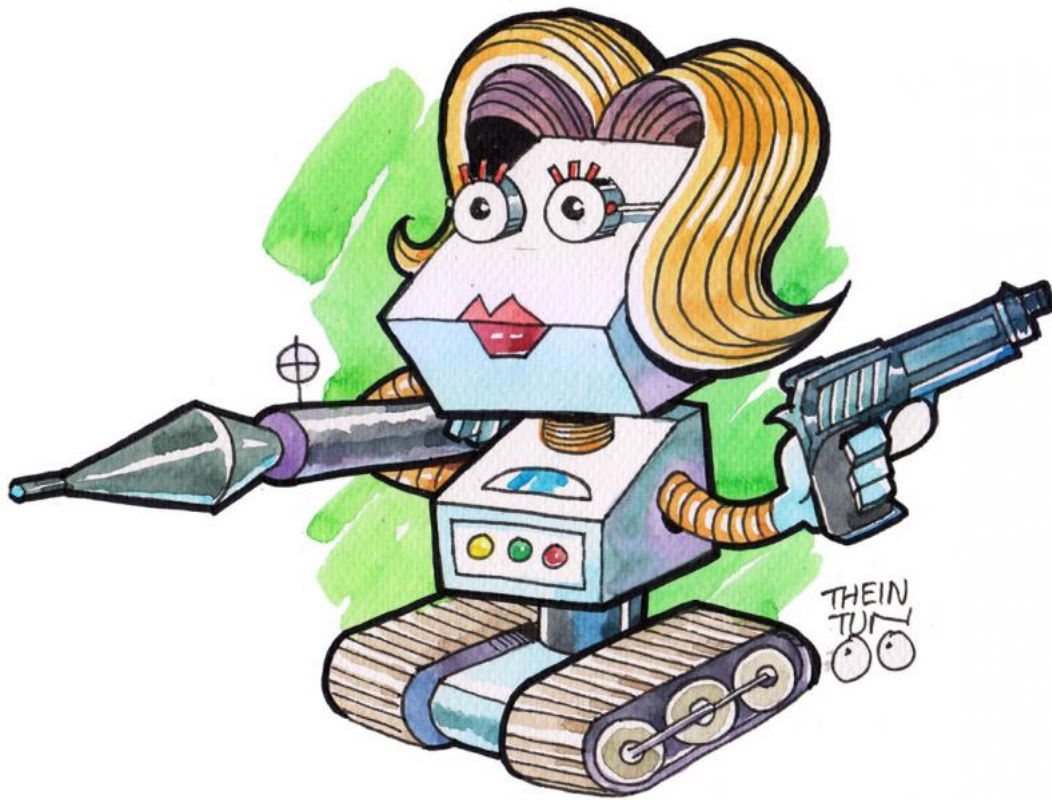
MYANMAR TIMES

1. [Home](#)
2. » [Lifestyle](#)
3. » What gender is your robot?

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What gender is your robot?

ONLY 35 percent of all students in East Asia and the Pacific enrolled in STEM-related fields of study are female according to UNESCO figures. For a lot of women in tech, this is not good enough.

Myint Myat Aung Zaw from Phandeeyar says that only 30 pc of girls show interest in tech. During the events they organise in schools only a few female students think that tech is for them.

“We can teach them (girls) if they are willing to learn though they don’t know about it,” he says. “But if
For some, the lack of role models for young women in STEM field is at the heart of the problem. In fact
region know a female public figure in the field.

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Last year, Phandeeyar selected two female participants for the First Robotic Challenge. They were in minority, but the selection panel hopes that the trend will be reversed. The organisers say they received many applications from female candidates coming from the school the pair was from.

“I’d say the number of female applicant jumped by 20 percent compared to last year,” says Myint Myat Aung Zaw.

Representative of Echo Myanmar, a consultancy, points out that even in schools and working spaces Myanmar should promote technology by giving trainings and encourage employees to go paperless.

Myanmar Tech Age Girls, an initiative from the Myanmar Book Aid, the Preservation Foundation and TAG International Development, aims to reduce the disparity in access to technology by conducting trainings in public libraries.

“There seems to be a life path that girls are traditionally expected to take”, she said, “but I’m a Tech Age Girl and I’m on a different path,” reads a press statement from Echo Myanmar quoting Thuzar, one of the participant.

Elsewhere in the world, women in developing countries seem to be keener to be studying science and technology at university than in the West. Myanmar should follow suit.

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