



## \$9M Donation to Help Fight COVID-19



PPP/March 26

Prime Minister Hun Sen announced that the government had received nearly \$9 million from Cambodian donors for the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic.

He made the announcement at a meeting with 422 volunteer doctors before they went on missions with the Ministry of Health to fight the disease.

“Until now, we have received nearly \$9 million. I thank and express my gratitude to the King and the Queen Mother. And I thank the various donors for their contributions,” he said.

The government had not yet used the funds but once the coronavirus is under control and the situation has gone back to normal, any left over money is to be diverted to the Kantha Bopha Foundation.

Instead of donating money, some businesspeople have offered their hotels to serve as a treatment facility for COVID-19 patients free of charge.

The PM reiterated that all COVID-19 positive people in Cambodia, including foreigners, can receive free treatment from Cambodian doctors because it is the obligation of the Kingdom as their hosts. •

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## China Experts to the Rescue



PPP/March 24-30

Seven Chinese medical experts has recently arrived in the Kingdom to help fight COVID-19 head-on, as more cases were found in the Kingdom.

The team is led by the deputy director of the Healthcare Department at Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, who also brought along 7,000 pairs of disposable latex gloves, over 100,000 medical masks, 5,000 N95 protective masks, and 5,000 disposable work hats.

They also donated to the Kingdom 4,000 disposable boot covers, 1,300 anti-penetration gowns, 1,250 medical protective clothing, 2,080 medical face shields, 50 infrared temperature sensors, and 2,280 medical protective goggles.

The Chinese embassy said that the medical experts were the first team of its kind to be sent by China to an ASEAN country to share experiences in the fight against the virus. They would advise and treat the patients.

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## Germany to Aid Cambodia in COVID-19 Response

PPP/March 25

Germany announced that it will provide €1.5 million (USD 1,618,000) to help support the COVID-19 Emergency Response Plan in the Kingdom.

German Ambassador to Cambodia Christian Berger said Germany was Cambodia's longstanding development partner and has contributed to its healthcare sector since 2003.

"For a good containment strategy, it is crucial to have good capacities for virus testing in place," he said.

The support of development partners like Germany is coordinated through the World Health Organisation (WHO) and includes contributions from the World Bank and other development partners. •



## Thank-you letter from U.S. Congressman to PM over MS Westerdam

KT/March 22

U.S. Congressman for Florida's Third District, Ted S. Yoho has sent a letter to Samdech Hun Sen, thanking the Premier for his humanitarian response over the Westerdam cruise ship case as follows:

"Mr. Prime Minister, I want to take the time to personally thank you for letting the Westerdam cruise ship dock in your country last month. Your hospitality in granting this ship safe haven to arrive in your country and allowing our embassy staff to escort over 600 Americans to safety serves as a prime example of international solidarity.

In this recent episode, I believe we saw the best of both of our countries in allowing Cambodians and Americans to work together in order to save lives. I greatly appreciate your trust in our officials to handle our American nationals, and hope that this goodwill can translate to future cooperation and friendship.

Thank you again for your help. Although we may have our disagreements on important issues, I'm glad our two countries can still manage to come together when it matters most."

Westerdam cruise ship with more than 2,200 multinational tourists and crewmembers on board, of them more than 600 were Americans, was allowed to dock at Sihanoukville Autonomous Port in Preah Sihanouk province of Cambodia in mid-February this year, after being turned away by four nations and two islands amid COVID-19 fears. •

## Proposed Cabinet Reshuffle Approved

KT/March 27

The National Assembly gave its nod to the proposed cabinet reshuffle.

Prime Minister Hun Sen designated five new ministers and five senior ministers as part of the widely anticipated cabinet reshuffle.

In the statement dated Friday 27, PM requested the National Assembly to offer a vote of confidence to the list of names of government officials in the cabinet reshuffle.

As anticipated, Cham Prasidh has become the Minister of the Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology and Innovation and retains his position as senior minister.

Keut Rith, the Justice Ministry's Secretary of State has replaced Minister Ang Vong Vathana who is promoted to be a senior minister.

Chea Vandeth, Chairman of the National Assembly's Commission of Planning, Investment, Agriculture, Rural Development, Environment and Water Resources has replaced Tram Ivtek, Minister of Posts and Telecommunications who is promoted to be a senior minister.

Minister of Cults and Religions Him Chhem are promoted as senior minister and is replaced by Chhit Sokhon, a secretary of state at the Council of Ministers.

