

Canal+ Myanmar premieres 25th original series

Emerald Heir charts villainous territory as domestic production expands

Canal+ Myanmar premieres its new original series, *Emerald Heir*, on its Zat Lenn Channel this evening (16 June), adding a family story of desire and revenge to a growing slate of originals across its digital, satellite and streaming subscription services. The 30-episode half-hour series is the Yangon-based platform's 25th original series since 2018 – and, with a record-breaking cast of 12 villains plus a necklace with evil powers, is part of the country's growing production story-telling confidence and ambition.

The full story is on page 3



Shanghai triumph for *She's Got No Name*

Stunning comeback for Peter Chan's recut film

She's Got No Name, a powerful drama starring Zhang Ziyi, made a stunning comeback this weekend as the Shanghai International Film Festival's opening title. The film – now the first of a two-part story – rewrites mainland China's release rules and is a triumph for Hong Kong filmmaker Peter Chan.

The full story is on page 2

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She's Got No Name Shanghai triumph

Stunning comeback for Peter Chan's recut film



She's Got No Name, a powerful drama starring Zhang Ziyi, made a stunning comeback this weekend as the Shanghai International Film Festival's opening title. Defying convention, the film also rewrites mainland China's release rules; Instead of being a world premiere, which custom dictates for an A-list festival, the film is a recut of the version that debuted at Cannes in May 2024. Moreover, the new feature is now the first episode of a two-part story.

She's Got No Name is a retelling of a 1945 cause celebre in which a Shanghai woman was accused of murdering her husband. The woman never quite owns up, but gleefully admits to having disposed of the dead man's head so that she won't be troubled by her abusive husband in the afterlife.

The film is the brainchild of writer-director-producer, Peter Chan Ho-Sun, whose early films marked him as a Hong Kong auteur, but who has also long sought success in the PRC market.

Chan finished production of his new work in early 2024 and accepted an invitation to play the film in competition in Cannes. However, the invitation meant post-production was rushed and movie suffered a chilly reception. "I let my ego get in the way and with hindsight should not have gone to Cannes," Chan told *ContentAsia*. "My original intention was for it to be a longer story, a two-part film or a premium mini-series."

Chan credits Shanghai's city authorities and festival organisers as being instrumental in enabling the work – an archly modern and feminist tale set in their city – to be resuscitated. "They basically asked 'what do you need to make this happen'," Chan reports.

In addition to having film editing ace William Chang Suk-ping handle the mass of previously unused footage, the two-part movie needed to shed its image as damaged goods. That involved the unprecedented recertification of *She's Got No Name* (Part 1) by Chinese authorities as a new film and giving it a fresh promotional push in the mainland market.

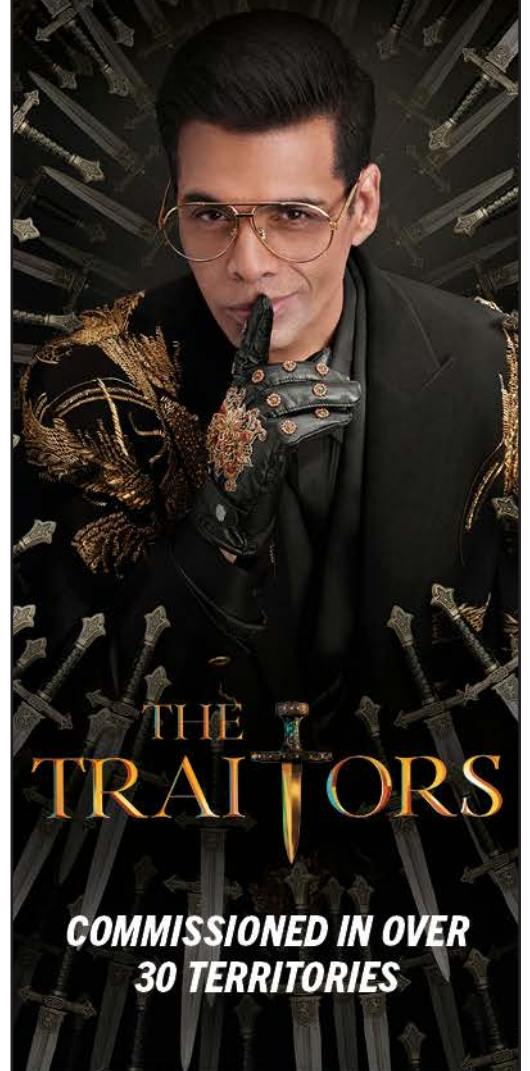
In addition to the festival red carpet treatment, the new film began its commercial rollout with a relatively rare "platform release" in 120 Shanghai cinemas ahead of a full nationwide rollout on Saturday (21 June). (Part two is not yet completed, but it is expected to release later this year.)

