

MYANMAR TELLS ASEAN Suu Kyi may be freed soon; top gen not to run in polls

AFP, Hanoi

Myanmar has told its neighbours that democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi may be freed after the November 7 elections, according to a source at a summit where the junta is under fire over the discredited polls.

For the first time, the reclusive government confirmed that Than Shwe would not be participating in the national polls, according to diplomats at the Hanoi conference, though it remains unclear what role he may have after the elections.

Philippine Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo said Myanmar Foreign Minister Nyan Win told his counterparts during an informal dinner Wednesday that Than Shwe will not be on the ballot.

It had been speculated that he would not run because his name did not appear on the candidates' list, but Than Shwe had never spoken about his future and no officials had publicly broached the issue of his retirement. He is widely expected to have some new role and title after elections. Many think he could become the next president, which is not an elected position.

"You know the system they have. He will be elected president, I'm almost sure," Romulo said.

The military junta, which has been in control for the past five decades, worked to put a fresh face on the oppressive country at the Hanoi meeting, unveiling a redesigned flag and new national name going from "Union of Myanmar" to "Republic of the Union of Myanmar."

Myanmar Foreign Minister Nyan Win tackled the divisive issue with his regional counterparts during Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) talks in Hanoi Wednesday.

"He said they will release Aung San Suu Kyi maybe after the elections," said a foreign ministry official from one of the Asean delegations, who attended the dinner meeting.

However, Nyan Win "did not say specifically" what date Suu Kyi -- who has been in detention for 15 of the last 21 years -- would be freed from house arrest, the source told AFP.

Authorities in Myanmar have previously told AFP that the democracy icon will be released when her current term of house arrest expires on November 13, but the military state has made no official confirmation.

Western governments as well as UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon -- who holds talks Friday with Asean leaders -- have repeatedly said the vote will not be credible unless Suu Kyi and other opponents are set free.

Ban has expressed his growing "frustration" with the Myanmar junta in recent weeks and called on its neighbours to be more aggressive with its pariah neighbour or risk tarnishing their own democratic credentials.

6,000 complaints against Afghan vote

AFP, Kabul

An Afghan election watchdog has registered almost 6,000 complaints following last month's parliamentary poll, around half of which could affect the final results, an official said yesterday.

The Independent Election Commission (IEC) has already thrown out 1.3 million votes amid concerns about fraud in the September 18 poll, the second of its kind since the overthrow of the Taliban in 2001.

The cancelled votes account for more than 23 percent of the ballots cast. Ahmad Zia Raza, a spokesman for the Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC) a UN-backed election watchdog, said his organisation received nearly 6,000 complaints about irregularities and fraud since voting day.

"From the election day to date we have received 5,971 complaints," Raza told reporters, putting around 2,500 of the complaints in the most serious category of potential irregularities known as "group A".

He said 70 percent of the objections had been processed. If the complaints are upheld they would change the results of the ballot by potentially forcing the cancellation of the affected votes.

The IEC announced preliminary results earlier this month. The final outcome is not expected before early November. About five million people voted in the election, which was marred by Taliban violence.

An Afghan independent election monitoring body meanwhile demanded "transparency" in the post-election process.

"The Free and Fair Election Foundation of Afghanistan (FFEA) expressed concern regarding the recounting and exclusion of ballots from the September 18 parliamentary elections," it said in a statement.

It called on "electoral institutions to demonstrate greater transparency as the 2010 electoral process enters its final weeks".

EU envoy

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think confrontational politics is not productive. We encourage both the sides to overcome the difficulties through dialogue," he said.

Speaking at Meet the Reporters programme of Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) held at its auditorium, the outgoing EU envoy said when he makes his farewell call on leader of the opposition Khaleda Zia he would ask her whether she could do more. He said he would say the same to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina when he calls on her.

Referring to the present political situation, the ambassador said, "It is a cause of some sorrow to me that party-political rivalries in Bangladesh are so fierce that even in private a civilised dialogue between members of the two largest parties seems impossible."

He said in the absence of normal parliamentary debates, professionals in the media have a valuable role to play in enhancing democracy in this country.

Replying to a question whether he apprehends another 1/11 (the changeover on January 11, 2007) if the current political situation continues, he said he hoped that it would not happen again as it is not good for a country to go into a state of emergency that curtails the rights of people.

The ambassador, who has been working here since 2005, said democracy and emergency cannot go together. He said constant fight is needed

to establish democracy, as no democracy is ever absolutely perfect.