Meanwhile, Minister of Civil Service Pich Bunthin is promoted as senior minister and replaced by secretary of state, Prum Sokha. •

## UNICEF Promotes E-Learning Scheme



PPP/March 30

UNICEF has scaled up support in 145 countries, including Cambodia, to help children continue their studies after school closures around the world due to COVID-19.

Meanwhile, the Korea International Cooperation Agency (Koica) gave funds to support the creation of a Khmer e-learning platform for students from grades 7-12 to study online for free.

School closures have disrupted the studies of 80% of students around the world. UNICEF declared further support for all countries to help children continue their learning and make schooling safe.

Robert Jenkins, chief, education and associate director, Programme Division, at UNICEF Headquarter said that based on the lessons learnt from school closures in response to Ebola, the longer students stay away from school, the less likely they would return.

Giving children more alternatives to learn, and building a routine, he said, is important.

To deal with the disruption to children's education and help them continue learning safely, UNICEF has allocated additional funding of \$13 million for about 145 countries.

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## Kantha Bopha: Nearly 2,000 Surgeries in March

PPP/March 30

71 children have undergone successful heart operations and interventional catheterisation at the Kantha Bopha Children's hospitals in Siem Reap and Phnom Penh in March, the hospital said in its monthly report.

Over the same period, 165 children were hospitalised for dengue hemorrhagic fever, while 1,889 underwent general surgeries.

The report, dated March 25, said the hospitals had received children and women in labour. It said 57,097 sick children were treated as outpatients, while 10,589 were inpatients. 11,183 pregnant women were examined and treated in the outpatient units of the Jayavarman VII (Kantha Bopha III) hospital's maternity ward in Siem Reap, while 1,782 women had deliveries.

The Kantha Bopha Children's hospitals have also called on people to protect their children from coronavirus infections by adhering to good hygiene practices and following the instructions announced by the relevant authorities. •

## Sankranta Festival in Capital Faces Cancellation

KT/March 25

The capital's celebration of the Sankranta festival for the upcoming Khmer New Year, which was set to take place at Wat Phnom temple, has been cancelled amid coronavirus fears.

In line with the decision, the administration called for extra caution among residents of the capital, urging them to practise preventive measures as advised by the Ministry of Health.

Chhin Ketana, secretary-general of the National Committee for Organising National and International Festivals, said despite the cancellation of the celebration, the traditional Khmer New Year will still be observed in the middle of April. However, all public gatherings will be prohibited in a bid to curb virus risks.

Earlier this month, scheduled New Year's festivities in Siem Reap were also cancelled following the detection of coronavirus infection in a 38-year-old Cambodian man in the province. Not long after, Kampot province, one of the Kingdom's top tourist destinations, followed suit.

The Khmer New Year, traditionally celebrated mid-April, is delegated as a national holiday, allowing all residents living and working in Cambodia at least three days off to join in on the festivities. This year's new year will take place from April 13 to 16. •

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### UNICEF Promotes E-Learning...

In Cambodia, UNICEF is supporting the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) to provide alternative learning opportunities to students including e-learning classes in key subjects.

"This programme can benefit 250,000 students in grades 9 and 12 in the Kingdom who would take their national examinations this year. Online classes would support a lot of students to learn during the school closures due to COVID-19," UNICEF said.

According to the UNICEF announcement, it is cooperating with MoEYS with support from the Japanese government to increase practising programmes which give learning alternatives to students in primary and secondary schools. •

## EU Holds Campaign to Promote Child Rights



KT/March 26

The European Union is holding a three-month campaign with the government to promote child rights in Cambodia.

The campaign is being launched with events in Phnom Penh and Battambang with milestones and animation posts on social media.

The campaign is conducted in partnership with USAID, UNICEF, Save the Children and the Child Rights Now Network, and is the latest in the EU's ongoing investment in activities supporting a better development of children in Cambodia.

Among the programs they have initiated are the Early Childhood Care and Development Program for ethnic minority children, the promotion of child-friendly communities through the development of a national child protection system in Cambodia, and the Responsive and Effective Child Welfare Systems Transformation. •

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### China Experts to the Rescue

China has made numerous contributions to Cambodia amidst the pandemic.

On March 19, Wuxi Techstar Technology Co Ltd and the Chinese Bacterial Molecular Medical Laboratory donated 3,000 COVID-19 test kits to the Kingdom.

The China Asia Economic Development Association also donated 100,000 medical masks.

National police officials received 200 sets of protective clothes and 500 pairs of medical gloves.

Jack Ma and Alibaba Foundation also donated 20,000 test kits to Cambodia. •