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## Kicking off the vaccination drive in the Kingdom



*Khmer Times/10 February*

The Royal Cambodian Armed Forces deputy commander-in-chief Lieutenant General Hun Manet was the first to get vaccinated with the Sinopharm vaccine and called on people to be inoculated.

The Lt Gen also appealed to all Cambodians to unite and join the government in implementing health measures and get vaccinated according to the government's plan.

The vaccinations are currently for priority groups including journalists being administered at four centres in the capital: Calmette Hospital, Ang Duong Hospital, Khmer Soviet Friendship Hospital and National Pediatric Hospital.

Of the 600,000 Sinopharm vaccines which have recently arrived in Cambodia, 300,000 doses were given to the Defence Ministry for the armed forces, dignitaries, senior ministers, governors, secretaries and undersecretaries of state.

Minister of Defence General all military officers and soldiers will receive COVID-19 vaccine, as they are the frontliners who work hard to curb the spread of the disease in Cambodia.

He added that the ministry is now studying the pace and the capacity to roll out the vaccine to the armed forces. •

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## Free Vocational Training for Unemployed Due to C-19



*Khmer Times/11 February*

Workers who lost their jobs due to COVID-19 can now apply for a training programme to study professional skills free of charge.

The Ministry of Labour said the scheme was to give an opportunity for jobless people to learn new skills to become more marketable in the workforce.

The programme consists of a special technical and vocational degree (C1) training course for workers free of charge and those who enroll will receive a bonus of about \$50 per month for four months.

The main technical and professional fields included in the programme are: construction, electrical, mechanics, manufacturing, business and information technology as well as tourism where the job market is in high demand now and in the future.

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## CDC Okays 144 Japan Projects worth \$2.79B Since '94 Debut



*Phnom Penh Post/15 February*

The Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC) has approved a cumulative 144 Japanese investment projects worth \$2.79 billion since its inception in 1994, 66 of which are in special economic zones (SEZ) with \$340 million in capital investment.

The release was issued following the 21<sup>st</sup> Public-Private Sector Meeting of the Cambodia-Japan Joint Committee held at the CDC on February 11.

## BACK Vows to Expand Pro Bono Legal Services



*Phnom Penh Post/10 February*

The Bar Association of the Kingdom of Cambodia (BAKC) has vowed to expand the scope of pro bono defence consultations for the poor and called on lawyers around the country to participate in serving social justice and contribute to reducing the effects of poverty.

In a notice dated 5 February, the BAKC noted progress it had already made in improving services for people who otherwise could not afford legal advice or representation and presented plans for a continued expansion of outreach.

The association's refined policy focus aims expand availability of free legal consultations for the general public and free representation of the indigent and those without access to it.

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CDC secretary-general said Japanese investors play an important role in contributing to Cambodia's economic growth, even as the world grapples with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Japanese ambassador to Cambodia praised the government's policy and efforts across the relevant institutions in addressing the challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis and maintaining Cambodia's competitiveness in international trade at this time.

Bilateral trade between Cambodia and Japan for the first 11 months of last year was worth \$1.9187 billion, down 8.77% from the \$2.1033 billion posted in the same period of 2019, according to the Japan External Trade Organisation (Jetro). •

## Livelihood Recovery Project to Help 10,000



PhnomPenhPost/16 February

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) signed an agreement to begin a project that will directly support 10,000 of the most vulnerable people affected by the economic fall-out from COVID-19 in Siem Reap and Banteay Meanchey provinces.

The 20-month project – Strengthening the livelihood recovery of the rural communities most affected by COVID-19 in Cambodia – is funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). It will help the most vulnerable population groups including poor and vulnerable households, small-scale farmers, returning migrant workers and unemployed casual workers, all of whom suffered greatly this past year from COVID-19.

A rapid assessment conducted jointly by the agriculture ministry, the Council for Agricultural and Rural Development (CARD) and FAO in April 2020 indicated the priority needs of the vulnerable group were agricultural inputs and assets for production, capacity building in production techniques and improved community infrastructure such as water storage facilities.

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## Cambodia, U.S. Reaffirm Commitment to Continue Close Cooperation



Khmer Times/18 February

Cambodia and the United States of America have confirmed their commitment to continue strengthening their bilateral cooperation, especially in the field of trade.