Early box office estimates are promising. Ent Group reports that *She's Got No Name* has already earned US\$630,000 and had a US\$2,800 per screen average on Sunday. That was by far the highest of any title on commercial release this weekend. – By Patrick Frater

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Canal+ Myanmar premieres 25th original series

Emerald Heir charts villainous territory as domestic production expands

Canal+ Myanmar premieres its new original series, *Emerald Heir*, on its Zat Lenn Channel this evening (16 June), adding a family story of desire and revenge to a growing slate of originals across its subscription services.

Filmed in Yangon, *Emerald Heir* is about a patriarch and his prized possession – an emerald necklace with the power to grant any wish. As rivalries between those around him escalate, family members and friends discover the terrible price of making wishes come true.

The 30-episode half-hour original series, produced by Nora Ko (*Sparkle Hearts*)/Bonanza Production and directed by Htut Tint Htut (known for zombie series *Toxic*), follows horror/supernatural drama, *The Loom*, which premiered in March, and marital drama *Unbreakable Vows* in January. All are wholly funded by Canal+ Myanmar.

Next up, is *Born to be One*, which premieres in September, followed by crime drama *The Lake* in November, and motherhood drama *Saturday Gems*, scheduled for January 2026.

May Wah Lwin, Canal+'s editorial manager in Yangon, says the team chose the *Emerald Heir* story because nothing else like it has been done in Myanmar. "The storyline is unique," she says. "They're family but not real family...full of desire, revenge, betrayal... It has 13 villains. Everyone is a protagonist and everyone is an antagonist. Even this mysterious, very beautiful, valuable emerald necklace is a villainous character," she says.

The platform's original production ambitions are part of Myanmar's increasingly vibrant and confident video production landscape across platforms. The streaming environment is also expanding; three new platforms rolled out in Yangon in the past year. "They all need content," Canal+ veteran, Damiano Malchiodi, who joined the Myanmar operation in 2021 as managing director for channels and content, says, adding that the demand gives rise to a new creative dynamic.

Although Myanmar's number of TV



Emerald Heir

series overall dropped last year, domestic platforms still produced 65 series in 2024 (compared to 74 in 2023). Canal+ Myanmar bucked the general industry trend, producing seven of the 65 series, up from six the previous year. Meanwhile, the film industry is booming, with more than 50 features produced in 2024 against about 31 the previous year, according to local industry data.

So far, Canal+ Myanmar has produced more than 400 hours of original scripted episodes in seven years. *Emerald Heir* is its 25th series since 2018.

At Canal+ Myanmar's HQ in Yangon, the production team is upbeat about their progress, at home as well as in neighbouring Thailand and beyond.

The platform is planning to air five original series this year, pushing up scale and production values, and five more are on the schedule for 2026 (including the first period costume drama) along with the hunt for a strong franchise property.

"We are trying to increase our ambition day by day," Malchiodi says, adding that he expects 2026 to be the company's biggest original production year yet.

Malchiodi notes requests for rights from Thailand, which has a significant Burmese population, but also because he believes the latest productions are qualitatively better. "There are no boundaries

when the story is strong, when the talent is great," he says.

Along with streaming service Viu, which is also part of the Canal+ family, platforms in Vietnam are acquiring Canal+ Myanmar shows, and the series, *Crying Forest*, has been picked up in Eastern Europe. Indonesia is also on the distribution radar.

