



PM Calls on Media to Fight against Fake News



Khmer Times/19 December

Prime Minister Hun Sen has recently called on all media and journalists reporting the COVID-19 to be factual and accurate in their reporting.

While calling for professionalism and code of ethics in journalistic reporting, he urged the media fraternity to respect the laws of the country, not to violate the rights of the people, and distort the truth.

He said the media must provide the right information to the people and create more awareness in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

The premier made the appeal to the media in a message to the Press Editorial Forum themed “The Role of the Press in the Context of Global Pandemic and Fake news”.

The whole world, including Cambodia, is affected and suffering from the COVID-19 pandemic, and some opportunistic groups are cashing on this to disseminate misinformation and fake news in the social media.

He added they were also distorting the truth and inflating the social media platform with inflammatory and misleading information to create chaos and unrest in the society and blame the government in their bid to serve their political agenda and ambitious greed.

The PM appealed to the media to mitigate these viral dissemination of false information and get the right information to the public which is very important to manage, contain and stop the spread of the COVID-19. •

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COVID-19 Vaccine Strategic Procurement Plan Discussed

AKP/18 December

The Royal Government of Cambodia has convened an urgent discussion meeting with relevant partners on the efficient procurement of quality and safe COVID-19 vaccine for Cambodians.

Permanent Secretary of State at the Ministry of Economy and Finance chaired the virtual meeting along with the Minister of Health, and representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

Participating multilateral and bilateral development partners include the World Health Organisation (WHO), UNICEF, Asian Development Bank (ADB), World Bank, European Union, Global Fund, GAVI Alliance, COVAX Facility, and Embassies of Australia, China, Japan, Russia, United States of America, United Kingdom, South Korea and France.

Focusing on a strategic procurement plan and actions for COVID-19 vaccine, the meeting will contribute to greasing the soonest possible purchase and proper control of the vaccine with quality and effectiveness for Cambodians.

The work will need thorough evaluation and the support of all development stakeholders is indispensable.

The Royal Government will purchase only the vaccine certified by the World Health Organisation, either through COVAX Facility, direct purchase from the manufacturer or other approach – underlined the permanent secretary of state.

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The UK and Cambodia Keeping Ties Strong



Khmer Times/18 December

During a meeting with Cambodia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Prak Sokhonn, the UK Ambassador to the Kingdom of Cambodia, Tina Redshaw, announced that starting on 1 January 2021, the UK will implement an independent trade policy.

The UK has decided not to replicate the EU's partial withdrawal of trade preferences under the Everything but Arms (EBA) programme for Cambodia. This is the result of its taking into account the economic impact of COVID-19 on some of the most vulnerable members of the society, among others, the Kingdom's garment workers.

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Bicycle Boom Sees Cambodia Overtake Rivals in Exports to EU



Khmer Times/15 December

As commuters shun public transport and look to keep fit during pandemic-induced lockdowns, the demand for bicycles has skyrocketed, giving some Cambodian industries a much-needed break.

More than 1.5 million bicycles were exported as of the end of the third quarter this year, bringing in some \$400 million in revenue.

Between January and September, half a million bicycles were exported to the US, 360,000 to Germany, 270,000 to the UK and 150,000 to Belgium.

The continued growth in bicycle exports has seen the Kingdom become the largest bicycle supplier for the EU market.

A World Bank report said that the Kingdom's position as the leading exporter of bicycles to the EU market makes the sector the third-most important export product of Cambodia after garments and footwear. ●

World Bank: Cambodia's Economic Growth Projected to Grow By 4% Year



Khmer Times/17 December

Cambodia's economy is projected to contract by 2% in 2020, but is expected to bounce back and grow by 4% in 2021, the World Bank said.

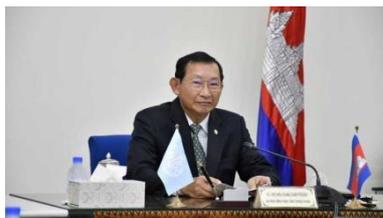
With the easing of social distancing measures, domestic economic activity is gradually returning to normal. Consumption is being partly underpinned by unprecedented government intervention, while inflation remained subdued. FDI inflows to projects in non-garment industries and agriculture have been rising, likely attracted by Free Trade Agreements.

Although total manufacturing exports have been hit by the pandemic, exports of bicycles, electrical parts, and vehicle parts and accessories are rising, and exports of rice and other agricultural commodities have surged. Domestic tourists have supported a partial recovery of the travel and tourism industry.

To help the country quickly recover from the pandemic, the report recommends boosting pro-poor and growth-enhancing public investment including cash-for-work projects, while promoting labor-intensive sectors to generate jobs by taking advantage of the quick recovery of domestic demand for consumer goods.

