



## Government Disburses \$125M in Handouts for Poor



PPP/June 24

Prime Minister Hun Sen said Cambodia has disbursed \$125 million in cash handouts over five months to municipal and provincial authorities for more than 600,000 poor and vulnerable families in target areas amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The PM said cash will be handed out to recipients in the fourth week of each month, amounting to \$25 million a month. At this stage, the government schedules payments every two months to implement the programme.

He continued that this was social assistance during the COVID-19 crisis, not a programme to support the poor permanently. He said those who can carry on their business or work should continue to do so instead of depending on state subsidies.

A sub-decree signed by the prime minister said poor families in Phnom Penh and those in urban areas outside the capital classified as Level 1 and 2 will receive a cash handout of 120,000 riel (\$30) a month.

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## Cambodian FM Says “Blame Game” Will Only Diminish Global Efforts against COVID-19



KT/June 20

Cambodian Foreign Minister Prak Sokhonn said playing the “blame game” will only diminish global efforts against the COVID-19 pandemic and called for international solidarity.

He made the remarks at the High-level Video Conference on Belt and Road International Cooperation: Combating COVID-19 with Solidarity.

“Any politicization of the outbreak or resorting to a blame game will only diminish the benefits of the international anti-pandemic efforts,” he said. “Without international cooperation and solidarity, we cannot win the fight against this pandemic.”

He said that countries need to focus on strengthening their collective capacities to address this public health crisis through exchanging technical expertise and experience, good practices, and exploring joint research and development of medicines and vaccines.

In this regard, Cambodia supports the creation of a Health Silk Road initiative, he said, adding that to build the Health Silk Road, it is vital for countries to share information and best practices, and enhance equitable and affordable access to health products, including vaccines, which should be recognized as global public goods.

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## New Independent Human Rights Institution to Be Launched In Cambodia



KT/June 20

Cambodian government is set to launch a new national independent human rights institution following recommendations from the UN.

Australia will assist Cambodia in creating a new national human rights institution, based on the Paris principles, given Australia’s experience following the formation of its own long-standing human rights commission.

The draft law of the new national independent human rights institution is being refined and will be finished pending input from both relevant government institutions and civil societies. •

## PM Hun Sen: New Phnom Penh Int’l Airport Will Be Ready By 2023



KT/June 22

Prime Minister Hun Sen said that the new Phnom Penh International Airport is 30% completed and will be finished by 2023.

During the site visit of the new Phnom Penh International Airport, the PM said that new the airport will be a 4F-class airport. He added that the new Phnom Penh International Airport is able to accommodate Airbus A380-800 and Boeing 747-800.

The project was announced in early 2018 under Cambodia Airport Investment company.

Cambodia Airport Investment Co Ltd is a joint-venture between Overseas Cambodia Investment Corporation (OCIC), and the government’s State Secretariat of Civil Aviation. Of the total investment, \$1.1 billion will come from loans from foreign banks, \$280 million from the Oversea Cambodia Investment Corporation, a local company, and \$120 million in registration capital. •

## PM Calls for Collective ASEAN Response to Virus Pandemic



KT/June 29

Amid the global pandemic, Prime Minister Hun Sen has called for a “collective response and solidarity” based on multilateralism in the Southeast Asia region to fight the coronavirus.

PM Hun Sen participated in the 36<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit along with nine other regional leaders via video conference, under the theme “Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN”, which was chaired by Vietnam.

It was the first time since its formation 53 years ago, that ASEAN was conducting the annual summit through video conference due to the pandemic.

He said the virus has brought about a number of challenges including public health safety, disruption in mobilisation of the global supply chain as well as severe social impacts amid a global economic downturn.

Cambodia fully supports the constitutional mandate of the World Health Organization as the leading and coordinating authority in the global fight against the pandemic.

“At the regional level, we are proud ASEAN has been relatively successful compared to other regions in the fight against COVID-19.” he added.

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## “Women’s Empowerment in the Digital Age” Highlighted by the Premier



KT/June 27

Prime Minister Hun Sen stressed his insights on “Women’s Empowerment in the Digital Age” during the ASEAN Leaders’ Special Session at the 36<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit held via video conference.