Malchiodi talks about a tight development process ("when you press the button you have to be 100% ready"), as well as a generation of rising stars who understand marketing and are as aware as every other celebrity of social media engagement.

"We mix the DNA of the cast," Malchiodi says.

Among *Emerald Heir*'s cast is one of Myanmar's top YouTubers and film actor – Nay Htoo Naing – who has never been cast in a TV series before. Similarly, lead actress Myat KayThi Aung is best known for her film roles, but she agreed to star in the TV series "because the project was shiny".

Malchiodi describes her decision as a game changer for the show. "Others in the ecosystem are looking at TV differently," he says.

Canal+ Myanmar celebrates this agility. As Malchiodi says it's "part of our mindset". – by Janine Stein

MasterChef Cambodia breaks domestic engagement records

CBS CEO Dave Ulmer kicks off studio expansion, led by tie-up with L.A.'s The Studio

Cambodia's largest broadcaster, Cambodian Broadcasting Service (CBS), is rolling out an international charm offensive on the back of the blockbuster launch of *MasterChef S4* and the start of a plan to build a global production destination.

MasterChef Cambodia broke viewership records for its premiere on Sunday, 8 June, with 1.1 million organic views on Facebook Live, the platform of choice for the Phnom Penh-based broadcaster.

In a country of 18 million people, fewer than three million TV households, and about 13 million Facebook users, the episode generated 34,000 reactions, 11,400 comments and 10,000 shares, making it the most engaged digital TV event in Cambodian history. The show airs on CTN (Cambodian Television Network) one of CBS' free-TV channels.

Celebrations on *MasterChef*'s performance went right up to the top of CBS's Phnom Penh-based parent – the Royal Group of Companies, a privately owned conglomerate involved in banking, finance, insurance, hotels and resorts, transport, aviation, energy, health and property investment, to name a few.

After the live premiere, a note from the Group's HQ described the performance as a "milestone" and said the production was a "flagship example of the future of entertainment – local, scalable, and socially engaging". It's also vindication for a strategy that puts CBS at the mercy of the Facebook algorithm.

For veteran Asia media exec Dave Ulmer, who joined CBS as CEO two years ago, the Facebook embrace is a no-brainer. The Meta platform is so entrenched in Cambodia that many companies don't even bother with their own websites anymore, he says.

MasterChef Cambodia's Facebook engagement is overwhelmingly local, which satisfies CBS domestic sponsors at the same time as overcoming broadcast TV infrastructure and traditional distribution challenges. Ulmer has also rolled out a company-wide AI adoption programme



MasterChef Cambodia S4



David Ulmer, CBS

to boost efficiency and productivity.

"Three years ago a hit TV show on broadcast TV would attract about 300,000 viewers, or between 10% and 12% of households. That doesn't matter any more compared to the millions online," he says.

MasterChef is part of a bigger picture Ulmer draws, one which raises Cambodia's voice in the global production conversation and creates a bridge between Hollywood and Cambodia.

The goal took a step forward in May this year with a MoU between CBS's studio facility, Camwood Studios, and The Studio in L.A. The newly minted partners plan up to 10 international film and TV productions over the next two years. The first project should start filming in Q4 this year. The MoU is anchored in a commitment to scale up Cambodia's creative ecosystem and economy.

Cambodia has enjoyed flashes of international film recognition. But the country's creative potential is nowhere near being realised, Ulmer says, talking up the development plan and at the same time laying out clear challenges. "With the exception of a few films, most of the content here doesn't travel," he says.

Cambodia has a dozen general en-

tertainment free-TV channels. These air a mix of local Khmer, Thai, Chinese and some Korean content.

Cambodia's film ecosystem is tiny, with about 100 screens – about a third of which are operated by the Thai-based Major – mostly in Phnom Penh. Local film budgets average about US\$100,000, with lows of US\$10,000 and rare highs of US\$500,000. Cambodian box office data is thin. Box Office Mojo shows the top weekend box office last year was US\$8,000 for *The Crow*. This year so far, weekend box office topped out at less than US\$4,000.

