



PM Unveils Steps to Navigate Covid-19 and EBA Impacts



KT/FEB 25

Prime Minister Hun Sen asked citizens and investors to trust that the government will overcome the challenges brought about by Covid-19 and the loss of the EU's Everything But Arms (EBA) scheme.

The PM mentioned that the government has drafted a four-point plan to navigate the challenges.

He said Covid-19 and the partial loss of the EBA deal will particularly affect the garment and tourism sectors. A small number of factories, are likely to lay off employees in the coming weeks as they run out of raw materials – which come mostly from China – and are forced to shut down temporarily.

To address these issues, he said, the government has drafted a four-point strategy. First, it is considering a six-month tax moratorium for the worst-hit factories. The Ministry of Economy and Finance has been charged with deciding if and how the moratorium will be granted.

The second and third points only concern factories that shut down their operations in the upcoming weeks due to a lack of raw materials. These factories will not be required to contribute to the National Social Security Fund while closed.

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UN Agency to Continue Support for Landmine and ERW Victims

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UNICEF announced that it is committed to continuing support for the government and its development partners to reduce threats posed by mines and explosive remnants of war.

UNICEF representative Cristian Munduate that concerted efforts by the government, development partners and demining agencies had reduced the number of casualties caused by landmines and ERWs from more than 4,000 in 1996 to 77 last year.

She also called for full integration of mine risk education in the primary school curriculum and textbooks, as well as other development activities by government institutions.

“We are committed to continue our assistance to landmine survivors as well as promote and protect the rights of persons living with disabilities, in particular children.”

Ly Thuch, first vice president of the Cambodia Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority, said that the participation in reducing victim rates should not only focus on clearing landmines, but also on educating people on the dangers of landmines and reporting those they come across to the authorities.

He noted that to educate the public, the government has designated the National Mine Awareness Day, which has been held annually since 1999, and introduced various measures to promote awareness on the dangers of mines.

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PM Asks Cambodians to...

These factories will have to pay workers only 40% of the minimum wage, which now stands at \$190. The government will pay workers another 20%. “In short, each worker will receive about 60% of the minimum wages,” he said.

To help laid-off workers, the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training will organise training courses to help them find work to supplement their income through the National Employment Agency.

Finally, the ministry will work closely with the Garment Manufacturers Association in Cambodia to disseminate information on the progress achieved in improving labour conditions in local factories. •

One-Stop Online Platform Launched for Business



KT/FEB 28

A new Single Window online platform has been launched by the Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC) that will simplify the process for businesses applying to import production equipment into the country.

The Cambodian National Single Window platform (CNSW), currently in phase II, gathers together the key ministries of Commerce, Health, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, and Industry and Handicraft, plus the Council for the Development of Cambodia and the General Department of Customs and Excise.

CDC Secretary General Sok Chenda Sophea said that around 101 companies have currently created accounts to use the platform, with 16 of them already submitting their applications online. Known as the “Master List”, it is expected to reduce the process of importing goods from 15 to 10 days.

While the purpose of the platform is primarily national, to facilitate trade and import for investors and the private sector, it also represents a big step in connecting Cambodia with other countries. The CDC is stepping up in terms of electronic technology and actively supporting the private sector and investment,” he said.

In addition, the CDC has recently approved 15 development projects worth a total of \$786.8 million. A 1,500-bed international hospital, a supermarket, a resort, a multi-equipment assembly factory and an agro-processing plant are some of the builds that have been green-lit. •

Save The Children Promotes Sign Language Learning



KT/FEB 28

Save the Children and Krousar Thmey will hold an event to promote their Accelerating Sign Language project, which helps children with hearing impairment access quality education.

The project was founded by Australia's Foreign Affairs Department and Trade. The project focuses on delivering Khmer sign language lessons to the children.

Elizabeth Pearce, country director for Save the Children, said project developers are testing open-source video modules to help children with hearing impairment learn sign language in communities and primary schools.

"The project aims to support children with profound hearing loss in accessing quality education, to create an enabling environment by providing support to their families, and by introducing Khmer sign language lessons to their teachers and fellow students," she said.

93 million children around the globe live with disabilities. In Cambodia, 2.1% of people aged five and older live with disabilities, while 57% of primary school children with disabilities are out of school.