He said the theme of the meeting, “Women’s empowerment in the digital age”, is of crucial importance as digital technology is increasingly utilised in the daily lives, in particular during in the context of COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, women’s empowerment is one important element of the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (SDGs 2030).

In the context of the current situation, he continued, research study has indicated that COVID-19 pandemic has caused more severe impacts on women than men, both in the economic and social aspects. Particularly, women in developing countries have been severely impacted as most of them working in service sector and informal sector, thereby rendering them unable to get assistance from social protection programme which only covers workers in the formal sector.

He reminded that empowering women in embracing digital technology is an opportunity, providing a new catalyst to accelerate the progress of gender equality and inclusive socio-economic development. In fact, there remains huge untapped potential for women to further contribute to economic growth.

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## Cambodia’s Bicycle Exports Valued At Nearly \$200 Million in First Five Months



KT/June 26

Cambodia exported locally assembled bicycles of 876,612 units to foreign markets in the first five months this year, a 19% increase compared to the same period in 2019.

Statistics from the General Department of Customs and Excises show that from January to May, Cambodia exported over \$197 million worth of bicycles, up 2%.

The biggest market for Cambodia’s locally assembled bicycles is the European Union, followed by the U.S., the UK, and Japan.

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## **“Women’s Empowerment in the...**

Hence, ASEAN leaders and stakeholders, in particular private sectors have to jointly work together in order to create a favorable environment enabling women to grasp these opportunities and potentials.

In this regard, PM Hun Sen said, ASEAN should continue attaching high priorities to women’s empowerment in this digital age with the focus on the following issues:

- Increasing the provision and access to services for women and girls in utilising ICT
- Focusing on STEAM education that would allow women and girls to gain new knowledge related to ICT
- Continuing to promote women’s participation in the economic and financial sector
- Creating an ecosystem that can respond to the needs of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and Women Entrepreneurs with the focus on promoting the use digital technology, facilitating access to financial resources, training as well as capacity building
- Promoting skill development such as digital literacy and protection identity so that women can fully and securely benefits from the digital economy.
- Promoting new initiatives and best practices related to empowering women in digital technology •

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## **PM Calls for Collective...**

As of June 28, there were 143,000 confirmed cases of the coronavirus in ASEAN nations with more than 80,000 recoveries. Indonesia, Singapore and the Philippine have recorded the most number of cases in the bloc.

In April, regional leaders also held a Special ASEAN Summit on COVID-19 via video conference and agreed on a number of practical measures to mitigate the impact of the crisis.

“As a future direction, ASEAN must be strategically well prepared for the post-COVID-19 period. To achieve this goal, ASEAN should come up with a clear and prudent recovery plan that lays out various scenarios for gradual reopening of cross-border travel within the region, intra-regional trade, and the revival of sectors that are most affected by the crisis.” he added. •

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## **Government Disburses...**

Some could receive more depending on conditions such as the number of children, people with disabilities and HIV-positive families.

The Ministry of Planning said since June 1, it had identified 560,000 poor families consisting of 2.3 million people who are eligible for the cash handouts.

The PM also advised officials in the capital and provinces to continue surveying citizens. He said COVID-19 could cause some families to become impoverished in the future. •

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## **Cambodian FM Says...**

FM Sokhonn highly commended China’s contribution to fighting the pandemic worldwide. He noted that in the current context, countries should reaffirm their commitment to supporting the role of the World Health Organization (WHO).

While the COVID-19 curve has been flattened in some parts of the world, it is time to start exploring and securing ways and means to create a conducive environment for a post-pandemic economic recovery.

He added that as a firm believer in multilateralism and an active actor in the Belt and Road cooperation framework, Cambodia is calling for deeper engagement of all state and non-state actors in various Belt and Road cooperative programs. •

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## **Cambodia’s Bicycle Exports...**

The bicycle assembly sector is attracting both world-renowned bike manufacturers and accessories factories to invest in Cambodia, mainly at special economic zones in Bavet city, Svay Rieng province.

In 2019, Cambodia exported \$418 million worth of bicycles, up from \$331 million in 2018 to foreign markets. •