The upside is a friendly, lower-cost relatively easy to navigate on-ground environment.

Ulmer kicked off his plan to grow Cambodia's production muscle by re-organising resources and renting out CBS' equipment and facilities, including six sound stages at the rebranded Camwood Studios. Two years later, he's ready to start welcoming foreign productions.

What's next? Expanding the existing tax incentive structure for foreign companies to include incentive and rebate packages to rival those offered by its neighbours, led by Thailand. He's working on it.

An extended version
of this article is here



NHK's Shin Yasuda on the way forward for doc co-production

Countdown: *Run Against Time: The Snowman Race* int'l debut at Sunny Side of the Doc

In October 2024, 25 of the world's top extreme runners gathered in Bhutan for one of the most remote and challenging foot races ever – the Snowman Race, 175 kilometers of Himalayan wilderness, with an average elevation of about 4,300m and multiple peaks rising to 5,470m.

For the Royal Government of Bhutan, the five-day race is part of a sweeping environmental protection promise. For Japanese broadcaster NHK, the race is part of a long-held documentary culture with time, money and vision to go where few others dare.

On 23 June, during Sunny Side of the Doc in La Rochelle, NHK presents *Run Against Time: The Snowman Race*. The international debut of the 49-minute feature comes a dozen years after the publicly funding platform premiered *Legends of the Deep: Giant Squid*, the first colour footage of a live giant squid in its natural habitat, and a few months after the release of *Deep Ocean: Kingdom of the Coelacanth*.

Co-produced by NHK, Bhutan Broadcasting Service (BBS) and French companies Gedeon (which has European distribution rights through Terranoa) and Ushuaia TV, *Run Against Time: The Snowman Race* is part of NHK's 100th anniversary celebrations. The Sunny Side agenda also features a special session on NHK's co-productions.

In the run-up to the four-day festival, Shin Yasuda, NHK's senior producer, international co-productions and acquisitions, content value development center, told *ContentAsia* that co-productions were even more important "in an age where public media around the world is facing budget constraints due to changes in the media landscape".

Yasuda spoke about high viewer expectation for grand-scale programming and NHK's ongoing quest for new styles of storytelling as well as event programmes with new discovery/big impact on a global scale.

In addition, he says, "co-productions have allowed us to bring Japanese sto-



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ries to the global audience". These range from science documentaries that analyse the mechanism of megaquakes and disaster-prevention measures to natural history documentaries that explore the wonders of Japanese wildlife.

"As the world becomes more complex and polarised, international co-productions also play an important role in seeking solutions to common problems we face as global citizens," Yasuda says.

"It is becoming more and more difficult for one country or region alone to solve problems that affect all of us such as climate change and global conflict," he adds, reiterating the call for "like-minded broadcasters and media companies around the world join hands to look for seeds of resolution".

"This may sound idealistic, but I think we live in a time when we need to remind ourselves of the spirit of altruism, which I think was at the core of international co-production when it was first conceived," Yasuda says, pointing to NHK's participation in Global Doc, an initiative led by France Televisions in which public media companies join forces to support and co-finance ambitious documentary projects with universal appeal.

"As the media industry becomes more diverse and fragmented, we believe that these partnerships play an important role



Run Against Time: The Snowman Race in Bhutan (top); Shin Yasuda, NHK (above)

in making sure that aspiring filmmakers are supported and that well-researched, high-quality content are made and delivered to the public".

NHK's challenges are similar to public broadcasters around the world – shrinking broadcast slots, budget cuts, and the need to better engage younger audiences.

Recognition for NHK's initiatives this year came in the form of an Oscar nomination of short documentary film, *Instruments of a Beating Heart*. The film was the result of years of collaboration between independent filmmaker Ema Ryan Yamazaki and NHK, which Yasuda says not only highlights NHK's filmmaking abilities, but also "proves the importance of long-term relationships". – by Janine Stein

An extended version
of this article is here



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What's on where...

