

Beer girl allies target Carlsberg

Chhay Chanvda
and Vincent MacIsaac

ANGKOR beer promoters will meet again this afternoon with city officials mediating the dispute between them and their employer, as pressure mounts on Carlsberg to bring an equitable end to a dispute over \$2 of daily overtime.

Carlsberg, which owns half of Angkor beer brewer Cambrew, had received letters from unions in Denmark, where it is based, and international labor federations that were "appalled by Carlsberg's behaviour in Cambodia," Mora Sar, president of the Cambodia Food Workers' Association, told the Post yesterday.

"Carlsberg is concerned about its image and how the strike in Cambodia affects it," Mora Sar said. Reports about the strike, which has been suspended until Thursday, also began appearing in the Danish media last week.

The 175 million-strong International Trade Union Confederation has urged Carlsberg "to act now to ensure that women workers are treated with the respect and dignity they deserve, and have the protection they so clearly need."

In an August 4 letter to Carlsberg's chief executive, the confederation said it was "deeply concerned about the degrading conditions in which beer promoters work. They are



An Angkor Beer promoter speaks into a microphone during a protest outside the Cambrew headquarters in Phnom Penh earlier this month. *KEVIN MAZUR/AGF*

subjected to constant sexual harassment by customers and are under intense pressure to consume alcohol."

The confederation horned in on Cambrew's refusal to implement a judgment by the Arbitration Council that sided with the beer promoters' claim that they were entitled to overtime for working on Sundays.

"Cambrew has to dare failed to honour that judgment. Certainly, Carlsberg would not ignore the judgment of a Danish tribunal," it said.

Sar Mora and representatives of the strikers will meet this afternoon with city officials who agreed last week to mediate the dispute.

Beer promoter Yeong Srey-mom said city officials were trying to resolve the dispute because Cambrew feared their strike would spread.

Ian Lubet, a Canadian academic who has been researching the beer industry in Cambodia for 12 years, said the suspension of the strike gave Cambrew "one week to bring

about an equitable solution or allow Carlsberg to get its PR machine rolling."

Sara Mora said several of the women who had returned to work had been shifted to less lucrative venues.

Instead of returning to busy restaurants and beer gardens, they had been relocated to nightspots with few customers and far lower sales commissions, he said. "They are being punished for striking."

Carlsberg declined to comment yesterday. ■

Villagers protest at governor's home

May Tithara

REPRESENTATIVES of 168 families from Kampong Chant's Memot district staged a protest at the provincial governor's home yesterday, seeking an intervention on their behalf in an ongoing land dispute with Memot Rubber Plantation.

Governor Hun Neng had not made an appearance, but villagers had met with his Cabinet, whose members promised to resolve the problem in three days. Oun Sou Cheng, a resident of Krong Kroep Leu village, in Memot's Traoung commune, said

"If the authorities don't find a solution for us in three days, we will bring our rice and our cooking pots here and continue the protest," she added.

Khout Srey Oun said 622 families had been living on the disputed land when the company began issuing eviction notices in December, 2009.

After multiple attempts by the company to threaten villagers, only 168 families had refused to leave their homes, she said.

"We have been living here for 30 years, so we are not in the wrong," Khout Srey Oun said.

"According to the Land Law, we have ownership of this land, not the company." ■