On another question about foreign diplomats' role in 1/11, Frowein said, "It [1/11] came as surprise for many, it came as surprise for us as well." There was no western diplomatic plot to bring the country under military rule, which is completely ridiculous, he said.

He highly praised the Fakhruddin Ahmed-led caretaker government as it did a very good job and prepared a voters list with photographs and national ID cards of 81 million people within a very short time.

"It is one of the best and fastest voters list in the world as it was prepared in less than one and a half years. The number of voters in the 2007 list was 93 million but it came down to 81 million, so there were 12 million fake voters in the previous list," he said. The EU spent 50 million Euro for the voter list preparation, he added.

When asked about the ongoing trial process of 1971 war criminals, he reiterated that the trial must meet international standards and follow due process where an accused has the right to defend and appeal.

DRU President Shamim Ahmad chaired the press interactions and General Secretary Pathik Saha made the introductory statement about DRU.

Yemeni Qaeda chief 'surrenders'

AFP, Aden

A suspected al-Qaeda commander in the southern Yemen province of Abyan has surrendered to the authorities after negotiations conducted by tribal leaders, a security official said yesterday.

"Jamal Ahmed Mairan, leader of al-Qaeda in Loder and Modia (towns) handed himself in on Wednesday after mediation by tribal authorities," the official told AFP, speaking on condition of anonymity.

He said Mairan, whose home town is Modia, is wanted in connection with an attack on intelligence officers in Abyan and a bank hold-up in the spring in Aden, the main southern city.

Scientists hope to record dreams

THE DAILY MAIL ONLINE

A system which could one day allow scientists to record people's dream has been developed.

In a remarkable breakthrough which would allow researchers a unique insight into the human mind, a dream recorder that could interpret electronic data is planned.

Experiments in which volunteers had electrodes surgically implanted into their brains has so far allowed the scientists to 'read' their minds, said Dr Moran Cerf.

He said: 'We would like to read people's dreams. It would be wonderful to read people's minds when they cannot communicate, such as people in comas.'

In tests on 12 epilepsy patients, electrodes recorded the activity of neurons in the part of the brain called the medial temporal lobe, which plays a role in mem-

ory retention.

With practice, the volunteers were able to control the appearance of 'hybrid' images consisting of one picture superimposed on another.



On cue they could quickly make a particular image, such as Marilyn Monroe or former US president George Bush, 'fade in' or 'fade out'.

During the tests, patients worked out their own strategies for conjuring up the

right images.

Some simply thought of the picture, while others repeated the name of the image out loud or stared at a particular aspect of the image.

All the participants quickly mastered the task and were successful in around 70 per cent of trials.

Dr Cerf, from the California Institute of Technology, who worked on the research reported today in the journal Nature, said: 'The patients clearly found this task to be incredibly fun as they started to feel that they control things in the environment purely with their thoughts.'

'They were highly enthusiastic to try new things and see the boundaries of 'thoughts' that still allow them to activate things in the environment.'

Scientists have previously used the activity of neurons in the brain to control a cursor on a computer screen.

France confirms Laden's threat tape genuine

AFP, Paris

France believes that a audio message from al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden threatening attacks on French targets is genuine, the foreign ministry said yesterday.

Ministry spokesman Bernard Valero told reporters that the authenticity of the message "can be considered as confirmed in light of initial checks" and that it confirmed the "reality of the terrorist menace" against France.



EXECUTIVE SEARCH

Timberland, a global MNC, is engaged in manufacturing and marketing outdoor boots, shoes, clothes and gear that are comfortable enough to wear through out the world. The company has 5,500 employees around the world with its global Head-Quarter in the USA and Asia Supply Chain Offices in Hong Kong, China, Vietnam, Thailand and India.

Timberland (TBL) is now seeking the services of qualified people to work at its Bangladesh operation at Chittagong for the following positions:

1. PRODUCTION MANAGER

The Role

- Work with factory partner to ensure that footwear meets quality standards, delivery timelines and customer requirements. Integrate self into every aspect of partner factories.
- Assist and support Timberland's Code of Conduct and Timberland Quality System (TQS) teams to ensure key Corporate Social Responsibilities, environmental and TQS objectives in its partner factories.