It said 44.3% of children with disabilities who had access to education completed primary education. •

\$2 Million Grant to Aid Kingdom's Labour Relations and Dispute Resolution



KT/FEB 28

The USAID and Swedish Embassy donated more than \$2 million to Arbitration Council Foundation (ACF) to further enhance the Kingdom's labour relations and dispute resolution services.

A new five-year \$1.5 million grant was provided by the USAID as part of its new Labour Rights in Cambodia project, while a two-year \$530,000 fund was given by the Embassy of Sweden to promote credible and well-functioning labour dispute arbitration system in the Kingdom.

ACF executive director Men Nimmith said these funds will further increase effectiveness of labour relations systems and labour market governance for private sectors in Cambodia.

As of 2019, the ACF had handled 2,882 cases affecting over 1.11 million workers in the industrial and service sectors across the Kingdom, revealed Mr Nimmith. Of these, 75% had been resolved successfully.

USAID-Cambodia Acting Deputy Mission Director Javier Castano today said it is crucial to maintain a system by which collective disputes can be adjudicated and peacefully resolved by an entity that workers and employers deem neutral and impartial. •

Japan to aid Kingdom's Agriculture, Health and Youth Sectors



KT/FEB 25

The Japanese government donated a total of \$890,471 for the development of irrigation systems, maternal and child healthcare, and youth capacity building in the Kingdom.

The grant contract was signed between Japanese ambassador Masahiro Mikami and the representatives of the said sectors.

A budget of \$85,019 will be allocated for the first project, which will focus on the development of irrigation systems aimed at enhancing agriculture in the Preah Vihear eco-village.

The donation will be given to the NGO Pride of Asia Preah Vihear Association Japan to support the construction of reservoirs and water facilities in the province's eco-village.

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Gov't Teams Up with Sweden, UNICEF to Revamp Education

PPP/FEB 20

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport launched the Quality and Inclusive Education Support Partnership, an initiative supported by Sweden and UNICEF that aims to enhance access to education for children in the Kingdom, particularly from disadvantaged communities.

Running from 2020 to 2023, the programme will be implemented with an \$8.3 million budget.

The partnership will contribute to advancing Cambodia's Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs], whose attainment is linked to education quality and inclusion, gender equality as well as health, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene in schools. It will benefit children, particularly those from disadvantaged groups, who are struggling to realise their potential.

The partnership was inked by Swedish ambassador to Cambodia Bjorn Haggmark, UNICEF representative to Cambodia Cristian Munduate, and Minister of Education, Youth and Sport Hang Chuon Naron at the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport in Phnom Penh.

Minister Chuon Naron said education is a priority for the government and is considered critical in improving human resources and enabling economic growth.

The Ambassador noted Sweden's longstanding cooperation with UNICEF and the ministry to improve the quality and inclusiveness of education in Cambodia.

The partnership will contribute to the realisation of development goals and SDGs, he added. •

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Japan to Aid Kingdom's Agriculture...

The association's representative Noritada Morita said farmers in the area will benefit from the project as it would increase agricultural production especially in the dry season, enhance agricultural technology and improve facility management for sustainable regional development.

The second project will receive a fund of \$452,427 to improve access on integrated healthcare, safe water and sanitation, and nutrition services in Preah Vihear.

Lastly, the third project will concentrate on youth capacity building in Pailin province. An amount of \$353,025 will be donated to NGO Kokkyo naki Kodomotachi (Children without Borders) to support the youth and equip them with life and employability skills, which they would need in the future. •

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UN Agency to Continue Support...

Australian Ambassador Pablo Kang said that mine risk education is a significant factor in the reduction of the casualty rate of landmine victims.

"I am very pleased to announce that Australia has just confirmed its continued support of the new phase of the Clearing for Results Project – which aims to help Cambodia achieve mine-free status by 2025 – and will focus on the provinces most affected by mines: Battambang, Pailin and Banteay Meanchey provinces," he said. •

More Ports Along Mekong Planned



KT/FEB 22

The construction of more ports along the Mekong River has been planned with an aim to improve the transport of agricultural products along the river.

Minister of Public Works and Transport, Sun Chanthol, said that two more ports would be constructed – one in Kampong Cham province and the other in Kandal province.

Land for the port at Tonle Bith river, in Kampong Cham province, and that in Kaam Samnor of Leuk Dek district, Kandal province have been selected with a plan of building a special economic zone inside.

The port constructions are under the management of Phnom Penh Autonomous Port, the senior minister underlined.

Sub-ports along the river are also on the construction list, an effort to improve the country's waterway transport. •