During their meeting, Cambodian Minister of Commerce and U.S. Ambassador to Cambodia spoke highly of the bilateral trade exchange between the two countries which remains high despite the COVID-19 crisis.

Both sides also discussed the possibility to increase the two-way trade volume.

Figures from the U.S. Census Bureau showed that bilateral trade between the two countries reached all-time high of \$6,921 million in 2020, a year-on-year increase of 17.8%.

Cambodia exported \$6,577 million worth of goods to the world largest economy, up 22.8% compared to 2019, and imported \$343 million worth of products from the country, down 33%.

The Kingdom's strong export to the U.S. in 2020 was backed by the export of non-garment products such as bicycle, furniture, and electronic components.

The meeting also touched on the draft law and regulations related to the digital sector and prioritized tasks toward Cambodia's chairmanship of ASEAN in 2022. •

## Cambodia, UK Pledge to Continue Close Cooperation in Trade Sector



Khmer Times/20 February

Cambodia and the United Kingdom have vowed to continue cooperating closely to boost their bilateral trade ties and restore the economy affected by the impact of COVID-19 crisis.

Minister of Commerce expressed congratulations to the British Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam on her new role, which will promote dialogue, good cooperation, and fruitful diplomatic relations between Cambodia and the UK.

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## BACK Vows to Expand Pro Bono...

He called on more lawyers to volunteer their time so that outstanding cases may be handled more quickly. He said 50 volunteer lawyers have signed on with their team so far.

The notice described target recipients under the programme as impoverished individuals suspected or accused of serious crimes or minors charged with felonies of misdemeanours.

Also encouraged to seek assistance are victims of felonies or misdemeanours who do not have means or access to secure legal representation, such as garment workers, women and children. Members of the general public are also eligible for legal consultations and are welcome to contact the BAKC.

A list of available attorneys will be prepared for each locale, and people can reach volunteer attorneys on duty during regular business hours in the capital and some locations around the country by dialling "1281" for their designated hotline.

The department has previously handled cases involving women, minors, and the poor as well as crimes including rape, domestic violence and human trafficking. •

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## Cambodia, UK Pledge to Continue...

He thanked the British government for its key contribution to develop human resources and enhance national economy of Cambodia by granting financing for the development of some priority areas, especially education, economy, and commerce as well as by providing Generalised System of References which is effective from January 2021 after Brexit.

He also highlighted the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC)'s efforts in expanding trade partnership through the establishment of free trade agreements with main trade partners in the region, and voiced his support for the progress in UK-ASEAN dialogue partnership.

The minister informed the British side about Cambodia's hosting of the 13th Asia-Europe Summit this year and 40th ASEAN Summit and Related Summits next year.

The British Trade Envoy welcomed Cambodia's annual economic growth and export potential. She spoke highly of the RGC's endeavours in facilitating trade activities of British businessmen and investors in Cambodia so far, and promised to attract more British investors to study Cambodia's potential areas.

She also laid stress on the Accelerated COVID Economic Support (ACES) project supported by the British government for ASEAN countries. •

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## Free Vocational Training for...

Currently, there are 12 technical and vocational education and training institutions that are providing the above training, with 3,360 students enrolling last year.

In 2020, the ministry provided technical and vocational training to more than 70,000 Cambodians in accordance with the health guidelines set by the Ministry of Health during the pandemic.

According to the Ministry of Labour, since the pandemic began, the government has provided a monthly allowance of \$40 to 340,032 garment and tourism workers, totalling \$23 million.

It said soft skill training was organised for a total of 66,607 workers from 107 factories. •

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## Livelihood Recovery Project...

The vulnerable groups also need access to markets in addition to better access to financial assistance in the form of grants and loans with low or no interest as well as the ability to delay loan repayment.

Agriculture ministry secretary-general said the implementation of this project will respond to the critical needs of rural farmers by restoring their livelihoods through the building of productive capacity and promotion of agriculture-based work.

The project will also provide assistance to farmers to begin using net-houses to grow crops.

This project will be implemented along with two other projects partly funded by the SDC including the FAO-sponsored Food Safety project and the Women Empowerment in Agriculture, Food Security, and Nutrition project being funded by a multi-donor mechanism. •