Commercialization

- Supervise and coach all team members conducting commercialization and production trials to ensure an efficient process flow. Provide guidance for improvements in personal skills and technical procedures.
- Work with the Product Development team to ensure that products are ready in a timely manner and assist in achieving buy readiness dates.
- Ensure Timberland standards and requirements for the engineering and manufacturing of footwear are adhered to with regards to product quality and Development Calendar timelines.
- Resolve technical-related problems which occur during the process of Commercialization and communicate these issues to TBL USA Management team and TBL Asia team in China as well as the factories.
- Review prototype products throughout development and identify potential Development, Commercialization or Production issues and provide options for solutions.

Production & Quality

- Participate in a clearly defined process that promotes production staff involvement in the Product Creation Process to ensure the manufacturability of all products at the time of Buy Readiness.
- Liaise with TBL Quality Assurance management team in USA to ensure that production footwear meets Timberland's quality standards and assist in identifying areas of improvement.
- Nurture a close working relationship with factories delivering exceptional results against the Scorecard metrics.
- Manage and develop Production QA/QC team to ensure all Timberland Key initiatives are met in all relevant areas related to factory.
- Support the implementation of Quality systems, to stabilize and then optimize the Timberland Quality process.
- Work with Factory and the concerned Timberland team and Vendors in establishing a system to ensure timely delivery of quality materials.
- Work with the Timberland planning team to ensure timely delivery and reliability targets are met at the factory.
- Work with the concerned Departments and TBL USA HQ, and Factories to prevent potential quality problems ensuring the product meeting TBL standards.

The Qualifications, Experiences and Skills

- A university/college degree in the relevant field.
- 8 years' of experience in production management, preferably in footwear or related field with a multi-national company.
- A team player with demonstrated leadership and interpersonal skills.
- Ability to communicate in English effectively.
- Computer literate.

2. PRODUCTION PLANNER

The Role

- Communicate closely with Timberland Asia planning team in China to coordinate and confirm buy, production schedules of Timberland shoes and ensure data accuracy.
- Maintain and update "Arigo" system.
- Communicate directly with factory production staff to collect daily information for production follow up. Visit factory to verify actual materials and production status.
- Ensure all the orders are planned to be processed according to Timberland's policies and rules.
- Ensure that the factories make sure the accuracy of reported completion dates and timely deliveries.

- Ensure factories are constantly informed of all the documentation information.
- Coordinate with the material teams to ensure the production starts on schedule.
- Work additional mold Purchase Order (PO), new season's mold PO based on buy demands.

The Qualifications, Experiences and Skills

- A university/college degree in the relevant field.
- 6 years' of experience in footwear production planning or related field.
- Command on the English language, both written and verbal.
- Is able to work with minimal supervision.
- Computer literate.

3. SENIOR PRODUCTION QA/QC (QUALITY ASSURANCE/QUALITY CONTROL)

The Role

- Work closely with the Production Manager to implement and monitor all of Timberland's Key Initiatives.
- Follow established quality systems to ensure factories are compliant with quality requirements at every stage of engineering and manufacturing.
- Ensure factories are testing and checking data and following the TBL required standards accurately and correctly.
- Examine the Quality reports provided by the factories to ensure that product quality meets TBL standards.

The Qualifications, Experiences and Skills

- A university/college degree in the relevant field.
- 6 years' of experience in QA/QC, preferably in foot-wear quality field.
- Command on the English language, both written and verbal.
- Computer literate.

4. OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR

The Role

- Perform all administrative matters.
- Contact and deal with Government agencies and local functionaries to ensure all office activities run efficiently and in compliance with local laws.
- Manage the pool cars, booking conference room and organizing employees' travelling issues.
- Handle daily petty cash disbursement and update monthly Office Expense Reports.
- Provide support in Human Resource operation in recruitment, leave record, employee records, coordinate training activities and community service projects, etc.
- Provide support to the expatriates in obtaining work permit, residence visa, etc.
- Support IT Manager to work with suppliers/contractor in IT field.

The Qualifications, Experiences and Skills

- A university degree.
- 5 years' of relevant experience, preferably in a multi-national company with experience in dealing with office administration/HR/Accounting.
- Command on the English language, both written and verbal.
- Is able to work with minimal supervision.
- Computer literate.

Remuneration

- A market competitive package will be offered based on skills and experiences.

Applications

- All applications will be treated on merit and in strict confidence.
- To apply, please forward an updated résumé by Thursday, 11th November 2010 to:

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Only short-listed candidates will be contacted