It also notes the opportunities to facilitate an expansion of domestic and foreign investment arising from recent bilateral and regional free trade agreements, including the Cambodia-China Free Trade Agreement and Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). •

Kingdom Inks Programme for Country Partnership



Phnom Penh Post/13 December

The government has recently signed a revised Programme for Country Partnership (PCP) document with the UN Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) via video link.

The document is tailored to foster industrial diversification, special economic zone development, innovation and support for the development of agro-value chains, with emphasis on those linked to the ailing tourism sector.

The London-based NGO Agriculture for Impact defines agricultural value chains as "the flow of products, knowledge and information between smallholder farmers and consumers.

The UNIDO said: "Cross-cutting components in the area of industrial policy and statistics, quality infrastructure, sustainable energy, and the circular economy, as well as women's empowerment and youth employment, will ensure a comprehensive approach that addresses the needs of key stakeholders and vulnerable groups."

The signing was accompanied by the launch of the Agro-Food and Tourism Enterprise Recovery Programme, one of the key projects to be implemented, which addresses the challenges faced by the Kingdom's micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) during COVID-19.

Cambodia became the first country in Asia to pilot the PCP initiative on 27 November 2017, when the ministry and UNIDO signed a joint declaration for the PCP for 2018-2023.

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Book Fair Moves Online to Promote Reading

Khmer Times/15 December

The Ministries of Information, Culture and Education are hosting an online book fair, "Week of Books" which started on December 12 until December 19 online.

The Week of Books includes a broad range of virtual activities including poetry, book and video promotions and book sales to promote reading. There is also live interaction with prominent speakers through Zoom, a common online meeting platform.

The book fair is an annual event held regularly at the National Library in order to raise public awareness of books in Khmer and foreign languages and to promote the publishing industry in Cambodia.

It also aims to support Cambodian writers and illustrators, as well as to cultivate a love of reading habits among Cambodians of all ages and to foster a passion for writing for the younger generation. •

Angkor Celebrates 28th UNESCO Heritage Anniversary



Khmer Times/15 December

Cambodia celebrated the 28th anniversary of the inclusion of Angkor Wat on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

King Norodom Sihamoni posted on his Facebook page to celebrate the anniversary. "The Angkor temples were inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List on 14 December 1992, in Santa Fe, US, under His Majesty King Norodom Sihanouk. His Majesty the King Father of Independence, Territorial Integrity and Khmer National Unity appealed to UNESCO to help save the Angkor temples."

After Angkor's inclusion on the World Heritage List, an international conference was held in Tokyo from 12-13 Oct 1993, under the initiative of the Japanese government, with the support of France and UNESCO. The conference aimed to develop strategies and action plans for the protection and conservation of Angkor. Subsequently, the International Coordinating Committee (ICC Angkor) was established in December 1993.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Hun Sen also posted a celebratory message on Facebook. He said that the anniversary is a reminder to all Cambodian people to love and participate in preserving the Kingdom's heritage.

Angkor Wat was built in the early 12th century by King Suryavarman II. The temple is 65 metres high and occupies a rectangular area of about 200 hectares, surrounded by water. •

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The UK and Cambodia Keeping...

In response, Prak Sokhonn expressed his high appreciation for the decision by the United Kingdom, considering it as encouraging for the Cambodian government and very good news for workers in the Kingdom who already been so affected by COVID-19's disastrous impact. He stressed that Cambodia is firmly committed to forging mutually beneficial relations with the UK in bilateral and multilateral areas.

Bilateral trade between Cambodia and the United Kingdom reached \$1.05 billion in 2019. Cambodia exports to the UK valued at more than \$978 million included mostly bicycles, garments and footwear, according to figures from the Ministry of Commerce. •

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COVID-19 Vaccine Strategic...

He continued that the government has initially targeted to vaccinate about 10 millions of Cambodian, especially the front-liners and the vulnerable groups, and the vaccination of the rest of the Cambodia's population will be coordinated with development partners.

Cambodia's access to the vaccine will not only prevent Cambodians from the deadly disease, but also open the opportunity for Cambodia to rebound its growth and enjoy further development. •

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Kingdom Inks Programme...

The PCP is funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), an office-level agency in the federal administration of Switzerland.

The Cambodian Minister said the PCP plays a crucial role in supporting the implementation of key policy documents and in achieving the government's priorities, especially in regards to the immediate recovery strategy devised to respond to the COVID-19 crisis.

He also strongly encouraged relevant government agencies, donors, partners and the private sector to join forces to maximise the PCP's development impact.

The signing represents a landmark event in UNIDO's support for the Kingdom's ambition of becoming an upper-middle-income country by 2030. •