June 2025	23-27	30th Shanghai TV Festival 2025	Shanghai, China
	23-26	Sunny Side of the Doc 2025	La Rochelle, France
	24-26	APOS 2025	Bali, Indonesia
July 2025	2-4	17th Content Tokyo 2025	Tokyo, Japan
	7-8	DW Global Media Forum 2025	Bonn, Germany
	23-26	Beijing International Radio, TV & Film Exhibition 2025	Beijing, China
August 2025	28-31	Gwangju Ace Fair 2025	Gwangju, Korea
September 2025	2-3	ContentAsia Summit ContentAsia Premieres 2025	Taiwan
	4	ContentAsia Awards 2025	Taiwan
	2	AVIA: Archipelago Video Summit 2025	Jakarta, Indonesia
	16-19	BCWW 2025	Seoul, Korea
	17-26	Busan International Film Festival (BIFF) 2025	Busan, Korea
	20-23	Asian Contents & Film Market 2025	Busan, Korea
October 2025	11-12	MipJunior 2025	Cannes, France
	13-16	Mipcom 2025	Cannes, France
	28	AVIA: Northeast Asia Video Summit 2025	Tokyo, Japan
	29-31	TIFFCOM 2025	Tokyo, Japan
November 2025	4-7	Taiwan Creative Content Fest 2025 (TCCF)	Taipei, Taiwan
	4-5	Dubai International Content Market 2025 (DICM)	Madinat Jumeirah, Dubai
	30 Nov-7 Dec	Jogja-NETPAC Asian Film Festival 2025	Yogyakarta, Indonesia
	29 Nov-1 Dec	JAFF Market 2025	Yogyakarta, Indonesia
December 2025	2	Asia TV Forum & Market 2025 (ATF) – ATF Leaders Dialogue	Singapore
	3-5	Asia TV Forum & Market 2025 (ATF) – Market & Conference	Singapore
	3-4	AVIA: Asia Video & OTT Summit 2025	Singapore
February 2026		Mip London 2026	London, U.K.
		The London TV Screenings 2026	London, U.K.
March 2026	17-20	Hong Kong FILMART 2026	Hong Kong
	24-26	Series Mania Forum 2026	Lille, Hauts-de-France
April 2026	23-28	Canneseries 2026	Cannes, France

The Apothecary Diaries decimates rivals

Japan's anime rule continues – Parrot Analytics



The Apothecary Diaries

Top 10 overall TV originals: Japan

Rank	Title	Difference from Market Average (x times)
1	The Apothecary Diaries	102.5
2	My Hero Academia	57.2
3	Frieren: Beyond Journey's End	50.0
4	Apocalypse Hotel	48.9
5	Detective Conan	44.5
6	Saigo Kara Nibanme No Koi	42.4
7	Fire Force	36.5
8	Solo Leveling	36.0
9	Attack On Titan	36.0
10	Katainaka No Ossan, Kensei Ni Naru	35.8

Top 10 digital originals: Japan

Rank	Title	Platform	Difference from Market Average (x times)
1	Gannibal	Disney+	26.0
2	Sakamoto Days	Netflix	25.0
3	Ameku Takao No Suiji Karte	Crunchyroll	23.8
4	To Be Hero	Bilibili	20.8
5	Saiki Kusuo No Psi Nan	Netflix	18.0
6	Fischers And The Lost Treasure	YouTube Premium	17.3
7	Andor	Disney+	16.6
8	Code Geass: Rozé Of The Recapture	Disney+	15.9
9	Lycoris Recoil: Friends Are Thieves Of Time.	Crunchyroll	15.8
10	Squid Game	Netflix	15.3

Date range: 26 May-1 June 2025

The total audience demand being expressed for a title, within a market. Audience demand reflects the desire, engagement and viewership, weighted by importance; so a stream/download is a higher expression of demand than a 'like'/comment. In this dataset we are comparing the demand that exists for each series in this market, against the average TV show. A difference of 1x represents the market average and 10x means a series is ten times more in demand than the average TV show in this market



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Published fortnightly by:

Pencil Media Pte Ltd

www.contentasia.tv

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